



LynxBrief

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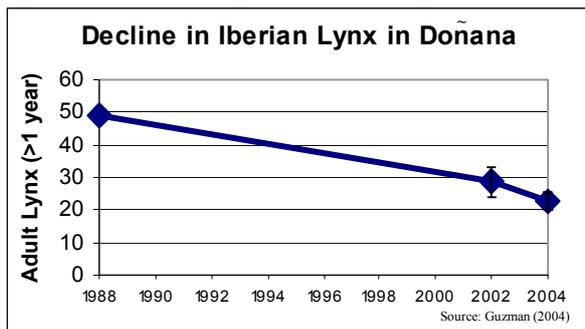
Welcome to the second edition of *LynxBrief*, a monthly briefing paper focusing on the conservation of the Iberian Lynx, **the most endangered big cat species in the world**. Thank you to everyone who has sent comments about *LynxBrief* and issues in lynx conservation. Comments on any issue related to the Iberian Lynx can be sent to: lynxbrief@yahoo.co.uk

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Lynx in Doñana

The Doñana lynx population is the smaller of the two known breeding populations, with around 20-25 adult lynx, and about 13 cubs being born here in 2004 from about 6-8 reproducing females (Guzman 2004). It is centred around Doñana National Park in South Western Andalusia, (as shown on map on Page 4). The population is fragmented, isolated from the other lynx population (300 km away) and still declining as shown below:



The causes of the ongoing lynx decline in Doñana are:

- **Reduced rabbit numbers;** due to habitat loss, rabbit disease (e.g. RHV) and excessive rabbit hunting.
- **Reduction in lynx habitat;** due to intensive agriculture (e.g. strawberries), forestry and other causes (e.g. urbanisation and use of "quads").
- **High non-natural mortality;** due to hunting and fast road traffic (see map on page 4) – *the latest lynx being killed by road traffic died on 14 March 2005, on the road between El Rocío and Matalascañas.*

In addition, the future recovery of lynx in Doñana will have to overcome two additional problems. Firstly, the small size of the population means that the genetic diversity in Doñana may already be too low for the population to be viable in the long term, even if the current decline can be halted. Secondly, habitat between Doñana and Portugal and the rest of Andalucía is not sufficiently inter-connected or protected to allow lynx to spread from Doñana into other potential lynx areas.

Organisations, such as the Junta de Andalucía, Ministry of the Environment, Biological Station of Doñana, the Doñana Foundation, WWF Spain and Ecologistas en Acción are implementing conservation projects in Doñana including: habitat improvement, rabbit repopulations, lynx supplementary feeding, underpasses and fences on roads and outreach work with the local human population. However, the lynx population in Doñana is still declining and has not yet been stabilised.



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There is no single solution to conserve and recover lynx in Doñana. However, **it is very important that this lynx population is not allowed to disappear, as without it there will only be one breeding population left (in Andújar), drastically increasing the likelihood that the Iberian Lynx will go extinct.** The loss of lynx in Doñana would also be a tragedy for the area, spoiling its reputation and policies of sustainable development (e.g. Doñana 21).

To conserve lynx in Doñana it will be necessary to:

1. **Reduce road traffic speeds;** current signs, rumble strips and roundabouts are not sufficient to adequately reduce traffic speeds, and thus more effective and numerous methods are required.
2. **Avoid intensive agriculture and new roads;** requiring changes in official policies, more scrutiny as to how EU structural funds and subsidies are spent, and campaigns to change local attitudes and demands in favour of real sustainable development.
3. **Recover rabbits in the area** by reducing rabbit hunting and disease impacts, and restoring more habitat; requiring more funds, applied research, outreach work with hunters and political will.
4. **Reduce hunting pressures on lynx;** increasing anti-poaching vigilance as well as awareness campaigns with the hunting community about the problems caused by illegal traps, snares and use of poisons.
5. **Translocate animals between Doñana and Andújar;** to maintain genetic diversity, as planned in the next proposed LIFE project (see page 2).
6. **Restore key areas of habitat;** current projects to remove eucalyptus need to be expanded, and landowners need to be encouraged to restore habitat through the provision of agro-environmental funds.
7. **Increase the size of protected areas;** particularly Natura 2000, which needs to be expanded to include areas between Doñana and Portugal. (*Natura 2000 will be specifically addressed in the next LynxBrief*)

To help mandate and support these actions, and support lynx conservation in Andújar, Andalusian politicians need to urgently **approve a Regional Lynx Recovery Plan**. Those interested should call on the President of Andalucía, to urgently politically approve such an official plan, by writing to:

**Excmo. Sr Presidente de la Junta de Andalucía,
Dr Manuel Chaves, Palacio de San Telmo,
Avenida de Roma, 41071 Sevilla, SPAIN
email: manuel.chaves@juntadeandalucia.es**

Interested parties should also support the new LIFE project (see page 2). **It is not too late to conserve and recover the Doñana lynx population. However, time is running out.**

Funding lynx conservation

It is important that long term funding is secured for lynx conservation to allow current conservation projects to be continued and expanded, and to allow the planning and implementation of more long term projects, particularly: lynx translocations and reintroductions, rabbit recovery, habitat improvement and outreach work in new areas.

