EXPANSION OF THE **LYNX POPULATION RANGE** IN NORTHERN POLAND

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



Co-funded by the European Union

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LASY PAŃSTWOWE

Nadleśnictwo Spychowo

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Rewilding Oder Delta

WWF



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Introduction

Historically, the Eurasian lynx *(Lynx lynx)* inhabited almost all of Europe and much of Asia. Over the past three centuries, persecution and habitat destruction caused the species to disappear from most of Europe. In recent decades, however, changing attitudes towards large carnivores, together with intensified conservation efforts, have contributed to the gradual return of the Eurasian lynx to its natural habitats. This recovery is particularly evident in northern and eastern Europe. Reintroduction programmes have also established local, generally isolated populations in southwestern and western Europe. However, their small population size and low genetic diversity threaten the long-term survival of the lynx in these regions.

Reintroduction programmes have also been carried out in the border region between Central and Eastern Europe. Lynx were released in Poland, within the Masurian Lake District (2004–2020), and at several locations in southwestern Lithuania (2011–2017). More recently, releases have taken place in Western Pomerania (since 2017), where a relatively large population has been established in a short period of time.

Project 101114131 – LIFE22-NAT-PL-LIFE LYNX PL LT DE, entitled 'Expansion of the Lynx Population Range in Northern Poland', is being implemented by an international consortium of five partners, three of which are based in Poland. The coordinating beneficiary is the West Pomeranian Nature Society. The other partners are the Spychowo Forest District, WWF Poland, the Ecosystems Protection Center (Lithuania), and Rewilding Oder Delta (Germany).

The main objective is to expand the area occupied by the Eurasian lynx in northern Poland and to strengthen connectivity between the peripheral populations in Central Europe and the continuous range of the species in Eastern Europe.

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THE RETURN OF THE EURASIAN LYNX TO EUROPE
PROJECT BACKGROUND

REINTRODUCTIONS

The development of nature conservation, new regulations protecting endangered species, growing awareness of the ecological importance of large carnivores have led to a fundamental change in attitudes towards the Eurasian lynx. In the second half of the 20th century, the species began to recolonise areas from which it had previously been eradicated, particularly in Northern and Central Europe. However, because many of these regions are far from the species' continuous range in Eastern Europe, natural recolonisation was not possible everywhere. As a result, reintroduction programmes were launched in the 1970s in southwestern and western Europe. New local populations were established in the mountain regions of Switzerland, France, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Germany. Most of these populations remain small, isolated from other lynx populations, and characterised by low genetic diversity.

In the 21st century, Eurasian lynx reintroduction programmes were launched along the margins of the Baltic population's natural range in northern Poland and Lithuania. In these areas, lynx density was low, and local populations were partially isolated from one another. Reintroductions were therefore undertaken to reinforce these populations and improve their long-term viability. Such programmes have been carried out in the Masurian Lake District (northeastern Poland), Western Pomerania (northwestern Poland), and southeastern Lithuania.

Distribution of the Eurasian Lynx in Europe (2023)

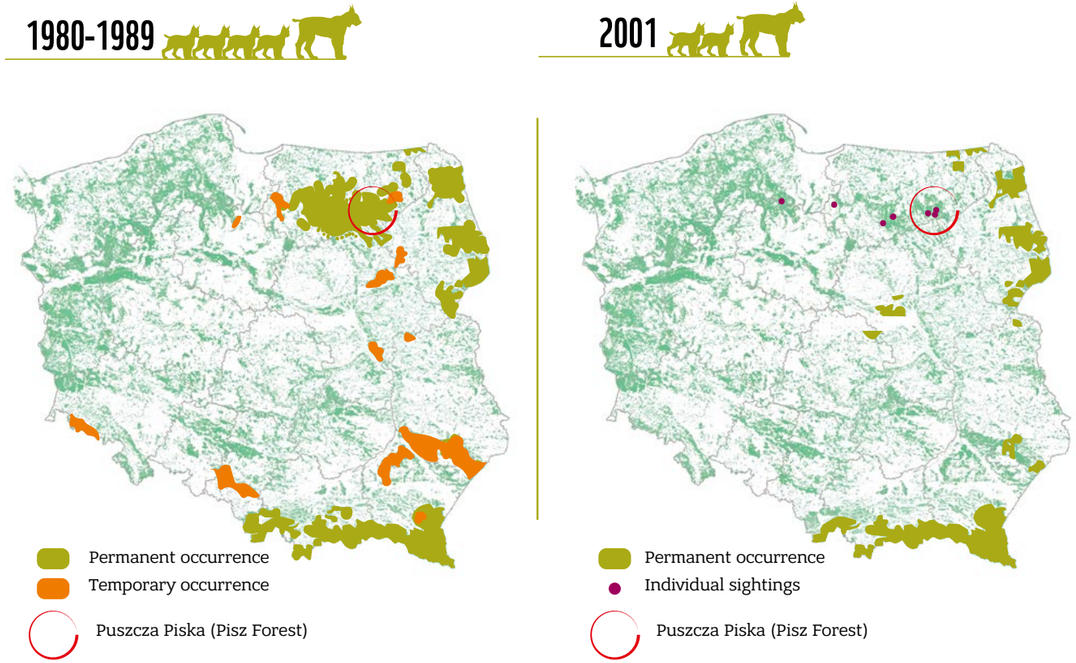
www.lcie.org/Large-carnivores/Eurasian-lynx



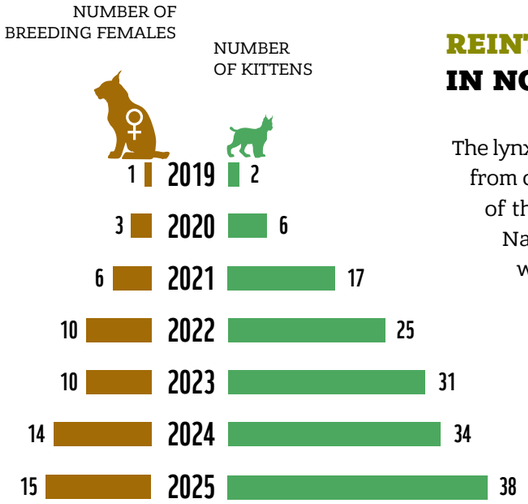
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REINTRODUCTION IN THE MASURIAN LAKE DISTRICT

The Eurasian lynx has been under strict protection in Poland since 1995. However, the Masurian population, the westernmost part of the Baltic population, was on the verge of extinction at the end of the 20th century. At the beginning of the 21st century, only a few individual lynx were recorded in this region.



