



Life Programme 2006-2011 Conservation and Reintroduction of the Iberian Lynx in Andalusia

GATO CLAVO NEWSLETTER

MAY/JUNE 10

The 2nd International Seminar on the wild rabbit takes place

In the framework of the outreach activities carried out under the LIFE programme, the 2nd International Seminar on the wild rabbit took place on the Rabanales Campus of Cordoba University on the 28, 29 and 30 April with significant public attendance, more than 200 enrolled



Opening reception of the 2nd International Seminar on the conservation of the wild rabbit

The programme was organised over two days with communications open to the public, subject to registration, and a third day with work groups by invitation. During the two days of plenary sessions there were 20 speeches by different subject specialists, followed by round table discussions where the public had the opportunity to ask questions and

participate with their contributions. On Friday 30, the work groups were attended by invited professionals directly involved with rabbit conservation.

The aim of these groups was to obtain a series of conclusions which will help manage and conserve the wild rabbit. At the end of Friday morning, in the plenary session, all the work groups presented their conclusions, which will be recorded in the minutes of the seminar.

Conclusions from the 2nd International Seminar on the wild rabbit

Among the main conclusions, mention was made of the need to further develop research into the management of rabbit populations and genetic with regard to immunity to illness to be able to answer to the conservation needs in the Mediterranean environment. Similarly, there were pleas for the unification of methodologies and criteria at a Peninsular level, in order to homogenise work and facilitate more solid conclusions. From a management point of view, the importance of habitat management in favour of the wild rabbit was highlighted as was the control and standardisation of repopulations to minimise handling related health risks. The scarce use of control of predators was

highlighted in the management of the rabbit and its exceptional nature was raised. From a health point of view, it was recommended that the generalised use of vaccinations on wild rabbit movements be stopped and the importance of carrying out epidemiological treatment of the populations was stressed. Finally, the need to vary the management of populations between areas of high and areas of low rabbit density was raised. Together, the guidelines drawn up at the seminar will represent the starting point for the improvement of the management of rabbit populations to very different levels, adding scientific knowledge, technical experience and the needs of the different sectors involved.

SUMMARY



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An Iberian lynx is found dead in the Sierra Morena

The carcass of an adult male Iberian lynx was found on April 29, in Viñas de Peñallana. The lynx, which was at least 12 years old, was the male known as "Romero" who was radio-marked on March 3 after straying into an area which had a higher human population to where he had been previously. Forensics suggest that the lynx died between April 24 and 26. The samples taken during the autopsy have not yet led to the determination of the ultimate cause of death, however trauma has been ruled out. Although toxicological tests have shown up negative, they suggest poisoning as the cause of death for the lynx which was in a good state of health in March. The results of various tests are still outstanding which may help disclose the cause of death with certainty. This uncertain case is not unlike that of "Estepa" the female from Doñana that died in February, where although the symptoms were compatible with poisoning the presence of any poison in the samples taken could not be determined. These two cases may be the result of poisoning with products which are unstable or difficult to detect.



SECEM Life Lynx volunteer camp, Doñana 2010



Soon the names of the participants in the latest Doñana volunteer camp competition will be available on the website: www.lifelince.org

This year the number of requests from participants from all over Spain has far exceeded one hundred, but only 15 will be chosen to take part in this initiative organised by SECEM [Spanish Society for the Conservation and Study of Mammals] and within the framework of the outreach-participative activities of the Life Lynx Project.

In addition to the support to the technical team with the traditional rabbit census, the participants are going to work on the conclusions drawn from surveys which the volunteers from the previous competition carried out on business people and tourists in Matalascañas and El Rocío. Based on this information, informative material will be prepared for public presentation.

Congratulations to the lucky winners!



Progress of the pregnancies of lynx reintroduced to Guadalmellato



Among masts and olive trees, Spring has brought along the first cubs from the reintroduced lynx Charqueña and Caberú. The first of these surprised the monitoring team since this female, although having shown classic heat behaviour (vocalising, marking with urine, interest by both sexes,...) she was not observed copulating and the pregnancy was not very evident.

At the beginning of April, the female gave birth to 3 beautiful cubs in one of the artificial trunks installed in the acclimatisation enclosure. Charqueña always seemed very attentive to them and rarely left other than to hunt. When they were approximately 25 days old, they were moved to a nearby wooden structure for subsequent transfer to a pile of tubes (both structures are artificial refuges for rabbits in the acclimatisation enclosure). They were seen leaving for the first time on May 17 with their mother who, with a lot of dedication, and above all patience,

looked after them as they explored their surroundings, played and fought. Eclipse, the young female, was at an advanced stage of gestation until mid-May approximately. Her pregnancy was recorded during a routine ultrasound which was performed when her GPS collar was being changed. The cubs have not yet been seen.

As for Diana, the only female with which the first copulation was observed on January 29, she had a large stomach until the end of April. To date, no cubs have been detected in her acclimatisation enclosure. Her behaviour, similar to before giving birth, signifies that she may have lost them although we cannot yet discard the idea that they are alive somewhere as each animal may behave differently after delivery as experienced in the off-site breeding centres. We hope to bring you good news in this regard in our next newsletter...

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