

The Wolf in Spain

-The Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus signatus*) is genetically distinct from other European wolves. It is smaller and more darkly colored. Average shoulder height is 70-80 cm, head-body length around 120 cm, tail 40 cm. Average body mass 28Kg for females, 32 Kg for males.

-Since the end of the Pleistocene the wolf has been the dominant predator of Iberia and the natural controller of wild ungulates.



Recent history of the Iberian wolf: persecution and near extinction

-The wolf was persecuted as vermin leading to dramatic population decline and range reduction between the late XIX and the mid XX century.

-By the 1970s the use of guns, traps and poison had reduced the total wolf population in Spain to some 500 animals, most of them in the NW region.

-This near-extinction implied a **genetic bottleneck** with long-term repercussions.

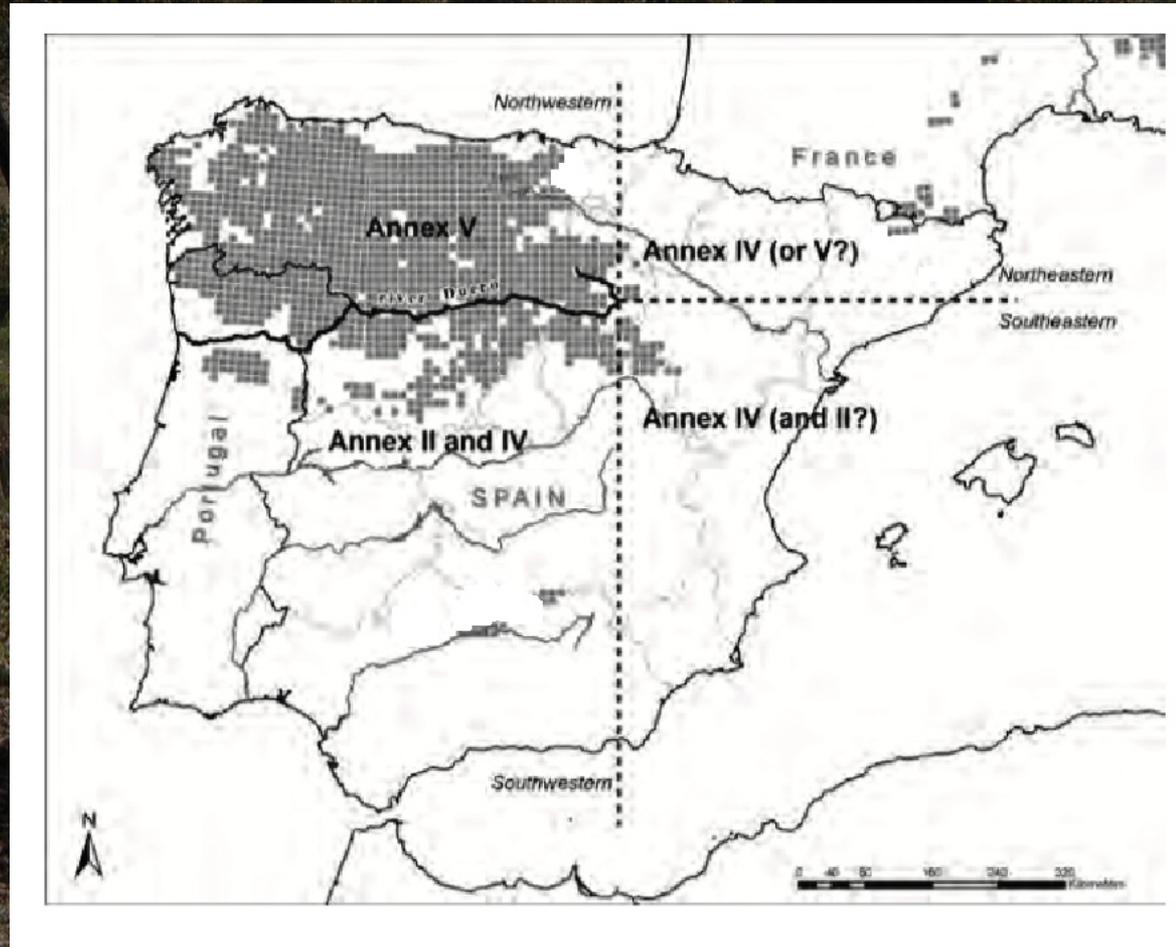


Recent history of the Iberian wolf: partial recovery

-In the 1970s, the wolf was removed from vermin status and became a huntable species.

-This allowed a gradual recovery of the population

-Facing protection of the wolf by European law, the Spanish government established different degrees of protection in different parts of the territory.



