

CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH A BOBCAT

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I would like to pass on to you a rather unique wildlife experience that I had on 11 July 1993 in the Cypress Hills Provincial Park.

I had spent a very leisurely and enjoyable three hours of a Sunday afternoon travelling the back road between the main park area and Fort Walsh. The wildflowers were exceptional and I couldn't go very far before I spotted another kind I hadn't photographed yet. The end of this journey brought me to the conglom-

erate cliffs where I stopped my car on the trail at the top of the cliff and stepped to the edge to look out over the lake and valley below.

To my surprise I heard a sound like a dirt bike seeming to come from the hills across the valley. No movement could be seen there and as I searched I quickly realized the sound came from much closer. I looked down and there on a grassy shelf about 60 ft. away sat a Bobcat looking at me. He was growling at me



Bobcat, Cypress Hills Provincial Park

Wayne Harris



Bobcat

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and this was the sound that had attracted my attention. After taking a brief look I quietly slipped back to my car, put the telephoto lens on the camera and carefully edged back to take a couple of quick pictures before he left. He was still there and, in fact, hadn't moved at all.

He had not moved after the first few frames and I got bolder and moved to the edge of the cliff and to several spots on the edge. There was no cover there and I was in full view at all times. Other than the growl, he showed no fear or concern for my presence. In fact, he even

closed his eyes several times and I would have to make a noise to get him to open them for a picture. He shifted position a few times but never made any motion to leave. After about 20 minutes he moved slowly towards me and approached within 30 ft. before moving under the edge of the cliff, but still remaining in sight.

My film was all used up and I had some deadlines to meet so it was time for me to return. I left with a memorable first-time encounter with a Bobcat and enough pictures to relive the moment any time I wanted.

