

# **Report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> (informal) visit of the International Committee for the Follow-up of Iberian Lynx Conservation Actions to Spain**

## **(22 – 23 October 2004)**

Urs Breitenmoser, co-chair IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group  
Eladio Fernández-Galiano, Council of Europe, Bern Convention Secretariat  
Agnieszka Olszańska, co-ordinator Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe (LCIE)

**Abstract:** The third (but this time not formal) visit of the international group to monitor and assess Iberian lynx conservation actions in the framework of the Bern Convention took place on 22 October 2004 (<sup>1</sup>, <sup>2</sup> – two previous reports). Organisation of the official visit was not possible because of other obligations of the Junta de Andalucía Ministry of Environment. The first day we've met with representatives of MIMAM and WWF Adena in Madrid, discussion results and decisions taken by the Bilateral Commission during its last meeting, on-going projects on the Iberian lynx conservation and the case of illegal road crossing Donana NP area. The second day has been entirely dedicated to the preparation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Seminar and workshop of Iberian lynx conservation planned to be held in Córdoba on 15-17 December 2004.

### **Meeting with MIMAM (22 Oct 2004)**

In Madrid, the group met with the representatives of the Ministerio de Medio Ambiente (MIMAM) – Miguel Aymerich (Dirección General de Conservación de la Naturaleza) and Juan Garay (Organismo Autónomo de Parques Nacionales).

Miguel Aymerich presented a short summary of the Bilateral Commission held on 19 Oct in Sevilla. Bilateral Commission works in very good and friendly atmosphere, improved good relations between Spanish institutions involved in the Iberian lynx conservation. BilCom approved all the documents prepared by the Scientific Commission (Comité Asesor). Additionally Comité Asesor has been designed to take technical decisions (after sending to the BilCom), while only political decision will be taken by the BilCom.

### **In-situ conservation:**

Review of current (2002-2004) situation has been presented. Situation in Sierra Morena is relatively good (field guards have seen a female with 4 cubs in one of the fincas), there are strong proofs of reproduction. Situation is much worse in the Doñana population, where there are not more than 5-6 breeding females and the population of rabbits is still decreasing.

Bilateral Commission decided that a complex management plan for lynx conservation will be elaborated (including rabbit management, infrastructures, hunting issues, etc.). New LIFE project application will be prepared for lynx conservation for next years. Project will include all partners engaged in the lynx conservation.

Within two years a national evaluation of areas for lynx possible re-introductions will be prepared, by Spanish autonomous regions and with the same methodology in Portugal. The project will include

---

<sup>1</sup> Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> visit of the International Committee for the Follow-up of Iberian lynx conservation Actions to Spain (17-19 March 2003). T-PVS Inf (2003) 5

<sup>2</sup> Report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit of the International Committee for the Follow-up of Iberian lynx conservation Actions to Spain (27-28 October 2003). T-PVS Inf (2003) 27 (includes: Breitenmoser U., Sliwa A. 2003. Assessment of the Conservation Breeding Programme for the Iberian Lynx.

existing and required habitats, prey base, prey dynamics and the dynamics of rabbit diseases (this part realised by IREC – Instituto de Investigación en Recursos Cinegéticos – a research institute on game biology run by the National Research Council (CSIC) and the University of Castilla La Mancha), it will prioritise the areas for possible reintroductions according to a meta-population concept.

Bilateral Commission tends to “reassign” in-situ conservation actions in hands of the Junta de Andalucía. The captive breeding programme will be kept as the national programme, with El-Acebucho breeding station as core center. Other Spanish regions will be encouraged to build new breeding centres in Extremadura, Castilla la Mancha and also in Portugal. The Programme of El Acebucho conservation breeding centre functioning<sup>3</sup> has been presented accepted by the Bilateral Commission. Plan for minimum requirements for genetic and demographic captive stock management has been also accepted (details in the report by Astrid Vargas).

As it has been realized since few years, Junta de Andalucía is maintaining the agreements with hunters to decrease rabbit hunting in the region.

