

REVIEW OF THE BALKAN LYNX RECOVERY PROGRAMME

Green Belt instead of Iron Curtain –
the Critically Endangered Balkan lynx as flagship



Manuela von Arx & Thies Geertz
KORA & EuroNatur



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Green Belt instead of Iron Curtain – the Critically Endangered Balkan lynx as flagship

Balkan Lynx Range Wide Meeting, Vevçani MK, 01.10.2012

Manuela von Arx & Thies Geertz

- 1. Build a base**
- 2. Phase 1: 2006-2009**
- 3. Phase 2: 2010-2012**



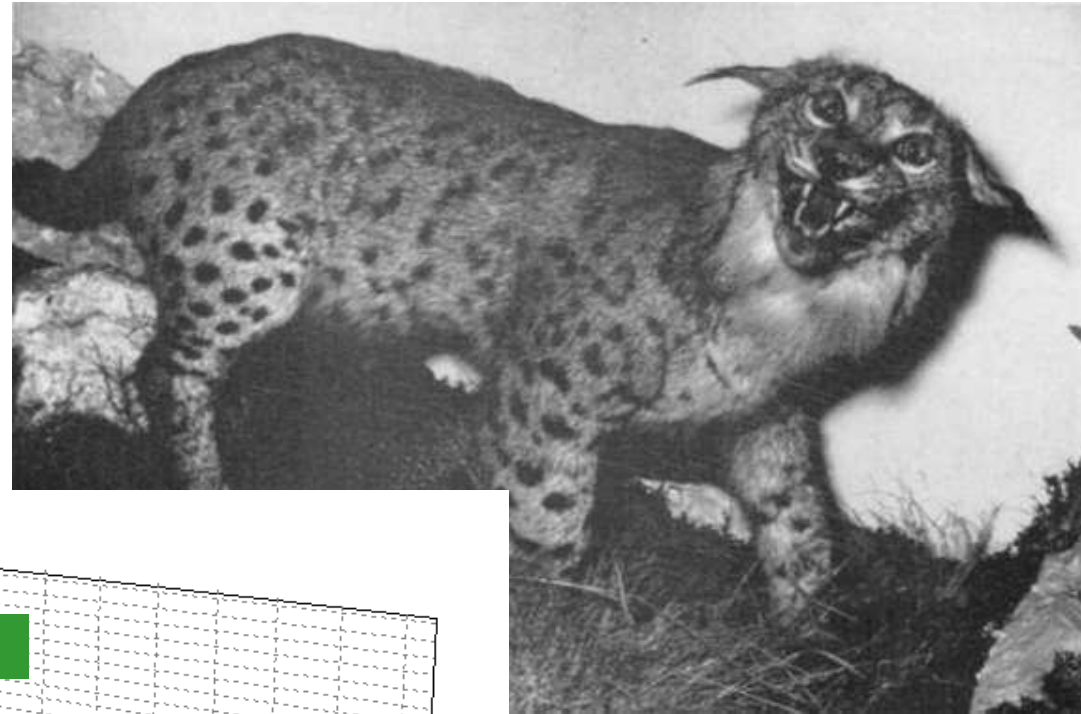
What is the „Balkan lynx“?

Buresch 1941:

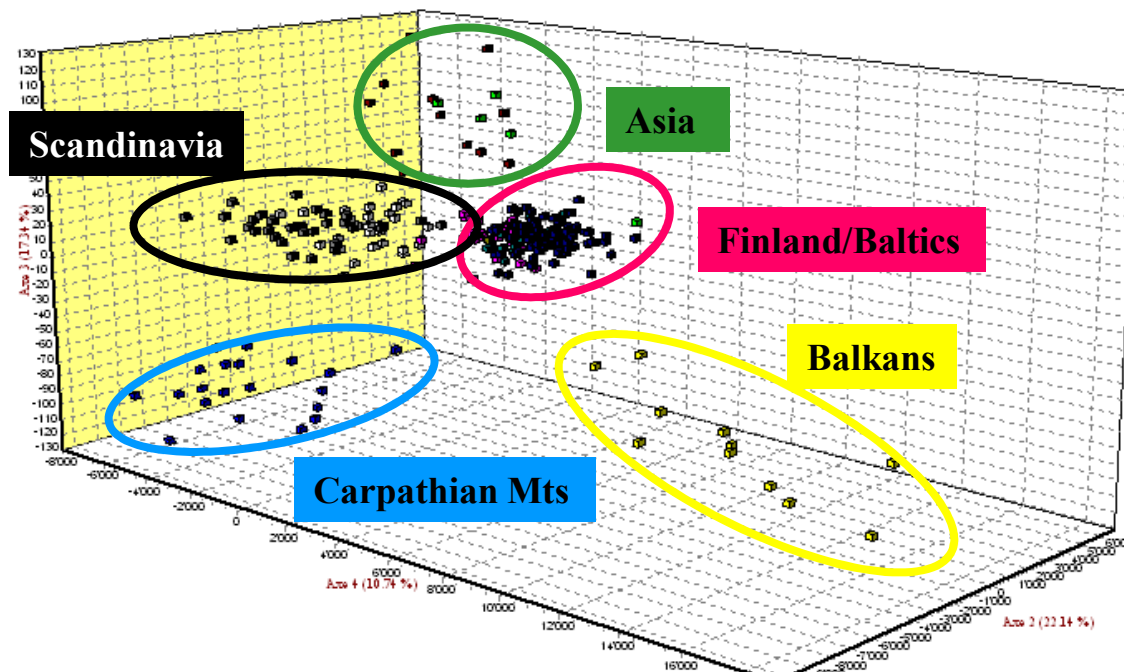
Lynx lynx balcanicus

Mirić 1978:

Lynx lynx martinoi



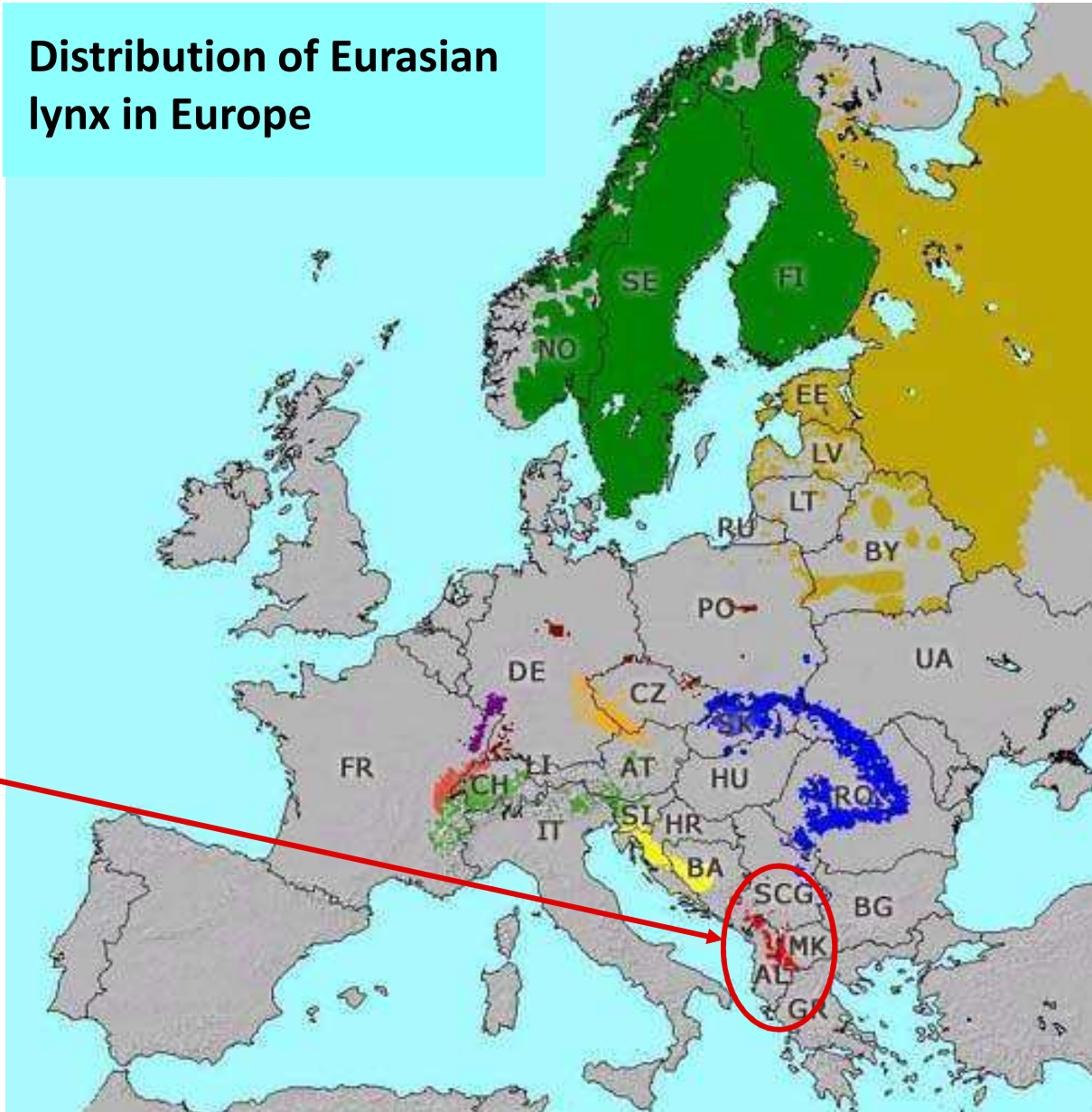
Balkan lynx holotype



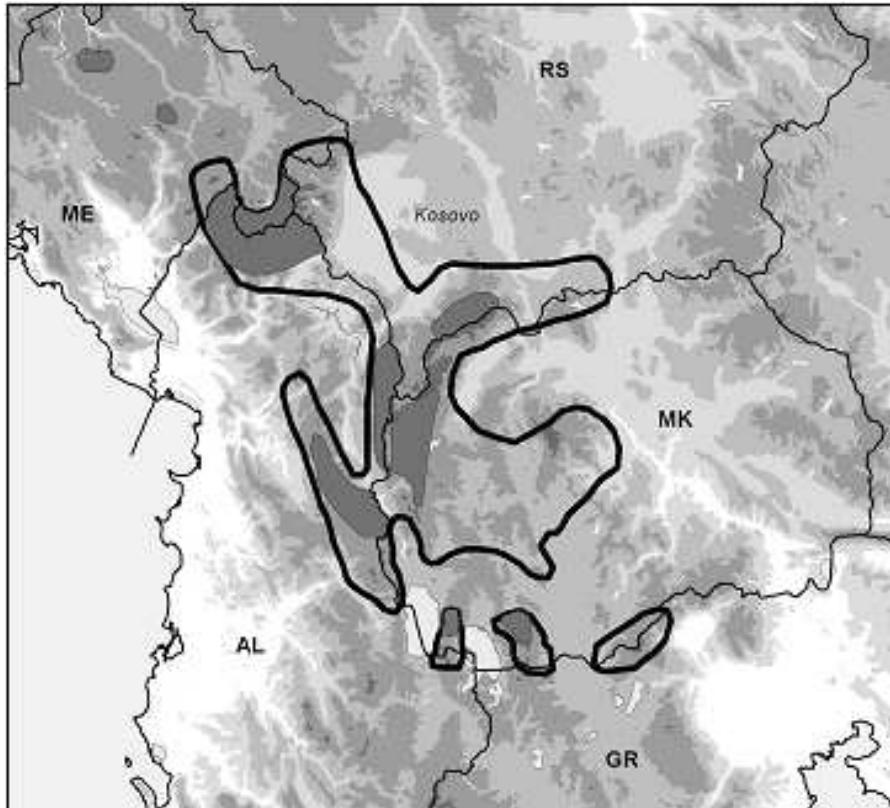
What is the „Balkan lynx“?



Most endangered autochthonous population



Distribution of the Balkan lynx

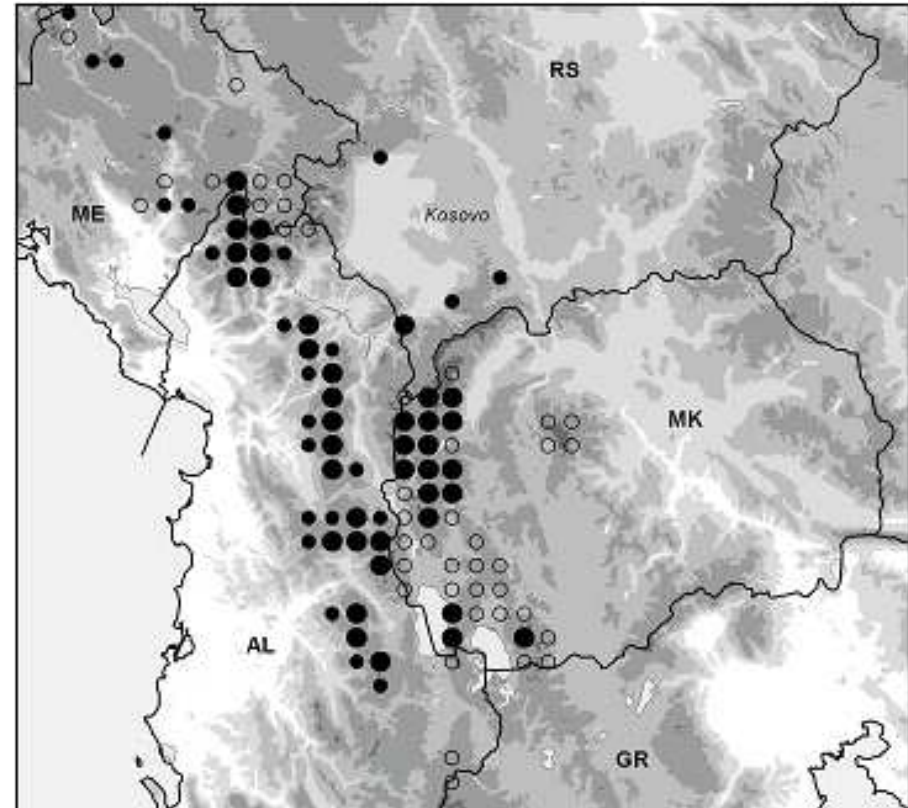


1970s (polygon): 280 lynx

1990s (dark grey): 62-78 lynx*

Mirić 1981

Breitenmoser-Würsten
& Breitenmoser 2001



2001: 80-105 lynx

von Arx et al. 2004

however, an assumed

The Balkan lynx is

Critically Endangered

according to IUCN Red List Criteria



Partnership: Participative Approach

National Workshops

21.-23. April 2005, Mavrovo and 25.-26. April 2005, Tirana



**1. Workshop
Albania-Macedonia
15.-17. November 2005
Mavrovo NP**



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Organisation:

Non-profit charitable foundation, founded in 1987

Seat in Radolfzell, Germany

Current staff member: 15

Fields of Activities:

Protection of large scale landscapes and the corresponding species (large carnivores, migratory birds)

Regional sustainable development

Environmental education

Lobbying

Partnerships:

Close, long-term cooperation with local partner organisations in project countries

Philosophy:

Our job does not end with establishing nature reserves

We local communities to get involved in nature conservation



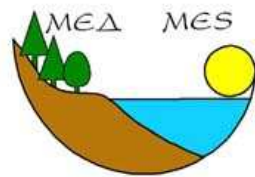


- Founded in 1996. Registered non-profit association.
- Performs applied research in the field of monitoring, ecology and conservation of carnivores in the cultivated landscape and their coexistence with humans.
- Main tasks: Monitoring of the status and trends of the carnivore populations by means of scientifically robust methods, research, status surveys of large carnivores in Europe, and providing information and consultancy for government agencies, interest groups and the general public.
- International collaboration and involvement in conservation programmes worldwide.
- Hosts of the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group



Projects 2006-2009:

Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme 2006-2009 (Phase I)



Building capacity to meet the challenges of multi-level democracy:
the case of conserving species with transboundary populations



1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012



Species conservation



Flagship for...



