A close-up photograph of an Iberian lynx sitting in a natural, grassy environment. The lynx has a thick, spotted coat with dark spots on a lighter background. It has large, tufted ears and a white ruff around its neck. The background is a soft-focus green and brown, suggesting a natural habitat.

# Iberian Lynx Conservation Programme

Impact Report



CBD-Habitat



## On the front line, in alliance with nature

### Fundación CBD-Hábitat

More than two decades ago, alarmed by the loss of biodiversity and the threat of extinction to some of our most emblematic species, we created the Foundation for the Conservation of Biodiversity and its Habitat, CBD-Habitat. Our mission is to protect our natural heritage. We work on the front line, taking direct action in the field. Our goal is to save critically endangered species and to restore their natural habitats, in close collaboration with the people with whom they coexist.

## An epic story of conservation

**In 2001 there were only a hundred Iberian lynxes left in the world!**

The species was on the brink of extinction. This iconic animal, flagship species of the Mediterranean landscape, was in urgent need of protection. Public and private efforts over the last twenty years have yielded outstanding results. But there are still challenges to be faced if the survival of the lynx is to become a reality.



# The decline of the prince of the Mediterranean habitat

Our elders would tell us that “el gato (‘the cat’) used to prowl the fields and olive groves... he hunted where there were plenty of rabbits, and foxes steered clear of his territory. But we have seen no trace of him for years”.

In the 20th century, the species went into drastic decline, hastening its path to extinction. By the early 2000s, only two isolated populations remained in Andújar-Cardena and Doñana, with fewer than 100 individuals between them. The Iberian lynx became the most endangered feline on the planet.

## Iberian Lynx

- Year 2001 ~ 100 individuals
- Year 2020 ~ 1000 individuals



# No prey, no hunter

The lynx is a **specialist predator**: its diet is based almost exclusively on one prey, the European rabbit. The transformation of habitats, overhunting and especially the impact of two viral diseases have decimated rabbit populations over the last 70 years. This has had a direct impact on the Iberian lynx, leading to its near extinction. Today, the scarcity of wild rabbits is still the main limiting factor for the recovery of the species in many areas.



## Other threats



Loss of landscape diversity



Road kills



Construction of major infrastructure



Traps, illegal snares, and shooting

In the past, **direct persecution** was another factor that drove the lynx to the brink of extinction. In addition to this, there is the gradual disappearance of the diverse Mediterranean ecosystem needed by the lynx. The **construction of major infrastructure** also

led to the reduction and isolation of lynx populations. Today, **road kill** is the main non-natural cause of mortality of the species, but there are still deaths due to other causes such as **illegal traps and snares or shooting**.



## The guardian of the Mediterranean ecosystem

The world's most endangered cat is a great protector of biodiversity.

The Iberian Lynx is a fundamental part of the Mediterranean landscape, a unique ecosystem in the world. Its recovery in areas where the lynx had disappeared helps to restore the natural balance, favouring other species as well.

# Protecting the Iberian Lynx

At CBD-Habitat we were pioneers in establishing the first collaboration agreements with private estates that were of interest for the conservation of the lynx.

