



LIFE EUROKITE CRIME REPORT

ILLEGAL PERSECUTION OF TAGGED RED KITES AND OTHER RAPTOR SPECIES IN EUROPE

PART 12 - COUNTRY SPECIFIC RESULTS - LUXEMBOURG

First interim report on the results of the LIFE EUROKITE (LIFE18 NAT/AT/000048) project 2020-2024 with additional results from 2013 onwards

“Cross-border protection of the red kite in Europe by reducing human-caused mortality”



This company project report was compiled by TB Raab GmbH within the LIFE EUROKITE project (LIFE18 NAT/AT/000048) and was checked by the owner of the loggers and the representatives of the (cooperation) partners responsible for finding the dead birds.

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Cover photo: Poisoned red kite © LIFE EUROKITE Archive (Ján Svetlík)



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Structure of the Crime Report

Due to the size of the report, it is divided in the following parts. Please see the other report parts for further information.

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Part 2 - Country specific results - Austria

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Part 4 - Country specific results - Croatia

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1 Overall summary

The LIFE EUROKITE project (LIFE18 NAT/AT/000048) is a cross-border protection project for the red kite and other raptor species in Europe. Within the LIFE EUROKITE project the core idea is to use telemetry technology to identify the spatial habitat use of the target raptor species, quantify the key reasons of mortality of bird of prey species in the EU and reduce human-caused mortality, particularly illegal activities such as poisoning.

Between 2013 and 2024, 3,554 individuals of 7 raptor species (3,161 red kites, 97 black kites, 43 booted eagles, 52 honey buzzards, 79 imperial eagles, 22 ospreys and 100 white-tailed eagles) were tagged with solar-powered GPS satellite tags in 19 countries across Europe with the help of many project partners and cooperation partners. From this a total of 1,795 individuals (1,680 red kites, 37 black kites, 18 honey buzzards, 29 imperial eagles and 31 white-tailed eagles) were tagged within the LIFE EUROKITE project.

From the 3,554 tagged birds a total of 1,623 died so far. Of these, a total of 1,594 individuals (1,480 red kites, 13 black kites, 14 booted eagles, 17 honey buzzards, 32 imperial eagles, 8 ospreys, 30 white-tailed eagles) died in the respective country where we also detected bird persecution within our sample. The first results of the LIFE EUROKITE project show, that 320 (20.08 %) of the tagged birds (293; 19.80 % red kites, 3; 23.08 % black kites, 1; 7.14 % booted eagles, 2; 11.76 % honey buzzards, 12; 37.50 % imperial eagles, 1; 12.50 % ospreys, 8; 26.67 % white-tailed eagles) were victims of illegal activities in 24 countries (10/01/2025). Poisoning (n= 238; 74.38 % of illegal activities) was by far the most common illegal act that caused the death of these tagged birds. The most used poison was Carbofuran which is banned in the EU since 2008. The second most common illegal act that caused the death of these tagged birds was shooting (66 individuals; 20.63 % of illegal activities). Of the 320 birds that were tagged and illegally killed, only 8 cases resulted in a conviction for bird persecution.

When extrapolating the data on illegal bird persecution over the past five years (2020–2024), it is estimated that approximately 46.180 red kites have died as a result of persecution. This estimate is derived by scaling up known persecution rates of tagged birds to the entire European red kite population, based on published population size estimates, average annual mortality rates, and the proportion of mortality attributed to illegal killing. It therefore reflects a population-level extrapolation, not a direct count of detected cases.

Due to varying numbers of tagged individuals and differing red kite population densities across countries, the results may vary considerably. Consequently, these findings do not allow for conclusions regarding the statistical frequency of illegal activities relative to red kite density in any given country.

Bird persecution in Europe persists all over Europe. Effective conservation requires stronger law enforcement, public education, international cooperation, and better tools like GPS tracking to detect and prosecute offenders. Political commitment across countries is crucial, along with harmonized laws, stricter penalties, and national action plans with clear goals. Raising awareness through initiatives like the “European Day Against Criminal Poisoning of Wildlife” and systematic data collection can help inform both the public and policymakers. Finally, stronger cross-border collaboration and support for monitoring and reporting systems are essential to address bird persecution at a European level.

2 Introduction

The LIFE EUROKITE project (LIFE18 NAT/AT/000048) is a cross-border protection project for the red kite and other raptor species in Europe. Within the LIFE EUROKITE project the core idea is to use telemetry technology to identify the spatial habitat use of the target raptor species, quantify the key reasons of mortality of bird of prey species in the EU and reduce human-caused mortality, particularly from illegal activities such as poisoning.

Specifically, the red kite (*Milvus milvus*) can act as an indicator of anthropogenic mortality across broad extents (Donázar et al. 2016; Natsukawa and Sergio, 2022) due to its high individual variability in migration strategies (García-Macía et al. 2022) and its condition of good sentinel species for main threats to raptors (Mattson et al. 2022). As migratory behaviour is associated with different exposure and risk levels, understanding the causes of cross-border mortality in red kites can provide important warning signs regarding wider impacts of human activities on wildlife populations in Europe (Donázar et al. 2016; Natsukawa and Sergio, 2022).

In response to ongoing illegal threats to migratory birds, international conservation bodies have taken major steps toward unified action. Under the leadership of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Bern Convention, and with the involvement of numerous states, observers, and expert groups, a comprehensive framework was adopted: the *Rome Strategic Plan 2020–2030*. This plan outlines a joint commitment to halving illegal bird killings in Europe and the Mediterranean by 2030, using 2020 as a baseline (Council of Europe, 2019). By generating large-scale, cross-border evidence on mortality causes, the LIFE EUROKITE Crime Report plays a key role in tracking progress toward this ambitious objective.

The Article 12 of the Habitats Directive clearly defines that member states shall take requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection for the animal species listed in Annex IV(a) in their natural range, prohibiting, among others, all forms of deliberate capture or killing and shall establish a system to monitor the incidental capture and killing of specimens of these species in the wild (European Commission, 2021; Panter et al. under review).

Between 2013 and 2024, 3,554 individuals of 7 raptor species (3,161 red kites, 97 black kites, 43 booted eagles, 52 honey buzzards, 79 imperial eagles, 22 ospreys and 100 white-tailed eagles) were tagged with solar-powered GPS satellite tags in 19 countries across Europe with the help of many project partners and cooperation partners. From this a total of 1,795 individuals (1,680 red kites, 37 black kites, 18 honey buzzards, 29 imperial eagles and 31 white-tailed eagles) were tagged within the LIFE EUROKITE project (Figure 1 to Figure 7).

The first results of the LIFE EUROKITE project show that illegal persecution of tagged birds (shooting, poisoning, trapping) is one of the biggest threats for those species. To date (as of 10 January 2025), 320 tagged birds have been victims of bird crime (Figure 8).

This report will give an overview of tagged birds which died due to illegal activities in Luxembourg and will give a detailed inside of the status of investigations and legal procedure.

