



LIFE EUROKITE CRIME REPORT

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

PART 9 - COUNTRY SPECIFIC RESULTS - GREECE

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.

Address of the lead author

TB Raab GmbH
A-2232 Deutsch-Wagram,
Quadenstraße 13,
E-Mail: office@tbraab.at



Editors

Hannah Böing, MSc
Mia Bausch, BSc
Luisa Scholze, MSc
DI Andreas Gärtner
DI Manuel Wojta
DI Dr. Techn. Maximilian Raab, BSc
Mag. Dr. Rainer Raab

GIS and map preparation by

DI Jochen Steindl
Adam Šupčík, MSc
Kurt Gruber, MSc

Citation

LIFE EUROKITE (2026): LIFE EUROKITE Crime Report. Illegal persecution of tagged red kites and other raptor species in Europe. Part 9 - Country specific results – Greece. First interim report on the results of the LIFE EUROKITE (LIFE18 NAT/AT/000048) project 2020-2024 with additional results from 2013 onwards. February 2026.

Deutsch-Wagram, Austria, 24.02.2026

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



Co-funded by
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Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or CINEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



Project: LIFE18 NAT/AT/000048 – LIFE EUROKITE



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.

Part 1 - Introduction, Methods, Overall Results, Discussion, Conclusion & Recommendation

Part 2 - Country specific results - Austria

Part 3 - Country specific results - Belgium

Part 4 - Country specific results - Croatia

Part 5 - Country specific results - Czech Republic

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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 EUOKITE project (LIFE18 NAT/AT/000048) is a cross-border protection project for the red kite and other raptor species in Europe. Within the LIFE EUOKITE 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 EUOKITE 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 EUOKITE project (Figure 1 to Figure 7).

The first results of the LIFE EUOKITE 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 Greece and will give a detailed inside of the status of investigations and legal procedure.

