



Status and Conservation of the Saker Falcon in Austria

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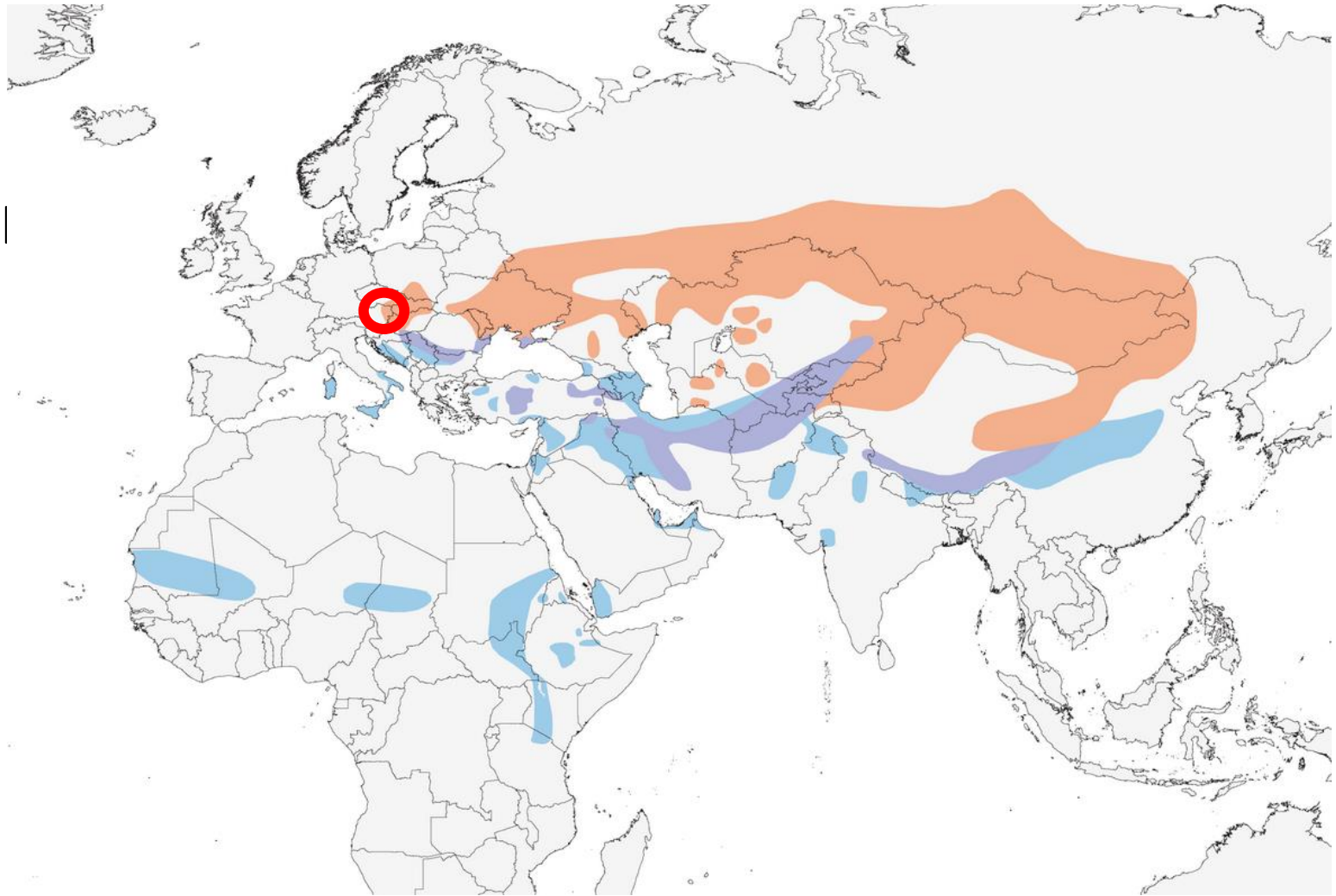
Hans-Martin Berg, Natural History Museum Vienna

