



October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017

To: Dr. Janis Ozolins et al., Authors of the Latvian Action Plan for Eurasian Lynx  
*Lynx lynx* Conservation and Management

From: Dr. Alistair Bath, Human Dimensions in Wildlife Management, Department of  
Geography, Memorial University, St. John's, NL, Canada. A1B 3X9.

Concerning: Review of the Latvian Eurasian Lynx Action Plan

I am pleased to write a positive review of the new Latvian Action Plan for Eurasian Lynx *Lynx lynx* Conservation and Management produced by Dr. Janis Ozolins et al. My review is based on attending and facilitating a workshop that occurred during the week of Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>- 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in Latvia, conversations with various key interest groups regarding Eurasian lynx management issues, and my reading of an English translation of the draft action plan. I have been familiar with Eurasian Lynx management issues in Latvia for more than 15 years as a member of the IUCN LCIE SSG, an occasional guest lecturer at the University in Riga and associated research activities within the country.

The plan is very thorough addressing the many necessary aspects to ensure favorable status of Eurasian Lynx is maintained in the country. It is also an ambitious plan offering direction for ten years from 2018-2028, and because of this there should be a clear statement in the plan that it is adaptive and flexible. This is certainly implied by the authors through their continual dialogue with all the key interest groups but the plan could benefit from a specific statement to this effect. My review continues with some specific comments regarding certain sections of the plan.

1. Within the Glossary of Terms, the authors discuss “social carrying capacity” which is explained adequately. The authors may wish to include instead the more recognized expression of “wildlife acceptance capacity” or WAC which was developed by Decker and Purdy in the late 1980s and has become well-recognized as the term to describe when societies choose to accept or tolerate a certain number of individual animals, damages and risks of living with wildlife.
2. The authors have done an excellent job in describing the species characteristics and ecology. There is a lot of depth here but not sure all is needed in an Action Plan. Consider editing this section.
3. It is the first time I have heard that the conditions for lynx can be greatly improved by beavers. While I don't dispute this, the authors may wish to cite a reference in this ecology section to support this statement.



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4. Due to the tradition of hunting and the importance the activity plays in lynx population dynamics in Latvia as noted in the action plan, it will be incredibly important to continue to work with hunters on lynx management issues. The action plan should strongly emphasize the need for this involvement of hunters and identify very specific steps to engage this important interest group.
5. The action plan may wish to state that forest fragmentation on lynx is not well understood and consider strong recommendations to manage forests conservatively and prioritize research on understanding the relationship, if any, between forests and lynx numbers.
6. The authors have a strong section in the plan connecting the international agreements with the national laws to ensure Latvia's commitment. This is carefully outlined in the Legislation section of the plan.
7. Latvia needs to play an active role working with its neighboring countries to maintain the Baltic lynx population. As outlined in the plan, this transboundary cooperation should be continued. It is positive the realization that such cooperation is essential for lynx conservation in the Baltics.
8. For creating and maintaining coexistence between lynx and people, it is impressive that Latvia has built into this plan linking compensation for livestock losses to preventative measures being taken. It should be made clear in the plan that all interest groups will work to aid the livestock community in learning about and implementing such methods.
9. On page 55, strongly suggest changing the wording of livestock farmers being the "most problematic stakeholder group". The English translation could read "Livestock farmers face some of the biggest challenges in finding opportunities to coexist with lynx".
10. A huge strength in the development of this plan is the involvement of the various interest groups and representatives and their evaluation of management options. Employing such applied and research-oriented human dimensions in wildlife management approaches is rare and yet so important for successful implementation of such plans. Integrating human dimensions research results into the plan, monitoring attitudes and beliefs over the course of the plan are essential and are strong aspects of this action plan.
11. The discussion regarding wildlife corridors and addressing habitat fragmentation could mention that such wildlife corridors should be maintained and enhanced where necessary for lynx and their prey. The plan could state this as a continued priority within the country and transboundary nations.



12. The plan could further emphasize that regular consultation with all interest groups will be built into the life of the action plan. This may be where a statement regarding the adaptive and flexible management style of the plan exists.
13. The authors should be applauded for the detailed discussion and stressing the importance of effective monitoring of the lynx population using a variety of techniques but equally important that clearly involves all interest groups in the data collection and reporting of the results.
14. On pages 62 and 63 when outlining activities and given the importance of involving the public and interest groups stated throughout the plan, why do the authors not suggest human dimensions training also be built in to improving capacity in lynx management issues.
15. On page 66 when discussing the human dimensions study that would be implemented as activity 6.5.4, it may be more feasible to allocate double the euros to such work (30,000 euros), and conduct the work over a two-year study period 2025-2027, which is more consistent with the program of a master's student.
16. Within the activities of 6.6.1 consider adding a human dimensions workshop training session and additional monies.
17. Activity 6.7.1 suggests that the working group be supported by existing authority budgets but a comment could be added that when difficult issues arise an outside facilitator may be needed and this could be budgeted in the action plan.

Overall, the authors have written an excellent and thorough action plan for the Eurasian lynx in Latvia that should ensure continued conservation and coexistence of lynx and people for future generations. Like any document, it must be a living document and the statements of continuing to build relationships and dialogues between all interest groups must be budgeted and actively planned for to ensure they occur.

If you have any questions regarding this review, please feel free to contact me by email (abath@mun.ca) or phone 709-864-4733 (also on WhatsApp when travelling).

Best regards,

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