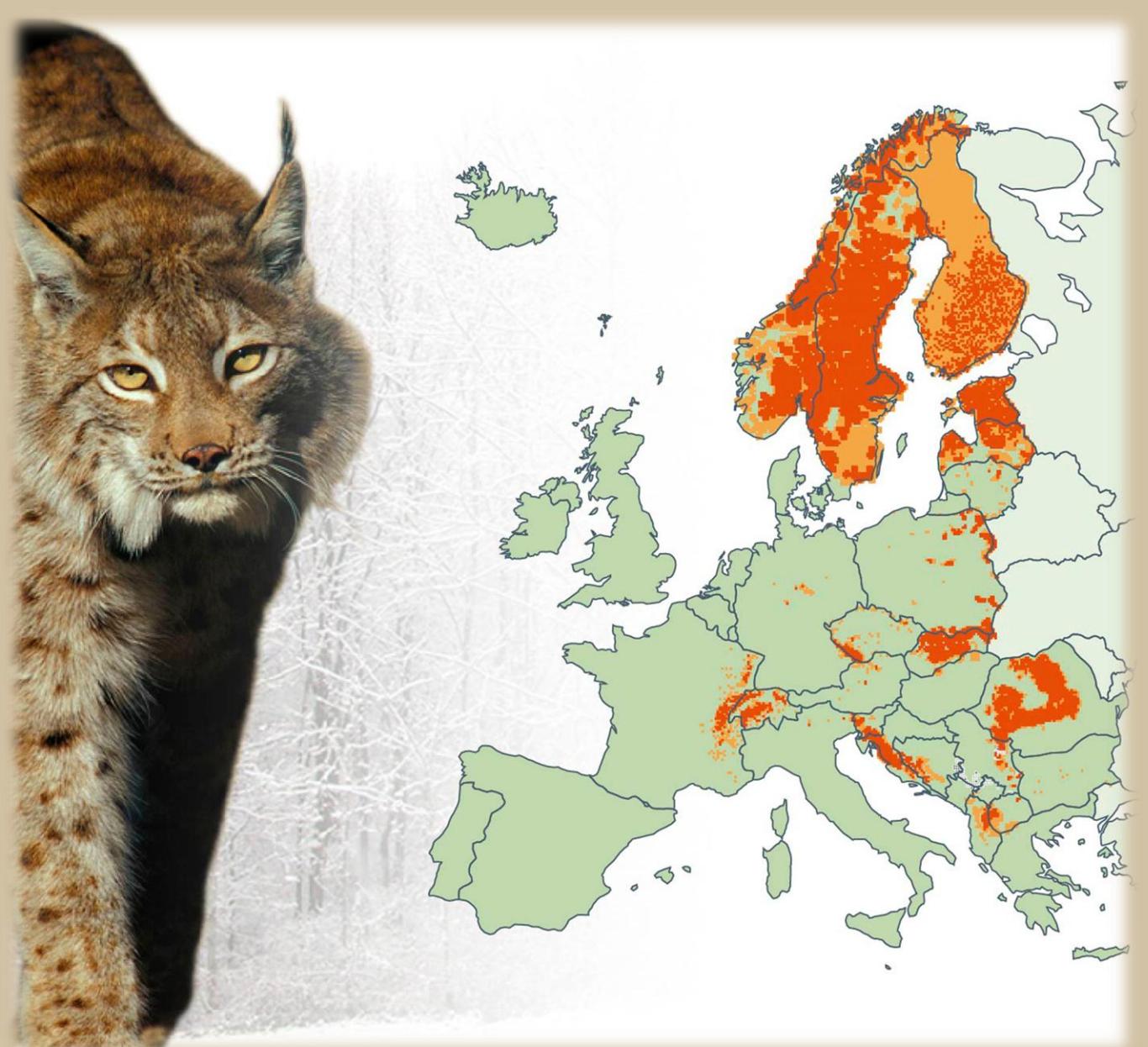


Situation of large carnivores in European forests



Large carnivores (bears, wolves, lynx and wolverines) are among the most challenging group of species to maintain as large and continuous populations or to reintegrate back into the European landscape.