Human dimension & conflicts



Prey conservation



Landscape conservation



Aim: Recovery of a viable Balkan lynx population

Goals:

1. to generate the baseline knowledge (lynx, prey, habitat, conflicts)
2. to establish a reliable survey and monitoring system
3. to create additional protected areas in the Green Belt of the southwest Balkans
4. to raise awareness and build national/international partnerships for lynx conservation
5. to facilitate political commitment of national authorities and international institutions

Prerequisite: The building up of a regional Balkan lynx team



Balkan lynx team



- Dime Melovski
- Aleksandar Stojanov
- Gjorgi Ivanov
- Vasko Avukatov
- (Sabit Mustafa)



- Aleksandër Trajçe
- Kujtim Mersini
- Bledi Hoxha
- (Erjola Keçi)
- (Olsi Qazimi)



1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

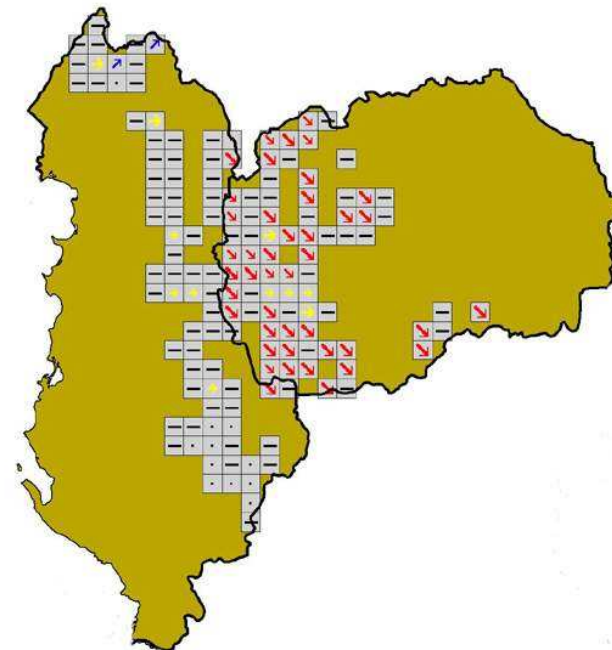
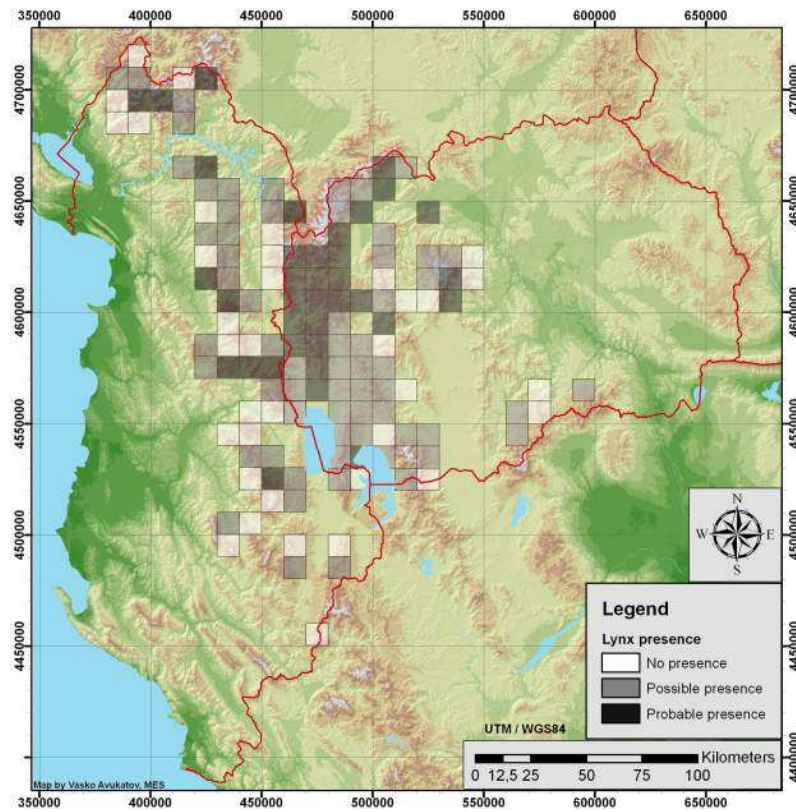
Capacity development:



Baseline survey:

Lynx presence

873 interviews of local inhabitants (553 MK, 320 AL)

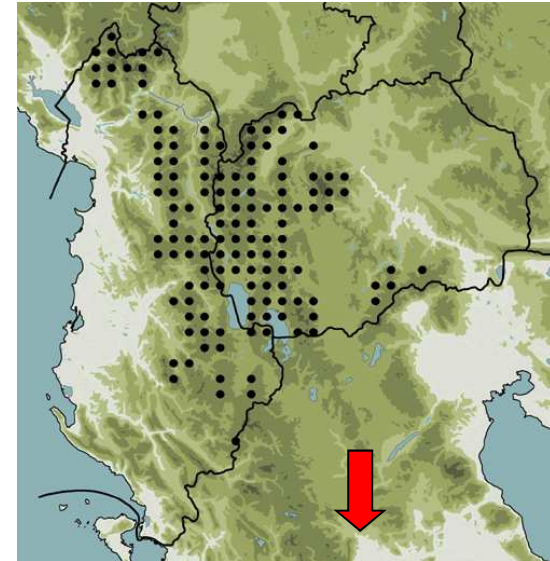
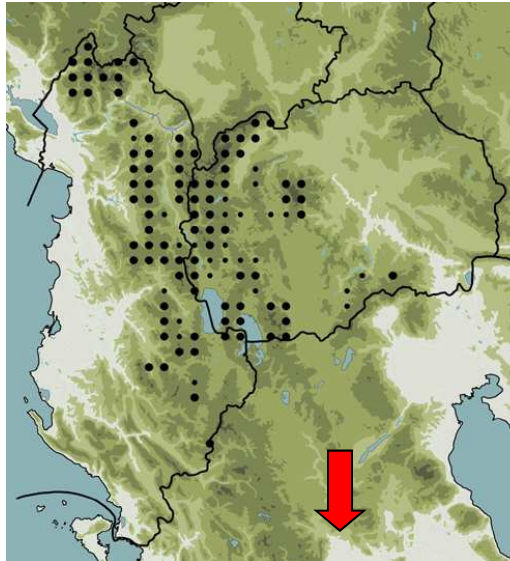
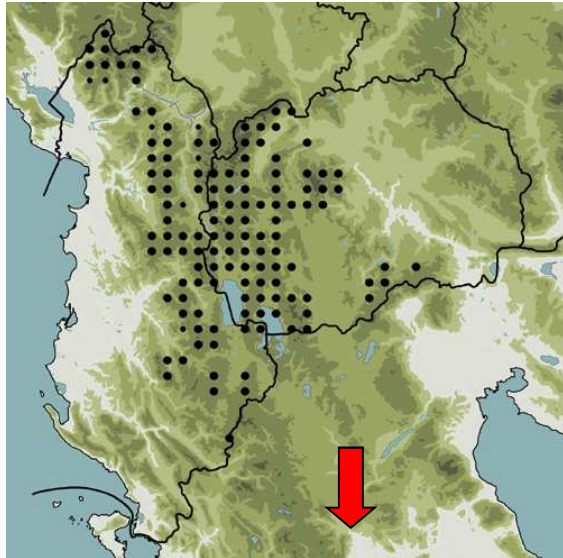