Almaty, KZ – 24.09.2023



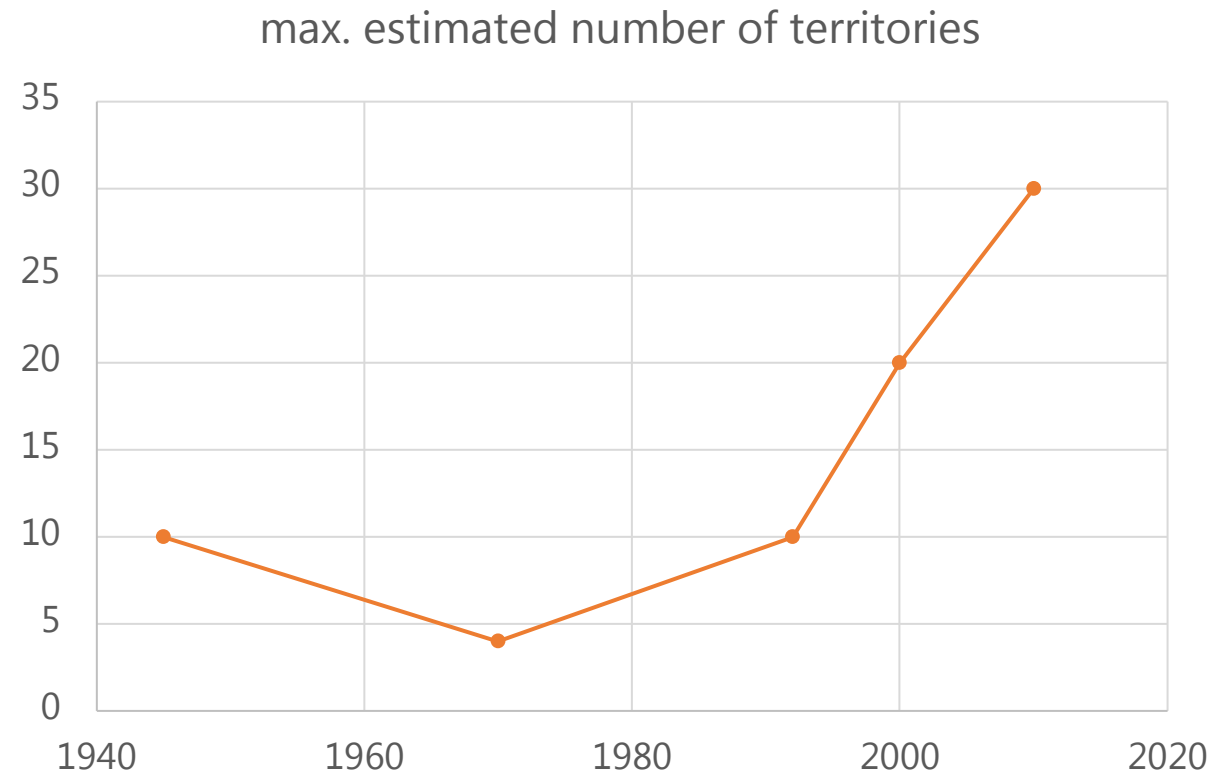
Introduction

- Westernmost edge of global range
- Part (c. 15 %) of central european population
- Rare species of high conservation concern
- Strictly protected by provincial (and EU) law
- Downlisted to EN in 2017



Historical distribution

- Considered „widespread“ until end of 19th century in eastern lowlands
- but few historical references or records
- Several breeding sites in alpine foothills (until 1970s)
- Near-extinction in mid-1970s
- Recovering since 1980s
- First breeding on electricity pylon in 1999





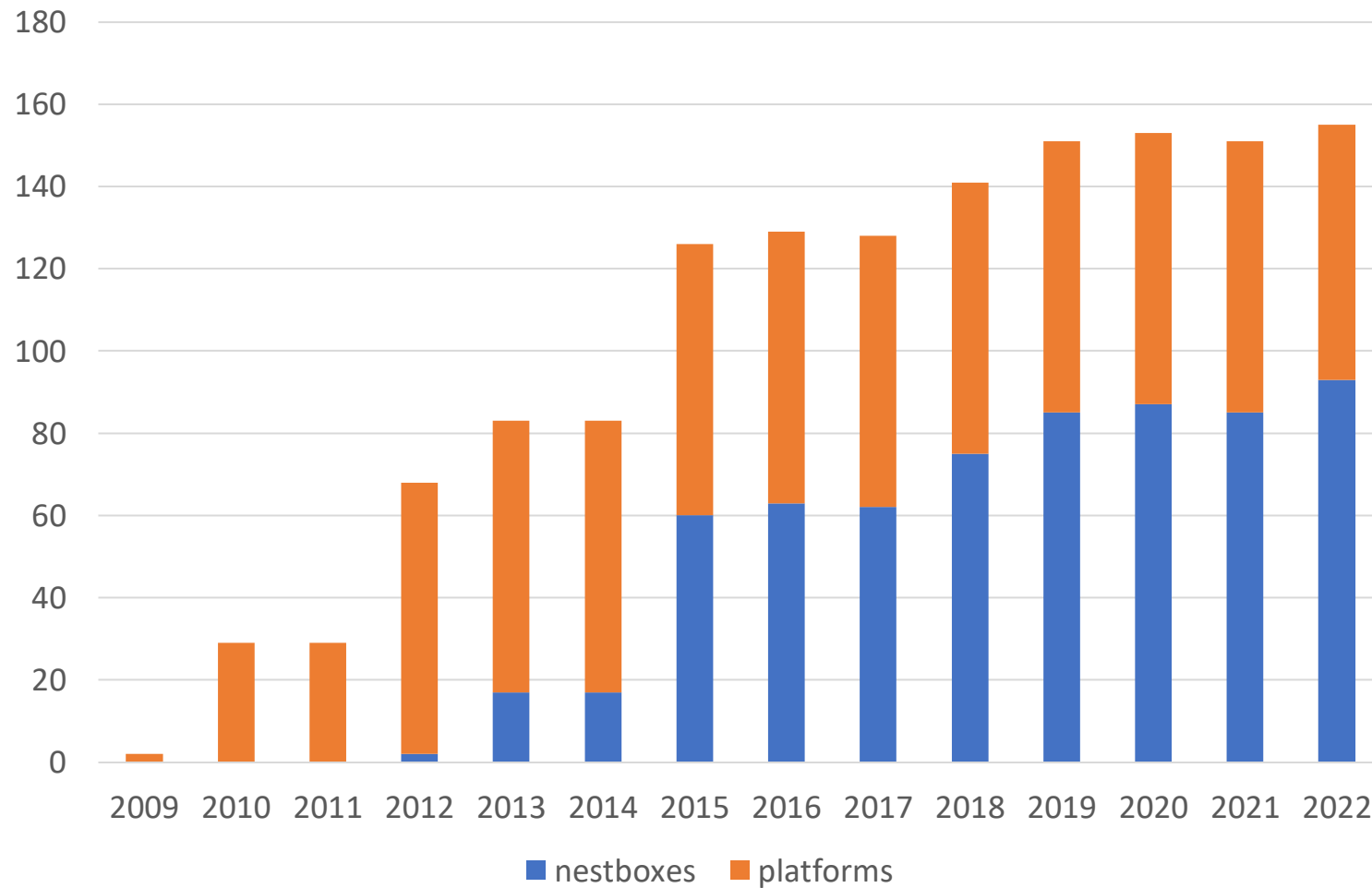
Conservation programme

- 1999: first systematic survey (BirdLife)
- 2004: cooperation between APG and FIWI (now AOC)
- 2007: installation of first breeding platform prototypes
- 2008-2011: setup of 66 breeding platforms (aluminium 100 x 100 x 140 cm, 15 cm high)
- 2012-2018: setup of 85+ nestboxes (aluminium 60 x 60 x 60 cm)
- 2011-now: systematic monitoring (FIWI/AOC & BirdLife), including areas without artificial nests
- 2015-now: ringing of young Sakers (273 ind. until 2022)



