

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats



Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 20 (1991) on the protection of the European lynx (*Lynx lynx*)

(Adopted by the Standing Committee on 11 January 1991)

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the convention,

Having regard to the aims of the convention to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats:

Considering that the European lynx (*Lynx lynx*) (hereinafter referred to as “lynx”) is a fundamental part of the European natural heritage on account of its symbolic, scientific, ecological, educational, cultural, recreational, aesthetic and intrinsic value;

Recalling that Article 1, paragraph 2, of the convention requires that Contracting Parties give particular emphasis to the conservation of endangered and vulnerable species;

Considering that the lynx is listed in Appendix III to the convention as a protected fauna species;

Considering that the lynx is seriously threatened throughout a substantial part of Western Europe, having become extinct in the territory of many Contracting Parties and reduced to small populations in several others;

Considering that habitat loss, shortage of prey, progressive fragmentation of its populations and human-induced mortality have been the main causes of its extinction (or the sharp decrease in lynx populations) in Western Europe;

Conscious that the lynx is a species that in some circumstances may come into conflict with human activities;

Considering that the areas where the lynx lives and also those areas where recolonisation by the species could take place and stable populations be sustained (hereinafter referred to as “lynx areas”) are of great biological importance;

Referring to Recommendation n° R (85) 15 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the reintroduction of wildlife species;

Referring to the IUCN (World Conservation Union) position statement on the translocation of living organisms, approved at the 22nd meeting of the IUCN Council in 1987;

Recognising the conservation efforts carried out by some states, particularly by reintroducing the species,

Recommends that Contracting Parties:

1. draw up management plans for the species in order to assure viable populations at appropriate levels;
2. establish, wherever absent, compensation schemes for damage caused by lynx to livestock and farm animals; improve them where such schemes already function, for instance by simplifying and accelerating administrative procedures for the payment of compensation, by informing livestock breeders of these procedures and by training game wardens in recognising lynx kills;

3. study the indirect damage that may be caused to stocks by lynx attacks, such as decrease in weight or in fertility rates;
4. favour, in order to avoid conflict, the development of measures aimed at preventing lynx attacks on livestock, for instance by encouraging herdsmen to guard their cattle at night, using electrical fences or dogs; encourage the maintenance and training of local races of sheep dogs;
5. strengthen the enforcement of the ban on the use of poison, poisoned or anaesthetic baits, and any other indiscriminate methods of killing;
6. ban, where appropriate, in important lynx areas the use of leg-traps and snares for the capture of animals;
7. pay particular attention to habitat conservation by adopting preventive measures in lynx areas, integrating them if required into existing networks of protected areas;
8. assess the impact on lynx populations of projects for public works, reafforestation, touristic use and any other development that may affect the habitat of the species;
9. undertake the organisation of awareness campaigns, aimed at the rural population in lynx areas and other target groups (hunters, schoolchildren, local decision-makers);
10. encourage research on all the aspects of the biology of the lynx, including behaviour; carry out in particular the monitoring of the size, biological characteristics and geographical distribution of the species;
11. in the areas where the lynx has been reintroduced or has moved from neighbouring areas, take the following measures:
 - careful monitoring of lynx populations and their prey;
 - the establishment of appropriate co-ordinating structures in order to inform and discuss with farmers and hunters;
 - the launching of information campaigns;
 - the establishment of special compensation schemes (such as those referred to in point 2 of the recommendation);
12. consider the possibility of carrying out captive breeding and reintroduction programmes in areas where the species has become extinct or is endangered ; carry out the necessary genetic studies in order to avoid the possible negative effects of introducing individuals from genetically different stocks;
13. co-ordinate, within the framework of the convention, reintroduction projects between neighbouring states, especially where they may lead to the extension of a population across a frontier;
14. develop, where appropriate for scientific or conservation purposes, bilateral or multilateral contacts with other states and conservation bodies and agencies, including those which are not based in the territory of Contracting Parties.

Recommends France and Turkey to monitor lynx populations and take adequate measures for their protection:

- Pyrenees: strengthen research efforts to improve knowledge of the status of lynx;
- Turkey: all populations in Turkey are threatened. Turkey has several endangered cat species (for example *Panthera pardus*); it is advisable to establish a conservation and education programme for these species.

Invites the relevant European states which are not Contracting Parties to the convention to:

1. consider the co-ordination and joint management of lynx populations in the Carpathian Mountains, to be set up by the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Poland and the Soviet Union;
2. consider extending the closed season for lynx hunting to the end of December in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic;
3. consider carrying out a more precise and scientific monitoring of lynx populations in Poland;
4. consider banning lynx hunting in Poland for some years until appropriate scientific data show that the lynx population is not decreasing;
5. consider monitoring more efficiently the Macedonia-Kosovo-Montenegro lynx population in Yugoslavia.

Further recommends Contracting Parties to:

1. strengthen collaboration with European states which are not Contracting Parties to the convention in order to implement the recommendations and invitations made above;
2. collaborate with other European states in all relevant aspects of lynx conservation.