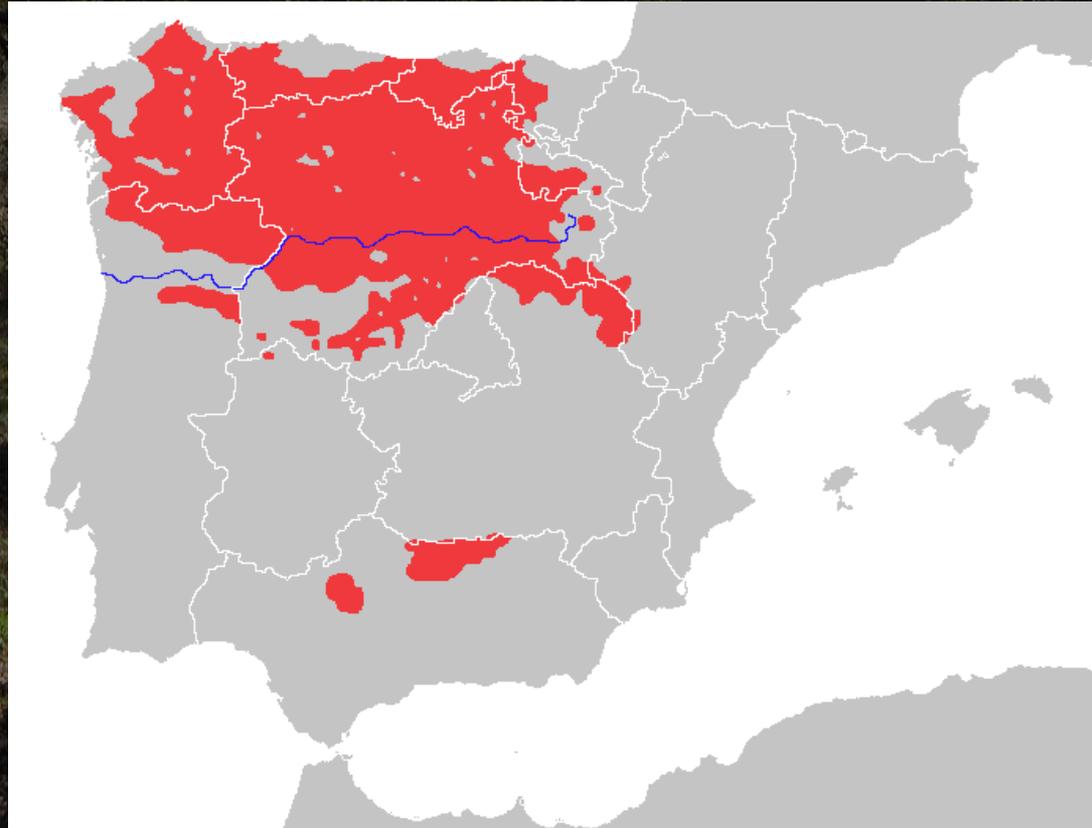
Current status of the Iberian wolf:

- The current official estimate is of 297 packs.

- The MITECO (generously) infers the presence of 7 animals per pack, resulting in a figure of around 2,000. Scientific studies suggest 3-4 wolves per pack is more likely.

- 90% of this population lives North of the Duero river.

- The wolf populations in Andalucía and Extremadura got extinct during recent decades in spite of full protection.



Current status of the Iberian wolf:

- Independent work by researchers from UAB and CSIC finds official estimates of packs and individuals to be inflated by 30 to 50%.

- Some 300-500 individuals (500-650 in 2017, according to a recent study) die each year due to the following causes :

- a) Poaching
- b) Trophy hunting in provinces north of the Duero.
- c) Lethal removal (South of the Duero and in regions like Asturias)
- d) Wolves hit by cars, poison.

Points “a” and “d” have never been accounted for when calculating wolf hunting quotas. The total number of non-natural deaths is close to the number of new members that wolves recruit with each generation.



Current status of the Iberian wolf:

Need for full protection

- 1.- Lethal removal and hunting break pack structure and generate more conflict.
- 2.- These practices contribute to the image of the wolf as a “problem” species. Anti-wolf propaganda generated in areas where hunting is allowed has impact elsewhere.
- 4.- Full protection sends a clear message and farmers may then see the wolf as a potential ally.



Current status of the Iberian wolf:

Protection and hunting ban

- 1.- For years, EAWC founder/member NGO “Lobo Marley” has led a social campaign in favor of wolf protection and hunting ban.
- 2.- Other large environmental NGO's joined the campaign and participated in large scale demonstrations with tens of thousands of people demanding strict protection for the wolf.
- 3.- In 2019 the Spanish government started the process of including the wolf in the List of Species with Special Protection, implying a hunting ban. On September 21th 2021 the new regulation was finally published in the BOE (Official Bulletin of the State). **SUCCESS!!**