Provision of artificial nests

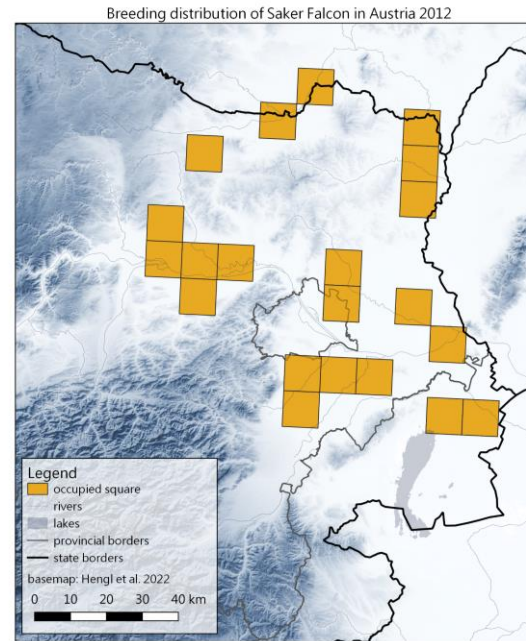
available artificial nest sites



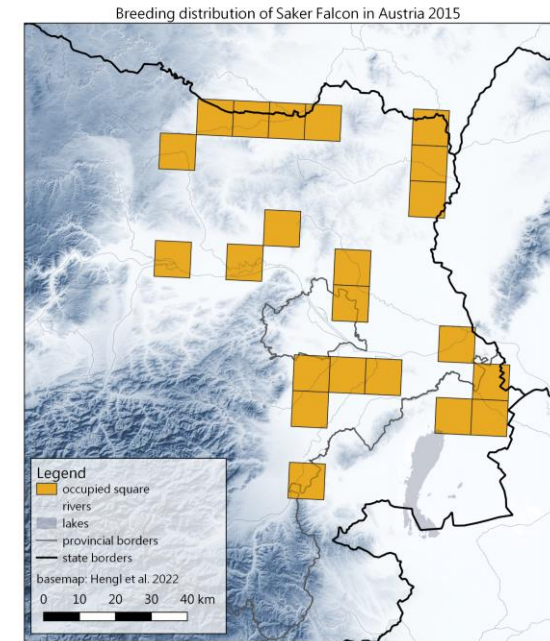
Range

- Restricted to lowlands and hilly areas of northeastern Austria
- Range rather stable in the long term
- Increasing consolidation of range
- Today mostly concentrated along large powerlines

