

Fostering conservation literacy through innovative lynx-based tourism

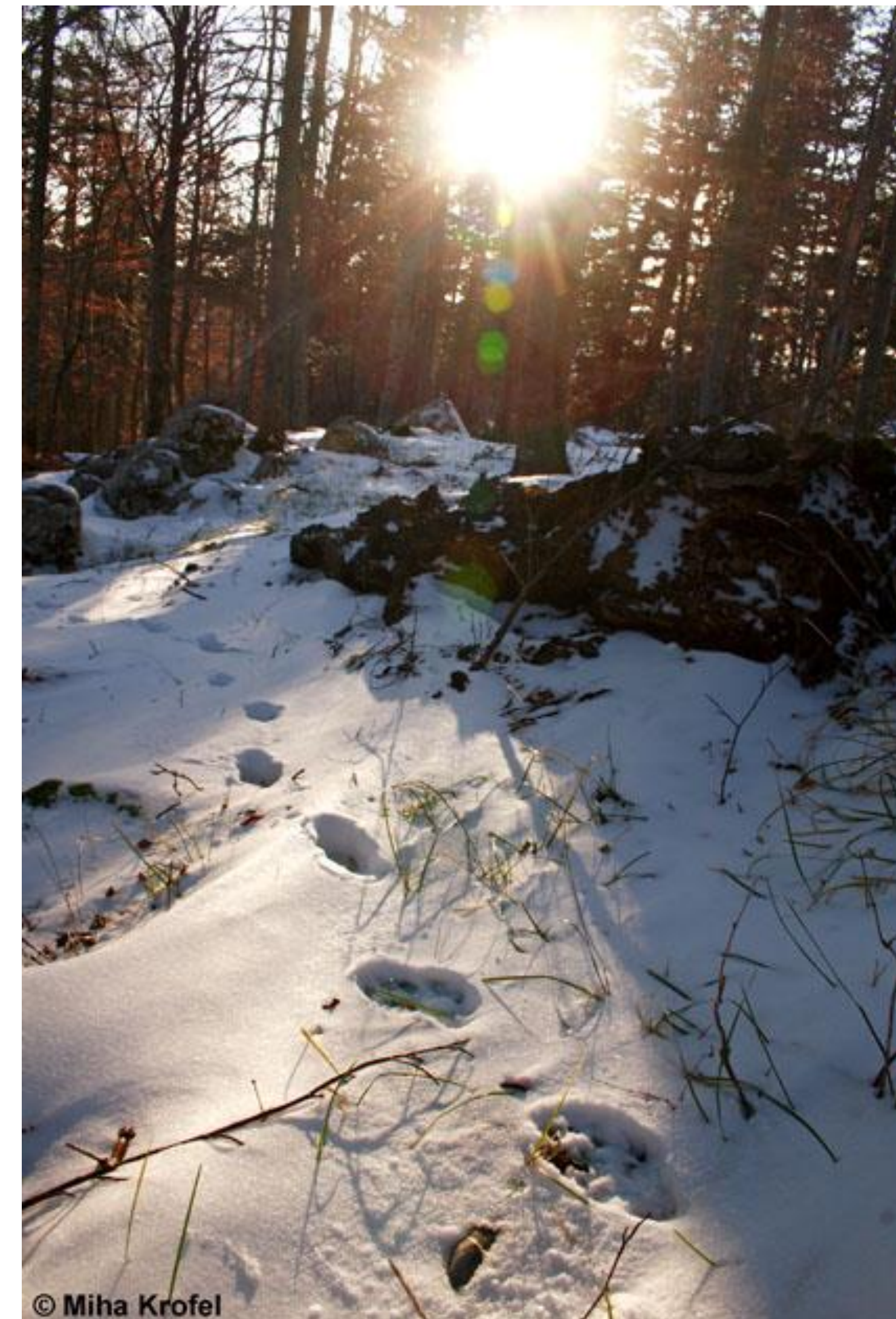
- *the LIFE Lynx concept*

Aleksandra Majić Skrbinšek,

