

Conservation and management of the wolf in Slovakia

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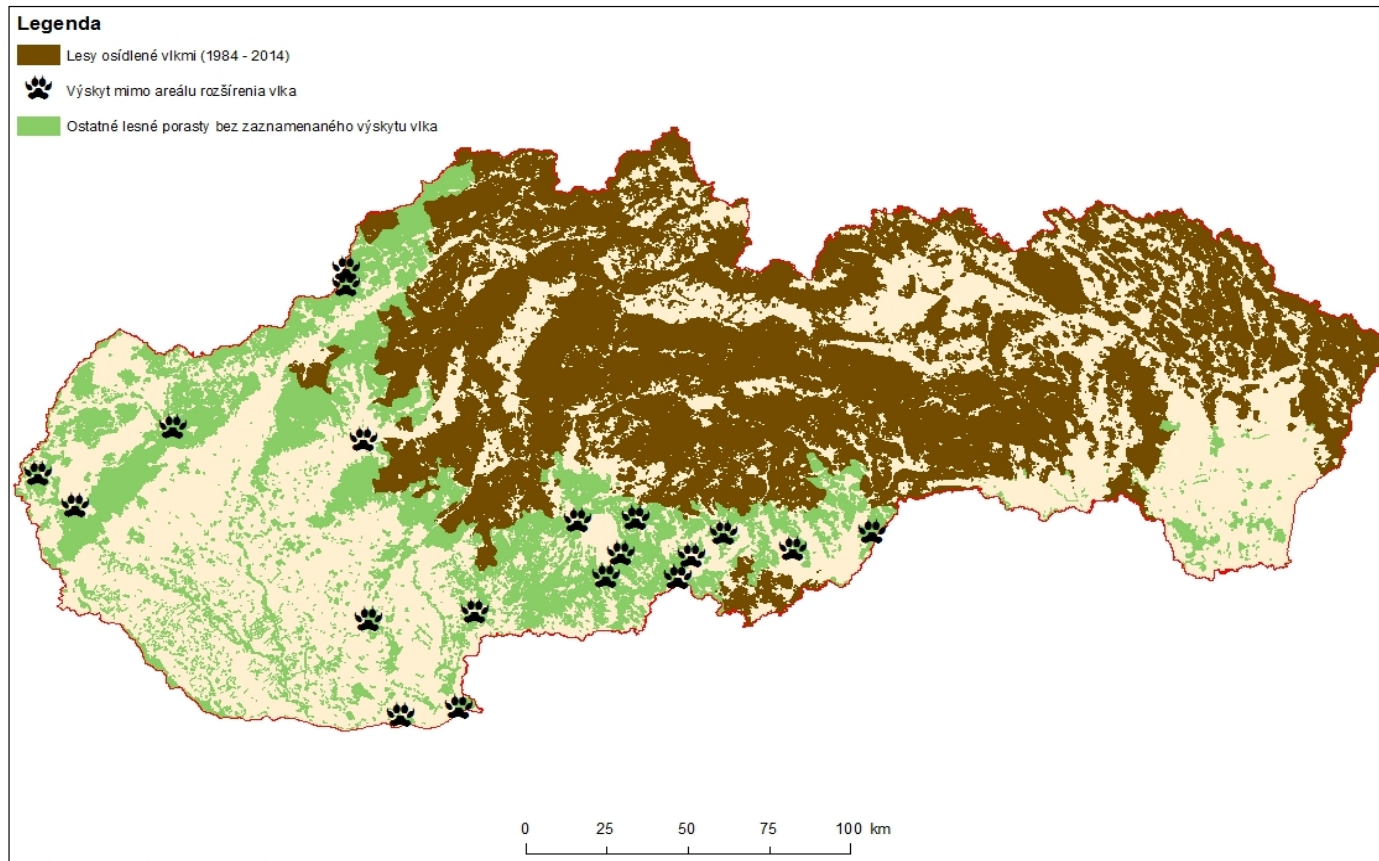
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Main objectives

