

Free virtual conservation lecture hosted by Sequoia Park Zoo & Foundation

March 15, 2022



The Sequoia Park Zoo Conservation Lecture Series is virtual for 2021-22 and the next lecture is scheduled for Wednesday, March 16, at 6:45 p.m. Fernando Najera, DVM, MS, PhD will be joining from the Department of Animal Physiology and Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Complutense University of Madrid.

He will discuss disease surveillance during the reintroduction of the Iberian lynx in Southwestern Spain. Zoo updates and information will begin at 6:45 p.m. with the lecture starting at 7 p.m. promptly. Attendees can ask questions to the speaker at the end of the presentation via the chat box on Zoom. Logging in through a free, registered Zoom account is required. The Zoom link will be available at www.SequoiaParkZoo.net and on social media. This lecture will not be recorded or available on Facebook, so the zoo encourages attendees to watch live on Zoom.

The reintroduction of Iberian lynx (*Lynx pardinus*) populations in Extremadura (Southwestern Spain) has been carried out since 2014. One of the measures to ensure the success of this program is to examine the

effects that diseases may have on reintroduction. Since disease may be prevalent at certain sites, reintroduced individuals may present a risk of infection after release.

During the study, experts screened Iberian lynxes and sympatric carnivores against multi-host pathogens that cause morbidity and/or mortality in the Iberian lynx. During the study years, infectious diseases did not pose a threat to the steady population growth of the Iberian lynx in this region. Nevertheless, the low pathogen contact rates observed also suggest vulnerability and unpredictability to a disease outbreak, highlighting the vital role that continuous disease surveillance plays in the Iberian lynx reintroduction program. Dr. Nájera received a conservation grant from the Sequoia Park Zoo in 2017 to fund aspects of this project.

Dr. Nájera is a wildlife veterinarian who earned both his veterinary degree and Ph.D. in wildlife physiology at the Complutense University of Madrid. Before enrolling in his Ph.D. program, he worked in zoos and wildlife rehabilitation centers in Spain and Ecuador. During his pre-doctoral research, he served as field veterinarian for the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, University of Oxford (WildCRU) leading the chemical immobilization of free-ranging Sunda clouded leopards in Malaysian Borneo. During this time, he also served as the veterinary manager for the Thailand Clouded Leopard Consortium, an ex-situ captive breeding program for mainland clouded leopards and fishing cats, and also performed clinical evaluations of captive Sunda clouded leopards at different facilities from Borneo and Indonesia. After his Ph.D. field work, he served as the field manager for a wolf conservation project in Idaho, completed an internship in Zoological, Exotic and Wildlife Medicine at the Oklahoma State University and lastly, led the disease surveillance program for the Iberian lynx reintroduction project and the sympatric carnivore community in Southwestern, Central, and South-Central Spain. Fernando is currently the Canid Conservation Initiative postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Conservation Medicine and the WildCare Institute (Saint Louis Zoo), the Endangered Wolf Center and the Washington University at Saint Louis. Fernando is passionate and devoted to the field of wildlife and zoological medicine with a special interest in free-ranging carnivore medicine and conservation.

If you would like help with the Zoom app, please email cac@sequoiaparkzoo.net by March 14 for troubleshooting assistance.

Join the Zoom meeting at [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86225621519?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86225621519?pwd=L1duWlJaaStSVVM3ZWJhNmttZXdKZz09)
[pwd=L1duWlJaaStSVVM3ZWJhNmttZXdKZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86225621519?pwd=L1duWlJaaStSVVM3ZWJhNmttZXdKZz09)