

# Predator-Prey Relationships



# Predators and prey

A **predator** is an animal that hunts and kills other animals for food. The animal that is eaten is the **prey**.

For example, lynxes are a type of wild cat that hunt snowshoe hares in northern parts of North America.



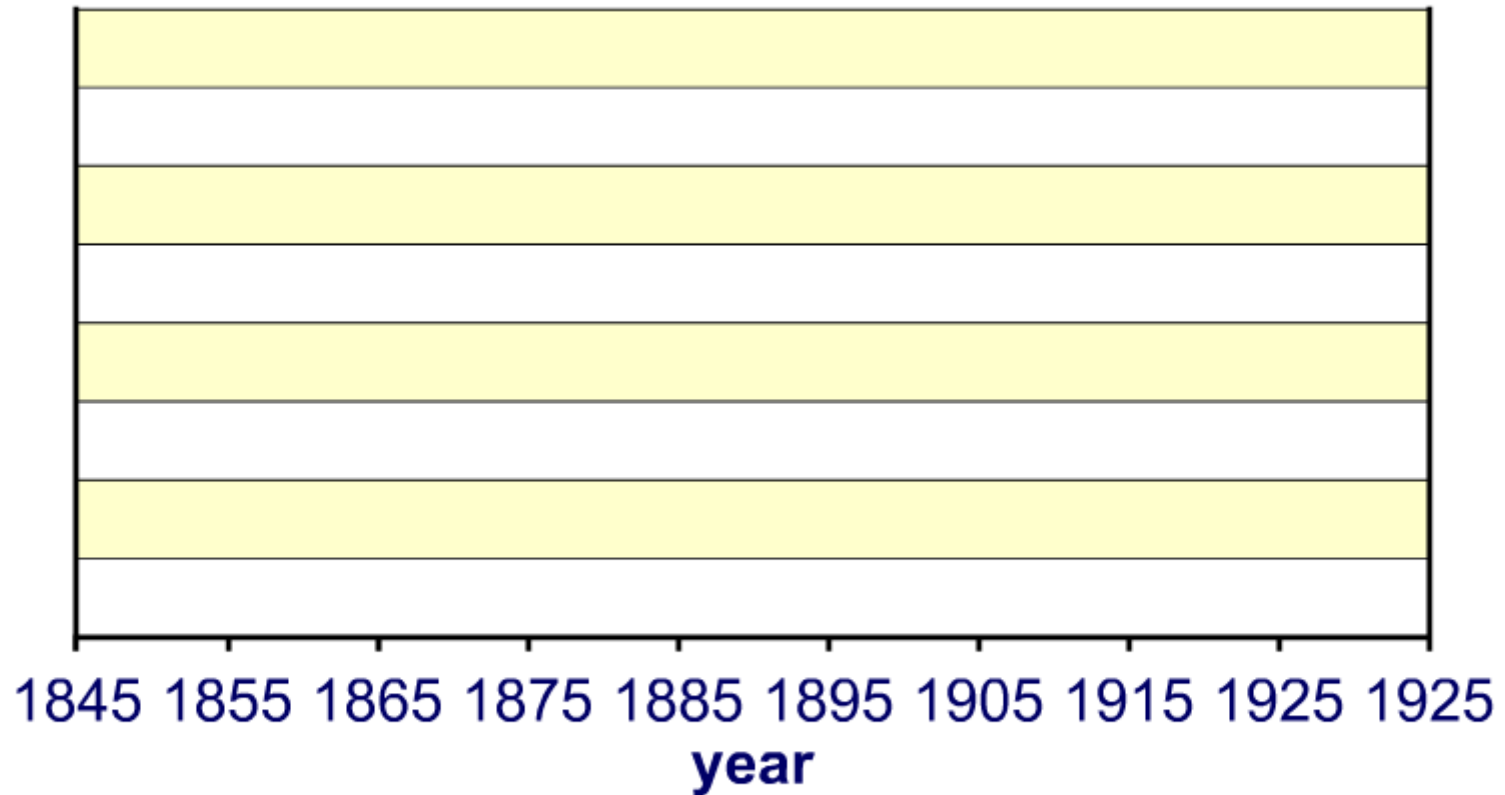
The size of the two populations are very closely linked.

Why do you think this is?





