

1. Sourcing Working Group

Convener: Kristina Vogt (k.vogt@kora.ch)

The Sourcing Working Group formed in 2021, responding to the Recommendations by the Bonn Lynx Expert Group. Initially, the main focus was the development of standards and protocols for the sourcing of ex situ lynx. The group adopted the name « Linking Lynx » and people from planned reintroduction projects joined. As work progressed, it transpired that the sourcing of lynx from all three sources – ex situ breeding programme, orphaned lynx, wild source populations – is closely connected and that it would make sense to coordinate respective requests and efforts. The idea of a “lynx distribution platform”, linking demand and supply and providing coordination, was born. During this workshop we will continue the work in three subgroups with respect to the sourcing of ex situ lynx and discuss open questions regarding the inclusion of the other sources.

Ex situ breeding programme (Dina Gebhardt, Alexander Sliwa)

The ex situ subgroup will focus on practical aspects of sourcing zoo-born lynx for releases:

- How can we make additional suitable breeding enclosures available, either from EAZA or from the Deutscher Wildgehege Verband (DWV)?
- How can we include additional genetically important Carpathian lynx (e.g., from Eastern European zoos) into the breeding programme?
- Handling protocol for staff in institutions that are raising ex situ lynx for reintroduction projects: Do we need additional information here (e.g. vaccination, capture, behaviour of keepers, etc.)?

Orphaned lynx (Kristina Vogt, Ole Anders)

The orphan subgroup will discuss how orphaned lynx could be made available for reintroduction projects in a coordinated way:

- From which lynx populations could orphans be sourced?
- What (political) work is needed in the source country to make the exchange of orphans possible?
- List of suitable sanctuaries and capacity in different countries
- Responsibilities (Who "owns" orphans? Who is responsible after a translocation across a border?)
- What should happen to orphans who cannot be rehabilitated to the wild?
- How do we integrate lynx orphans into the "lynx distribution platform", i.e., how will the exchange of orphans be coordinated?

Wild source populations (Jakub Kubala)

The wild sources subgroup will discuss how people working with wild source populations could participate in the Sourcing Working Group and what is needed from their perspective.

- How can we integrate wild sources into the Sourcing Working Group?
- How should requests for wild-caught lynx reach the source countries in a coordinated manner in the future?
- What resources are needed in the source countries to ensure monitoring of donor populations and to maintain capacity for wild captures?
- How can we maintain public acceptance and political will to ensure a role of the autochthonous populations as sources for reintroduction projects?

2. CELynx – Genetics Working Group

Convener: Christine Breitenmoser-Würsten (ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch)

Small, isolated populations may suffer from genetic erosion and inbreeding depression. It is therefore crucial to include genetic factors management plans for further lynx reintroductions to ensure their long-term success. Reintroduced populations of lynx in Central Europe show overall moderate levels of genetic diversity and higher level of inbreeding (Mueller et al. 2022). Therefore, a set of recommendations was formulated at the Expert Lynx conference in Bonn 2019 to enable (i) a harmonized genetic monitoring, and (ii) short- to long-term genetic management of reintroduced lynx populations (Bonn Lynx Expert Group 2021). In the workshop we will review progress since previous meeting and address specific aspects, i.e.: (i) Agreement on lynx generation length, (ii) Standardisation of genetic marker sets and sampling rate for harmonised genetic monitoring, (iii) Optimal management scenarios for ensuring viability of lynx populations, (iv) Genetic metapopulation model for Continental Europe. We will furthermore discuss the perspectives and needs of further genetic/genomic research to gain knowledge on the genetic status of reintroduced lynx populations and on evolutionary processes affecting their viability for future. The expected outcome is the definition of next steps and recommendations for further cooperation.

References

- Bonn Lynx Expert Group. 2021. Recommendations for the conservation of the Eurasian lynx in Western and Central Europe. *Cat News Special Issue 14*, 78–86.
- Mueller S. A., Prost S., Anders O., Breitenmoser-Würsten Ch., Kleven O., Klinga P., Konec M., Kopatz A., Krojerová-Prokešová J., Middelhoff T. L., Obexer-Ruff G., Reiners T. E., Schmidt K., Sindičič M., Skrbinšek T., Tám B., Saveljev P., Galsandorj N. & Nowak C. 2022. Genome-wide diversity loss in reintroduced Eurasian lynx populations urges immediate conservation management. *Biological Conservation* 266, 109442. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2021.109442>

3. Monitoring Working Group

Conveners: Kirsten Weingarth-Dachs (kirsten.weingarth@posteo.de), Urša Flezar (ursaflezar@gmail.com), and [Fridolin Zimmermann (f.zimmermann@kora.ch)]

Reliable estimates of abundance of lynx populations are key in understanding the species' life history and demography and are required for policy and decision-making (e.g. Fauna-Flora-Habitat directive).

In Central Europe, camera trapping has become the standard tool for collecting systematic data about present lynx populations, enabling us to estimate the basic demographic parameters, such as abundance. At the same time, opportunistic monitoring often represents the first information about lynx in yet unexplored areas, as well as guide the future monitoring programs. In case of reintroduction or reinforcement of lynx populations, telemetry is essential for tracking the translocated animals and evaluating the overall success of the conservation actions. With the use of genetic surveys, we can assess parameters such as inbreeding, a pressing issue for many lynx populations in Central Europe. However, the decisions about the specific criteria for the implementation of different methods vary between study areas and influence the quality and comparability of the data collected on a continental scale.