University of Ljubljana

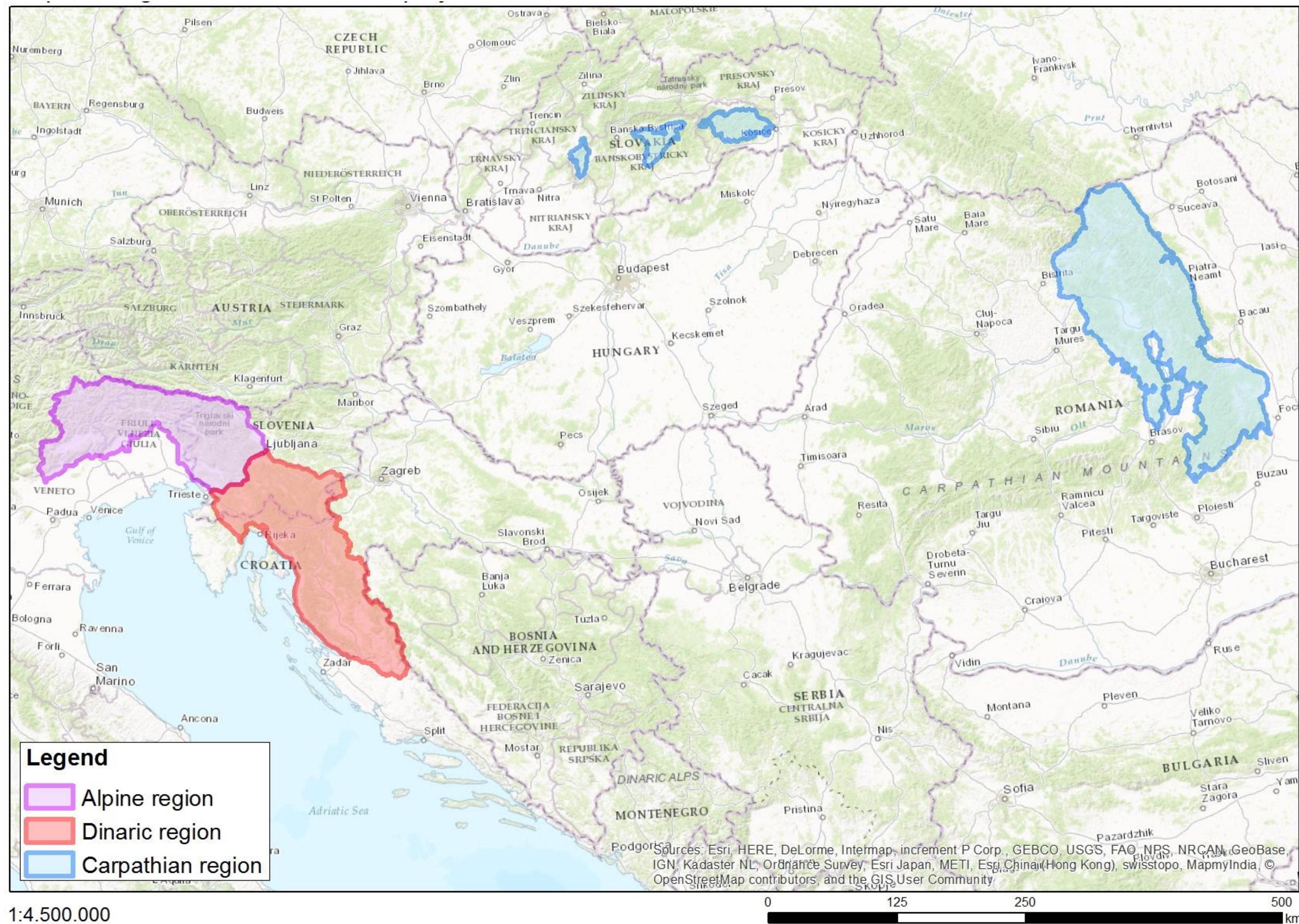
Content:

- Background of the LIFE Lynx project.
- Why tourism activities in the project?
- Which activities are planned?