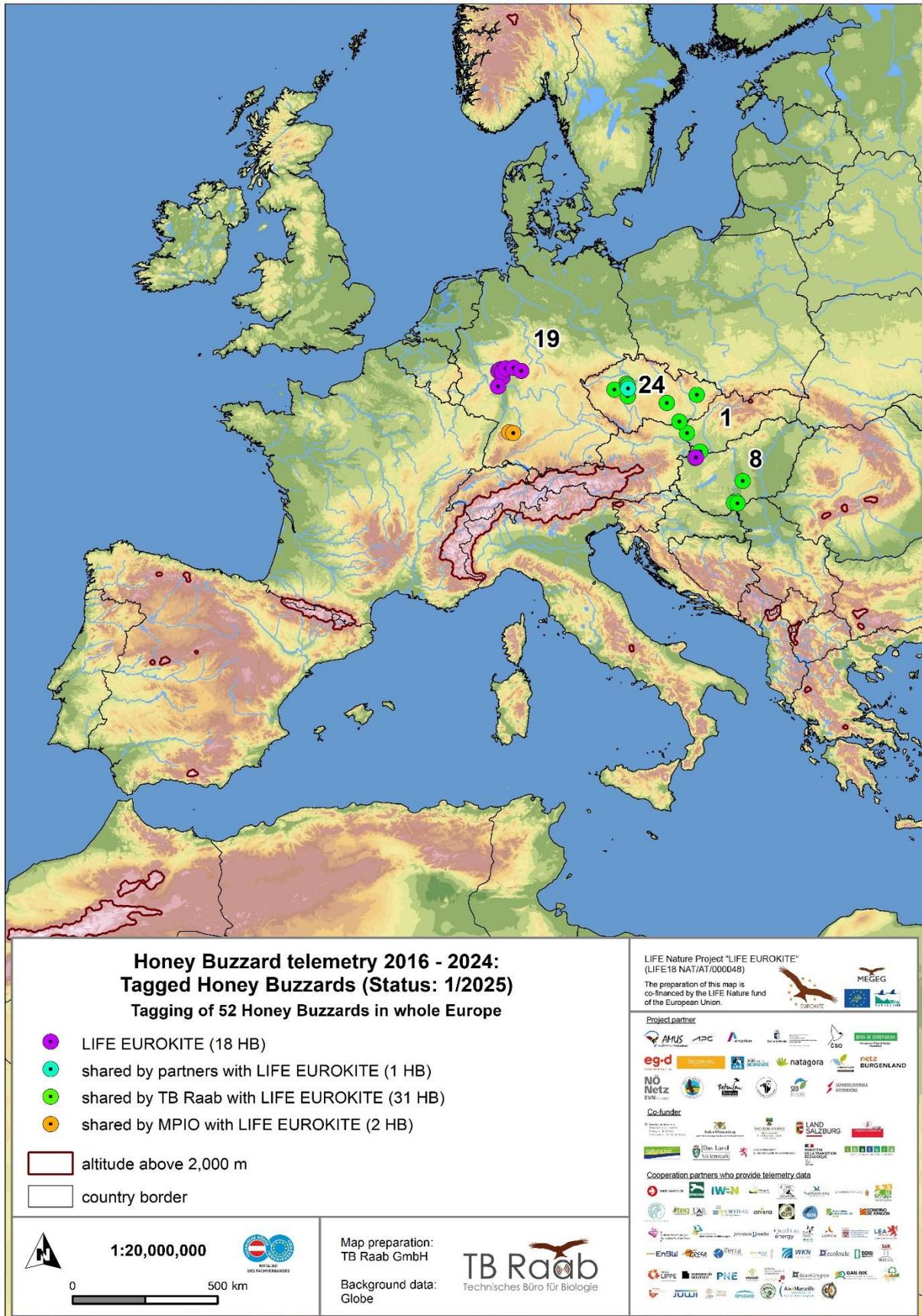


Figure 4: Tagging of 52 honey buzzards by the LIFE EUROKITE project and numerous cooperation and project partners across Europe in the years 2016-2024.

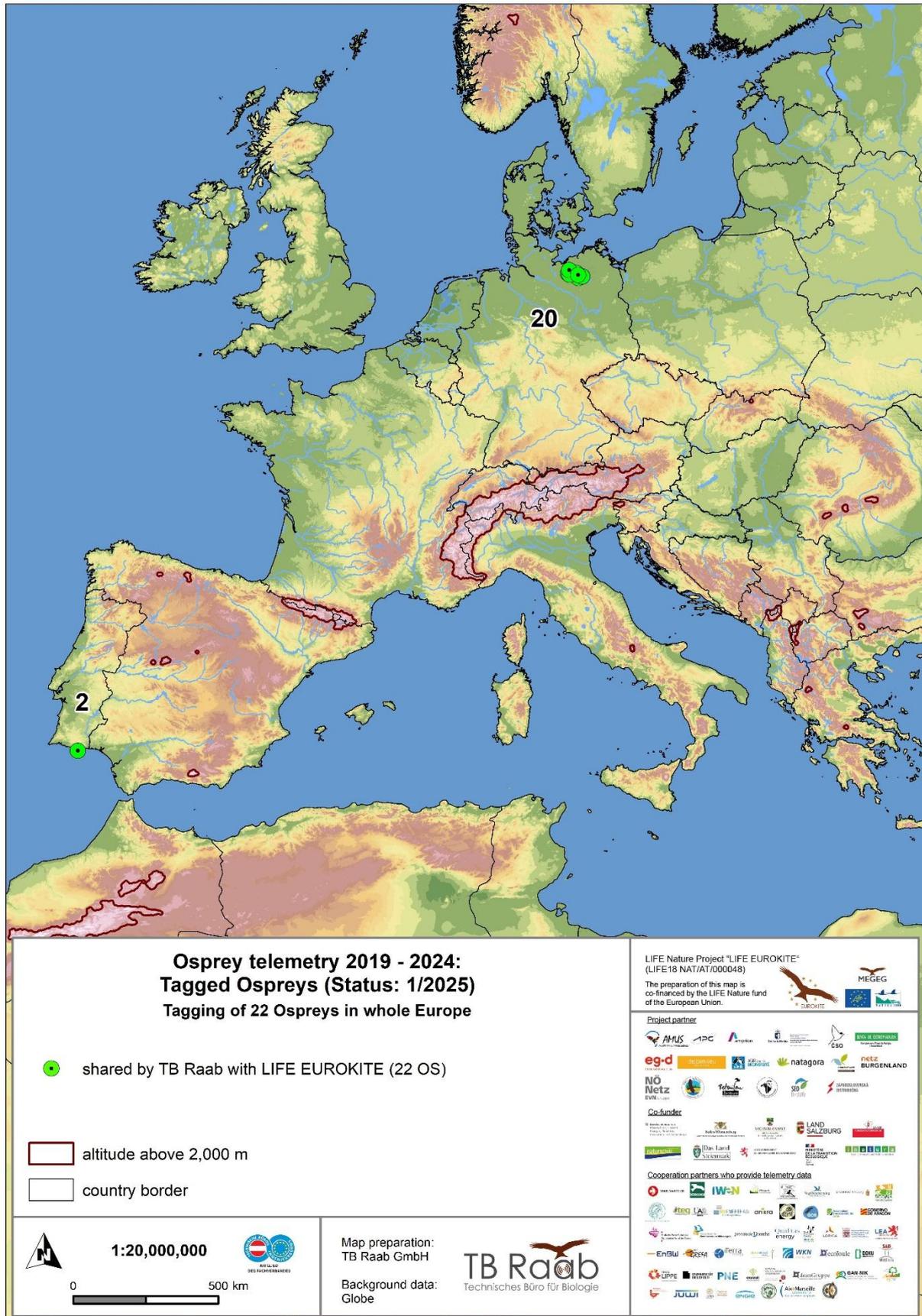


Figure 6: Tagging of 22 Ospreys by the LIFE EUROKITE project and numerous cooperation and project partners across Europe the years 2019-2024.

