

IMPACT REPORT PROJECT

101114131 — LIFE22-NAT-PL-LIFE LYNX PL LT DE

Expanding the range of the lynx population in northern Poland

THE LYNX POPULATION IN NORTHERN POLAND

2024-2025



Co-funded by
the European Union



Nadleśnictwo
Spychowo



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I. Implementation of tasks in the period: October 2024 – September 2025

In the second year of the Project, the release of lynxes began in the area of PL NE of the Project and activities in PL NW were continued.

The inclusion of a new partner, WWF Poland, in the Project made possible to fully organize activities related to the release of lynxes in north-eastern Poland. In December 2024, a field team (WZT) was organized to select areas for release and monitor lynxes released into the wild in cooperation with WWF's local population information team.

On the basis of genetic tests, 5 lynxes born in the ZTP breeding center Dzika Zagroda (4 males and 1 female) were qualified for release in the Piska Forest. The selection of individuals suitable for reintroduction in the PL NE area is a greater challenge than in the case of the PL NW area, as the aim is to eliminate the negative impact on the autochthonous lynx population in the Augustowska, Knyszyńska and Białowieża Forests.

5 available and tested individuals were positively qualified for release in the NW area of the project. 2 females and 3 males were released into the wild.

II. Comprehensive care for lynxes in the of PL NW Project area

As the Project progresses and the restored population increases, conservation priorities change. More and more commitment and time is required to track wild populations and work with lynxes born in the wild. The biggest challenge is replacing telemetry collars for animals living in the wild and collaring lynxes born in the wild with telemetrically monitored mothers. Only thanks to this will it be possible to observe the population and evaluate the Project's activities in the coming years.

Table 1 Activities with lynxes

Case description	during the reporting period	from the beginning of the Project	since the beginning of the reintroduction 2019
Collaring lynxes released into the wild in the area of PL NW	5	15	96
Collar replacement on lynxes living in the wild in the area of PL NW	19	32	86
Collaring of lynxes born in the wild in the area of PL NW	5	15	28



Photo 1 Immobilization before putting on the collar



Photo 2 Telemetry collar for lynx

With the increasing number of lynxes living in north-western Poland, good relations with local communities are becoming more and more important. That is why the activities of the Emergency Lynx Service are becoming increasingly important. Helping injured and sick lynxes is much more effective if residents inform about such individuals, and a quick response to reports builds lasting acceptance for the species.

Table 2 Activities with lynxes in the area of the PL NW Project

Case description	during the reporting period	in the Project	since the beginning of the reintroduction 2019
Catching sick or injured lynxes	5	14	25
including a lynx with scabies	3	8	20
Rescuing orphaned lynxes	0	1	6
Catching lynxes with undesirable behavior	4	9	13



