

Lynx pardinus (TEMMINCK, 1827)



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This species has frequently been considered as a subspecies of the Eurasian lynx *Lynx lynx*, but it seems well established that the two are different species.

Distribution

Endemic to Europe. *Lynx pardinus* is found exclusively on the Iberian Peninsula, mainly in southern Spain and Portugal. There are recent dubious records from the northern half of both countries. During the 19th century it was present throughout the Iberian Peninsula. During the Pleistocene it also occupied central Europe.

Geographic variation

No living subspecies have been recognized.

Habitat

The species is very dependent on Mediterranean woodland and maquis thicket, where it finds dense scrub for shelter and abundant rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus* for food. Adult individuals are intrasexually territorial all the year round and seasonal changes of habitat and food are very small. The Iberian lynx avoids croplands and tree plantations and as a consequence the suitable habitat is very fragmented.

Population status

During the 1980s, the total world population was estimated at less than 1200 individuals, including

Iberian lynx; Pardel lynx

AL	-	LT	-
BG	-	LU	-
CZ	Rys pardálový	LV	Ibērijas lūsis
DE	Pardelluchs	MK	-
DK	Pardellos	MT	-
EE	Pürenee ilves	NL	Pardellynx
ES	Lince ibérico	NO	Pantergaupe
FI	Pantteri-ilves	PL	Ryś iberyjski
FO	-	PT	Lince-ibérico; Liberne
FR	Lynx pardelle	RO	-
GR	-	RU	Пиренейская рысь
HR	Iberski ris	SE	Panterlo
HU	Párduchiúz	SI	Iberijski ris
IR	-	SK	Rys škvinitý
IS	Spánargaupa	TR	-
IT	Lince pardina	YU	Иберijski рис

subadults but not kittens. There are probably nine distinct subpopulations in Spain, occupying a range of about 11000 km², and three in Portugal, occupying 700 km². These subpopulations are spatially structured as metapopulations and seem to be genetically isolated. Only one of them, in the eastern Sierra Morena and Montes de Toledo, includes more than one hundred individuals. Population numbers have probably decreased strongly in the 1990s as a consequence of an acute reduction of rabbit numbers because of a viral haemorrhagic disease. The species has been considered by IUCN as the most vulnerable of all the Felidae.

International legal & conservation status

Bern Convention, Appendix II.

EU Habitats & Species Directive, Annex II* & Annex IV.

CITES, Appendix I. EC 338/97, Annex A.

IUCN Red List, Endangered.

Other information

In the past, habitat destruction and direct persecution were the main threats to the species. At present, the decline of lynx numbers is mainly due to habitat loss (and fragmentation) and the decline of its main prey species, the rabbit, owing to myxomatosis, viral haemorrhagic disease and changes in the landscape. Lynx mortality by human-related causes is also high, although most of the deaths are unintentional (road casualties, captures in traps for foxes and rabbits, etc). Small population size is also a threat: 90% of populations in



areas less than 1000 km² have disappeared since 1960. Theoretical risks of inbreeding depression and genetic drift exist.

Literature

- Beltrán *et al.* (1996)
- Castro & Palma (1996)
- Delibes (1980)
- Ferreras *et al.* (1992)
- Nowell & Jackson (1996)
- Rodríguez & Delibes (1990)

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