

Mitigation of the impacts of electrocution on Eagle Owl in Western Slovenia

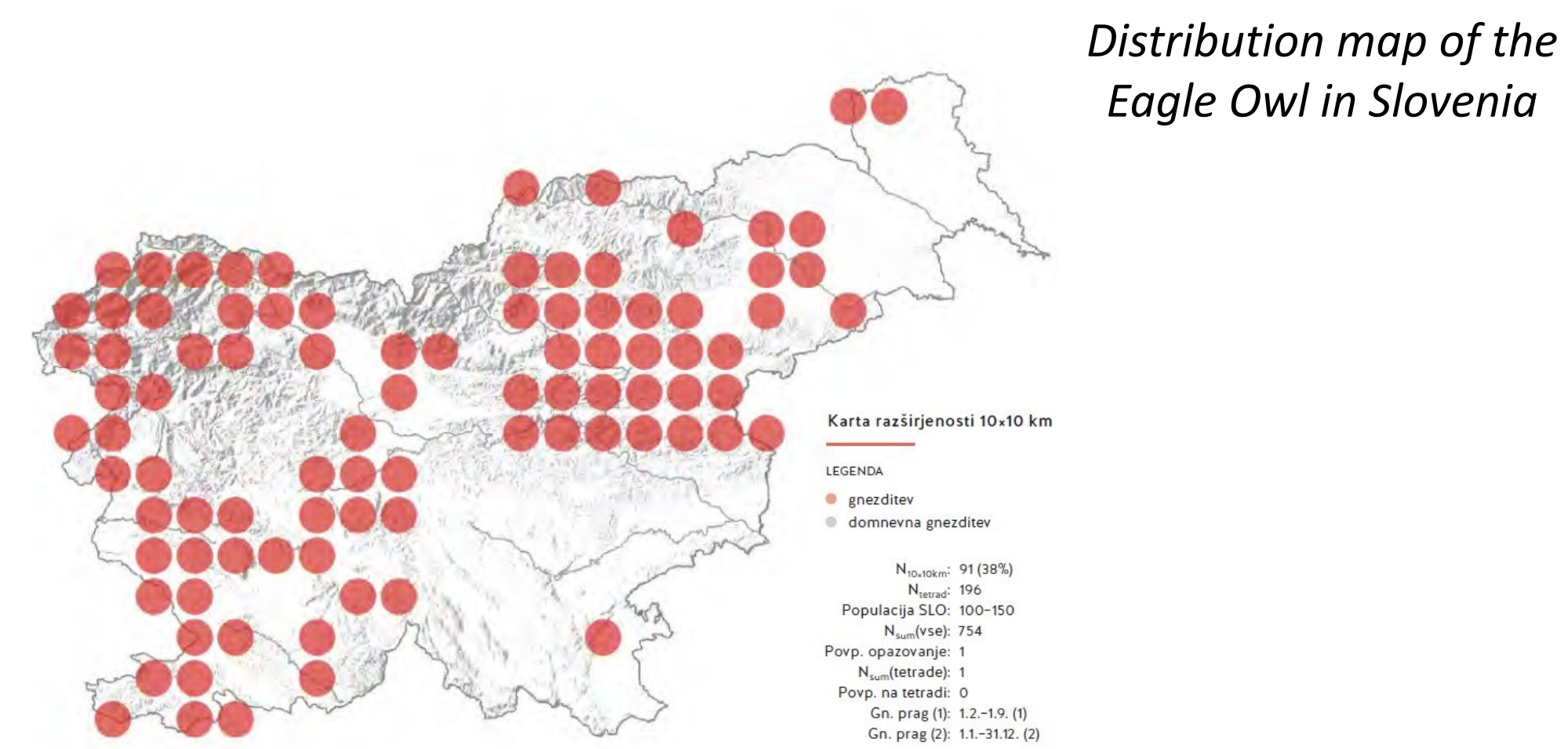
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ABOUT THE PROJECT

Region: Western Slovenia
 Duration: 01/01/2023 – 30/06/2024
 Lead partner: DOPPS BirdLife- Slovenia,
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Most of the Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*) population in Slovenia nests in the western and southwestern parts of the country. In this region, the distribution powerlines are made of concrete due to strong bora winds. Previous research indicates that electrocution on middle voltage powerlines with inadequate design presents a serious threat to the core population of this endangered and protected species in Slovenia.

Within the scope of this project, all relevant existing data on the Eagle Owl breeding areas, within the European Green Belt, will be gathered. Identification and prioritization of at least five dangerous black spots around the breeding sites will be done through a newly designed prioritization model.



Electrocuted Eagle Owl in the Karst region in Slovenia (photo: T. Mihelič)

Further work will involve the isolation of middle voltage powerline pylons of at least three electrocution blackspots. The effectiveness of these actions will be measured by predefined criteria based on actual mortality and breeding success in neighbouring breeding sites and surveys of priority areas done before and after the mitigation measures are applied.

