

**LIFE**  
L y n x



Preventing the Extinction of the Dinaric-SE Alpine Lynx Population  
Through Reinforcement of the Dinaric and Long-term Conservation

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT LYNX AND LIFE LYNX PROJECT

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Katalogni zapis o publikaciji (CIP) pripravili v  
Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani  
COBISS.SI-ID-16000771  
ISBN 978-961-6822-61-9 (pdf)

Questions and answers about lynx and LIFE Lynx project; Preventing the  
Extinction of the Dinaric-SE Alpine Lynx Population Through Reinforcement  
and Long-term Conservation  
1st Edition - electronic version  
Editors: Urša Marinko, Manca Velkavrh  
Publisher: University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Biology  
Design: Agena d.o.o.  
Cover-photo: Matej Vranič  
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Ljubljana, 2020

# Questions and answers about lynx and LIFE Lynx project

**Full title of the project: Preventing the Extinction of the Dinaric-SE Alpine Lynx Population Through Reinforcement and Long-term Conservation**

Large carnivores often raise admiration, sometimes fear and always – questions. You can find answers to the most common questions we've received during the inception phase of the LIFE Lynx project. You can find answers to many questions including what is a lynx, why and how did we start the activities to prevent its repeated disappearance from Dinarides and SE Alps, what did we take in account and why are we doing this, in this booklet. We hope for the booklet to become an important source of information for people, living within the project area, as well as for the members of the project team. With it we would like to offer an easily accessible insight into our work, as well as to increase the efficiency of our communication efforts. We've answered a series of questions coming from different stakeholders – hunters, farmers, NGO members, people living in areas, where translocated lynx might go, or anybody from the broader public, interested in this topic.

The project LIFE Lynx started on the 1st of July in 2017 and will run until 31th of March 2024. Since reviving our lynx population is a long term task, we've planned our project activities to set a firm basis for reaching this long-term goal.

During this project we will gather and analyse data about former lynx introductions, plan and carry-out translocations of at least 14 specimens, keep an eye of how successful their integration in the current population is, using telemetry and photo-traps and of course, include local inhabitants, schools and other important stakeholders, organise some ecotourism activities and develop a thematic lynx trail.

This booklet is not a description of all project activities, but it gives a good insight into our way of thinking, planning and working.

If you haven't found the answers to all of your questions here, you can check our project website or contact and follow us via contacts listed below.

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**E-mail:** life.lynx.eu@gmail.com  
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**Vimeo:** LIFE Lynx  
**Youtube:** LIFE Lynx







# Lynx biology and conservation status

## 1. What is lynx?

Lynx is the largest wild cat in Europe, an adult animal measuring 80 to 150 cm in length. Females are on average 2.5 kg lighter than males and weigh between 15 and 21 kg. The lynx is characterized by a thick brown and white fur with black spots, a medium-long tail with a black tip and a fluffy ear top. Each specimen has its own unique dot pattern different from others that make them recognizable from each other in the photos. Most European lynx live in forests, as plant cover is important for them to keep prey hidden and also to hide themselves from humans.

## 2. What do lynx feed on?

Lynx are predators specialized in hunting small ungulates. Throughout most of Europe, including Dinaric Mountains, their main prey is roe deer. They also hunt other ungulates (chamois, red deer, mouflon), wild boar and small prey (rodents, hare, fox, birds) to a lesser degree. Dinaric lynx population is somewhat specific in relatively frequent use of fat dormouse (about 16% of diet), which is especially important for females and young lynx.

## 3. How many deer does a lynx kill?

Lynx kills a large prey (ungulates) about once a week and 50 animals per year. Taking into account the home range size, lynx in Slovenia and Croatia on average kill 0.24 animals per 100 ha per year. But it has to be taken into account that in healthy populations, two adult lynx (a male and a female) will share the same territory.

## 4. How much habitat does a lynx need?

Average home range size of lynx in Slovenia is 215 km<sup>2</sup>. Usually males have larger home ranges than females. In healthy populations each territory is shared by two adult lynx - one male and one female. The home ranges of adults of the same sex mostly exclude each other (they may overlap along the boundaries of home ranges).

