

# Large carnivore conservation actions for Latvia – an update of national species conservation plans

Contractor: Wildlife Management research group  
LSFRI Silava

Addresses for proposals:

[guna.bagrade@silava.lv](mailto:guna.bagrade@silava.lv); [janis.ozolins@silava.lv](mailto:janis.ozolins@silava.lv)

### Public discussions on Conservation Plan drafts

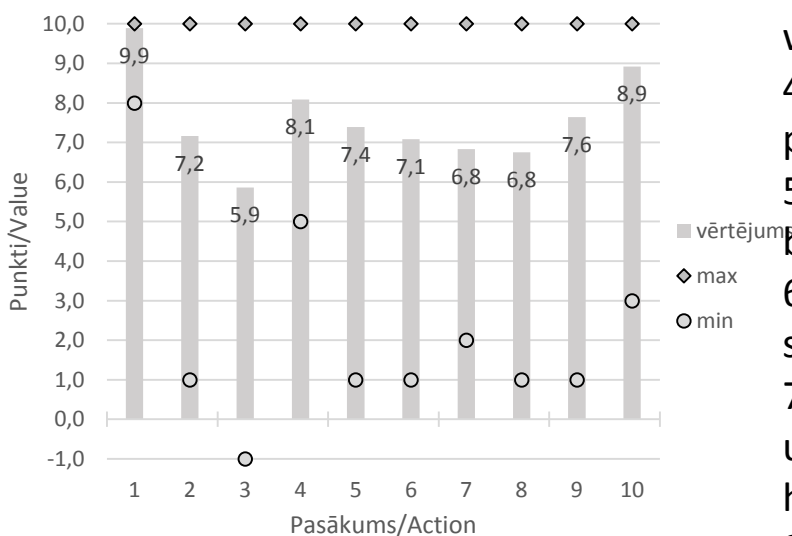
**Three trials** of public discussions were planned.

The first discussion took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017. All stake holders supposedly connected to the conservation of wolves, lynx or brown bears in Latvia are addressed (**27 governmental institutions and NGOs**). Majority confirmed participation by January 9. The list of the stake holder bodies that actually responded is available upon request. All proposals and comments were recorded.

Second meeting takes place on February 22. It is attended by international experts invited to facilitate discussions and to review the conservation goals and actions according to the best experience at the international level. Leading experts from Estonia and Lithuania are involved. Key specialists are invited from non-EU countries (Canada and Norway) for more independent expertise.

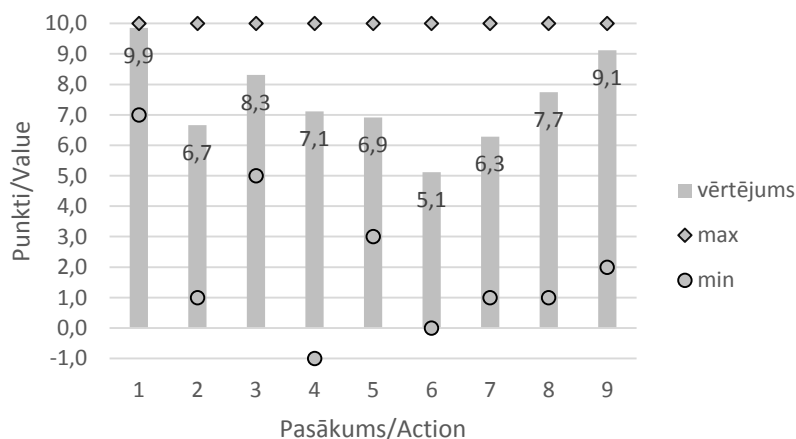
Final meetings will be organised after the complete compilation of the updated Conservation Plans. The terms and agendas will be appointed for each species separately and sent to addresses of all contributors.