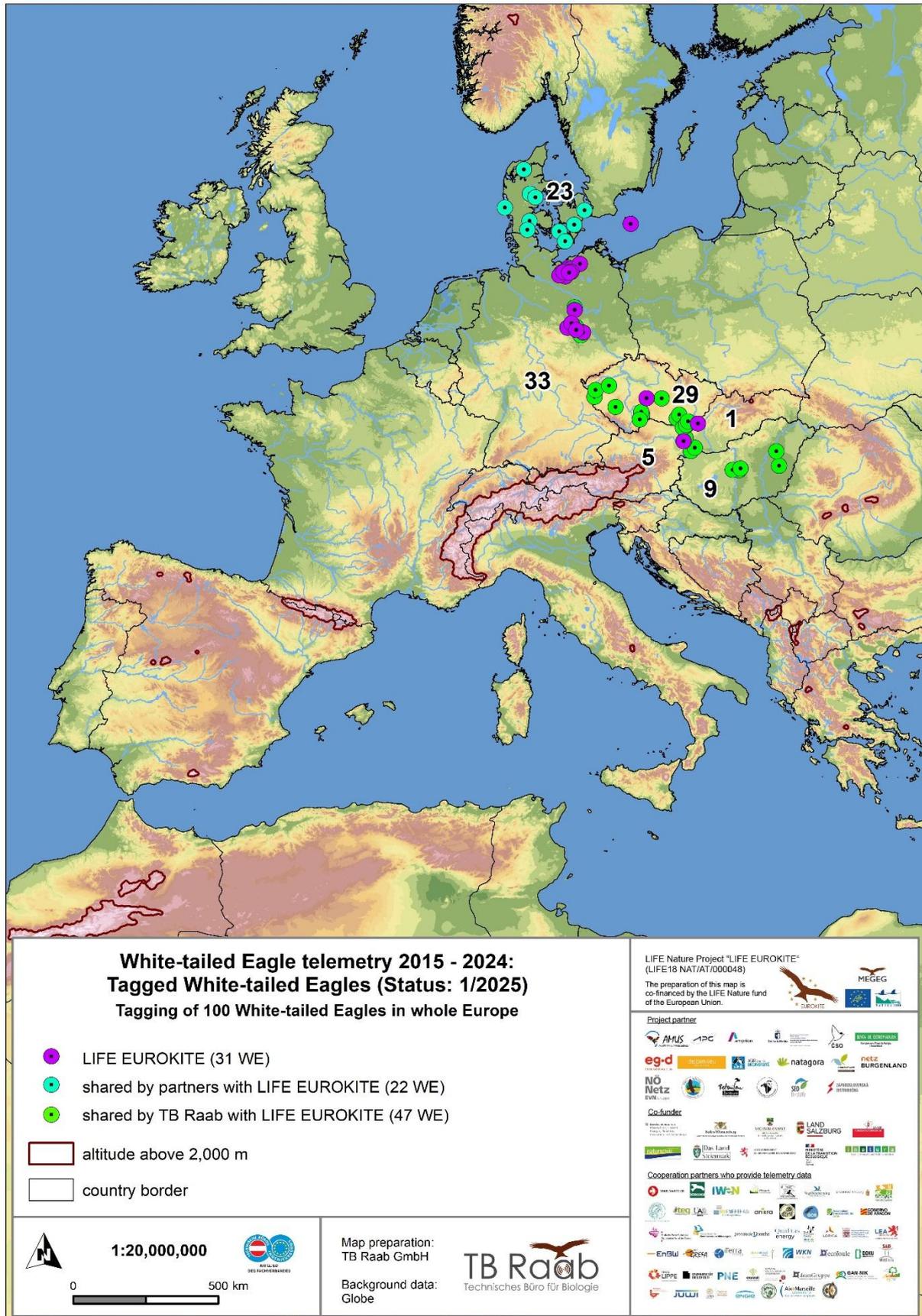


Figure 7: Tagging of 100 white-tailed eagles by the LIFE EUROKITE project and numerous cooperation and project partners across Europe the years 2015-2024.

3 Luxembourgish results

The subsequent section provides a detailed overview of the cases with illegal mortality reasons in Luxembourg. A total of 2 birds have been confirmed as victims of illegal activities. Both died because of poisoning.

3.1 Tagged individuals that have been poisoned

The birds are listed in chronological order by date of bird crime, commencing with the first recorded case.

RK_0502

General information about the bird

Name: Noerdange_03

Species: Red kite

Birth date: 13.05.2018

Place of tagging: Noerdange, Luxembourg, Luxembourg

Date of tagging: 26.05.2020

Age at tagging: 3.+ CY

Origin of bird: Captured with trap

Ownership category: C_natur&emwelt

Logger number: 180892

Ring number: H196311

Sex: Female

Bird crime information

Place of bird crime: Useldingen, Luxembourg, Luxembourg

Coordinates: 49,74821502, 5,959830

Date of bird crime: 01.08.2020, 11:18:29 AM (UTC)

Age at bird crime (Days): 811

Age at bird crime: 3. CY

Responsible organization for the investigation: natur&emwelt

Logger and/or bird found: Logger and bird found

Carcass state: No information received

Bird crime: Poisoning – Other substances

Certainty category: Certain

Additional information: The laboratory confirmed that the bird was poisoned with Methamidophos.

Investigation information

Last editing: 08.01.2025

Investigation: No information received

Police and/or authority investigation: Authority informed → No information received

Legal proceeding: No information received

Conviction: No information received

If investigation stopped or no conviction was achieved, why?