Photo 3 Lynx affected by scabies



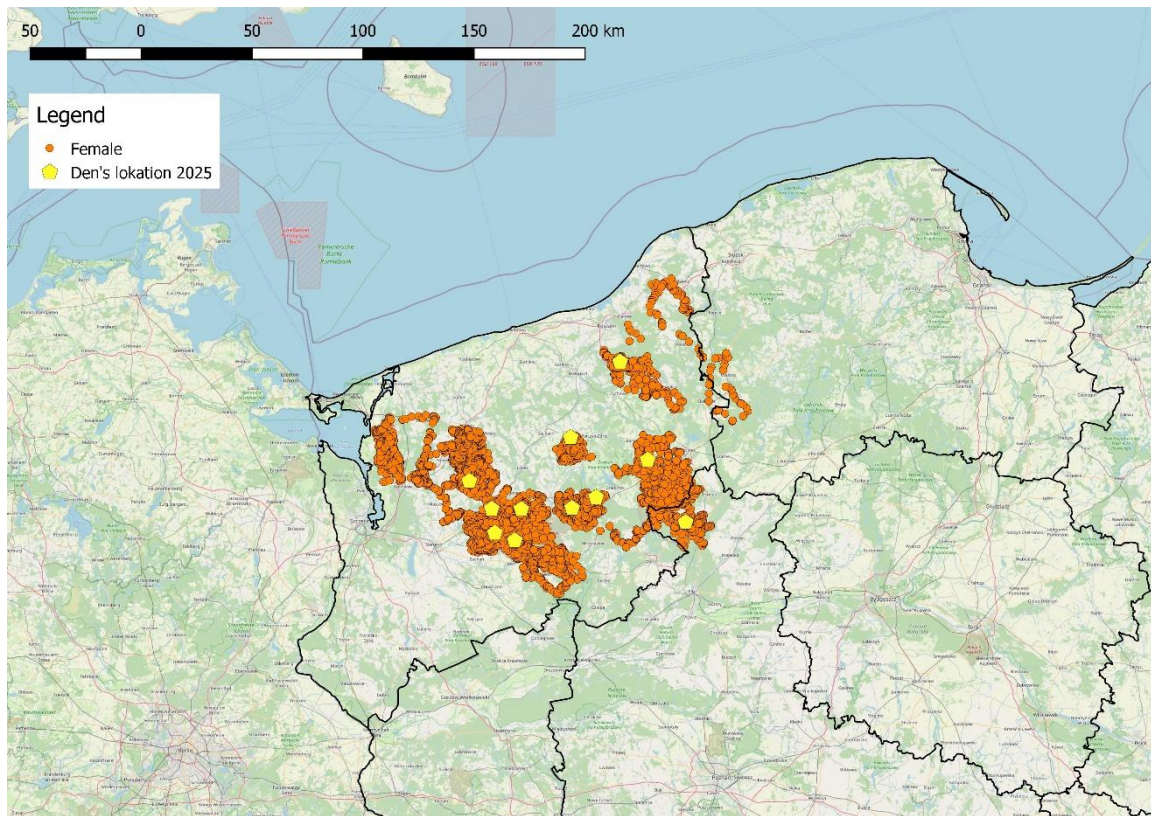
Photo 4 Catching an sick lynx

II.1 Reproduction in the wild

In the 2025 season, at least 11 females (monitored by telemetry) started breeding in the wild, giving birth to at least 20 kittens.

Breeding sites are presented on Map 1, against the background of telemetry points showing the activity of monitored females.

Map 1 Lynx breeding sites in the 2025 season



In the wild, in PL NW Project area, there are already more lynxes that are not telemetrically monitored, such as animals that are starting to breed. Such individuals and families are very difficult to detect and observe. However, repeated information allows us to conclude that in the 2025 season, they certainly brought out at least 3 more females, in addition to those indicated on Map 1.

Photos 5-8: Breeding dens of lynx 2025





II. 2 Mortality

In the period October 2024 – September 2025, 8 cases of lynx deaths in the wild (4 males, 4 females) were recorded: as a result of traffic accidents (2), due to disease (2) and undetermined causes (2). Two lynxes died as a result of gunshots.



Photo 9 Dead lynx affected by scabies



Photo 10 Dead lynx, cause undetermined



Photo 11 Dead lynx - disease intestinal

II.3 Population size estimation

The tables below show the numbers of lynxes released into the wild before and during the start of the project and documented cases of reproduction. These are basic data that allow to estimate the current population size in the area of PL NW of the project

Table 3 Number of lynxes released into the wild in individual years of reintroduction in the area of PL NW

Year	Total number of lynxes released into the wild	Females	Males
2019	26	9	17
2020	24	8	16
2021	12	9	3
2022	7	1	6
2023	14	6	8
2024	9	5	4
2025	5	2	3
Sum	97	41	56



Photo 12 Release of the Cichej Lynx after treatment



Photo 13 Release of the Sirocco lynx



Photo 14 Jorg the lynx release



Photo 15 Release of the Smaldo lynx after treatment

Lynxes have been breeding in the wild since 2019. The data presented in the table refer to certain cases, confirmed by telemetry data and/or by means of recordings from camera traps and direct observations using VHF telemetry.

