

International Seminar on the Iberian Lynx

Andújar (Spain) 29-31 October 2002

Over 100 participants attended an International Seminar on the Iberian Lynx in Andújar, Spain, from 29 to 31 October 2002 to coordinate efforts to save the Critically Endangered lynx from extinction.

The meeting was co-organised by the Spanish Ministry of Environment, the Regional Government of Andalucía, the Council of Europe/Bern Convention, Adena/WWF, the Doñana Biological Station (National Research Council), and the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group. The Municipality of Andújar, which is lo-

cated in one of the two areas in Spain where there is still a breeding population of lynx.

Many organisations as well as private landowners from Spain and Portugal, and international institutions, including the European Union and the Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe were present.

The meeting agreed to the following recommendations.

(Note: These are not listed in order of importance and are a rough translation from the Spanish conclusions.)

Recommendations

1. To promote Mediterranean forest conservation within European policy.
2. To maintain the integrity of lynx habitat and the current lynx distribution area; avoiding habitat fragmentation and the construction of new infrastructure projects; ensuring that any new public works will consider the conservation of the species; adapting existing roads, making them safe for the lynx.
3. To preserve the favourable status of all areas occupied by Iberian lynx in the 1980s in order to facilitate the species' future expansion, which is critical to its long-term conservation.
4. To study and apply the necessary corrective measures to neutralise non-natural mortality in Iberian lynx distribution areas.
5. To enact habitat improvements before 2010 in Doñana and Cardena-Andujar to allow a significant increase in lynx numbers, particularly by increasing rabbit populations.
6. To adapt forest management, hunting activities, management of riverbeds and margins of lynx presence, in collaboration with the responsible authorities and landowners.
7. To unify the criteria for the management of rabbit populations, and developing a rabbit reintroduction protocol.
8. To improve the efficiency of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) mechanisms, to ensure rigour and transparency.
9. To improve the coordination and strengthen joint activities conducted by the different administrations responsible for Iberian Lynx conservation to achieve improved efficiency; to guarantee the cooperation with appropriate international institutions and with society in general; and to secure the integration of lynx conservation into regional policy.
10. To promote, within the framework of the Bern Convention, the establishment of an International Committee to monitor and assess Iberian lynx conservation activities.
11. To approve and implement an Action Plan for the conservation of the Iberian lynx in Portugal.
12. To approve and start recovery plans in Andalucía, Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y León, Extremadura and Madrid.
13. To promote coordinated agri-environmental measures for lynx conservation; establishing adequate control mechanisms; and giving priority to the Natura 2000 areas.
14. To encourage good habitat management for lynx on private estates through tax exemption, public acknowledgment, and other forms of promotion, such as the quality branding of goods produced on estates with an Iberian lynx presence.
15. To conduct surveys on the different characteristics of the various types of lynx populations, differentiating between recorded breeding areas, areas of recorded presence and the remaining distribution areas. To define, within the National Commission for Nature Conservation working group, adequate monitoring methodologies and to coordinate their application.
16. To establish clear and measurable objectives within every conservation project, and evaluating the results on the basis of their positive effect on Iberian lynx populations.
17. To increase the participation of all stakeholders involved in Iberian lynx conservation, particularly the land owners of estates with lynx presence, the hunting community, NGOs, and community groups; and to involve these groups in the elaboration and implementation of conservation plans and projects; to adequately recognise the important role of landowners and their significant contribution to the survival of the Iberian lynx.
18. To improve awareness and the involvement of the hunting community in management activities through collaborative agreements and joint projects.
19. To promote a positive image of the lynx through specific campaigns, stressing its symbolic value, as well as the biological and ecological interest of its conservation.
20. To promote the participation of the business community in conservation and awareness raising projects.
21. To build knowledge in the following areas:
 - Endogamy and techniques to reduce it (translocations, population reinforcements, etc.).
 - Pathology of rabbits and the use of lynx vaccinations.
 - Relationship between rabbit density and lynx breeding success.
 - Distribution and abundance of the rabbit in the Iberian Peninsula (using cartography).
 - Effectiveness of conservation projects.
22. To initiate joint management of all lynx meta-populations, including the captive population; and to consider the exchange of individuals among sub-populations to reduce the risk of genetic in-breeding.
23. To ensure that captive breeding guarantees the conservation of the genetic variability of the species by including individuals from marginal populations in addition to the capture of Iberian lynx from Doñana and Andújar Cardena; to create a complementary gene bank for the species.
24. To implement captive breeding immediately according to the approved plan; proceeding without delay in the capture of the specified individuals; making the necessary political and technical decisions to enable the capture of individuals dispersing in autumn and winter 2002.
25. To support and reinforce the activities of the captive breeding committee.
26. To promptly review the captive breeding plan in order to make it more ambitious.