No information received

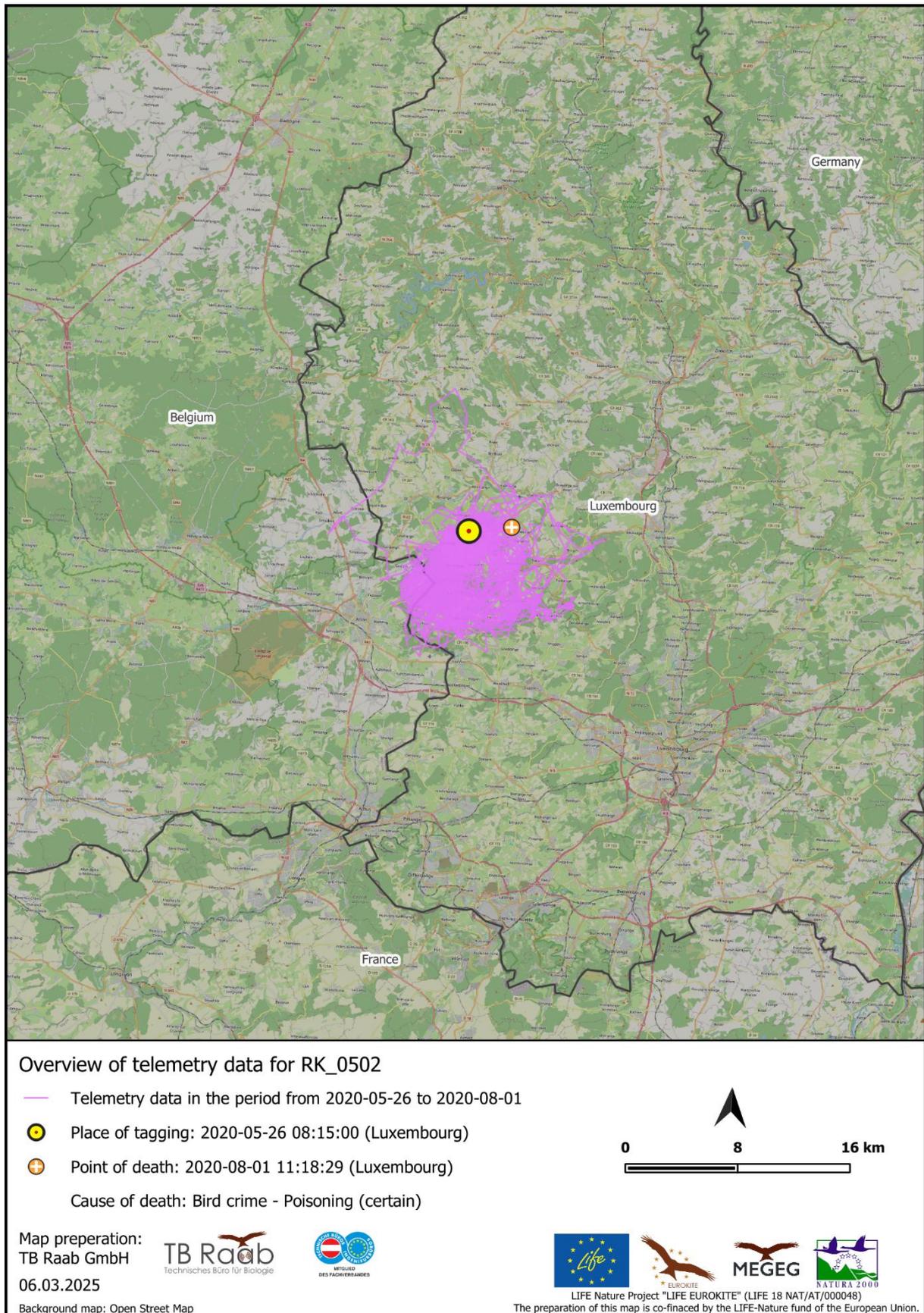


Figure 9: Overview of the telemetry data for RK_0502.

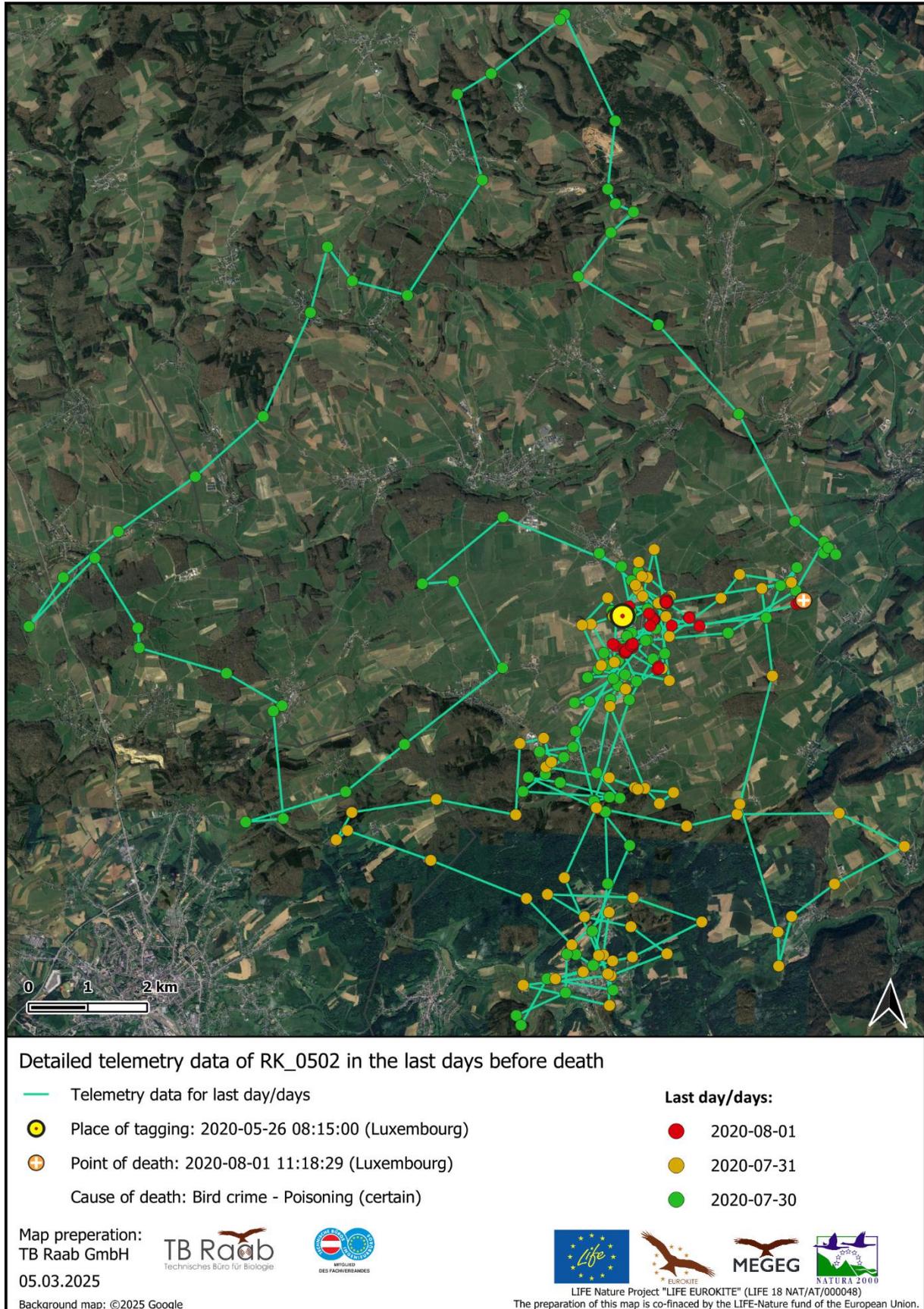


Figure 10: Detailed telemetry data of RK_0502 in the last days before death.