#### **International cooperation:**

On 1<sup>st</sup> October an agreement (memorandum of understanding) between Spain and Portugal concerning Iberian lynx and imperial eagle has been signed<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Organisation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Seminar and workshop of Iberian lynx conservation, Córdoba 15-17 December 2004:**

Rest of the meeting concerned the organisation of the Seminar. MIMAM declared its interest and will of help with organisation in formal and financial issues.

#### **Meeting with WWF Adena (22 Oct 2004)**

##### **Illegal road crossing Doñana National Park**

Luis Suarez presented the situation of the illegal road crossing Doñana National Park and dividing in two “Coto del Rey”, the best dispersion area for the lynxes in Doñana. Officially the road is an “agriculture path” converted into a regular road without the necessary permissions and without any Environmental Impact Assessment process. Despite these facts the Agriculture Department converted the track into a road, without any impact measures and without considering that the road is actually used by the people moving from Sevilla to Matalascañas (so not agriculture tracks or tractors, but fast cars) and the traffic has increased notably (those cars reach very high speed, even close to 160 km/h). The road has been denounced to the Agriculture department and to the Environmental department with no reaction from those institutions. Complaint to the European Commission was sent. The complaint was accepted and in July the EC opened a Procedure of Infraction against Spain. As a consequence of the strong pressure made by the different NGOs, the Environmental Department of the Junta proposed in 2002 the application of different measures to reduce the speed and to mitigate the impact in the lynxes (measures like: a fence along the road, roundabouts, speed bumps, fauna passes, etc). Officially WWF has not accepted these measures (WWF considers that the only possible solution is removing the road), but the fact is that only a few of these measures have been applied in a uncorrected and incomplete way (there are only 3, instead of 9 roundabouts, underpasses are often full of water, with no vegetation and constructions “encouraging” animals to use them). Spanish NGO *Ecologistas en Acción* has denounced the Councillor for the Environment (Fuensanta Coves) and the Agriculture department to the Public Prosecutor, for the lynx killing. Currently the fence is being finished. We express our doubts about the efficacy of a fence to keep lynx away from the road; indeed, the fence could become rather a trap than a safeguard.

Additional serious problem seen by WWF Adena is lack of any coherent plan of infrastructure development in the area.

---

<sup>3</sup> Vargas A. Octubre 2004. Programa de Funcionamiento – Centro de Cría del Lince Ibérico El Acebucho, Parque Nacional de Doñana.

<sup>4</sup> Memorando de entendimiento entre el Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, del Reino de España, y el Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y ordenación del territorio y el Ministerio de Agricultura, pesca y Bosques, de la República Portuguesa, para el cooperación sobre el Águila imperial ibérica y el Lince ibérico. Santiago de Compostela, el 1 de Octubre de 2004.

### **Iberian lynx management plans implementation**

Government of Castilla La Mancha prepared lynx action plan, including lynx recovery (and possible construction of recovery or breeding centres, elaboration of rabbit population distribution map, etc.). Government of Andalucía still has not prepared a recovery plan for lynx.

### **Natura 2000**

WWF Adena is not satisfied with Spanish proposition of Natura 2000 site. Some areas of great importance for lynx (in Sierra Morena and Montes de Toledo) hadn't been included to the list.

### **Working meeting for organisation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Seminar and workshop of Iberian lynx conservation, Córdoba 15-17 December 2004.**

On Saturday 23 Oct 2004 and "organisation team" met in Córdoba (meeting participants: Miguel Ángel Simón, Rafael Cadenas (Junta de Andalucía), Astrid Vargas (El Acebuche captive breeding centre, Doñana NP), Luis Suarez (WWF Adena), Urs Breitenmoser (IUCN CatSG), Agnieszka Olszanska (LCIE).

Agenda of the meeting and list of participants has been prepared. Junta de Andalucía will be responsible for logistic and organisation issues (secretariat – invitations, documents distribution, etc., hotels and meals), MIMAM will provide simultaneous translations.