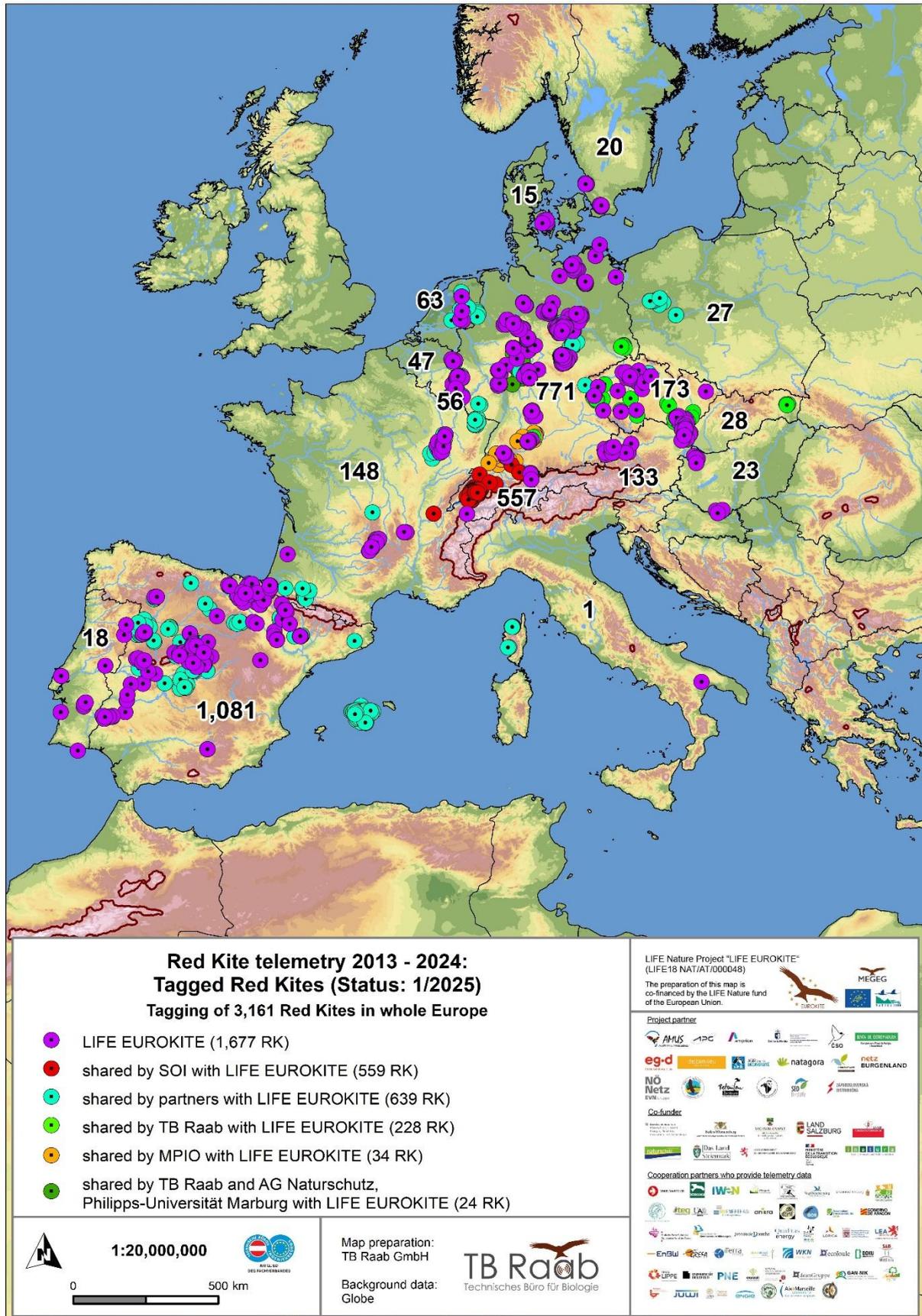


Figure 1: Tagging of 3,161 red kites by the LIFE EUROKITE project and numerous cooperation and project partners across Europe in the years 2013- 2024.