1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

Baseline survey: Prey species



1. Build a base

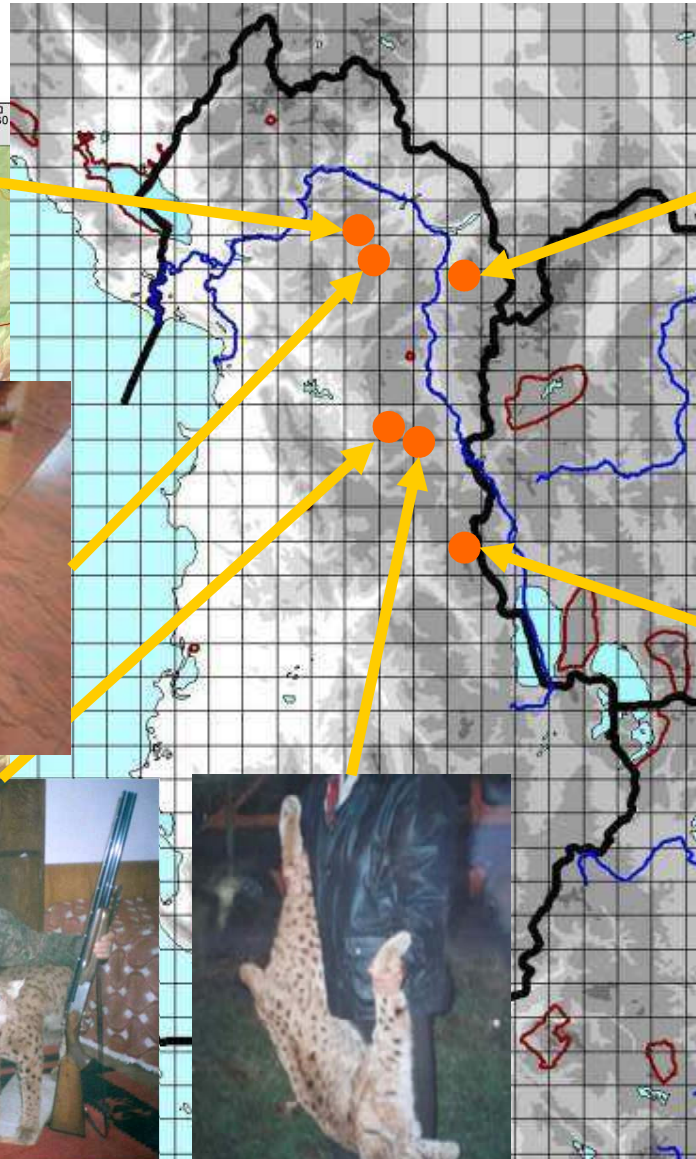
2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

Baseline survey: Lynx «hard facts»



- Balkan lynx hard facts**
- 📍 Lynx tracks (found by BLRP)
 - 📷 Camera trap photography of lynx
 - 🚫 Lynx tracks (found by non-BLRP)
 - 📸 Lynx photography (taken by non-BLRP)
 - 🐾 Stuffed lynx or lynx pelt



7 AL, 9 MK



Baseline survey: Threats



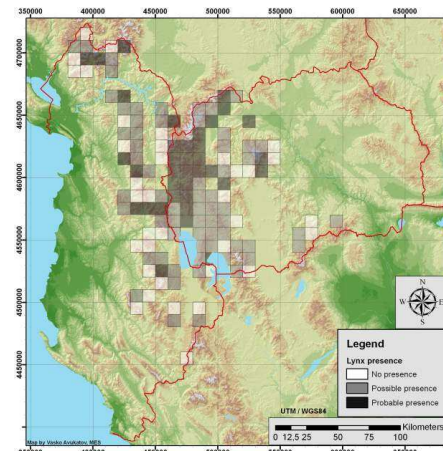
Direct persecution



Habitat degradation



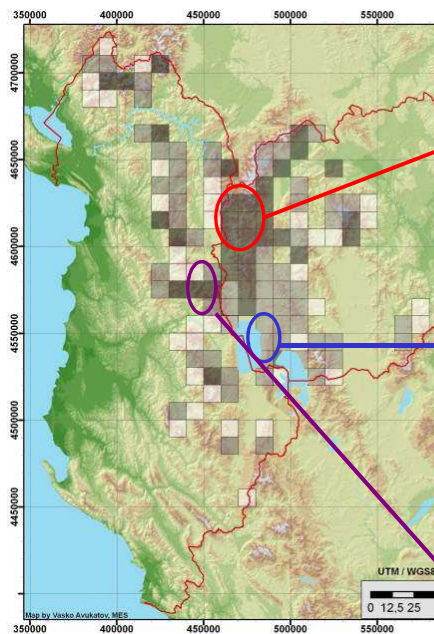
Decreasing prey populations



Small size & fragmentation of the population



Camera trapping: Results



Study area (size)	Date	No. cam.-traps	No. lynx pictures	Lynx population estimation	Other species (No. of pictures)
Mavrovo NP, MK (436 km ²)	26.02.- 26.04.08	32 sites x 2 = 64	29	$7 \pm 1,82$ independent lynx* $= 0,84 \pm 0,24$ lynx/100km ²	badger (12), brown bear (13), brown hare (30), chamois (28), red fox (10), roe deer (36), wild boar (47), wildcat (6), wolf (7)
Galichica NP and northern surroundings, MK (~ 250 km ²)	19.11.08.- 14.01.09	19 (13 sites)	0	-	badger (1), brown bear (1), brown hare (11), red fox (13), roe deer (10), wild boar (3), wild cat (8), wolf (2), [dogs (10)]
Shebenik-Jabllanica NP (340 km ²)	02.03.- 17.04.09	38	0	-	badger (1), brown bear (2), brown hare (5), red fox (15), roe deer (2), stone marten (7), wild cat (5), dogs

* Model Mh of programme MARK



1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

Camera trapping:



1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

Monitoring network:



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1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

Monitoring network:



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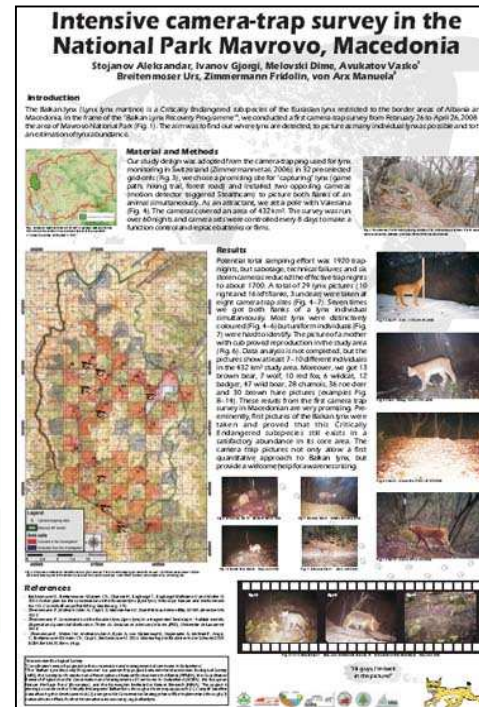
Public awareness & Outreach:



Press articles



Leaflets & posters



Presentations & posters at international conferences



Public awareness & Outreach :

