**Iberian hare and European rabbit extinctions: the foundation of a Breeding Centre in Portugal**

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**Introduction:** The Iberian hare (*Lepus granatensis*) and wild rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus algirus*) are endemic and key species, that have declined the hare by more than 50% in the last four years after the emergence of a natural recombinant myxoma virus (ha-MYXV) and the putative reactivation of Leporid gammaherpesvirus 5 (LeHV-5) which together will lead to the reclassification of its conservation status to Vulnerable by the IUCN this year.

**Material & Methods:** Physical and technical facilities (about 2 ha) were created including breeding, feeding and physical training parks as well as methods for disinfection, deworming, and capture of animals with minimal stress, and the specific probe was built for the Iberian hare for semen collection.

**Results:** Currently, the centre has 4 epidemiological units with 60 hares and 2 epidemiological units with 40 wild rabbits (Endangered, IUCN). During this year, repopulations were started (43 hares and 67 rabbits) in Évora with 2.7% of mortality.The eletrojeaculaton method has allowed the collection of sperm in about 5-10 minutes, of a concentration of 1.06x109±7.98x108 spz/mL.

**Discussion:** In the next years the annual restocking will include 200 hares and 300 rabbits. Artificial insemination will be started and it is expected that improve the species' prolificacy, increasing the number of animals released into the wild.

**Keywords:** Iberian hare; European rabbit; Conservation medicine; Reproduction.

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