



years
of inspiring
a sustainable
future

IUCN ECARO

Miskovic Milica

Conservation Programme Officer

IUCN ECARO – Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

- Opened in 2015
- Located in Belgrade, Serbia (previously IUCN SEE)
- Spanning the North Pacific, the Arctic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, encompassing the steppes, deserts and mountains of Central Asia, the lush forests of South Caucasus and the karst ecosystems, underground freshwater and wetlands of the Western Balkans - this vast region hosts an exceptional array of globally important and threatened species



CBD Technical and Scientific Cooperation Mechanism

- In its decision 15/8, the Conference of the Parties established a technical and scientific cooperation mechanism comprising a network of regional and/or subregional support centres to be coordinated by a global coordination entity.
- goal of the mechanism is to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation and technology transfer among Parties and to enable Parties and relevant organizations to effectively utilize science, technology and innovation to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- In Asia, the entity that received the highest score is the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), followed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Asia Regional Office and the IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (IUCN ROWA);
- In Europe, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission received the highest score, followed by the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN Med) and IUCN's Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (IUCN ECARO);
- in consortium with Regional Cooperation Council, the association "Parks Dinarides – Network of Protected Areas of Dinarides," and the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Large Carnivore Initiative.





Biodiversity Task Force is comprised of representatives of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. IUCN ECARO serves as the **Secretariat** of the Biodiversity Task Force.

The mandate and operational principles of the BD TF are defined by **Terms of Reference** and the **Rules of Procedures** of the BD TF.

BD TF works under the auspices of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). BD TF acts as the **technical and advisory body of the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWG Env)**

Biodiversity Task Force was inaugurated at the **1st meeting held on 14 November 2017 in Belgrade.**



The Green Agenda for the Western Balkans

The Green Agenda for the Western Balkans is the growth strategy for the region that aims to tackle the challenges of climate change and green transition, based on on the European Green Deal

GAWB Action Plan identifies IUCN as a regional coordinator for Nature protection and Biodiversity pillar.

Contribution of IUCN ECARO to Nature Protection and Biodiversity Pillar through:

ADAPT phase 2 (funded by Sida)