© Miha Krofel

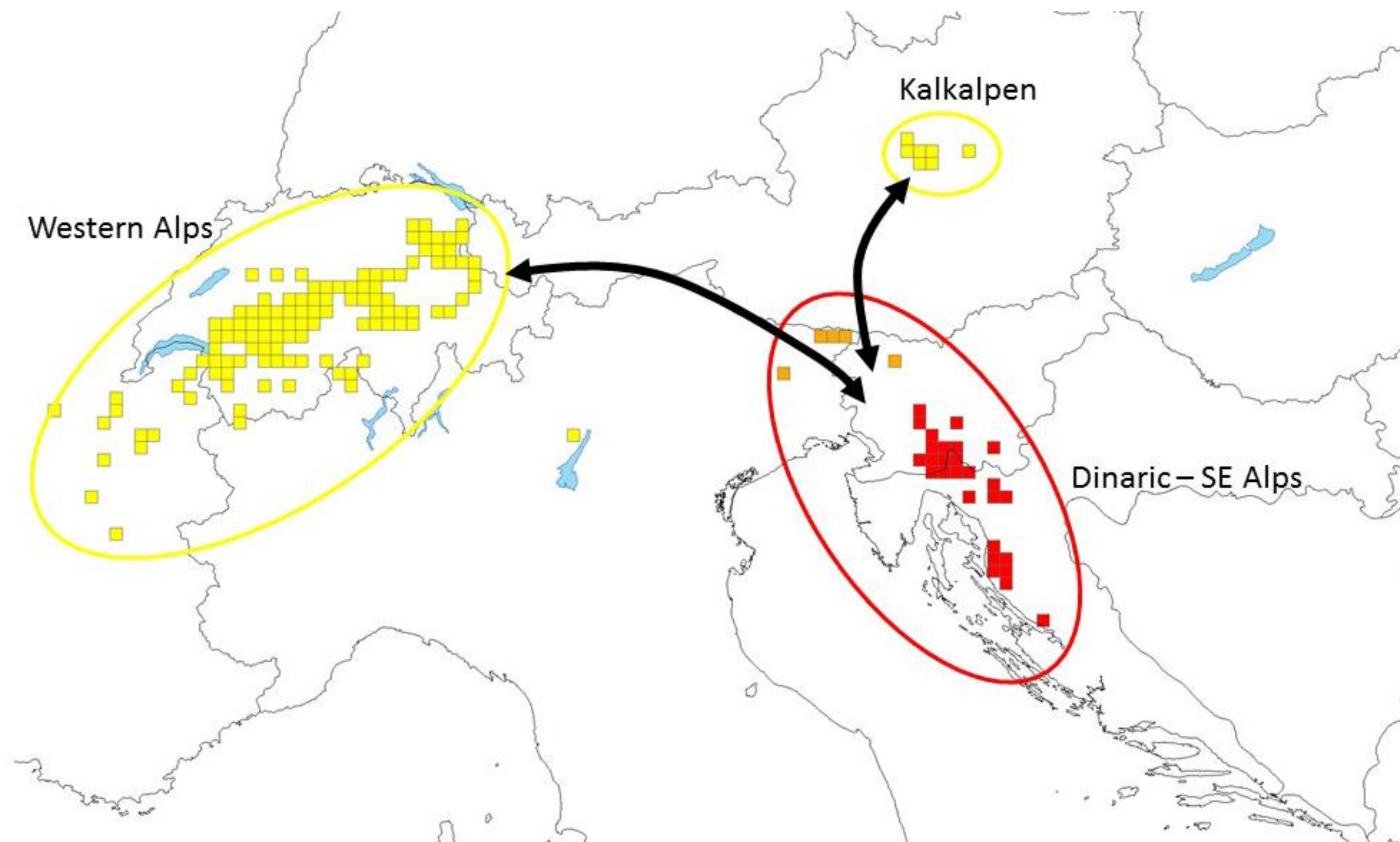
The LIFE Lynx project



The LIFE Lynx project

Italian beneficiaries:

- Arma dei carabinieri – Comando Unità Tutela Forestale, Ambientale e Agroalimentare,
- Progetto Lince Italia





Why the LIFE Lynx project?