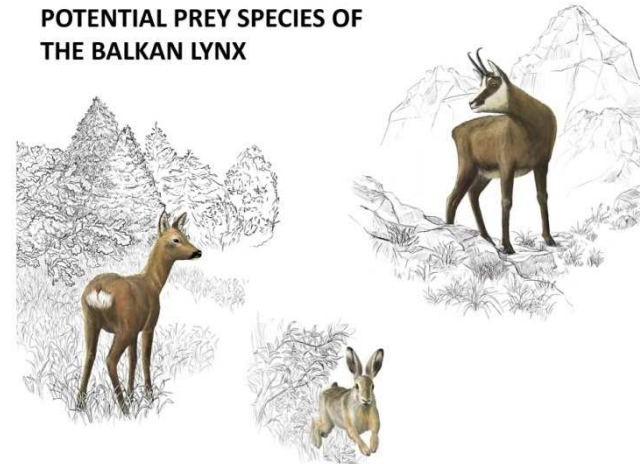


Presentations at schools, talking to people

www.catsg.org/balkanlynx



POTENTIAL PREY SPECIES OF THE BALKAN LYNX



ROE DEER
Capreolus capreolus

CHARACTERISTICS: Coat sandy to red-brown in summer and grey-brown in winter. A black nose and moustache and a white chin are the facial features. Males have rather short and erect antlers which are shed in autumn and regrow until the following spring. The roe deer feeds mainly on grass, leaves, berries and young shoots.

SIZE: 95-135 cm, height 60-80 cm, **WEIGHT:** 15-36 kg (males heavier than females)

HABITAT: Highly structured mixed forests, on their edges, on openings and meadows. They avoid steep terrain.

BROWN HARE
Lepus europaeus

CHARACTERISTICS: Brown hares are larger than rabbits, with long and strong hind legs that allow it to run up to 72 km/h. Their black-tipped ears are equal in length to the head. The fur is reddish-brown to greyish with white underpart both in summer and winter. The brown hare is strictly herbivorous.

SIZE: 50-70 cm, **WEIGHT:** 3-6 kg

HABITAT: Highly adaptable species, it occupies a wide variety of habitats, including grassland, steppes, open temperate woodland, arable farmland, and pastures.

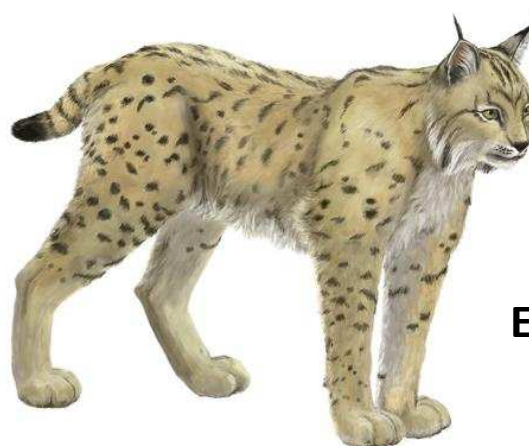
CHAMOIS
Rupicapra rupicapra

CHARACTERISTICS: Coat pale brown in summer with dark brown legs and a black dorsal stripe, in winter the whole body is darker. White face with pronounced black stripes. The horns are slightly thicker and more curved in males than in females. The chamois is a ruminant that feeds mainly on grass and herbs.

The Balkan chamois is a subspecies: *Rupicapra rupicapra balcanica*.

SIZE: 120-150 cm, height 70-85 cm, **WEIGHT:** 15-30 kg (females), 20-40 kg (males)

HABITAT: Alpine meadows, steep pastures as well as rocks and forests.



Exhibition

European Green Belt

- 24 countries, 8'500 km
- Convert the Iron Curtain into a Life Line through Europe
- Create a backbone for Protected Areas across Europe
- The most important sites along the Green Belt need a protection status and good management



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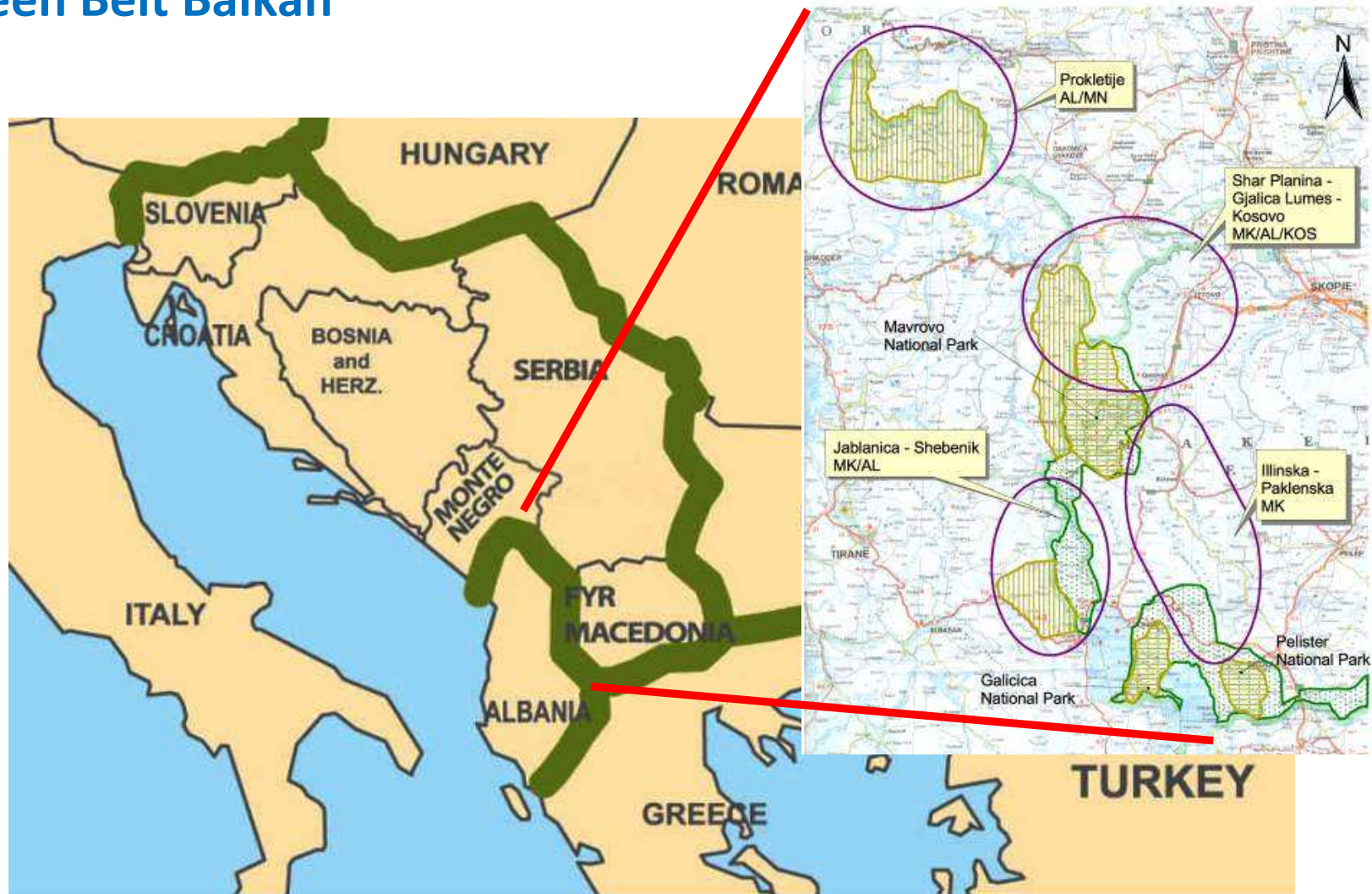
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1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

