





# Encyclopedia of Endangered Species

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In Association with IUCN-The World Conservation Union

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# Spanish lynx

## *Lynx (Felis) pardinus*

<b>Phylum</b> .....	Chordata
<b>Class</b> .....	Mammalia
<b>Order</b> .....	Carnivora
<b>Family</b> .....	Felidae
<b>Status</b> .....	Endangered, IUCN Endangered, USFWS Appendix I, CITES
<b>Range</b> .....	Portugal; Spain

### Description and Biology

The Spanish lynx or pardel is a small- to medium-sized cat with an average length of 30-40 in (76-101 cm), shoulder height of 20-27 in (50-70 cm), and weight of 25-30 lb (11.3-13.6 kg). The upper body is light brown to reddish, liberally covered with well-defined, round black spots; underparts are pale to white. The face is heavily whiskered and the ears end in black tufts. Its short, black-tipped tail measures 4.75-5.5 in (12-14 cm). Rabbits are the mainstay of this lynx's diet, supplemented by water birds and young deer. It is a strong swimmer and climber, but usually hunts on the ground. Home range varies widely with season and the availability of food, from 4-40 sq mi (10-100 sq km).

This species is solitary except during mating season, usually in January, when the female mates with a single male, the male with a number of females. Average litter is two to three young, born in a secluded den after a gestation period of 63-73 days. The female cares for the young alone, nursing them for three to four months.

### Habitat and Current Distribution

The Spanish lynx is found in southwestern Spain and in a few scattered areas in Portugal. Population is estimated at fewer than 1,000 individuals.

Present restricted habitat is comprised of wooded, mountainous areas in central and southern Spain and in scrubs and sand dunes in the Coto Donana, and the Guadalquivir Delta.

### History and Conservation Measures

While the Spanish lynx once ranged throughout the Iberian Peninsula, its distribution has now been greatly reduced. Initial population figures are unavailable, but the population has declined and continues to decline. Considered a threat to livestock, bounties were once offered to encourage the slaughter of the lynx. In the 1950s and 1960s, a major decline was attributed to the disease myxomatosis, which infected rabbit populations.

The most serious continuing threat to the Spanish lynx is loss and degradation of habitat. Agricultural

tural development is usurping prime habitat, contributing to the fragmentation of the population and the reduction of prey species. Conservation ef-

forts must take into account the habitat requirements for a predatory species. In addition, the public's perception of the lynx as a pest needs to be challenged.