- About wolf population status
- Action plan for the conservation of wolves in Slovakia
- Challenges for the wolf conservation

- The wolf is a native species for the West Carpathians.
- In the past inhabited the whole area of current Slovakia.
- Although, the wolf population had been decimated after World War II, the first conservation efforts appeared pretty late in 1975.
- Further conservation efforts have been introduced after 1990 and resulted in the ***ratification of the Action Plan for the Conservation of the Wolf in Slovakia in 2016.***

Slovakia harbors well established wolf population



Range 1995	Range 2015	Difference
12 600 km ²	13 864 km ²	+ 1,264 km ²

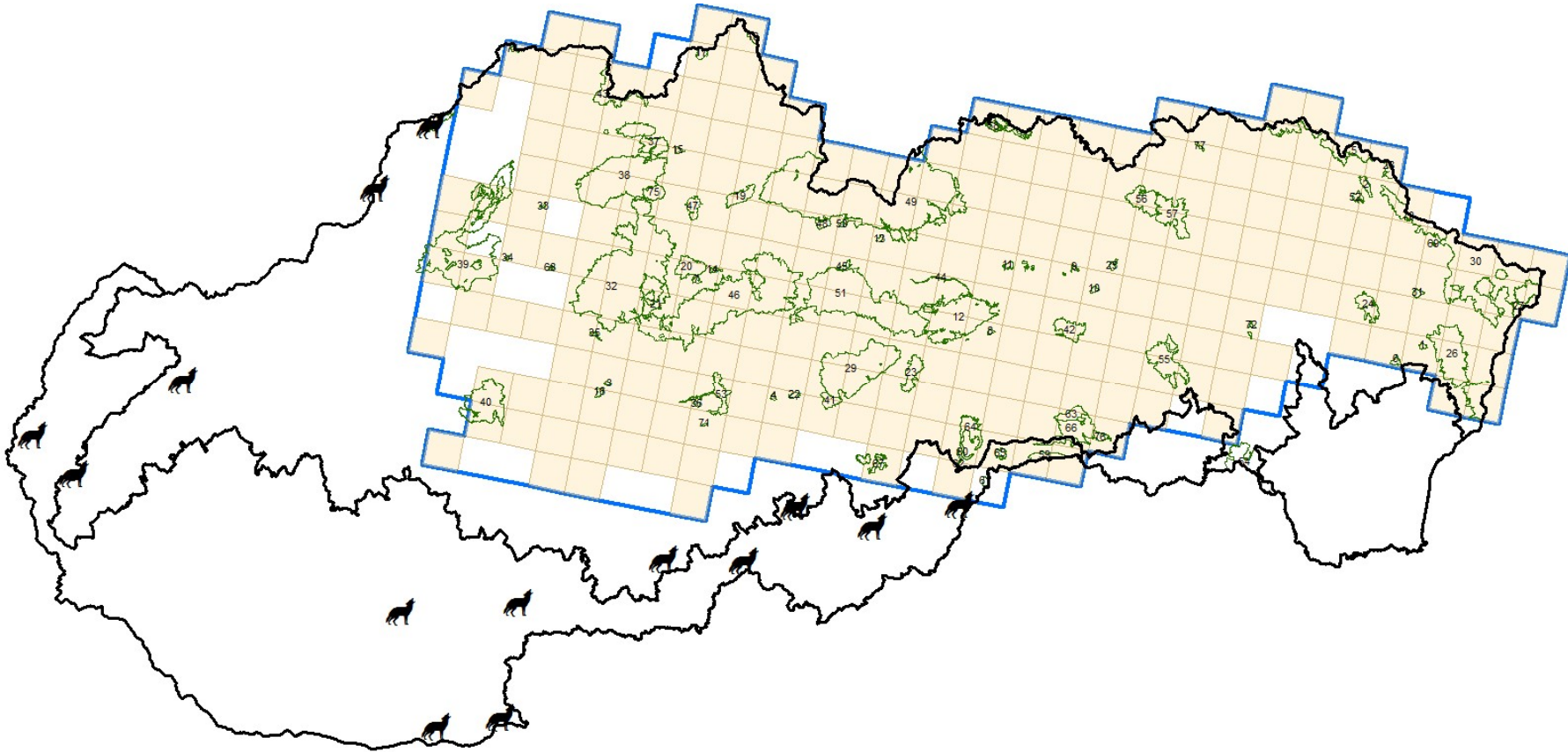
Legal status of the wolf in the past and today