- Species got extinct in the beginning of 20th century due to:
 - active persecution, and
 - lack of prey.



Why the LIFE Lynx project?

- Reintroduction followed in 1973 in Slovenia.
- Three pairs from Slovakia were released in Kočevsko region of Slovenia.

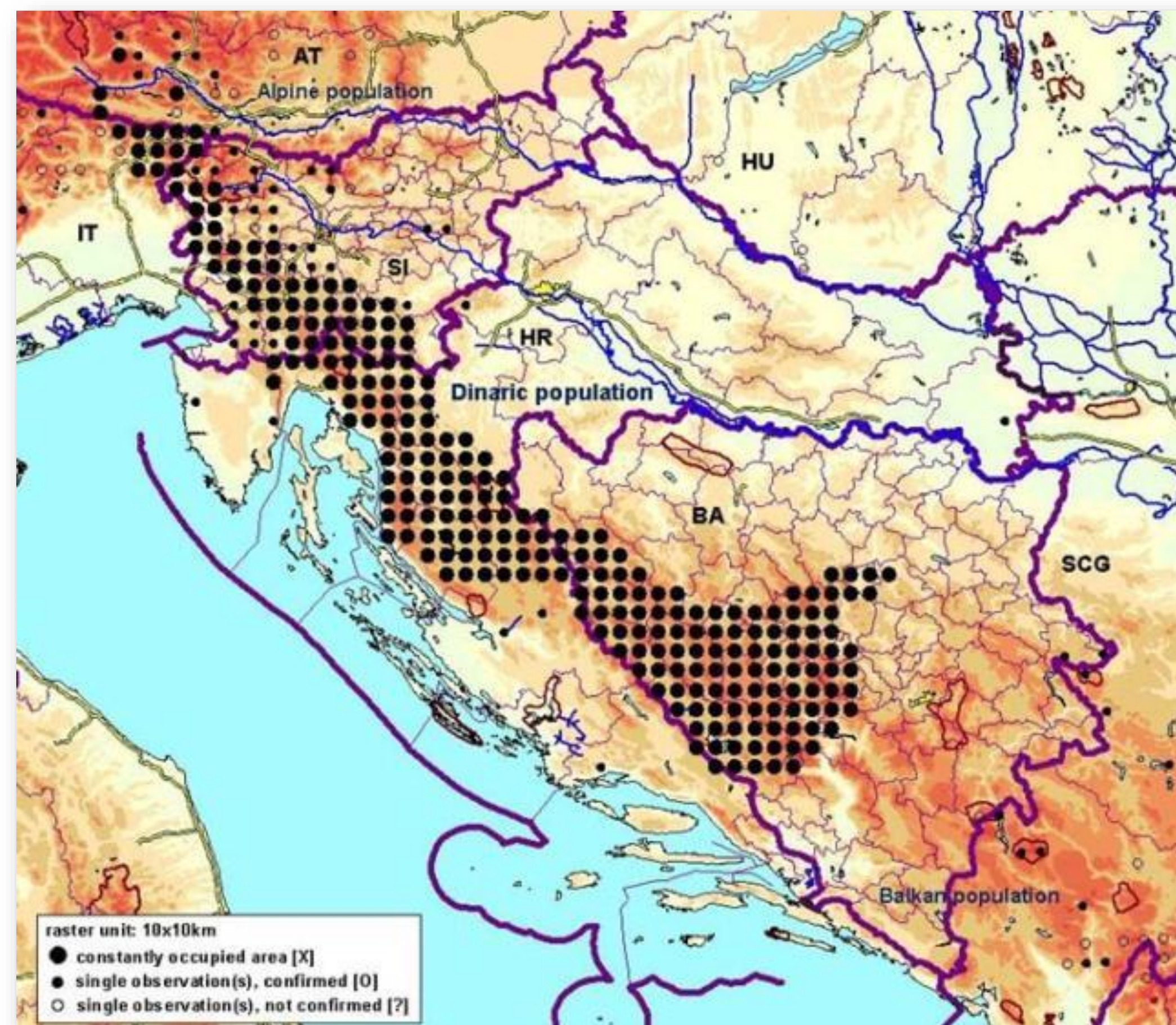


Photos from: Čop, 1994



Why the LIFE Lynx project?

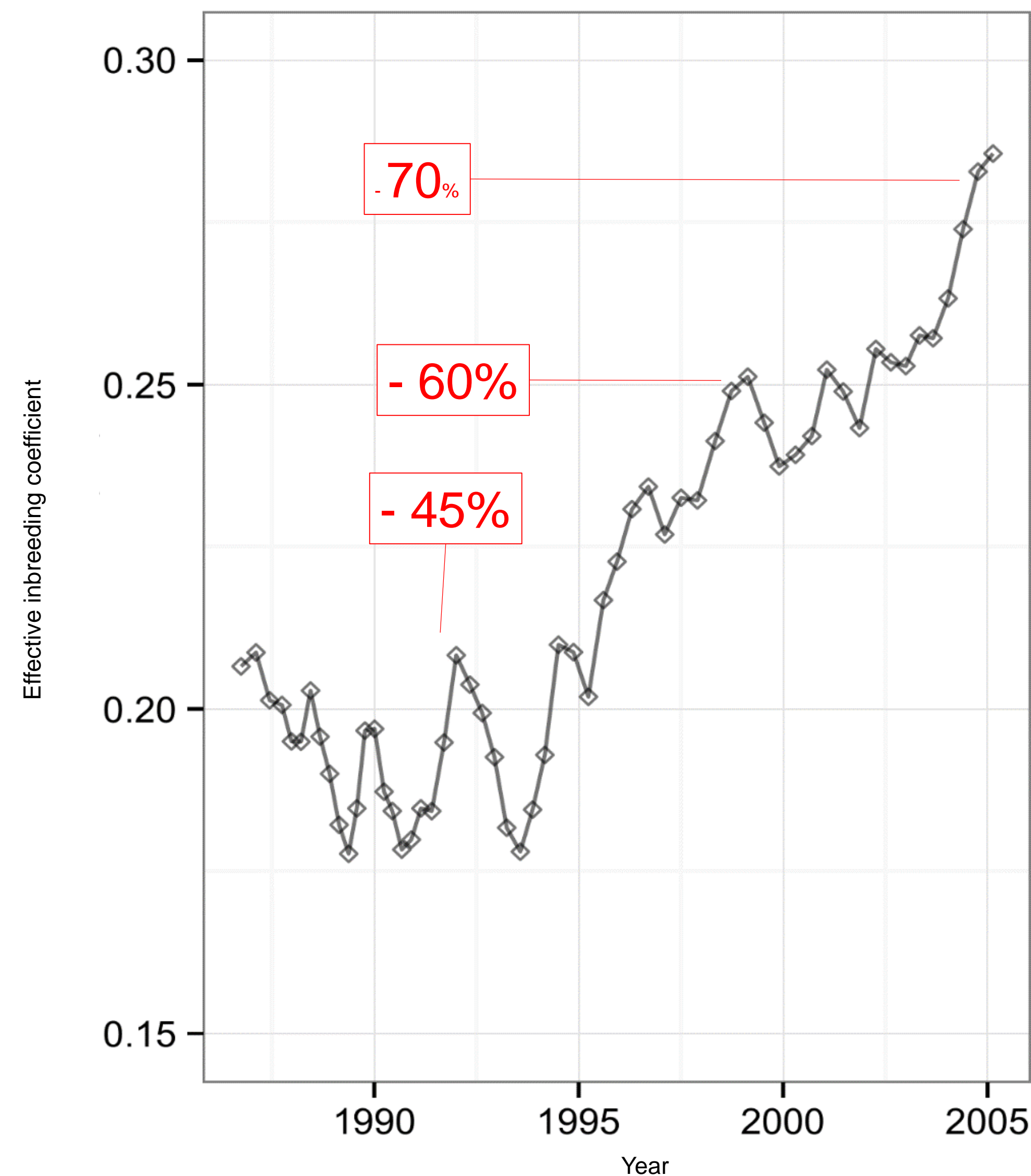
- One of the most successful reintroductions.
- Peak around 1990 (~75 individuals in Slovenia).