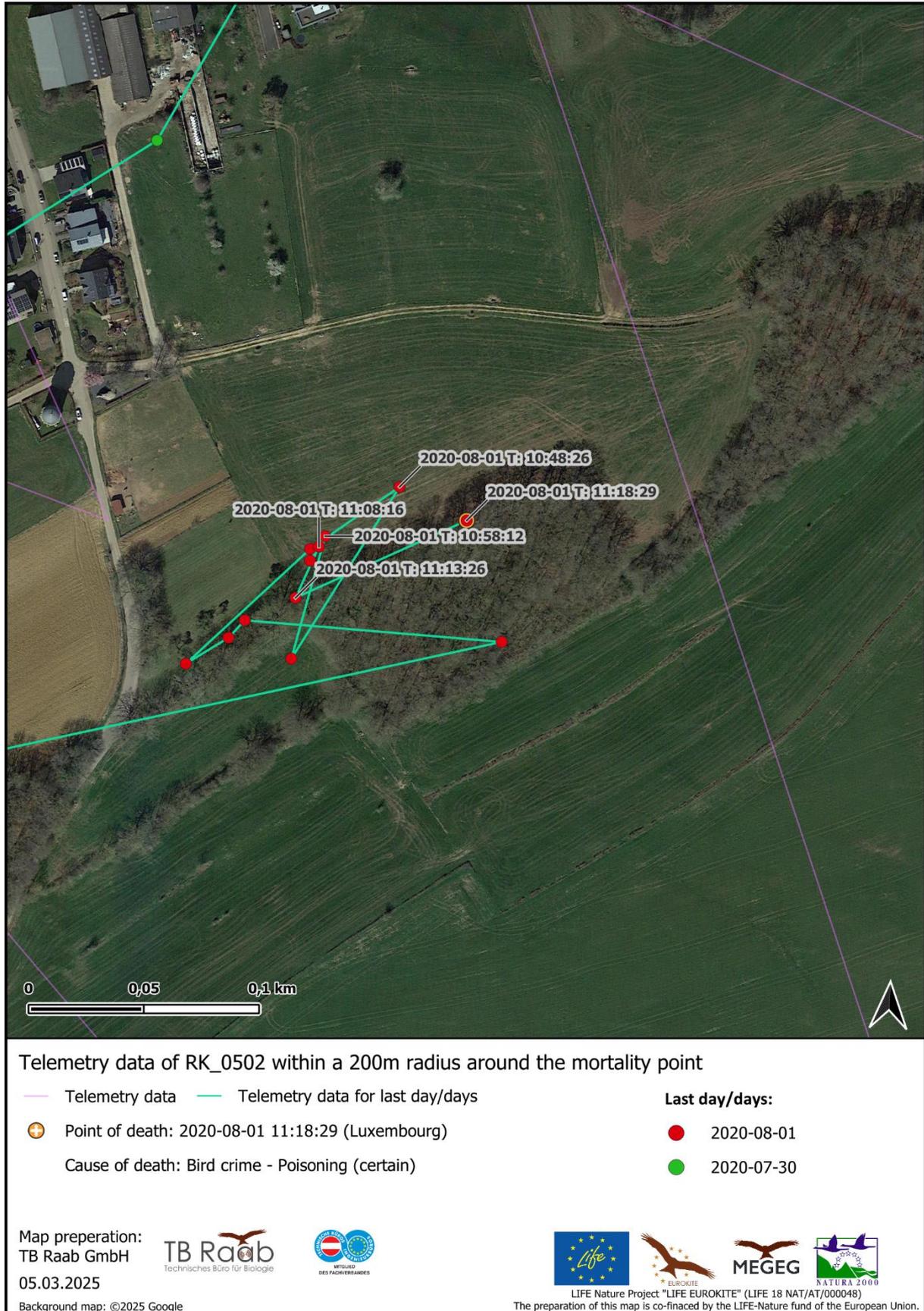


Figure 11: Telemetry data of RK_0502 within a 200m radius around the mortality point.

RK_0608

General information about the bird

Name: Putscheid_01

Species: Red kite

Birth date: 13.05.2016

Place of tagging: Putscheid, Luxembourg, Luxembourg

Date of tagging: 24.05.2018

Age at tagging: 3.+ CY

Origin of bird: Captured with trap

Ownership category: C_StefVanRijn

Logger number: 180317

Ring number: No Ring

Sex: Male

Bird crime information

Place of bird crime: Ronnebesch, Vianden, Luxembourg

Coordinates: 49,9424780, 6,1390849

Date of bird crime: 12.04.2023, 03:11:08 PM (UTC)

Age at bird crime (Days): 2.525

Age at bird crime: 8. CY

Responsible organization for the investigation: natur&ëmwelt

Logger and/or bird found: Logger and bird found

Carcass state: Good

Bird crime: Poisoning – Other substances

Certainty category: Certain

Additional information: The laboratory confirmed that the bird was poisoned. Presumably secondary poisoning of an euthanised animal. Animal food bowl directly next to the cadaver.

Investigation information

Last editing: 08.01.2025

Investigation: No information received

Police and/or authority investigation: Authority informed → No information received

Legal proceeding: No information received

Conviction: No information received

If investigation stopped or no conviction was achieved, why?

No information received



Figure 12: Discovery situation of the red kite RK_0608, which died on 12.04.2023, in Ronnebesch, Vianden, Luxembourg. © LIFE UEROKITE Archive (natur&emwelt)