## 5. Where do lynx live in Slovenia, Croatia and other countries?

Lynx used to live throughout Slovenia and Croatia, as well as a large part of the rest of Europe. In Dinaric Mountains and the Alps they were completely exterminated by the beginning of 20th century. After the reintroduction they have re-colonized a large part of Dinaric Mountains and part of Eastern Alps, but the population started declining again in the 1990s. Today lynx still occur in some parts of Dinaric Mountains of Slovenia and Croatia (Snežnik, Javorniki, Kočevsko, Menišija, Rakitna, Hrušica, Nanos, Trnovski gozd, Gorski kotar, Velebit, Lika), but are extremely rare in the Slovenian Alps. The Dinaric-SE Alpine population extends also to Italy, Austria and Bosnia & Herzegovina. In Europe, Eurasian lynx populations also occur in the Western Alps (Switzerland, France, Italy),





Jura Mountains, southern Balkans (Macedonia, Albania), Carpathians (Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland, Czech Republic), Bavaria-Bohemia-Austria, Palatinian Forest and Vosges, Harz, Black Forest, Baltic (Estonia, Lithuania, Lithuania, Poland) and Fennoscandia (Finland, Sweden, Norway).

#### 6. How many offspring does a lynx typically have?

Reproductive success of a lynx population depends primarily on the feeding conditions in the environment, usually the density of roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*). When they become sexually mature, Eurasian lynx females usually mate until the age of 12–13 years.

Breeding season focuses on February/March when females come into oestrous for about a week, usually having 1-3 kittens after a two-month gestation period. However, due to high mortality, only half of the cubs survive until their first year.

Many European studies of lynx reproduction found that the average number of kittens per female at the end of their first year of life was between 1.2 and 1.6. Deviating from this are data from Switzerland, where they found only 0.69 kittens per female in the studied animals.



Photo: Franc Kijun

#### 7. How long does a typical lynx live?

Eurasian lynx can live to over 20 years in captivity, but usually up to 18 years in the wild. However, most lynx die much earlier due to different survival rates during their life stages. Kittens that survive their first year disperse from their natal territories and search for their own territory, become residential lynx. Survival rates of dispersing or subadult lynx in Europe range from 36 % to 62 %. There is rather scarce data on survival rates of resident lynx in Europe, however data from telemetry study in Scandinavia indicate yearly survival rate of adult lynx between 81-83% in a hunted population.



Photo: Matej Vranič

## Lynx and game management

**8. Why are ungulate culling quotas in Slovenia being increased right before lynx are about to be reinforced? Why do we have to reduce the prey base of lynx before introduction? (Culling quota of red deer in Slovenia has been constantly increasing over the past years, last year even for more than 30%.)**

Red deer is rarely a lynx prey thus its management does not influence lynx conservation. In 2020 Slovenia Forest Service is updating the guidelines on how to incorporate lynx and wolf presence in the ungulate management plans with special attention on roe deer as lynx's main prey.

**9. Can harsh winters negatively impact ungulate numbers and result in having less food for lynx?**

In general the prey base for lynx in Slovenia and Croatia is generally sufficient. Even in a case of harsh winter (and some losses in wild ungulate populations) there would still be enough food for lynx. Lynx prey spectrum depends on prey availability. If one prey species is scarce, lynx can switch to another species.

**10. Can there be a combined negative effect on ungulates given a harsh winter and increased culling?**

There can certainly be some negative effect of harsh winter on the abundance of ungulate populations – due to the deaths of weak and old animals. But this is just a part of the natural processes, which are important for the functioning of the ecosystems. However, harsh winters in combination with increased culling, can decrease the number of ungulates. So, after harsh winters adaptation of quotas should be considered.



**11. What is the long-term management plan for lynx, if their population recovers? Expands? How many lynx do we really need? How much is enough?**

Current efforts of Slovenia and Croatia are directed towards stopping and reversing the current decline of the population. Once that is achieved, our lynx population will still remain isolated and small, and will continue to face many of the same challenges. In such cases there is just one option to prevent extinction, if we don't wish to translocate animals periodically: to enable connectivity with other lynx populations. This can be done through maintaining and increasing natural connectivity with lynx crossing the landscape on their own, or/and by creating lynx stepping-stone areas between neighbouring populations and with "artificial" connectivity measures where animals are actively translocated between populations.

