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Press Release

Another Iberian Lynx killed on the road

WWF-Spain urges to close the road from Villamanrique to El Rocío

Madrid, 1 September 2004. WWF-Spain has been demanding for more than two years the closing of the illegal road from Villamanrique de la Condesa to El Rocío (Southwestern Spain, Huelva province). This rural way, asphalted by the Andalusian Government, is having an dramatic impact on the populations of Iberian Lynx in Doñana. In fact, yesterday morning another young Lynx has been killed, in the same place where another animal died in 2002.

Deaths due to car accidents represent now the first cause of mortality of the already scarce population of Iberian Lynx in the surroundings of Doñana. From 1998, 52 percent of the specimens found died have been killed on the road. The last victim, a young male of 20 months, has been killed yesterday morning in the road from Villamanrique to El Rocío.

This fact is especially serious because this has taken place in an illegal road, as WWF-Spain has denounced in several occasions. The Council of Agriculture of the Andalusian Government asphalted the old forest track from Villamanrique to El Rocío in June of 2001, in spite of protests from the environmental groups and the lack of an Environmental Impact Assessment. This illegal road, where another Lynx was killed in March of 2002, crosses the heart of Doñana Natural Park and fragments the most important dispersion area of lynxes in Doñana.

Due to the continuous demands from WWF-Spain and other environmental groups, such as Ecologists in Action, to close this road, the Andalusian Government was committed to implement a set of measures to alleviate its environmental impact. Three years later, these measures have been applied only partially and obviously these have been inefficient.

In April 2002 WWF-Spain presented a complaint to the European Commission, admitted to proceeding in July 2002. Recently, the General Directorate of Environment of the European Commission has communicated to WWF-Spain that a Procedure of Infraction against Spain has been opened, considering this road violate the Environmental Impact Directive and the Habitats Directive.

"There is no any alternative. The only possible action in this case is to immediately close this road that continues being illegal since it has confirmed by the European Commission", said Juan Carlos del Olmo, Secretary General of WWF-Spain. "This is completely inadmissible in one of the most representative natural areas worldwide", Del Olmo added. And he concludes "if this situation is not urgently reversed and the irrational growing of infrastructures is not stopped, we will extinct the Iberian Lynx in a short term".

Más información:

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