Distribution

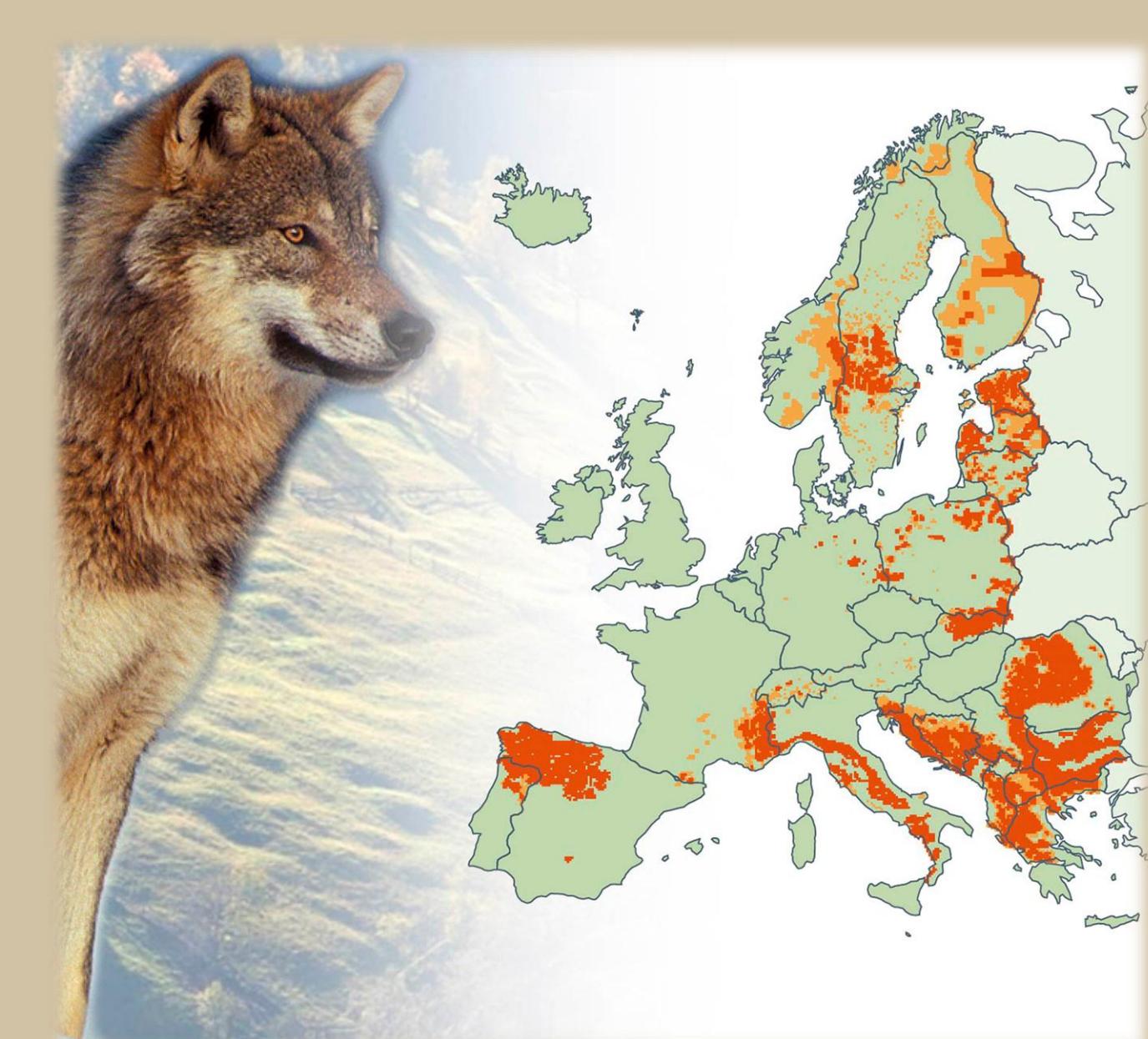


Lynx



Wolverine

Lynx are specialized hunters that target snowshoe hare, which make up the bulk of their diet. In fact, lynx can only sustain populations where there are adequate snowshoe hare populations. These stealthy cats avoid humans and hunt at night, so they are rarely seen.