In the project, we're addressing both approaches. To increase natural connectivity, we'll introduce a "stepping stone" population in Eastern Alps, which will be an important step towards connecting the current lynx populations in the Alps into a larger meta-population (i.e., a set of populations which occasionally exchange individuals/genes). On the other hand, we are fully aware that our population may still need assistance in the future. The long-term population management plan with specific populations goals will be prepared at the end of the project, when we will be able to include all data and experience from the project's implementation. It also needs to be taken into account that lynx are territorial species that self-regulates its density. Therefore in a given area only two adult lynx are present (one male and one female) with potential overlap among the neighbors only along the periphery of the territories.



## 12. Will lynx impact mouflon?

Lynx will impact mouflon through predator-prey relationship, but at this point, we cannot know what and how strong the impact will be. The fact is, that in the past lynx has never exterminated any free-living prey species. However, because mouflons are introduced species and are not adapted to native European carnivores, it is possible that effects of lynx predation will be stronger to those on native ungulates (roe deer, red deer, chamois, ibex and wild boar). There is even a possibility that large carnivores like wolves and lynx may exterminate mouflon, due to naive animals lacking escaping terrain. The impact may be even stronger in the conditions of fenced mouflon (game farms).

## 13. Should we be worried about long-term negative impacts to ungulates due to predation by lynx?

No. Populations of native ungulates (mainly roe deer), which represent prey base for lynx in Dinarides, are stable and healthy. Natural predators are always dependent on their prey, so prey abundance is an important limiting factor of lynx population density, too. Besides, they have evolved strong territorial behaviour which allows low population density only and consequent sustainable predation ("use") on their prey populations. Adult lynx kills 50 to 60 ungulates per year. If we take into consideration the average size of lynx territory (cca 215 km<sup>2</sup>) and estimated densities of ungulates ranging from 3 - 12 per km<sup>2</sup>, we can see that the influence on ungulates is sustainable.

Besides direct predatory impact on ungulates, lynx also impacts them indirectly by predation of small carnivores. Small carnivores like foxes and martens are significant predators of juvenile ungulates, especially in the first weeks of their lives, so lynx predation on small carnivores reduces their abundance as well as their negative effect on survival of young ungulates. In that way lynx positively influences his prey base.



## 14. Who decides where lynx will be released?

Project team in cooperation with the local hunting clubs. Important factor when determining the best micro-locations for the release sites is also the map of lynx habitat suitability, together with planning towards connectivity with neighbouring populations. It is important to take into account the current local situation of lynx in the release areas. The releases are also carried out according to the national management plan.

## 15. Who is allowed to see the lynx in the release areas? Can anyone?

Due to the importance of preventing the disturbance of lynx, it is important to keep the release sites confidential. The access to the enclosures would ideally only be allowed to a small number of people, however we agreed that at the release time, the project team members, some members of the hunting club in the area where lynx will be released and journalists who document the event as well as other invited guests can also be present.

## 16. Why aren't you also releasing ungulates like roe deer and chamois for lynx to eat? This way hunters are the ones that take care of their food.

Lynx consumption of ungulates is around 0,2 - 0,3 per 100 ha per year. Releasing roe deer and chamois raised on another location where predators are absent would be a bad thing to do as they wouldn't have learned necessary predator avoidance behaviour. It would be similar to releasing pen raised pheasants into the open hunting ground - feeding the foxes. Moreover, we release lynx to improve the genetic variation and lower the impact that inbreeding caused to this population. Since populations of roe deer and chamois don't breed in close relations, translocation and releasing of ungulates is not necessary.







