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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

39th meeting
Strasbourg, 3-6 December 2019

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DRAFT RECOMMENDATION ON THE CONSERVATION OF THE EURASIAN LYNX (*LYNX LYNX)* IN EUROPE

Document prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Participation

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. … (2019) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2019, on the Conservation of the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx)* in Europe

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

Having regard to the aims of the convention to conserve wild fauna and its natural habitats;

Considering that the European lynx *(Lynx lynx)* is a fundamental part of the European natural heritage;

Conscious that international co-operation by all relevant Parties is necessary for the long-term preservation and management of the species in the region;

Recalling that one of the aims of the convention is to conserve wild fauna and its habitats, especially those species whose conservation requires the co-operation of several states, and to promote such co-operation;

Stressing the need to advance to a more coordinated management of the whole population of lynx in the whole of its range;

Desirous to avoid a further loss of biological diversity in Europe and wishing to promote co-existence of viable populations of lynx in Europe with sustained development of its rural areas and noting that lynx conservation is compatible with other human activities such as livestock raising and hunting;

Recalling Recommendation No. 115 (2005) on the conservation and management of transboundary populations of large carnivores and Recommendation No. 137 (2008**)** on population level management of large carnivores' populations;

Convinced that illegal killing of lynx and other illegal activities affecting the species have no place in lynx management and should be actively eradicated;

Taking note of the Conclusions of the expert workshop on lynx conservation in Bonn, Germany, 16−19 June 2019,

Recommends that relevant Contracting Parties to the Convention:

1. Strengthen conservation of endangered native populations of lynx, such as the Balkan Lynx listed in Appendix II of the Convention;
2. Monitor and improve genetic diversity of all reintroduced populations aiming to avoid the threat of inbreeding depression;
3. Monitor and manage transboundary populations of lynx following the principles and guidelines endorsed in the Standing Committee Recommendation No.137 (2008) on population level management of large carnivore populations; develop in particular a common conservation strategy for the native Carpathian population;

4. Improve as necessary connectivity of different lynx subpopulations, based on genetic and population data; use, as appropriate, restoration of corridors, green bridges, mitigation of human-induced mortality, habitat improvement, and, where necessary, translocations; in that context promote knowledge of migration of lynx between populations, improving information the movement of individuals and monitoring their genetic status;

5. Monitor genetics of all lynx populations in Europe; the monitoring needs to include tracking of genetic diversity and inbreeding over time, assessing effective population size and detecting genetic flow between neighbouring populations

6. Develop a system for assessing and exchanging animals to facilitate an assisted metapopulation management; for that purpose facilitate the establishment of a permanent lynx genetics working group which could develop a detailed protocol for genetic monitoring and conservation aiming to reduce the inbreeding of wild populations and guide genetic management of metapopulations;

7. When restocking populations of reintroduced populations, use preferably genetic stock from the same source as the original population, or, where appropriate, properly managed specimens from the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) Carpathian lynx European Studbook (ESB); make sure when animals are taken from free-ranging populations that removal of individuals will not be detrimental to the source population; for reintroductions in the "Baltic lowland lynx" populations should come from the Baltic or Karelian population or from the EAZA Northern lynx ESB of the Fenno-Baltic line;

8. Develop specific protocols for (1) breeding, husbandry, training and assessment of zoo-born lynx designated to be released, and (2) for the husbandry and testing of orphaned lynx to be released. These protocols must be jointly developed by lynx experts, the EAZA Felid TAG and ESB, and relevant IUCN SSC institutions (e.g. Cat Specialist Group, Reintroduction Specialist Group, and LCIE);

9. Support, as appropriate, the creation of a permanent Eurasian lynx Working Group, e.g. affiliated with IUCN SSC specialist groups such as the Cat Specialist Group and the LCIE; this group could be charged with (1) drafting detailed protocols for capturing, treating/examining and transporting Eurasian lynx; (2) developing and maintaining practical protocols for lynx conservation and management as outlined under the recommendations above; (3) engaging with other experts to develop concepts for a wider outreach and communication in order to reach the institution and interest groups mentioned above, but also the general public.