



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.3

23 October 20255

Original: English

15th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Campo Grande, Brazil, 23 to 29 March 2026
Agenda Item 31.3.3

**PROPOSAL FOR A CONCERTED ACTION FOR
THE EURASIAN LYNX (*Lynx lynx*)***

Summary:

The United Nations Environment Programme/Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and IUCN Cat Specialist Group have submitted the attached proposal* for continuation of the **Concerted Actions for the Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*)** in accordance with the process elaborated in Resolution 12.28 (Rev.COP14).

*The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CMS Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

PROPOSAL FOR A CONCERTED ACTION FOR THE EURASIAN LYNX (*Lynx lynx*)

Proponents

United Nations Environment Programme/Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group

Target species, lower taxon or population, or group of taxa with needs in common

Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*, Linneus, 1758), specifically the subspecies *Lynx lynx balcanicus* (Bureš, 1941), *Lynx lynx carpathicus* (Kratochvil & Štollmann, 1963), *Lynx lynx dinniki* (Satunin, 1915) and *Lynx lynx isabellinus* (Blyth, 1847).

Lynx lynx balcanicus was listed under CMS Appendix I, while *L. l. carpathicus*, *L. l. dinniki* and *L. l. isabellinus* are included in *L. lynx* listed under Appendix II at COP14 in 2024.

Geographical range

The Eurasian lynx is a Palearctic species distributed from the Atlantic in Europe to the Pacific in northern Asia, but splits into several distinct subspecies of which four are target taxa of this proposal: *L. l. balcanicus* is today limited to a tiny population in the border region of North Macedonia and Albania; it inhabited historically the south-western Balkans. *L. l. carpathicus* was historically restricted to the Carpathian Mountains but today includes several reintroduced populations in West- and Central Europe, where the lynx went extinct. *L. l. dinniki* is the Caucasus subspecies, which spreads from the Caucasus Mountains south and west to the Anatolian Peninsula, northern Iraq and Iran. *L. l. isabellinus* is the Central Asian subspecies, the mountain ranges of the Pamir, Hindukush, Tien Shan, and (partly) the Himalaya, assumedly including steppe areas such as the Dzungar Basin. These four subspecies are clearly separated from the large continuous distribution range of *L. l. lynx* and *L. l. wrangeli* in the boreal forest belt of Eurasia (Fig. 1).

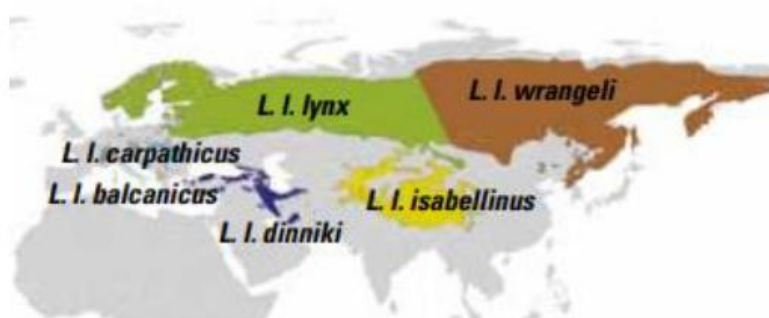


Fig. 1. Approximate distribution range of the subspecies of the Eurasian lynx according to Kitchener et al. 2017.

Summary of Activities

While the boreal distribution range of the Eurasian lynx is large, continuous and stable, the “southern” subspecies (Fig. 1) have lost most of their historic range (in Europe) or their conservation status including distribution range, population size and trend are largely unknown (in Asia). These four subspecies are conservation dependent and, as distributed over many range States, need transboundary cooperation for their long-term conservation. The initial suggestion anticipated (1) developing a spatially explicit conservation action plan for *L. l. balcanicus*, (2) a conservation strategy for the Carpathians, (3) recommendations for

reintroduction, genetic remedy and sourcing animals for the realm of *L. l. carpathicus* in continental Europe, (4) and (5) performing a baseline survey for *L. l. dinniki* and *L. l. isabellinus*, allowing assessing their conservation status e.g. according to IUCN Red List standards.

