

Rabid Bobcat Attacks Hikers

A couple hiking in the mountains near Tucson, Ariz., were clawed and bitten by the bobcat.

Posted: April 26, 2008 2 a.m. EDT

A rabid bobcat attacked a couple hiking in the Santa Rita Mountains near Tucson, Ariz., on April 19, forcing the man to kill the animal with his geologist's hammer. The couple attempted to evade the bobcat, but it continued to attack them, The Associated Press reports.

Rich Thompson said he recognized the signs of rabies in the bobcat when he saw it staring at him and his wife, Katrina Mangin, as they hiked through the mountains. When the couple tried to avoid the bobcat, it went after them, attacking Mangin by climbing up her legs while clawing and biting. It then jumped on Thompson's back.

"I hit it with the backpack over my shoulder," Thompson said, adding that the bobcat continued to attack. Thompson then took out his geologist's hammer and killed the rabid animal.

"It's very sad," he said. "This poor kitty was deranged by its disease-riddled brain. I love the native cats. It was terrible to have to kill it."

The couple received treatment for rabies after the attack. Local health officials recently reported an increase in rabies cases in the area.