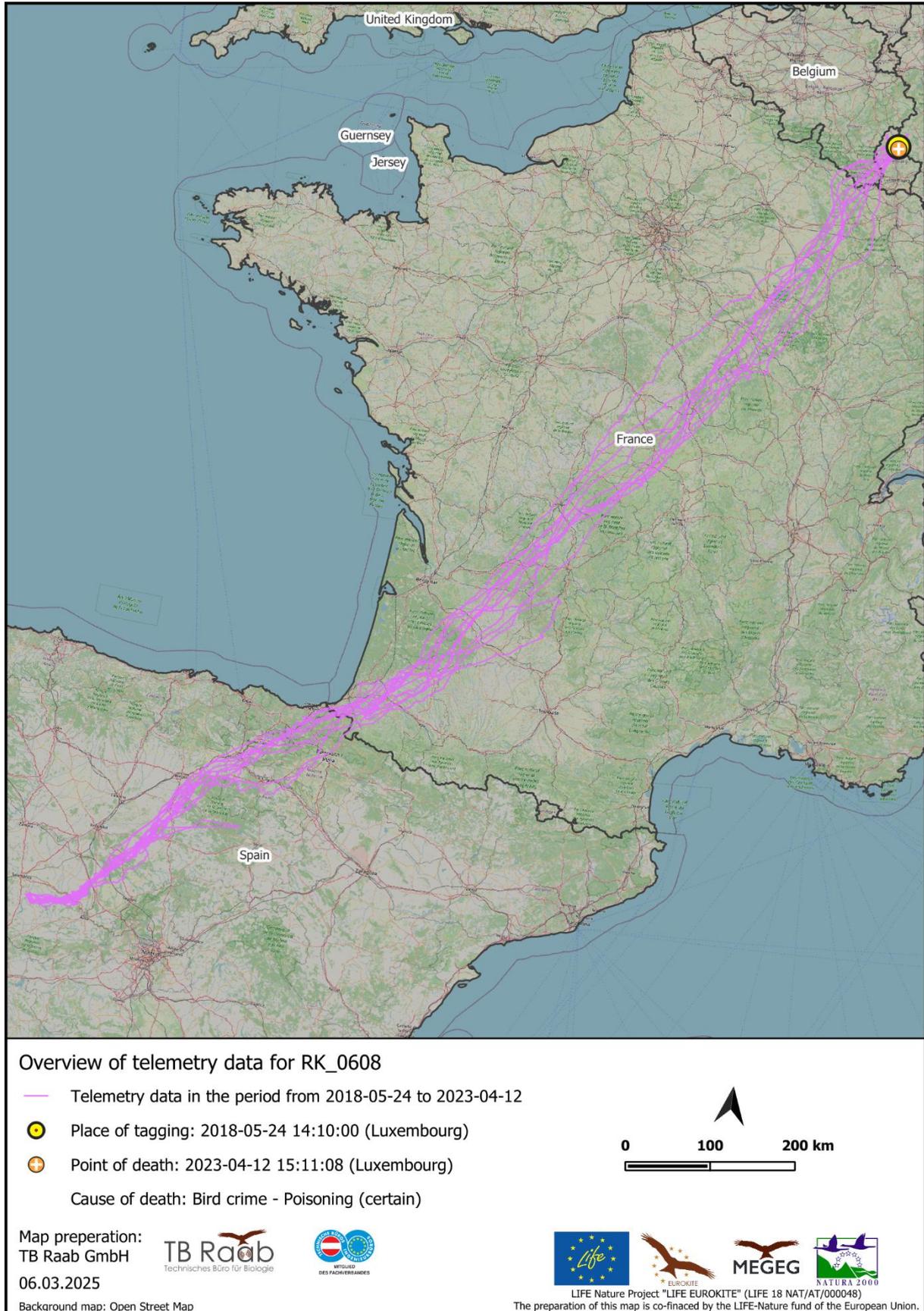


Figure 13: Overview of the telemetry data for RK_0608.

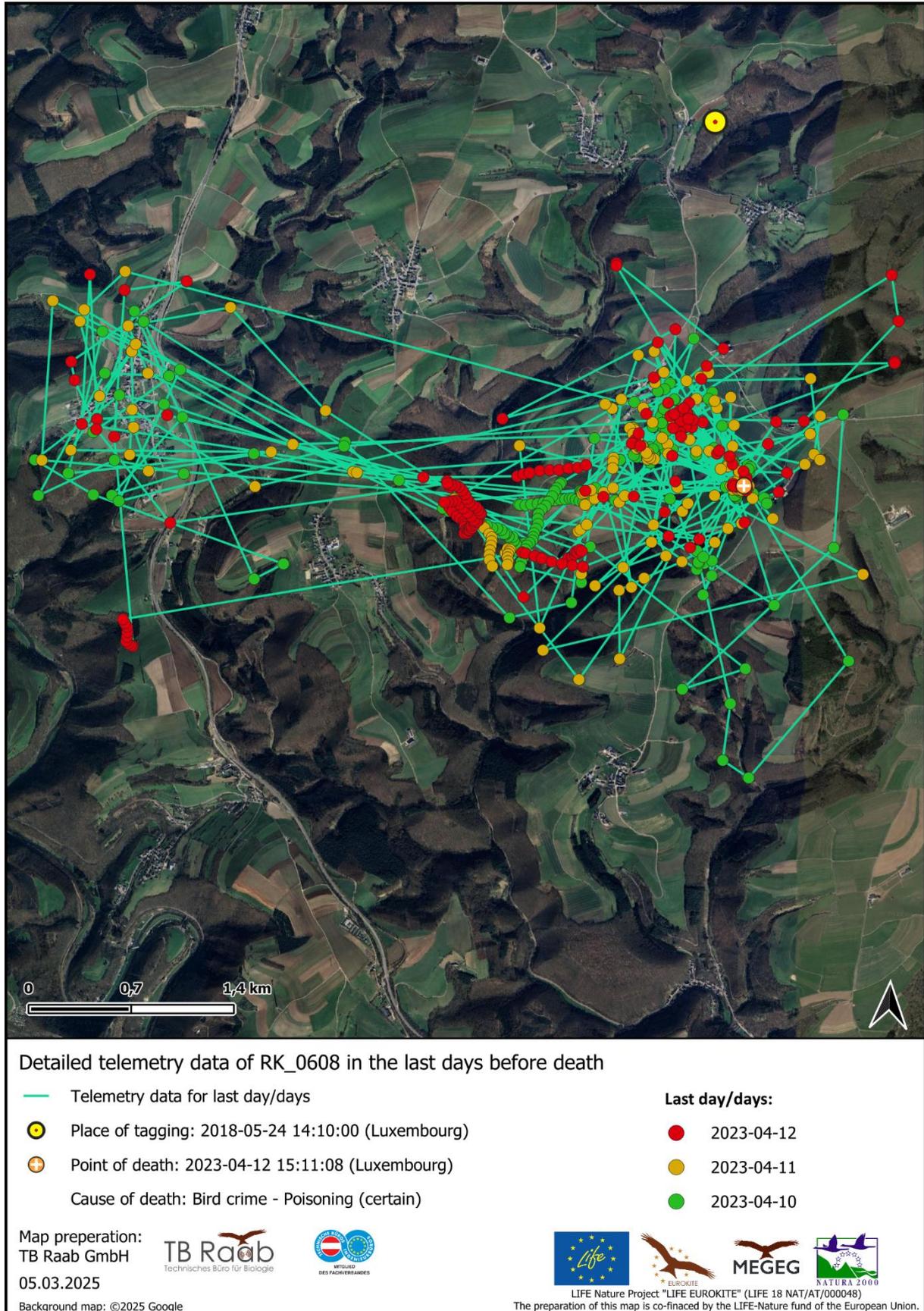


Figure 14: Detailed telemetry data of RK_0608 in the last days before death.