As lynx is spreading in Central Europe due to reintroduction programs or natural recolonization, the significance of standardized monitoring and comparability of obtained parameters is increasing. Especially the camera trap monitoring faces enormous challenges concerning data merging and large-scale individual comparisons.

Introduction: Monitoring working group

How can we meet the future demands of lynx monitoring in Central Europe?

Within the monitoring working group, we will discuss:

- i) The requirements for a successful intra- and inter-population lynx monitoring, focusing on camera trapping mainly in terms of data standardization.
- ii) The minimum standard for evaluating the effectiveness of the reintroduction programs, defining the specific criteria for the application of each method for lynx surveillance available (opportunistic surveys, camera trapping, telemetry studies, genetic sampling).
- iii) What are the measurements of success in a lynx monitoring? And which factors apart from the study design contribute to or affect the success of monitoring?
- iv) The most recent examples of good practice of lynx reintroductions and population-level monitoring programs and the latest lessons learnt.
- v) What support can existing networks offer to tackle the future needs and challenges?

The participants are invited to share their experience and collaborate with their own ideas or suggest additional topics to be discussed. We look forward to an open and lively discussion.

4. Health Working Group

Conveners: Magda Sindicic (magda.sindicic@gmail.com), Pavel Kvapil (pavel.kvapil@gmail.com)

Lynx health workshop is aimed at sharing and discussing various veterinary topics related to the health and well-being of the animals. The working group will cover a range of subjects including:

1. Anesthesiological protocols review, with possible implications for debilitated or genetically impaired animals.
2. Peri-anaesthesiological monitoring - in terms what is most common approach in different countries and how clinical and paraclinical examinations in the field differ.
3. Health monitoring and sampling for infectious and non-infectious diseases.
4. Necropsy protocols review.
5. Cooperation, data sharing, open discussion.

The desired outcome of the workshop would be shaping up lynx health working group, proposal of optimal protocols and standards of health care in lynx conservation. This would possibly lead to unification of methods used across European countries and facilitate the better communication and data sharing among various groups working with these animals.

5. Human Dimension Working Group

Convener: Aleksandra Majić Skrbinšek (almajic@gmail.com)

The "Bonn Lynx Expert Group" workshop held in Bonn, Germany in June 2019 brought together experts from various lynx conservation projects, who agreed that addressing policy and human dimensions aspects is crucial for the successful coordination and cooperation of local or regional efforts. As a result, the public outreach working group meeting is organized in response to this agreement, with a focus on facilitating discussions and collaborations related to public outreach activities for lynx conservation projects and organizations in Europe.

The meeting will provide a platform for participants to exchange opinions, share experiences, and assess the needs for collaboration and coordination in planning and implementing public outreach activities. The discussions will be exploratory in nature, aiming to delve into important questions related to stakeholder engagement, communication strategies, and the role of traditional and non-traditional interest groups. For instance, the meeting will explore ways of integrating stakeholders and interest groups in lynx conservation projects, with a particular emphasis on understanding the perspectives of traditionally polarized groups that hold extreme viewpoints, both positive and negative. The meeting will also consider the role of non-traditional interest groups, such as artists, as "positive messengers" in promoting lynx conservation.

Additionally, the meeting will delve into communication strategies, including the who, what, and how of effectively communicating with different stakeholders, and the balance between information sharing and communication in engaging the public. The meeting will also explore the nuances of education versus exchange, rational versus emotional framing, and the need for context-specific recommendations for public outreach efforts in the European context.

Practitioners involved in a wide range of public outreach approaches, including implementation of communication campaigns, integration of stakeholders and interest groups, and other related efforts, are welcome to join the public outreach working group meeting. This meeting presents a unique opportunity to share expertise, insights, and lessons learned from different lynx conservation projects and organizations, and contribute to the development of effective public outreach strategies for lynx conservation in Europe.

Don't miss this opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions and collaborations with experts in the field. Join us at the public outreach working group meeting to contribute to the collective efforts towards conserving the majestic lynx in Europe.

6. Policy Working Group

Convener: Katrina Marsden (marsden@adelphi.de)

The "Bonn Lynx Expert Group" workshop, held in Bonn, Germany in June 2019 brought together scientists and experts from lynx conservation projects, who agreed priority issues for addressing lynx conservation in the future. The group agreed that addressing policy and human dimensions aspects is crucial for the successful coordination and cooperation of local or regional efforts but that these aspects were not sufficiently considered in this initial workshop. In this follow up workshop therefore, policy, conflict and coexistence and awareness raising are the focus of two break out groups.

The policy workshop will examine the following topics, aimed at considering the different points of entry to have an impact on the policy cycle. We will examine how to influence the formation of international, EU and national policy and more particularly, its implementation on the national, regional and local levels.

In the first part of the workshop, a basic "needs analysis" will be carried out with participants based on the Bonn and BeCon recommendations. In particular, the most important areas where an influence on policy is needed will be examined based on examples provided by participants. This will help to identify the most important institutions or bodies to address on the different levels.

In the second part, means to address policy makers on different levels will be gathered from participants and discussed as a group. The group will aim to come up with a list of policy recommendations and the next steps for a guide for addressing policy makers.

There are overlaps with the aims of the public outreach working group, especially on the aspect of working with and engaging stakeholders. The approach in both groups will therefore be coordinated and the outputs compared.