- Unprotected till 1975.
- Decisive breakthrough in the wolf management brought the Hunting Regulation N. 172/1975. It introduced closed season from 1 March till 15 September, statewide gun hunting as the only method of taking wolves, strict prohibition of poisoning, killing pups in dens, leghold trapping, night hunting, hunting from cars, snowmobiles and aerial shooting.
- All year protection 1995 – 1999 was not respected by hunters.
- Slovakia became a member of the Bern Convention in 1997. Slovakia at the request been granted an exception from the protection of the wolf, shifting it from the Bern Convention Appendix II, “totally protected species”, to Appendix III, “protected species that can be subjected to controlled hunting”
- From 1 July 1999 it has been introduced partial protection of wolves, with an open season 1 November – 15 January.

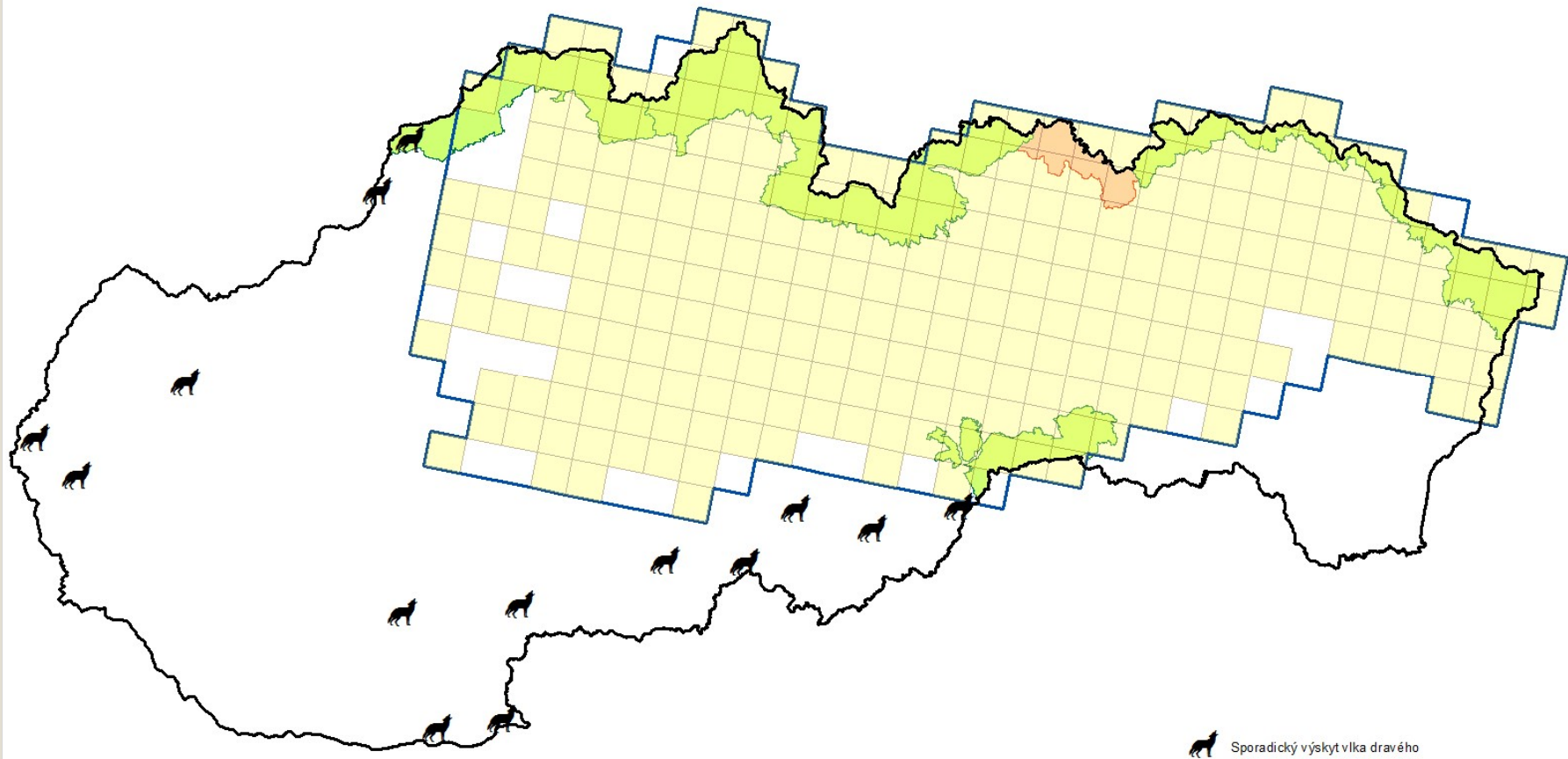
Legal status in the past and today

- In 2004, Slovakia joined the European Union and has adopted a system of nature conservation of Natura 2000.
- According to the Habitats Directive the wolf is included in Annexes 2 and 4.
- According to Annex 2, Slovakia has the obligation to designate protected areas for the wolf. Sites of Community importance for wolves and other species included in Appendix 2 have been designated on 1 August 2004.
- The Slovak Republic has, however, an exception from the full protection of the wolf, which is declared in Annex 4 of the Directive.
- One of the problems in relation to EU legislation was hunting of wolves within the Sites of Community Importance including those where the wolf is the subject of protection.
- This situation has changed in 2013, when hunting was banned in the major Sites of Community importance for the wolf safeguarding habitat connectivity with neighbouring countries (Decree N 489/2013 and Decree N 158/2014).