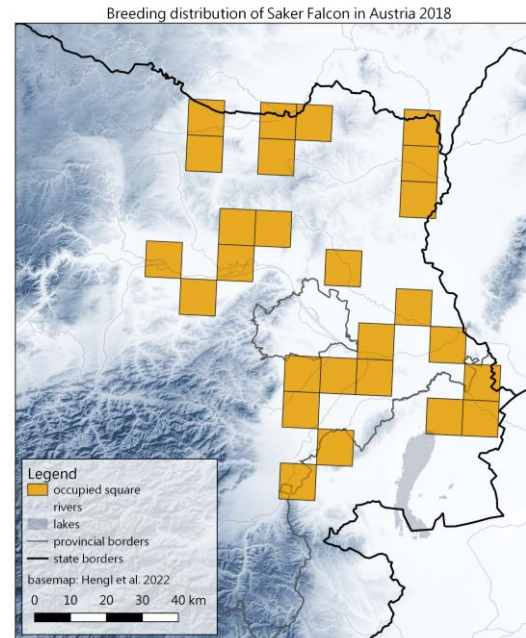
2012



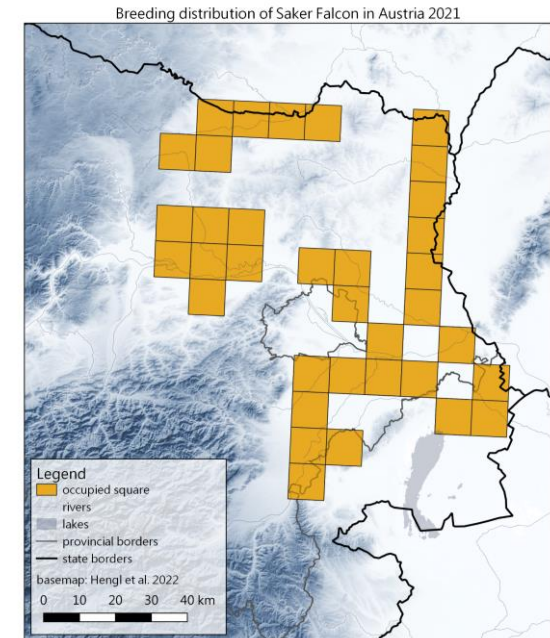
2015



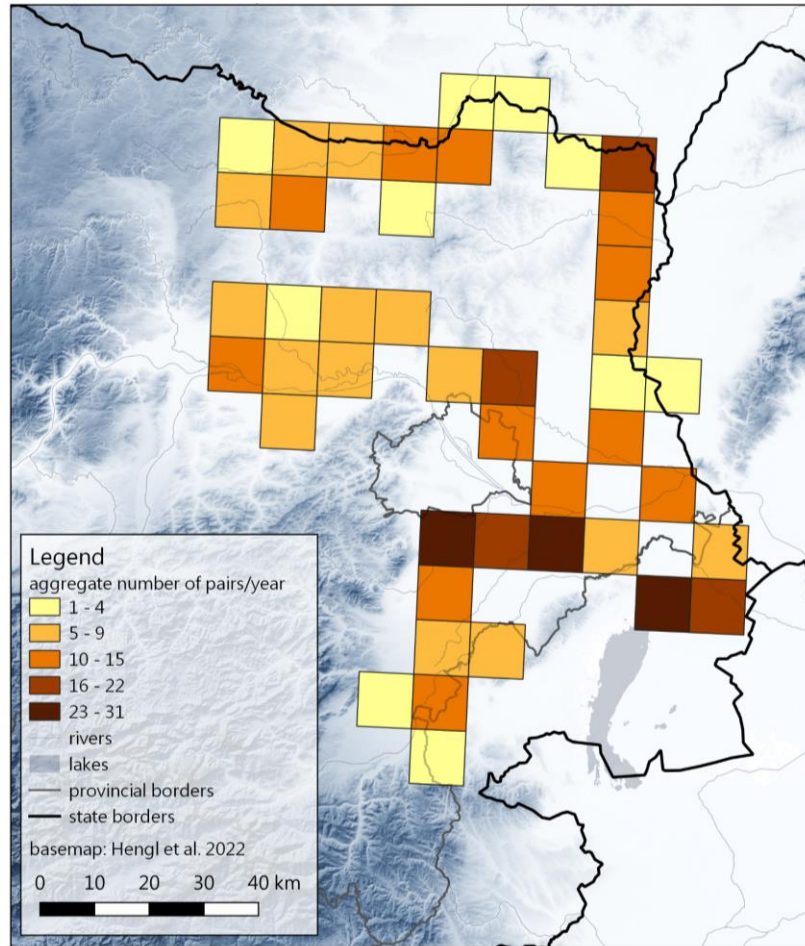
2018



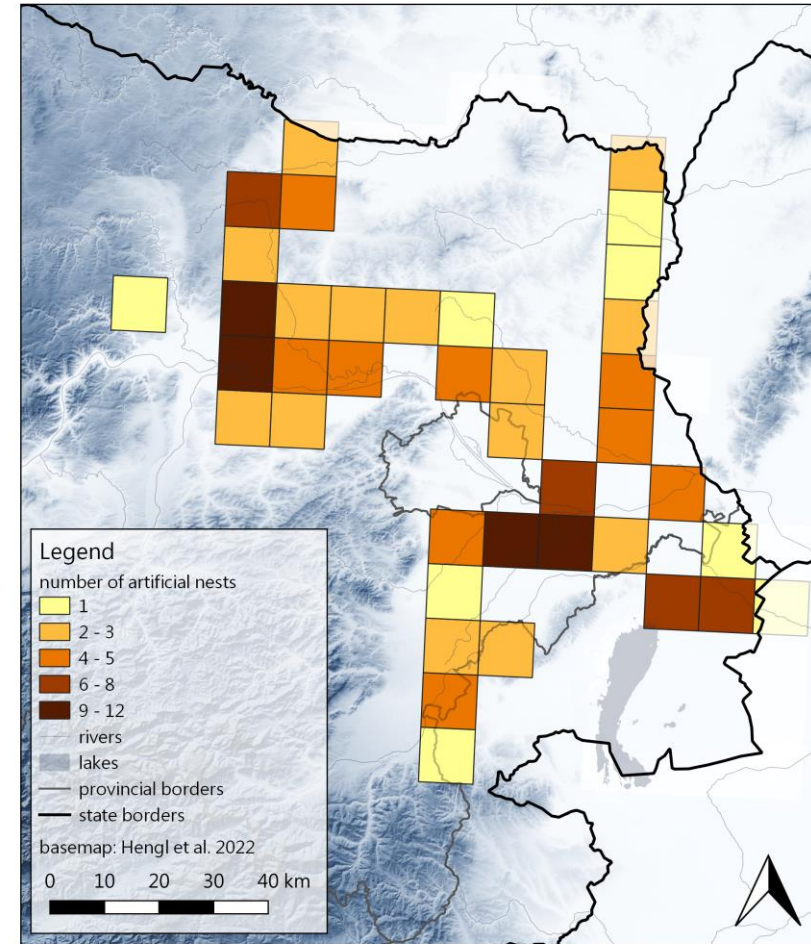
2021



Present distribution