However, apart from Activity 1, Activities 2-5 require prolongation of its implementation period until the end of 2026. Please see below a description on the progress of activities and proposed new deadlines.

Activities and expected outcomes

Results (expected outcome) and related Activities are tabulated in the Logical Framework given in the Annex. Please see below a short narrative of each block.

- (1) The Balkan lynx *L. l. balcanicus* emerged from a glacial refuge in south-eastern Asia and was historically restricted to the mountain ranges of the southern Balkan Peninsula. It is today limited to the transboundary zone of North Macedonia and north-eastern Albania and is listed as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List. Its potential recovery area includes suited habitats in North Macedonia and Albania, but also in Greece, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the region of the Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244/99). Biology, ecology and conservation status are rather well known thanks to an ongoing research and conservation programme, but what is lacking is an institutional transboundary cooperation.

Range-wide Conservation Strategy for the Balkan lynx (*L. l. balcanicus*) was prepared following the updated IUCN assessments. The Red List assessment (RLA) and the Green Status of Species assessments (GSS) have been finished and are ready to be published on the IUCN Red List website. The Conservation Strategy was developed by a team of experts in five online workshops in winter/spring 2025 and numerous internal coordination meetings, was submitted to and subsequently discussed with the Range States in a workshop in Skopje (North Macedonia) 2–5 June 2025. The strategy was further distributed to the range countries for consultation purposes. The drafting committee further revised the strategy based on the comments and recommendations received during the consultation period. The final draft version of the strategy was submitted to the Bonn and the Bern Conventions on the 23rd of October 2025.

- (2) *Lynx lynx carpathicus* is restricted to the Carpathian Mountain Range. While the Romanian population is believed to be stable, the Slovak/Czech population seems to decline, and the Ukrainian population is likely to be so low that the continuous distribution may be disrupted. It is urgent to establish range-wide transboundary cooperation with regard to its monitoring and conservation. The process for **development of the strategy** has been initiated within the auspices of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, with regional conservation organisations and scientific institutions that are to support the development and guide the establishment and implementation of conservation activities through national action plans, according to the IUCN Guidelines for the Strategic Planning of Species Conservation. The following progress has been made:
 - RLA and GSS are finalised as a draft to provide input to the planning process.
 - Conducted discussion with the Carpathian Convention Secretariat on the joint development of a range-wide conservation Strategy.
 - Dates for the workshops and physical meetings are yet to be determined, depending on available funding.

- (3) The Eurasian lynx was widespread in continental Europe, but went extinct in the course of the 19th and early 20th century. Reintroduction of *L. l. carpathicus* in the mountainous areas of continental Europe started 50 years ago, using wild-caught lynx from Slovakia. The reintroduced populations are still very small and isolated, and the oldest of them suffer from inbreeding. To save extant populations and recover a viable metapopulation of lynx in West- and Central Europe, a tight transboundary cooperation is urgent. Extant populations need to be reinforced and new populations need to be established to improve connectivity. Sourcing lynx is challenging, as the availability of specimens from both natural source population and from conservation breeding programmes are limited and several release programmes are competing for lynx. Monitoring and genetic assessment need to be harmonised, and protocols for translocation, health monitoring, breeding and training need to be standardised and widely accepted by all decision-making national and sub-national authorities on continental Europe.

We will, in cooperation with the Carpathian Lynx Working Group, develop **guidelines for the recovery of the lynx in Central and Western Europe based on the “Bonn Recommendations”** (e.g. Recommendation No. 204 (2019) of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention) providing general guidance on the recovery of a metapopulation and provide concrete protocols for sourcing and management of translocations and reintroductions. Some progress has been made as follows:

- Range hosting re-introduced populations of Carpathian lynx included into the RLA and GSS.
- Drafting of the IUCN SSC Guidelines for the reintroduction and conservation of the lynx in the “Realm of the Carpathian Lynx” in progress. The work is done in cooperation with the Linking Lynx Expert Group. The Guidelines will be finalised as soon as the range-wide Strategy (Activity 2 above) is available (tentatively spring 2027).

