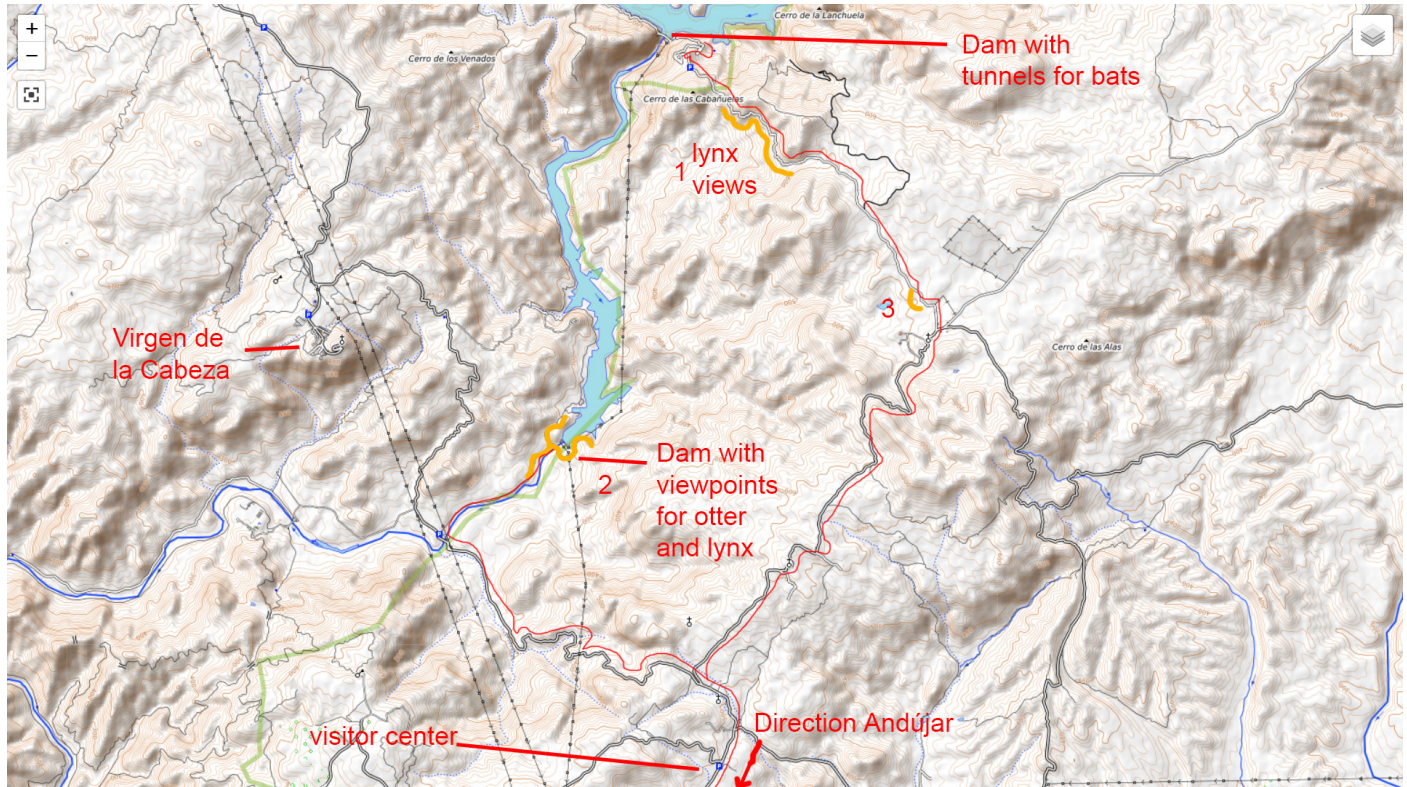


Iberian lynx and other mammals in maps and charts

Daan Drukker



Map 1, in red the important roads and locations. In orange the important viewpoints

From 13 to 16 January 2024 I visited the region of Andújar to look for lynxes. I was there with my girlfriend Liselotte, my parents Bas Drukker and Irene Rottier, my sister Eva Drukker and her friends Hans Linssen and Fernando Gross. That seems like quite a big party for mammal watching, but for the Iberian lynx, that is no problem! January is known as the best month to see the lynxes, as it is their mating season. It was amazing to see how many people came to look for the lynx. Normally I do not like birding and mammalwatching in big crowds, but there was something with the attitude of the people that were also looking that made the whole situation very pleasant. The searching parties consisted of remarkably many young people, and I have never seen a more equal gender distribution in any other twitch.

