

# THE RECOVERY OF THE IBERIAN LYNX AND THE THREATS THAT REMAIN FOR ITS CONSERVATION

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The **Iberian Lynx**, an endemic species of the Iberian Peninsula, has been the **most threatened felid in the world**, and the only one included by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 2002) in the highest category of threat: critically endangered (Ayaz, A. S. M. 2014). However, since the beginning of the 21st century, efforts aimed at their recovery have led to a significant **increase in lynx numbers** (from approximately 100 individuals in 2002 to 1,111 lynxes in 2020) (WWF, 2021). In order to achieve this recovery, the **causes of threats to the conservation** of the lynx have been studied, and, in turn, **management measures** have been sought to reverse them.

## THREATS



Habitat disappearance and fragmentation

Wild rabbit population decline



Illegal hunting and road kill

Diseases and inbreeding depression



## MANAGEMENT MEASURES

### IN SITU

- Reduce the disappearance, fragmentation and alteration of the **habitat**, providing green corridors to improve connectivity, controlling the population of ungulates to prevent overgrazing and carrying out forestry actions to recover and maintain the Mediterranean forest (Ayaz, A. S. M. 2014).
- **Promote rabbit populations** by improving the habitat (Mediterranean forest), providing quality water and food points, carrying out adequate protection of vivariums and burrows and proposing health-controlled translocations (Ayaz, A. S. M. 2014).
- **Act against illegal hunting, illegal trapping** and the use of poisons, strengthening surveillance and introducing **radio-monitoring collar technology** (WWF 2021).
- **Reduce lynx collisions on the road network** by **identifying black spots on the roads** (either by the proportion of collisions or with radio-monitoring collars) and, in turn, reducing these collisions with the creation of wildlife crossings and favoring the habitat to avoid them, in addition to providing correct signaling and speed reduction (Garrote G et al 2018).
- **Sanitary control of the population of lynxes** and other sympatric fauna.

### EX SITU

- **Management aspects:** control of the genetic, demographic, sanitary, reproductive and ethological status of the animals in captivity for a correct reintroduction into nature (LYNXESITU).
- **Reintroductions:** it is important to have a good number of individuals which can be reintroduced, in addition to carefully choosing the areas where **these animals are going to be released**, having scientifically studied their viability in that area (LYNXESITU).

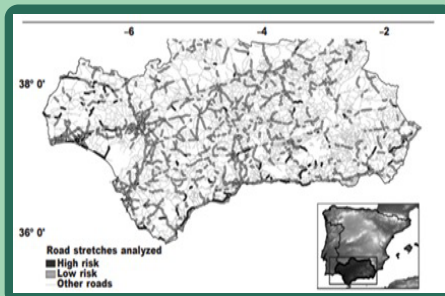


Figure 2 Map of the black points of road kill on the roads of Andalusia.

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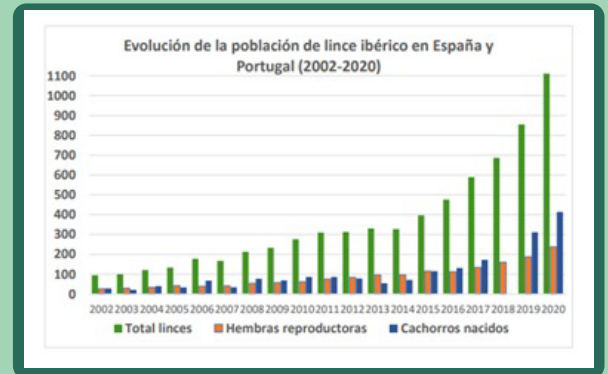


Figure 1 Evolution of the Iberian lynx population in Spain and Portugal from 2002 to 2020

## CONCLUSIONS

For a stable state of conservation of the species, the most important thing is to **eliminate the causes that have led to the decline in its population**, that is, to **act in situ**, at the field, without forgetting to support the current populations with **captive-bred individuals**, a measure that will end sooner or later when the species can sustain itself.