As part of the activities of the Kadzidłowo Wild Animal Park and projects implemented by WWF Poland, more than 30 Eurasian lynx were reintroduced to the wild between 2004 and 2020. Two reintroduction methods were used. The first, known as 'born to be free', involves releasing captive-bred lynx into their natural habitat. The second, known as 'wild to wild', involves capturing animals from the wild and subsequently releasing them at a new location. In this case, lynx from Estonia were translocated to the Pisz Forest. Both reintroduction methods were accompanied by field monitoring of the lynx population.



Source: West Pomeranian Nature Society.

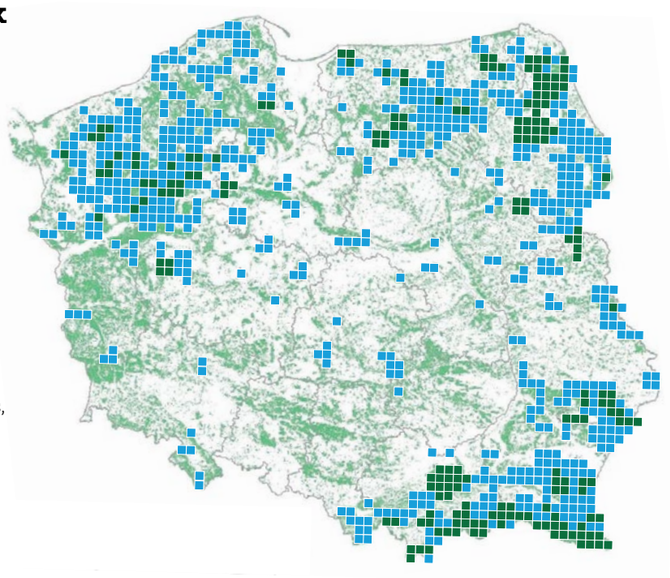
REINTRODUCTION IN NORTHWESTERN POLAND

The lynx released into the wild in northwestern Poland originated from captive breeding programmes. From 2019 until the launch of the LIFE project at the end of 2023, the West Pomeranian Nature Society released more than 100 individuals into the wild. A further 24 lynx were reintroduced between 2023 and 2025 as part of the project. The lynx began reproducing as early as the first year after their release. During the early years of the reintroduction programme, females produced litters of 2–5 kittens. Today, the lynx population in northwestern Poland is among the largest in the country.



Eurasian lynx occurrence in Poland

The Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection (GIOŚ)



Distribution map of the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*) in a 10×10 km grid for the period 01.05.2023–30.04.2024

Based on survey data from Forest Districts, National Parks, Forest Experimental Stations, and the Polish Hunting Association.

Permanent occurrence

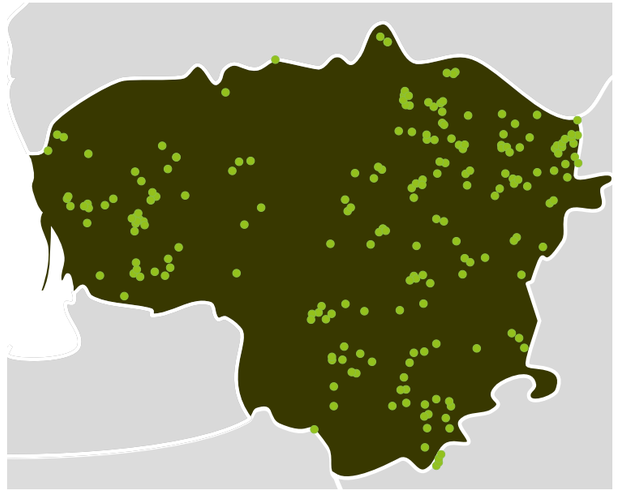
Occasional occurrence

REINTRODUCTION IN LITHUANIA

In Lithuania, the Eurasian lynx was granted legal protection in 1979 and was included in the Red Data Book of Lithuania in 2000. At the beginning of the 21st century, the lynx population declined dramatically, reaching only 30–40 individuals in 2007–2008. However, since 2010, the population has been steadily increasing, exceeding 160 individuals by 2018. This rapid growth was associated with a reintroduction programme. Between 2011 and 2017, a total of 22 lynx were released at several locations in western and southwestern Lithuania.

Eurasian lynx occurrence in Lithuania

based on citizen science monitoring data from 2023–2025



Source: based on citizen science monitoring data from 2023–2025.



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REINTRODUCTION IN GERMANY

Active conservation programmes for the Eurasian lynx have been implemented in Germany in the past and continue to be carried out today. The most important lynx reintroduction projects are associated with the following areas: the Bavarian Forest and Šumava on the German-Czech border (since the 1970s), the Harz Mountains (since 2000), the Palatinate Forest (LIFE Luchs, 2016–2020), the Thuringian Forest (2024–2027), Baden-Württemberg (2023–2027), and Saxony (RELynx Sachsen, 2024–2030).

Current conservation status and challenges:

- The Eurasian lynx population in Germany is currently estimated at nearly 190 individuals occurring in three main areas.
- Conservation status: Local populations are effectively protected; however, their isolation limits or prevents gene flow and increases the risk of inbreeding.
- Future prospects: Experts estimate that, through improved ecological connectivity between habitats, reduced road-related mortality and poaching, and continued reintroduction programmes, the lynx population in Germany could increase significantly.
- Public support: Reintroduction efforts generally receive strong public support.