- (4) The Central Asian subspecies *L. l. isabellinus* is distinct from other lynx subspecies in its appearance, but likely also with regard to its ecology. However, it is the least-known subspecies and information on distribution, abundance and trend are not available. Its conservation status has hence never been assessed according to the IUCN Red List procedures. Its range however overlaps largely with the Snow Leopard (a CMS-listed species considered under CMS CAMI), and we hope to profit from the network established for Snow Leopard conservation to compile data on the lynx, too. In close cooperation with Range States scientific and conservation institutions, a baseline survey will be conducted leading to a robust assessment of the conservation status of the Central Asian lynx. The survey will be based on (i) review of literature, (ii) compilation of all bycatch-data from camera trapping across the region and (iii) a fine-scaled questionnaire survey with stakeholders done by local (young) experts. This will not only allow compiling information to inform further conservation approaches, it will also offer the opportunity for awareness and capacity building and to establish a network for future cooperation. Some progress on the **Survey and first IUCN assessments for the Turkestan lynx (*L. l. isabellinus*) in Central Asia** has been made as follows:

- There is an ongoing Range-wide survey, with results from the Range States expected in October 2025.
- Training for the assessors (RLA, GSS) was provided in two online workshops.
- RLA has started and is ongoing, complemented through a GSS. A Climate Change Vulnerability assessment (CCVA) is planned to be added, as it is likely that Central Asia will be strongly affected.
- The planned activities are expected to be finalised in summer 2026.

- (5) The Caucasian subspecies *L. l. dinniki* is distributed across the Caucasus range and further south and south-west. There is more information available on its distribution range and ecology than from the Central Asian subspecies, but trend information is not available, and range-wide data are too sparse for a robust assessment of the subspecies' conservation status. Hence the approach proposed will again include performing a baseline survey across the range, a first assessment of the conservation status, training of local (young) experts and establishing a network of institutional and private organisations.

With regards to the **Survey and first IUCN assessment for the Caucasus lynx (*L. l. dinniki*) in Anatolia and SW Asia**, please see below some progress on the activities:

- The Survey (compilation of data from the Range States) has started; however, there have been delays mainly attributed to complicated communication.
- Training for the assessors (RLA, GSS) was provided in two online workshops.
- GSS and CCVA would be sensible complementation, but will start only when RLA is advanced and available as a draft.
- In case of progress in solving the above-mentioned challenges, the planned activities are to be finalised in 2026.

Associated benefits

Generally, lynx are flagship and keystone species across their range. Hence their conservation has a high effect on awareness raising and includes conservation of habitats and prey populations. In Europe, this includes improving connectivity between larger habitat complexes and management of roe deer populations (which is the main prey). Cooperation between scientific institutions and conservation NGOs is well-established (especially for the Balkan lynx sub-species), but conceptual and practical cooperation between conservation agencies at national and sub-national level needs to be enhanced.

In Asia, the proposed lynx conservation activities will allow awareness raising, capacity building and fostering institutional cooperation. It is assumed that the habitat fragmentation is less prominent than in Europe, but border fences, infrastructure development and lack of transboundary cooperation bear the risk of future population fragmentation, which is potentially dangerous especially in Central Asia, where we assume to find an overall low density and a pronounced linear distribution, depending on dense-cover habitats available.

Timeframe

IUCN SSC (Cat Specialist Group) and Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention remain committed to achieving the initially planned results under Activities 1-5. However, there have been some delays in implementing Activities 2-5, thus requiring a prolongation of the Concerted Action with delivery anticipated by the end of 2026.

Activity 1: Completed and submitted to the Bonn and Bern Conventions on 23rd October 2025, together with a report on the progress of implementation of the Concerted Actions.

Activity 2: The process of development of the Carpathian lynx strategy has been initiated; however, its finalization is to be postponed until third quarter of 2026.

Activity 3: Draft recommendations to be available by mid of 2026, revised version by October 2026, depending on completion of Activity 2 (finalization – tentatively spring 2027).

