

Welcome to the fifth edition of *LynxBrief*, a briefing paper focusing on the conservation of the Iberian Lynx, **the most endangered big cat species in the world**. Comments on, and questions about, any issue relating to the conservation of the Iberian Lynx should be emailed to: [lynxbrief@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lynxbrief@yahoo.co.uk)

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## The importance of Lobby Letters

Each edition of *LynxBrief* has recommended that lobby letters be sent to politicians and policymakers to support or oppose particular actions that influence lynx conservation and the survival of the species. In addition, a number of model lobby letters have been made available (under the button "model lobby letters") on the SOS lynx website: [www.soslynx.org](http://www.soslynx.org)

It is very important that individuals and representatives of scientific institutions, NGOs and Government organisations, send lobby letters. If lobby letters are not sent then politicians and policymakers do not know the strength of feeling that exists about a particular issue. This is particularly important to counterbalance lobbying from conflicting interests, e.g. for development in lynx areas. Letters can be one of the most effective ways of making politicians and policymakers change their actions, including with respect to nature conservation.

Model letters are provided, along with the information included in *LynxBrief*, to make it even easier to write and send lobby letters. Where possible, email addresses are also provided. If model letters are used, they should be modified to make them more personal to the sender and/or the organisation that they represent. This helps to give each letter more influence.

**Thank you for making a difference to lynx conservation!**



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### Stop Press: LATEST KNOWN LYNX DEATHS

The body of a dead lynx killed by road traffic at Hinojos, near El Rocio (Doñana), and the body of another lynx killed by unknown causes in a hunting estate were both discovered in early September.

## New Iberian Lynx Compendium!

The IUCN Cat Specialist Group has produced a new online compendium of information relating to the Iberian Lynx (e.g. academic publications, reports, maps, plans etc.). This very useful compendium is now publicly available under the button "conservation compendia" at: [www.catsg.org](http://www.catsg.org)



## Habitat Planning for the Iberian Lynx

Work is now underway to plan areas of habitat available and important for a viable recovered Iberian Lynx meta-population in the future. This work will include mapping geographical information about habitat quality, along with consideration of prey (i.e. rabbit) availability and negative pressures from local human populations (e.g. hunting and land-use change).

**Habitat planning for the Iberian Lynx is essential for:**

1. Identifying and preparing areas for future reintroductions and translocations of lynx, as recommended by IUCN guidelines.
2. Justifying protecting areas of habitat important for future lynx recovery, which may not currently contain any lynx, particularly in the face of strong and conflicting pressures for damaging development.

Given that the lynx is an Iberian species, habitat planning will involve collaboration between various Spanish Autonomous Regions and Portugal. This inter-regional work was encouraged particularly by a presentation from the IUCN Cat Specialist Group at the Iberian Lynx Conference in Córdoba, December 2004 – which itself drew upon experience with planning habitat for the recovery of other feline species. Subsequently, a habitat planning workshop was held in Portugal in March 2005, attended by representatives from Spanish Autonomous Regions and the Portuguese government, organised by Pedro Sarmento.

The planning of habitat for the Iberian Lynx is being co-ordinated by José Garcia Santiago (Junta de Andalucía) and Fridolin Zimmermann (IUCN Cat Specialist Group). To date, important information has been provided by the Junta de Andalucía, as well as from the Portuguese Government and the Junta de Extremadura. Unfortunately, however, useful information has not yet been provided by the regional governments of Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y Leon and Madrid, and habitat planning is thus behind schedule.

In order to allow habitat planning to proceed, it is essential that required geographical information is provided as soon as possible from Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y Leon and Madrid. Without this information, the planning of future reintroductions and translocations will not be possible, and it will be harder to justify protecting particularly important areas of habitat.

