

# Habitat requirements

In Europe lynxes inhabit forests. Habitat analysis of lynx observations in Poland has showed that there is a clear relation between the frequency of observations and the availability of the key elements of the environment such as forest density and its type, the area of the forest, the degree of its fragmentation, density and distance from human settlements and the development of road infrastructure (Niedziałkowska et al. 2006).

Lynx prefers habitats with various degree of forest density and undergrowth, dead trees, fallen trees and shrubs, young forest stands and clearings (Podgórski et al. 2008). The species habitat preferences are closely related to its behavior and biology. Being a predator which attacks from a short distance and surprises its prey, lynx chooses habitats with many different structures (fallen trees, shrubs etc.) for its hunting grounds. They should enable the lynx to approach its potential prey undetected and assess the distance (Okarma and Schmidt 2013). For this reason, for their hunting grounds lynxes tend to choose habitats with less forest density (contrary to the sites where they hide their prey), often near small clearings. The research conducted in Switzerland have proved that lynxes can adapt well to living in regions with lower forest density and afforestation degree (Breitenmoser-Würsten et al. 2001). Even there, however, they were mainly found in places characterized by dense forest and/or shrubs. Telemetry studies conducted in the Białowieża Forest has shown that migrating lynxes move mainly within dense forests (Schmidt 2013).