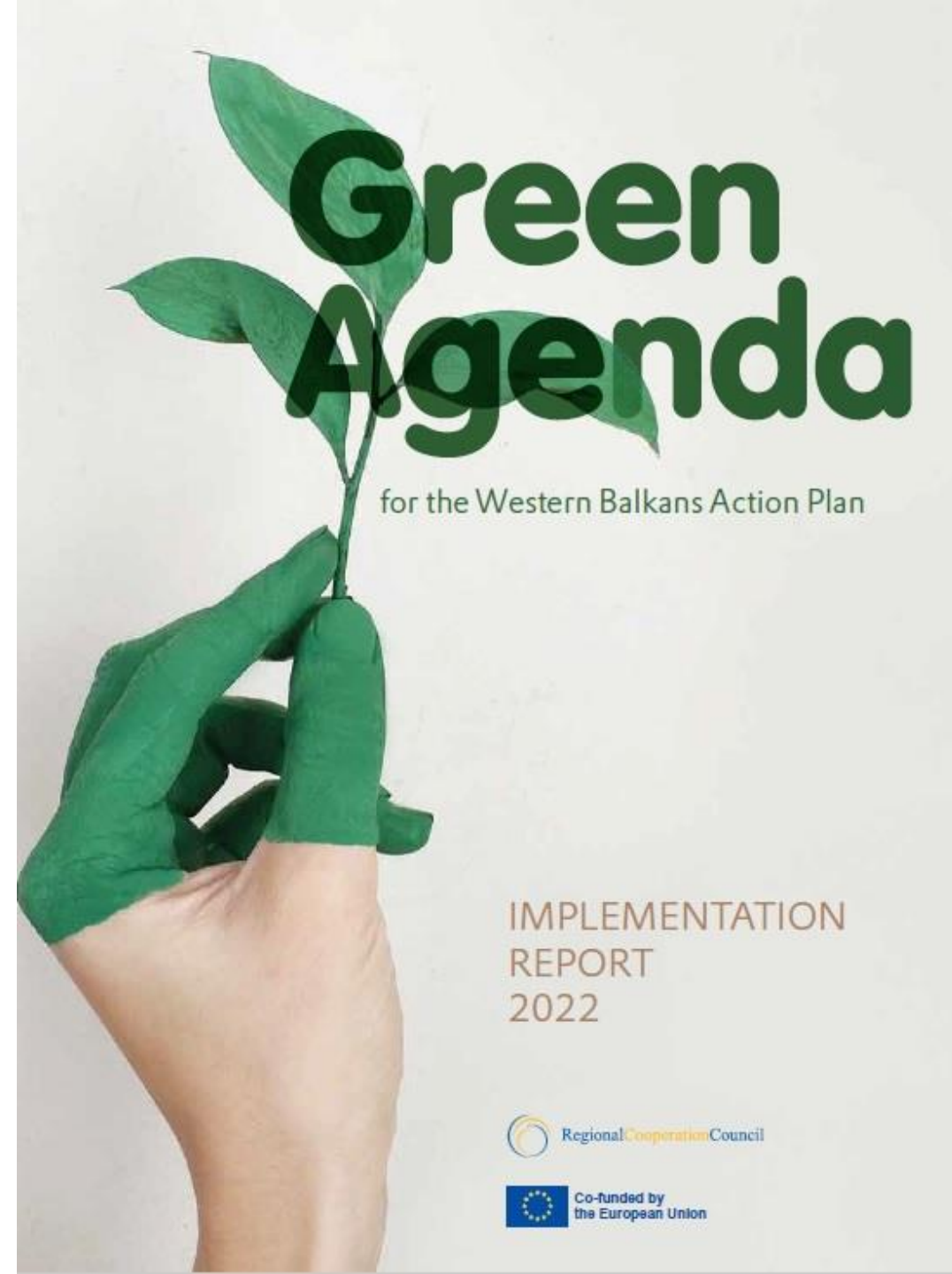
€ 2.3 Million

Four years (expected August 2024 – July 2028)

Greening the Western Balkans (funded by ADA)

€ 2 Million

Four years (June 2024 – May 2028)



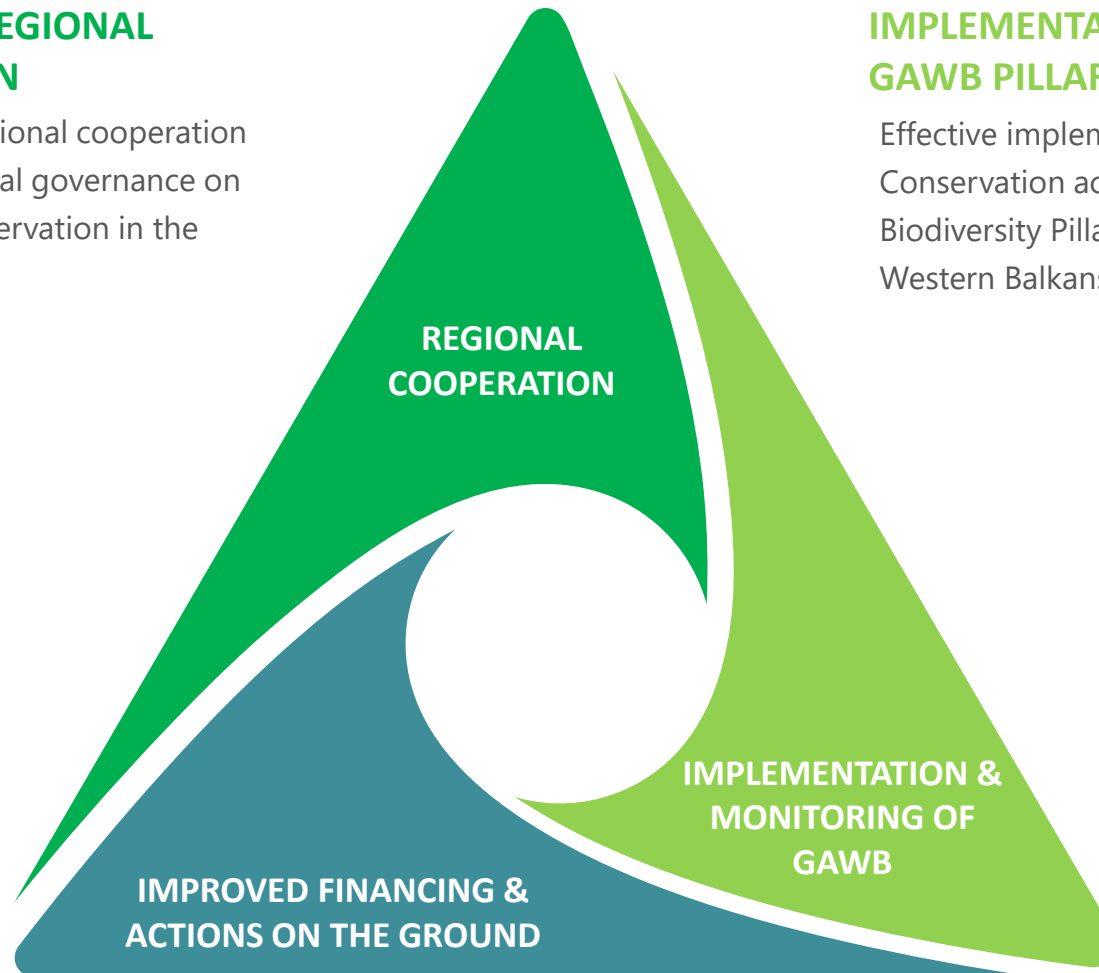
Greening the Western Balkans – Intervention Logic

