

Holyoke

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pens quite a bit, too.

My response: In typical fashion, I sent it along to Jennifer Vashon, a biologist with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Then I told Koziol that Vashon is usually very prompt with her responses to such questions, and we ought to hear something from her soon.

By the time I finished emailing him, her response was in my in-box.

"It is a bobcat," Vashon wrote. Then she explained why.

That's really why I'm sharing the photo today: The more we learn from the experts, the more likely we'll be to correctly identify the next bobcat (or lynx) we see.

"Lynx have a dark black bar on the outside edge of the facial ruff," she wrote. "Also, the white throat of a bobcat is more evident than on a lynx, likely due to the brown coat of a bobcat and more gray coat of a lynx. [This cat] also appears to have short ear tufts — again,



ANDY KOZIOL

Bobcat or lynx? This big cat visited Andy Koziol's Holden home recently. Biologist Jennifer Vashon of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife took a look at the photo and confirmed the critter is a bobcat.

bobcat. Lynx have longer ear tufts, greater than one inch."

Then Vashon got to the crux of the matter: Many of us can ID a lynx when we get a gander of its oversized hind feet. In this photo, they're obscured. In this case, Vashon took an educated guess based on her other observations.

"The feet are hard to see in the picture, but they, too, appear small (proportional to the animal)," she wrote. "Lynx have pretty large feet, almost like a puppy that hasn't grown into its paws."

So there you have it: This critter is a bobcat.

And as always, if you've got questions about what's been creeping around in

your backyard, feel free to send 'em along to me. I'd be glad to take a guess ... and even more happy to ask for an expert second opinion for you.

John Holyoke can be reached at jholyoke@bangordailynews.com or 990-8214. Follow him on Twitter: @JohnHolyoke

Farmer harvesting firs before budworm returns

BY ANTHONY BRINO
BDN STAFF

With spruce budworm populations expected to grow in northern Maine forests, Matt Gregg of Maple Meadow Farms is among several woodlot owners who are getting ahead of the problem.

A farmer and auctioneer, Gregg is harvesting balsam fir trees this winter from the farm's 180-acre mixed woodlot north of Route 163 in Mapleton. He drives into the area in a small truck, along with the family dog, Wilson, and enlists the help of a Belgian draft horse to pull the trees up to the trail.

Gregg hasn't seen any signs of the spruce budworm, which killed more than 20 percent of Maine's fir trees in the 1970s and 1980s, but he believes the predictions of researchers who say the bugs are going to start growing in number.

"Right now we're concentrating on the fir because we'd like to get it out as quickly as we can," he said.

The spruce budworm feeds on the new growths of balsam fir and white spruce trees. Populations are thought to

boom in 30 to 60 year cycles that coincide with the maturing of the trees. Spruce budworm populations in Quebec have been growing for a decade, and an estimated 15 million acres of forestland in Quebec and New Brunswick have been damaged so far.

The woodlot Gregg manages has a diversity of ash, beech, maple, tamarack, cedar, spruce, fir, hemlock and a small red pine plantation, which he is in the process of thinning.

The draft horse is one of four that Matt and Andrea Gregg use in their grain and hay fields and in their woods. The horses are less disruptive to the evolving mixed forest and the young trees that they're hoping to favor in the canopy.

"Cutting the firs will allow some of the smaller maple and yellow birch trees to get more sun," Gregg said.

"Really with a woodlot, you've got to let it grow the way it wants to grow," he said. "There aren't a lot of big trees left. The younger trees are slender and straight that will grow into good commercial wood after a decade."

Snow

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"It was extremely cold," Bolduc said. "Then, Friday night, we almost didn't even go to bed. We sculpted from 7 a.m. Friday until 11 a.m. Saturday and took just four hours off."

While working, they had the opportunity to watch a national news event take place: Their sculpture site was just across the street from Lake Geneva, where several cars sank into the ice.

"We watched the cars sink, and we watched the recovery effort," Thompson said. "On Facebook, we posted a picture of our sculpture. Somebody said, 'You know what [the sculpture] is yelling? He's yelling to the cars across the street: Don't park on the ice!'"

Things to Do Outdoors

GRAND LAKE STREAM — Winter Birding Weekend with Downeast Lakes Land Trust and the Fundy Chapter of Maine Audubon Society, 8-11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 13. Meet at Grand Lake Stream School building, 15 Water St. People of all ages and skill levels welcome. Part of Great Backyard Bird Count. 796-2100 or cbrown@downeastlakes.org.

HOLDEN — Family snowshoeing outing, guided, gently-paced ramble through meadows and woods, searching for tracks and stories in the snow, noon-2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, Fields Pond Audubon Center. Snowshoes available to rent. \$20 center members; \$25 others. 989-2591 or fieldspend@maineaudubon.org.

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MACHIAS — Downeast Coastal Conservancy to hold "Snow Day in the Park," 1-3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, Middle River Park. 255-4500 or <http://downeastcoastalconservancy.org/>.

MADAWASKA — Fourth annual Rally in Valley Winter Festival for children, noon-2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, Four Seasons Trails, Spring Street. Registration, 11 a.m.-noon Feb. 13, at the door. \$5 per participant. 834-1353 or j.fortin@nmmc.org.

MIL0 — Schoodic Lake Ice Fishing Derby, Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 13-14, on Ebeemee, Seboeis and Boyd lakes. Organizers say ice conditions vary and caution people to be careful. Norway Point and Berry Cove have not been

able to hold ice, and travel from Lakeview Village to Knights Landing should be done on land, not on the lake. 943-2303, 943-2785 or www.trcmaine.org.

STETSON — Howard Lodge A.F. & A.M. Ice Fishing Derby, Saturday, Feb. 13, Pleasant Lake. Weigh-in/length station at Herb's Landing at White's camp. Terry White, 296-2929.

UNITY — Learn to decipher clues animals leave behind with naturalist Trevanna Frost Grenfell and Sebasticook Regional Land Trust, 9 a.m.-noon Sunday, Feb. 14, Moulton's Mill Preserve. Free. Advance registration required. Jennifer@sebasticookkrit.org or 948-3766.

For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit www.bangordailynews.com.

COMING SOON

- 2.14 Avner the Eccentric
 - 2.21 The Waiters
 - 2.27 Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company - *Body Against Body*
 - 2.29 Béla Fleck & Abigail Washburn with the Del McCoury Band
 - 3.19 The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes
 - 3.20 Simone Dinnerstein
 - 3.26 True Blues
- ... and more!

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