



MORONGO BASIN ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

Bobcat - *Lynx rufus*

About the Species:

Bobcats are widely distributed across the Morongo Basin, however the best suited areas are found in the western portion of the basin. Many residents of the more rural portions of the area have had the opportunity to view individual bobcats; studies indicate that compared with females of the species, males may have more of a tendency to move through rural developments and travel farther distances, up to 3 miles per day. While the bobcat is currently classified as a game species by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, concerns over the recent increase in trapping of the animals for pelts have prompted efforts to change that status via enacting restrictions on trapping of the species.



Threats:

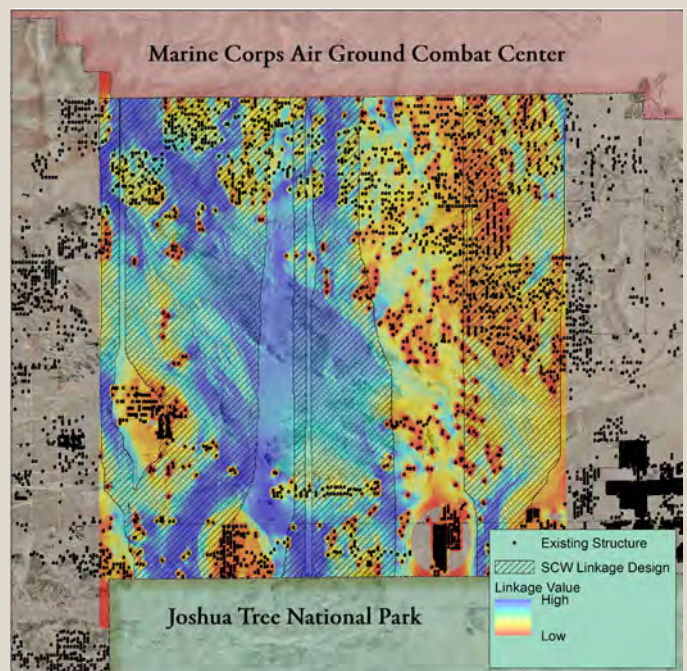
The bobcat is active at night and thus subject to impacts from unnecessary lighting, which can interfere with its ability to travel between locations. Road impacts, including road kill, and fragmentation from roads and development have the potential to interfere with this species, which is more sensitive to disturbance than other desert species of similar size. Bobcats often feed on small mammals and therefore may be susceptible to poisoning when ingesting small mammals exposed to rodenticides used by homeowners. Additionally, bobcats may be killed by mountain lions or coyotes.

Habitat:

The best habitat for bobcat is a natural area, such as desert scrub and sagebrush. They prefer steep or rocky areas that provide cover and protected locations for their dens.

Potential Development Impacts:

Due in part to their nature as solitary animals, the bobcat is sensitive to development and its associated impacts. It does not appear that *planned* future development is likely to significantly further impact bobcat habitat within the study area, with the caveat that future development is planned thoughtfully. The central patch of core bobcat habitat within the basin is currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management as an Off Road Vehicle area and therefore may be of limited value as habitat for resident bobcats. However, this area may provide an important stepping stone for connectivity, particularly since bobcat movement is likely to occur at night when recreational use is less probable.



Colors represent relative value of current density. Areas of high current density indicate where animal movement is likely to be concentrated.

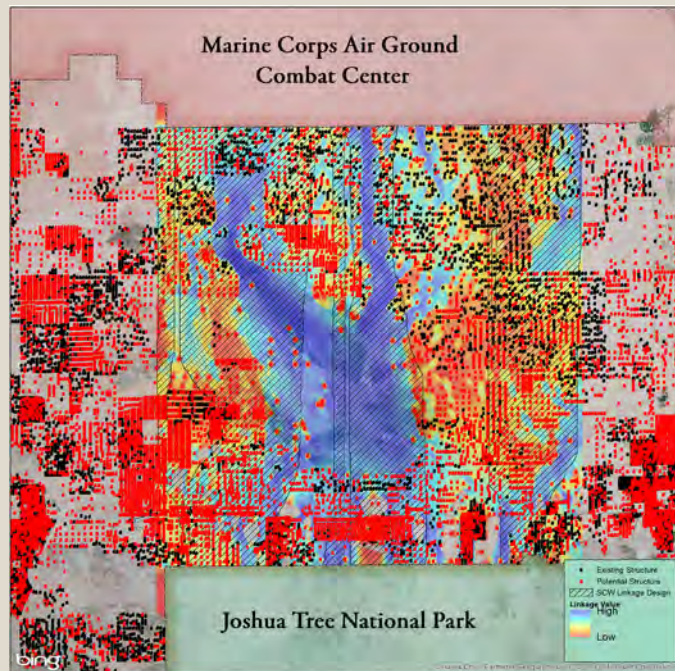
The Wild Planner analysis indicated areas where there may need to be modifications of the currently mapped linkage design to accommodate areas that have already been compromised by development, including the easternmost corridor of the four bobcat corridors mapped by SC Wildlands. Existing development patterns dictate that lateral movement between the remaining corridors provides the best options for bobcat movement (previous page).

Under full build out, resistance to movement could be increased by 62 percent, resulting in significant restriction to movement in the southern, western, and central portions of the linkage area.

and impede movement of bobcats dispersing between Joshua Tree National Park and Twentynine Palms Marine Base (see example for Scenario 4, below).

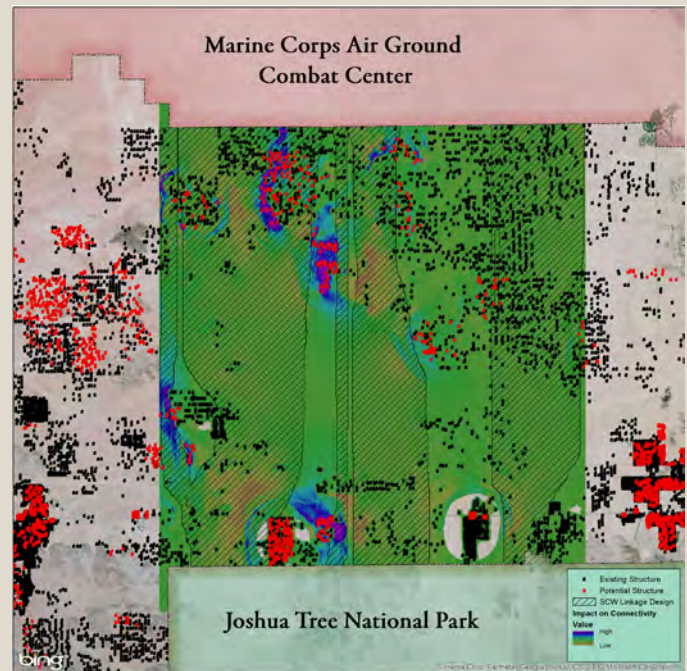
Strategies for Protection:

The information generated by Wild Planner can be used by landowners, local conservation stewards, and land use planners to restore linkages, modify linkage boundaries, identify alternative linkages, or focus efforts on managing the least impacted portions of linkages. In addition to providing road crossing structures and possible speed reduction at road crossings, there may be some future legislative protection enacted for this species.



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Development patterns modeled by the analysis of scenarios showed that similar to results for the badger, Scenarios 1 and 4 were the worst development scenarios in terms of impacts on wildlife, with estimated increases in landscape resistance of 12 percent for both scenarios. This would result in localized bottlenecks to bobcat movement which could restrict options



Species information from SC Wildlands reports; see www.scwildlands.org.

Photo Credit: USFWS.

Map Credit: Brent Brock, Craighead Institute.

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