ENHANCED REGIONAL COOPERATION

Consolidated regional cooperation and environmental governance on biodiversity conservation in the Western Balkans

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF GAWB PILLAR 5

Effective implementation and monitoring of Conservation actions of the Nature and Biodiversity Pillar of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (GAWB)



IMPROVED FINANCING & ACTIONS ON THE GROUND

Enhanced conservation outcomes through improved financing and action on the ground, in-line with GAWB

ADAPT 2.0 - Intervention cycle

KNOWLEDGE, CAPACITY AND AWARENESS

Consolidated regional cooperation and environmental governance on biodiversity conservation in the Western Balkans.

Capacity building & NbS CoP

KNOWLEDGE & CAPACITY



REGIONAL POLICY INTEGRATION

Enhance the role of Nature-based Solutions in the **Green Agenda for the Western Balkans**

Involvement of CSO & Academia for reviewing key deliverables of GAWB Action Plan (Restoration Coordination Group)



REGIONAL POLICY INTEGRATION (GAWB)

NbS IMPLEMENTATION & SCALE-UP

NbS IMPLEMENTATION AND SCALE-UP

Implementation of NbS pilots
Catalyse opportunities for the deployment of Nature-based Solutions on the ground

Contribution of IUCN ECARO to the GAWB

| Action | Description | Main regional coordinator(s) | ADAPT 2.0 contribution to achieving each action |
|--|---|------------------------------|---|
| Pillar 1. Decarbonisation | | | |
| Action 6 | Increase opportunities for the deployment of Nature-based Solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change | RCC, IUCN | ADAPT 2.0 (establishment of a regional NbS fund) |
| Pillar 5. Protection of Nature and Biodiversity | | | |
| Action 51 | Develop and implement a Western Balkans 2030 Biodiversity Strategic Plan | IUCN, RCC | Greening the Western Balkans |
| Action 51a | Develop a Western Balkans Biodiversity Report | IUCN, RCC | |
| Action 51b | Develop a Western Balkans Biodiversity Strategic Plan | IUCN, RCC | |
| Action 52 | Prepare nature protection and restoration plans including for marine areas | IUCN, RCC, EPPA | |
| Action 53 | Develop and implement a Western Balkans Forest Landscape Restoration Plan | IUCN, RCC | ADAPT 2.0 |
| Action 53a | Prepare Restoration Opportunities Assessment Report | IUCN | |
| Action 53b | Prepare Forest Landscape Restoration Plan (including a financial plan) | IUCN | |
| Action 54 | Analyse biodiversity benefits of Nature-based Solutions and opportunities for their integration into the development of climate and other plans | IUCN, RCC | ADAPT 2.0 |
| Action 54a | Report on climate change and biodiversity linkages | IUCN, RCC | |
| Action 55 | Strengthen the mechanisms for regional cooperation and strategic planning on biodiversity conservation and implementation of the commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity | IUCN, RCC | Greening the Western Balkans & ADAPT 2.0 |
| Action 56 | Reinforce the engagement with the United Nations Rio Conventions (and synergy between the three), and join efforts in preparing a regional position on a global post-2020 biodiversity agenda | IUCN, RCC | Greening the Western Balkans & ADAPT 2.0 |
| Action 57 | Set up the Western Balkans Biodiversity Information Hub to improve knowledge exchange and availability of information | IUCN, RCC | Greening the Western Balkans |
| Action 57a | Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation Framework | IUCN, RCC | |
| Action 58 | Development of Green Infrastructures and ecosystem connectivity | RCC, EPPA, IUCN | ADAPT 2.0 (establishment of a regional NbS fund) & Greening the Western Balkans (implementation of grant mechanism) |

Northern Forest Initiative: Forest Landscape Restoration in North Macedonia and Albania