Vilku SAP līdzšinējo pasākumu  
vērtējums/Evaluation of current actions for Wolf  
conservation



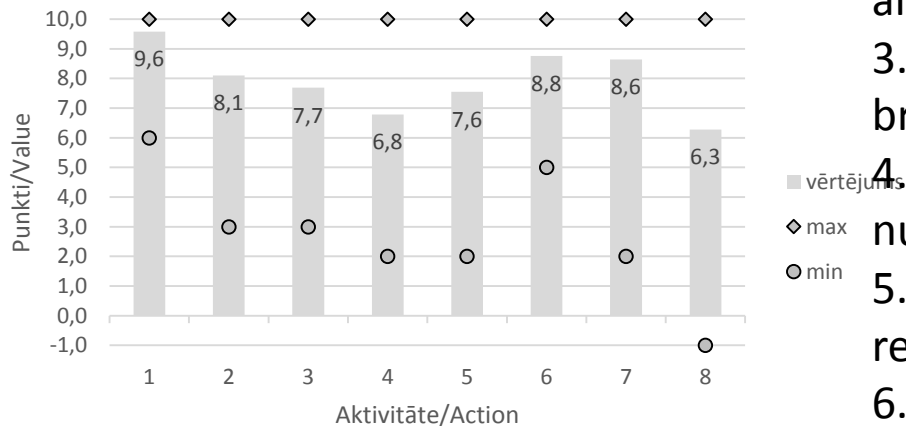
1. Monitoring of the population status
2. Elaboration of the compensation system for the wolf-caused damage where funding would be obtained from structural funds for rural support
3. Inspections of taxidermy workshops and fur processing workshops
4. Wolf diet research and assessment of wolf impact on prey populations
5. Information work on livestock protection from wolf attacks, based on the experience from other countries
6. Telemetry project with the aim of finding out the home range size and wolf territorial behaviour
7. Anonymous opinion poll among hunters on wolf numbers, unregistered cases of wolf mortality and the attitude to the hunting control system
8. To introduce a more user-friendly and fool-proof system of reporting wolves that were hunted and found dead due to other reasons
9. Seminars for specialists from relevant fields on wolf (large carnivore) conservation news in the country
10. Public education and awareness raising

Lūšu SAP līdzšinējo pasākumu  
vērtējums/Evaluation of current actions for Lynx  
conservation



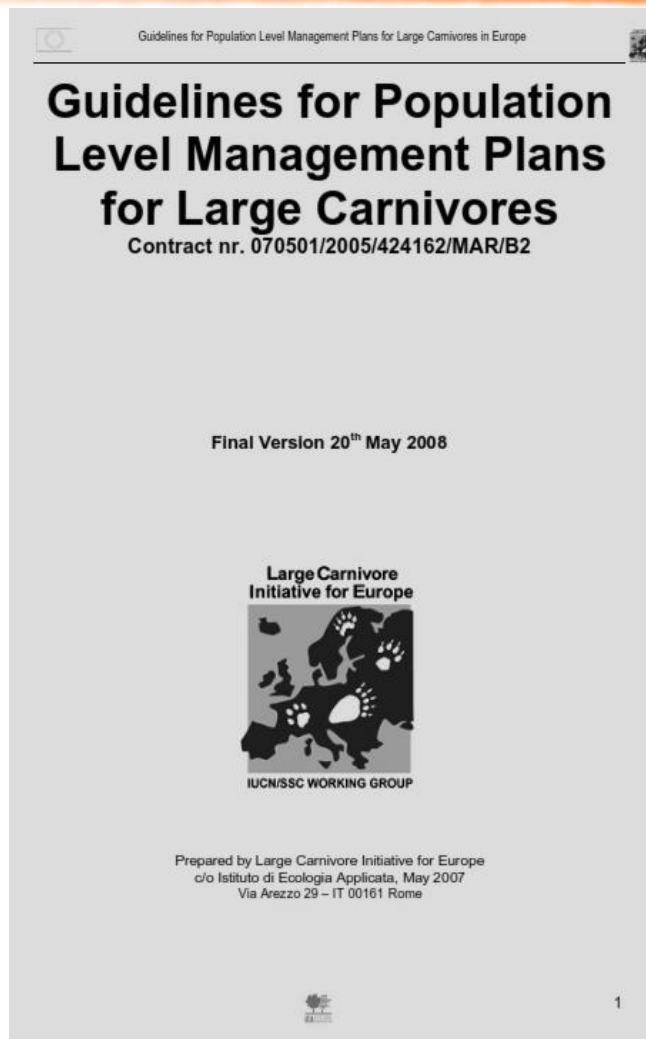
1. Population status monitoring
2. Control of taxidermy and pelt workshops
3. Diet studies and assessment of lynx impact on prey populations
4. Continuation of the telemetry project and data analysis with the aim to find out about lynx habitat use.
5. Anonymous hunters' survey about lynx number, non-registered lynx deaths and attitude towards the control system of lynx hunting
6. Amendments in the Council of Ministers Regulations on calculating losses caused by game species to agriculture
7. To introduce a more user-friendly and fault-resistant system of reporting hunted and dead lynx
8. Workshops (for experts) on lynx (large carnivores) conservation status in the country.
9. Public information about research results