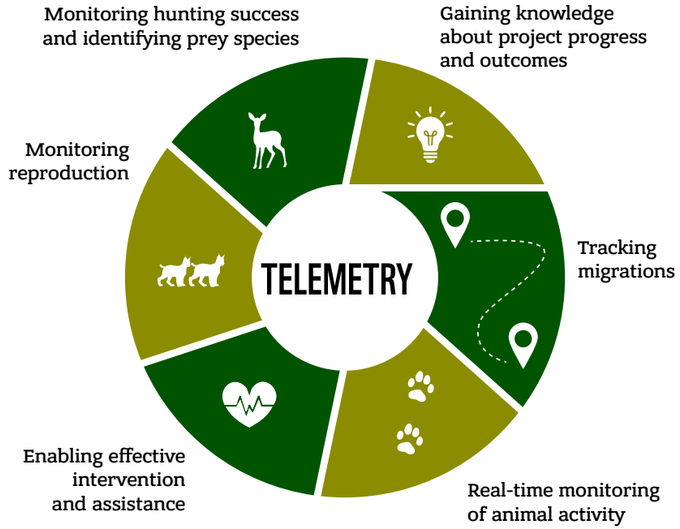


Lynx in Bavaria. © Roger Leguen / WWF



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LYNX MONITORING

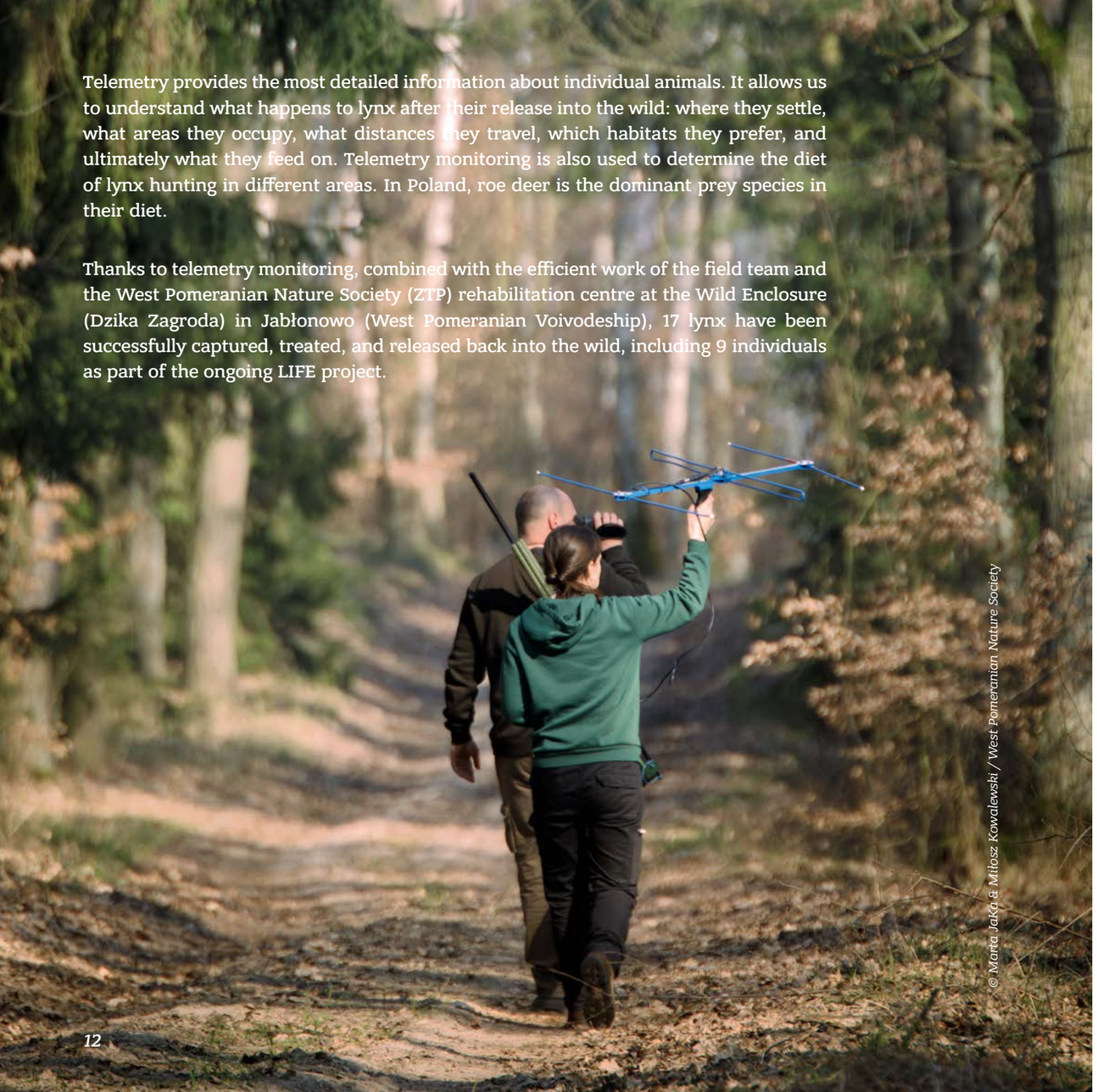


TELEMETRY

Monitoring is an integral part of every reintroduction programme, both during the implementation of activities and after their completion. Today, the use of telemetry to track released animals is standard practice. Lynx released as part of reintroduction programmes carried out in Poland and Lithuania are fitted with GPS/GSM telemetry collars. Precise locations of lynx in the field provide valuable data and also enable effective intervention measures to be taken to save the animals' lives.

Telemetry provides the most detailed information about individual animals. It allows us to understand what happens to lynx after their release into the wild: where they settle, what areas they occupy, what distances they travel, which habitats they prefer, and ultimately what they feed on. Telemetry monitoring is also used to determine the diet of lynx hunting in different areas. In Poland, roe deer is the dominant prey species in their diet.

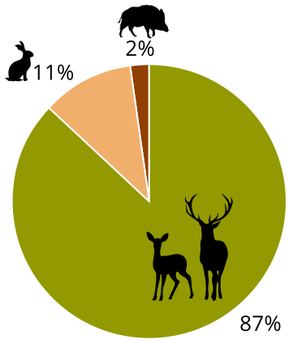
Thanks to telemetry monitoring, combined with the efficient work of the field team and the West Pomeranian Nature Society (ZTP) rehabilitation centre at the Wild Enclosure (Dzika Zagroda) in Jabłonowo (West Pomeranian Voivodeship), 17 lynx have been successfully captured, treated, and released back into the wild, including 9 individuals as part of the ongoing LIFE project.



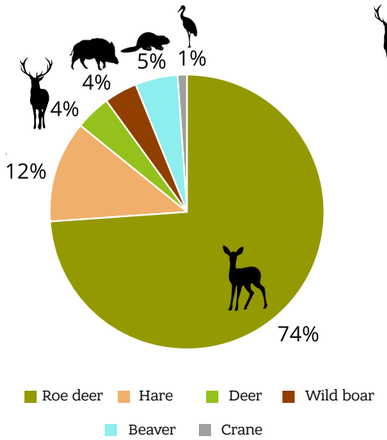
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What do lynx eat?

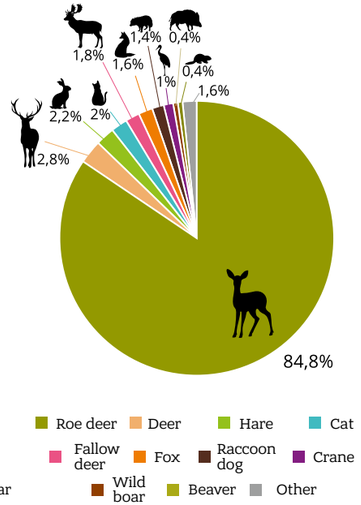
Białowieża Forest (IBS PAN)



Masurian Lake District (WWF)



West Pomeranian Voivodeship (ZTP)



A measure of success of a reintroduction programme is whether released animals can survive in their new environment, find food, and ultimately reproduce. Information on these aspects is provided by telemetry monitoring, as well as direct observations, tracking, camera traps, and hair traps, which are essential for genetic studies.