In order to inquire about, or submit information for, habitat planning, please contact:

**José Garcia Santiago** – [jgarcias@egmasa.es](mailto:jgarcias@egmasa.es)

**Fridolin Zimmermann** – [f.zimmermann@kora.ch](mailto:f.zimmermann@kora.ch)

## Expanding Andújar Natural Park

The largest and most important Iberian Lynx population survives in and around Andújar Natural Park in the Sierra Morena in northern Andalucía. Andújar Natural Park was created in 1989 and offers important protection from development and incompatible land-use for the Iberian Lynx and many other endangered and rare species such as the Spanish Imperial Eagle and the Iberian Wolf. The Natural Park is administered by the Junta de Andalucía and covers 75,000 ha, including both private and publicly-owned land.

At present a significant amount of the Iberian Lynx population in the area lives outside the Andújar Natural Park to the east (see map on Page 4). Iberian Lynx also live to the west of the Andújar Natural Park, but these are protected within the Cardeña Natural Park. In order to protect the Iberian Lynx living outside the two natural parks, and to facilitate the work of conservation organisations, it has been proposed that the Andújar Natural Park be expanded to the east, as shown on page 4. This proposal is already supported by:

- Ecologistas en Acción- Andalucía
- SEO-Bird Life International
- Federation of Andújar Residents Associations
- UGT Union
- SOS Lynx

Expanding Andújar Natural Park will help protect and expand the largest and most important Iberian Lynx population, and the habitat and prey base on which this population depends, particularly in the face of some pressure for damaging development in this area. An expanded Natural Park would also help conserve the local population of the endangered Spanish Imperial Eagle and the rare Iberian Wolf.



The proposed area to be included within the expanded Andújar Natural Park is already included within Natura 2000 proposals. However, Natura 2000 does not offer the level of protection, administrative support and funds for conservation management available to Natural Parks. Most importantly, as this area contains a significant part of one of only two known breeding populations of the most endangered big cat species in the world, it deserves inclusion within the Natural Park.

Those wishing to support the expansion of the Andújar Natural Park should write to both the president of Andalucía and the Andalusian Environment Minister:

**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](mailto:manuel.chaves@juntadeandalucia.es)**

**Excma. Sra. Consejera de Medio Ambiente de Andalucía,  
Fuensanta Coves Botella, Avda. Manuel Siurot, nº50,  
Casa Sundheim, 41013, Sevilla, SPAIN  
email: [consejera.cma@juntadeandalucia.es](mailto:consejera.cma@juntadeandalucia.es)**

Those wishing to take a more active role in helping the campaign to enlarge the Andújar Natural Park should contact:

**Javier Moreno Montoza, Ecologistas en Acción- Andalucía:  
[life\\_lince@yahoo.es](mailto:life_lince@yahoo.es)**



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## Captive Breeding Update

The Captive Breeding Programme of the Iberian Lynx has progressed a lot. Brezo and Brisa, both born in captivity in March 2005, are growing fast and by the end of August had reached the weights of 6 kg and 5.5kg respectively.

Following the unfortunate death of Brezina, killed in a fight with Brezo on 11 May 2005, Brezo and Brisa have been even more closely monitored by CCTV cameras and temporarily separated from each other and their mother, to increase their safety. Both are developing normally and are now living again with their mother (Saliega), from whom they are learning to hunt the live rabbits that are provided in their enclosure.

It should be stressed that the death of a cub, killed in a fight with a sibling, though unfortunate, might be quite a common occurrence for lynx in the wild (see Palomares et al., Biological Conservation nº 122). Since the Iberian lynx captive breeding programme aims to help re-establish the species in areas of historical occupancy, husbandry management focuses on breeding lynxes in an environment as naturalistic as possible, trying to prevent domestication and to maintain their instincts honed for future generations. The unexpected and sad accident has helped reveal a relevant aspect of Iberian lynx biology with important management implications for the species in captivity and in the wild. *LynxBrief* congratulates the highly professional team running the captive breeding programme and looks forward to more successful captive breeding during the next winter breeding season.

There are now 15 lynx in captivity, 12 in the main breeding centre at El Acebuche, Doñana and 3 in the “associate centre” at Zoo Jerez. A new larger centre is under construction in Jaén, northern Andalucía, not far from the wild population in Andújar. It is also hoped and planned that centres outside of Andalucía can be incorporated into the breeding programme, to reduce risks and maintain the Iberian character of the species, provided that these centres are constructed to the required standard and adhere to the programme’s strict protocols.

