

### 1 Are lynx native to Britain?

Yes. They once inhabited the whole of Britain and were part of a population that stretched over a vast area of Europe and Asia.

### 2 How long have lynx been extinct?

Nobody knows for sure but carbon dating from bone remains and cultural evidence suggests that lynx were last in Britain around 500 years ago.

### 3 Why did they become extinct?

The widespread loss of woodland and the collapse of wild deer populations, along with sustained persecution and hunting, probably led to their eventual disappearance.

### 4 How big is a lynx?

Eurasian lynx are similar in size to a Labrador dog, but are not as heavy, weighing about the same as a border collie.

### 5 What do they eat?

Lynx are ambush hunters and prey predominantly on medium-sized woodland deer such as roe and sika deer and the calves of red deer. To a lesser degree, they will also take prey such as hares and foxes.

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## Where do they live?

Lynx are solitary and have huge territories – much larger than that of smaller predators such as foxes and martens. They prefer woodland cover where their main source of prey is found, and where they can find den sites for their kittens.

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## What's happening with lynx in Europe?

A reduction in hunting pressure and a softening of public attitudes towards large carnivores, has allowed lynx to slowly spread across mainland Europe in the last few decades. Their distribution remains patchy in many areas, but current population estimates suggest there are around 8,000 lynx living across 25 European countries.

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## What are the challenges of living with lynx?

Britain has been without its native large carnivores for several centuries and unlike many European countries, we've 'forgotten' how to live alongside them. Lynx are secretive and elusive and pose no danger to people. Experience from elsewhere in Europe suggests that a minority of lynx would take some sheep, but that this would be uncommon and localised. This can be managed effectively through a range of prevention methods.

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## What are the benefits of reintroducing lynx?

Nature is not a set of individual animals but a complex interactive system. Removing significant elements of that system, inevitably leads to it faltering and failing. Large carnivores are integral to healthy ecosystems as they help regulate numbers and behaviour of deer and some smaller carnivores, thus creating opportunities for other wildlife. In Scotland, where deer densities are higher than most other European countries, lynx would provide an effective deer management service, helping to improve woodland regeneration and store carbon. Lynx could also act as high-profile ambassadors for nature-rich landscapes, which across the world, are increasingly attracting valuable tourism revenue.

## 10 Can they survive in Scotland?

There is adequate habitat and wild prey in Scotland to support a viable population of lynx, in the order of around 500. Their primary threat is people – collisions with cars and illegal persecution both being significant potential dangers.

## 11 What is *Lynx to Scotland*?

The obstacles to returning lynx to Scotland are less about biology and more about people and their perceptions and attitudes. *Lynx to Scotland* is a study to provide an evidence base for the extent of public appetite for a reintroduction, and therefore, the likelihood of its success. It is possible that opposition to lynx restoration is such that it is inappropriate to proceed, and the project partners are willing to accept such a conclusion.

## 12 Is *Lynx to Scotland* a lynx reintroduction project?

No. It may evolve in the future but for now, this is a stand-alone consultation process to accurately assess public and stakeholder opinions.

## 13 Who is involved?

*Lynx to Scotland* is a partnership between Trees for Life, Vincent Wildlife Trust and SCOTLAND: The Big Picture.

## 14 What will happen next?

The study will run throughout 2021 and the results will determine the next steps. Lynx reintroduction cannot and should not be forced upon the people of Scotland. If support is sufficient, it may be appropriate to proceed with a trial reintroduction. If not, what is presently a disjointed and often divisive debate around the return of lynx, will at least be better evidenced.