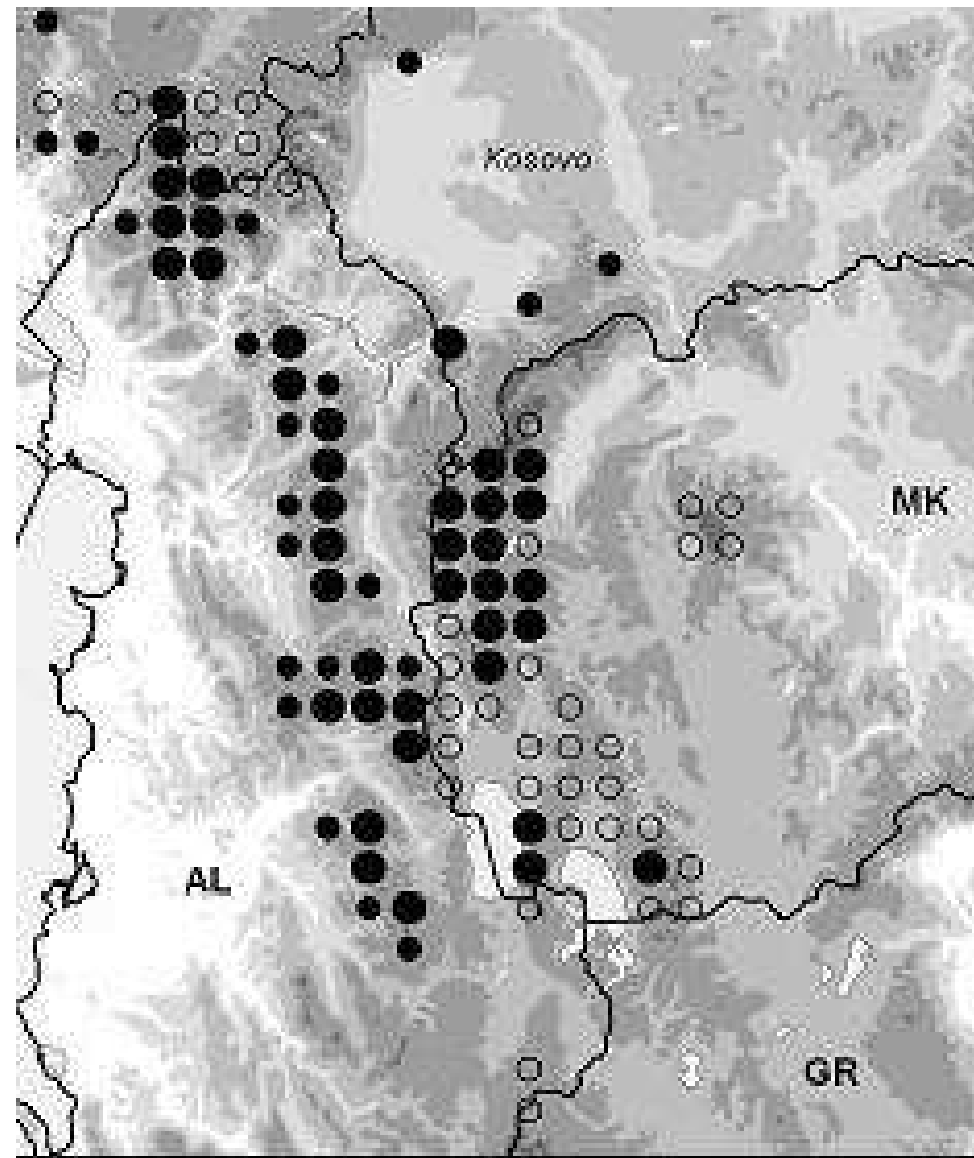
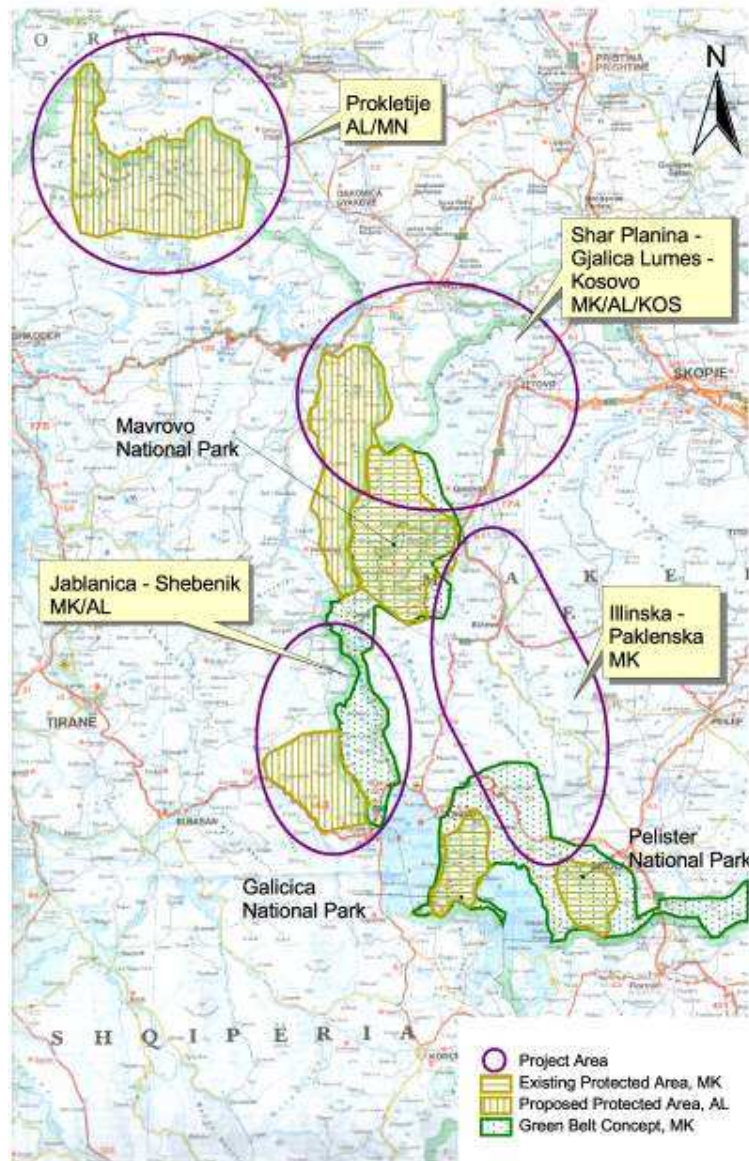
Green Belt Balkan



1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

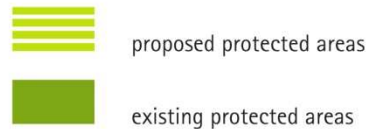
3. Phase 2: 2010-2012



Network of Existing and Proposed Protected Areas in the Framework of the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme

- A** Prokletije National Park, MN
- B** Prokletije (proposed as National Park), KOS
- C** Bjeshket e Nemuna (proposed as National Park), AL
- D** Nature Park Korab-Koritnik, AL
- E** Shar National Park, KOS
- F** Enlargement of Shar National Park (proposed), KOS
- G** Shar Planina (proposed as National Park), MK
- H** Mavrovo National Park, MK
- I** Jablanica (proposed as National Park), MK
- K** Shebenik-Jablanica National Park, AL
- L** Illinska Plakenska (important bio corridor), MK
- M** Galicica National Park, MK
- N** Pelister National Park, MK

* Kosovo under UNSCR 1244

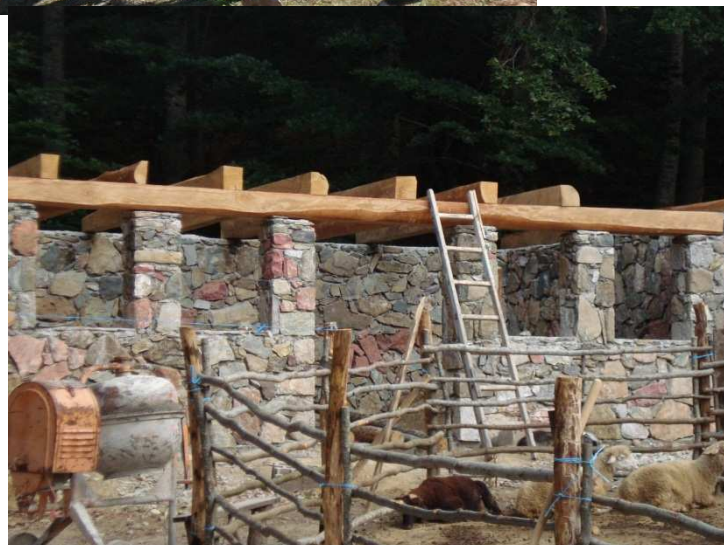


1. Build a base

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Model projects for local sustainable development:



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1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

Human dimensions:



Human dimensions:

Wolf, Bear and Lynx are 3 very different species!