Because the Iberian Lynx is a critically endangered species, with no more than 100 surviving adults (Guzmán 2004), captive breeding is an essential part of the conservation effort, capable of helping to safeguard the genetic diversity of the species and providing individuals for reintroductions. It is planned that by 2010 the captive breeding population will have been increased to around 70 animals, through more captive breeding and the incorporation of more wild founder individuals. Reintroductions might then be possible, provided that habitat planning, habitat protection, outreach, rabbit recovery and other work has significantly advanced by then.

## Update on new lynx LIFE proposals

As described in the April edition of *LynxBrief*, the Junta de Andalucía is now working hard to complete a proposal for a new lynx LIFE project, to be part-funded by the European Union (EU). This LIFE project will (if approved) include:

1. Maintaining existing work in habitat improvement, agreements with landowners, vigilance, outreach, supplementary feeding and rabbit recovery.
2. Identifying and preparing areas for reintroductions from the Iberian Lynx Captive Breeding Programme.
3. Carrying out the first reintroductions, provided that the captive breeding programme is successful.
4. Translocating lynx between Andújar and Doñana to maintain genetic diversity, especially in Doñana.

LIFE proposals are also being worked on by the government of Portugal and Fundación CBD Habitat in Castilla-La Mancha. These projects will (if approved) identify and prepare areas for reintroductions as well as (in Castilla-La Mancha) continuing important conservation work in areas that still contain some lynx. All three LIFE proposals include a number of partner organisations, such as NGOs and hunting organisations, and need to be submitted to the EU by 15 October 2005.

In order to demonstrate widespread support for these LIFE proposals, and to give them the greatest chance of being approved by the EU, it would be very useful if individuals and representatives of organisations that have not already done so write letters of support to those responsible for the proposals. Letters of support, and enquiries, should be sent to:

**Miguel Angel Simon Mata** (Junta de Andalucía)  
Delegación Provincial de Medio Ambiente de Jaén  
Calle Fuente Serbo 3, 23071 Jaén, Andalucía, SPAIN

**Rodrigo Serra** (ICN), Investigacao Veterinaria Independente,  
R. Constantino Fernandes, 20 3FTE, 1700-119 Lisboa, Portugal

**Nuria El Khadir**, Fundación CBD Hábitat, c/ Nieremberg 8,  
Bajo A, 28002 Madrid, SPAIN

A model letter for supporting the Andalusian LIFE project is already available on the SOS Lynx website: [www.soslynx.org](http://www.soslynx.org)

## Football star supports Iberian Lynx!



Ex-England international, Paul Gascoigne is officially supporting the conservation of the Iberian Lynx. Paul is writing to the EU to officially support the lynx LIFE proposals from the Junta de Andalucía and the ICN in Portugal.

Paul's endorsement of Iberian Lynx conservation will be important to raise awareness and support from younger people and those who usually care more about the "beautiful game" than beautiful animals such as the Iberian Lynx.

## 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 interests. In particular, it is important that those interested in lynx conservation write lobby letters to politicians and policy-makers to encourage them to alter their actions in favour of the Iberian Lynx.

This month, it is **RECOMMENDED** that those interested in the conservation of the Iberian Lynx write to the Junta de Andalucía to support a proposal to enlarge the Andújar Natural Park to the east.

It is also **RECOMMENDED** that those who have not already done so, write letters of support for the new LIFE projects in Andalucía, Portugal and Castilla-La Mancha.

Finally, it is hoped that those responsible for habitat planning in Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y Leon and Madrid will urgently contact the habitat planning co-ordinators to provide essential geographical information.

*LynxBrief* sends best wishes to all those interested and involved in lynx conservation and looks forward to more of your comments, suggestions and questions.

### About the author

*LynxBrief* is edited by **Dan Ward**, who has a degree in Natural Sciences (Cambridge University), 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](http://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](mailto: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.

# Map of proposal to expand Andújar Natural Park (Andalucía, Spain)