Activity 4 and 5: Each of these blocks have been initiated, but require careful preparation (establishing partnership, capacity building/training, and fundraising) and an additional year of implementation. Both activities are foreseen to be ready for submission by mid-end of 2026.

Each of the Activities will result in Outcomes (e.g. Action Plans, Conservation Strategies, Conservation Assessments) that will inform subsequent projects and continuous works. The Concerted Actions will continue to be implemented and finalised in the next intersessional period. No changes in the approach or activities are needed.

Relationship to other CMS actions

The Concerted Action is the first conservation initiative for terrestrial species under CMS in Europe, where transboundary cooperation is a *conditio sine qua non* for wide-ranging species such as the Eurasian lynx with mostly transboundary populations. In Central Asia, the CMS CAMI programme facilitates the conservation of listed species and transboundary conservation. The sub-species *Lynx lynx isabellinus* has been officially included into CAMI at the Third CAMI Range State meeting (24-26 June 2025, Tashkent, Uzbekistan). Consequently, the lynx is addressed as one of the target species of the CAMI Work Programme 2026-2032, which encompasses activities of relevance to its conservation.

Conservation priority

The urgency of improved conservation of the Critically Endangered *Lynx lynx balcanicus* is undisputed; the subspecies is at the verge of extinction. Only concerted transboundary actions can save it. For these reasons, the highest priority was given to implementing the CA/Activity 1. The next two Activities (2, 3) for the Carpathian lynx are also urgent as several projects are proposed but need to be coordinated under one common approach and based on agreed conservation principles. With regard to Activities 4 and 5, it is difficult to assess their urgencies; there is a lack of reliable information to assess status and trend of these two subspecies. But considering the fast and vast development in the regions concerned, we believe that providing such baseline information to inform subsequent conservation approaches must have high priority.

Relevance

Like other large cats, Eurasian lynx were found to live at low densities wherever robust studies were executed. All viable populations outside the enormous belt of the boreal forest are transboundary and are increasingly suffering from fragmentation. While, at least in Europe, national awareness is mostly given and conservation activities are in place, the crucial transboundary cooperation is only exceptionally established. This is mainly a shortcoming of institutional awareness and priority setting. Support from an international convention is therefore most welcome.

Absence of better remedies

Lynx lynx (Appendix II) and *Lynx lynx balcanicus* (Appendix I) were listed by COP14 on CMS Appendices. The listing should be supported by further activities. For *L. l. balcanicus*, *L. l. carpathicus* and *L. l. dinniki*, a Concerted Action under CMS is being implemented – in cooperation with other conventions and initiatives wherever available – an additional strong instrument for the cooperation between the Range States. For *L. l. isabellinus*, inclusion into the CMS CAMI is beneficial and considered an additional support. The proposed activities – compiling baseline information informing a robust assessment – will be needed to define sensible targeted activities also under the CAMI Programme of Work.

Readiness and feasibility

For Activities 2–3, leadership is available through IUCN institutions (e.g. several Specialist Groups), a sound scientific understanding provided by several universities and other scientific institutions involved, and the engagement of several large conservation organisations involved into the activities at various levels. Fundraising will be needed to organise the workshops needed for the Carpathians, but most of the work will be done by the experts and conservationists in the frame of their employments or projects.

For the two baseline surveys in Asia, fundraising will be needed. We expect the participating (scientific) institutions to provide their support for the project, but funds will be needed to train and support the project executives in the various Range States.

Likelihood of success

All methods and concepts proposed here are standard, established and widely tested and bear no methodological risk. The promised output will be achieved. With regard to the participation of the Range States and their subsequent engagement, we assume an improved cooperation among all Parties to CMS and the Range States participating in the CMS CAMI.

