

The lynx in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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1. Lynx

1.1. Present situation and distribution

The last individuals of the autochthonous lynx population in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) were exterminated in 1911. In 1980, or 69 years later, the first lynx tracks were observed on the Plješevica Mountains northwest of Bihać by the Croatian border, as well as on the Grmeč Mountains northeast of Bihać. Animals from the reintroduction in Slovenia – released in 1973 – had arrived in B&H. The trend of the range expansion was to the southeast, parallel to the extension of the Dinaric mountain range all the way to the Neretva River. The other direction of expansion was north towards the Krivaja River. Lynx have not yet been noticed in the southeastern mountains of B&H.

1.2. Present trend

The lynx population size has not been determined in any of the hunting units. Only cases of mortality have been recorded. The observation of tracks and sightings are also recorded.

1.3. Legal status

The Hunting Law of B&H of 1978 does not mention the lynx. That is logical, as lynx were not present in the country when the law was established. In the Serbian Republic of B&H, the new Hunting Law of 1994 lists lynx as a protected game. Recent information from that area is that the law will be changed and lynx will be given unprotected status. In the B&H Federation the new Hunting Law is in preparation, and the status of the lynx will have to be determined. With reference to legal and illegal hunting, according to our information, lynx are hunted whenever seen.

1.4. Available literature (reports)

Data for the last 20 years (1980–2000), since the lynx reappeared in B&H, have been collected by hunting professionals at forestry organizations and by local hunting clubs. In Table 1 all animals are listed that were hunted, killed by traffic, or seen alive.

2. Prey species

2.1. Main game for lynx food

All main lynx prey are ungulates (*Artiodactyla*):

1. Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)
2. Chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*)
3. Moufflon (*Ovis aries*), fenced
4. Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*)

2.2. Alternative lynx prey

1. Hares (*Leporidae*)
2. Squirrels (*Sciuridae*)
3. Fowl (*Galliformes*): *Tetraonidae* and *Phasianidae*

2.3. Damage to livestock

No cases of lynx damage to livestock have been recorded so far. In one case, a lynx was seen near fenced sheep in 1993 at the Vlašić Mt. near Travnik.

3. Habitat

3.1. Status and development of forests

Lynx have so far been seen in medium high and in high mountains (800–1400 m). These mountainous areas are covered with several types of forest dominated by beech, fir and spruce in different mixtures, belonging to the Eurosiberian region. The forests are accessible by trucks for the transport of timber. Ecological rules are followed in forest management; some old trees and snags are left in the forest.

3.2. Protected zones

The protected areas are:

1. "Blidinje" Nature Park near Čvrstnica, 32.340 ha, since 1992.
2. Virgin forest reserves: "Janj" near Šipovo, 195 ha; "Lom" near Drvar, 278 ha, "Plješevica" near Bihać, 50 ha (total 150 ha with the part in Croatia).
3. Forest reserves: "Omar" near Skender Vakuf, 97 ha; "Žuča-Ribnica" near Kakanj, 50 ha.

4. Inhabitants and institutions

The area where lynx occur is the least settled in B&H. People live by livestock, agriculture, and forestry.

4.1. Government organizations

There are two units in B&H: The Serbian Republic and the Federation of B&H. The governments make laws through relevant Ministries. The Federation B&H is

divided in 10 cantons which may have local laws when they are coordinated with the Federal laws.

4.2. Nongovernmental organizations

Hunting NGOs in B&H are organized in three hunting associations:

- Hunting association of Serbian Republic
- Hunting association of Herzeg-Bosnia
- Hunting association of B&H

Each hunting association is equal and is a member of the Conseil International de la Chasse (CIC).

Each local hunting club is a member of one of these hunting associations. Hunting professionals are educated at Forestry Faculties in Sarajevo, Banjaluka, and Zagreb or in High Schools in Iliđa and Karlovac. Forestry engineers and technicians are organized in their NGO.

Table 1. Known lynx mortalities and observations of lynx in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

No	Year	Community	Location	Found alive	Dead	Sex	Weight (kg)
1	1980	Bihač	Plješevica	track		–	
2	1983	Zavidovići	Prometnica		traffic victim	–	
3	1984	Bihač	Plješevica	sighting		–	
4	1985	Bihač	Loskun		Hunted	–	
5	1986	Drvar	–		Hunted	M	
6	1987	Bihač	Plješevica		Hunted	M	
7	1987	Kupres	Cincar	sighting		–	
8	1988	Zavidovići	Kamenica		Hunted	F	
9	1989	Bihač	Plješevica		Hunted	M	
10	1989	Bihač	Plješevica		Hunted	F	
11	1989	Bihač	Plješevica		Hunted	M	
12	1989	Šipovo	Crni Vrh		Hunted	F	
13	1991	Glamoč	Staretina		Hunted	F	18
14	1991	Glamoč	Priluma		traffic victim	M	
15	1993	Šipovo	Vitoroga		traffic victim	M	
16	1993	Novi Travnik	Vranica		Hunted	M	
17	1993	Vitez	Vranica		Hunted	M	
18	1993	Travnik	Vlašić	sighting		–	
19	1994	Rama	Vran		Hunted	F	
20	1994	Rama	–		Hunted	M	
21	1994	Rama	–		Hunted	F	
22	1996	Posuje	Čvrsnica		Hunted	M	
23	1998	Posušje	Čvrsnica		Hunted	M	
24	1998	Šipovo	Vitoroga		Hunted	M	
25	1999	Rama	Raduša	sighting		–	
26	1999	Kupres	Čučkovine		Hunted	M	20
27	1999	Kupres	Jaram-Kurljaj		Hunted	M	22
28	1999	Glamoč	Cincar		Hunted	M	22
29	1999	B. Grahovo	Šator		Hunted	F	11
30	1999	B. Grahovo	Šator		Hunted	M	21
31	2000	Donji Vakuf	Semešnica	sighting		–	