Sites of Community Importance where the wolf is the subject of protection



Wolf range and the areas where hunting is banned all year round

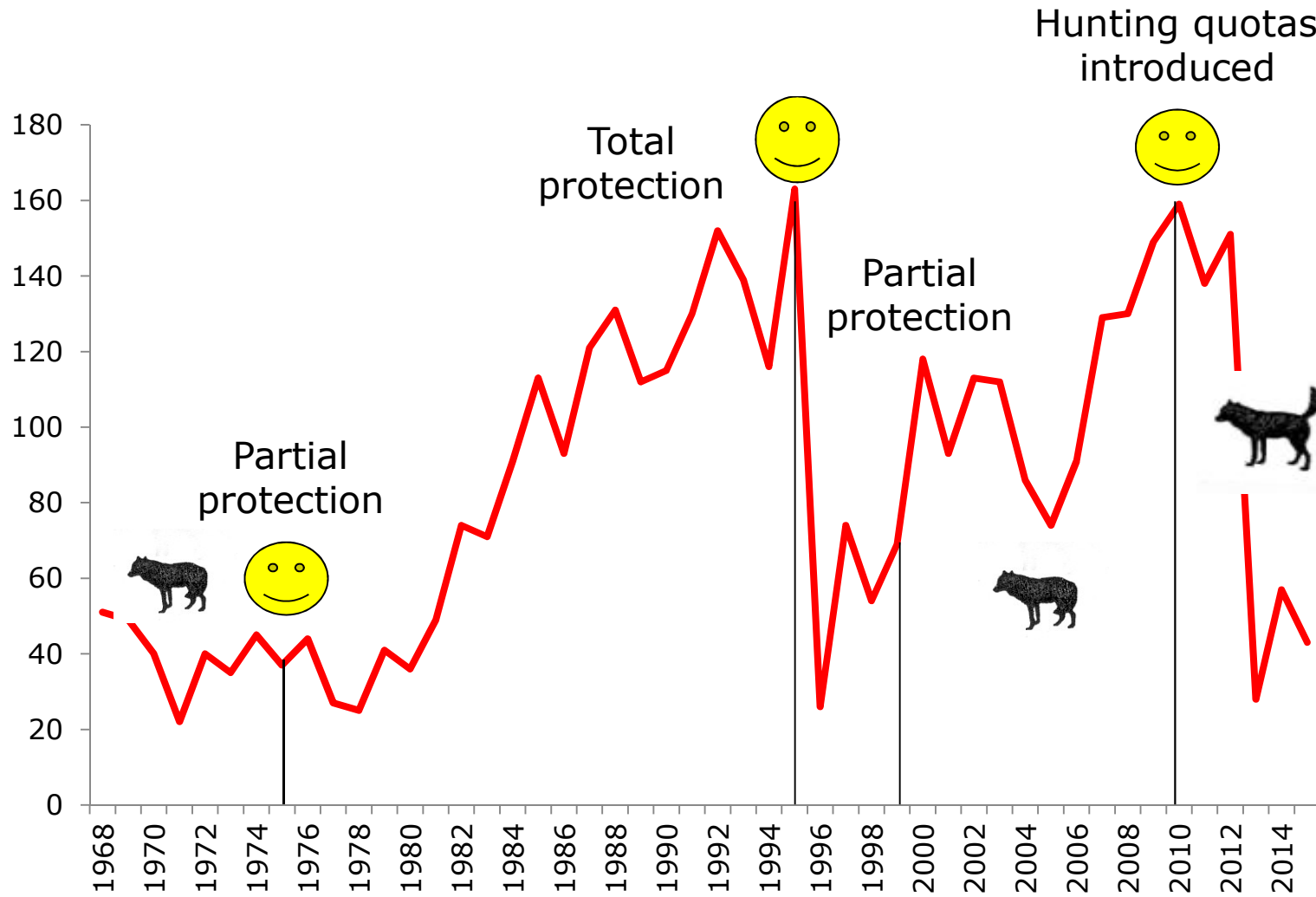


The wolf and hunting management