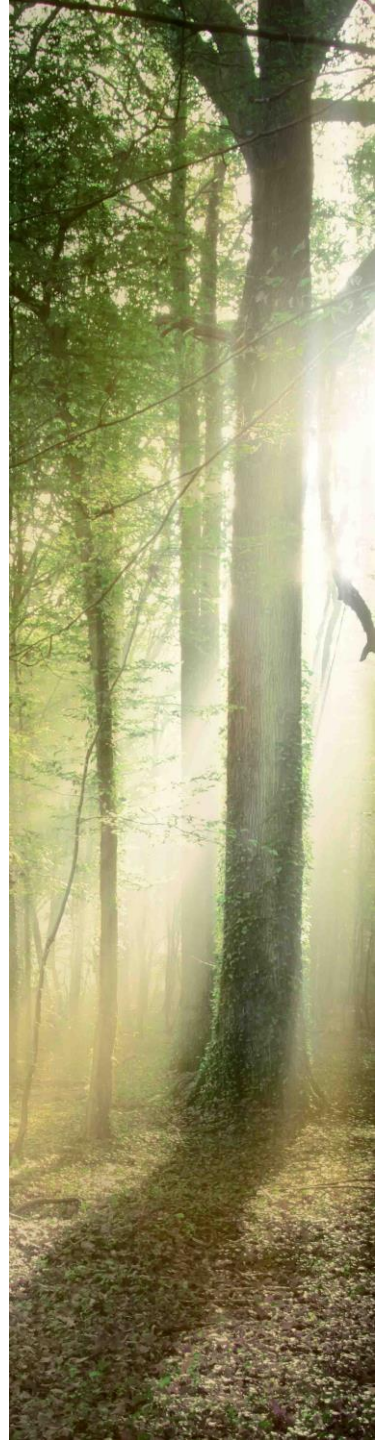
Funded by **Swedish Postcode Foundation**

Applying Nature Based Solutions – Forest restoration

2 ROAM assessments: The Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM), developed by IUCN and WRI, is a framework developed for countries to conduct forest and landscape restoration opportunity assessments and to identify specific priority areas at a national or sub-national level.

>10 stakeholder consultations and community meetings, more than 100 stakeholders consulted in each country

ROAM Report for North Macedonia; restoration sites have been selected
Draft ROAM report for Albania; priority sites identified for validation



2.1. NFI Project at Glance

Project Overview

0.63
mln EUR

Project Budget
core funds from Swedish Postcode Foundation

Objective:
to contribute toward preventing further net loss of forests through restoration work and strengthening local capacities

Focus areas
Bukovikj in North Macedonia
Pashtrik-Morina in Albania

40 ha
restored

2.5
years

Project term
from 2023 till mid-2025

Capacity building -
trainings on sustainable forest management

80 
trained

METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS:



[Global Standard for NbS](#)



[Guide to ROAM](#)



[Bonn Challenge](#)



Project is funded by:



- Founded in 2016
 - Providing interdisciplinary guidance, resources, and capacity building
 - Fostering links between policy, science and communities
 - Assimilating and sharing knowledge for HWCC management
- 50 members from different countries and ranges of expertise
- Biggest library on HWCC resources, policy briefs, HWC Case studies together with UN FAO
- Network of >50 governmental Focal Points
- In 2023, first ever International Conference on HWCC
- The IUCN SSC Guidelines on Human-Wildlife Conflict and Coexistence (EN, FR, RU, PT)

Activities relevant to Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos LCI

- Governmental Focal Points
 - Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia
 - Invited to events, sharing of resources, FP's bring to the Specialist Group's attention needs in the country
 - Liaising at major policy-making events (e.g. SBSTTA26, CMS COP)
- Guidelines
 - Info webinar for all FPs
 - Webinars organised for several NGOs and their networks - **reach out if interested in organizing one for the initiative!**
 - Discussions with Vulture Conservation Fund (VCF) about translating the Guidelines to Serbo-Croatian
 - If interested in supporting the translation to other languages, please reach out

- HWC Indicator Development process
 - Target 4 in KMGBF includes management of HWC and Parties will have to report on it
 - Developing an indicator for this part of the target – online workshops with a working group with experts and CBD Parties
 - Will be presented at COP16 and needs to be piloted
 - Montenegro is a pilot candidate
- Workshop on Large Carnivore Management in Georgia
 - Led by International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), co-organized with HWCCSG, UN FAO, ELO and Georgian MoE
 - In development
 - Tentative date – end of September 2024
 - Objective: exchange of best practices among the EU and EU Candidate Countries regarding management of the large carnivores

Contact and more information

Dr Alexandra Zimmermann, Chair: alexandra.zimmermann@ssc.iucn.org

Luna Milatović, Policy Officer: policy@hwctf.org

Guidelines



www.hwctf.org | [@hwctf](https://twitter.com/hwctf)



Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe

- structure and Balkan LC involvement -

Plitvice, 16-17 November 2023
Dime Melovski; Djuro Huber



Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe



IUCN/SSC Specialist Group

**Large Carnivore
Initiative for Europe**
IUCN/SSC SPECIALIST GROUP



"To maintain and restore, in coexistence with people, viable populations of large carnivores as an integral part of ecosystems and landscapes across Europe"

Six target species...