Photo: Miha Krofel

# Lynx and people

## 17. What are lynx good for? Why do we need lynx?

Slovenian, Croatian forests and their ecosystems will be changed forever if we lose a species such as lynx. Its functions as a top predator, that maintains healthy populations of wild ungulates and directs the evolution of prey species such as roe deer through controlling their numbers and therefore indirectly safeguarding plant growth, are essential for healthy ecosystems which can further provide opportunities and benefits for local communities such as ecotourism. Lynx presence presents an important added value to the attractiveness of an area. Apart from the current advantages we have an important moral obligation to save this autochthonous species for the future generations, which is also the wish of the majority of the public living in this area.

## 18. What will happen if lynx starts causing damages to small- and medium-sized livestock like sheep, goats or swine?

In case of damages, project members and damage inspectors will present the effective protection measures to the farmer and, if they will be interested, deliver them the equipment needed for the installation of an electric fence. Damages on livestock caused by large carnivores are compensated by the state. Those caused by lynx are rare, though.

## 19. What can be done if lynx kills livestock?

Livestock animals can be effectively protected with the use of electric fences and nettings, but also by including a livestock guarding dog into the herd. If damages occur anyway, farmers should report it in order to get compensation by the state.

## 20. Will lynx kill my dogs? My cats?

The chances of lynx attacks on domestic pets are not impossible, but they are very low.

## 21. Do lynx ever attack people? Should I be worried about my children if they are walking to school in areas where lynx will be released?

There are no documented cases about healthy lynx attacking people. Lynx is a very shy species and the probability of even seeing a lynx is very low. Lynx are afraid of people and avoid them. The only situation when they can be dangerous to people is if it is infected with rabies. Today rabies is luckily more or less exterminated from Slovenia and Croatia.

## 22. How will you prevent illegal killing of the lynx as it has happened in the past?

There is no way to completely prevent the illegal killing of wild animals and the same goes for illegal killing of lynx. HAS (Hunting Association of Slovenia), together with other project partners, has zero tolerance to illegal killing of all kinds of wild animals, game and protected species and all our activities are aimed to discourage and reduce the possibility for such actions. The establishment of a special Police investigation unit in one of the project actions is unique in Europe and is aimed for the same goal.







Photo: Miha Krofel

# The LIFE Lynx project

## 23. Who is in charge of this project?

LIFE Lynx project is a collaboration of beneficiaries from five countries, of which 3 are sharing Dinaric-SE Alpine lynx population. Partners of the project in Slovenia are Slovenian Forest Service (coordinating beneficiary), Hunting association of Slovenia, Institute for nature conservation and University of Ljubljana. Project beneficiaries from Croatia are Faculty for Veterinary Medicine University of Zagreb, Association BIOM and Karlovac University of Applied Sciences. In Italy the beneficiaries are The Progetto Lince Italia and Arma dei carabinieri - Comando Unità Tutela Forestale, Ambientale e Agroalimentare. Beneficiaries from the so-called donor countries are Association for the Biological Diversity Conservation from Romania and Technical university in Zvolen from Slovakia.

## 24. How much does this project cost?

Yearly budget for 11 participating organizations in 5 countries is approximately 1 million EUR. The project lasts 6 years and 9 months.



## 25. Who is paying for this project?

EU's LIFE Programme is the main financial contributor of our project (approx. 60%). Other financial contributions are covered by co-financiers and project beneficiaries. The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning is the main co-financer in Slovenia and the Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund in Croatia.



## 26. Isn't this a huge waste of money? Don't we have more important issues like jobs to worry about?

1 million € is spent per year for lynx conservation, and 1 Million € is spent for 0,38 km of the cheapest four-pass highway in Slovenia\*. It is also a wish of Slovenian and Croatian public to ensure lynx survival into the future and this can be achieved only by population augmentation, as will be done in this project. Not just the translocation and the releases are tackled, other issues will be addressed by different activities such as guidelines for spatial planning, establishment of police investigation group and communication with so called Local consultative groups. There are many important issues we have to deal with. To different people, some are more important than others, but nonetheless we should also invest in those that are often forgotten. We believe that nature shouldn't be left behind, and top predators are one of the most important parts of our nature.



With this project we are also creating new job opportunities and supporting the local economy.

\*Since the beginning of the implementation of the National Highway Construction Program in the Republic of Slovenia in 1994 to 25th November 2004.







