SCALP+ Monitoring Report Lynx Year 2023 (1. May 2023 – 30. April 2024)

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Comment: In the frame of SCALP+, lynx experts from eleven European countries agreed on common criteria for the interpretation of monitoring data[1]. Based on this collaboration, annual standardised distribution maps are produced to allow a comparison of monitoring data between regions, countries and populations (Fig. 1).

[1] Molinari-Jobin et al. 2012. Monitoring in the presence of species misidentification: the case of the Eurasian lynx in the Alps. Animal Conservation 15: 266-273.

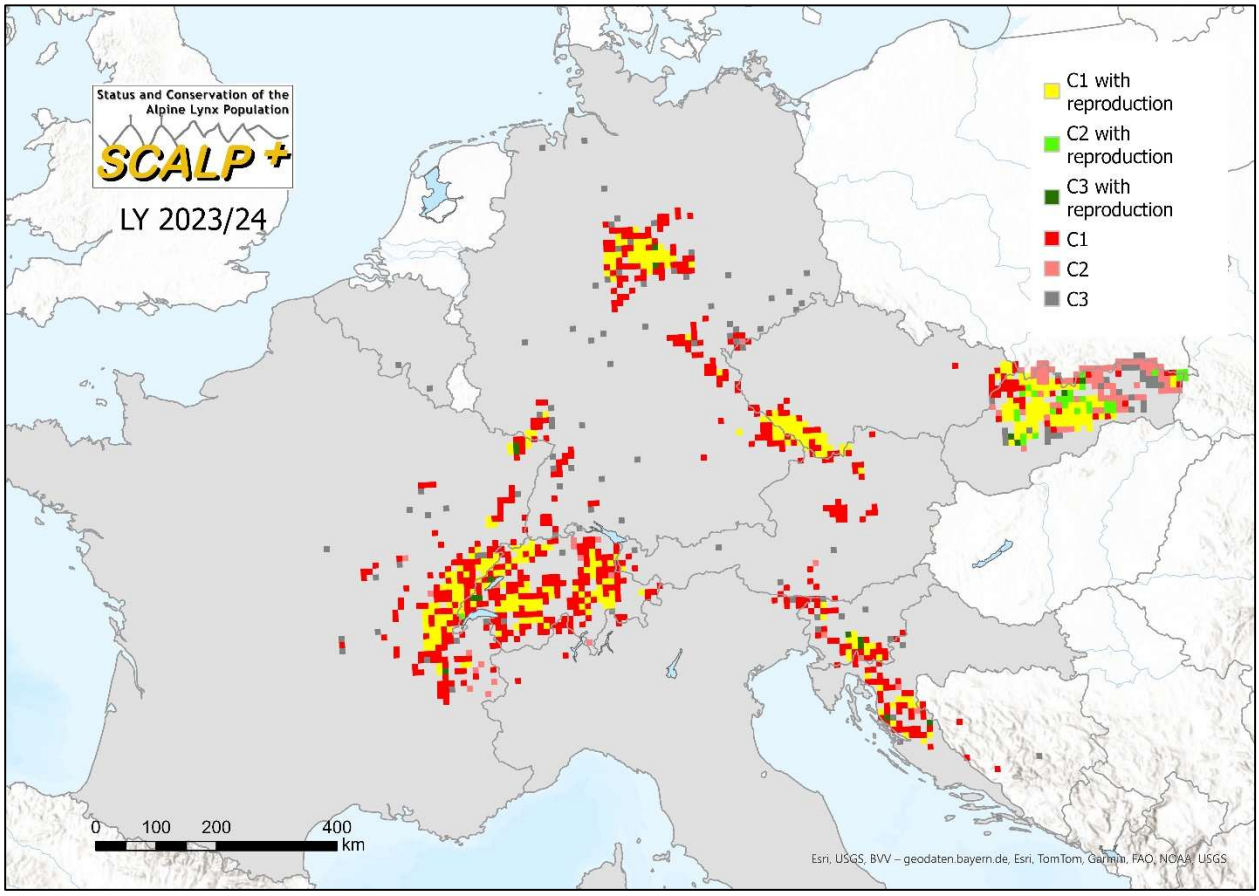

Fig. 1. Observed lynx distribution in eleven countries (grey) in lynx year 2023/2024 based on a 10x10 km grid[2]. A distinction was made between different SCALP categories and whether the observation included a reproductive event or not[3]. Non-grey countries represent those that either did not participate or have incomplete data.

[2] The shapefiles are available at the following location: https://doi.org/10.5061/dryad.wstqjq30d

[3] The collected data are classified in three categories: Category 1 (C1): "Hard facts", verified and unchallenged observations such as dead lynx, clear photos of lynx and samples confirmed by means of genetic analysis. Category 2 (C2): Observations controlled and confirmed by a trained person such as killed livestock or wild prey and lynx tracks. Category 3 (C3): Unconfirmed but plausible observations of the category 2 (kills, tracks, other field signs too old or badly documented) and all plausible observations such as direct observations, calls and scats which by their nature cannot be verified unless through photo, registration or laboratory analyses. Evidence of reproduction consist in photos of lynx kittens or young lynx found dead (C1), large and small tracks together (C2) and direct sighting of female with kittens (C3). The order of category layers in the map is C1 reproduction, C2 reproduction, C3 reproduction, C1, C2, C3. GPS-data of collared lynx are not included in the distribution map.

