Wolverine monotoring in Västerbotten county

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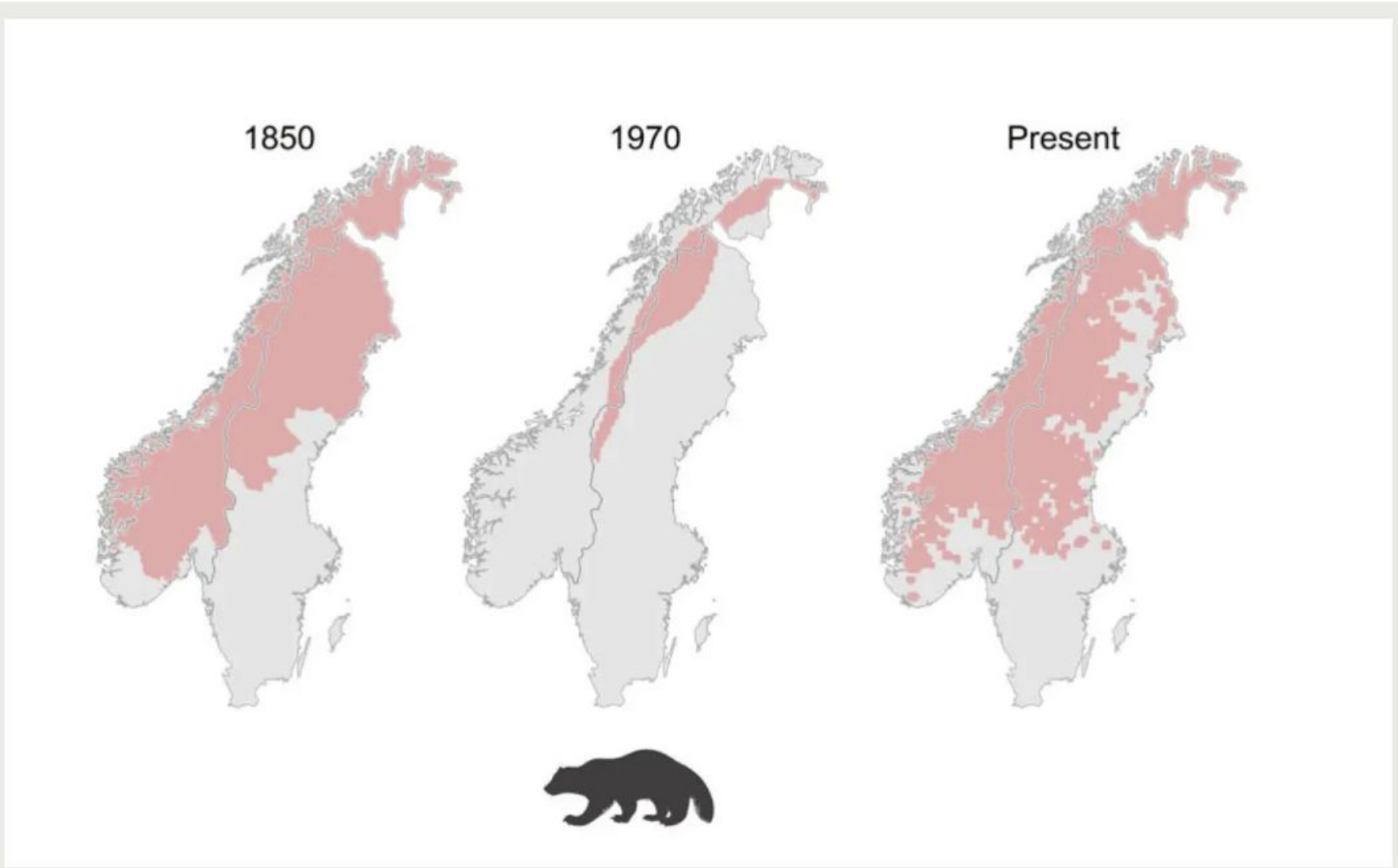
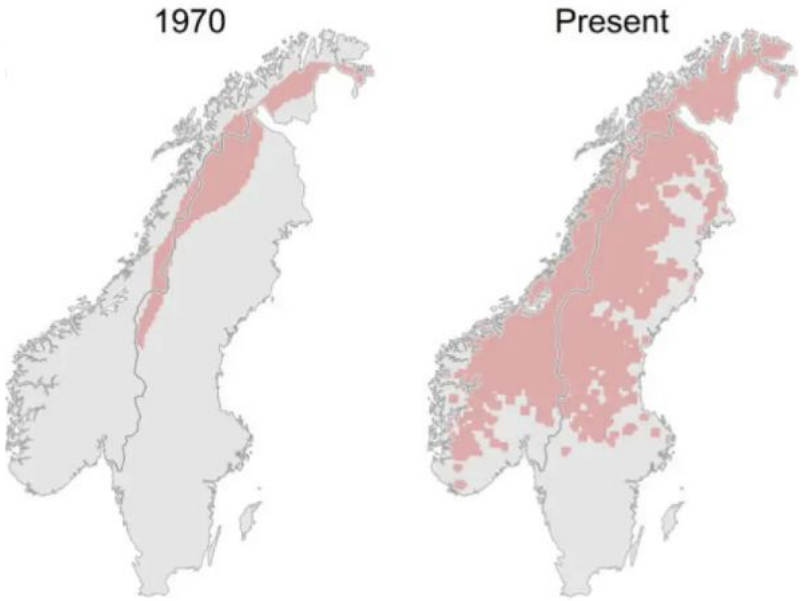
Länsstyrelsen
Västerbotten



