



LIFE Project ***Enhancing Habitat for the Iberian Lynx and Black Vulture in the Southeast of Portugal***

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The LIFE – Nature Project ‘Enhancing Habitat for the Iberian Lynx and Black Vulture in the Southeast of Portugal’, which acronym is LIFE Habitat Lince Abutre, is coordinated by LPN – Liga para a Protecção da Natureza in partnership with several private and public institutions, namely Centro de Estudos da Avifauna Ibérica (CEAI), Associação Nacional de Proprietários e Produtores de Caça (ANPC), Associação dos Jovens Agricultores de Moura (AJAM), Direcção-Geral de Veterinária (DGV), Instituto de Conservação da Natureza e Biodiversidade (ICNB) and Centro de Investigação e Intervenção Social (CIS / ISCTE-IUL). It has as co-financers the *Fauna & Flora International* (FFI) and ICNB.

This project is co-funded in 75% by the LIFE-Nature Programme of the European Commission and has an overall budget of about 2,6 million euros. The LIFE Habitat Lince Abutre will last for 4 years, from January 2010 to December 2013, and will be implemented in the regions of Mourão, Moura and Barrancos, Guadiana Valley and Caldeirão Hills, in the areas of the Natura 2000 Network therein.

The LIFE project Habitat Lince Abutre aims to contribute to the improvement of the survival, feeding and breeding conditions for the Iberian lynx and black vulture in the southeast of Portugal, benefiting a wide set of other threatened species.

For such, management agreements will be established with local stakeholders, particularly landowners, managers, farmers and hunters, in order to promote the conservation of natural habitats and allow the implementation of the conservation measures foreseen in the project. Another objective is to aware and involve the local society in the conservation of Iberian lynx, black vulture and their habitats.

In the initial phase of the project, the priority areas for action will be identified, so that the management agreements can be established. At the same time, plans and studies on the factors that threaten the conservation of both species will be performed, in particular a poison mitigation plan at the regional scale, an evaluation of the sanitary status of domestic and wild fauna that share potential habitat and pathologies with Iberian lynx, and an action plan for the conservation of black vulture at the regional scale.

Among the major conservation actions to be implemented, are included the promotion of habitat corridors for Iberian lynx in olive groves, enhancement of wild-rabbit populations through habitat management, construction and rehabilitation of artificial nests for black vulture, increasing food availability for black vulture through the implementation of a network of feeding stations, and prevention of disturbance of both species. All together, the conservation actions envisaged shall significantly contribute to improving habitat conditions for both these species in the areas targeted by the project.

Regarding public awareness and the dissemination of results, there will be actions related to public participation and assessment of attitudes towards the conservation of Iberian lynx, black vulture and the Mediterranean ecosystem (at the beginning and end of the project), the production of awareness and environmental education materials, and awareness actions addressed at local stakeholders, schools and populations within the project intervention area. Furthermore, there will also be an online disclosure of the project (through the project website), demonstration of habitat management actions, organization of technical workshops and participation in scientific meetings.

Finally, note that there is an action aimed to ensure the permanent articulation between the project and the Action Plan for the Conservation of the Iberian Lynx in Portugal, as well as another action that will allow stakeholders to stay informed and participate in the development of the project. LIFE Habitat Lince Abutre project will also have a Technical and Scientific Advisory Group formed by varied specialists on different areas of interest to the project, which shall advise the team in the actions' implementation and in the application of the foreseen conservation measures.