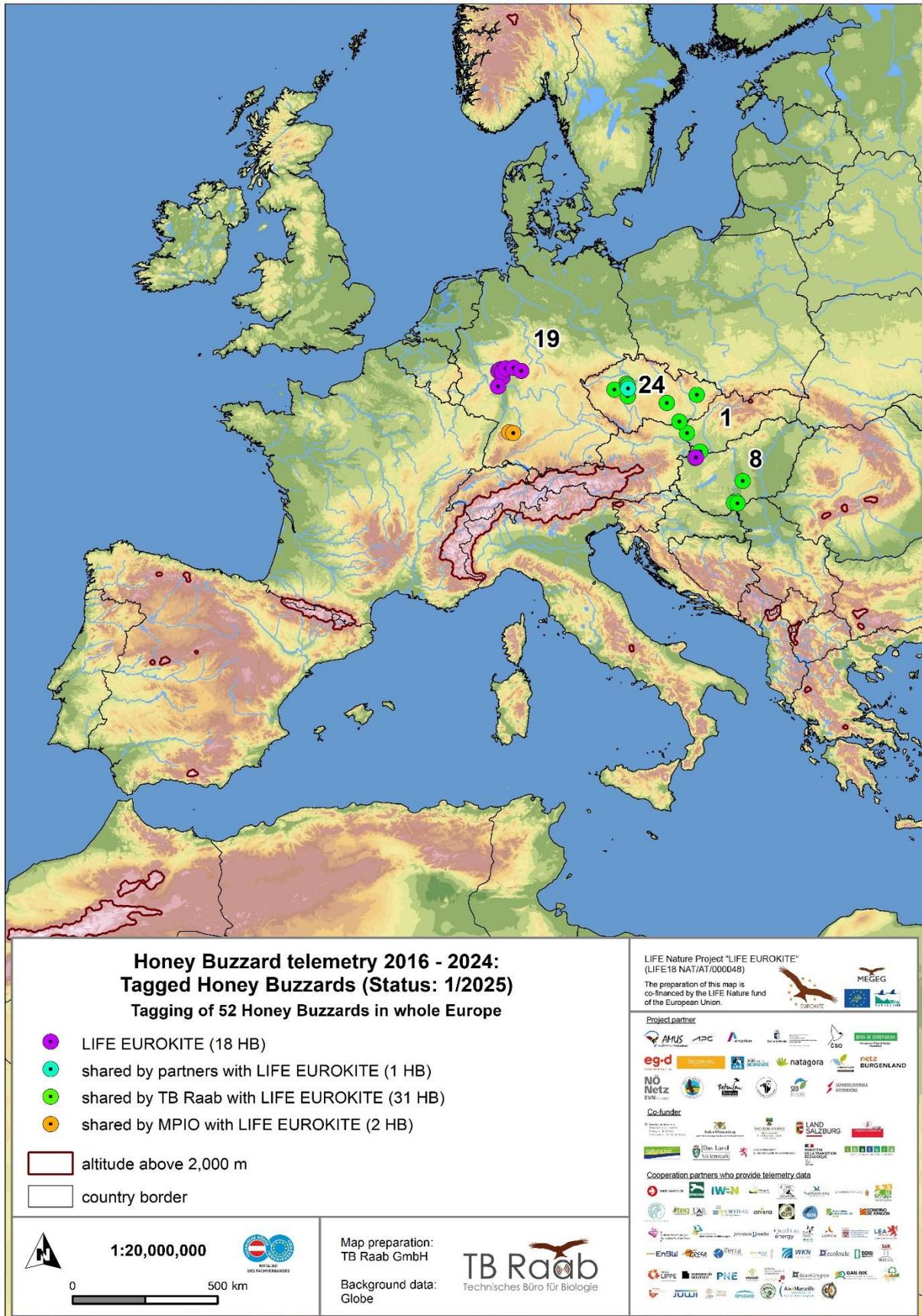


Figure 4: Tagging of 52 honey buzzards by the LIFE EUROKITE project and numerous cooperation and project partners across Europe in the years 2016-2024.