Distribution 25 years after the reintroduction.

Why the LIFE Lynx project?

- Today 10-15 lynx left in Slovenia.
- What is the problem?



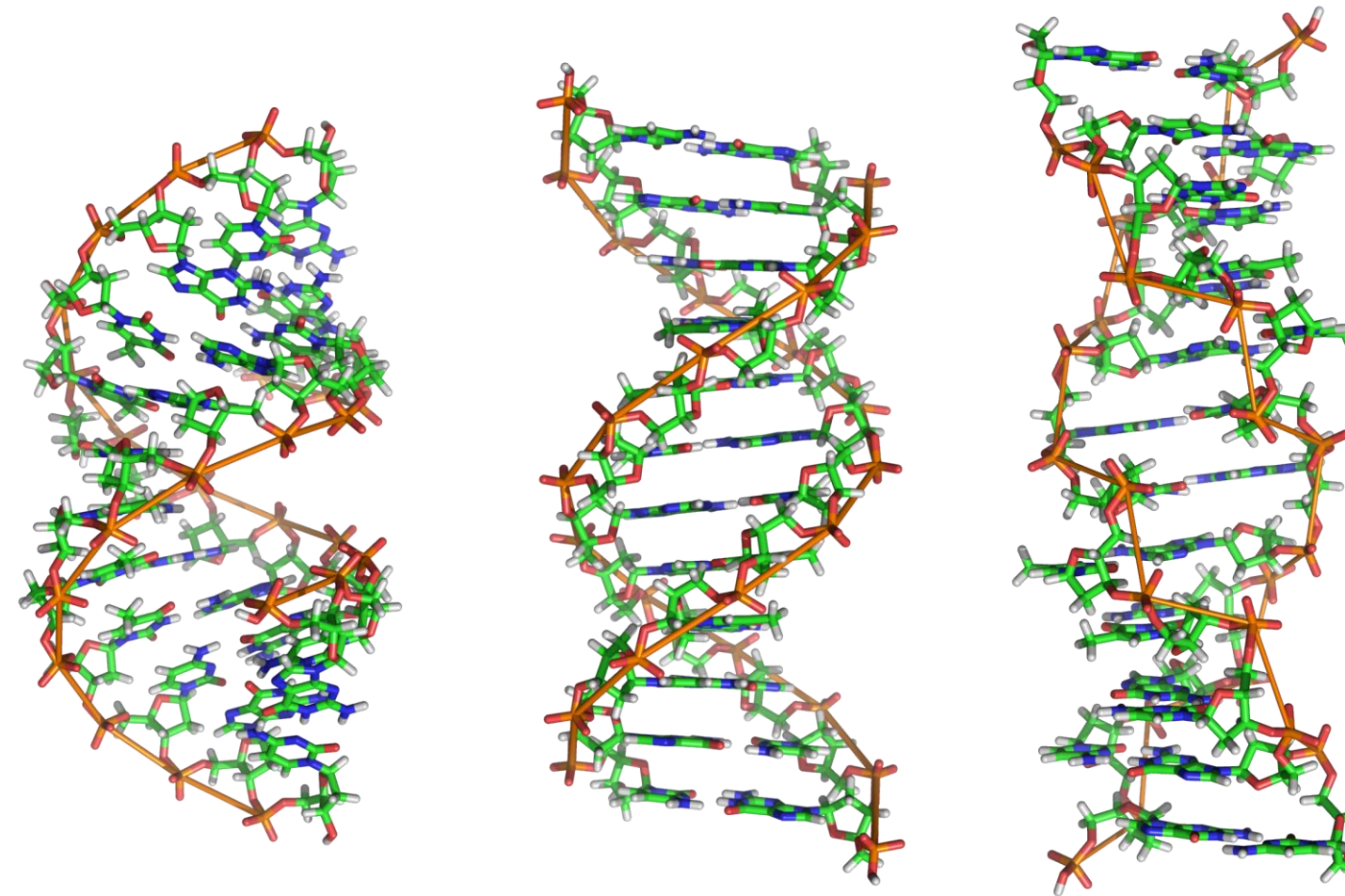
Expected loss of fitness

DRAWN ON BASIS OF DATA FROM:
SINDIČIĆ, M. ET AL., **Genetic data confirm critical status of the reintroduced Dinaric population of Eurasian lynx.** *Conservation Genetics* 14, 1009–1018.



Why the LIFE Lynx project?

- What is the solution?





Why the LIFE Lynx project?

- How?



- Releasing new animals into the nature among the most **controversial measures!**
- **Working with stakeholders** is of paramount importance!
- Among many ????? -> How to provide **benefits for local communities?**

Photo: Marko Masterl, for DinaRis

Photo: Nationalpark
Kalkalpen/Sieghartsleitner

The LIFE Lynx project

Why tourism?

- Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world, and **ecotourism** is the fastest growing component of that industry (Gossling, 2000)
- 7% of world tourism relates to **wildlife tourism** (UN World Tourism Organisation, 2016)