Bear

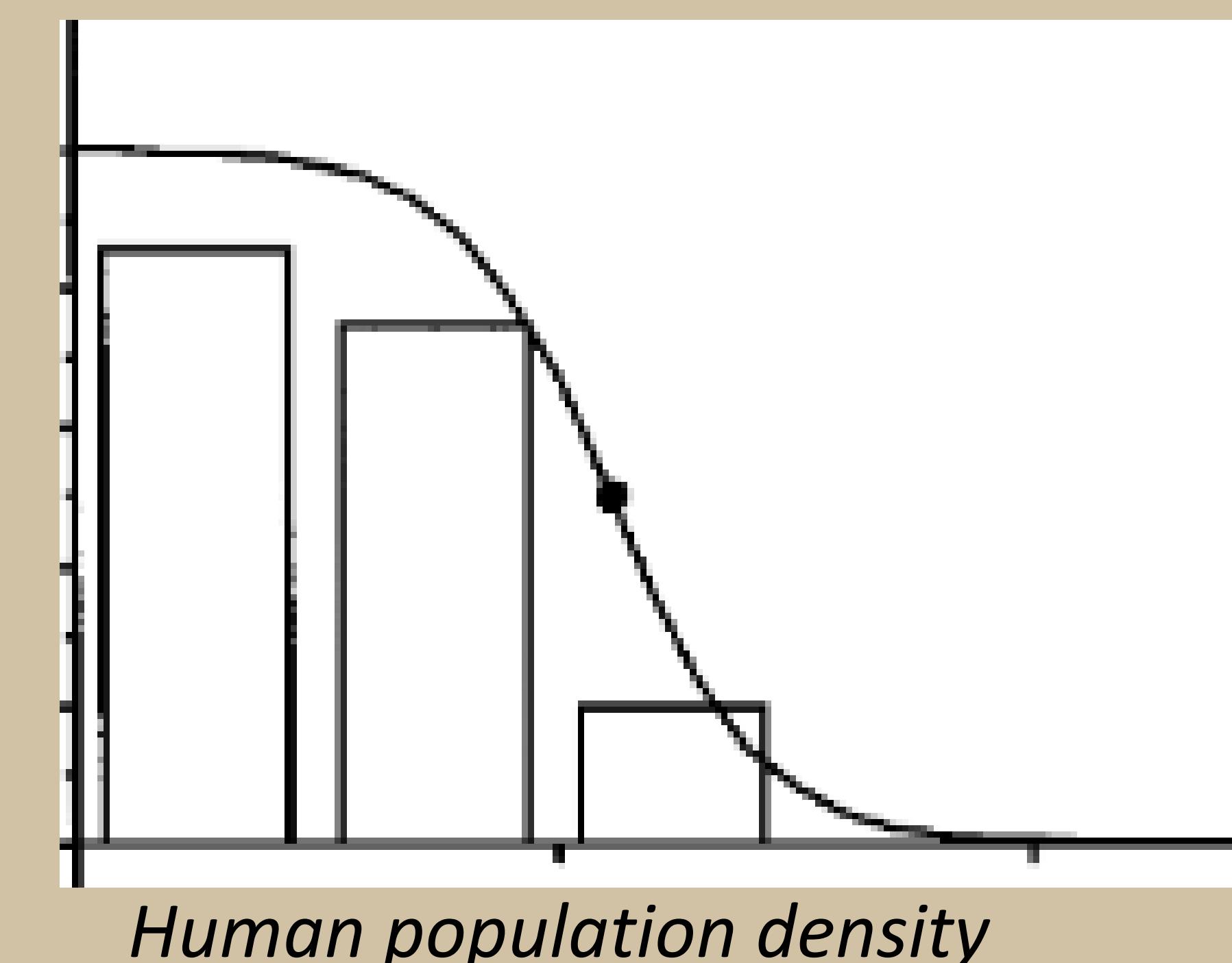
Brown bears are apex predators, meaning they are at the top of the food chain. Though brown bears are often perceived as carnivores, they are actually omnivorous. Brown bears live in a variety of habitats, including forests, woodlands, alpine and subalpine meadows, and even the Arctic tundra. Brown bears typically live 20 to 25 years in the wild.

Wolf



Wolves typically live 6 to 8 years in the wild. Wolves live and hunt in packs of around six to ten animals. They are known to roam large distances, perhaps 20 kilometers in a single day. These social animals cooperate on their preferred prey—large animals such as deer, elk, and moose.

Humans and carnivores



Carnivore management strategies in Europe

In the last few decades, these animals have made a dramatic recovery across Europe and numbers have now reached around 40,000, with most of the populations stable or increasing. This is mainly due to favourable national and international legislation such as the EU Habitats Directive, adopted some 20 years ago, which protects the European large carnivore species.



Is a coexistence of men and large carnivores possible in Europe?



Sport hunting has provided important economic incentives for conserving large predators since the early 1970's, but wildlife managers also face substantial pressure to reduce depredation. Sport hunting is an inherently risky strategy for controlling predators as carnivore populations are difficult to monitor and some species show a propensity for infanticide that is exacerbated by removing adult males.



In our opinion a coexistence between men and large carnivores is possible, in Europe. Losing them may be as big threat as the climate change so we must protect them.

They are an important part of environment and regulate a population of herbivores. We have to find a compromise and give to large carnivores a chance to live in their natural environment. We can live "in peace" with residents of the forests..



Human perception of big predators

Thousands years ago, large predators were perceived as competition, but not as a threat. Hunters had respect for and kinship with predators. This was reflected in attitudes of aboriginal peoples. Bears and wolves played important roles in the legends, beliefs, and lives of prehistoric peoples. Bears were potentially dangerous and fearsome creatures to hunt and kill and had physical similarities to man. Now, they are considered as a danger. Large carnivores are part of European culture and appear regularly in myth and literature, just as tigers play an important part in Asian cultures!

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