**27. Why weren't local people consulted about this? Nobody asked me/us, if we are OK having lynx reinforced.**

An attitude survey carried out 10 years ago within the project DinaRis revealed that the majority of the local public living in the lynx range in Slovenia and Croatia supported reinforcement of the lynx population, if this will save lynx from extinction. This support together with the confirmed data on the seriousness of the lynx population inbreeding was the basis for careful planning of the project. Subsequently, key stakeholders who live in lynx habitat and in reintroduction areas are essential partners in this project. We use participatory approaches for development of all key management documents in the project and in addition we will use the data obtained in public attitudes survey to check support of the public for the measures which will be implemented. Various stakeholders, interest groups and the general public will thus be directly or indirectly informed, consulted or included in planning and implementation of the project activities.

**28. What is the purpose of Local consultative groups and why should I be involved?**

During the project preparation phase we've learned that local public and stakeholder groups from the lynx presence area would like to be more actively involved in steering the projects such as LIFE Lynx, making sure that their main concerns regarding such projects are being addressed. This was taken into account when developing

the project by dedicating a large part of the project activities to cooperation with local people and their respective or nearby communities. Apart from information and dissemination activities such as public presentations, web page, publications and similar, we've planned for a better structured way of consultations about all important issues concerning reinforcement and generally about the project through special local consultative activities. Local people are thus invited to join this forum of local interests, so called local consultative groups. We want to encourage dialogue among local key stakeholders and the project group and involve them in directing and fine-tuning of the project activities. In addition, members of LCGs will be also invited to participate in organizing activities in their local communities, will receive, keep and also distribute project promotional materials, will be encouraged to participate in public awareness raising activities by informing their communities about the progress of the project and will be thanked for their important input on special annual events. We believe LCGs can play a major role in ensuring that all of the key concerns of the local public regarding the project are addressed in the most appropriate way.

**29. Why have I not been invited, informed about the meetings or events organized for local communities?**

Several public presentations and meetings were implemented before the project started in order to inform local people about it. When it started, we continued with an information campaign, more intensively organizing local presentations for communities, preparing local media outlets and organizing meetings where local people were invited to participate in the project. We are trying to use all possible means to advertise these public events and if you have in mind a specific outlet or channel that we could use, please let us know, so that we can improve our reach in the future. You are welcome to contact us at: [life.lynx.eu@gmail.com](mailto:life.lynx.eu@gmail.com). Thank you!

**30. How many local people will get employed by the project? Why only people from Ljubljana?**

The projects such as LIFE Lynx employ professionals engaged in the protection of large carnivores from all over Slovenia. The headquarters of the institutions that implement the project are in Ljubljana, but they all have regional units throughout Slovenia. People working on the regional units are crucial for the project implementation. Moreover, employees in Ljubljana come from different Slovene regions as well.

Within the project we will carry out a series of educational and promotional activities in the areas where large carnivores are present. In particular, we would like to emphasize activities with local schools and the tourism sector. Both will provide important added value to the local communities as well as for the project. Local consultative groups will also play an important role in the project.







**31. Why did you choose the Carpathian rather than the Balkan lynx for reinforcement of the Dinaric population?**

Historically there was a single continuous lynx population stretching from the Balkans throughout Central Europe, including Alps and Carpathians. Only later became this large population fragmented to smaller isolated populations. Distance from Slovenia/Croatia to the Carpathian population is similar to distance to the Balkan population and lynx from both of these populations are very similar morphologically, ecologically and behaviourally. However, the Balkan population is today very small (estimated to 19-37 animals), declining and probably suffers from inbreeding, while the Carpathian population is large (estimated to around 2800 animals), genetically diverse and very healthy. This makes the Carpathian lynx a much more suitable donor population for reinforcement of the Dinaric-SE Alpine population. Capture of animals for translocation also won't have an important negative effect on the Carpathian population, while it could seriously jeopardize the small Balkan population, where capture of required numbers of lynx would likely not be feasible during the project period.