Past and present wolverine distribution in Scandinavia. (Image: NMBU)

- Scandinavian wolverines have recovered from the brink of extinction and are now occupying a considerable portion of their historical range.

- There is now a shift in wolverine numbers from alpine areas into the forest.



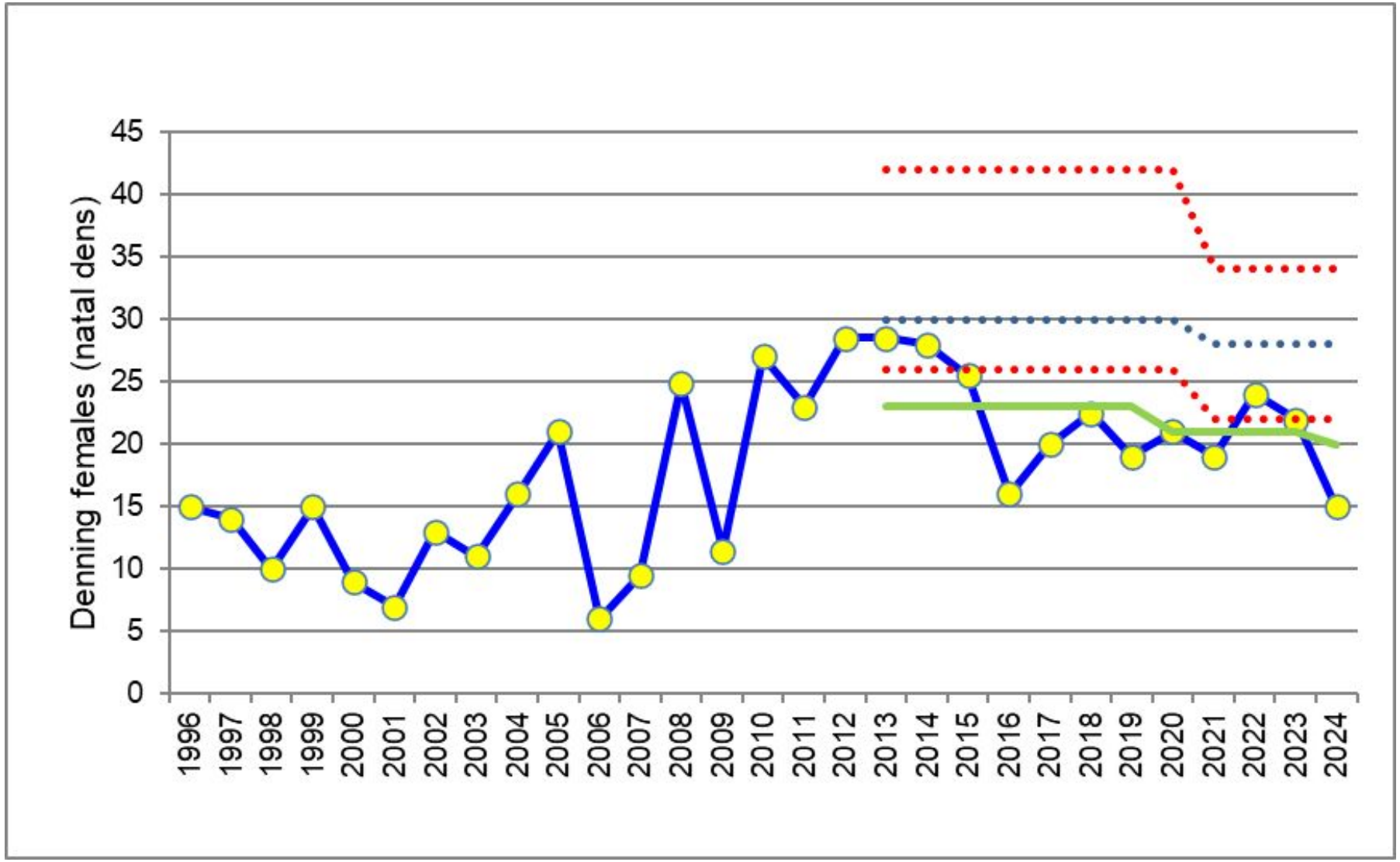
Zooming in on Västerbotten

- Wolverine ability to maintain or expand their range depends on e.g.
  - habitat
  - snow cover (for denning etc.),
  - prey availability (e.g., semi-domesticated reindeer),
  - and how conflicts are managed

- Conflicts with reindeer husbandry are central in the county's history of managing the wolverine population.

- A study showed that most people in Västerbotten hold positive views toward wolverines (but there is a notable minority with more negative attitudes).

- Monitoring shows that wolverines are largely confined to more remote, mountainous, or forested areas where human disturbance is lower.


