

How many bobcats are in the park?

That is a very good question, also hard to answer. To the best of my knowledge we have never had a survey done of bobcats in Palo Alto Open Space. I can make a reasonable estimate.

I will consider Open Space on the west side of Route 280 (again, to the best of my knowledge no bobcat sightings in downtown Palo Alto or at the Baylands – they are probably there in limited numbers just not seen often).

Foothills Park and the Enid W. Pearson Arastradero Preserve are about 2,000 acres combined; or, about 3.2 square miles. A bobcat will have a home range of about one half to over 16 square miles depending on how much food and water, etc... are available. We have plenty of both in these two parks so I will use a smaller range estimate (but not the smallest) of about 1 square mile each. Males will tend to defend their territory carefully; females will often have overlapping territories.

I would estimate we have 3 – 4 male bobcats with 3-6 females and a couple of kittens each year; for a total of about 6 -12 bobcats in Palo Alto Open Space.