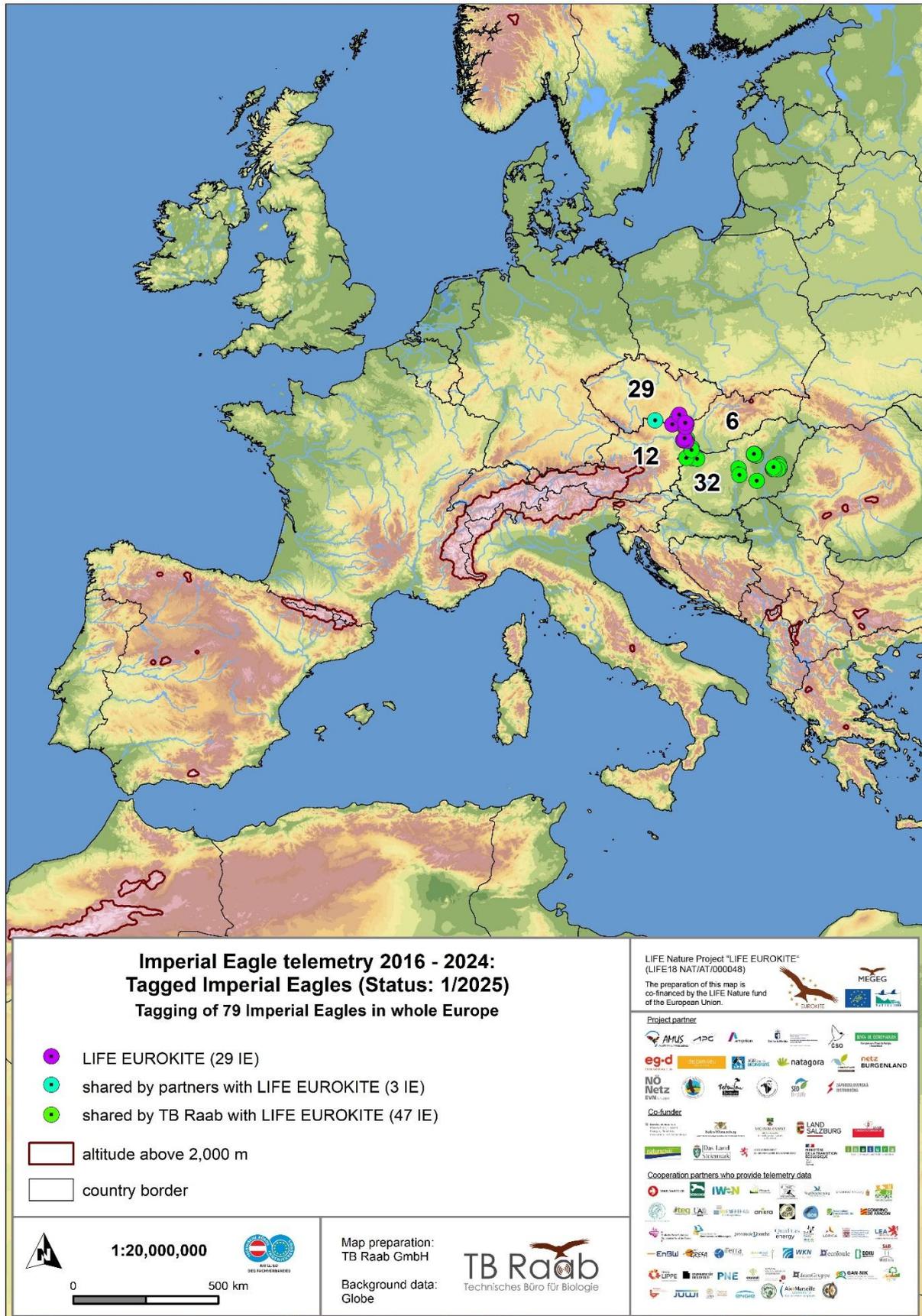


Figure 5: Tagging of 79 imperial eagles by the LIFE EUROKITE project and numerous cooperation and project partners across Europe the years 2016-2024.

