

CONSERVATION OF THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED BALKAN LYNX

Achievements and Aspirations

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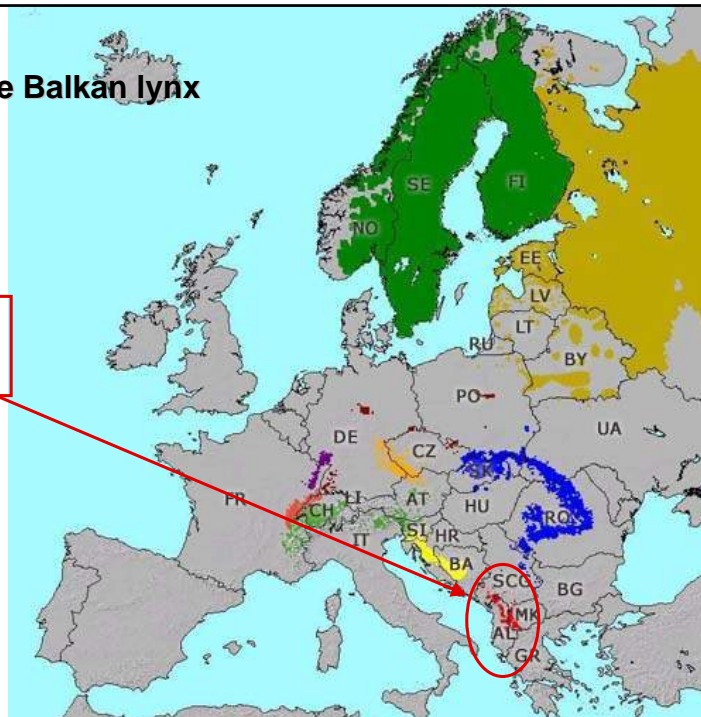


Situation of the Balkan lynx

Distribution of Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*) in Europe

Most endangered indigenous population

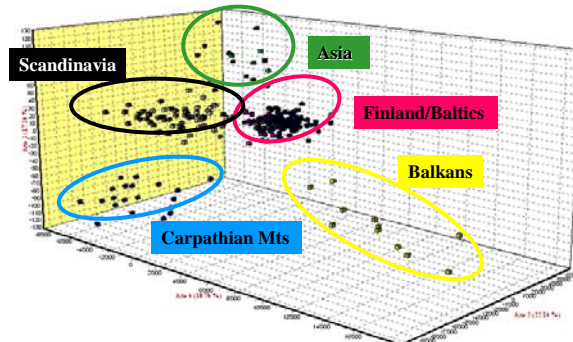
Balkan population: 70 – 100 estimated individuals



What is the „Balkan lynx“?

Buresch 1941:
Lynx lynx balcanicus

Miric 1978:
Lynx lynx martinoi



Whether as subspecies or regional metapopulation -

Critically Endangered

according to IUCN Red List criteria

Genetic differentiation in Eurasian lynx based on microsatellite analyses (ELOIS)

Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme 2006 - 2009

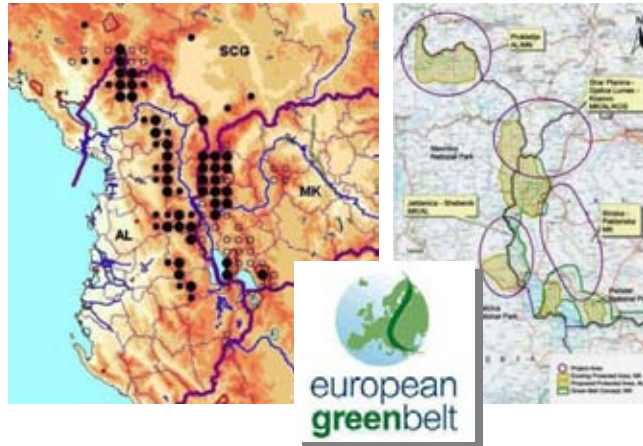


Aims of the BLRP

- Conduct baseline survey of lynx, prey, habitat, conflicts
- Establish monitoring of lynx population
- Build national/international partnership for lynx conservation
- Create additional protected areas in Balkan lynx area
- Develop and implement national action plans for lynx conservation

Approach – How do we do it?