New LIFE proposal



Most of the current lynx conservation projects in Andalucía are co-ordinated and part-funded through an EU LIFE project, which runs until 2006. This project has been very useful in allowing various organisations (e.g. Junta de Andalucía, Fundación CBD Habitat, Ecologistas en Acción and Ministry for the Environment) to work together and implement a range of projects including: lynx monitoring, supplementary feeding, rabbit repopulations, habitat improvement, outreach work and education campaigns with children. See: http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/medioambiente/LIFE_lince/infogeneral/introduccion.html

These projects are now beginning to have a real positive impact on the lynx (see page 3) and attitudes of the local human population. To allow this good work to be continued and expanded, the Junta de Andalucía is currently working on a proposal for a further LIFE project (2006 to 2011). This project will involve continuing current projects and also plans to include:

1. Planning, studying and preparing areas of habitat for reintroductions of captive lynx.
2. Implementing the first reintroductions from the captive breeding programme, if successful.
3. Translocating lynx between Andújar and Doñana to maintain genetic diversity.

There is now quite a lot of competition for EU LIFE funds, particularly given the entry of new Eastern European countries into the EU, many with weaker economies than Spain, and with their own environmental problems to address. It is thus important that the lynx LIFE proposal is as strong and well supported as possible, to ensure that it is approved by the EU.

It would be very useful if any organisation or individual concerned about lynx conservation could **write a letter of support for the new lynx LIFE proposal, to:**

Miguel Angel Simon Mata
(Coordinador del proyecto LIFE lince en Andalucía)
Servicio de Gestión del Medio Natural
Delegación Provincial de Medio Ambiente de Jaén
Calle Fuente Serbo 3,
23071 Jaén, Andalucía, SPAIN

There is also the possibility for individuals and organisations to **pledge financial support** to the new LIFE project, increasing available funds and the likelihood that the EU will approve the project. Those interested should also contact the above address.



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One Planet Living

It is important that private funding is secured for lynx conservation, in order to reinforce public budgets, particularly in the long term.



One promising source of funding is through a new “One Planet Living” project in Portugal. One Planet Living is a joint BioRegional – WWF initiative, set up to create a world-wide network of sustainable communities adopting ten guiding principles: Zero Carbon, Zero Waste, Sustainable Transport, Local and Sustainable Materials, Local and Sustainable Food, Sustainable Water, Natural Habitats and Wildlife, Culture and Heritage, Equity and Fair Trade, Health and Happiness. See: http://www.wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/opl_brochure.pdf

Property developer Pelicano SA is working with BioRegional and WWF to create the first One Planet Living community, in Portugal, which is expected to start on site in early 2006. This development aims to build 6,000 homes and tourism facilities based on the 10 principles, in an area previously used for sand quarries and exotic pine plantations. The area around the site will be reforested with native vegetation. Most importantly for the lynx, a percentage of the sale of each home will be donated to lynx conservation projects and other programmes. It is hoped that this project may secure major funding for lynx conservation in the Iberian Peninsula over the next 10 years .

Cork producer: Correggi Group



A further important source of funding for lynx conservation by the private sector has been set up by international cork producer Correggi Group.

Correggi Group produces and sells cork from cork forests in Southern Spain and Portugal. They are now developing a new “lynx label” to promote the conservation of the Iberian Lynx and the sustainable use and protection of cork forests: a key lynx habitat. Most importantly for the lynx, a percentage of the sale of each cork to wine producers (15 million corks/year) will be donated to lynx conservation projects, to be administered by SOS Lynx for projects in Spain and Portugal.

If you would like to advertise or comment on a new source of funding for lynx conservation, please email:

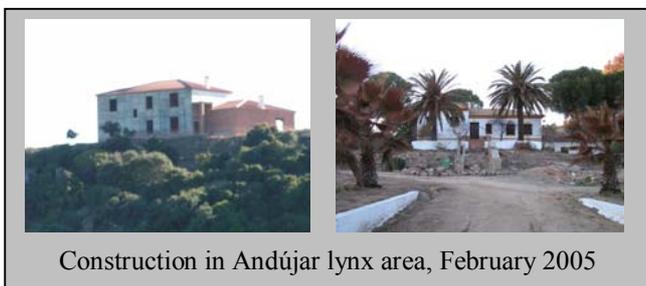
lynxbrief@yahoo.co.uk

Update on Lynx in Andújar

The first edition of *LynxBrief* in February reported the good work that is being done to conserve lynx in Andújar, and concerns about proposals by the Ayuntamiento de Andújar to reclassify a 1000ha area within and adjacent to the lynx area for urbanisation.

