

Bobcat Released Into the Wild

The female feline, nicknamed Skittles, was set free in a remote area of South Dakotas Wildlands National Park.

A young Bobcat that had been raised by humans since it was a small kitten was released back into South Dakotas Wildlands on April 5.

The spotted cat was originally picked up in the wild by a concerned human and surrendered to Game Fish & Parks officials. When Game Fish & Parks received the cat, the only options available were to destroy her or raise her for release.

Marty Hansen, who had previously cared for another Bobcat, accepted the kitten from GF&P officials knowing it would eventually have to be released. Hansen, who owns a taxidermy shop, had his previous Bobcat for nine years before he died at age 17.

The Bobcat was given the name Skittles by Hansens granddaughter shortly after she arrived at Hansens home last June. Hansen estimates Skittles was about 6 to 8 weeks old when she was picked up in the wild.

Skittles spent the first two months of her life in the house, Hansen told the Rapid City Journal. And during that time, she learned to use a litterbox and played with the Hansen house cat and the familys small dogs.

On April 5, she was released into Wildlands National Park, where contact with humans is expected to be minimal. According to the states Game, Parks & Fish department, anyone coming across a wild baby animal should leave it alone, and that the mother usually comes back looking for her young. Posted: April 7, 2006, 5:00 a.m. EST