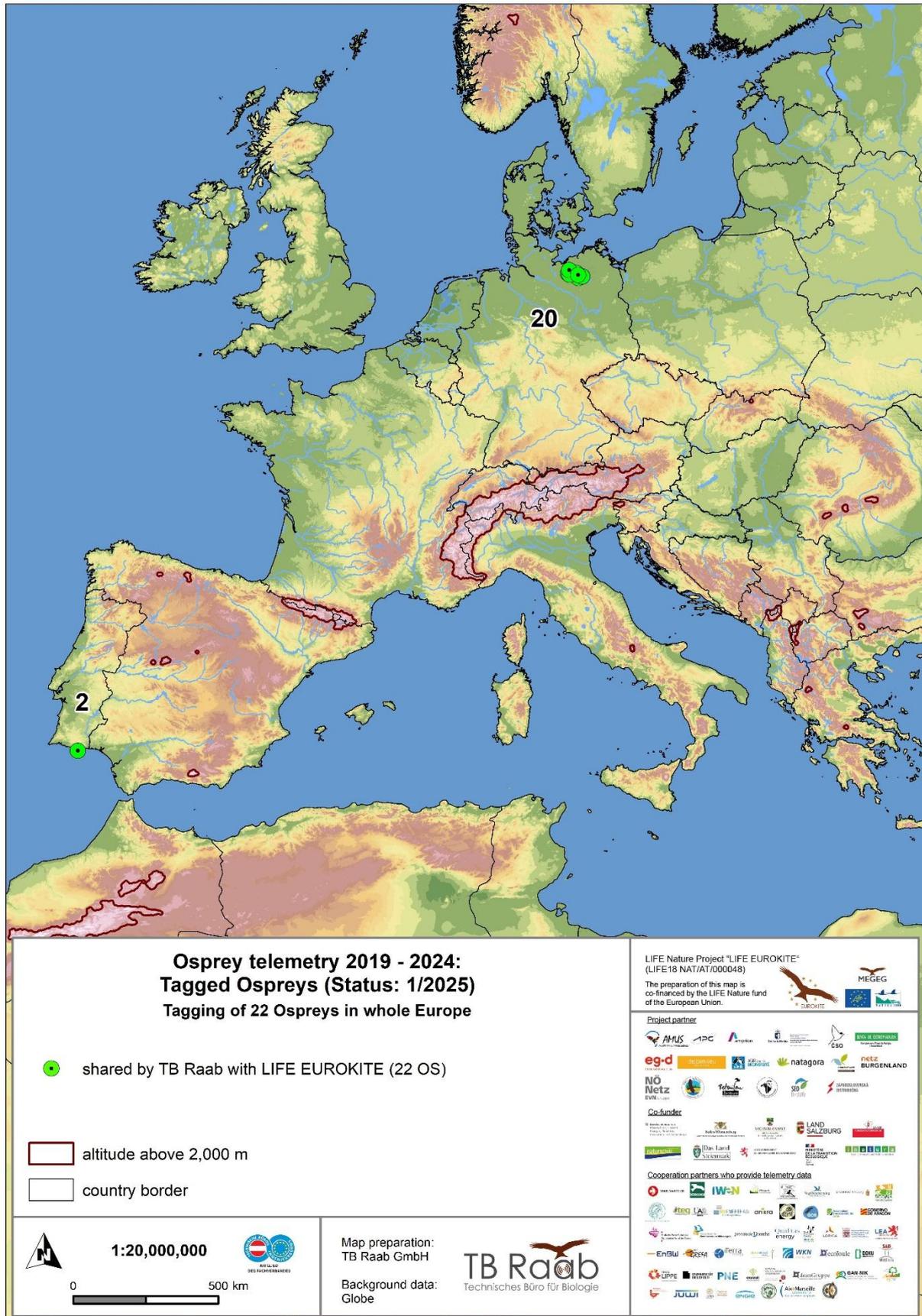


Figure 6: Tagging of 22 Ospreys by the LIFE EUROKITE project and numerous cooperation and project partners across Europe the years 2019-2024.