Species conservation and landscape conservation



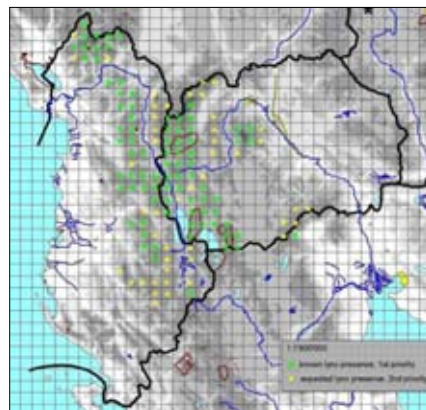
and considering human dimension

Baseline survey on lynx, prey and other carnivores in Albania and Macedonia

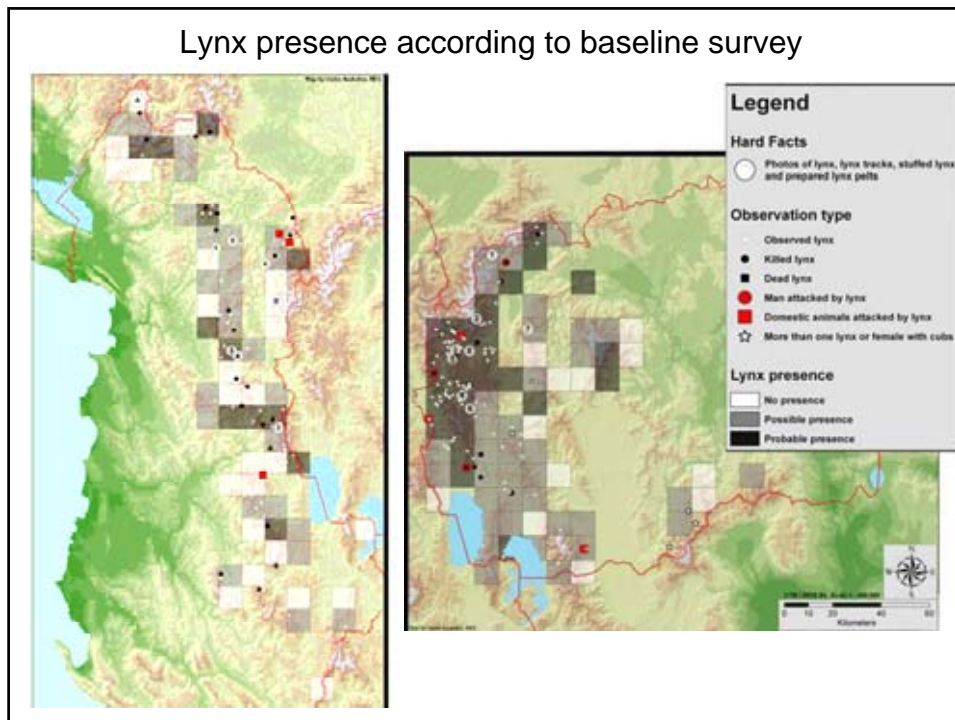
Purpose: *To collect systematically local knowledge on lynx, prey and carnivores in Albania and Macedonia through means of questionnaires*

Study area & Methods

- Defined by available information on lynx presence in both countries
- Map overlaid with 10x10 km grid
- 136 grid cells selected for survey
- At least 1 visited village per grid cell
- Direct (face to face) interviews
- Period of survey: August 2006-July 2007
- Number of interviews: 873



Lynx presence according to baseline survey



First camera-trapping attempts

- Camera-trapping techniques implemented for the first time in AL & MK in the frame of the BLRP
- First intensive session of camera-trapping for capture-recapture analysis of population conducted in Mavrovo NP, Macedonia in February-April 2008
- Intensive session of camera-trapping planned in Albania in the beginning of 2009



Training of network members in monitoring



Development of a recovery strategy for lynx

- In 2-3 June 2008 workshop for the Balkan lynx Recovery Strategy
- 50 nature conservation experts from Albania & Macedonia
- The recovery strategy document will be drafted to the governmental agencies from both countries for endorsement



Protected areas approach

Proclamation of Trans-boundary protected areas

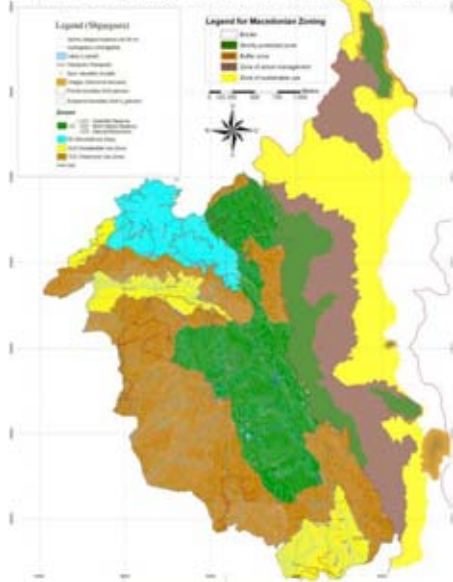
Enhancement of international cooperation for nature conservation

Protection of large and complex ecosystems

Protection of sub-populations of lynx



Jablanica Mt. zoning overview Albania and Macedonia



Human dimension approach - Why?

- **Balkan lynx live in an environment shared with humans**
- **The motivation to conserve them comes from humans**
- **Many of the main threats to their survival come from humans**
- **We must understand the lynx in the mind as well as in the forest**
- **Need to understand how people interact with the lynx**

Mainly based on talking to people (questionnaires)!

(Focus on wolf, bear and lynx)



Human dimensions - Results... so far

Wolf, Bear and Lynx are 3 very different species!

Wolf

Associated with most conflict with livestock and hunters

Extremely negative attitudes among interviewed people



Bear

Associated with fewer conflicts

Respected – belief that conflicts are due to a few individuals



Lynx

Lack of interactions and experience – invisible

Lack of accurate knowledge

Not regarded as a major problem = low conflict



Conclusions

Balkan lynx still exists ...

... but is on the verge of EXTINCTION

Small and fragmented nuclei seem to remain in parts of Albania & Macedonia

Main threats identified:

- Direct persecution (9 killed lynx discovered during the survey and several confirmations on killed individuals)
- Habitat degradation
- Decline of prey base (prey populations facing high hunting pressure)

Lynx-humans conflicts are practically inexistent and most likely won't affect its conservation

Further research on lynx is needed for:

- Assessment of population size
- Ecology and behavior
- Land tenure system



THANK YOU!