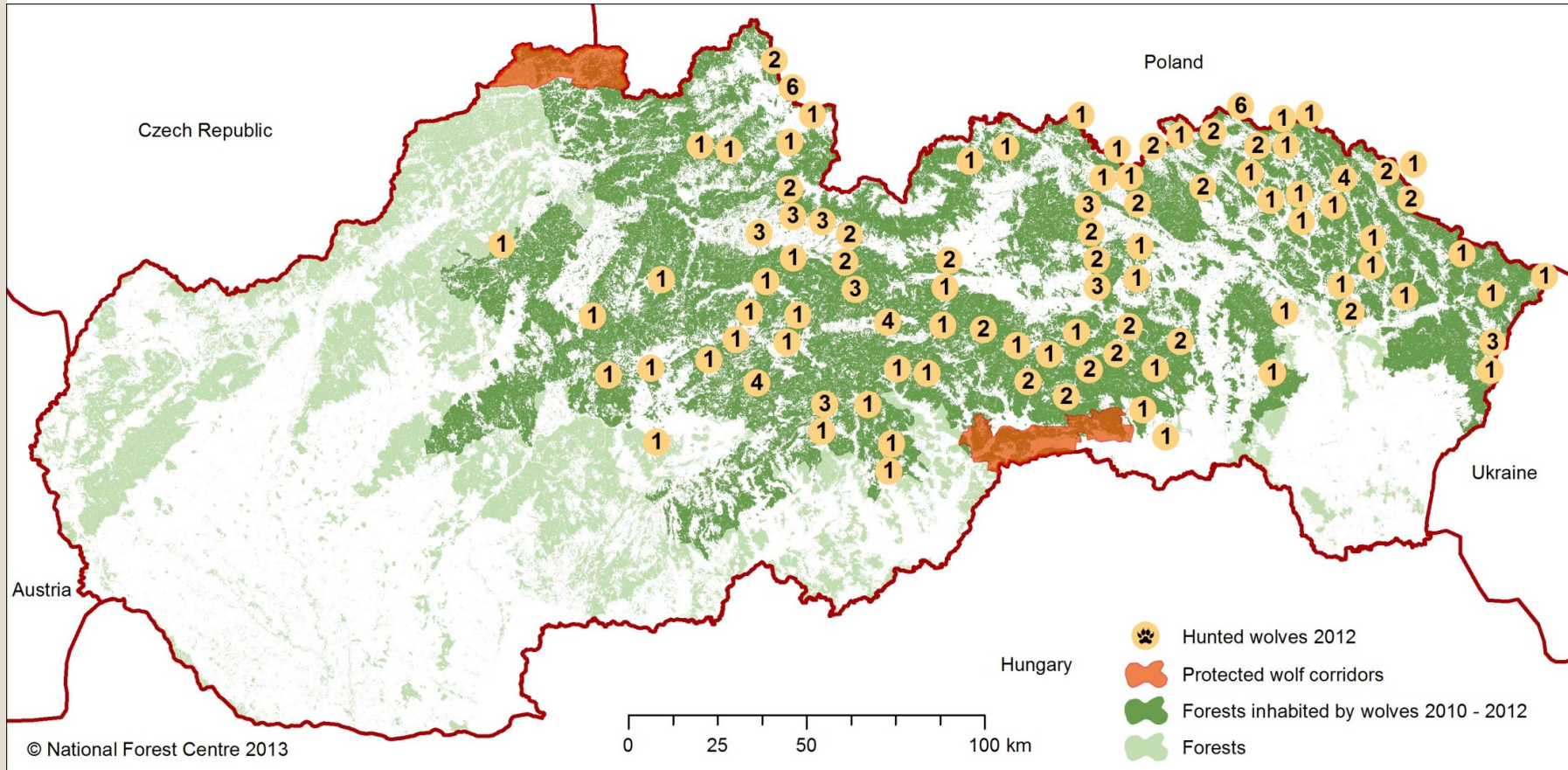
Wolf hunting by the public is not about solving problems, for the most part. It's about people's desire to kill wolves from whatever reason that might be"