Many reports have been written regarding the lynxes in Andújar. I therefore would like to do this a bit different. In the maps below you'll see how and where to best go if you want to maximise your chances. However, keep in mind that you'll have a chance of finding a lynx in many other ways and locations. My sister and her friends for example found one in the Coto Doñana a few days later during the night next to the road. If you do not feel like going when many other people are there, there are other options too.

What to bring

The thermal scope turned out to be the best tool to find the Iberian lynx. We had four lynx observations, and we found three of them with the thermal scope. Our first observation was of a pair that was pointed out to us by other lynx observers during daytime. For this one a telescope was very useful. Our group had three thermal scopes (all three of the relatively cheap category around €1000, which worked very adequately) and four telescopes. I also brought an Echo Meter Touch bat detector for on my phone, a portable light trap for moth watching and some Hestlinga mouse traps (the last one not resulting in any mice, but the rest was very useful).

When to go

As you can see in the chart on the next page most validated observations on Observation.org come from the months of December and January. The lynxes are easiest to see during that period as it is their mating season. Another reason it is easier, is because there are more people searching, especially during the weekends. My advice is to plan 4 days of searching: start on a Saturday, so you have the advantage of other people in the weekend, and enjoy the peace and quiet without the pressure (in case you were successful the first days) on the Monday and Tuesday.

Where to look

See map 1. In orange the most important viewing areas. These are concentrated around two locations. 1. Is the location where you can scope around in the valleys below and the opposing slopes. During daytime it is very busy here. Here (38.2135, -3.9613) we saw our first lynxes, a pair that was sunbathing on the opposite slopes and later split

Iberian lynx

Lynx pardinus (Temminck, 1827)

Mammals Felidae Lynx Lynx pardinus Species

Details Observations Photos Sounds Statistics On/in Names Projects

All years All months Only approved All All life stage: All activities All methods Filter Clear Filters

Per month

Month	Observations	Individuals	Observers	Provinces
jan	283	397	101	7
feb	128	149	73	6
mar	76	95	40	6
apr	84	108	64	7
may	56	89	35	7
jun	28	32	13	6
jul	75	76	19	5
aug	27	34	17	5
sep	59	85	23	6
oct	41	55	22	5
nov	53	69	30	7
dec	214	305	64	6
Total	1,124	1,494		

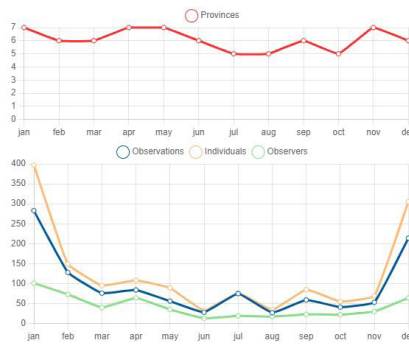


Chart 1, statistics of approved observations of Iberian lynx from Observation.org, clearly showing peaks in December and January

ple are concentrated around the bridge below the dam, where your chances on otter are the best, and where I saw and heard some nice bat activity. A huge European free-tailed bat came by, very clearly audible to the unaided ear. The same is true for the social calls of my first Kuhls pipistrelle, while below the bridge there were multiple Soprano pipistrelles that I saw flying around and was only able to hear with the bat detector. A third location (3) is where the lynx is also seen occasionally.