Table 4 Females entering breeding in the area of PL NW

Year	Number of females reproducing	Number of kittens born in the wild	Number of kittens reared up to 1 year
2019	1	2	2
2020	3	6	2
2021	6	17	9
2022	10	25	11
2023	10	31	21
2024	14	34	27
2025	11	20	?
Including	-	135	72

Photo [unclear], 2025



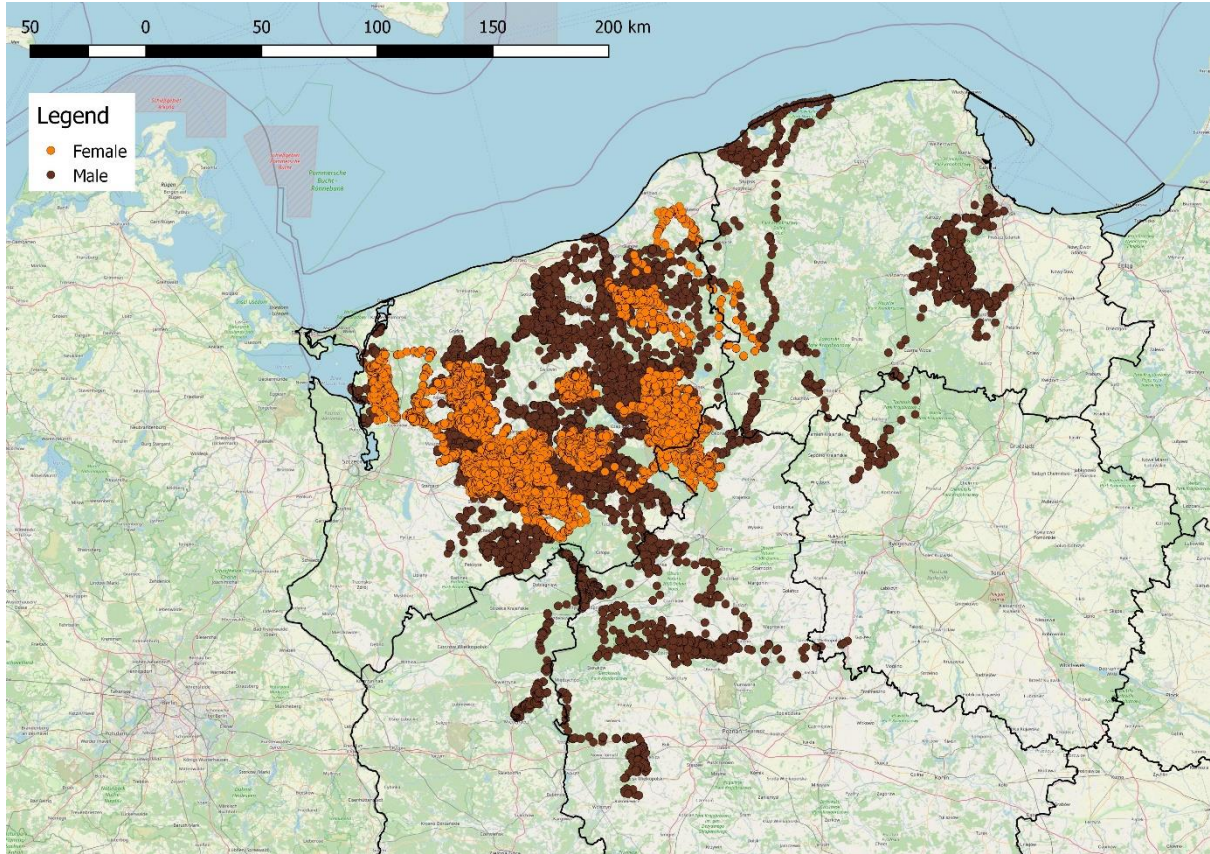
The following data were used to estimate the minimum population size:

- number of lynxes living with active telemetry collars - 32
- number of lynxes with non-working collars, but constantly observed - 10
- number of kittens raised up to a year from monitored mothers (until the 2024 season) - 72
- 50% of kittens born in the current season 2025 – 10

THE ESTIMATED MINIMUM POPULATION SIZE OF POLAND NW IS CURRENTLY 121 INDIVIDUALS.

The spatial situation of the population presented by location points of individuals monitored by GPS telemetry is presented in Map 2.

