

## Understanding Florida's native bobcats: Frequently asked questions

The United States is home to somewhere between [2.4 and 3.6 million](#) native bobcats. The only one of the lower 48 states in which their population is decreasing is Florida. But even here, bobcats live in deep forest, hammock lands, wetlands, and in suburban and urban areas, including Turtle Rock and surrounding communities.

### What do bobcats look like?

As described by [Smithsonian's National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute](#), "The bobcat's fur is buff to brown, sometimes with a reddish tinge, and marked with spots or stripes of brown and black. The fur on its undersides is lighter in color. Bobcats have facial ruffs, ear tufts, white spots near the tips of their ears and bobbed tails." Some bobcats don't have either spots or stripes, and rarely, people spot a black bobcat!



### How large are bobcats?

Adult bobcats are about twice the size of domestic cats. They weigh anywhere from nine to 33 pounds and are about 18 to 24 inches tall to the shoulder.

### Why might I see a bobcat during the day?

It's not unusual to see a bobcat during the day. Bobcats sleep only two to three hours at a time, and are not completely nocturnal. They are typically most active at dusk and dawn.

### What do bobcats eat?

Bobcats prey mostly on small animals including rodents, rabbits, birds, and occasionally deer. In Florida, bobcats also eat iguanas. They are beneficial for pest control. This flexible diet allows bobcats to live in areas ranging from rural to urban.

### How can I protect my pets?

Follow the regulations Turtle Rock provides for pets, which help ensure their safety. Pets must always be kept on leash when not contained in your yard. It is always prudent to watch over pets, especially small ones, even in your own yard. Keep pet vaccinations up-to-date.

## **Do bobcats attack people?**

Bobcat attacks on people are virtually unknown, and on the rare occasions they do occur, are typically because the animal feels trapped and unable to retreat. Of course, as with any wild animal, you should not attempt to touch either an adult bobcat or her kittens.

## **What are bobcats' social habits?**

Adult bobcats are typically solitary and get together only to mate. According to [Sciencing](#), "When building a den, the bobcat favors hollow logs, tree hollows, caves, rock outcroppings and openings in the ground. It can live close to people and doesn't pose any great threat – it's too small to hunt or eat people and rarely preys on game or domestic creatures – but it is not suitable to keep as a pet."

Bobcats mark their territory with scent. The male typically has a larger territory than the female, since he may seek multiple mates. Bobcats breed from August to March, with the peak period being February and March. Females typically have one to four kittens. Mother bobcats raise their young.

## **How can I keep a bobcat out of my yard?**

[Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) advises, "Yell, use air horns or throw rocks towards but not at the bobcat to discourage the animal from being in an unwelcome place."

If the bobcat often travels through your yard, you can spray the perimeter with coyote urine, available online and at some pet and hardware stores. Do not leave pet or human food untended outside, and never feed a bobcat or any wild animal.

## **What if I am concerned about a specific bobcat?**

Please call the management office with questions or for assistance.

*Image: Mother and kitten bobcats, courtesy and copyright Mary Keim, Creative Commons License.*

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March 25, 2023*