Lāču SAP līdzšinējo aktivitāšu vērtējums/ Evaluation of current actions for Brown bear conservation



1. Population status monitoring
2. To promote experience from other countries regarding prevention of bear attacks on beehives and livestock
3. Education events for schoolchildren regarding brown bears and their conservation in Latvia
4. Anonymous survey of hunters about bear numbers and unregistered cases of bear mortality
5. Seminars (for experts and representatives of relevant fields) on bear conservation news in Latvia
6. Spreading research results and public education work
7. To agree on the procedure how to solve situations in relation to “problem bears” and bears that are killed or injured illegally
8. Telemetry project with the aim to find out the size of the home range and its use by Latvian bears

Conservation goal –  
people carnivore coexistence,  
a favourable population status,  
no population target in terms of  
maximal numbers.





## **A manifesto for large carnivore conservation in Europe (ver. 20.06.2013)**

### **Prelude**

Since its creation in 1995 the Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe (LCIE)<sup>1</sup> has worked towards the achievement of a vision *"To maintain and restore, in coexistence with people, viable populations of large carnivores as an integral part of ecosystems and landscapes across Europe"*. Now we are firmly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the context of large carnivore conservation in Europe has developed considerably due to many expansions and some contractions in carnivore distributions and massive changes in social, economic and political situations across the continent. We therefore see a clear need to make the details of this vision more explicit. This builds on the series of policy support statements that have been made over the last 10 years, and the principles for population level management<sup>2</sup> that were developed in 2008, as well as other policies developed by other IUCN specialist groups such as the IUCN Policy on Sustainable Use of Wild Living Resources.



## Agreement to participate in the EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores

In recognition of the challenges arising from the conservation of large carnivores in the European Union, the European Commission has established a Large Carnivore Initiative. Following discussions with stakeholders, it has been decided to establish a dedicated EU Platform on Large Carnivores in order to provide a framework for structured dialogue among stakeholders on the issues arising from co-existence of people and large carnivore. This will be a voluntary grouping of main stakeholder organizations with an interest in large carnivore issues. The species of concern are the brown bear, the wolf, the Eurasian lynx and the wolverine: the highly endangered Iberian lynx is not part of this initiative.

**The mission of the platform is to PROMOTE WAYS AND MEANS TO MINIMIZE, AND WHEREVER POSSIBLE FIND SOLUTIONS TO, CONFLICTS BETWEEN HUMAN INTERESTS AND THE PRESENCE OF LARGE CARNIVORE SPECIES, BY EXCHANGING KNOWLEDGE AND BY WORKING TOGETHER IN AN OPEN-ENDED, CONSTRUCTIVE AND MUTUALLY RESPECTFUL WAY.**

The organizations listed below agree to the following core principles:

1. Working within the EU legal framework: *The EU's Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) is the overarching legal instrument for the conservation and sustainable management of Large Carnivore species at a favourable conservation status in the EU.*
2. Ensuring the necessary knowledge base: *Any management of large carnivores must be determined on the basis of sound scientific evidence using best available and reliable data.*
3. Recognition of socio-economic and cultural considerations and concerns: *Human societies have the right to use their natural resources and preserve cultural heritage in a sustainable way within multifunctional landscapes, of which large carnivores are an integral part. The contribution of economic activities to the values of those landscapes has to be recognised. The need to ensure public safety should also be recognised.*
4. Solutions to conflicts through constructive dialogue among stakeholders: *Finding solutions arising from conflicts with large carnivores and facilitating human-large carnivore coexistence is best achieved through constructive dialogue among key stakeholders at local, national and EU levels. These solutions should be adapted to local and regional conditions.*
5. Engagement in trans-boundary cooperation: *The vast majority of the populations of large carnivore species in the EU have ranges that cross national borders. Therefore national solutions will not work in isolation without meaningful stakeholder dialogue involving trans-boundary cooperation within the EU, and where appropriate, with neighbouring countries, taking into account, inter alia, the Guidelines for Population Level Management Plans for Large Carnivores.*


The undersigning organizations commit themselves to the EU Platform on Large Carnivores. By doing so, they undertake to work together to find solutions to conflicts arising from the coexistence of humans and large carnivores by

- 1) sharing their experiences and expertise in addressing the challenges of human and large-carnivore coexistence;
- 2) listening to, and discussing other stakeholders' experiences and views;
- 3) engaging in dialogue for consensus seeking and accepting that solutions may at times involve compromise;
- 4) being open to accept examples of good practices for successful coexistence of humans and large carnivores;
- 5) expressing willingness to transfer and test those examples of good practices;
- 6) ensuring their capacity to fully engage in the work of the platform.

Brussels, 10 June 2014

  
Bernard Lozé, President  
CIC – The International Council  
for Game and Wildlife Conservation

  
Pekka Pesonen, Secretary General  
COPA-COGECA  
European Farmers and European Agri-cooperatives

  
Christoph Büren, President  
ELO – European Landowners' Organization

  
Thomas Hansson, President  
EUROPARC Federation

  
Gilbert de Turckheim, President  
FACE – The European Federation of  
Associations for Hunting and Conservation

  
Anne Ollila, Director  
Joint representative of Finnish and Swedish  
Reindeer herders

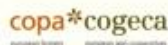
  
Luc Bas, Director  
IUCN – International Union for Conservation  
of Nature, European Union Representative Office

  
Tony Long, Director  
WWF-World Wide Fund for Nature  
European Policy Office

I would like to convey my appreciation for and extend my warm congratulations to the organizations listed above on the signature of this important Agreement, which I wholeheartedly welcome. This represents a major step forward in the EU Large Carnivore Initiative, which the Commission has promoted for the past two years, and is the fruit of our joint efforts to address issues arising from the coexistence of humans and large carnivores in the EU in a constructive spirit of cooperation and dialogue.

  
Janez Potočnik  
European Commissioner for the Environment



  
copa\*cogeca  
European farmers European agri-cooperatives

  
ELO  
European Landowners' Organization





## Key actions for Large Carnivore populations in Europe

January, 2015

This document is the final product of:

**Task 1 of contract ENV.B.3/SER/2013/003**

**Support to the European Commission's policy on Large Carnivores under the Habitats Directive – Phase 2**

Coordination: Luigi Boitani

Sections coordinated by: Henrik Andren (5), Luigi Boitani (3), Djuro Huber (2), John Linnell (1), Urs Breitenmoser and Manuela Von Arx (4).

Contributions by: Francisco Alvarez, Ole Anders, Henrik Andren, Elisa Avanzinelli, Vaidas Balys, Juan Carlos Blanco, Luigi Boitani, Urs Breitenmoser, Guillaume Chapron, Paolo Clucci, Aleksander Dutsov, Claudio Groff, Djuro Huber, Ovidiu Ionescu, Felix Knauer, Ilpo Kojola, Jakub Kubala, Miroslav Kutal, John Linnell, Aleksandra Majic, Peep Mannil, Ralph Manz, Francesca Marucco, Dime Melovski, Anja Molinari, Harri Norberg, Sabina Nowak, Janis Ozolins, Santiago Palazon, Hubert Potocnik, Pierre-Yves Quenette, Ilka Reinhardt, Robin Rigg, Nuria Selva, Agnieszka Sergiel, Maryna Shkvyria, Jon Swenson, Aleksander Trajce, Manuela Von Arx, Manfred Wolff, Ulrich Wotschikowsky, Diana Zlatanova.