Map 2 Population coverage in PL NW



III. Comprehensive care for lynxes in PL NE Project area

III.1 The situation of the local population

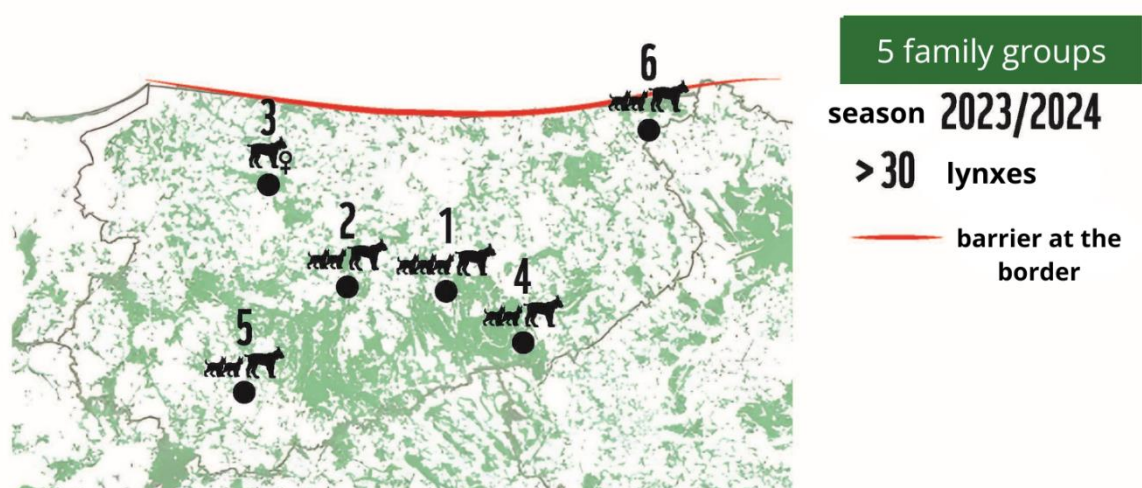
The PL NE area includes 2 voivodeships (Podlaskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie), where there are 4 lynx monitoring stations (P. Białowieska, P. Knyszyńska, P. Augustowska, P. Piska) established as part of the National Environmental Monitoring. In a report to the European Commission from 2019. in all these positions, the overall assessment of the conservation status of the species was Inappropriate - Bad (U2).

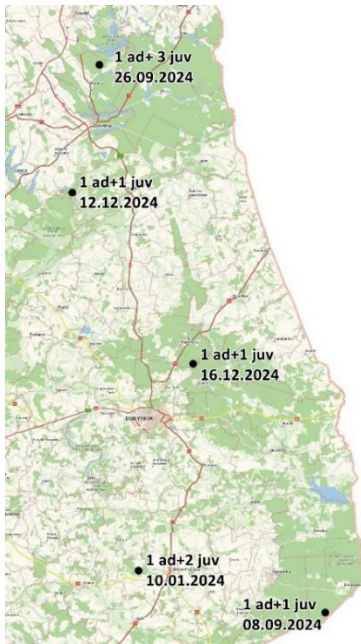
However, monitoring carried out in recent years by the WWF Poland Foundations in cooperation with partners shows some beneficial changes, e.g. in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship in the 2023/24 season, 5 family groups were identified. A similar number of family groups was shown by monitoring in 2024 in the Podlaskie Voivodeship (IBS report). However, in large forest complexes such as Białowieska Forest, Knyszyńska F., Augustowska F. only 1 family group was found. In the PL NE region, lynxes occur over a relatively large area. However, their density seems to be low. Low birth rate may not offset mortality, which does not guarantee the survival of a population in the long term.

Genetic analyses of samples collected in the field by WWF Poland show the beneficial impact of releasing lynxes into the environment (earlier re-introduction) on the increase in genetic variability of the population occurring in Warmia and Mazury. The research also showed migrants from Podlasie to Masuria and in the opposite direction. In connection with the described situation, it is justified to release lynxes both in the Warmian-Masurian and Podlaskie voivodeships.

