

## What is the fencing for along Highway 60?



Anyone driving along the Park's Highway 60 corridor will notice the black drift-fencing that has been temporarily installed in various places by both Park staff and construction contractors working on the highway. It is intended to keep Snapping and Painted Turtles off of the roadway in an attempt to reduce their mortality. These turtles prefer soft ditches and banks of roads for nesting.

Scan for more information about Ontario Turtles at Risk in Algonquin Park

[youtu.be/FnGGVLHpwsW](https://youtu.be/FnGGVLHpwsW)



Painted Turtle: Note the brilliant colours!



Snapping Turtle: Be careful to avoid its jaws as it will feel threatened and may snap!

### Help Protect Us!

If you see a turtle on the road, slow down!  
If possible, you may want to try to assist the turtle by moving it in the direction it was heading.

Be careful with Snapping Turtles — you should not try to pick one up!  
Avoid its jaws as it will feel threatened and may snap!  
And, always remember, watch out for other traffic!

## Fish Research on Lake of Two Rivers

Over two years (2017-2019) the Harkness Laboratory of Fisheries Research is conducting an in-depth population assessment and monitoring of fish movement in Lake of Two Rivers.

In May 2017, fisheries researchers caught 20 Lake Trout and 10 Smallmouth Bass and surgically implanted them with acoustic transmitters. The transmitter (about the size of one AAA battery) emits a unique sound frequency every 5 to 10 minutes. The sound from the transmitter is picked up by acoustic receivers in the lake, which are installed one metre below the surface of the water.

With 49 receivers in the lake, the exact location and depth of each fish with a transmitter will be accurately determined. This study is anticipated to yield detailed information about habitat use.

If you happen to be fishing on Lake of Two Rivers, keep an eye out for fish with a small, red tag near the fin on the back. If you do catch one, please release it, so it may continue to contribute to our understanding of its species. If it cannot be released, please return the transmitter to a Park Office. Keep in mind the fishing regulations prohibit the harvest of Lake Trout from Lake of Two Rivers with a total length between 40-55cm.

This valuable research helps improve our understanding of Lake Trout and Smallmouth Bass by producing accurate population estimates and determining where and when fish use specific habitat. The results of this study will help inform future fisheries management planning and resource management decisions, not only for Lake of Two Rivers, but all of Algonquin.

For more information see the bulletin boards or park office.



If you catch a fish with a red tag, please release it.



Fisheries researcher implanting transmitter.



## ALGONQUIN VISITOR CENTRE

HOURS OF OPERATION

Museum • Bookstore & Nature Shop • Café **WiFi**

Open Daily  
9 am - 7 pm

June 16 to October 8, 2018

Algonquin Logging Museum - Open 9 am to 5 pm June 16 - October 14, 2018.  
The 1.3 km trail with outdoor exhibits is available year-round.

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Algonquin

# The Raven

A Natural and Cultural History Digest

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## We've found the missing Lynx!

by David LeGros

The forests, lakes, hillsides and bogs of Algonquin are the very picture of the North for many people. It is true that the landscape has many elements in common with those found farther north of here, such as spruce forests and bogs, but we really are the very southern fringe of true northness. For many kinds of wildlife, Algonquin is about as far south as they live; Moose, Eastern Wolves, Spruce Grouse and Canada Jays (Gray Jays), for example, rarely occur south of here. These species live throughout Algonquin, and many people in fact come from far and wide just to see them. Some, like Canada Jays and Moose are easier to find than others, such as wolves. It takes a great deal of time to even catch a glimpse of one, let alone snap a good picture. Indeed, some animals are very hard to find, especially when we are on the very fringe of what is suitable habitat.

It has long been believed by biologists and naturalists that wild cats, such as Lynx and Bobcat are absent from Algonquin.

Typically, Lynx are found north of here, and Bobcats to the south. Every now and then, a report comes in of either cat, but there is very little proof associated with these. In October of 2017, however, we got a big surprise. A Visitor Centre staff member was speaking to a photographer, who told her about a second-hand Lynx sighting and he had a picture too!

It was a photo of the LCD screen of a camera showing a Lynx. He had met two German travellers the day before and they asked him to identify the animal they had photographed on October 6th. Having no way to get a copy of the image, the staff member also photographed the LCD screen of the photographer - a picture of a picture! The image was clearly from a location on the Opeongo Road, but it appeared that we would never get more details than the date and approximate location. But,

sometimes, you get lucky! A few days later, when looking through observations on the citizen science website, iNaturalist.org, we spotted an observation of a Lynx, in Algonquin.



Lynx observed on Opeongo Road on October 6, 2017.

AMANDA GUERCIO



We then contacted the observer, and got more details and photographs! At first, we thought it was the original observers from Germany on Opeongo Road, but it soon became apparent it was an altogether different date, location and observers! The cat was seen two days later, on October 8, over 20 km away, between Lake of Two Rivers and Whitefish Lake by the MacPherson family while canoeing.

“We were paddling up the river between Pog Lake and Whitefish. We were going around a corner where the river narrows. I had just taken a picture of a turtle, so I had the lens on and camera out. We saw the Lynx on the bank and started taking pictures. It stayed still for about minute. It seemed to stare at my wife, but didn’t really look at anyone else. We tried to remain still in the canoe, and we drifted a little bit closer. Eventually, it started to creep into the forest. It never did fully stand up. It moved very slowly, taking a step or two, then pausing. I noticed the tail, it look like a pom pom, a black puff ball. Not far behind us, a group of canoeists also did see it, but it was mostly in the forest by then.”