Denning females (natal dens)
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
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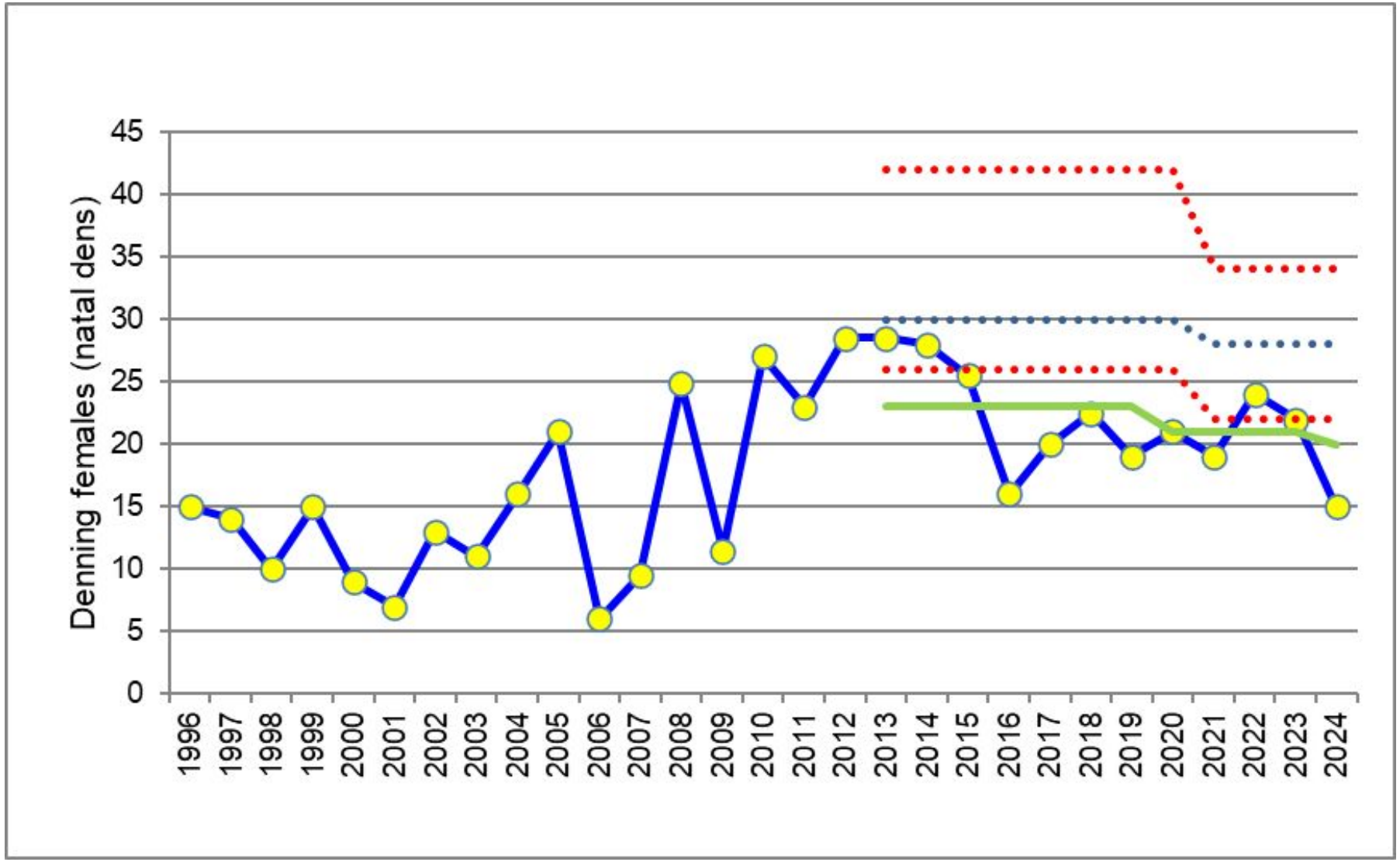
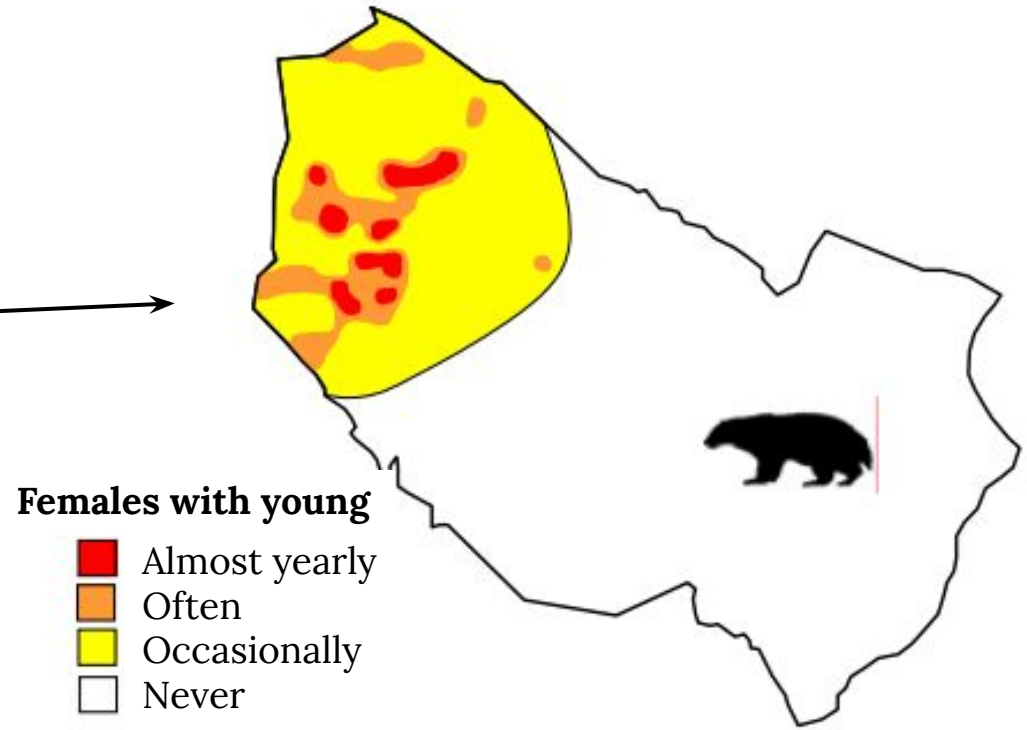
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024



