

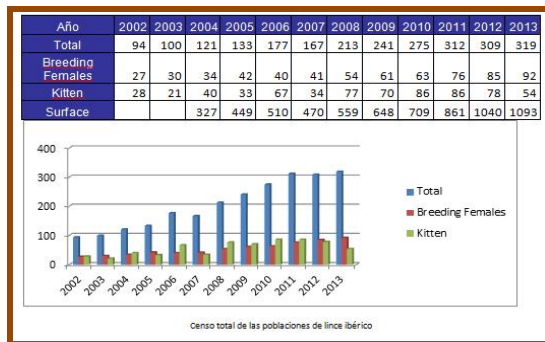


Info Lynx

NEWS

LYNX CENSUS 2013: deaths from hit and runs and rabbit disease

The regional government of Andalusia revealed at the beginning of 2014, the Census of the population of Iberian lynx (2013). Despite the recovery efforts made, the number of specimens stagnates at 319, only eight more than in 2012.



(Chart: Total Census of the populations of Iberian Lynx; source Regional government of Andalusia)

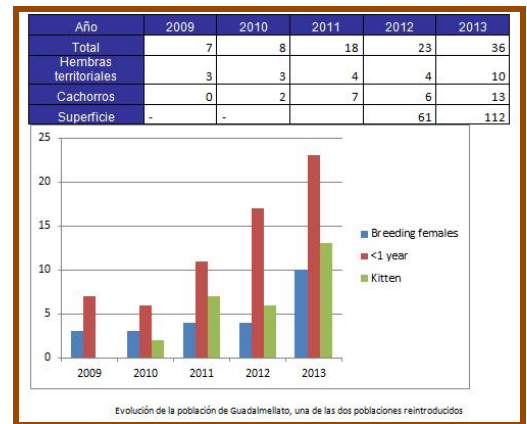
According to WWF, this stagnation is due to a new strain of the rabbit disease (RHD) and the increase of deaths by hit and runs, which reached 14 in 2013.

http://www.wwf.es/noticias/sala_de_prensa/noticias_de_especies.cfm?27320/WWF-alerta-de-la-disminucion-de-casi-el-40-de-cachorros-de-lince-ibrico-en-Andaluca WWF warns of the decline of the number of Iberian lynx cubs by almost 40% in Andalusia.

Highlights of 2013:

Rabbit disease (RHD) has been a serious problem in 2013. This problem has been less noticeable in reintroduced populations (Guadalmellato and Guarrizas), located in areas of high density of rabbit populations; these populations have increased considerably

(contributing to 'embellish' overall results).

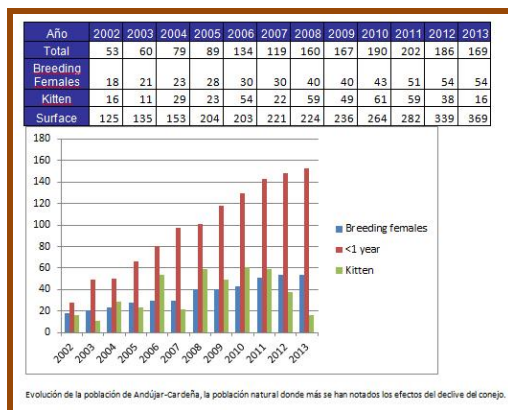


(Chart: Evolution of the Guadalmellato population, one of the two reintroduced populations; source: regional government of Andalusia)

However, historical populations (Andújar-Cardena and Doñana) have experienced a tremendous setback, and the number of cubs has fallen to around 40%. This decrease is more evident in Andújar, where the new strain of RHD was detected more than two years ago.

During 2013, the effects of rabbit disease began to be observed in Doñana, and if the trend keeps on like this, 2014 will be disastrous. Despite this disturbing and bleak reality, efforts made have ensured the stability of the number of areas with breeding female lynxes and the number of kittens over one year old. However, these populations are ageing and there have been almost no incorporation of juvenile lynxes.

As a result, if the situation of rabbits does not improve immediately, the Andújar and Doñana populations will begin to decline.



(Chart: evolution of the population in Andújar-Cardeña, the natural population where the impact of the decline of the rabbit population has been most strongly felt; source: regional government of Andalusia)

To try to alleviate this dramatic situation, an emergency plan was launched in Andújar, with the participation of all agencies with competence in the area. In parallel, a more intensive monitoring of the populations of rabbits has been established to see how they evolve in view of this new strain of the disease and to discover the existence of other factors.

For some time, WWF has been demanding the development of adequate rabbit management plans to the different administrations involved. The NGO also warned more than one year ago about the impact of the new RHD strain. This insistence and the data provided by the **Life Iberlynce** program have motivated the debate of the problem of rabbits and rabbit disease in the last meeting of the Fauna and Flora Committee, held on 29 January, 2014.

One of the outcomes of this meeting was the creation of a specific rabbit task force with the participation of all the autonomous communities, which will meet in April for the first time.

WWF will continue requesting the approval of a **National strategy for rabbit management** and the development and implementation by each autonomous community of the corresponding regional plans, so that the management of this species will not continue to be done “in the dark”.

WWF WANTS TO AVOID TURNING 2014 INTO ANOTHER BLACK YEAR FOR THE IBERIAN LYNX

The year 2013 closed with a total of 14 hit and runs, almost half of them concentrated in two black spots. This is the highest number in history, not only in absolute data, but also in terms of a percentage of the population (almost 5%).

In addition, 2014 began dramatically with **six hit and runs in the first quarter**, one of them by a conventional train.

