

American Marten

Martes americana (Cape Breton Population)

STATUS

Not listed

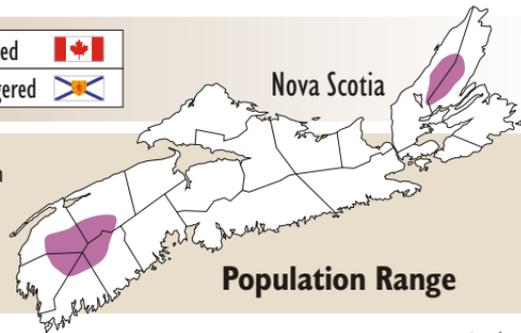


Endangered



Nova Scotia

There are likely fewer than 50 marten left in Cape Breton. Recent records confirm their existence in southwest Nova Scotia.



Habitat

Found in mature coniferous forests, where food supply is abundant (mice, chipmunks, rabbits, shrews, insects, reptiles, fruits, and berries). In recent years marten have been observed in mixed forests as well as cutovers adjacent to standing timber. Preferred resting and hunting areas are in rotting logs, stumps and burrows. They are rarely found in open fields, where there is no protection from predators or weather.



Species Description

The American Marten, or Pine Marten, is a member of the weasel family. It has a slender body with a small sharp-pointed head, rounded ears and a bushy tail. Its coat is dark with a light orange patch under its belly and throat. Males are 80 cm long (including a 20 cm tail), females are slightly smaller. They have semi-retractable, cat-like claws.



American Marten are typically observed in mixed wood or coniferous forests, in the habitat described above.

Interesting Points

- They are agile and fast, and can move in trees for hundreds of yards without falling to the ground.
- They are nocturnal, excellent swimmers, fearless, and very curious (which many humans confuse with tameness).
- Marten are called “*Apistanéw;*” in the Mi’kmaq language.



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Marten Release Program in Cape Breton

Similar Species

Mink:

Similar size (60-80 cm); darker fur; less prominent ears; found more often near water.



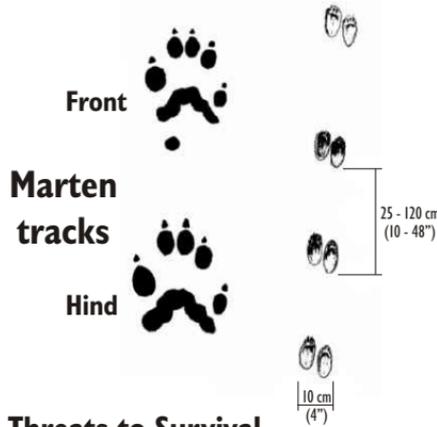
Fisher:

Larger (80-100 cm); skull wider; frosted or grizzled fur; less prominent ears.



Short-tailed Weasel:

Much smaller (30 cm), long and skinny, thin tail; white chest; fur white in winter.



Threats to Survival

- Initial decline in Nova Scotia due to unregulated over-trapping (1700-1900)
- Today, habitat loss and degradation, and small isolated populations (which provide few breeding opportunities) are the biggest threats.



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How You Can Help

Partnerships with local stakeholders like landowners, foresters, and trappers (who are currently collecting good data for NS DNR) are key to helping the marten. If you fall into one of these categories, find out more (contact below).

Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

Contact: NS DNR in Kentville, Nova Scotia (902) 679-6091

Info: www.speciesatrisk.ca/martenandlynx/, www.gov.ns.ca/natr/

Sighting Reports: 1-866-727-3447 or sightings@speciesatrisk.ca