> In Project 101114131 – LIFE22-NAT-PL-LIFE LYNX PL LT DE, entitled 'Expansion of the Lynx Population Range in Northern Poland', various monitoring methods are applied, including telemetry, direct observations, tracking, camera traps, and hair traps.



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CAMERA TRAP MONITORING

Camera traps are automated devices used to capture photographs and videos. They are triggered by passive infrared (PIR) motion sensors, powered by batteries, and often supported by solar panels, which provide greater autonomy and extend operating time.

Key aspects of camera trap monitoring:

- **Applications:** Monitoring wildlife, preventing poaching, surveillance of private property, and detecting illegal waste dumping.
- **How they work:** A passive infrared (PIR) motion sensor detects movement and triggers the camera to take a photograph or record a video.
- **Data transmission (GSM/LTE/Wi-Fi):** Modern models can transmit images and videos immediately to an email address, mobile phone, or dedicated app.
- **Technical features:** Infrared LEDs (typically 940 nm), invisible to both humans and animals, enable high-quality night-time photography and video recording.
- **Installation:** Camera traps are typically mounted on trees or posts using adjustable mounting straps.



Camera traps deployed throughout the lynx range help, among other things, to assess the condition of individual animals.
© Piotr Kalata / WWF Poland

Camera trap monitoring of lynx involves:

(1) confirming the presence of animals in a given area,
(2) identifying individual lynx,
(3) recording family groups,
(4) documenting behavioural patterns.

In addition to lynx, camera traps capture images of many other wildlife species, including foxes, wolves, badgers, beavers, and otters.

MONITORING USING HAIR TRAPS

Hair traps are non-invasive devices used to collect animal hair for genetic analysis. They typically consist of a small pad made of a coarse material impregnated with a scent attractant. Velcro strips are attached to the pad to collect hairs when an animal, such as a lynx, rubs against it. Hair traps are placed in areas where lynx are likely to travel, particularly at locations used for scent marking.

Collected hairs are especially valuable if they contain hair follicles, which provide genetic material (DNA). In the laboratory, DNA is extracted and analysed. If the DNA is of sufficient quality, genetic analyses make it possible to identify individual animals at specific locations. They also allow researchers to determine the sex of individuals and assess their relatedness to other lynx occurring in the area. In addition, genotype databases enable comparisons between lynx from reintroduction areas and those from other regions, making it possible, in some cases, to identify dispersing individuals.



Hair trap in the Spychowo Forest District.
© Piotr Kalata / WWF Poland



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THREATS AND CHALLENGES

For the re-established lynx populations in northern Poland, several key challenges and conservation needs have been identified that require targeted action. The most urgent challenges are: (1) high mortality, (2) low genetic diversity, (3) lack of connectivity within the metapopulation in Poland and Lithuania, and (4) maintaining public acceptance.

High mortality. Monitoring of reintroduced lynx has shown that as many as one in three individuals may not survive their first year in the wild. Analysis of available data (Mammal Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences) indicates that the main causes of mortality are road collisions (35%) and sarcoptic mange (29%). Another serious concern is the deliberate killing of lynx released into the wild. For this reason, the rapid detection of sick or injured animals is of critical importance. Their prompt capture, treatment, and, whenever possible, release back into the wild can significantly reduce lynx mortality in monitored areas. Such interventions are among the most important measures for the conservation of the species.

Causes of Lynx Mortality



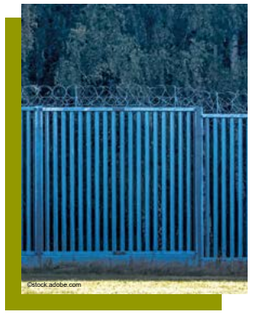
COLLISIONS



SARCOPTIC MANGE



POACHING



BARRIERS

IBS PAN data on lynx mortality (2015–2023): road collisions (35%), sarcoptic mange (29%), other causes (36%)

Low genetic diversity. Genetic studies show that low genetic diversity in small and isolated European lynx populations may be one of the main threats to the long-term survival of the species in areas with low lynx densities. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that individuals released into the wild represent a genetically diverse pool and to facilitate gene flow between populations. As part of the LIFE project, the release of 40 lynx is planned. These individuals will contribute to strengthening the existing populations in northern Poland and will promote genetic exchange between populations.

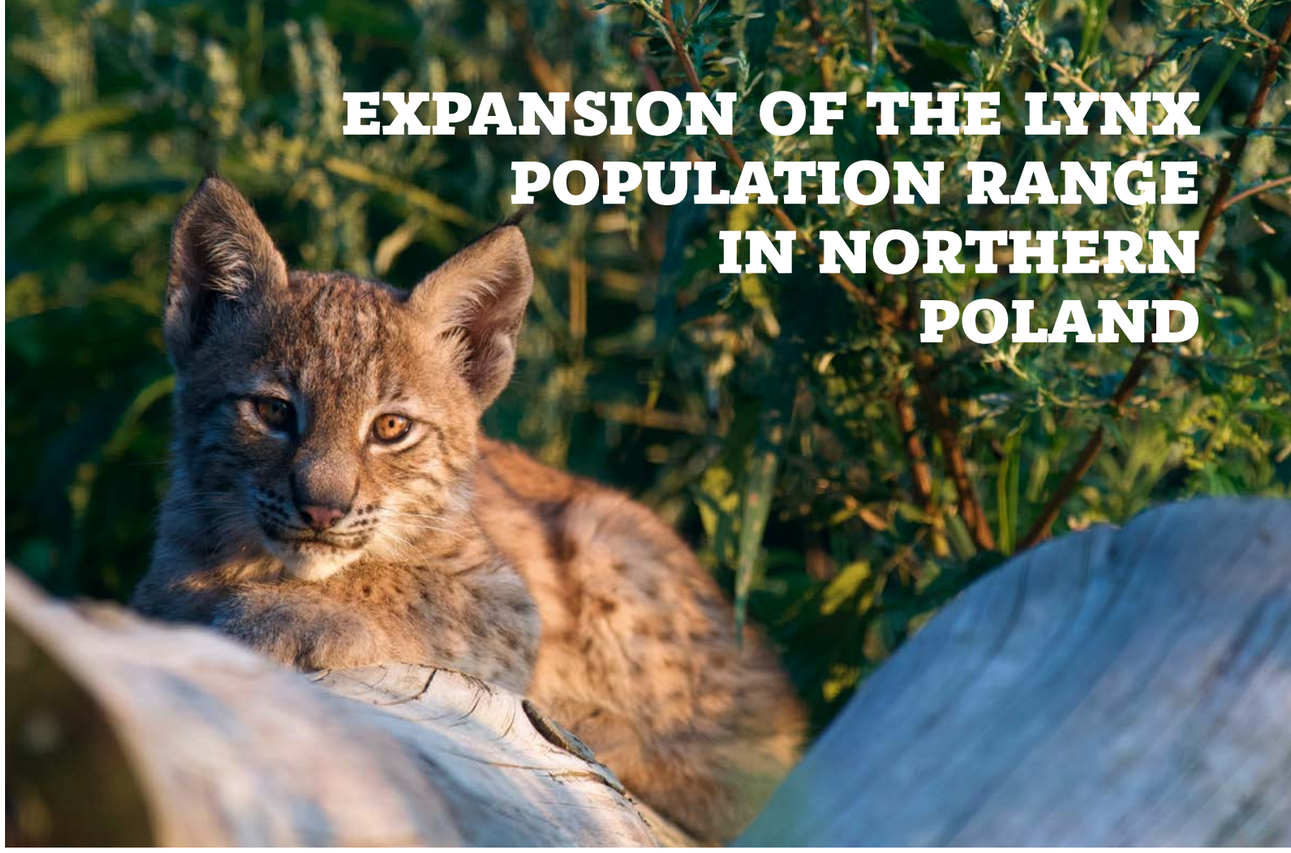
Lack of connectivity within the metapopulation in Poland and Lithuania. In both northeastern Poland and Lithuania, the distribution of the Eurasian lynx is fragmented, with populations occurring in isolated patches. The key to their effective conservation is maintaining a sufficient number of local populations and ensuring effective gene flow between them. The planned release of 40 lynx in northern Poland will strengthen existing local populations, promote the dispersal of individuals, and improve connectivity with populations in Eastern Europe, including those in Lithuania.