In late October, a report of another Lynx came in. The sighting itself, however, was

*Lynx photographed by park visitor on Madawaska River in Algonquin Park on October 8, 2017. FRANKLIN MCPHERSON*



made on May 17. The photo submitted to us via FaceBook showed a Lynx in mid-jump in the Hailstorm Creek area. It may be the same animal seen on Opeongo Road in October. However, a different individual seems likely since Hailstorm Creek is at the north end of Lake Opeongo, roughly 15 km from the midpoint on the Opeongo Road.

Just over a month after the “first sighting”, we received reports and confirmed Lynx tracks, again on the Opeongo Road on November 10th. By this time, a nice skiff of snow had fallen on Algonquin, and the tracks of mammals were easy to find. An observant photographer noticed the large, round tracks heading down the road, eventually crossing and returning into the forest. The following day, the photographer saw more big, round tracks again farther south on the Opeongo road. The fresh snow that had fallen over night assured us they were new. The tracks seen on the road do provide some indication of the Lynx’s lifestyle. The footprints left behind in the shallow snow were not just big, they were enormous for an animal that is approximately 70-100 cm in body length and weighing 8 to 15 kg. The tracks were almost



*Lynx observed by park visitor at Hailstorm Creek on May 17, 2017. ACE CAMPBELL*

15 cm across and nearly round. The feet that made these tracks are like snowshoes; easily walking on fluffy snow, making nothing more than a muffled crunch in a quiet winter world.

Now we at *The Raven* do not want to give you the impression that we are overrun with Lynx in light of recent sightings. By late winter following the observations, there was no more evidence detected. It does, however, make us wonder how many Lynx were in the area and why were they here? Firstly, Lynx live in the boreal forests found to the north of Algonquin. There, they feed on a variety of small to medium-sized animals, but Snowshoe Hare make up the bulk of their diet. In fact, the abundance of Lynx is dictated by Snowshoe Hare numbers; when prey is abundant, Lynx numbers increase, and when hares become scarce, Lynx number crash. The boom and bust of hares occurs in fairly predictable cycles, typically every 10 years, and Lynx populations follow suit with a lag of a couple of years. The last peak in hare numbers was in 2006-2007, so we should be in a high end of the cycle now. This may mean that Lynx reproduction was good to the north, and perhaps some dispersing young Lynx may have wandered south into

Algonquin. However, Lynx usually travel long distances in search of prey, sometimes several hundreds of kilometres, when hare numbers are low. This may bring them to marginal habitat at the fringe of their range. The reason why Lynx were seen in Algonquin in 2017 is still a mystery, but after more than 100 years of no confirmed observations it appears that one or more Lynx may have been present in the Park.

Snowshoe Hare can be abundant in a good year, and they are the preferred prey of a Lynx, but they are not easy to catch. The hare has white fur in winter, and easily matches its surroundings. They are also quite fast on their feet, sharp-eyed and move easily over the snow, which can be very deep. How does a Lynx capture prey? Despite being superficially shaped like a wolf, which often chases prey over long distances as a part of a pack, Lynx are solitary ambush hunters. They usually sit and wait in a hunting bed where prey is likely to be, such as on hare trails. When prey is spotted, the Lynx will remain concealed until the prey is as close as possible and then quickly give chase over a short distance, matching the rapid zigzags of the hare until catching it with a swipe of the paw.

Many long-time Algonquin naturalists and biologists were obviously very excited by the prospect of possibly seeing a Lynx, after all there are very few confirmed cat sightings in the Park. Even with the number of researchers, naturalists and biologists getting into the field, it is still pretty unlikely that they can document every single species found here. Even if you do get to spend some time in remote corners, you rarely make a big discovery. But sometimes you get lucky and make a once in a lifetime observation within a kilometre or two of busy Highway 60! There is incredible value in submitting wildlife observations to citizen science projects. Every year, nearly a million people visit Algonquin, and each of them has the power to make an observation. Many citizen science websites

and apps now exist, and these compliment the data park naturalists and biologists have been collecting on paper from staff and visitors for decades. Biologists and park naturalist staff can only visit limited number of places in the Park, and we aren’t always at the right place at the right time, but you might be! For more information, check out some of the following citizen science projects:

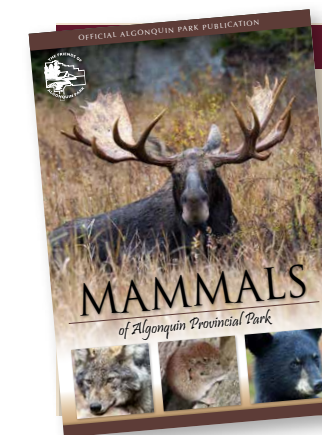
**eBird.org** – Submit your bird sightings from anywhere in the world! Share your Algonquin observations with the user APPBirds.

**iNaturalist.org** – Submit your plant and animal sightings from anywhere in the world!

**ontarionature.org/oraa/app/** – Submit your reptile and amphibians sightings from Ontario!



*Lynx tracks photographed on Opeongo Road on November 11, 2017. RICK STRONKS*



## Publications

**NEW ONLY \$4.95**

### Mammals of Algonquin Provincial Park

Fifty-five species are on Algonquin’s mammal list. This book looks at their life histories, physical characteristics, and behaviours. Spectacular colour photographs of the Park’s mammals to help make it easier to identify them, and illustrations that are a useful reference to distinguish tracks and scats are included in this new and heavily revised edition.

Available at the Algonquin Visitor Centre Bookstore & Nature Shop, East Gate and West Gate, or online at [algonquinpark.on.ca](http://algonquinpark.on.ca)