### **References:**

1. Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> visit of the International Committee for the Follow-up of Iberian lynx conservation Actions to Spain (17-19 March 2003). T-PVS Inf (2003) 5.
2. Report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit of the International Committee for the Follow-up of Iberian lynx conservation Actions to Spain (27-28 October 2003). T-PVS Inf (2003) 27 (includes: Breitenmoser U., Sliwa A. 2003. Assessment of the Conservation Breeding Programme for the Iberian Lynx.
3. Memorando de entendimiento entre el Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, del Reino de España, y el Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y ordenación del territorio y el Ministerio de Agricultura, pesca y Bosques, de la República Portuguesa, para el cooperación sobre el Águila imperial ibérica y el Lince ibérico. Santiago de Compostela, el 1 de Octubre de 2004.
4. Vargas A. Octubre 2004. Programa de Funcionamiento – Centro de Cría del Lince Ibérico El Acebuche, Parque Nacional de Doñana.

## **Appendix 1. Programme of the visit**

### **MONDAY, 22 OCTOBER**

Morning – Meeting with Dirección General de Conservación de la Naturaleza y Organismo Autónomo de Parques Nacionales, Ministerio de Medio Ambiente.

Noon – Meeting with WWF Adena.

Afternoon – departure for Córdoba

### **TUESDAY, 23 OCTOBER**

Meeting with the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Seminar and workshop of Iberian lynx conservation organization committee in Córdoba.

## Appendix 2. Participants of the meetings

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation / function</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Breitenmoser, Urs	IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group Co-Chair	c/o KORA Thunstrasse 31 CH-3074 Muri / Switzerland Tel: +41 31 951 90 20, Fax: +41 31 951 90 40 <a href="mailto:urs.breitenmoser@ivv.unibe.ch">urs.breitenmoser@ivv.unibe.ch</a>
Fernández-Galiano, Eladio	Council of Europe, Head of the Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division	Council of Europe, Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division F- 67075 STRASBOURG Cedex France Tel: +33 388 41 22 59, Fax: +33 388 41 37 51 <a href="mailto:eladio.fernandez-galiano@coe.int">eladio.fernandez-galiano@coe.int</a>
Olszańska, Agnieszka	LCIE coordinator	Institute of Nature Conservation PAS, Al. Mickiewicza 33, 31-120 Krakow, Poland Tel. +48 12 6320549 ext.146 <a href="mailto:olszanska@iop.krakow.pl">olszanska@iop.krakow.pl</a>
Aymerich, Miguel	Ministerio de Medio Ambiente DGCONA Subdirector General de Conservacion de la Biodiversidad	Gran Via de San Francisco, 4 28005 Madrid, España Tel: +34 91 5975414, Fax: +34 925 267919 <a href="mailto:miguel.aymerich@dgcnmma.es">miguel.aymerich@dgcnmma.es</a>
Garay Zabala, Juan	Organismo Autónomo de Parques Nacionales	Gran Vía de San Francisco, 4 E - 28005 Madrid, España e-mail: <a href="mailto:juan.garay@oapnmma.es">juan.garay@oapnmma.es</a>
Suárez, Luis	WWF Adena	Gran Vía de San Francisco, 8 esc. D. 28005 Madrid, España Tel: +34 91 3540578, Fax: +34 91 3656336 <a href="mailto:especies@wwf.es">especies@wwf.es</a>
Cadenas de Llano Aguilar, Raphael	EGMASA Programa de Actuaciones para la Conservación del Lince Ibérico en Andalucía Proyecto LIFE – Recuperacion de las poblaciones de Lince ibérico en Andalucía	EGMASA Avda de los Custodios s/n 14004 Córdoba, España Tel: +34 957 01 59 11, Fax: +34 957 01 59 10 <a href="mailto:rcadenasdellano@egmasa.es">rcadenasdellano@egmasa.es</a>
Simón Mata, Miguel Angel	Junta de Andalucía, Coordinador de Programas de Conservación del Lince en Andalucía	Servicio de Medio Natural Delegación Provincial de Medio Ambiente de Jaén Fuente Serbo, nº 3, Edificio Mirador Fuentezuela, 23071 Jaén, España Tel: +34 953 01 24 04, fax: +34 953 01 25 08 <a href="mailto:gmn.ja@dpja.cma.junta-andalucia.es">gmn.ja@dpja.cma.junta-andalucia.es</a>
Astrid Vargas	Programa de Conservación Ex-situ del Lince Ibérico	Centro de Cria en Cautividad de El Acebuche Parque Nacional de Doñana Matalascañas -21760 Huelva – España Tel. +34 959 50 61 70