Photo: Marko Masterl, for DinaRis



The LIFE Lynx project

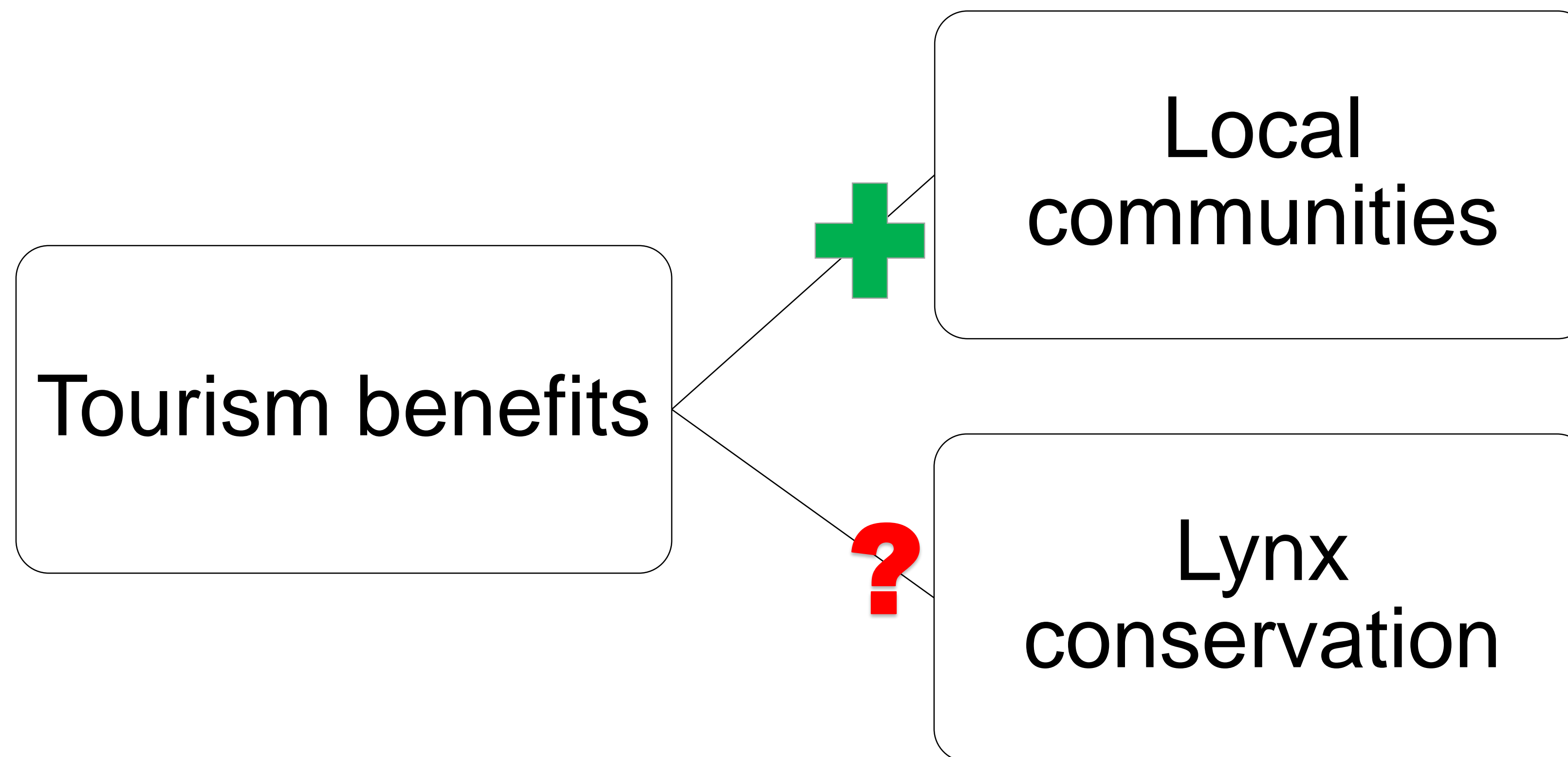


Photo: Marko Masterl, for DinaRis



The LIFE Lynx project

Tourism and wildlife conservation:

- Tourism gives an **economic value** to the nature.
- **Alternative** to more damaging land use practices (e.g. in Great Bear Rainforest in Canada the 2012, the Coastal First Nations, unilaterally declared a ban on trophy hunting of bears in their territories, since it was threatenign the ecotourism opportunities).
- **Reduces poaching** (e.g. elephant poaching down by 50% in some regions of Kenya due to active community-based management of tourism, Northern Rangelands Trust, 2017)
- Helps increase **social acceptance** of species (see examples above).
- Useful vehicle for **raising awareness** about a species conservation threats, damage prevention, etc.

Photo: Marko Masterl, for DinaRis



The LIFE Lynx project

Tourism and wildlife conservation:

- If poorly managed can be very damaging!



Wildlife photographers at Pasir Ris Park.
Photo: Fong Chee Wai, NG JING YIN



Santa Cruz Island in the Galápagos. Photograph:
Gary Calton, from Cadwalladr, 2012



Photo: Marko Masterl, for DinaRis

The LIFE Lynx project

“Lynx watching” not an option!

- 1) Targeting “nature lovers” – **transboundary lynx walk** – circular hiking trail in Slovenia and Croatia; use already existing trails; emphasise the importance of joint responsibility for the population. Suitable for independent travellers.
- 2) Targeting “young generations” – **educational lynx trails** in Slovenia and Italy, telling the story about lynx extinction, reintroduction and reinforcement. Suitable for schools.
- 3) Targeting “art lovers” – **painting holiday** program to promote lynx conservation through visual arts in Slovenia and Italy. Novel target group. Novel approach – based primarily on emotions.

Photo: Marko Masterl, for DinaRis



Thank you!



"Lynx" watercolor painting process, Alina Kurbiel, 2014