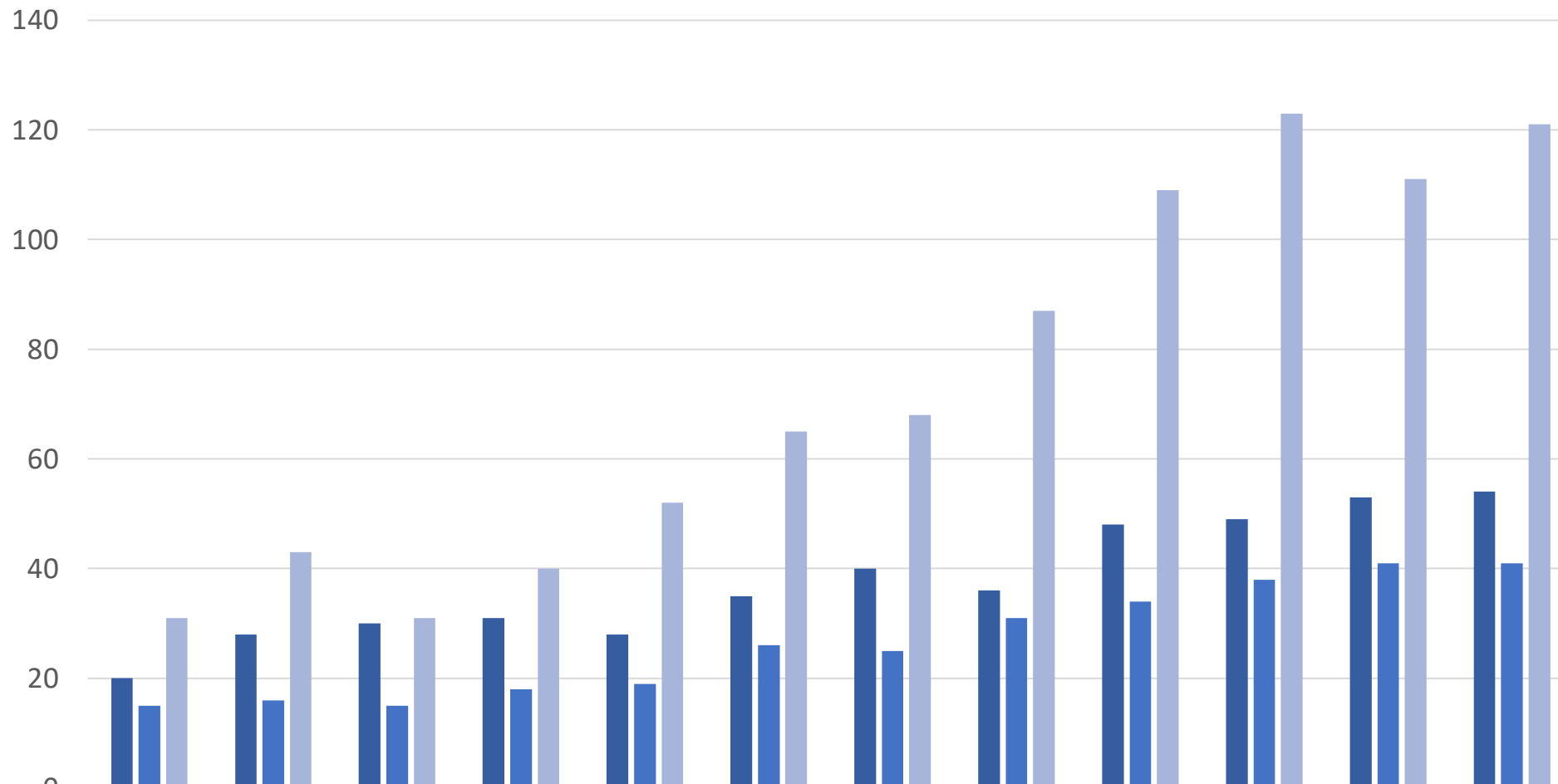


Distribution and aggregate number of pairs of Saker falcon (2012-2022)



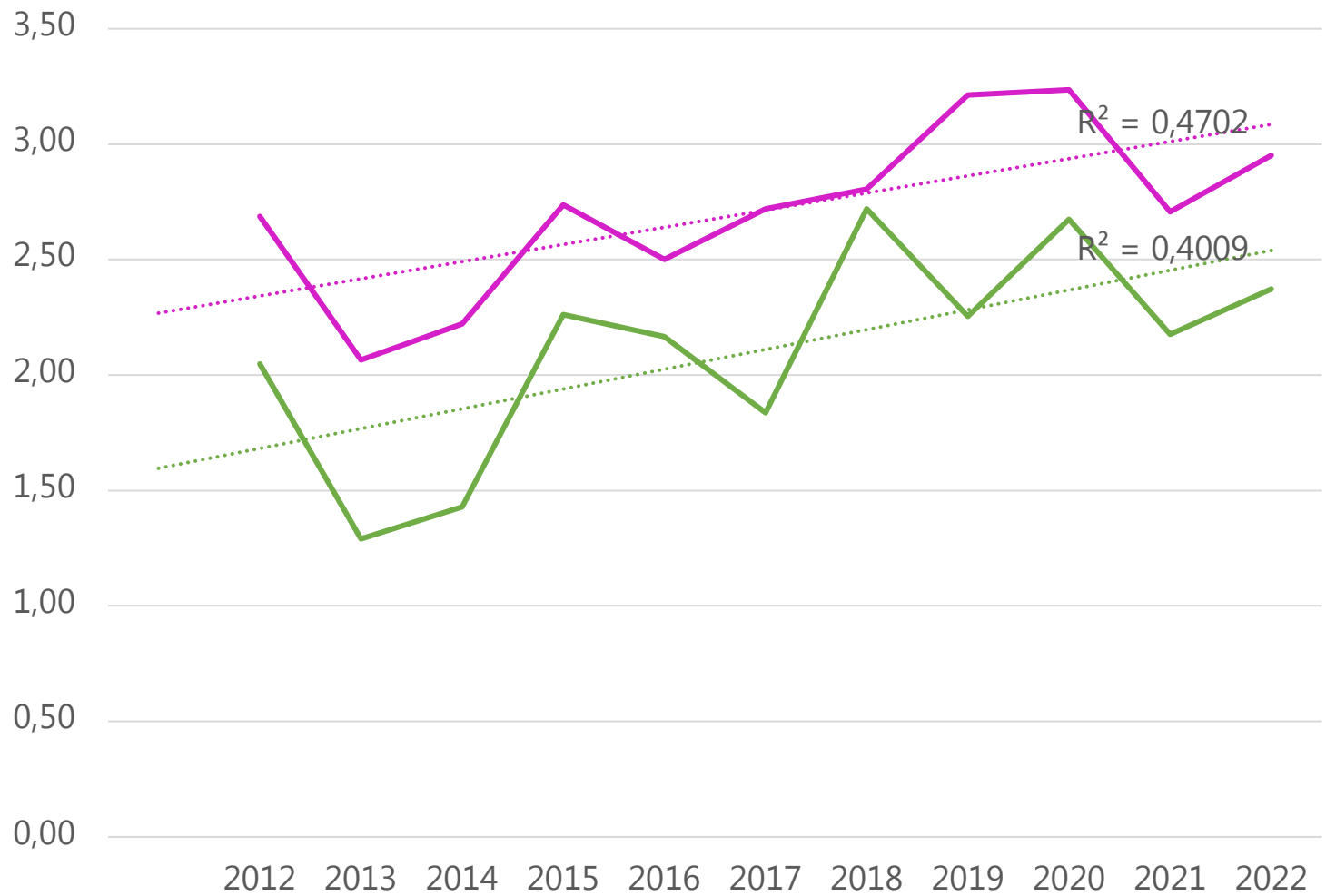
Distribution of artificial nests (2012-2021)