**32. Is it true that Balkan lynx is mostly preying on hares, while the Carpathian lynx are hunting ungulates?**

No. Recent studies of the diet of the Balkan lynx in Macedonia have shown that also the Balkan lynx mostly hunt ungulates (roe deer and chamois), exactly like the lynx from the Carpathian population. Lynx from both populations also hunt hares, but these don't represent the main food source for neither Carpathian nor Balkan population.



**33. Why are you releasing carpathian lynx as it is endangering balkan lynx? (Balkan lynx is listed as a subspecies; it has been in the media lately, also by IUCN.)**

There isn't any scientific proof that "balkan" lynx and "carpathian" lynx belong to different subspecies. Looking at historical distribution 200 years ago, it's clear that today's Alpine population was connected to today's "Balkan" population. Therefore, we're talking about two different ecotypes of the same species, which were artificially created after humans exterminated lynx from the Pannonian basin. Future connection between these populations could be beneficial also for the Balkan lynx population which is also endangered due to loss of genetic diversity. In fact, in the near future the Balkan population will most likely become directly connected to the Carpathian population, which is spreading towards the south-west through Serbia. In this way, the natural connection between lynx from these areas will be re-established regardless of the developments in the Dinaric lynx population.







Photo: Matej Vranič

## Perceptions of the project and lynx

### 34. We already have too many bears in Slovenia and Croatia, we also have wolves, and now lynx ... Why?

Presence of large carnivores is important for the ecosystem as they increase biodiversity and habitat heterogeneity. They affect ecosystem by controlling prey and mesopredator numbers. By limiting herbivore numbers and changing their behaviour they help reduce the pressure on plants and affect the distribution of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus). Limiting mesopredator numbers helps relieve pressure on other species of small mammals. Different species perform different ecological roles in the ecosystem, therefore bears or wolves cannot replace lynx in its function, but the entire carnivore guild is required to ensure natural functioning of Dinaric forest ecosystems. In addition, public surveys among the inhabitants of Dinaric region in Slovenia and Croatia have shown that the majority of local people would like to see that these species survive here also in the future.

There are around 20 adult lynx living in Slovenia and around 50 in Croatia. Lynx numbers in both countries have been in decline since the 1990s. Reinforcement of new, non-related lynx is necessary for a recovery and conservation of this autochthonous species and to connect Alpine and Dinaric populations which is one of the goals of the project. The main goal of the project is not just to increase the number of lynx but to increase genetic diversity of the lynx population and further the distribution and connectivity with other lynx populations so that the population stands a chance of survival in the decades that are coming. The targeted size of the population is a matter of discussions among different interest groups.

### 35. Why do we in Slovenia and Croatia have to have "all of Europe's large carnivores"? Doesn't this seem unfair?

From 2018 all of Europe's mainland countries host at least one large carnivore species. Bears, wolves and lynx inhabit approx. half of the European countries that have recognized their importance and were able to conserve them through adoption and implementation of protective legislation, supportive public opinion, and a variety of practices making coexistence between large carnivores and people possible. Slovenia and Croatia are good examples of how to conserve natural heritage for future generations. Each of the two countries by themselves are too small to host viable populations of large carnivores, therefore they need to contribute their own shares towards conserving healthy joint large carnivore populations.







Photo: Matej Vranič

## Other concerns

### 36. Don't we have enough large carnivores?

The abundance of large carnivores depends mostly on how much people are willing to accept them within a given area. The number can differ significantly among different interest groups and with regards to the species. Their biological carrying capacity is generally much higher than the level of acceptance in the local environment, if their habitat is suitable and large enough to meet ecological requirements (food, shelter, reproduction, etc.). In general our brown bear population is the most numerous and in some areas it seems that it has exceeded "social carrying capacity". As a response to that the population is being controlled through regulated removals of bears from the population. The other extreme is the lynx population which has over the last decades suffered incredible decline in numbers. Subsequently there were practically no complaints when culling of lynx was halted.