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Public acceptance. Public acceptance is a crucial component of every reintroduction programme. As part of the project, activities have been planned in Poland, Lithuania, and Germany to maintain a high level of public support for the Eurasian lynx. These include mitigating the consequences of potential human–wildlife conflicts and organising thematic workshops for key stakeholder groups. Positive public perceptions of the species can also be strengthened by collecting lynx sighting reports from people spending time in the field as part of citizen science monitoring.

EXPANSION OF THE LYNX POPULATION RANGE IN NORTHERN POLAND

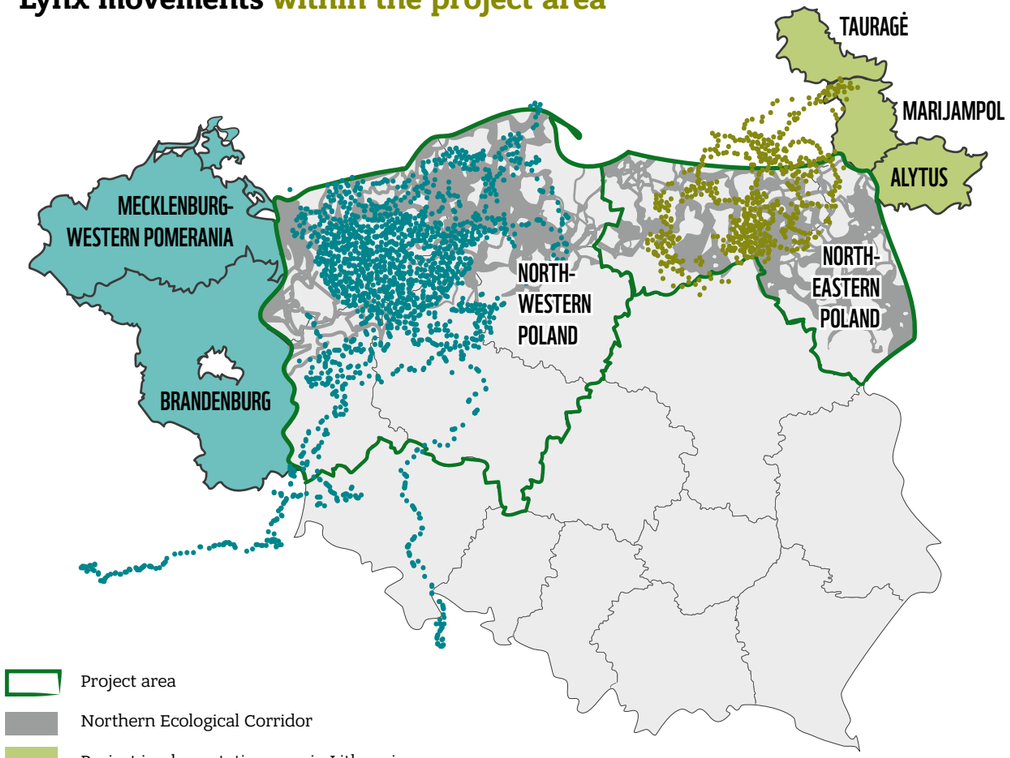


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PROJECT AREA

The area for Project 101114131 — LIFE22-NAT-PL-LIFE LYNX PL LT DE, entitled 'Expansion of the Lynx Population Range in Northern Poland', was defined on the basis of GPS telemetry data collected from the lynx released into the wild during previous reintroduction programmes. The project covers four functional units: two in northern Poland, one in Lithuania and one in Germany.

Lynx movements within the project area



Project area

Northern Ecological Corridor

Project implementation area in Lithuania

Project implementation area in Germany

Telemetry data from lynx released in northwestern Poland (2019–2021)

Telemetry data from lynx released in northeastern Poland (2019–2025)

Source: Materials from ZTP and WWF Poland for the LIFE project

- **PL NW area** covers five voivodeships in northwestern Poland: West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Greater Poland, Pomeranian, and Kuyavian-Pomeranian;
- **PL NE area** covers two voivodeships in northeastern Poland: Warmian–Masurian and Podlaskie;
- **LT S area** comprises the Lithuanian administrative regions bordering Poland: Alytus, Marijampolė, and Tauragė;
- **DE area** comprises the Oder River Valley on both the Polish and German sides of the border.



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PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The LIFE project aims to improve the conservation status of the Eurasian lynx at the western edge of its natural range in Poland, where the species is currently assessed as having an 'unfavourable–bad (U2)' conservation status. It also seeks to address the key threats and challenges identified in the report submitted to the European Commission in 2019.