After joining the Life Project, the WWF Poland Foundation donated over 200 hair samples collected in the PL NE region (2024 and 2025 seasons) for genetic analysis performed by the laboratory of the University of Białystok. This will have a beneficial effect on the creation of a genotype library and the ability to assess the development of the population in this region.

Map 3 Family groups in the Warmian-Masurian





Map 4 Family groups in the Podlaskie Voivodeships

III.2 Project activities

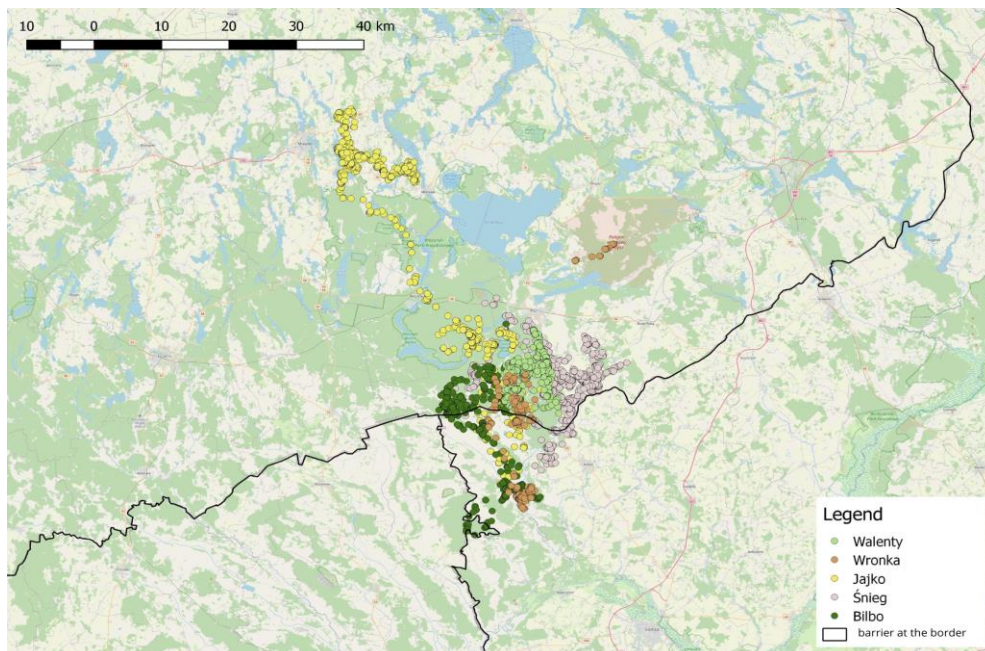
On February 17, 2025, in the Pisz Forest District in the Natura 2000 area of Ostoja Piska PLH280048, 5 lynxes, 4 males and 1 female, born in the ZTP breeding center Dzika Zagroda, qualified for the Project on the basis of genetic tests, were released into the wild. All lynxes are equipped with telemetry collars.

Due to undesirable behavior, constant presence near farms and poultry hunting, the female Wronka was caught on 26-03-2025 and transported to the acclimatization enclosure in Dłusko in PL NW Projekt area. After training again in captivity, she was released into the wild in PL NW. The training turned out to be effective, Wronka did not approach urbanized areas, she began to hunt roe deer effectively, unfortunately on 01-09-2025 she died hit by a train.

The remaining males live in the PL NE area, are monitored by telemetry, regularly hunt wild animals (fox, raccoon dog, roe deer, beaver) and do not pose any problems.

The activity of lynxes in the area of PL NE is shown in Map 3.

Map 3 Lynx activity in PL NE Project area



All individuals released in PL NE are young (born in May 2024), they will have a chance to start breeding no earlier than in the 2027 season.

Photo 18-19: Release of lynxes in the PL NE Project area



IV. Summary

In the second year of the Project, 10 lynxes genetically tested were released into the wild:

- in the area of PL NW – 5 individuals (2 females, 3 males)
- in the area of PL NE – 5 individuals (1 female, 4 males)

At least 11 females started breeding in the telemetrically monitored population of Polish NW, who gave birth to 20 kittens.

The population size of Polish NW was estimated at 121 individuals.