LCIE - structure

- Founded in 1995; since 2010 is a **Specialist Group within the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of IUCN**
- 32 countries
- 54 members
- **The LCIE has 3 types of product:**
 - Coordination and networking between projects run by LCIE group members and partners
 - Some specific LCIE working projects and products
 - Inspiration and guidance to the wider conservation community



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Bear, wolf and lynx in south-west Balkans challenges and conservation

Stakeholder meeting in Ohrid,
05 October 2023



Balkan LC session



- Inbreeding as a threat – reinforcement as an answer
- Commitment from the authorities to proceed

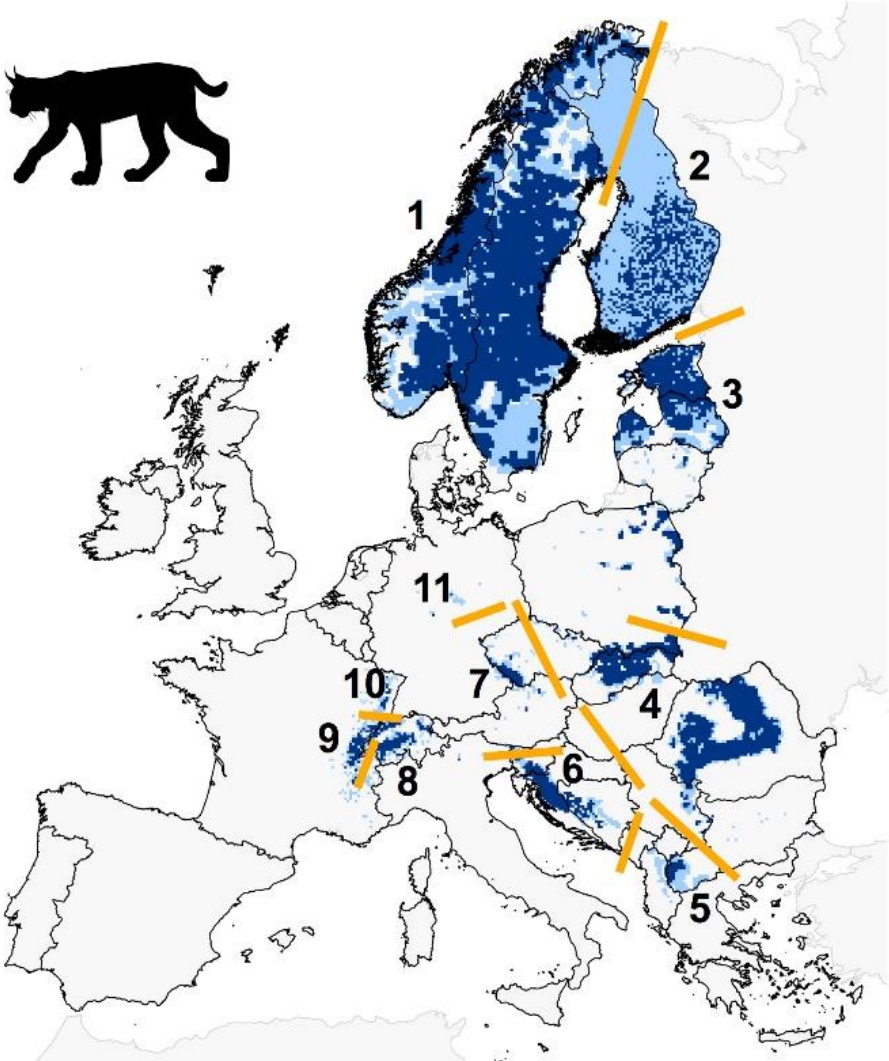


- Bear population seemingly increasing in western N. Macedonia
- How should the authorities react to the increasing incidents in order to prevent future incidents?