Urbanisation Proposal

Unfortunately, the Ayuntamiento de Andújar is still proposing to reclassify the 1000 ha area (known as “Viñas de Peñallana”) for urbanisation. Many houses have been built illegally here over recent years, and the proposal will legalise these constructions – setting a dangerous precedent – and will also allow the rate and number of constructions to increase in the future.



Construction in Andújar lynx area, February 2005

Many organisations and individuals – including the Spanish Government’s official Lynx Working Group – have expressed their concern over the urbanisation proposal. However, in order to ensure that the proposal is not implemented, and that instead the area is re-classified for greater protection and properly protected for the lynx, **it is important that as many individuals and organisations as possible send their concerns to:**

Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Andújar

Plaza de España 1, 23740 – Andújar, Andalucía, España.
Teléfono: 00 34 953 508 200.
E-mail: info@ayto-andujar.es

Consejería de Medio Ambiente

Avda. Manuel Siurot 50, 41071 – Sevilla, Andalucía, España.
Teléfono: 00 34 955 003 500.
E-mail: consejera.cma@juntadeandalucia.es

Lynx Range Expansion: GOOD NEWS!

As reported in last month’s *LynxBrief*, conservation projects by the existing LIFE project and WWF/Adena have contributed to the stabilisation of the Andújar lynx population. In addition, **it has now been confirmed that the population range expanded to the west in 2004 to include new territories in Cardeña Natural Park.**

It is important that this successful conservation is allowed to continue and be expanded through the success of a new lynx LIFE project and by avoiding damaging development such as the urbanisation proposal.

Conclusions

It is important that all those interested and working in lynx conservation (in research, conservation and/or lobbying) work together to ensure the survival of this beautiful and important creature, particularly in the face of conflicting policies and interests.

In particular, it is **RECOMMENDED** that all those interested in lynx conservation **write to or email the President of Andalucía, calling on him to urgently approve a lynx recovery plan for the region.**

It is also **RECOMMENDED** that those interested in lynx conservation **send a letter to the *Servicio de Gestión del Medio Natural* supporting their proposal for a new LIFE project**, using the address provided.

Finally, anyone who has not already done so should also **contact the Ayuntamiento de Andújar to voice concerns about the urbanisation proposals.**

LynxBrief sends best wishes to all those interested and working in lynx conservation, and looks forward to receiving more of your comments.

About the author

LynxBrief is researched and written by **Dan Ward**, who has a degree in Natural Sciences, a MSc specialising in Environmental Policy and experience in conservation projects in Scotland, New Zealand, Ecuador and Spain. He accepts no responsibility for the use that may be made of this report.

About SOS Lynx

SOS lynx is a campaign organisation set up in 2000 to promote the conservation of the Iberian Lynx, and works mainly at the International level. For more information about, and to support, SOS lynx, see: www.soslynx.org

About Ecologistas en Acción – Andalucía

Ecologistas en Acción – Andalucía is a federation of ecological groups that works to conserve the Iberian Lynx and the natural environment in general, and promotes peace and solidarity. Ecologistas en Acción is not necessarily identified with all the contents of this publication. You can contact the organisation by email at: andalucia@ecologistasenaccion.org:

About One Planet Living and Pelicano SA

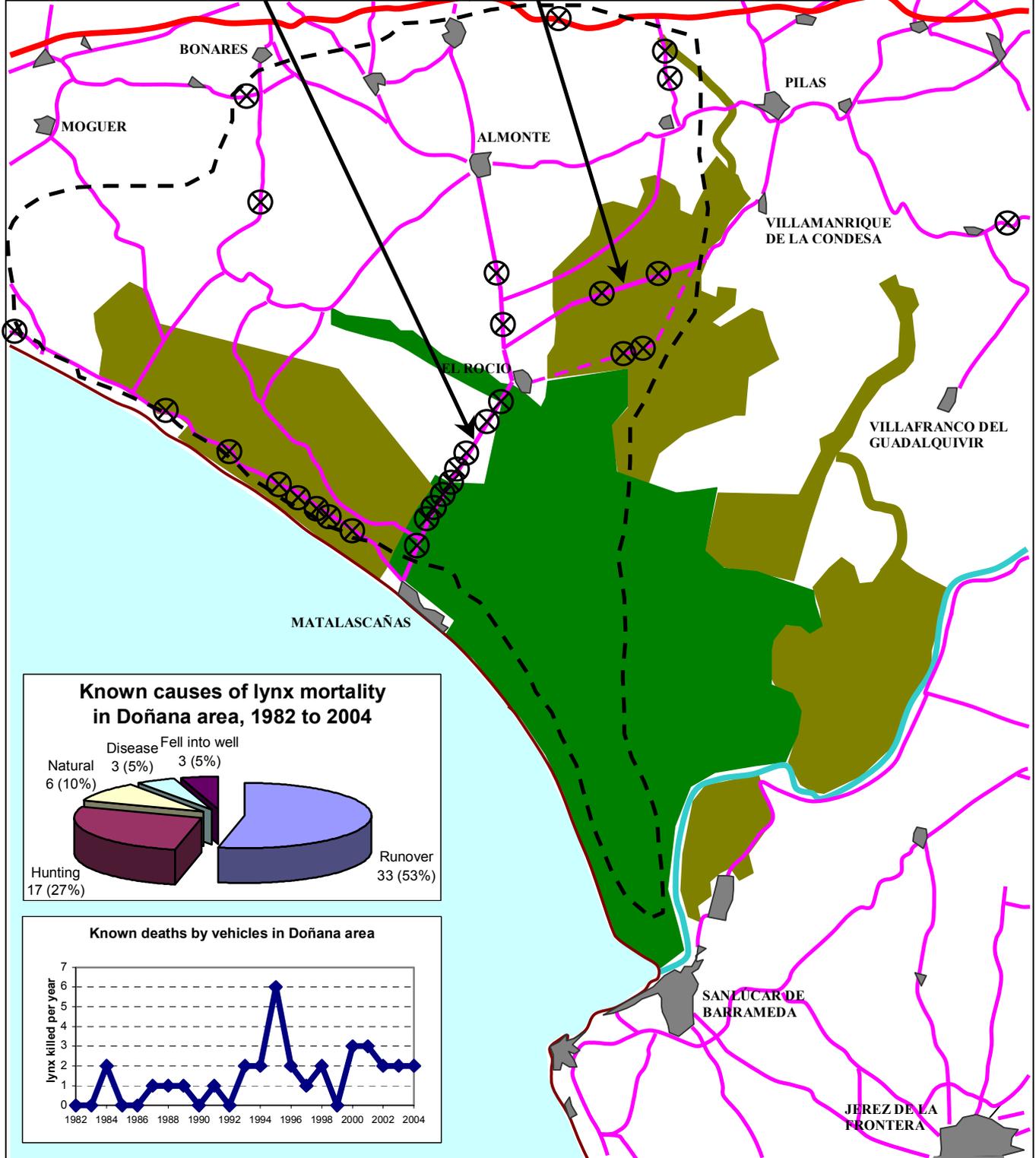
In 2001, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said: “Our biggest challenge this new century is to take an idea that seems abstract – sustainable development – and turn it into a reality for all the world’s people”. BioRegional and WWF have sought to take up this challenge. One Planet Living (OPL) is a joint initiative that aims to make it easy, attractive and affordable for people everywhere to adopt sustainable lifestyles, and at the same time support nature conservation. Pelicano SA, a Portuguese developer, is a Founding Global Partner of the OPL initiative, and is directly supporting lynx conservation in Portugal.

Reference: Guzman (2004) “Seguimiento y estatus del Lince Iberico en Espana 2002-2004” Available at: http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/medioambiente/LIFE_lince/fondoc/Ise300minario/docs/Seguimiento_y_situacion.pdf

Iberian Lynx, Roads and Road Deaths in Doñana

There is considerable local pressure to upgrade the fast road in-between Almonte and Matalascañas into a dual lane motorway, to accommodate tourist traffic and visitors to the El Rocío annual festival. Many lynx have already been killed on this road, and a motorway would be even worse. Ecologistas en Accion have proposed that public transport should be improved instead, including a new tram system. The latest lynx (a 2 year old male) was killed by traffic on this road on 14 March 2005. See: http://www.ecologistasenaccion.org/article.php3?id_article=1680

This road was built in 2000 by the Agricultural Department of the Junta de Andalucía, with EU money, but **without an Environmental Impact Assessment**. 2 lynx have since been killed by fast moving traffic using the road. WWF Spain and Ecologistas en Acción have **launched legal challenges** against the road including with the EU, calling for the road to be removed, see: <http://adena.genetis.com/newsletters/donanalince/donanalince.htm>



Doñana Natural Park
Doñana National Park

MOTORWAY
ROAD
OFF-ROAD TRACK (not all shown)

Lynx killed by vehicles in the area (1982-2004)
Iberian Lynx breeding areas (1984 – 2001)

0m 5 km 10 km 15 km
SOSLynx.org

Source: "Incidencias y mortalidad de lince ibérico registradas en el area de Doñana", Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Doñana Parque Nacional (2004)