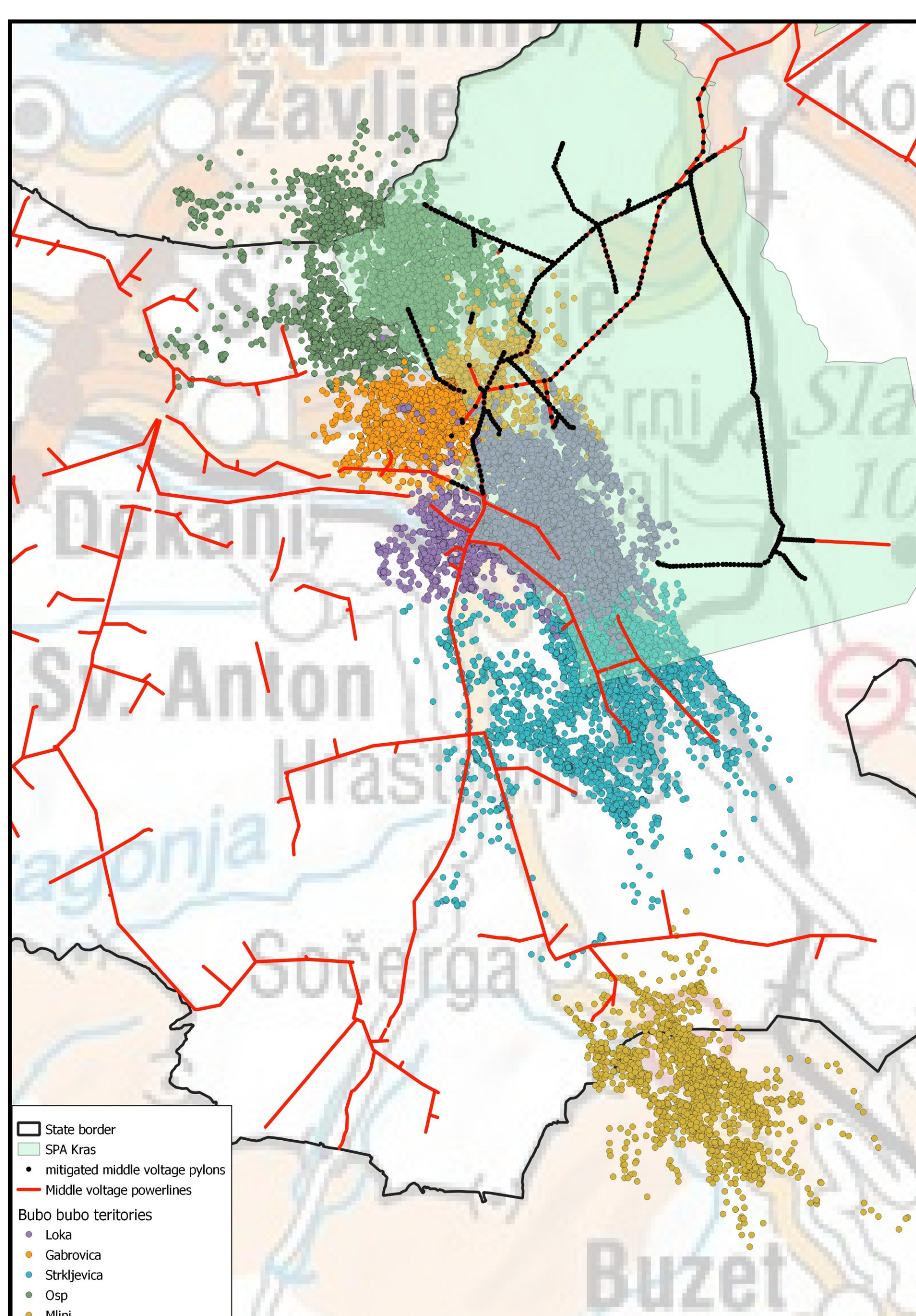


Mitigated middle voltage powerline pylon within the SPA „Kras“ (photo: P. Höfferle)

While protected areas enfold the core of biodiversity, the buffer zones and sustainable use areas around them have high potential and are very important in terms of the conservation of bird species on a larger scale, for instance, migration routes or population dynamics.

Mitigation of electrocution has been tackled in recent years in some priority nesting areas, but the problem of neighbouring areas remains. With this project, conservation efforts on a local and regional scale for this species will be extended outside of protected areas.

Engagement with local communities through an existing volunteering network dedicated to the the Eagle Owl will enable to establish a strong network of local volunteers. This will increase and strengthen our local conservation efforts.



Area adjacent to the project area, where existing middle voltage powerline pylons have been mitigated within the SPA „Kras“ area (black dots). Red lines represent existing, unmitigated middle voltage powerline grid, while the colourful dots represent the estimated territories of the Eagle Owls that extend within and beyond the current SPA „Kras“ borders.



Volunteers gathering for the Eagle Owl surveys (photo: T. Basle)

Through joint mitigation actions, the project will allow nurturing of the existing bond with the energy sector in the region, thus contributing to building capacities and relations in terms of inter-disciplinary conservation efforts and actions.