

A Step in the Right Direction



FFI staff and supporters are pulling together to raise support for the Iberian lynx. The response to the fundraising appeal launched in December 2003 demonstrated the strength of support for work in this field. The generosity of the many contributors to the fund was matched by key donors, including the Nando Peretti Foundation, the Arcadia Fund and Wild Invest, who approved project funding applications.

These funds are vital to the implementation of FFI's strategy for the Iberian lynx. The strategy, which aims to complement and build upon the activities of others in both Portugal and Spain, will secure a cross-border corridor of habitat under favourable management for this threatened cat. The corridor will allow for the expansion and reconnection of isolated lynx populations and for the secure reintroduction of captive-bred individuals.

The planned corridor stretches from Espinhaco de Cão in Portugal to the Sierra Morena in Spain. The primary aim is to establish priorities and bring key areas of habitat under long-term conservation management through the development of management agreements and plans with local land management organizations and landowners.

Initial focus has been on Portugal, where a partnership has been formalized through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between FFI and the Liga Para A Protecção Da Natureza (LPN), a leading Portuguese conservation NGO. A full-time project officer is currently being sought and the first meeting of a new lynx programme advisory group is being organized to drive the strategy forward.

Efforts are also being made to complete an assessment of the key areas for lynx in the first target area, the Serra Do Caldeirão region. It is anticipated that dialogue with land-user groups concerning the development of conservation management agreements will commence soon and the first areas will be secured in early summer 2004.

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