What causes this pattern?

- 20 years ago
  - Den monotoring
  - As wolverines started to recolonize forested areas, new challenges arose



- Today
  - Extensive individual-based DNA monotoring

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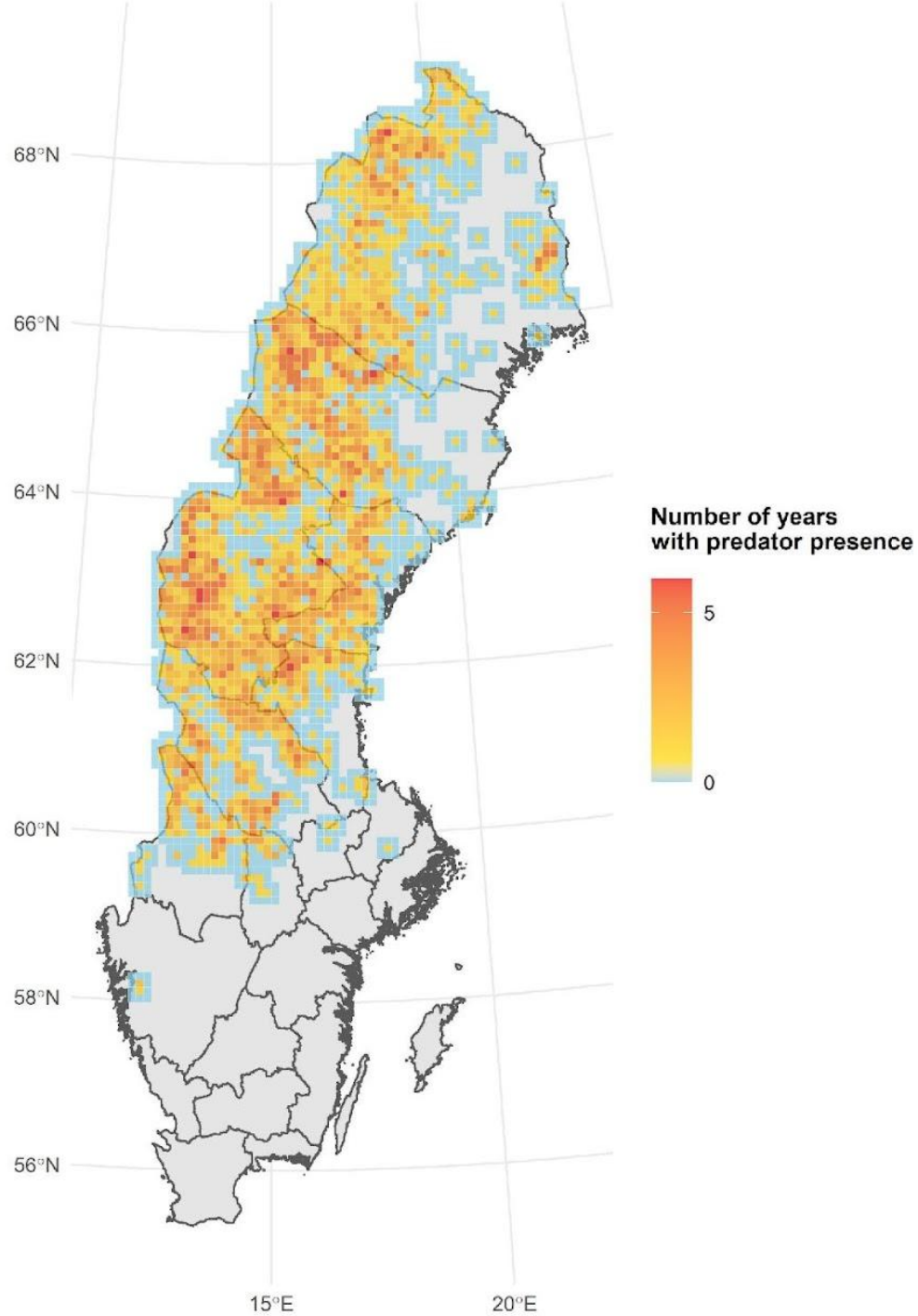
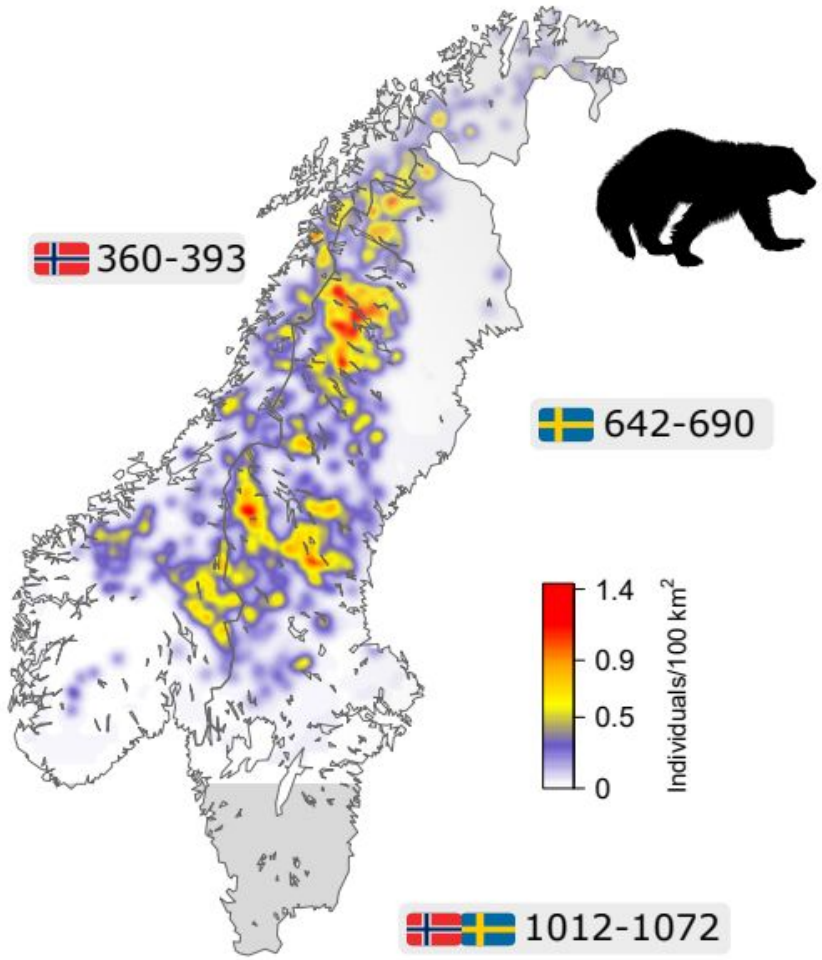