Main project objectives

- **Restore the historical range** of the Baltic lynx metapopulation in Central Europe by establishing genetically diverse local populations located within close proximity to one another.
- **Create conditions for effective dispersal and gene flow within the Baltic lynx metapopulation** in Poland by establishing stepping-stone populations between the species' continuous range in Eastern Europe and its peripheral populations in Central Europe, while also facilitating the natural recolonisation of northeastern Germany by the Eurasian lynx.
- **Maintain public support for active lynx conservation** in Poland, Lithuania, and Germany, and secure broad support for the conservation and management strategy for the Baltic lynx population in Poland, developed in cooperation with key stakeholders and international project partners.



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ACTIVITIES

The project objectives will be achieved through the implementation of the following activities:

1. Ensuring genetic diversity within the founder group of lynx originating from the Baltic population by obtaining individuals from the breeding facility of the West Pomeranian Nature Society (ZTP), other breeding centres and zoos, as well as potentially through the translocation of wild animals. The area of direct reintroduction activities under the project covers northern Poland, specifically the Northern Ecological Corridor extending from the eastern to the western border of the country.

2. Field teams operating in two areas of northern Poland: (1) northwestern Poland and (2) northeastern Poland. Their work will focus on monitoring released lynx and the environmental conditions affecting them, as well as reducing the impact of threats, such as sarcoptic mange, through the identification of diseased individuals, their capture, treatment, and subsequent release back into the wild. These activities will be carried out by two field teams: (1) a western team operating in northwestern Poland, and (2) an eastern team operating in northeastern Poland.



Lynx rehabilitation centre – Wild Enclosure (Dzika Zagroda) in Jabłonowo.
On the left: an acclimatisation enclosure; on the right: a rehabilitation enclosure.
© Marta JaKa & Miłosz Kowalewski / West Pomeranian Nature Society



Hair trap, © Stefan Jakimiuk

3. Monitoring conducted in the lynx reintroduction area by field teams. As part of the monitoring programme, telemetry monitoring, camera trap monitoring, and the collection of lynx hair samples using hair traps are planned. The collected hair samples will undergo genetic analyses, enabling the identification of individuals occurring in a given area and determining their origin.

4. Genotypes identified from both wild-living lynx and captive-bred individuals selected for the so-called founder group will contribute to the 'Eurasian Lynx Genotype Library'. This resource will be used to support the planning of *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation activities, including identifying individuals with unique genotypes, determining population origin, and monitoring gene flow between populations. More than 150 initial usable genotypes have already been obtained from previous projects carried out by WWF Poland, the West Pomeranian Nature Society (ZTP), and the Mammal Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences.



© Marta JaKa & Miłosz Kowalewski / West Pomeranian Nature Society

5. Lynx rehabilitation centre in the Spychowo Forest District. The Forest District management will ensure the operation of the centre, including its maintenance and staffing, and will employ a veterinarian. This will enable the treatment, recovery, and subsequent release of lynx back into their natural environment.



Lynx rehabilitation centre near Spychowo. © Piotr Mierzejewski

6. A series of workshops in Lithuania for stakeholder groups (hunters and livestock breeders) who play a key role in ensuring acceptance of lynx conservation measures in the country. The project will also include camera trap monitoring and hair trap sampling (collection of hair for genetic analyses) in the region adjacent to the Polish border. These activities will support the monitoring of potential dispersing individuals and gene flow between lynx populations occurring in the two countries.



Stakeholder meeting in Lithuania. © Ecosystems Protection Center



Towards a shared landscape – educational workshop. © Sylwia Rylowska / Rewilding Oder Delta

7. Activities in Germany focus primarily on preparing German society for the return of the Eurasian lynx to the north-eastern part of the country. As part of these activities, a field team, consisting of employees or associates of Rewilding Oder Delta, will be established and trained. The team will monitor lynx presence along the border between Poland and Germany and organise workshops for local communities.

8. Public acceptance of project activities and support for maintaining the current legal protection status of the Eurasian lynx will be promoted through positive communication in the media, including social media. In addition, a series of at least 10 workshops involving various stakeholder groups in northern Poland is planned. These activities will foster public support for active lynx conservation and help identify the best solutions to be implemented within the species conservation strategy in Poland. An assessment of the impact of the planned activities on the socio-economic situation in the project area will also be carried out.

9. Exchange of knowledge on best practices and experience related to Eurasian lynx reintroduction in Poland and Europe in order to support the development and implementation of the conservation and management strategy for the Baltic lynx metapopulation in Poland, and thus the long-term sustainability of the project results.



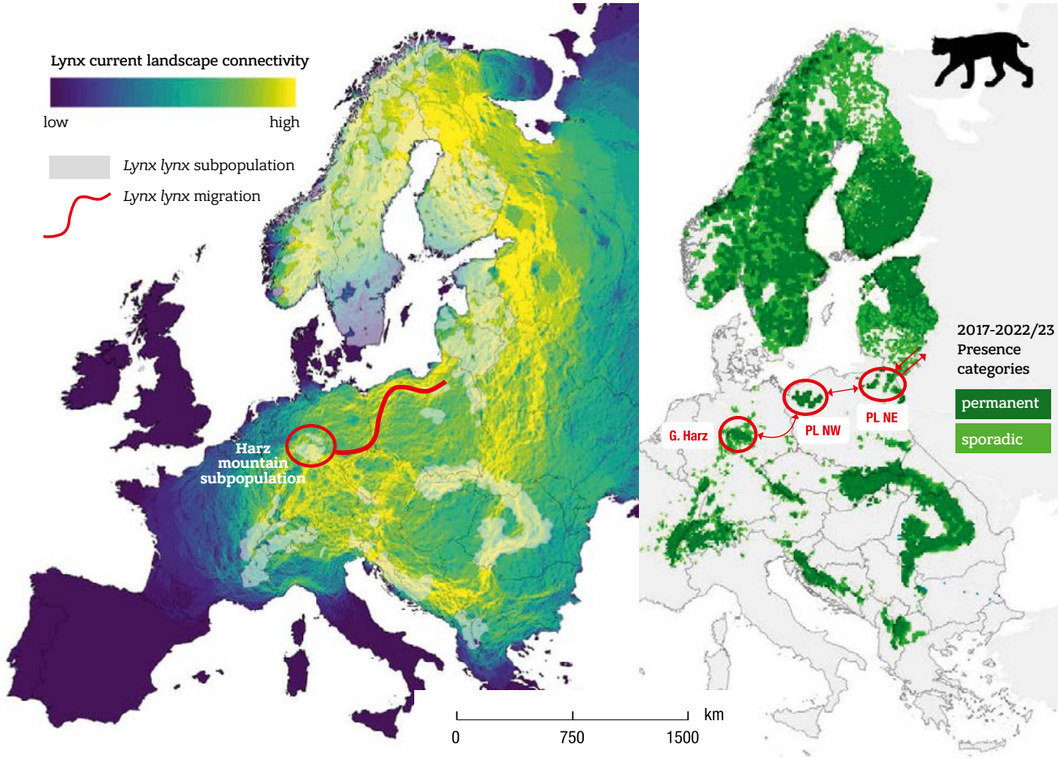
Lynx monitoring workshop with the participation of conservationists and scientists in Bielsk Podlaski. © Piotr Kalata / WWF Poland