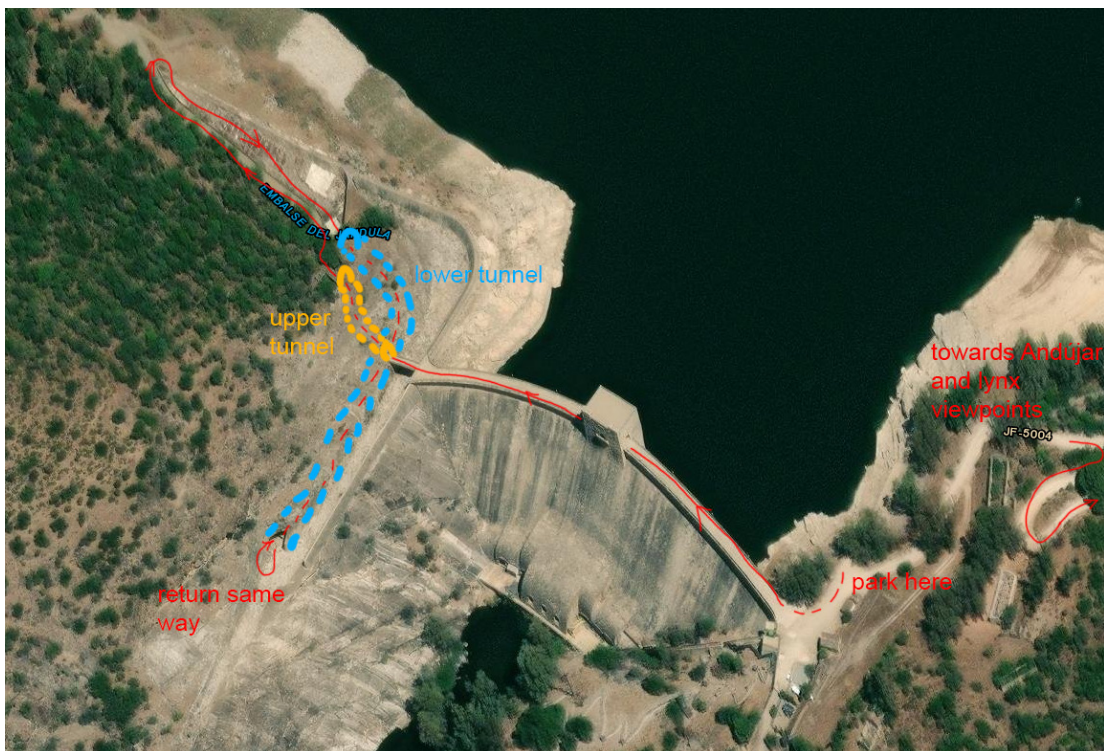
Other mammals

I saw 4 new mammal species this trip (12 in total, 13 if you count fallow deer) and 4 new birds (110 in total). The main attraction are the otters (dipped) and the bats. My bat species I saw and heard flying around the best place for the otters. If you have not seen Eurasian otter yet, I fully recommend spending more time at this spot. I also saw 3 greater mouse-eared bats and one Daubenton's bat hibernating at the tunnels at the second dam. Here there are also records of Lesser mouse-eared bat, Schreiber's bent-winged bat and Mediterranean horseshoe bat, so also a good tip.