Development of Saker Falcon Breeding Population in Austria 2011-2022



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
■ monitored nests	20	28	30	31	28	35	40	36	48	49	53	54
■ successful nests	15	16	15	18	19	26	25	31	34	38	41	41
■ fledged young	31	43	31	40	52	65	68	87	109	123	111	121

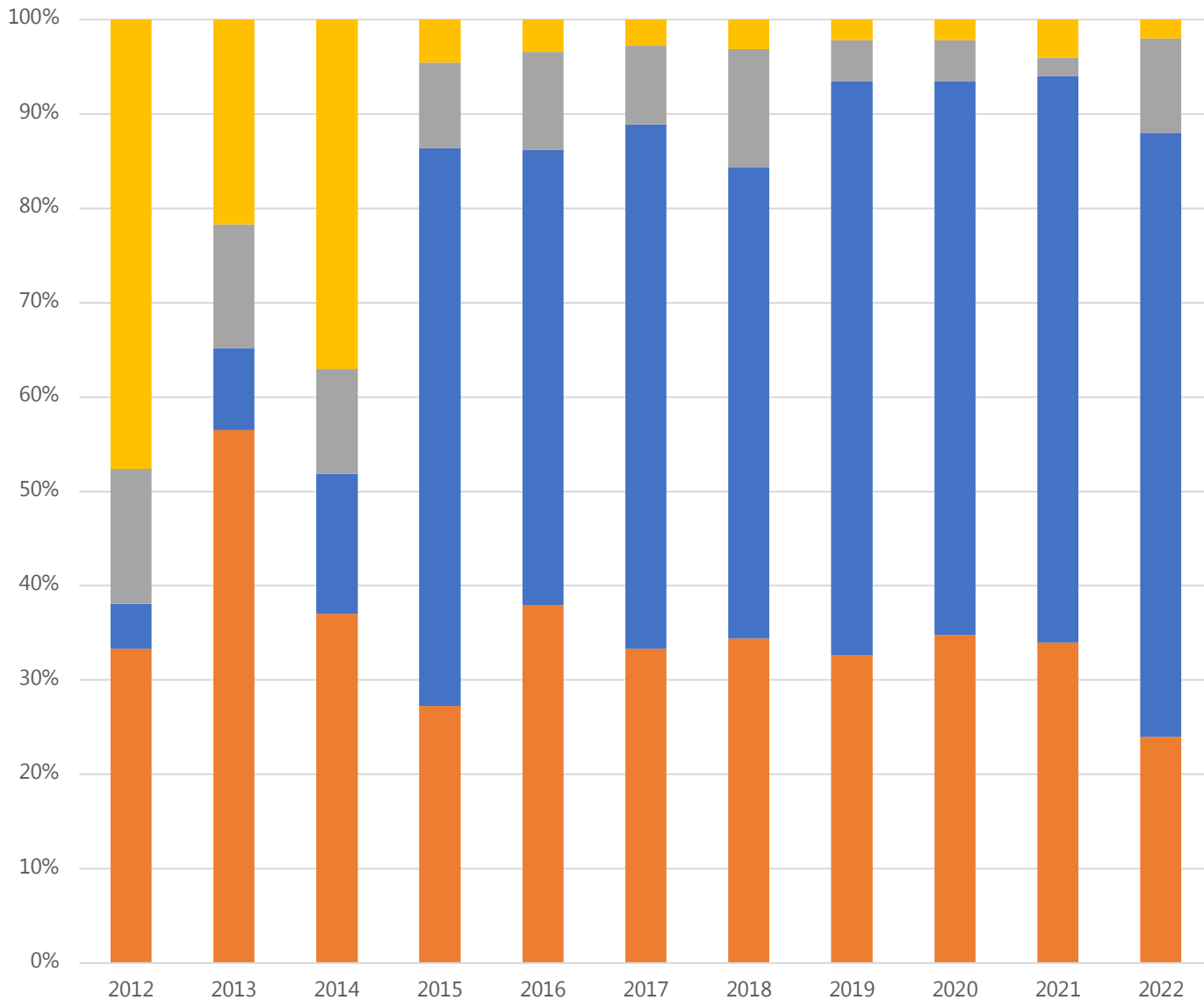