Special events 2023/24:

Alpine population:

- In the south-eastern Alps of Italy, three lynx were released to reinforce the population (Fig. 2). Two were wild-caught in Romania and the third was a rehabilitated orphan from Croatian Dinaric Mountains. The minimum number of independent lynx present in the south-eastern Alps was 16 (www.progettolinceitalia.it/reports/statusreport2023).
- This is the fifth year that no reproduction was reported from the Kalkalpen region, Upper Austria.

Baden-Württemberg:

- First release of a female lynx bred in captivity in the northern Black Forest in December 2023 as part of the 'Lynx Baden-Württemberg' project (Fig. 2). The lynx successfully established herself in the release area during 2023/24.

Bohemian-Bavarian-Austrian population:

- In the Austrian part of the population, 23 independent animals were recognised in 2023/24. Out of this, 13 animals were subadults. This is a strong sign for a high fluctuation of animals in the outer part of the population.

Ore Mountains:

- In March 2024, three lynxes were released – two female wild-caught animals from Switzerland and one male bred in captivity (Fig. 2). These are the first lynxes to be released in the western Ore Mountains as part of the 'RELynx Sachsen' reintroduction project.

Vosges-Palatinate population:

- Three reproductions took place in the Vosges area. Among them, one female known since 2022 gave birth to three kittens in the Ballons Comtois, the southern area of the Vosges (Haute-Saône/Territoire de Belfort), where no reproduction has ever been detected since the return of the lynx in the 1980s.
- One individual detected in the spring 2023 seems to have settled west of the Vosges mountains (Haute-Marne), in the plain area. Several signs of presence of this individual were registered.

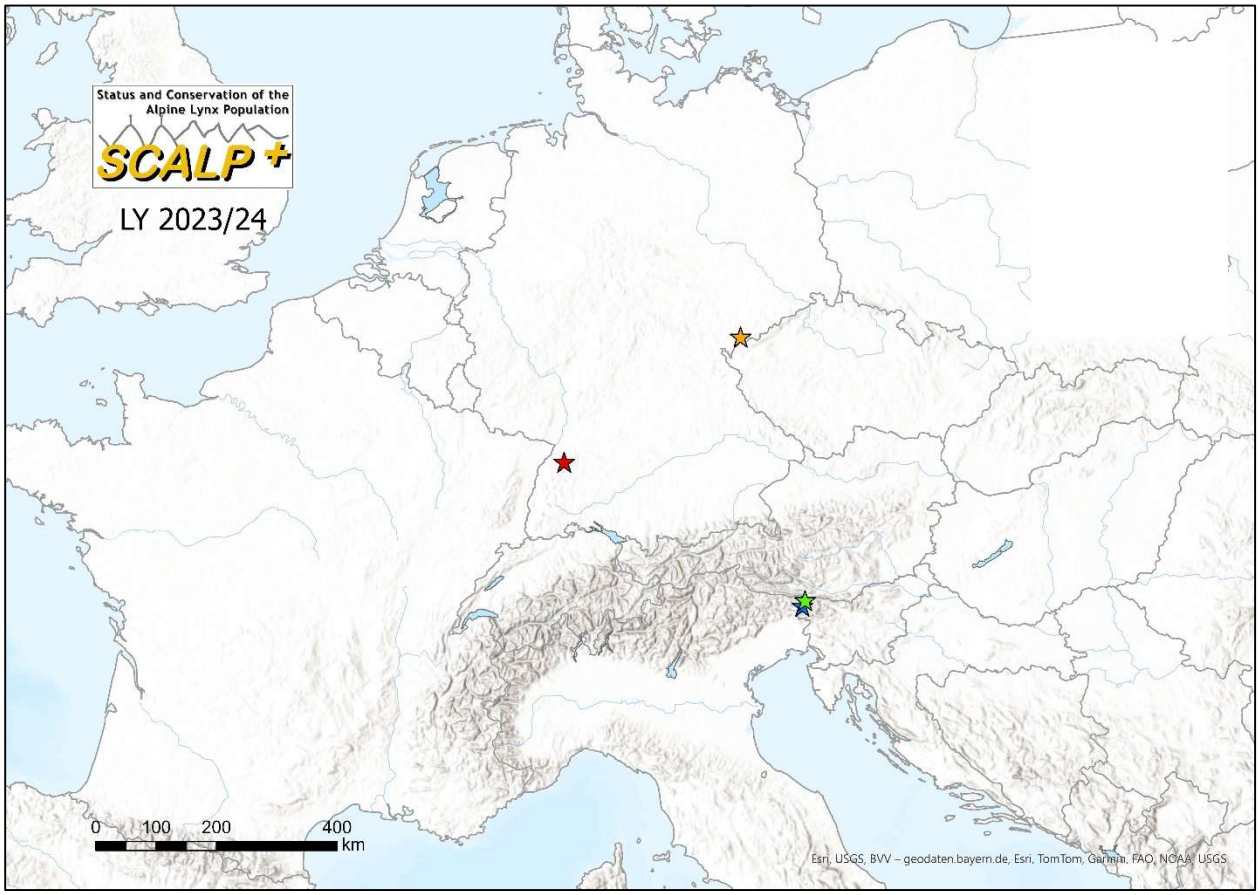

Fig. 2. From May 2023 to April 2024 a total of seven lynx were released to reinforce the lynx populations in Central Europe: three in the south-eastern Alps, Italy in the frame of ULyCA (blue = lynx originating from Romanian Carpathian Mountains, green = translocated orphan), one in Baden-Württemberg, Germany (red = lynx originating from captive breeding program) and three in Saxony, Germany in the frame of RELynx Sachsen (orange = two lynx originating from the Swiss Jura Mountains and one from the captive breeding program).

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