## How are predator and prey populations linked?



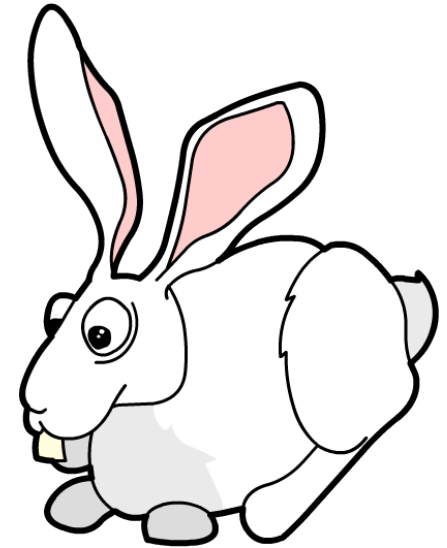
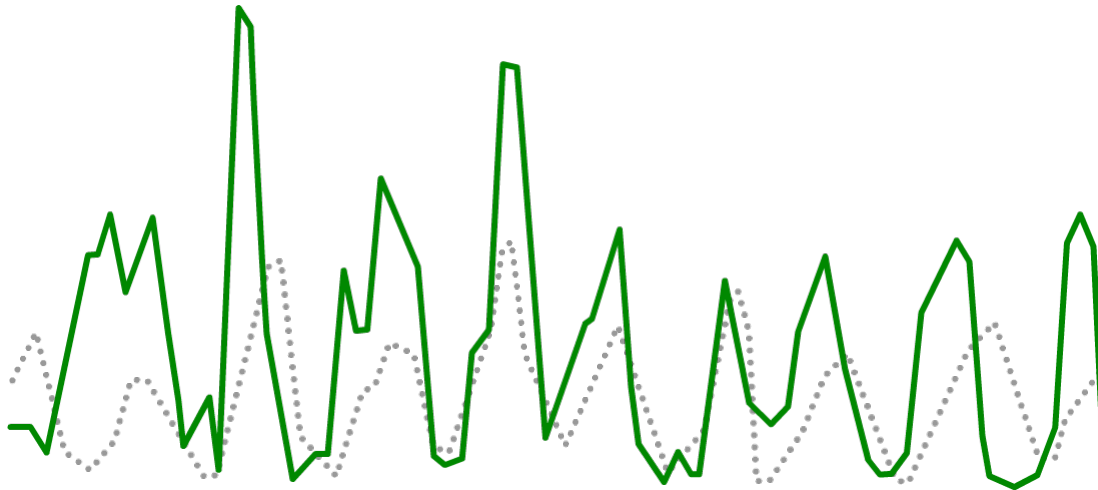
hare population

lynx population



# Prey population changes

The hare population follows a cyclical pattern, where it rises and falls in a fairly regular cycle. Why is this?



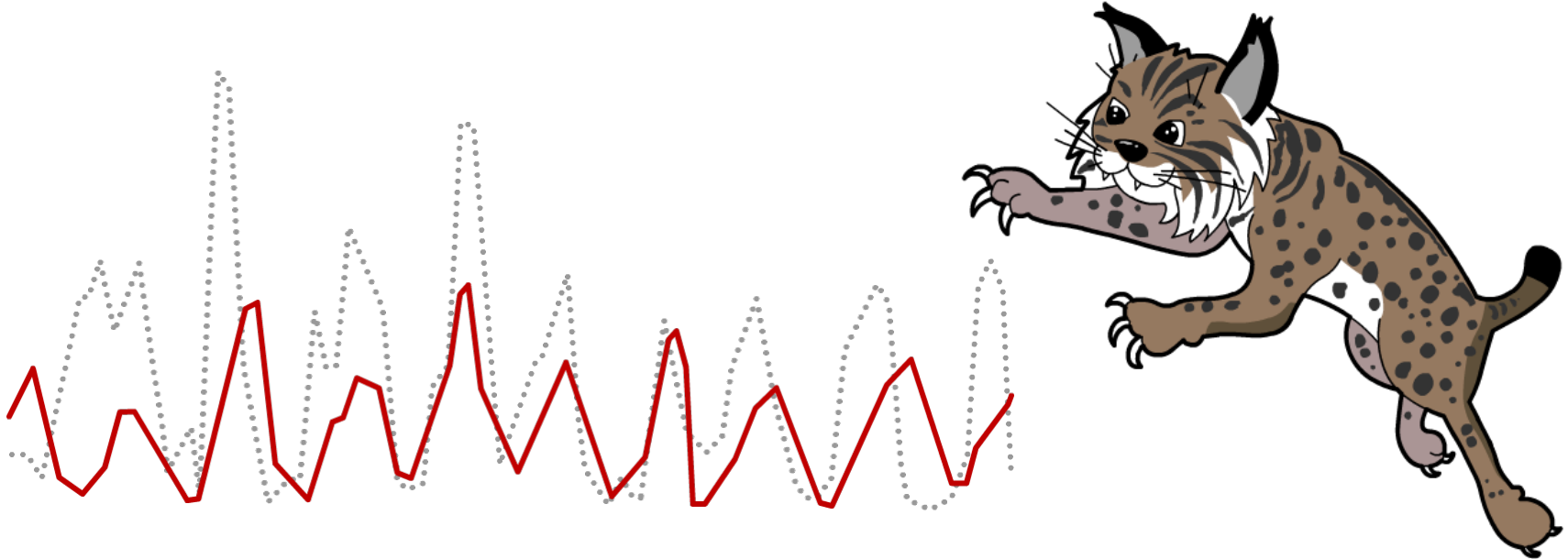
The hare population changes due to both the vegetation growing season **and** changes in the lynx population.

Individual hares must compete for food and mates, and must also avoid being killed by lynxes, their predators.



# Predator population changes

The lynx population also follows a cyclical pattern very similar to the hare population. Why is this?



The lynx is very dependent on hares for food, so as the hare population changes so does the lynx population.

This is why the lynx population rises and falls slightly after the rise and fall of the hare population.

## Predator-prey population cycles

Why do predator-prey population changes occur in cycles?

Click "**start**" to find out.



pop. size

time

