

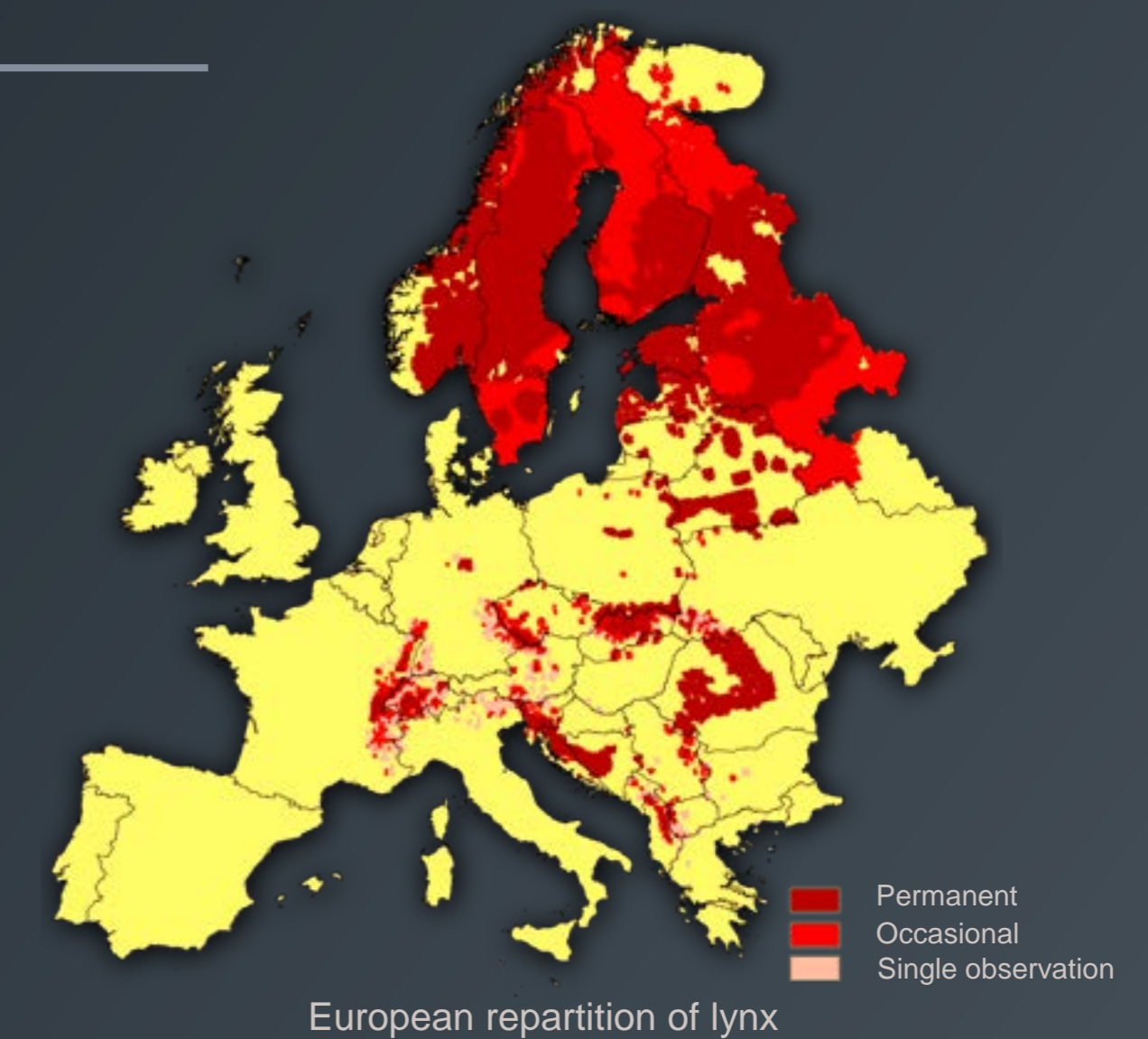
Evaluating radical conservation futures: strategies for assessing the potential for Eurasian lynx in the Benelux countries

Background:

Last 30 years have seen a dramatic changes in large carnivores status in Europe:

- Natural recolonization of Wolf in the Alps (I, CH & F), Germany, Scandinavia
- Reintroductions of Lynx in the Alps (CH & F), Hartz (D), Dinarics (SLO, HR)
- Reintroductions of Bears in the Pyrenees, Alps (I)

Many large carnivores are now in places and in numbers that would have been unthinkable 30 years ago!



How far can this go? What are the limits?

Case study

- **What ? Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*)**
- Even though they are not the greatest colonizer / most generalist they are in many ways the most “acceptable” of the carnivore species.
- **Where ?** Benelux countries, most extreme case in Europe
- **Why ?** Even here recent signs exist (but caution reliability and origins)...



Goal

Try and evaluate the potential of this region to contain lynx
Try and determine if this is a realistic future scenario or just a wild dream

Two approaches

(1) “Ecological” potential of the habitat to support lynx

- Use of Habitat suitability analyses
- Concordance between different modeling approaches and different types of input data
- Use of datum from Scandinavia (abundance of data of different types) and Baltic States (gradient of habitats from “wilderness” to very fragmented)
- Then apply best model(s) to Benelux presumably taking into account forest / infrastructure / human density / prey ...

(2) “Social” potential

Reviewing lynx /human conflicts across Europe

Available information :

- Livestock conflict (sheep / reindeer)
- conflict with hunters (competition for roe deer)
- fear (questionnaire data)



Important to dream but also important to have a dose of reality

Important to target conservation efforts where they are needed and have a chance to succeed

Our minds are open!