



Bobcats, like many wild cat species, face a large number of threats in the wild, including habitat loss, habitat fragmentation due to human development, disease, poisoning and are still trapped and hunted for their fur throughout most of their range. In western states killing of bobcats is unlimited, and pelts from bobcats in these states are most prized because the region's high elevations and cold temperatures make their spotted fur softer. Populations of bobcats sustain the ecological balance of both meso-predator and prey populations, yet continued growth of human population and road networks have increased mortality rates and genetically isolated bobcat populations.

In Southern California, Felidae Conservation Fund is working in the Bay Area and Central Coast, trying to identify remaining bobcat habitat and wildlife linkages between habitats, in an effort to conserve wild Bobcat populations and prevent local extinctions. Identifying linkages that connect habitats is critical as they provide a means for species to access necessary resources, provide access for juvenile dispersal and facilitate movement between habitat patches for wildlife to find viable mates. Since carnivores generally have relatively large home ranges, fragmented habitats often become smaller than the home ranges. As a result, home ranges of large carnivores often extend into the boundaries of urbanized areas which leads to human-wildlife conflicts.

The Bay Area Bobcat Study aims to look at how human development and habitat fragmentation affects bobcat populations, population status, mortality factors, and health, all of which have not been evaluated in depth for the region. This study will track bobcat movement through fragmented landscapes and identify barriers that hinder juvenile dispersal within bobcat metapopulations. Combining telemetry and conducting field camera research will reveal where bobcat juveniles are dispersing, and how bobcats are moving on the landscape. By gaining this information felidae will be able to make plans for conservation including informed recommendations to land managers and roadway engineers, concerning wildlife corridors and crossing structures.

You can read more about the project here: <http://www.felidaefund.org/?q=bay-area-bobcats-page>