<http://www.lifelynce.org/visorNoticias.aspx?6964%3d313735> A Lynx was killed by a vehicle in the province of Córdoba

<http://www.lifelynce.org/visorNoticias.aspx?6964%3d313637> Lynx run over in the A-483 within the municipality of Almonte (Huelva)

<http://www.lifelynce.org/visorNoticias.aspx?6964%3d313634> Lynx hit in the N-420 in the area of Azuel (Córdoba)

<http://www.lifelynce.org/visorNoticias.aspx?6964%3d313635> A dead lynx is found in the area of Guarrizas

According to Ramón Pérez de Ayala, responsible for the Life Iberlynce program in WWF Spain, "we cannot accept the number of lynx deaths in our infrastructure due to the inaction of the Ministry of development, particularly because these are the same black spots we already pointed out on several occasions. In these two cases, these are the sections with the highest number of fatalities, both lynxes and other species". He also adds: "In WWF we have already sent an allegation letter to the head of the Ministry of Public Works requesting immediate action so that 2014 does not become another black year for Lynxes as 2013 was, with a total of 14 hit and runs".

ONLINE ACTION

However, the Ministry of public Works is still to respond and the number of hit and runs continues to increase exponentially. To stop this bleeding, in WWF, we have organized an **online collection of signatures to demand to fix black spots on roads.**

(Online action at:
<http://www.wwfenaccion.com/lince>)



IDEAS TO SAVE THE IBERIAN LYNX

SECEM (Spanish society for the conservation and study of mammals), within the framework of the Life "Iberlynce" project, has presented a book of ideas to save the Iberian Lynx (http://issuu.com/secem/docs/ideas_para_conservar_al_lince_ib_r).

This publication brings together almost **40 new ideas** to protect the most endangered feline in the world, provided from different professional fields. The book offers a series of actions that could be carried out, but also invites to reflect on new possibilities or new approaches to deal with old issues.

One of the first surprises is precisely the absence of new proposals for research. This may be due to the fact that the authors have considered that there is sufficient knowledge to work on the conservation of the Lynx; or that we are already working in those fields where there are gaps in knowledge, such as in the case of the dispersal of juvenile Lynx, as well as in rabbit management and rabbit diseases.

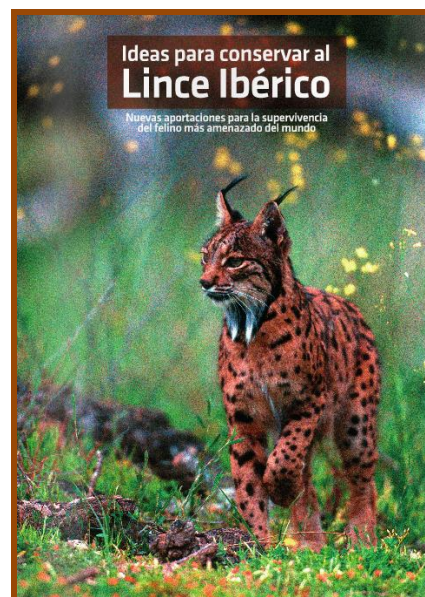
A first set of measures, that we could call "conventional", are field actions. 18% of the proposals are habitat improvement and some other 18% refer to the reintroductions of specimens. Most of these proposals are already being implemented although new approaches are recommended, such as the work to restore the habitat of the Lynx in the olive groves.

The two blocs with the largest number of proposals are those focusing on communication and/or awareness, reaching 46% and the ideas of socio-economic profile, with 41%, as well as 13% of proposals to improve coordination. There is a large disparity in this last block of ideas and many of them are difficult to carry out; they do however point forward.

In addition, the large difference in the number of proposals in these fields with respect to the previous blocks makes it necessary to consider if the traditional ideas of conservation have been exhausted, or if, on the contrary, it means that this type of actions have been abandoned.

Field actions are currently covered to a large extent by the Life "Iberlynce" project, although it lacks policies that contribute to consolidate the current work in the coming years.

On the other hand, as indicated in the book, communication and increasing awareness are the fields where most can be done to complement the on-site work.



LYNX RELEASES

In the last few months, four lynxes have been released to reinforce the two reintroduced populations, two in each of the populations.

During the last year and a half, necessary studies and field work have been carried out to select the locations to reintroduce the lynxes. The last meeting to address this issue took place in March in Cazalla de la Sierra (Seville). The result was the selection of places where the lynx may be released in the coming months: Vale do Guadiana (Portugal), Valle de Matalchel (Extremadura) and Campo de Calatrava (Castilla - La Mancha). The final decision will be communicated in May, after specifying certain biological and social aspects of the release. In this way, the reintroductions will begin in June.

News: (<http://tinyurl.com/o5q7zwc>)

WWF welcomes all progress in the preparation of territories to create new populations and highlights the efforts made by all the partners of the Life Iberlince project.

In Castilla - La Mancha, where the WWF NGO is also working on the field, preparatory actions are progressing at a good pace and they have the support and the enthusiasm of local authorities, the local population and owners.

This publication is published within the framework of the project "Iberian lynx conservation project: looking into the future" that WWF Spain developed with funding from WWF Netherlands. This project represents a complement and a strategic support to other activities carried out by the Organization for the conservation of the species.

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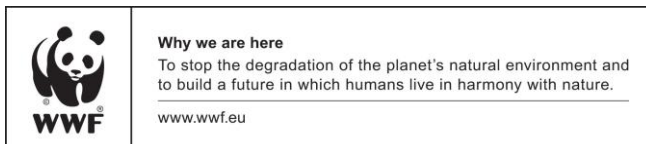
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Even so, WWF warns that it is important to be extremely careful and take all the necessary steps prior to the release of specimens in new territories to ensure the success of this action.

At the moment, it is necessary to achieve some kind of progress to reduce mortality from non-natural causes mainly those due to predators controland run overs, before making the final decision.



(Caption: Lynx release. EFE)



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