Magnitude of likely impact

The total number of countries to be involved in/affected by these activities is 35 (A-1, 5; A-2, 5 (1 overlap with A—1); A-3, 8; A-4, 7; A-5, 11), of which only 5 are not Parties to CMS. As a large (Europe) or medium-sized (Asia) carnivore species, lynx act as flagship for habitat and prey (Europe: small ungulates, Asia: likely mostly lagomorphs) species. Outreach to stakeholders is crucial. On the one hand, cats are charismatic species, on the other hand, lynx may be considered a threat to (domestic) prey species. However, considering that anthropogenic mortality is likely a considerable threat throughout the range, such communication is important.

Cost-effectiveness

The costs for Activity 1 have been covered through ongoing projects of the SCC and IUCN/CSG, whereas for Activities 2 and 3 is expected to be low and well-justified compared to the expected outcome. Costs for Activities 4 and 5 need to be estimated after establishment of the partnership needed. However, labour costs are expected to be moderate and the capacity-building and awareness-raising effect large.

Consultations-Planned/Undertaken

Long-term contacts have been established with scientific and conservation institutions in all countries considered for Activities 1–3, as well as institutional contacts in most of the Range States. With regard to the Asian project areas (Activities 4–5), we have been in contact with Range States institutions through diverse activities and projects in the frame of IUCN SSC work, and more specifically with the CMS related authorities through CAMI-related work (e.g. the development of a Conservation Strategy for the Persian Leopard as a contribution to the CAMI Programme of Work). The IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group has started to establish contacts with scientific institutions and experts in the Range States of *L. l. isabellinus* and *L. l. dinniki*.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROPOSED PROLONGATION OF ACTIVITIES UNDER THE CMS CONCERTED ACTION FOR THE EURASIAN LYNX (*Lynx lynx*)

Objective/Result/Activity (A)	Indicator	Timeline	Actor	Funding
Objective 1: To develop concepts and recommendations guiding the transboundary cooperation in the conservation and recovery of the Balkan lynx (<i>Lynx lynx balcanicus</i>) and the Carpathian lynx (<i>Lynx lynx carpathicus</i>) in Europe				
Result 1.1: Develop, endorse and implement a spatially explicit conservation action plan (a Strategy) for the range-wide conservation and recovery of the Balkan lynx in cooperation with the extant and historic Range States under the auspices of international conventions				
A.1.1.1: Produce a report on the conservation status of the Balkan lynx	Report produced and distributed	End of March 2024	BLRP6	BLRP
1.1.2: Agree with the Range States on the development of a Conservation Strategy under the auspices of international conventions such as the Carpathian Convention, Bern Convention, CMS and with the support from IUCN and the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention	Consensus on approach with Range States	Spring 2025	RS, Conventions, BLRP, IUCN, UNEP/SCC	NA
A 1.1.3: Organize and perform participatory workshops for the development of the Conservation Strategy	Venue, participants, and approach agreed	Spring-Summer 2025	BLRP, Cat SG, RS, UNEP-SCC	\$10-20k
A 1.1.4: Draft, review, revise and submit the Conservation Strategy.	Strategy endorsed by RS and Conventions	Autumn 2025	BLRP, Cat SG, RS, Conventions	\$5k
Result 1.2: Develop, endorse and implement a Strategy for the conservation of the autochthonous population of the Carpathian lynx in Europe in close cooperation with the Range States to inform the development and implementation of related National Action Plans				
A 1.2.1: Produce a summary report on the conservation status of the Carpathian lynx as an input document to the strategy workshop.	Report produced and distributed	End of 2024	CLWG7, Cat SG	NA
A 1.2.2: Agree with the Range States on the development of a Conservation Strategy under the auspices of the Carpathian Convention, the Bern Convention, and CMS.	Draft Strategy produced and distributed	End of 2025	RS, Conventions, CLWG, Cat SG	NA
A 1.2.3: Organize and perform participatory workshops for the development of the Conservation Strategy, facilitated by IUCN	Strategy endorsed by RS and conventions	First half of 2026	Cap. Conv., IUCN, local organisers	\$10-20k
A 1.2.4: Draft, review, revise and submit the Conservation Strategy.	Strategy endorsed by RS and Conventions	Mid-end 2026	BLRP, Cat SG, RS, Conventions	\$5k
Result 1.3: Develop guidelines for the recovery of the Carpathian lynx in the mountainous region of West- and Central Europe to coordinate reintroductions, reinforcements, and connectivity, and to organize the sourcing and agree on common principles and protocols				
A 1.3.1: Develop guidelines based on the “Bonn Recommendations” and the Protocols presently being developed by the CLWG.	Guidelines drafted	2026	IUCN and CLWG	\$10k
A 1.3.2: Submit the draft guidelines to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention and the Scientific Council of CMS for review.	Guidelines submitted	End of 2026	IUCN and CLWG	NA