Development of breeding success



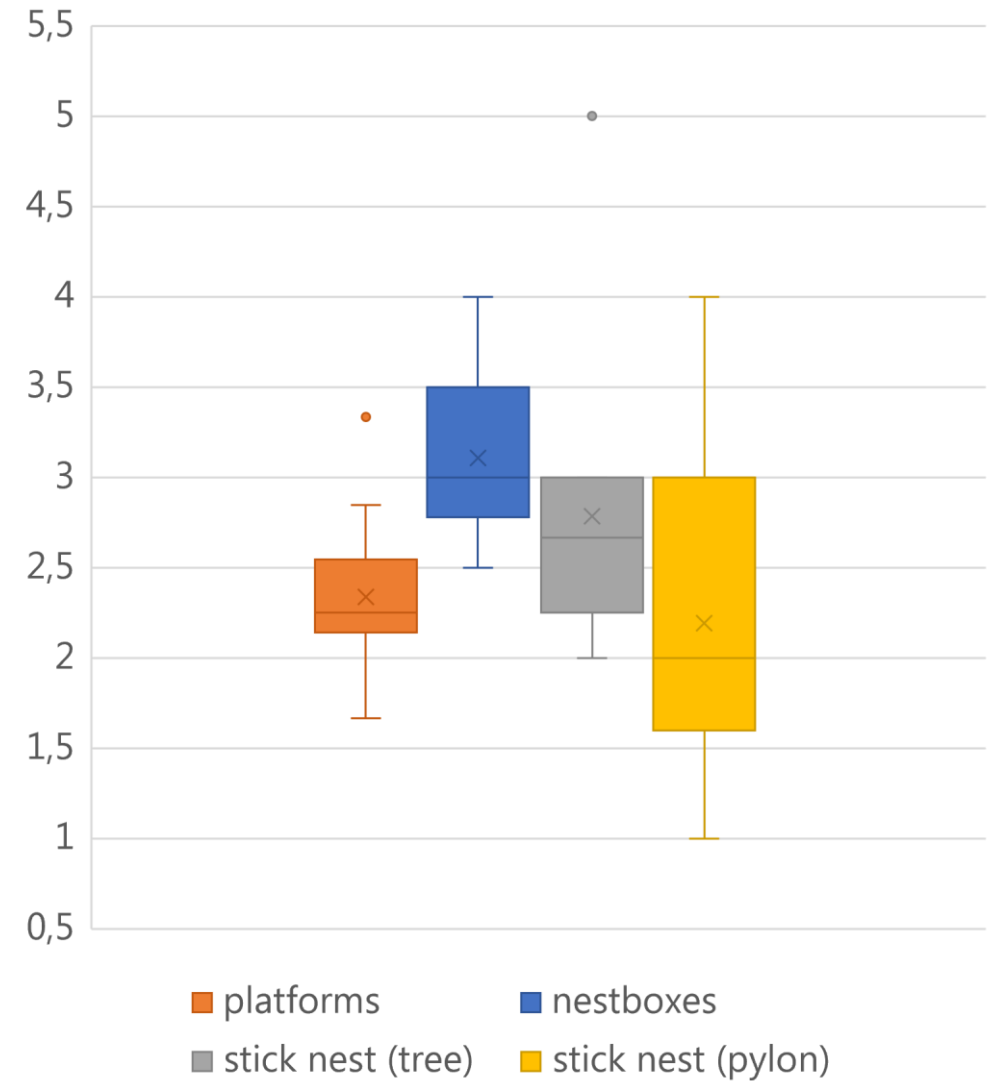
Clear increase in productivity of population

- chicks per known nest
- chicks per successful nest
- Linear (chicks per known nest)
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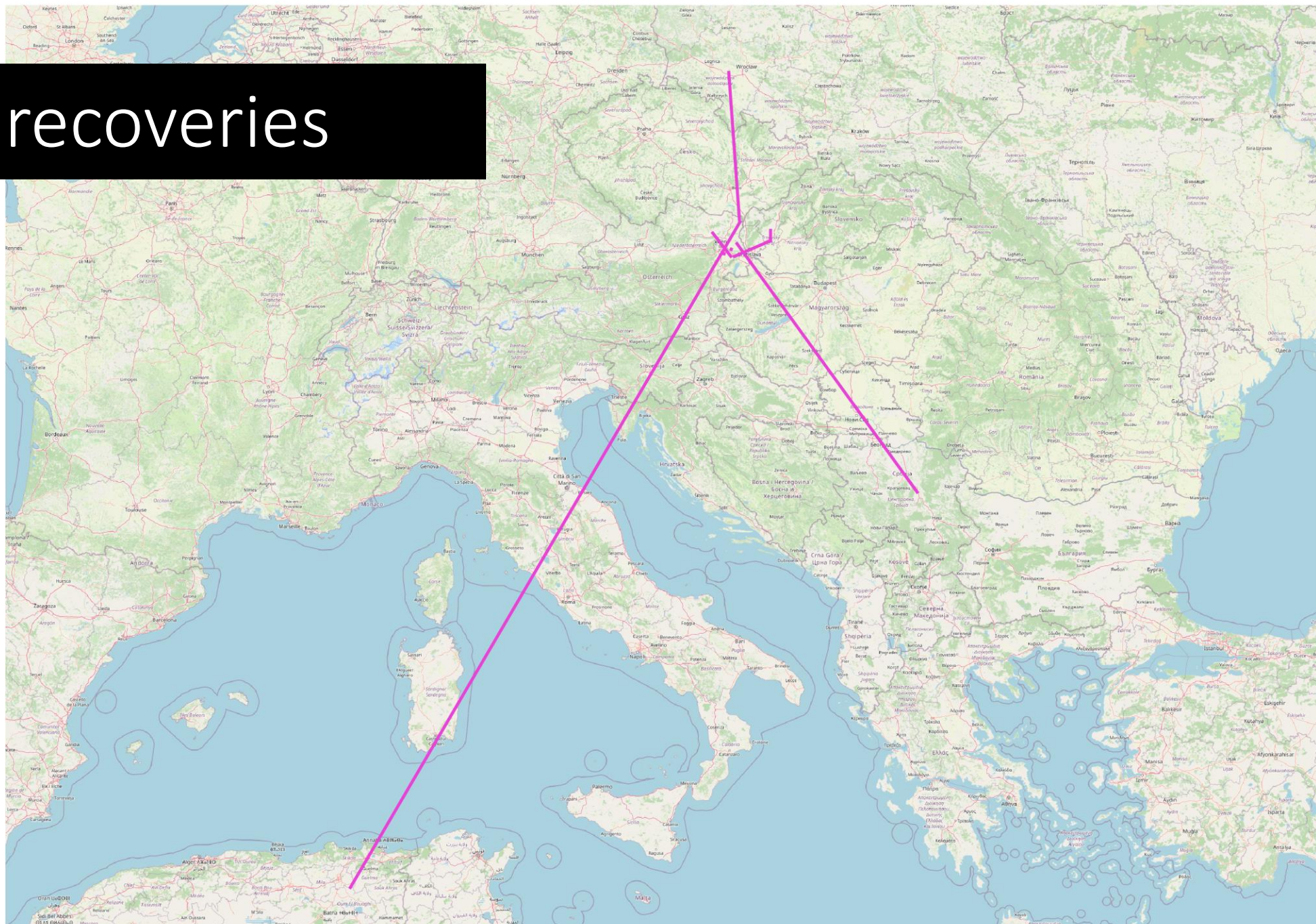
Proportion of used nest types per year
(2012-2022)