- Remove the wolf from the bounty list in the law on hunting in MK
- Systematic approach to reduce the number of stray dogs

Balkan lynx (*Lynx lynx balcanicus*)



Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme Phase I-VII (2006-2027)

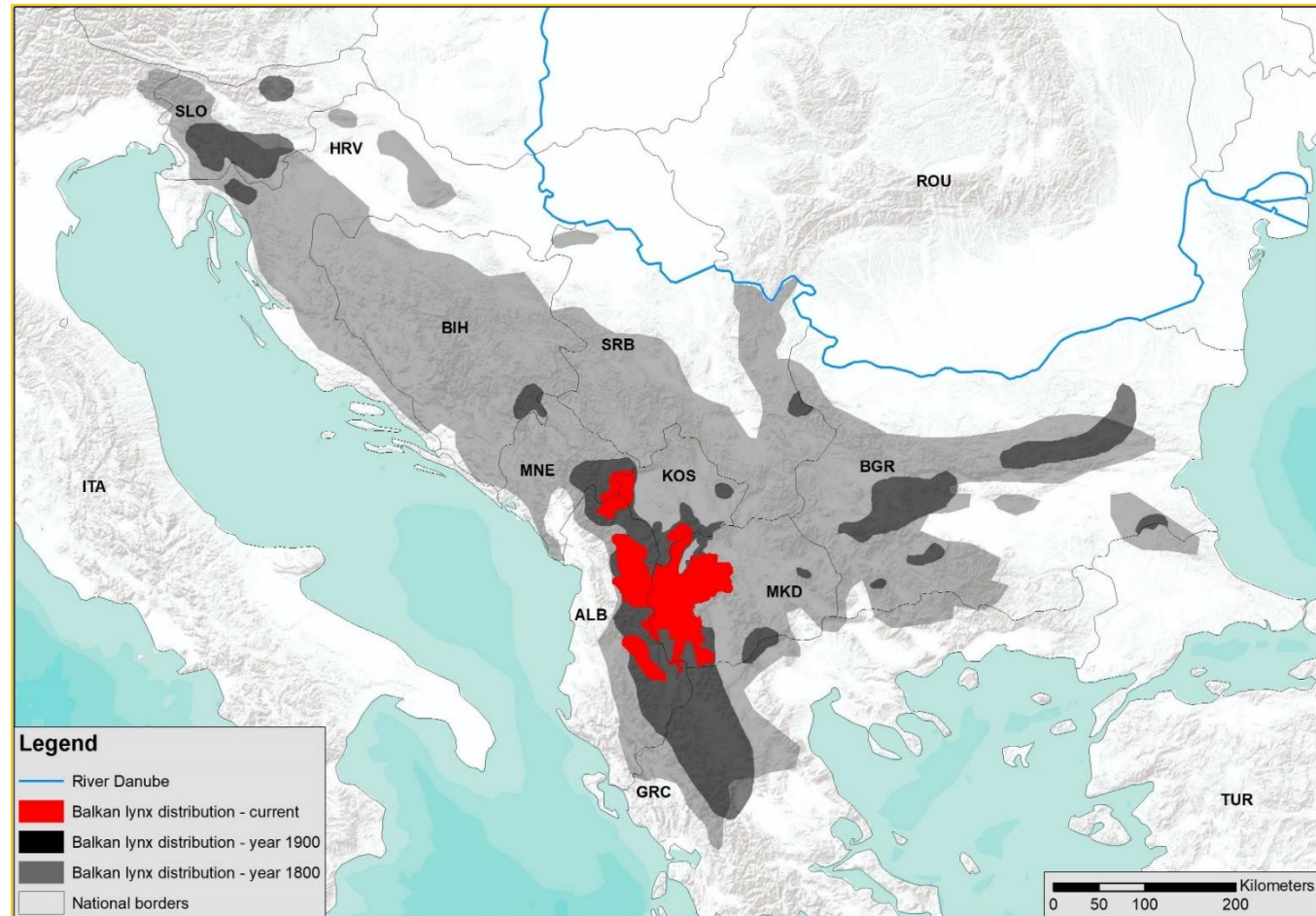


Deterministic threats

- Habitat fragmentation and destruction – infrastructure: hydropower, wind farms
- Illegal killing of lynx and wild ungulates
- Poor law enforcement - lynx in a restaurants



- Stochastic threats
- Small effective population size – N_e > Low genomic diversity > Inbreeding depression