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THE FUTURE OF THE EURASIAN LYNX AT THE EDGE OF ITS RANGE

According to experts, the long-term survival of the Baltic lynx population in Poland can be supported by increasing the number of local populations and maintaining ecological connectivity with the species' range in the eastern part of the continent. Due to the lack of reliable information on the conservation status of the lynx in Belarus, the current political situation, and the construction of a barrier along the border with that country, the integration of lynx populations in northern Poland with the continuous range of the species in the Baltic countries is becoming particularly important. The size of the Baltic lynx population in the four EU countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland) is estimated at 1,500–2,000 individuals. In Estonia and Latvia, the lynx is classified as a game species, whereas in Lithuania and Poland it is legally protected. Lynx populations in Lithuania therefore represent an important link connecting northern Poland with the continuous range of the species, which begins in neighbouring Latvia.



Functional connectivity and the current configuration of protected areas indicate the existence of numerous poorly protected migration corridors for the Eurasian lynx.
Source: based on Iannella M., Biondi M., Serva D., Biological Conservation 291 (2024).

Distribution of large carnivores and population data over the years 2017–2022/23.
Source: based on https://lciepub.nina.no.

During the implementation of the lynx reintroduction project in northwestern Poland, dispersal into Germany was also recorded. Therefore, by releasing at least 40 lynx in northern Poland, this project will contribute in the long term to the establishment of a more continuous range of the species. This will enable effective gene flow between peripheral populations and the core area of the Baltic lynx population, and may also contribute to the reinforcement of isolated populations in Western Europe.

PROJECT PARTNERS

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West Pomeranian Nature Society (ZTP)

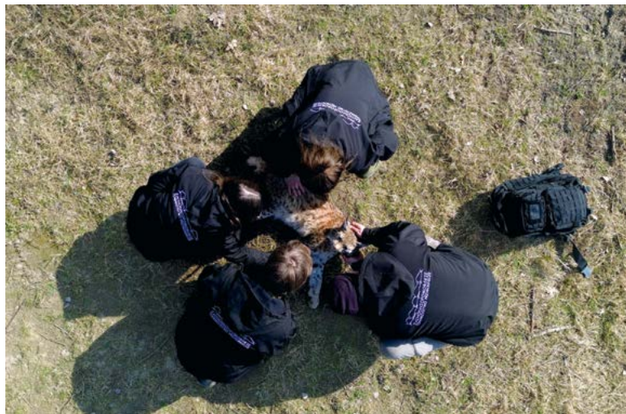
The organisation was founded in 1994 by conservationists from northwestern Poland, primarily ornithologists who wanted to work towards the protection of animal species and their habitats. The initial years of its existence were dominated by bird conservation, particularly the protection of wetland species and birds of prey subject to protected zones. The conservation of European bison became another major challenge when, at the beginning of the 21st century, bison that were victims of road accidents were brought to a feeding site for white-tailed eagles operated in the Ińsko Lake District. The West Pomeranian Nature Society also took responsibility for bison from the herd established by Professor Ryszard Graczyk in Western Pomerania and has continued its conservation efforts in the region ever since. Over the course of 20 years, this population has increased from 22 individuals to 500 European bison in 11 herds.

The work carried out with European bison has enabled the West Pomeranian Nature Society to develop conservation methods that are unique in Poland for protecting rare species living in typical Central European landscapes consisting of a mosaic of managed agricultural land and forests. The organisation operates on the principle that active wildlife conservation does not have to be limited to specially designated protected areas, but can also take place alongside human activities, within landscapes shaped by agriculture and forestry. This principle guided the Society in 2016, when it began efforts to restore the Eurasian lynx to Western Pomerania, where the species had been absent for nearly 400 years. At the Wild Enclosure (Dzika Zagroda) in Jabłonowo, established as a demonstration European bison enclosure and a support base for the management of the free-ranging bison population, lynx breeding enclosures were created, enabling the launch of the 'Return of the Lynx to Northwestern Poland' project. Implemented between 2017 and 2023, the project involved releasing captive-born lynx originating from European breeding centres and the Society's own breeding programme after a specially developed adaptation process in acclimatisation enclosures. The project was a success: 69 lynx 'returned' to Western Pomerania, where they are now reproducing in the wild and establishing the foundations of a self-sustaining population that is becoming a permanent part of the region's natural heritage.

In the current project, the West Pomeranian Nature Society is the coordinating beneficiary responsible for implementing the lynx reintroduction programme in northern Poland.







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WWF Poland

WWF is an international organisation dedicated to nature conservation. For more than 60 years, it has been combating environmental degradation in many parts of the world. WWF's mission is to create a future in which people live in harmony with nature. For 25 years, WWF has also been protecting nature in Poland, focusing on the country's rich natural heritage. Its activities support the conservation of not only Poland's largest predators, including the wolf, Eurasian lynx, brown bear, and grey seal, but also the habitats in which these species occur. Through education, dialogue with businesses, decision-makers, local governments, and various stakeholder groups, WWF Poland promotes sustainable agriculture and works to address climate change. It also takes action to combat illegal trade in endangered plant and animal species and strives to ensure that seas and rivers remain rich in life.

WWF became involved in Eurasian lynx conservation in 2007, when it joined the species reintroduction programme in the Masurian Lake District. The reintroduction activities were carried out using the 'born to be free' method developed by Dr Krzywiński from the Kadzidłowo Wild Animal Park. As a result of this initiative, at least 20 released individuals survived their first year of life. However, there was a risk that the population would not persist without an additional source of genetic diversity. Therefore, between 2012 and 2015, on the initiative of WWF Poland, six lynx were translocated from Estonia and subsequently released into the Pisz Forest. The Foundation also became involved in long-term monitoring of the local lynx population using camera traps and hair traps. The collected samples are analysed by a team of geneticists led by Professor Mirosław Ratkiewicz from the Faculty of Biology at the University of Białystok.

In the current project, WWF Poland is responsible for promotional and educational activities aimed at maintaining public acceptance of the lynx's protected status. In cooperation with project partners, it also conducts lynx monitoring in the forests of northeastern Poland. WWF Poland is additionally a co-financing partner of the project.