breeding output per successful nest
in different nesttypes
(yearly average 2012-2022)



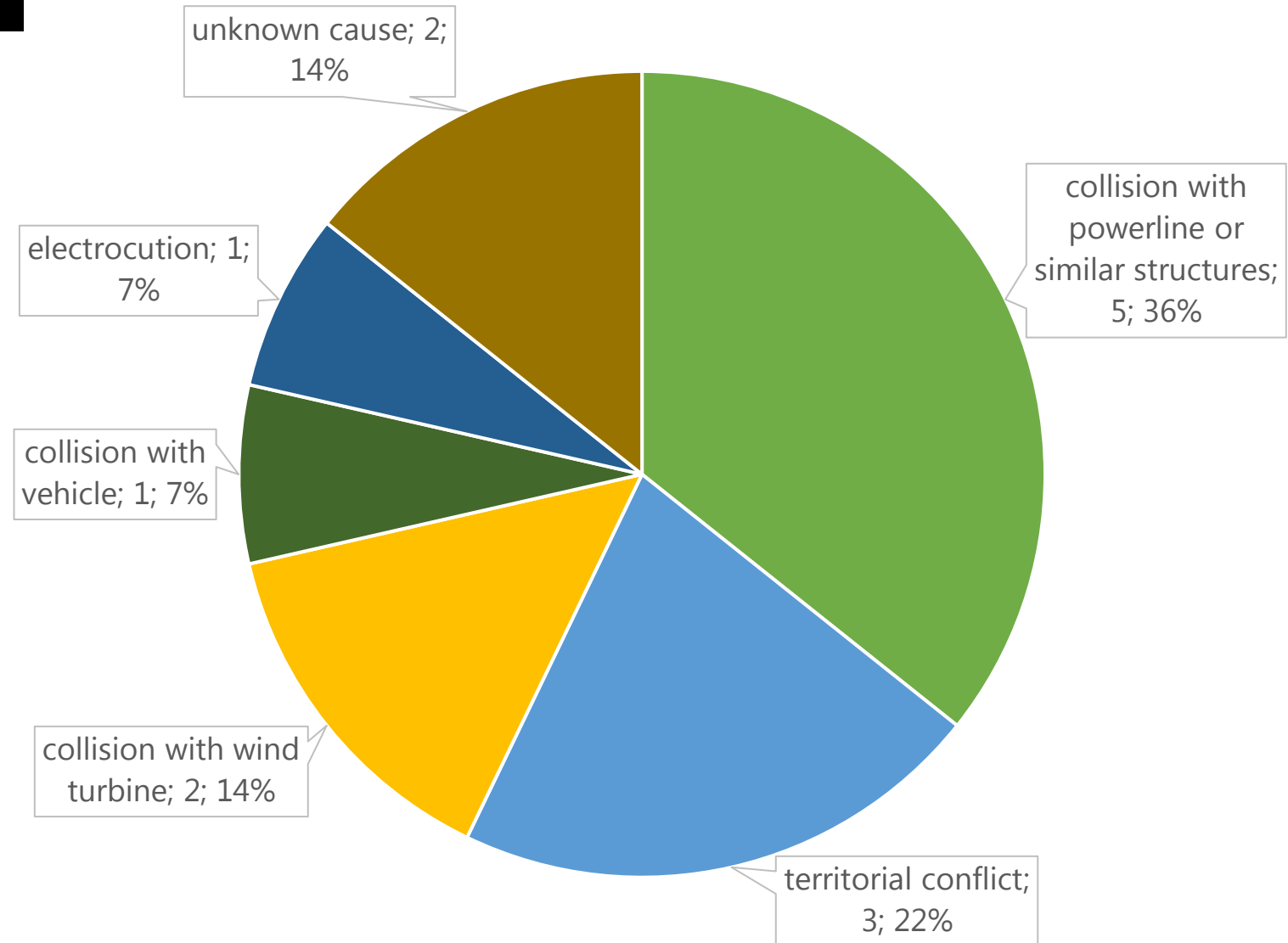
Ringing recoveries



Mortality

Saker Falcons found injured/dead in Austria 2015-2022

n= 14





Future threats?

- Wind farm development
- Nest site competition
 - Eurasian Eagle-owl
 - Common Raven
- Indirect poisoning
 - Rodenticides



Acknowledgements

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