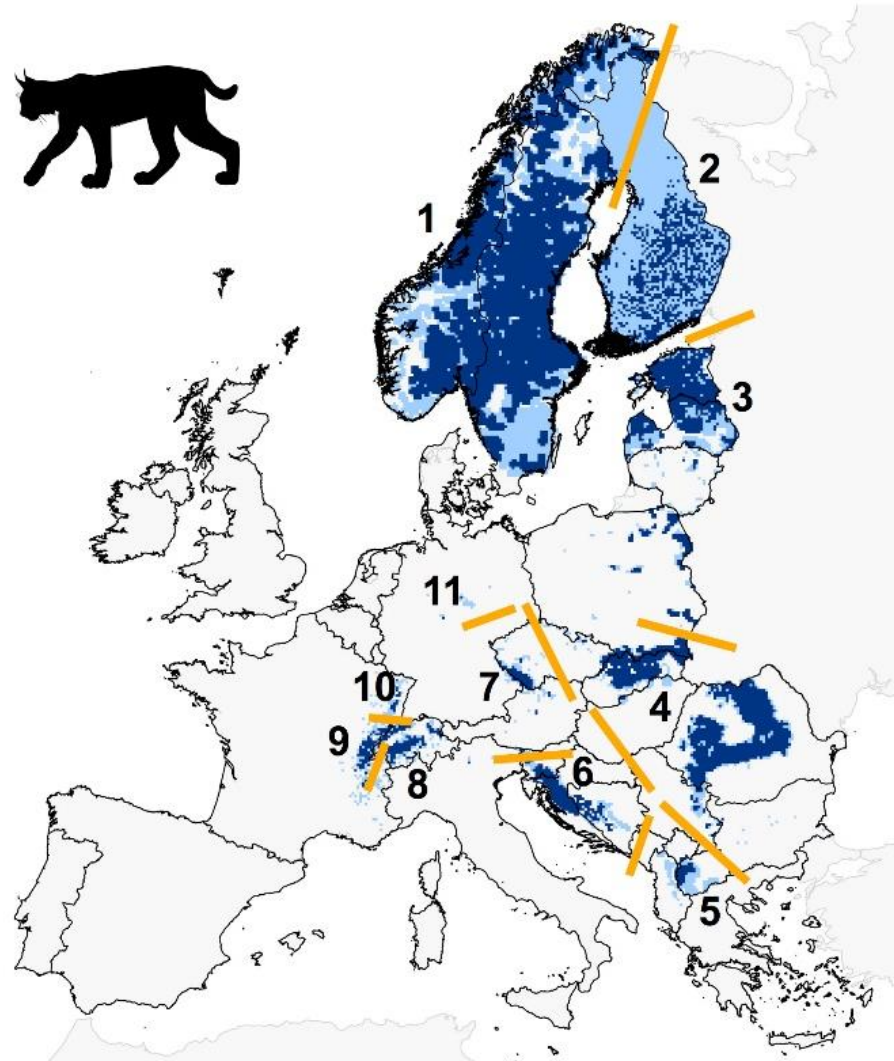


Dinaric lynx (*Lynx lynx*)