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Spychowo Forest District

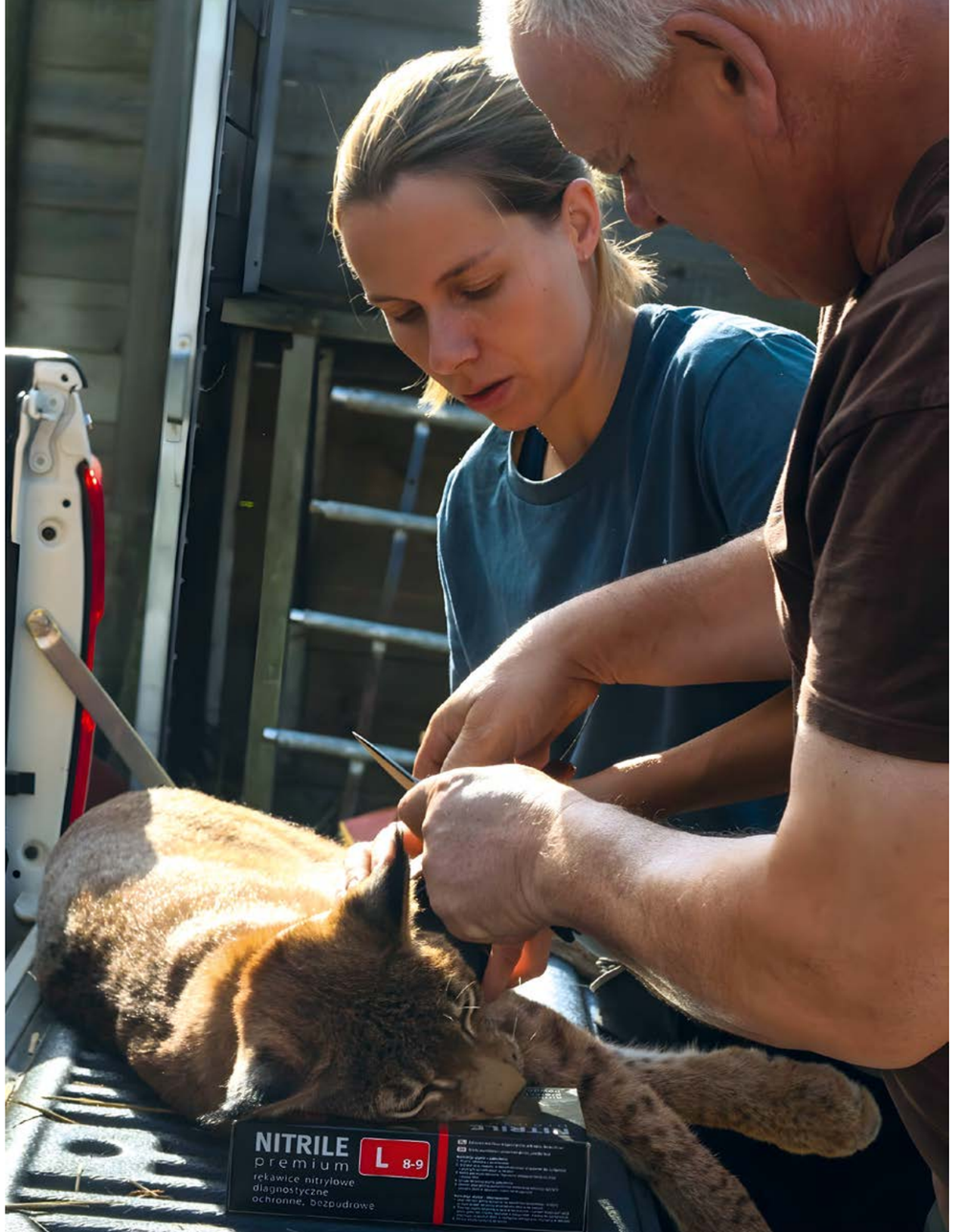
The Spychowo Forest District has been involved in nature conservation and the protection of endangered animal species for many years. Since 2018, foresters from Spychowo have been working to save the black grouse. For this purpose, they have established the largest black grouse breeding centre in Poland, which raises approximately 100 young birds each year. These birds are released into the wild, which gradually helps to restore local populations of this endangered forest grouse species.



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The Spychowo Forest District has been involved in Eurasian lynx conservation for more than a decade. It participated in the WWF Poland project 'Active Conservation of the Lowland Lynx Population in Poland', which aimed to reintroduce lynx through the 'born to be free' method and through the translocation of individuals from Estonia to the Masurian region. As part of this initiative, two lynx acclimatisation enclosures were constructed, the feeding base for Cervidae was improved through measures such as meadow restoration and the establishment of deciduous tree plantations, and winter surveys of large carnivores were carried out.

As part of the LIFE project, a lynx rehabilitation centre has been established in the forests of the Spychowo Forest District. The centre will provide treatment and rehabilitation for sick individuals, lynx injured in accidents, and animals requiring capture from the wild.



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Rewilding Oder Delta

Rewilding Oder Delta is an independent association founded in 2019 within the European Rewilding Europe network. It operates in the transboundary Oder Delta region. Its mission is to restore natural ecological processes for the benefit of both people and nature. The organisation's activities focus on river renaturalisation, habitat restoration, species reintroduction, and the promotion of regenerative tourism and nature education.

In the LIFE project, Rewilding Oder Delta is responsible for monitoring the expansion of the lynx population in the border area of northwestern Poland, which is crucial for the successful return of the species to Germany. As part of the project, a Polish–German team has been established and trained in procedures related to lynx capture and monitoring. One of ROD's key activities in this context is also building public acceptance and preparing local communities for the return of the Eurasian lynx.



© Ecosystems Protection Center

Ecosystems Protection Center

The Ecosystems Protection Center (EPC) is a Lithuanian non-governmental organisation focusing on nature research, predator conservation, and environmental education. Its experts, including Petras Adeikis and Renata Špinkytė-Bačkaitienė, study predator populations and actively strive to promote public awareness.



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The organisation's most important projects include the reintroduction of Eurasian lynx (2011–2013) and the breeding of the Eurasian eagle-owl in cooperation with the Lithuanian Zoo in Kaunas (since 2011). EPC also monitors wildlife, conducts technology-based nature conservation programmes, and provides advice to national authorities, including the Ministry of the Environment. The organisation currently places strong emphasis on addressing conflicts between livestock breeders and large carnivores, focusing on strategies that promote more harmonious coexistence between people and wildlife.

Within the LIFE project, EPC organises seminars and workshops in Lithuania aimed at building public support for lynx conservation. The organisation is also responsible for genetic sampling, camera-based predator monitoring, and preparing lynx for breeding and reintroduction.



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