



## Reintroducing the Iberian Lynx in Guadalmellato (Córdoba)

The selection process to locate the most favourable areas to reintroduce the Iberian lynx has taken several years



The Guadalmellato Reservoir, near the reintroduction area.

**I**n the previous Life project, "Conservation of the lynx in Andalusia," three potential areas for reintroducing the Iberian lynx were chosen: Hornachuelos (in Guadiato, Bembezar and Retortillo), Guadalmellato in Cordoba and Guarrizas in Jaen. This was done through a multi-criteria study that looked at different variables: historical distribution of the species, nature of the vegetation, distance from urban centres, distance from roadway links, and slope and altitude. Combining these variables in a geographic information system generated a priori the best areas to accommodate the species.

The current Life project continued to study biological variables such as the availability of food, vegetation coverage, potential causes of mortality, the possibility of connecting with current Iberian lynx populations, and social acceptance in the area. The final result of

this study was the selection of the areas of Guadalmellato in Cordoba and Guarrizas in Jaen, dismissing the area of Hornachuelos due to lesser food availability and greater distance from the nearest lynx population (Andujar-Cardena).

One of the final conclusions during the 3rd International Seminar on the Conservation and Reintroduction of the Iberian Lynx in November 2008, was to prioritize reintroductions in the area of Guadalmellato, until a total of 6 territories were established.

In the last quarter of 2009, 3 pre-release enclosures were built in this area, measuring 3 and 4 hectares. On December 14, before the media, the first adult pair was released into the enclosures, Caberu and Charqueña, both 4 years old. Four days later, a second pair of adults was released, Cascabel and Diana, also 4 years old. Finally, on December 21, the last pair was released, both two-year-old juveniles, Elron and Eclipse, thus completing the reintroduction process.

### SUMMARY

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- Open house at the Guadalmellato area
- School drawing contest
- Three deaths in the Doñana population

### Management Activities Planned for Guadalmellato

Agreements with private property owners are an instrument that allow for Iberian lynx and rabbit populations to be tracked. In addition, they can be used to take action toward improving rabbit habitats. Worth noting among the measures developed, are the improvements to existing rabbit warrens, the increase in the number of warrens by building artificial refuges (tube and pallet burrows), regeneration of meadows by planting grains and legumes, and brush clearing actions to replace serial thickets with productive meadow areas. Additionally, several rabbit breeding areas have been built in areas of lower density, supported by some of the previous actions.

Artificial burrows have been built by using material from pruning, in order to increase the number of rabbit refuges, and existing ones have been improved on the more than 14 properties in this area with accords for the conservation of the lynx. In areas with few rabbits, fenced in breeding areas have been built surrounded by burrows. When the number of rabbits gets high enough, the enclosures are opened so that they can colonise adjacent areas.

In parallel to these actions, rabbit populations are being tracked with the same methodology used in the Life project for the other current lynx populations. Furthermore, to mitigate factors that may imply a mortality risk for the lynx, surveillance and control of illegal activities in the reintroduction area is proposed to support the State's security efforts (Seprona and Environment Agents).



# Open House at Guadalmellato area



Presentation at the Villafranca de Córdoba cultural house assembly hall

An open house was held last November 27, in Villafranca de Córdoba for the local population in the area of Guadalmellato. The purpose was to inform attendees about the upcoming release of the Iberian lynx in the area, and to take advantage of the meeting place to exchange opinions and questions. The

open house began with a showing of the animated film *The Missing Lynx*, to encourage participation among the littlest participants in the open house, and it culminated with a sampling of organic products, to highlight the importance of agriculture and consumer habits in the conservation of the species.

## Latest Casualties in the Iberian Lynx Population

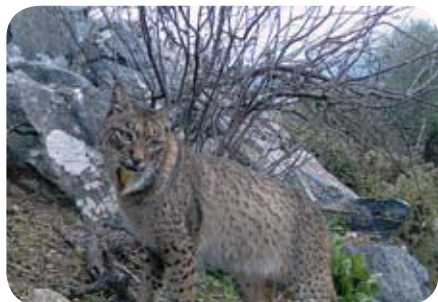


Bruma, photo taken from camera trap 06/08/09. Life-lynx project archival photograph

The deaths of 5 Iberian lynx in the wild populations—4 in Doñana and 1 in Sierra Morena—have been registered since November 26, 2009. The first two were adult females from Doñana, “Centaurea” and “Bruma”, autopsy reports for which showed tuberculosis and peritonitis as the

causes of death, respectively. The third death was a subadult male from Doñana called “Epsilon” who was struck by an agricultural vehicle in Villamanrique de la Condesa. On January 2, a Sierra Morena lynx called “Cipres” died from a tumour in the oral cavity. “Cipres” had spent one month at the El Blanqueo captive breeding centre, where they were unable to do anything toward his recovery. Lastly, on February 1, thanks to the radio-tracking programme, a subadult female called “Estepa” was found dead in Doñana. The cause of death has not been determined, although infectious disease, trauma and common poisoning have been ruled out. The body showed signs of post-mortem handling, therefore some important clues may have been lost. New tests are currently being done in order to shed light on the cause of death. Nevertheless, disease is currently the primary cause of death detected in the Iberian lynx.

## Tracking the Second Lynx used for Genetic Reinforcement in Doñana



Caribu in Cerro del Andevalo, near Portugal

On April 20, 2009, near the Olivargas reservoir, Caribu was captured and his collar was replaced with a GPS. He was released in Doñana; from there he returned to the Huelva pre-sierra, following the same steps as in his first dispersal. This second GPS collar sent a message in December 2009 that the battery was depleted. For the moment, the decision made was to leave him in the area that he had chosen for the upcoming mating season, so that he could explore or return to Doñana in search of a female. His movement took him more than 50 km in a straight



### School Drawing Contest

For another year, the annual drawing contest for school children was held. This past December 17, the selection of the winning artwork was made and excursions and prize awards are currently underway. The list of the winning artwork can be found at: [http://www.lifeline.org/public/Dibujos\\_ganadores\\_09-10.pdf](http://www.lifeline.org/public/Dibujos_ganadores_09-10.pdf)



### A Booklet on the Iberian Lynx

A small booklet was just published by the Life Project in an attempt to provide readers with information about the Iberian lynx. It is addressing all types of audiences, with attractive illustrations, and it is translated into English. It can be downloaded at: [www.lifeline.org](http://www.lifeline.org).

line to the T.M. of the Cerro del Andevalo, where he has remained during recent months. This took him over the national border, where he established himself in Lic Moura-Barrancos (Portugal), less than a kilometre from Badajoz. From here he returned to his starting point, where he was captured and his GPS-GSM transmitter was replaced. He was released again in Doñana, to take advantage of the end of the breeding season, in an attempt to address the original goal for this animal: to improve the genetic variation of the Doñana population. He has been in Doñana since February 4, and is currently making exploratory movements within the Doñana Natural Area (END, by its Spanish acronym).

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