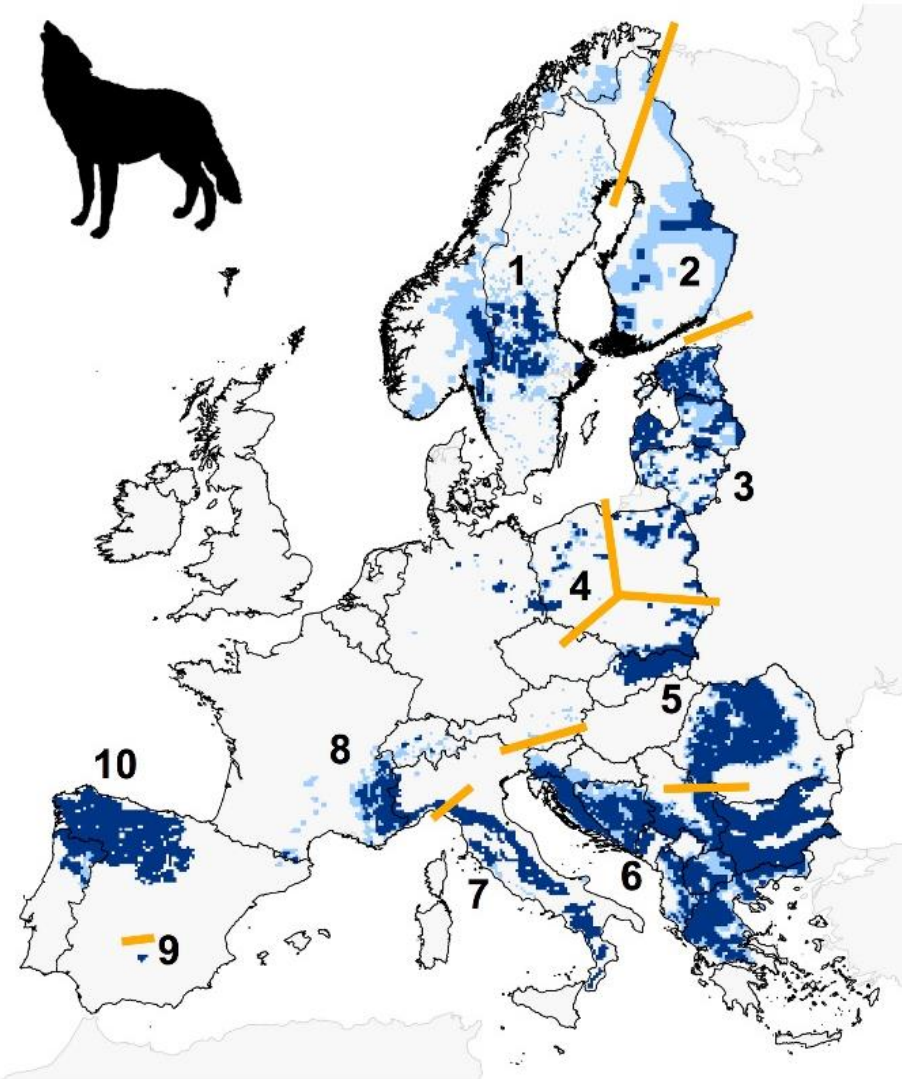


LIFE LINX Project (just finished)

- Added 14 individuals from Slovakia and Romania to cope with inbreeding
- Population grew recently



Grey wolf (*Canis lupus*)



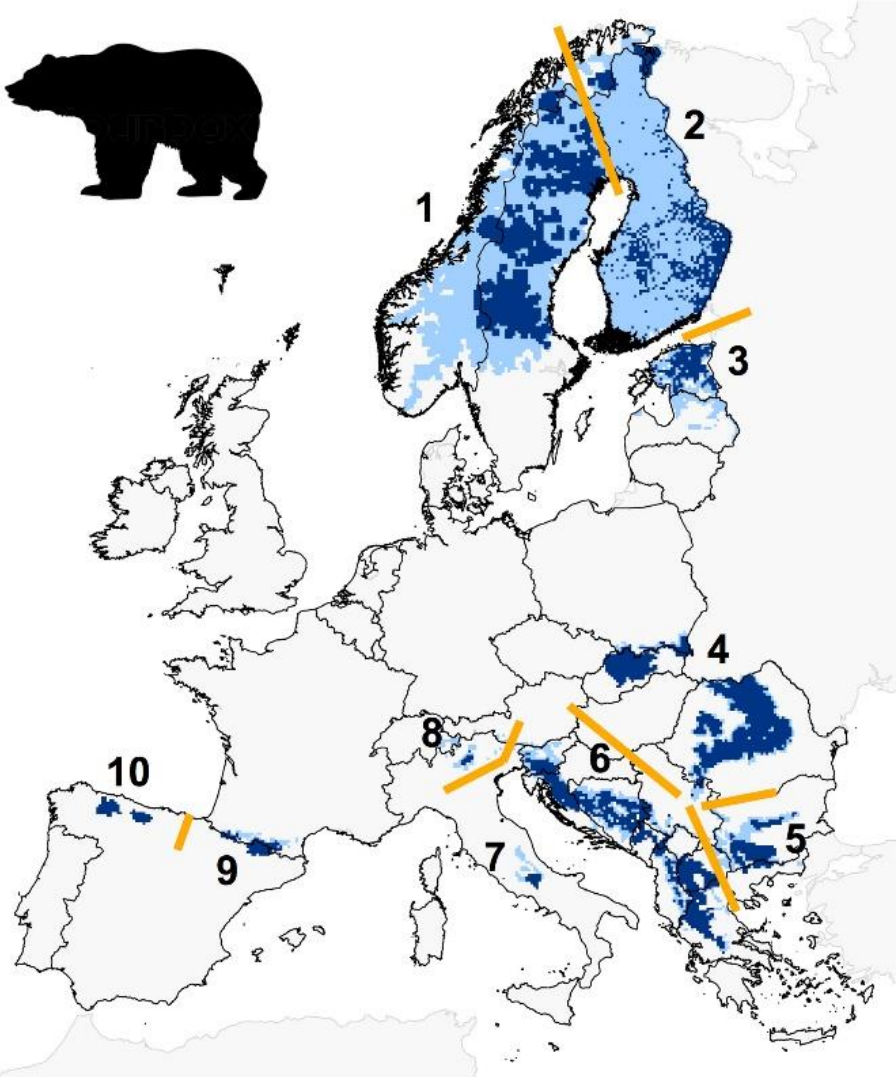
“Pest control” and illegal killing



Hybridization



Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*)





Other IUCN SSC for Large Carnivores

- Bear Specialist Group: European Brown Bear Expert Team (co-chair Djuro Huber)
- Canidae Specialist Group (Wolf Specialist Group was chaired by Dave Mech, now passive)
- Felidae Specialist Group (Urs Breitenmoser active)