

## Lynx: 10 Exciting Facts about the Brush-Eared Animal



Photo credit: Julius Kramer

### 1. The lynx is a loner

Other predators, such as wolves, spend most of their lives in a family group. The lynx, on the other hand, prefers to stay alone. The females raise their young, but as soon as they are old enough, they leave their mother in search of their own territory. Males and females only meet during the mating season.

### 2. As big as a sheepdog

With a shoulder height of up to 70 cm and a body length of up to 120 cm, the Eurasian lynx is about as big as a German shepherd. This makes it not only the largest representative of its species group, but also the largest predatory cat in Central Europe.

### 3. Master of camouflage

Lynx are perfectly adapted to their surroundings by the pattern of their fur, making them almost impossible to recognise in the dense forest. Each lynx has a different coat pattern. Similar to the human fingerprint, lynx can be individually identified by this pattern. The fur of a lynx consists of up to 9,000 hairs per square centimetre. By comparison, there are only about 200 hairs per square centimetre on our heads. The dense coat of hair therefore also insulates the lynx ideally against cold and moisture, which is not necessarily the case with our hair.

### 4. Eyes like a lynx

It is not for nothing that there is this saying, because the eyes of the lynx have a very high visual acuity. For example, they are able to recognise a mouse from a distance of 75 metres. We humans, on the other hand, can just about spot a mouse 50 metres away in good light. In addition, its eyes are six times more sensitive to light in the dark than our eyes, partly because there are more rod cells in its retina that still function in low light. This helps the lynx to orientate itself at night just as well as during the day. There is no question of night blindness here.

### 5. Impressive hearing

Nothing escapes the lynx's hearing. The lynx can still perceive sounds in the range between 65 and 70 kilohertz, whereas human hearing ends at 16 to 20 kilohertz. With this ability, the lynx perceives other animals and also hikers from a long distance and this explains why the chance of encountering it in the forest is very small.

## 6. The famous brush ear

The functions of the whiskers, brush ears and stubby tail have not yet been clearly explained. It is assumed that the beautiful brush ears help the lynx to determine the wind direction. This could help it when hunting. As a lurking and stalking hunter, the lynx often waits for hours for its prey and kills it with a big leap to the throat.

## 7. A home as big as Bremen

The territory size of a lynx is 50 - 400 km<sup>2</sup>, i.e. between 5,000 and 40,000 ha. This is almost the size of the German city state of Bremen. The size of the territory and the density of the lynx population are closely related to the available prey. The lynx needs the large territories to be able to successfully hunt on a regular basis. The territories of male lynx are significantly larger than those of females. The size of their territory means that lynx regularly cross borders and their home territories often overlap several countries. One of the reasons for its rarity is that the lynx insists on undisturbed, dense old forests for its habitat, a condition that is becoming more and more difficult to fulfil in Europe.

## 8. The food requirements of the lynx

Perhaps you are also wondering how much a lynx actually eats per day? The daily food requirement of lynx is between 1.1 and 2.7 kg of meat. Once a lynx has killed a larger animal, it often feeds on it for several days. Afterwards, the lynx can also starve for a few days. On average, a lynx kills about 50 deer per year.

## 9. Reintroduction as a concept for success

Since its absolute low in the first half of the last century, the European lynx population has grown from only 700 to about 9,000 animals. Decimated prey and intensive persecution are responsible for the decline in European lynx populations.

## 10. Humans are its greatest threat

Although these animals are strictly protected today and are subject to hunting laws, lynx are shot illegally or poisoned time and again. Diseases or other natural losses play a rather minor role.