Photo: Marko Mastel

### 37. Are there concerns we should have, if lynx wander to such habitats without food? I.e., Is this fair to lynx?

According to lynx habitat suitability survey most of Dinaric and SE Alpine areas where translocated lynx will be reinforced, is highly suitable for lynx. In this area there are habitats with enough lynx prey (roe deer, and other small ungulates). The main prey species for lynx - roe deer is present throughout the project area in Slovenia and Croatia. There are however parts without suitable roe deer population outside the project area in Croatia (e.g. parts of Dalmatia and Lika). If some of the translocated lynx happen to wander to such areas, we will try to capture them again and bring them to more suitable areas, where they will also have a chance to meet and mate with other lynx.





**38. What happens, if “too many lynx” are killed by cars on Slovenian and Croatian roads and highways?**

According to our past experience this is highly unlikely to happen. If such events should occur, we will discuss which prevention measures should be taken. If a translocated animal is killed or dies as a result of a traffic accident, the project team agrees it should be replaced with a new animal to ensure enough lynx are translocated to lower the inbreeding problem of our lynx.

**39. Transport of lynx - are there any animal welfare concerns?**

The animals will be transported according to common veterinary practices for wild animal transport. The transported animals will be well taken care of according to accepted animal welfare standards.

**40. What will happen if lynx from Slovakia and Romania do not survive in SI/HR? Is there a threshold (of dead lynx) that will trigger a “pause” in the project?**

All activities in the project will be closely monitored. Reinforced lynx are being collared and we closely monitor them. We are aware that some lynx may die and we will take all precaution measures to alleviate the situation. Project steering group has mechanisms in place for dealing with crisis situations. Project-related mortality of reinforced animals would certainly fall in that category. As we are doing everything possible to avoid such outcomes a specific threshold of dead lynx to stop the project has not been set.



**41. Are the populations of lynx in the source countries robust enough to handle the removal of individuals for the LIFE LYNX Project?**

Both Romania and Slovakia have healthy LIFE Lynx populations of several hundred animals. Preliminary data collected in the capture areas in both source countries showed that lynx densities are relatively high and that animals are regularly reproducing. Therefore, we believe that removed territorial lynx will be quickly replaced by younger animals. We will also monitor the situation after the capture and translocation of lynx to ensure that source populations are not jeopardized.

**42. How do you know if you are having an impact on the lynx population in Slovakia or Romania?**

This can be determined by research after the removal of individuals from the population; the areas of removal are monitored before and after captures take place.

**43. Why will you release only 4 animals in Croatia and 10 in Slovenia?**

We want to connect Dinaric population with SE Alpine population. To reach this goal, we will release 5 lynx in the SE Alpine area to establish a new stepping stone population. We will release 5 animals in Slovenian Dinaric part to increase the chance of a connection between those two populations. Lynx from Slovenia are dispersing to Croatia and lynx from Croatia are dispersing to Slovenia.

**44. If you want lynx in Italy and Austria, why don't you release them there?**

Lynx will likely disperse from Slovenia to Austria and Italy. If we would release them in those two countries instead in Slovenia the distance between Alpine and Dinaric part of the population would be too big. Our goal is to connect those two parts so the distance between must be of optimal geographic distance. In Italy the lynx population was reinforced in 2014 with the release of two lynx in Friuli. In Austria, from 2011 to 2017 five lynx have been translocated from Switzerland to Upper Austria to form a north-eastern Alpine population nucleus.





## Questions related to tourism and economics

### 45. Can tourists be taken to enclosures in the release sites?

No. To prevent any unnecessary disturbance of the lynx, it is important to keep the release sites confidential. Project is preparing a selection of interpretation materials that can be used in tourism. Within the project we will develop thematic Lynx trails in Slovenia and Italy, together with the "Lynx Walk" - an electronic guidebook in different languages for the trail between Slovenia and Croatia, suitable for tourists and schools. The trail will be equipped with interpretive signs about lynx reintroduction. After the project, parts of the actual lynx enclosure will be moved to the thematic walking trail. See [lifelynx.eu](http://lifelynx.eu) for more information.

### 46. Can tourism institutions use photos, videos, telemetry data, produced during the project for promotion of the destination?

