Alton Man Spots Bobcat In Backyard, Captures It With Photos

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Mark Hackworth, who resides in the 600 block of Summit Street in Alton, captured a bobcat between two houses on Saturday, February 11, 2023. He also saw a bobcat the following day in the backyard.

"The bobcat had a red squirrel in its jaws," Hackworth said when he saw it the first time. "On Sunday, February 12, I saw it lounging in the backyard. I got my camera and was fortunate enough to get a few shots. It ran a short distance then just stopped, sat down, and looked around. I thought some people might be interested in this sighting."

Bobcats Facts

Size: Adult males average 25 pounds, while adult females average 15.

Home range: Adult males occupy a 36-square-mile territory, while adult females live in a 12-square-mile area.

Breeding: Two to four kittens are born in dens in caves, hollow trees, or barns. Kittens are reared by their mother. Male kittens between the ages of 1 and 2 venture off to stake out their own territories.

Diet: Bobcats mainly hunt mice, moles, squirrels, rabbits, and entrails left by deer hunters.

Life expectancy: Up to 12 years, although under optimal conditions, bobcats could live 15 to 20 years.

In 2016, the bobcat became the 14th species of furbearer that has a regulated hunting or trapping season in Illinois. It is one of many examples of a recovered wildlife species that highlights the work of biologists, researchers, and landowners across the state. Before 1972, there were no limits or closed seasons on bobcats in Illinois. Bobcats were formally protected by the Wildlife Code in 1972 and listed as a state-threatened species in 1977.

In 2005 IDNR did a survey and it found 4 percent of the hunters who checked in a deer saw at least one bobcat across the state. In 2021, 18.7 percent of successful hunters reported seeing at least one bobcat, documenting a big increase in the percentage of successful deer hunters who saw bobcats from 2005 to 2021 across the state.