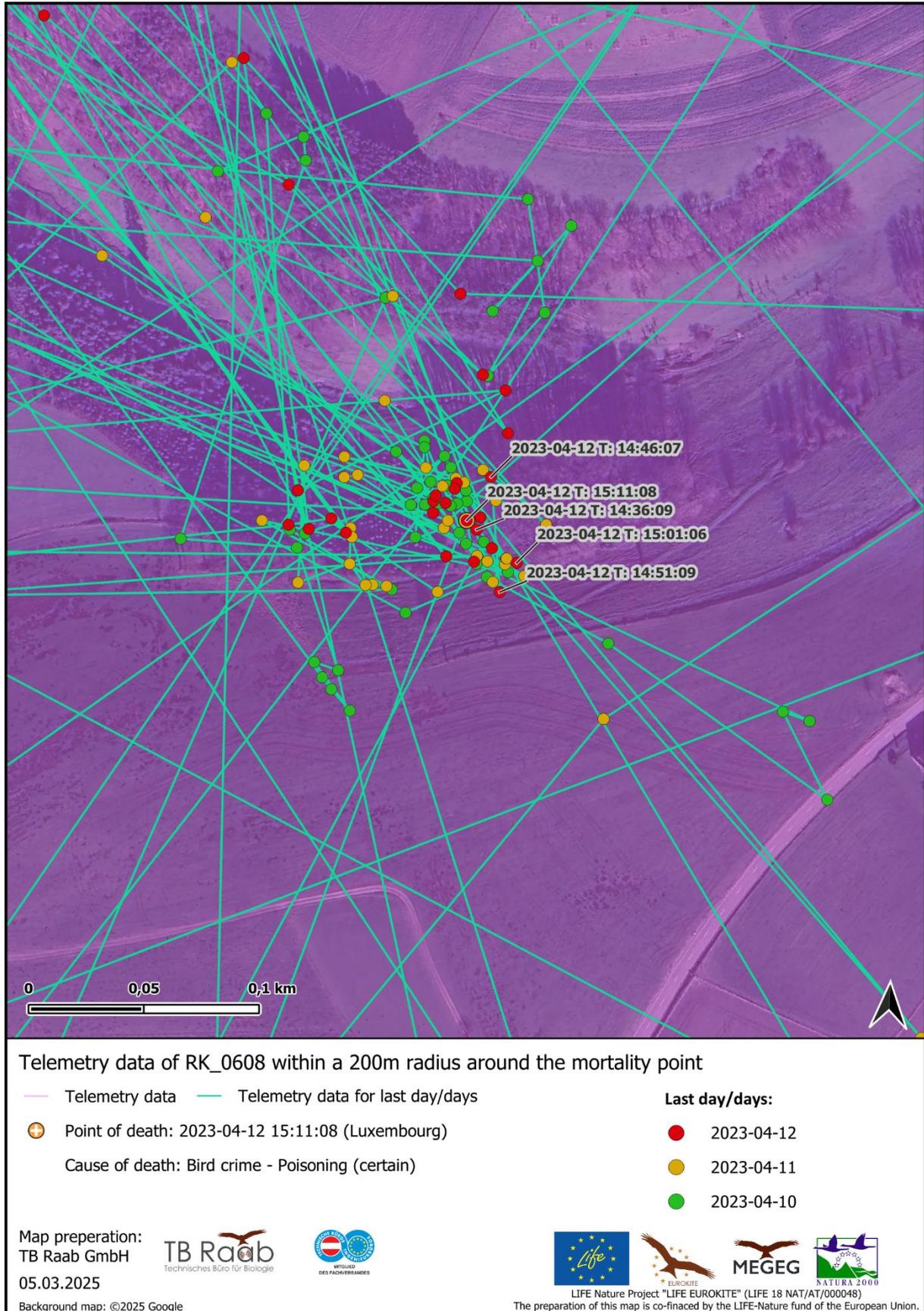


Figure 15: Telemetry data of RK_0608 within a 200m radius around the mortality point.

3.2 Summary of the Luxembourgish results

Please note, that due to different number of tagged birds per countries and especially the different density of red kites per country the results can differ significant per country. Therefore, these results do not provide any information about the statistical frequencies of illegal activities in the respective country.

The interim results of the LIFE EUROKITE (LIFE18 NAT/AT/000048) project 2020-2024 with additional results from 2013 onwards show, that a total of 21 tagged raptors died in Luxembourg. Of those, 2 individuals (red kites) died due to bird crime in Luxembourg. Both died due to poisoning (Table 1 to Table 2 & Figure 19).

Table 1: Overview of the numbers of tagged birds which died due to bird crime in Luxembourg.

Mortality reason	Red kite	Total
Bird crime - Poisoning	2	2
Total	2	2

Table 2: Overview of the districts where tagged birds died due to bird crime in Luxembourg.

Federal State	Bird crime - Poisoning	Total
Luxembourg	2	2
Total	2	2

Detected substance

Toxicological analysis was available for 1 bird. The other bird was either not analysed, or the detected substance was categorised as unknown. The analysis revealed the presence of 1 active substance, Metamidophos (Figure 16). Metamidophos belongs to the chemical group of carbamate insecticides.

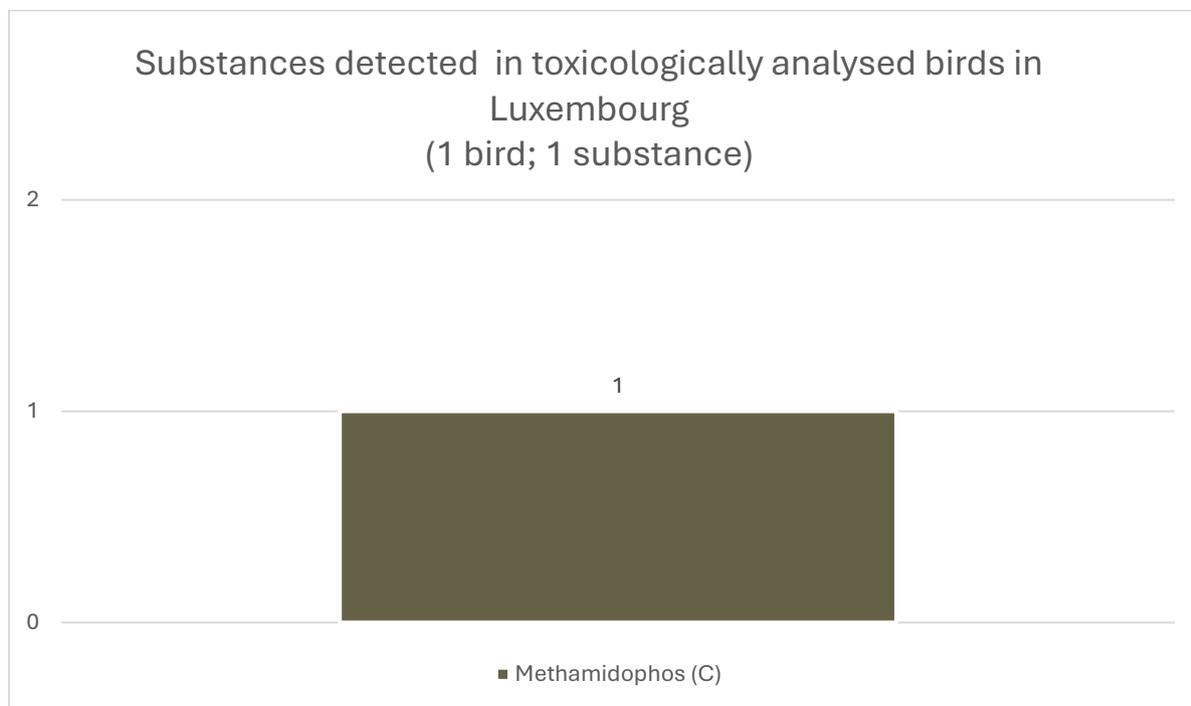


Figure 16: Substances detected (1 substance) in poisoned birds in Luxembourg (1 toxicologically analysed bird with detected substances). In total, 2 birds were classified as poisoned based on field evidence and GPS data. Toxicological analyses were available for 1 individual. The detected substance is classified into the following chemical groups: (C) carbamates.

Carbamates are not approved for use under current European legislation (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2009)

Table 3: Regulatory status and legal framework of not approved toxic substances detected in poisoned raptors in Luxembourg tagged in the LIFE EUROKITE project (2013–2024) according to Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and Council.

Substance	Status	Regulation	Legislation
Metamidophos	Not approved	Reg. (EC) No 1107/2009 (repealing Directive 91/414/EEC)	2006/131/EC

Substances confirmed as lethal

Toxicological analysis reveals that the bird is confirmed to have died as a result of poisoning, with toxicological threshold values enabling the lethal substance to be clearly identified. The bird is confirmed to have died from Metamidophos exposure (Figure 17).

