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Abstract: To evaluate the population and the distribution of lynx in the Swiss Alps, the spatial and numerical development of signs of presence found from 2000 to 2002 were analysed and compared to the previous investigation period (1995 to 1999). The observations were classified in accordance with the three levels of reliability as proposed by SCALP. From 2000 to 2002, 1039 signs of presence were recorded in the Swiss Alps.

Present status and distribution of the lynx in the Swiss Alps

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To evaluate the population and the distribution of lynx in the Swiss Alps, the spatial and numerical development of signs of presence found from 2000 to 2002 were analysed and compared to the previous investigation period (1995 to 1999). As in the former periods, three sources of information on presence of lynx were considered: (1) reports of lynx killed, captured or found dead; (2) records of livestock killed by lynx; (3) records of wild prey remains, tracks, scats, sightings and vocalisations. The observations were classified in accordance with the three levels of reliability as proposed by SCALP. From 2000 to 2002, 1039 signs of presence were recorded in the Swiss Alps (Table 1). 87 out of them could be classified as Q1 data (8.4%), compared to 49 (3.0%) out of 1633 for the former period. The increase of Q1 data is mainly due to the use of camera-traps for the extensive monitoring. The frequency of quality 3 data is relatively stable. Figure 1 shows the distribution of lynx for the three-year period 2000-2002 for the different data quality.

Table 1. Number of records collected in the two periods.

	Total 1995-1999	Total 2000-2002
Quality 1		
captures	6	4
dead lynx	41	17
photos	2	66
Total Q1	49 (3.0%)	87 (8.4%)
Quality 2		
killed livestock	519	270
wild prey remains	429	233
tracks	167	127
Total Q2	1115 (68.3%)	630 (60.6%)
Quality 3		
sightings	417	270
wild prey remains	18	15
tracks	22	35
vocalisations	12	2
Total Q3	469 (28.7%)	322 (31.0%)
Total	1633	1039

Regarding the distribution, lynx recently established in two new compartments, Graubünden (V) and Nordostschweiz (II), as revealed by the number of 5 per 5 km grid cells newly occupied by lynx in the different compartments of the Alps (Table 2). The presence in the compartment II is the consequence of the re-introduction project realised from 2001 to 2003. Lynx naturally arrived into the compartment V, probably originating from compartment III. Occupation range appears stable in the compartments VI and VII, but shows stagnation or even decrease or absence in number III, IV and VIII.

Table 2. Number of 5 per 5 km grid cells with lynx observations in the Alps. Only quality 1 and 2 data considered. Numbers: unique for period, total for period (parenthesis). 1995-2002: shared by both periods and total number (parenthesis).

Compartment	1995-1999	2000-2002	1995-2002
Graubünden V	1 (2)	8 (9)	1 (10)
Nordostschweiz II	1 (1)	14 (14)	0 (15)
Nordwestalpen VI	31 (121)	19 (109)	91 (141)
Ticino VIII	3 (3)	2 (2)	0 (5)
Valais VII	24 (47)	28 (51)	24 (76)
Zentralschweiz Ost IV	5 (8)	1 (4)	4 (10)
Zentralschweiz West III	22 (39)	8 (23)	18 (48)
Total	87 (221)	80 (212)	138 (305)

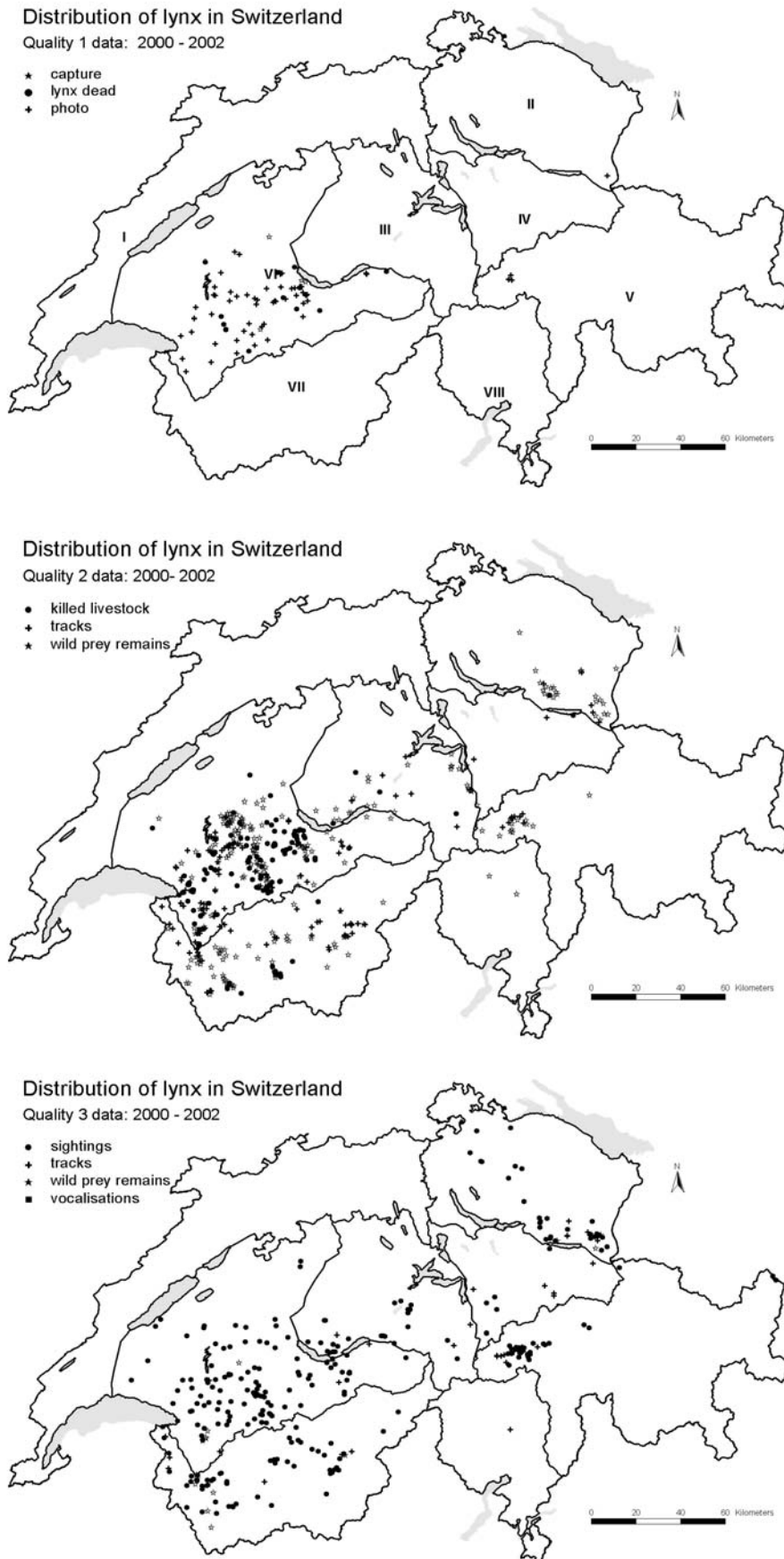


Figure 1. Distribution of the lynx in Switzerland and in the 8 management compartments for the three-year period 2000-2002.