During the project, photos and videos from camera traps, as well as maps from telemetry data, will be produced. We will create a selection of materials that can be used by tourism organizations in the project area. Tourism organisations are encouraged to use the materials for communicating lynx conservation issues and for development of sustainable, non-consumptive forms of tourism (e.g. recognizing signs of lynx presence, art workshops and painting holidays).

## Additional questions from the workshops, presentations, meetings etc.

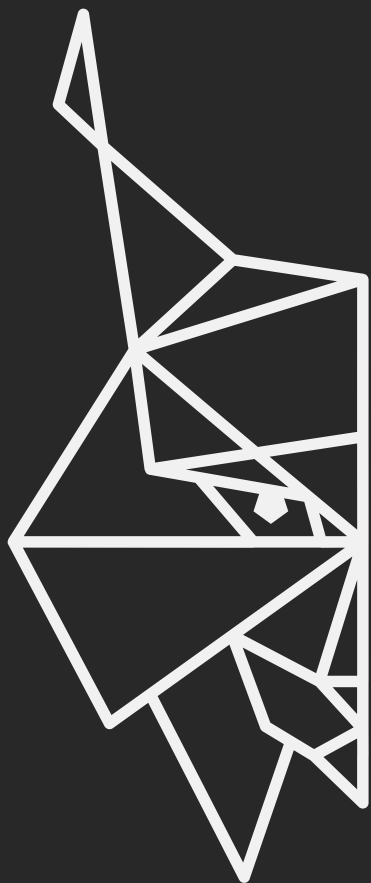
### 47. What is happening with Croatian lynx Martin?

Martin was found by a hunter as a month and a half old lynx orphan in June 2017 near Bribir. The information came to the Inspection for Nature Conservation and together with the inspector we came to take the kitten to better care in Zagreb Zoo on September 11th 2017. Martin was healthy, progressed well and in October 2017 was transported to a newly built lynx enclosure in Risnjak National Park. In cooperation with Risnjak National Park, Zagreb Zoo, Public Institution "Priroda" of Primorsko-goranska county, Veterinary faculty and University of Applied Sciences in Karlovac and Ministry, Martin was monitored and continued to progress well, was fed with live food, etc. He was released on January 29th 2018 and instantly started hunting roe deer successfully (heavy winter with deep snow helped him). He was continuously tracked, thanks to the GPS GSM collar. He went to Slovenia, where Slovenian part of the team continued his monitoring. One of the researchers noticed he was not really afraid of humans - he could approach him to a distance of only few meters. Few weeks later, on 15.08.2018, we got the last signal from his collar, showing he was somewhere between Brezovica pri Borovnici, Rakitna and Zaboče. Then it stopped sending data and every signal was lost. LIFE Lynx cameras scattered all around Slovenia haven't recorded his presence and he's considered missing. Likely killed and the collar destroyed.

### 48. Why are animals not raised in ZOO Ljubljana?

A conclusion of our recent review of the past carnivore reintroduction and translocation efforts was that wild-born animals are preferable to captive-born animals for translocation purposes. This is largely based on the fact that carnivore translocation programs were more successful (31% success) when wild-caught animals were used compared to efforts that used captive-born animals (13% success), as well as that survivorship of released wild-caught animals was higher (53%) than captive-born individuals (32%). Although there are some cases of successful translocation programs using captive animals, including Eurasian lynx, there are several problematic issues associated with using captive-born individuals, which could jeopardize success of such projects. These include: 1) reduced ability to search for and kill prey, 2) lack of shyness of other predators, and 3) ability to recognize suitable denning sites, raise kittens, and avoid humans. Therefore, captive carnivores should only be released when there are no other alternatives. Because within the present project we have the ability to obtain wild-caught lynx, we will only use lynx born in the wild.





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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

**Name:** Preventing the extinction of the Dinaric-SE Alpine lynx population through reinforcement and long-term conservation

**Acronym:** LIFE Lynx

**Reference:** LIFE16 NAT/SI/000634

**Time Frame:** 1/7/2017 – 31/3/2024

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LIFE16 NAT/SI/000634

With support of EU LIFE financing

## Partners



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## Co-financiers



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT  
AND SPATIAL PLANNING



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