Rolf Peterson

Hunted wolves 1968 – 2015: 4056 wolves/48 years



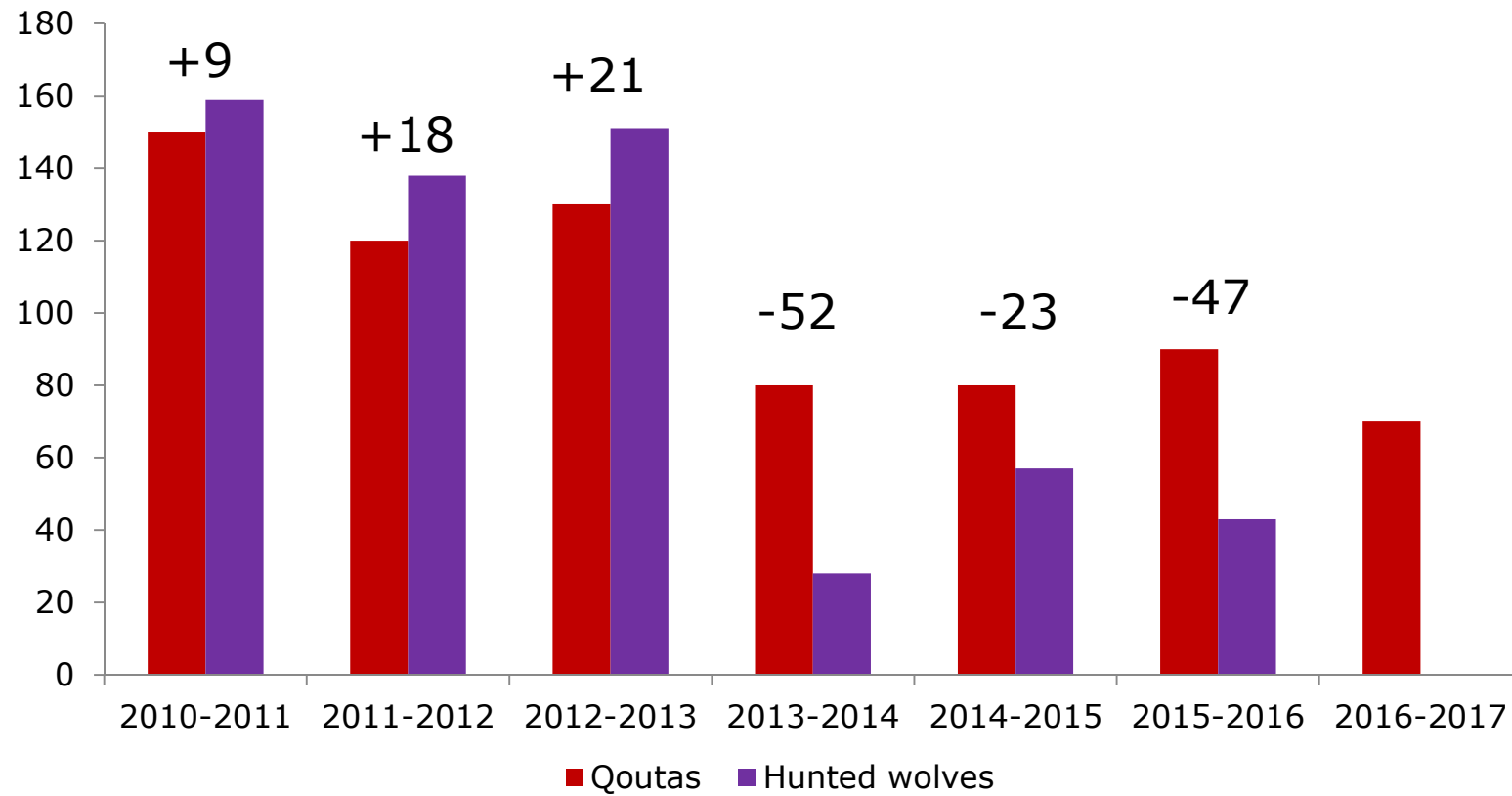
Hunted wolves in 2012: N = 151



Introduction of hunting quotas

- Before 2010, wolves were hunted in unlimited numbers.
- Hunting Law N 274/2009 introduced duty to set annual quotas for wolf hunting.
- Following the introduction of quotas for wolf hunting in 2010, essentially nothing has changed because annual quotas in 2010, 2011 and 2012 were set too high without any relevant data about population size in Slovakia. Moreover, in all these three hunting seasons quotas were considerably exceeded.
- In 2013, Slovakia acceded to strong action to prevent further culling. This included a ban of hunting in many Sites of Community Importance, the prohibition of drive hunts, and a check of each carcass by Government inspectors. Killed wolves have to be left on the shooting spot without disturbance until the arrival of the inspector.

Hunting qoutas 2010-2016





**Predation on
wild ungulates**

Depredation of wolf on livestock

- Nationwide records kept from 1997
- Less bear than wolf damage
- Occasional kills by the lynx
- Compensation scheme introduced in 2003

Foto Ivan Godál

Damage to sheep



Conditions for compensation

- Night penning
- Human guard(s) (shepherds)
- Electrical fence or other carnivore-proof fence
- Guard dog(s)

Successful human-wolf coexistence

- Carnivores never exterminated in the Carpathians
- The rural population never forgot the carnivores
- This is different to other places in Europe where carnivores now occupy habitats where they were not before, or had been forgotten over the decades or centuries of absence

Concluding remarks

- Slovakia harbours well established and healthy wolf population, which is partially shared with neighbouring countries including the Czech Republic, Poland, the Ukraine and Hungary.
- The current system of conservation and management of the wolf is appropriate for maintaining viable population in accordance with human needs.

Thank you



Foto Patrik Michál'