A 1.3.3: Revise the draft version and submit final version to the Conventions and to all Range States concerned

Guidelines finalized	Spring 2027	IUCN and CLWG	TBD
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Objective 2: To perform baseline surveys and a robust assessment of the conservation status for the two Asian subspecies of the Eurasian lynx, *L. l. isabellinus* (Central Asia) and *L. l. dinniki* (Caucasus and SW Asia) and prepare the ground for the range-wide conservation of these subspecies through building networks and develop the local capacities needed

Result 2.1: Compile the baseline information needed for the conservation of the Central Asian Lynx *L. l. isabellinus* and use these activities for networking and building local capacities

A 2.1.1. Contact Range States with regard to submitting a proposal to include <i>L. l. isabellinus</i> into the CMS Central Asian Mammal Initiative.	<i>L. l. isabellinus</i> listed under CMS CAMI	March 2024	IUCN	NA
A 2.1.2. Build a network of scientific institutions and other organizations across the range and train the network members in survey technique and RL assessment	Network functional	End of 2024	IUCN Cat SG and NGOs	\$5k
A 2.1.3. Perform a review of scientific literature, unpublished reports, media articles and social media contribution with regard to the species' presence and perception.	Review report available	End of 2024	Network experts, IUCN, NGOs	TBD
A 2.1.4. Scan all available sources for pictures of <i>L. l. isabellinus</i> (e.g. camera-trapping projects, wildlife photography platforms, social media).	Picture data base compiled, gaps identified	End of 2024	Network experts, IUCN, NGOs	TBD
A 2.1.5. Perform a survey by means of questionnaires based on a regular grid or on adequate management units in all Range States.	Survey completed, gaps identified	Mid-2026	Network experts, NGOs	TBD
A 2.2.6. Compile information from A 2.1.2-4 into a review report on <i>L. l. isabellinus</i> and perform a Red List Assessment and, if possible, a Green Status Assessment according to IUCN protocols in cooperation with the Range Country experts.	Report available, RLA and GSA done and submitted	Autumn 2026	Network experts, IUCN, NGOs	TBD

Result 2.2: Compile the baseline information needed for the conservation of the SW Asian Lynx *L. l. dinniki* and use these activities for networking and building local capacities

A 2.2.1. Build a network of scientific institutions and other organizations across the range and train the network members in survey technique and RL assessment.	Network functional	During 2025 and onwards	IUCN Cat SG and NGOs	\$5k
A 2.2.2. Perform a review of scientific literature, unpublished reports, media articles and social media contribution with regard to the species' presence and perception.	Review report available	End of 2025	Network experts, IUCN, NGOs	TBD
A 2.2.3. Scan all available sources for pictures of <i>L. l. dinniki</i> (e.g. camera-trapping projects, wildlife photography platforms, social media).	Picture data base compiled, gaps identified	End of 2025	Network experts, IUCN, NGOs	TBD
A 2.2.4. Perform a survey by means of questionnaires based on a regular grid or on adequate management units in all Range States.	Survey completed, gaps identified	Mid-2026	Network experts, NGOs	TBD
A 2.2.5. Compile information from A 2.1.2-4 into a review report on <i>L. l. dinniki</i> and perform a Red List Assessment and, if possible, a Green Status Assessment according to IUCN protocols in cooperation with the Range Country experts.	Report available, RLA and GSA done and submitted	End of 2026	Network experts, IUCN, NGOs	TBD