Combinations

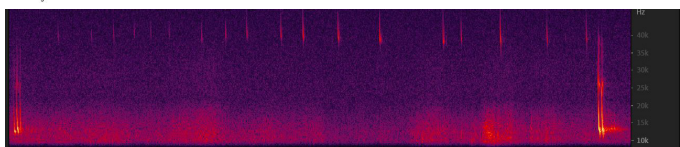
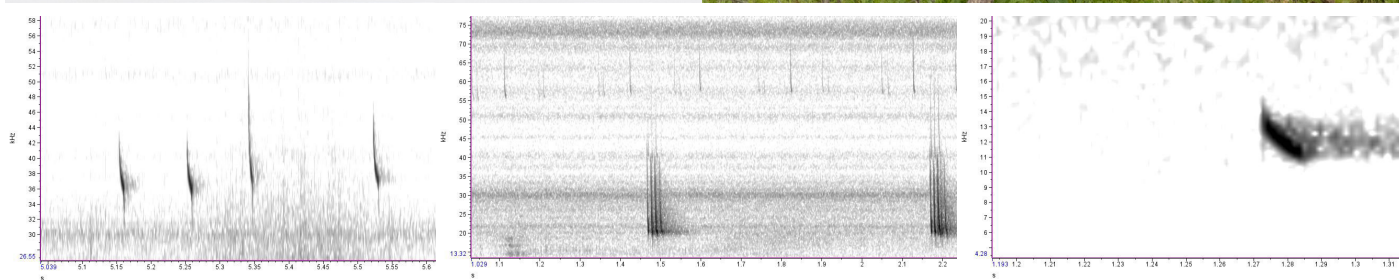
We combined our trip with some extra days near Cabo de Gata and Alhama de Granada. The area around Cabo de Gata/Almeria is the driest area of continental Europe, and the temperatures were much better compared to the rest of Spain in this period of January. We did have some rain due to storm Juan, but its effects were much worse in other parts of Spain. Cabo de Gata is great for birding. There was nothing new for me, as I only needed the central Iberian endemics, and those can be found near Andújar. It is very interesting however, with Bonelli's eagles, Trumpeter

up. Our second and third observation were also here, around this GPS-point (38.2087, -3.9532), where we saw them on two separate nights, discovered with the thermal scope. If you follow this road further you end up at the upper dam, where there are two tunnels for bats (see map 2). Location 2 is at the lower dam, further downstream along the river Jándula. This is the best place for otter (although we missed them), and lynx is frequently seen here too. We met people who saw one close by on the tracks around. We found one at dusk on the opposite side of the lake Jándula with the thermal scope. Too far away for good pictures, but apparently it is often seen there. Most peo-



Map 2, upper dam with the location of the tunnels

finches, Black wheatears and great numbers of Balearic shearwater (in half an hour we saw 62 migrating eastward for example). My sister and her friends and my parents too went to the Extremadura. A very nice region, but I would prefer to go there in April, although they saw all the bird species they were looking for (except Pin-tailed sandgrouse). Unfortunately I sprained my ankle on a hike in the Sierra Nevada when I wanted to check a stream for mayflies, so that hampered my chances on checking more caves and our visit to the Alhambra. Also my quest for *Mus spretus* and *Microtus duodecimcostatus* was fruitless, even though I waited and baited at burrows for the latter for quite some time at Andújar (when my ankle was still okay).



Upper to lower left to right: Iberian lynx (found with thermal at location 1), Iberian hare, *Menophra thuriferaria*, Iberian ibex, *Wesmaelius navasi*, Wild rabbit (in its native range, yeah!)
 Sonograms of Kuhls pipistrelle (usual echolocation), Soprana pipistrelle (echolocation and social calls), European free-tailed bat, Kuhls pipistrelle (both social calls and normal echolocation)

#	Mammal list	Scientific name	Notes
1	Iberian hare	Lepus granatensis	3 obs, all at night from the roads toward lynx area
2	European rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	common, nice to see them in native range
3	European free-tailed bat	<i>Tadarida teniotis</i>	1 flying by at otter place
4	Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	1 in upper tunnel. Tragus was checked for Cappacini's
5	Greater mouse-eared bat	<i>Myotis myotis</i>	2 in lower tunnel, 1 in upper tunnel
6	Kuhl's pipistrelle*	<i>Pipistrellus kuhlii</i>	heard social calls at otter bridge, confirmed with bat detector
7	Soprano pipistrelle*	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	seen around otter bridge, confirmed with bat detector
8	Iberian lynx*	Lynx pardinus	4 obs of 3 to 5 individuals, see text and map
9	Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	1 at night
10	Wild boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	common at night
11	Red deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	common
12	Fallow deer	<i>Dama dama</i>	several observations, non-native
13	Iberian ibex*	Capra pyrenaica	2 observations. One from the upper dam and one at first lynx
			In bold Iberian peninsula endemics, * indicates new species for me
	Link to list with observations		
	Mammal list	13	
	Bird list	110	including 4 new Iberian endemics for me
	Moth list	27	
	Lacewing list	2	