68°N
66°N
64°N
62°N
60°N
58°N
56°N
15°E
20°E
Number of years
with predator presence
5
0

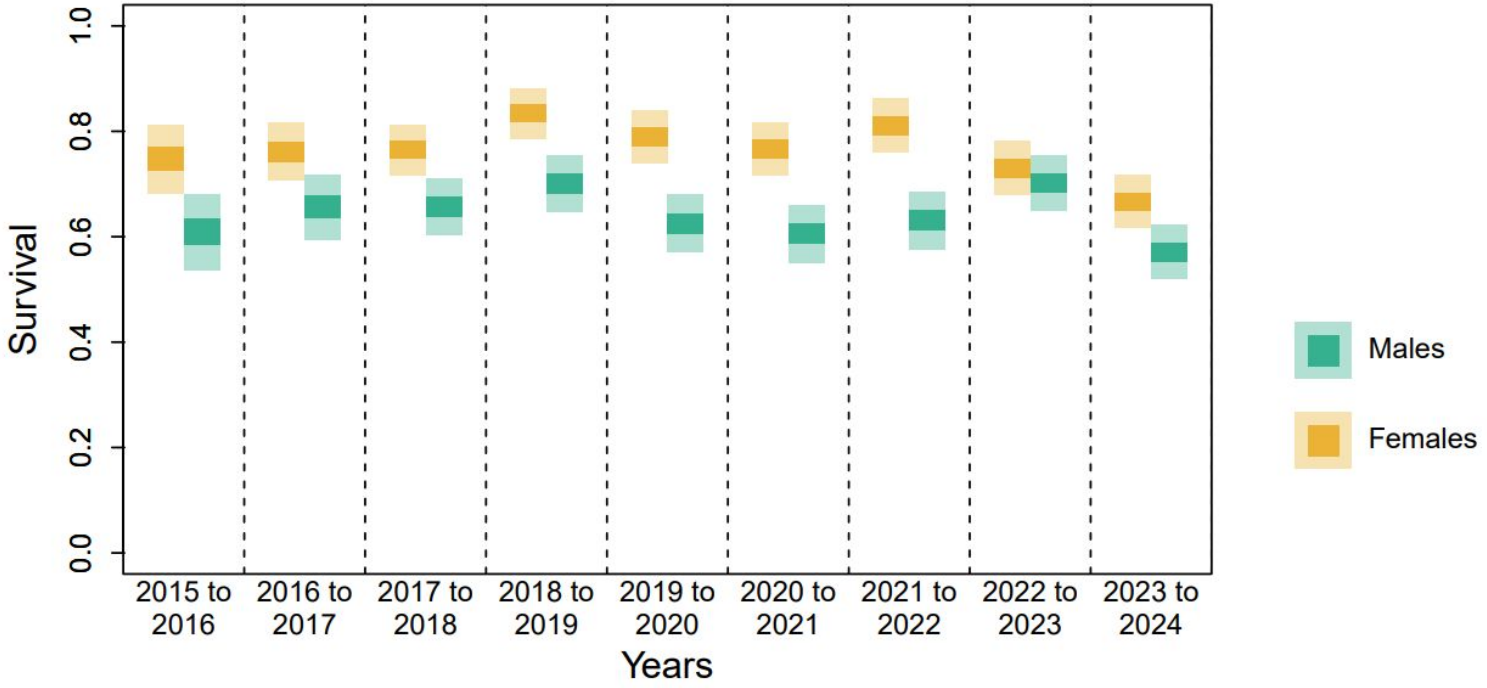
- Management authorities and volunteers contribute to the monitoring of wolverines – primarily through the collection of sources of DNA.