Contract management in DG Environment: András Demeter and Marco Cipriani

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Lynx

### 3. Baltic population

#### Specific actions:

1. Working group for transboundary cooperation
2. Trade surveillance



## Key actions for Large Carnivore populations in Europe

January, 2015

### Wolf

## 2. Baltic population

### Specific actions:

1. Establishing an International Baltic wolf population Working Group
2. Comparing impact of different wolf management regimes in countries sharing the population

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## Key actions for Large Carnivore populations in Europe

January, 2015

Brown bear

### 4. Baltic population

#### Specific actions:

1. Establish and implement measures to facilitate the expansion of the population range to the south
2. Bear occurrence outside permanent range: GIS data base, suitability of possible range

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# Guidelines to prioritize proposed conservation actions into three categories:

**I – crucial actions – non-fulfilment could lead to species extinction from recent range and habitats or jeopardize international obligations;**

*apzīmē vissvarīgāko(ās) darbību(as), kuras(u) neveikšana tieši apdraud sugas saglabāšanu esošajās dzīvesvietās vai starptautisko saistību neizpildi;*

**II – important actions – fulfilment helps to achieve conservation goal within current reference period of the Action Plan, however its missing does not endanger species survival within recent range or habitat;**

*apzīmē svarīgu darbību, kuras veikšana palīdz mērķu sasniegšanai plāna darbības periodā, taču tās neveikšana tieši neapdraud sugas saglabāšanu esošajās dzīvesvietās;*

**III – significant action that is commendatory yet does not impact population survival at national level crucially.**

*apzīmē būtisku darbību, kuras veikšana ir ieteicama, taču kas nav vitāli nepieciešama sugas dzīvotspējīgas populācijas(u) saglabāšanai valstī).*

## Unmixed priority I – monitoring

Two goals:

- adaptive management
- reporting to EC

Missing index – hunting effort

Diet research, interaction with prey populations

Passages across roads and railways

Summarization of bear evidences

? – comparability within range of Baltic population

# Assessment and reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive – example on Wolf

## Reporting Formats for the period 2007-2012

2.9 Conclusions (atbilstoši <a href="#">General Evaluation matrix</a> ) (assessment of conservation status at end of reporting period)		LV eksperta atbilde/vērtējums	Paskaidrojums, kāda informācija/datu avoti izmantoti novērtējumos, kā dati interpretēti u.tml.
2.9.1. Range <b>Izplatība</b>	a) Favourable (FV) / Inadequate (U1) / Bad (U2) / Unknown (XX) b) If CS is U1 or U2, use of qualifiers is recommended	Favourable (FV)	
2.9.2. Population <b>Populācijas lielums</b>	a) Favourable (FV) / Inadequate (U1) / Bad (U2) / Unknown (XX) b) If CS is U1 or U2, use of qualifiers is recommended <sup>5</sup>	Favourable (FV)	
2.9.3 Habitat for the species <b>Piemērots biotops</b>	a) Favourable (FV) / Inadequate (U1) / Bad (U2) / Unknown (XX) b) If CS is U1 or U2, use of qualifiers is recommended <sup>5</sup>	Favourable (FV)	
2.9.4 Future prospects <b>Nākotnes perspektīvas</b>	a) Favourable (FV) / Inadequate (U1)/ Bad (U2) / Unknown (XX) b) If CS is U1 or U2, use of qualifiers is recommended <sup>5</sup>	Favourable (FV)	
2.9.5 Overall assessment of Conservation Status	Favourable (FV) / Inadequate (U1) / Bad (U2) / Unknown (XX)	Favourable (FV)	
2.9.6 Overall trend in Conservation Status	If overall CS is U1 or U2, use of qualifier '+' (improving), '-' (declining), '=' (stable) or 'x' (unknown) is obligatory		

## **Priority II – elaboration of the compensation/prevention system for damages**

A note by the stakeholders: Implementation of compensatory mechanisms may enhance society's tolerance toward wolves. Moreover, there may be more reports (and data) concerning depredation on livestock.



