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Species

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## Iberian lynx: Ecology & Habitat

### Do not disturb

The Iberian lynx is found in Mediterranean woodland and maquis thicket, and favours a combination of dense scrub for shelter and open pasture for hunting rabbits. In addition, this species also requires sufficient water supplies, and low levels of human disturbance. The species generally lives between an altitude of 400 m and 1,300 m.

### Social Structure

Except for the mating period, Iberian lynx are mostly solitary animals. Rearing the young is the exclusive task of females.

### Life Cycle

Young lynx wean anywhere between 8 and 23 months of age; Young males disperse up to 30 km and females may either inherit a territory from their mothers, or live in a neighbouring area. Provided that a suitable area has been found, a lynx will establish and remain in its territory. Although the species can live up to 13 years in the wild, they usually die before that age, especially when there are significant impacts from humans in the area.

### Breeding

Female lynxes generally give birth between March and April, although when females do not find a mate or do not become pregnant, they can enter oestrus again and give birth at any time of the year. It is thought that females are able to reproduce in their second year.

The average litter size is three, with rarely more than two young surviving weaning. Kittens remain in the natal den for between two and four weeks, and by four months are able to accompany their mother on hunts. Dispersal takes place between 8 and 23 months. Very high rates of mortality during dispersal have been detected.

No Iberian lynxes have been born in captivity although a captive-breeding plan was approved in February 2001, but has yet to be implemented. It is not known how easily Iberian lynxes will adapt to captive breeding.

### Diet

The Iberian lynx mostly depends on wild rabbits to feed, but it will also eat ducks,

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\* WWF only provides detailed information on the 'priority' and 'flagship' species that it is focusing on.

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#### Iberian lynx

young deer and partridges if rabbit densities are low. While an adult lynx needs about one rabbit a day, a mother raising her young needs to catch about three.

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