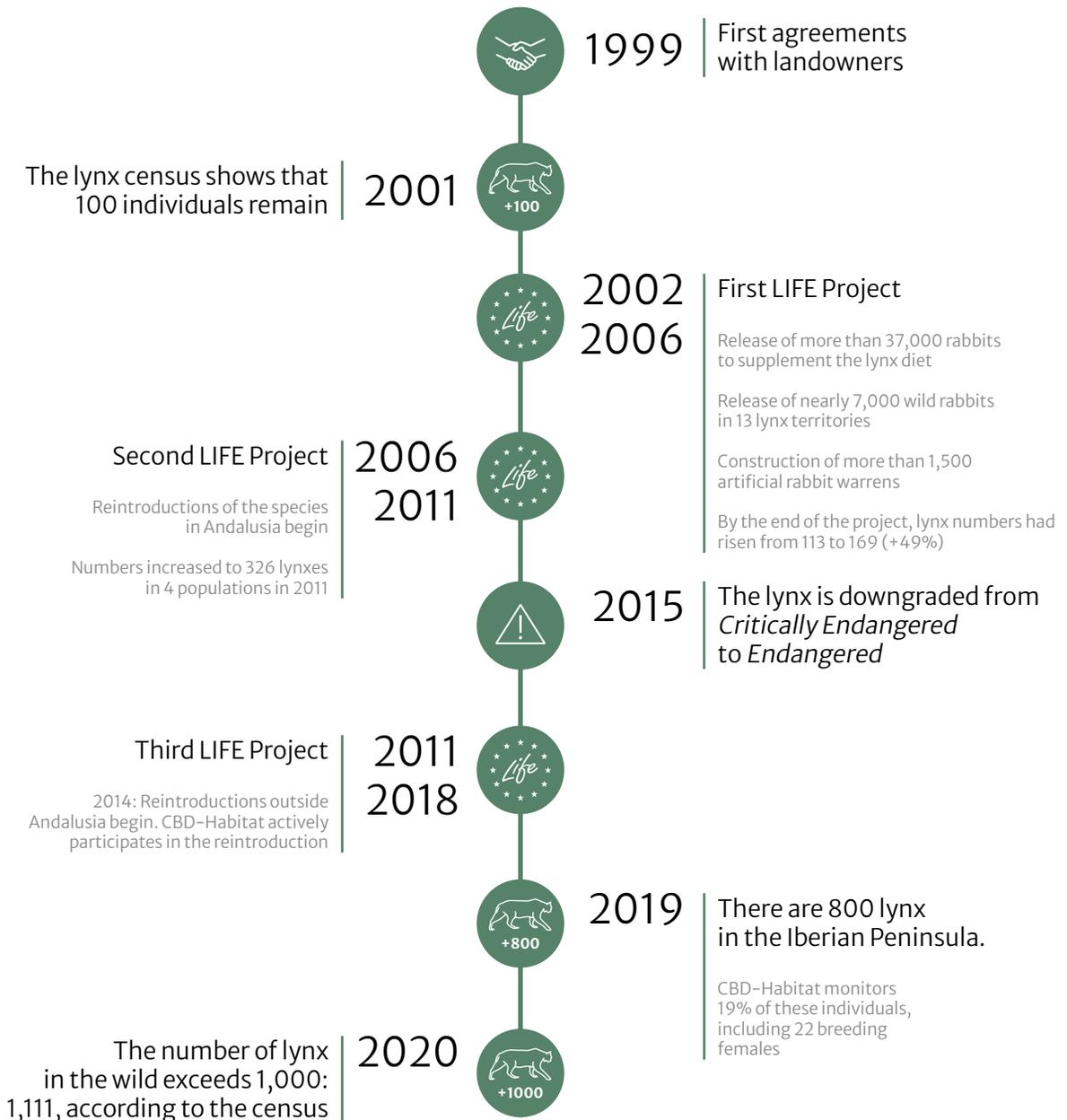
Twenty years ago, we entered into the first collaboration agreements with private landholdings that were key to the conservation of the lynx. Since then, we have worked in Andalusia, Extremadura, and Castilla-La Mancha, managing lynx conservation projects in close collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.

The technology we apply to our work provides us with information on each and every lynx in the area. And to protect them, we have made improvements to the habitats that favour not only the lynx, but also the rabbit populations on which it feeds.

We have stepped up monitoring in the areas where the species is present and have carried out awareness-raising actions with key groups for its conservation (hunters, farmers and stockbreeders, etc.). We provide advice on the sustainable management of natural resources to owners and managers of estates, and we monitor infrastructures that pose a threat to the species (such as roads), while proposing improvements to avoid road kill. To guarantee the survival of the lynx, we also work in areas with potential for attracting new lynx populations.

# Project milestones

After 20 years of work, we have contributed to the Iberian lynx being downgraded from Critically Endangered to Endangered. Today lynxes can be seen in Andalusia, Portugal, Extremadura and Castilla-La Mancha. The 2020 census reveals promising figures: 1,111 individuals, spread over 14 population nuclei.



# The challenges of today and tomorrow



What is needed to bring the lynx back from the brink of extinction?

Despite all the progress made in recent years, **Iberian lynx populations are still not out of danger.** imperative that we build on the growth of recent years. We must link up the different populations – to guarantee genetic variability – and increase the range of the species, by helping it to spread and gain a foothold in new territories.

## What exactly is needed?



Grow 5x times the current size of the population



Establish 8 new populations

Be part of this inspiring conservation story today, and forever. Help us make the survival of the lynx a reality!

Es momento ponernos juntos en primera línea para proteger al lince ibérico y su hábitat, el monte mediterráneo. Porque estamos orgullosos de nuestro compromiso con nuestro extraordinario patrimonio natural.



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