### Notes by the stakeholders:

Compensations should be provided from **structural funds for rural support**, especially for preventive activities, because wolves are hunted quite intensively and are not strictly protected.

However, wolf caused damage to livestock and other loss may be compensated from funds for nature conservation. Compensations should be reserved from nature conservation funds because controlling the numbers and setting the hunting quotas are conducted according to concerns of nature conservation.

## Priority II - strengthen surveillance of turn-over in game trophies and products (example on Lynx)

ACTION 2	
<b>Title of the Action:</b>	Trade surveillance
<b>Objective:</b>	To ensure the highest level of expert support to authorities and custom service dealing with surveillance of trade with fur and fur products.
<b>Description of activities:</b>	<p>A consolidated surveillance system required by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).</p> <p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organise workshops, trainings, reference collections, awareness campaigns;</li> <li>2. Ensure case-to-case consultations of authorities with experts enabling inerrable identification of Eurasian lynx fur and skulls;</li> <li>3. Ensure turn-over of hunting trophies to be monitored in accordance with issued hunting quotas and permits.</li> </ol>
<b>Expected results:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective law enforcement network where inspectors and custom service can promptly intercommunicate with zoologists and fur experts;</li> <li>• Origin of legally obtained hunting trophies easily traceable and provable by surveillance authorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Principal responsibility for implementation:</b>	Responsible agencies for CITES in all countries.
<b>Timing of the activities:</b>	1 year to establish, continued.
<b>Level of urgency:</b>	3
<b>Benefit:</b>	2–3 depending on species status (protected or game)

## Priority II – education and awareness raising

- Should be specified according interest groups and stakeholders – school children, farmers, tourists, hunters etc., however part of the information can be shared by general public (e.g. safety issues)
- Means of information: lectures, a variety of leaflets, articles, interviews, movies, home pages, a book etc.
- Ensure English version of information (SAP, home pages etc.)
- Science involvement

### Notes by the stakeholders:

It is essential to inform the hunters in order not to evaluate the lynx as an exclusive trophy or a threat to roe-deer (taking into account that lynx self-regulate their population well).

Obligatory instruction on preventive activities for livestock holders should be introduced.

Educational work should focus both on general public and hunters.

Educational work should also focus on middle-aged people living outside of cities, which frequently go to pick berries and mushrooms. There is a great concern about a proper behaviour when encountering a bear (how to behave, where to report).

### Notes by the stakeholders:

What will occur, when the population size will exceed its carrying capacity?

Population size is determined by monitoring the population condition. When assessing the population status, indices of hunting effort should be elaborated and applied for reducing the hunting intensity.

The 4<sup>th</sup> activity (a telemetry project) should also include genetic research.

Research on potential competitors for food (medium-sized carnivores).  
Research on allele exchange between populations of western and eastern Latvia.

Impact assessment of Rail Baltica.

## Priority III – a social survey

- Should repeat previously performed inquiry for comparability
- Results are guiding, not necessarily uncritically considered in management
- Apart from general public, the key interest groups should be surveyed specifically

### Notes by the stakeholders:

Developing a web-based questionnaire for hunters Medniekiem.lv was suggested.

The 5<sup>th</sup> (anonymous opinion poll among hunters) and 7<sup>th</sup> activity (reporting system of hunted and accidentally killed wolves) should be combined as a single activity.

# Priority ??? - hunting

Maintain restricted hunting of wolves and lynx for ensuring human–large carnivore coexistence unless hunting aggravates favourable conservation status of populations and contradicts to generally accepted code of ethics. Changes in legal acts?