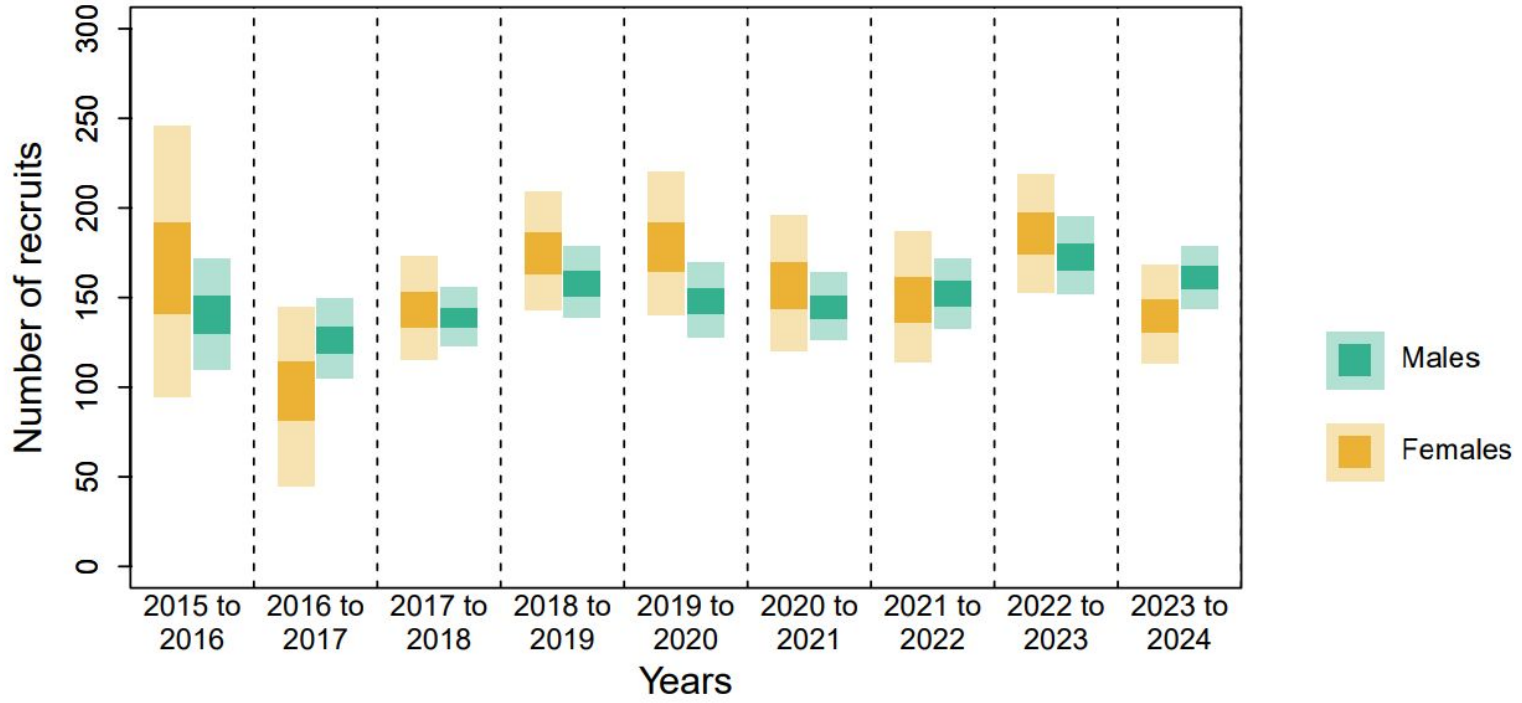
- The resulting information is stored in a multinational database (Rovbase), which is globally unique in terms of the size of the area it covers, and the number of samples collected and genetically analysed.

RovQuant



Density map and ranges of abundance estimated for wolverines in 2024





Source: RovQuant

Thank you!