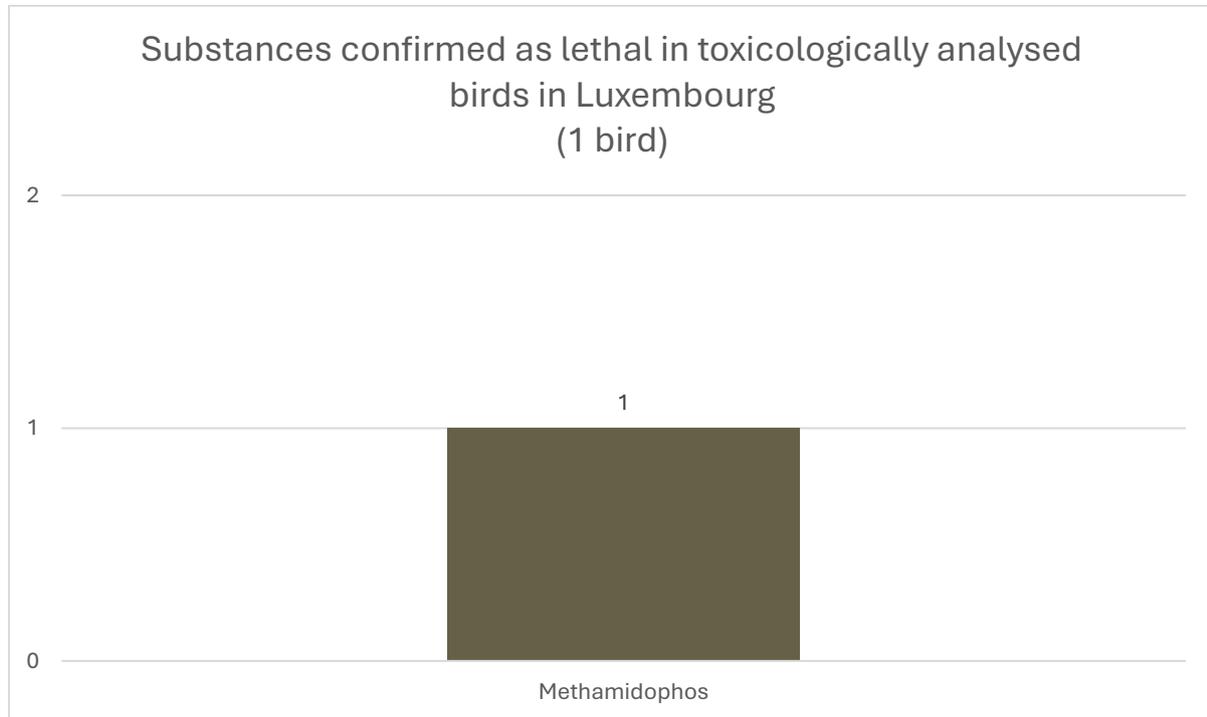


Figure 17: Toxicological analysis was available for 1 bird, which was confirmed to have died as a result of poisoning, with toxicological threshold values enabling the lethal substance to be clearly identified.

Assessment of intentional poisoning

Poisoning cases were evaluated using toxicological findings together with field observations. Birds were classified as intentionally poisoned when evidence clearly indicated deliberate poisoning, such as detection of substances banned in the European Union, discovery of poisoned bait near the carcass, the presence of multiple dead birds at the same site or when the perpetrator had been identified. When available evidence did not allow a clear determination of intentional poisoning, cases were classified as undefined. This group includes birds exposed to substances that are legally permitted in the EU (e.g. rodenticides, metaldehyde or cadmium), cases of secondary poisoning, birds recovered from landfill sites, and birds without toxicological examination. It also covers cases in which a detected substance was banned at the time of analysis but remained legally authorised when the poisoning event occurred. Overall, 1 of the 2 poisoned birds was classified as intentional poisoning cases, while the other one remained undefined.

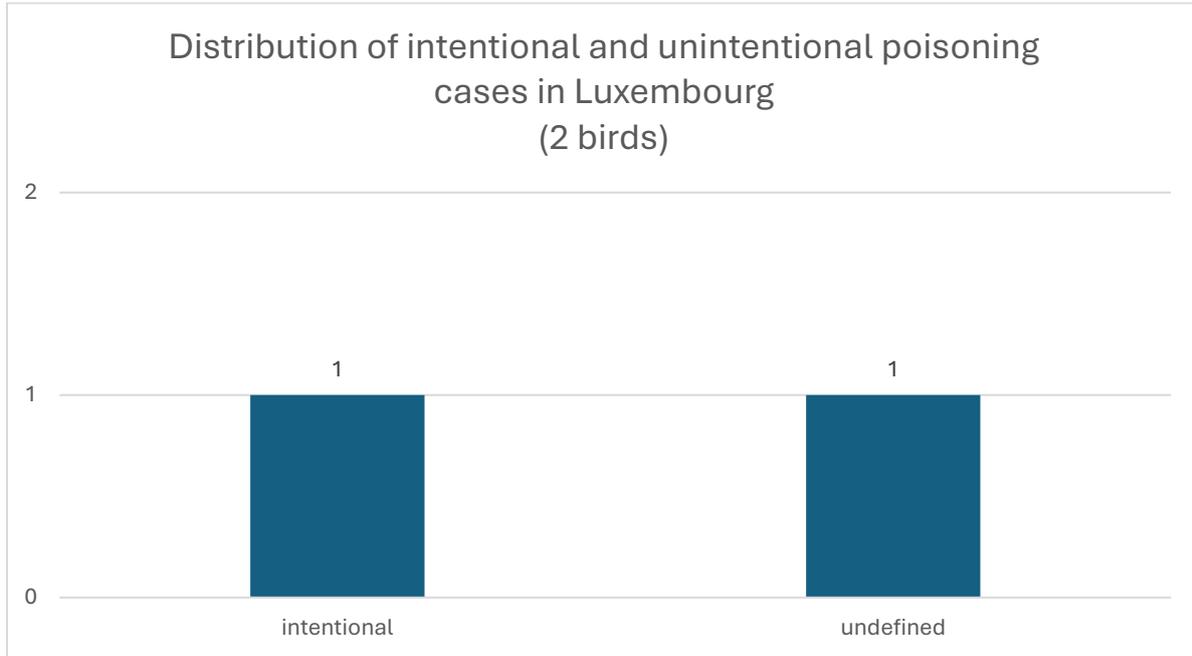


Figure 18: Number of poisoned birds classified as confirmed intentional poisoning or as cases with undetermined intent. Confirmed intentional poisoning includes cases involving toxic substances prohibited in the European Union, the presence of poisoned bait, multiple birds found dead at the same site or instances where the perpetrator has been identified. Cases with undetermined intent include birds exposed to legally permitted substances, secondary poisoning, landfill-related cases, or birds without toxicological analysis. Of the 2 poisoned birds in Luxembourg, 1 was classified as confirmed intentional poisoning and the other one as case with undetermined intent.

Results of the investigation

In both cases, the authorities have been informed. However, no further information has been received.

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5 List of tagged individuals which died in Luxembourg

Red kite

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RK_0608.....	16



CPEW
Campaign against criminal poisoning of European Wildlife

**POISONING
IS THE DIFFERENCE.**

**THESE CRIMES MUST STOP.
SIGN OUR PETITION NOW.**

<https://chng.it/zCZhxGhQSy>

www.stopwildlifepoisoning.eu

Coordinating beneficiary



The TB Raab GmbH was commissioned to implement the LIFE EUROKITE project after a pan-European public tender.



Project partner (Associated Beneficiary)



Co-financier



This project is co-financed by the LIFE Nature Programme of the European Union



Cooperation partner



This project is co-financed by the LIFE Nature Programme of the European Union