*Saglabāt vilku (lūšu) ierobežotas medības, kā plēsēju un cilvēku līdzāspastāvēšanu veicinošu saimniecisku darbību, ja populācijas tiek uzturētas labvēlīgā aizsardzības stāvoklī un medību procesā tiek ievēroti nosacījumi, kas tās padara atbilstošas sabiedrībai būtiskām vispāratzītām ētiskām vērtībām. Vai nepieciešams papildināt normatīvos aktus?*

- Legalised, well regulated hunting of large carnivores at sustainable levels can be a useful tool in responding to conflict, through slowing their increase to socially acceptable levels, engaging local populations in management, increasing their perceived local value, and decreasing illegal killing.
- Legalizētas, labi uzraudzītas un uz ilgtspējības principiem balstītas lielo plēsēju medības var būt noderīgs ceļš uz konfliktu mazināšanu, jo tās aizkavē populācijas pieaugumu līdz sociāli pieļaujamam līmenim, iesaista populāciju apsaimniekošanā vietējos iedzīvotājus, veicina izpratni par dabas vērtībām un samazina nelikumīgas medības.

By accession to European Union in 2004, Latvia had to implement new restrictions to ensure species conservation in conformity with EU Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC, as well as with Bern Convention and Washington Convention – CITES (both ratified in 1997).

Local point of view - restrictions for lynx harvesting are appointed not because of identified threats to populations but rather to establish a system for diminishing or banning hunting as soon as any threat would appear.

Since 2004, lynx hunting became subject to derogations from the Habitat Directive. The lynx is harvested in accordance with SMP: monitoring - annual quotas.



CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION  
OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITATS

## European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity



*In cooperation with:*



*Prepared by:*

*Mr. Scott Brainerd, Wildlife Biologist,  
Norwegian Association of Hunters & Anglers*

*Adopted by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention at its 27<sup>th</sup> meeting in Strasbourg,  
26-29 November 2007*

*You can download the full document from the website of the Council of Europe at:  
[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/conventions/Bern/Recommendations/tpvs07erev\\_2007.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/conventions/Bern/Recommendations/tpvs07erev_2007.pdf)*



### 3.10 Principle 10: Minimise avoidable suffering by animals

#### 3.10.1 Rationale:

For practices to be socially sustainable, avoidable suffering needs to be minimised.

#### 3.10.2 Guidelines:

Conservation will be enhanced if

##### *3.10.2.1 Regulators and managers:*

- a) Adopt rules, regulations and incentives that promote methods and equipment that minimise avoidable suffering for animals;
- b) Communicate to hunters the need to treat game animals with respect;
- c) Recognise and promote best practices.

- and -

##### *3.10.2.2 Hunters and hunting tour operators:*

- a) Show respect for game animals and strive to reduce or eliminate avoidable suffering where possible;
- b) Learn about animal physiology and the most efficient way to kill game while inflicting minimal suffering;
- c) Promote measures which ensure proficiency in the use of hunting techniques and implements;
- d) Strive to efficiently track down and dispatch wounded game;

# Lynx diet (subadults)



*Note: photos are taken in laboratory of LSFRI Silava and do not represent the same individual but characterize condition of orphan lynx*



## Options to reduce hunting pressure if needed:

### *Medību intensitātes samazināšanas iespējas:*

- Shorter season (autumn vs. spring)

*Īsāks termiņš (rudens vai pavasaris)*

- Diminishing quota

*Mazāks limits*

- Splitting of quota in parts according territorial division without opportunity for redistribution

*Limita sadalījums pa teritorijām bez pārdales iespējas*

- Ban of hunting across certain areas

*Teritoriju noteikšana, kurās nemedī*

- To set one season without harvest

*Gads bez medīšanas*

- To issue individual shooting permits with limited validity

*Terminētas medību atļaujas pirms sezonas sākuma*

- Restricted use of weapons and ammunition

*Ieroču un munīcijas ierobežojums*

## Priority III – develop non- consumptive use

Nature tourists and large carnivores – a challenge for rural small scale economy?