Wolf

**Associated with most conflict with livestock and hunters
Extremely negative attitudes among shepherds and hunters**



Bear

**Associated with fewer conflicts
Respected, belief that conflicts are due to a few
specific individuals**



Lynx

**Lack of interactions and experience – invisible
Lack of accurate knowledge
Not regarded as a major problem = low conflict**



1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

Partnership



with hunters



with authorities



with universities

with sheep breeders
/ shepherds

with national parks

with game wardens

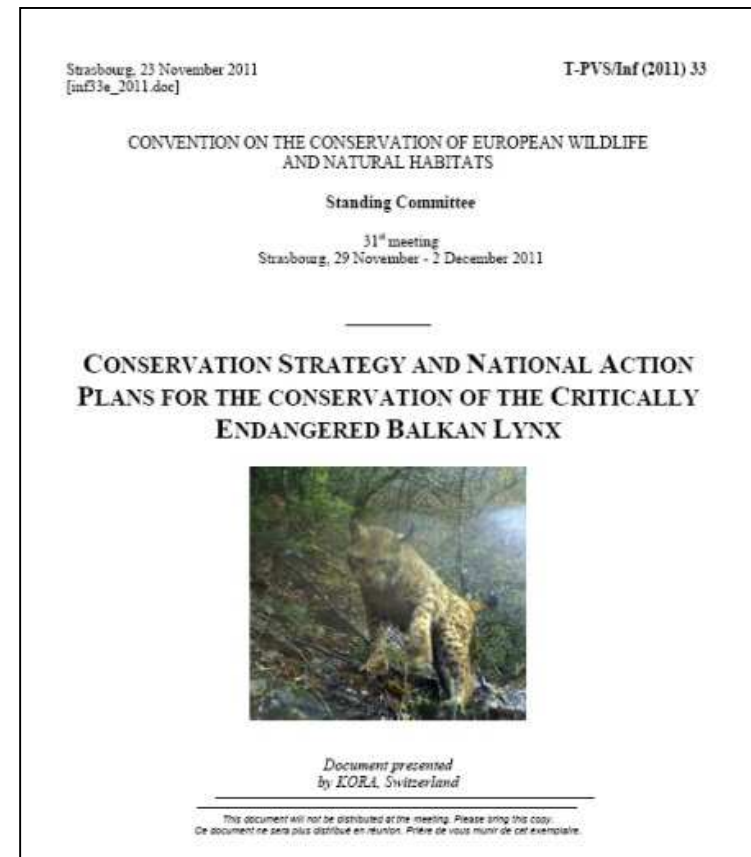
with the local people in general



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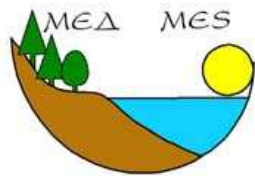
Partnership

Development of a regional Conservation Strategy and National Action Plans as road map for the conservation of the Balkan lynx



Projects 2010-2012:

Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme 2010-2012 (Phase II)



SCOPES 2010-2012

Status, ecology and land tenure system of the critically endangered Balkan lynx *Lynx lynx martinoi* in Macedonia and Albania



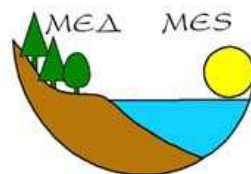
The role of natural resources in sustainable rural livelihoods in the western Balkans – The distribution and flow of costs and benefits



Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme 2010-2012:

Main Objectives:

- **Monitoring of lynx and prey**
- **Communication and outreach, increase public awareness, cooperation, information exchange**
- **Education and training**
- **Working towards the proclamation of further protected areas**
- **Model projects for sustainable local development**
- **Enlargement of the activities to Kosovo and Montenegro (search for partners, workshops, training of potential lynx team members)**



SCOPES 2010-2012:

Status, ecology and land tenure system of the critically endangered Balkan lynx *Lynx lynx martinoi* in Macedonia and Albania

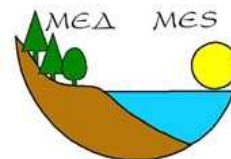


Goal 1. Study the land tenure system, social organisation, habitat preferences, and distribution of the Balkan lynx in order to understand the species as an integral part of the landscape on the individual and population level.

Goal 2. Investigate the feeding ecology of the lynx in order to make sensible recommendations for wildlife management measures enhancing and securing the prey base.

Goal 3. Develop the capacity in wildlife research and monitoring in both countries and train young researchers in the relevant methodologies and field techniques.

>> master theses



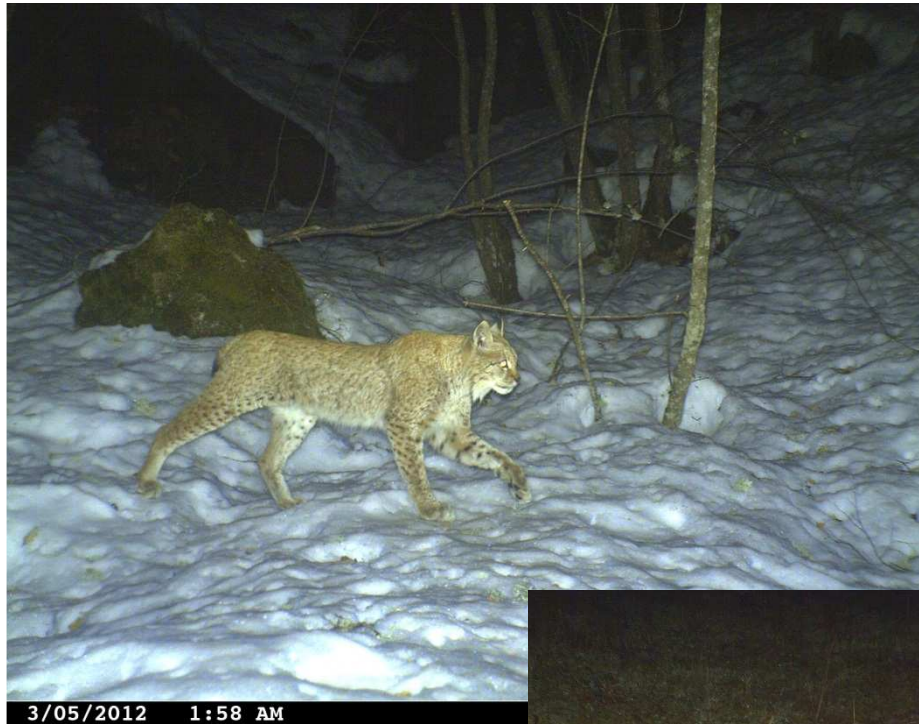
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1. Build a base

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3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

Lynx research:



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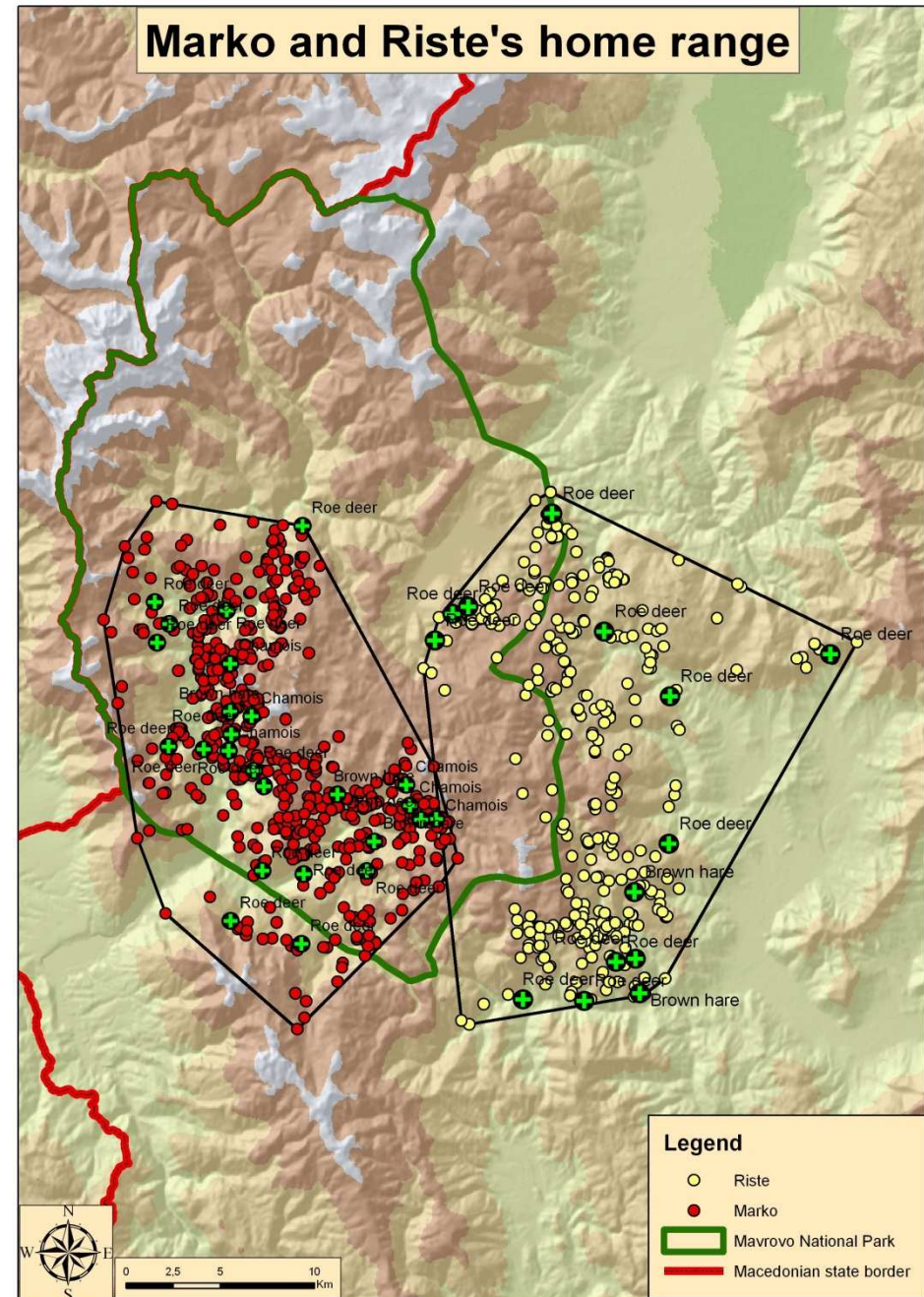
Radio telemetry:



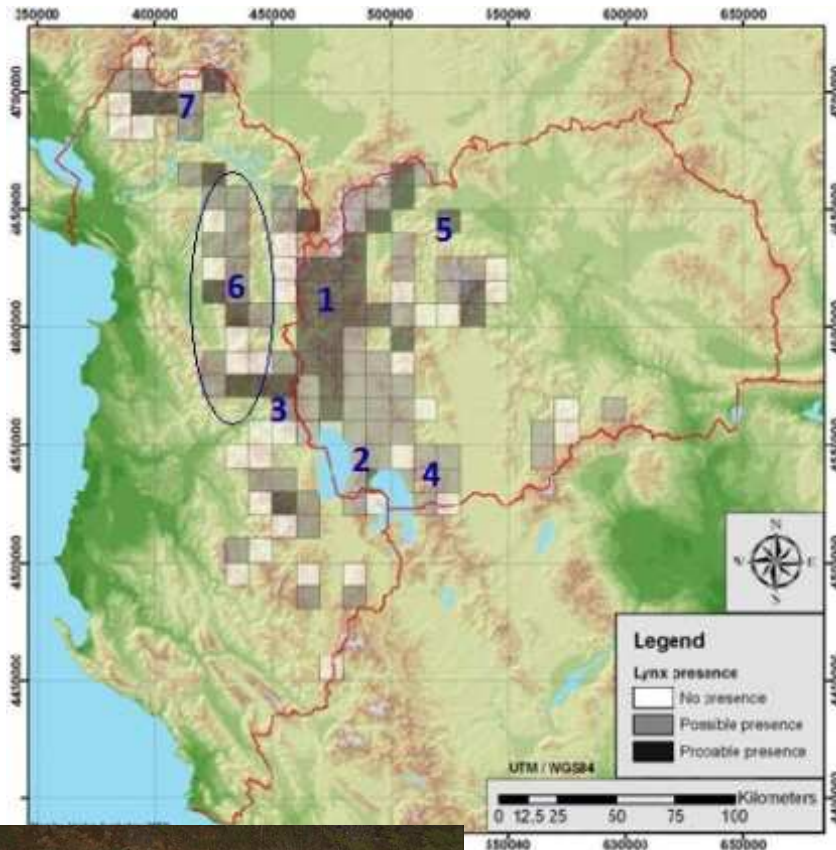
Marko



Riste



Camera trapping:



1. Mavrovo NP (MK):

7 ± 1.82 lynx ; $0.84 \pm 0.24/100 \text{ km}^2$ (2008)

9 ± 3.24 lynx ; $0.84 \pm 0.29/100 \text{ km}^2$ (2010)

2. Galichica NP (MK): 0 lynx

3. Shebenik-Jabllanica NP (AL): 0 lynx

4. Pelister NP (MK): 0 lynx

5. Jasen PA (MK): 2 lynx

6. NE Albania: 1 (2?) lynx

7. Valbona valley, Albanian Alps: 0 lynx



➔ **The Mavrovo is the only region with a functioning population (reproduction)**

➔ **The population size is now estimated to be 20-44 individuals only!**

1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

Camera trapping:

First pictures of Balkan lynx in Albania!



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1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

Training of students:



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Situation Kosovo & Montenegro?

Fact Finding Mission Dec 2011:

- At most a few single individuals in the Sharr NP, Kosovo (4-5) ?
- Probably no lynx left in Montenegro
- Further investigations needed
- Capacity development started



Lessons learnt (1/2):

- Balkan lynx has only one remaining source population → Mavrovo NP region
- AL: Shebenik-Jablanica National Park proclaimed; proclamation of Korabi Nature Park
- MK: Jablanica National Park proclamation envisaged; proclamation of Shar Planina National Park under discussion
- Partners are reliable and “junior partners” (students) are enthusiastic
- Media are interested and respond positively



Lessons learnt (1/2):

- Proclamation of a protected area is only the first step on a long way to real conservation
- Bottom-up approach and participation of local people is crucial, however, not consistently supported by governmental institutions and the administration
- The management of protected areas and wildlife populations is not efficient
- Conservation has low priority for governmental institutions and
- Lasting commitments of governmental representatives are difficult to attain

→ It takes longer than you think...



1. Build a base

2. Phase 1: 2006-2009

3. Phase 2: 2010-2012

Thank you!



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