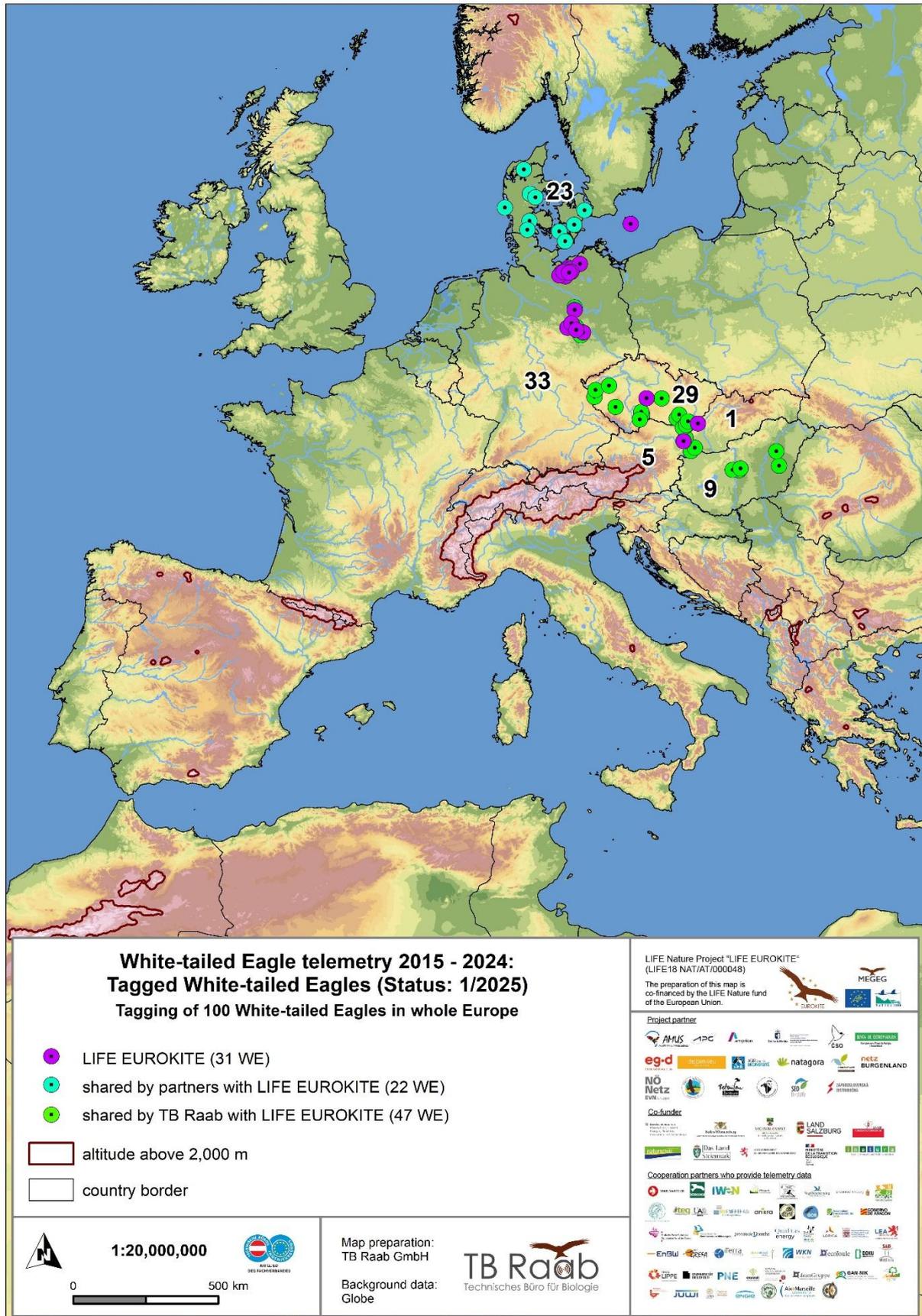


Figure 7: Tagging of 100 white-tailed eagles by the LIFE EUROKITE project and numerous cooperation and project partners across Europe the years 2015-2024.

3 Greek results

The subsequent section provides a detailed overview of the cases with illegal mortality reasons in Greece. 1 tagged bird have been confirmed as a victim of illegal activity. This bird died because of shooting.

3.1 Tagged individuals that have been shot

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

RK_0062

General information about the bird

Name: Kite_10

Species: Red kite

Birth date: 12.05.2016

Place of tagging: Humenné, Prešovský kraj, Slovakia

Date of tagging: 15.06.2016

Age at tagging: 1. CY

Origin of bird: Juvenile from the nest

Ownership category: E_TBRAAB_VFU

Logger number: KITE10

Ring number: D5607

Sex: Female

Mortality information

Place of bird crime: Island, Western Greece, Greece

Coordinates: 38,384366, 21,2023830

Date of bird crime: 18.11.2016, 03:01:10 AM (UTC)

Age at bird crime (Days): 190

Age at bird crime: 1. CY

Responsible organization for the investigation: VFÚ

Logger and/or bird found: Logger found, and bird not found

Carcass state: -

Bird crime: Shooting

Certainty category: Probable

Additional information: Expert assessment (VFÚ).

Investigation information

Last editing: 08.01.2025

Investigation: No information received

Police and/or authority investigation: 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_0062.

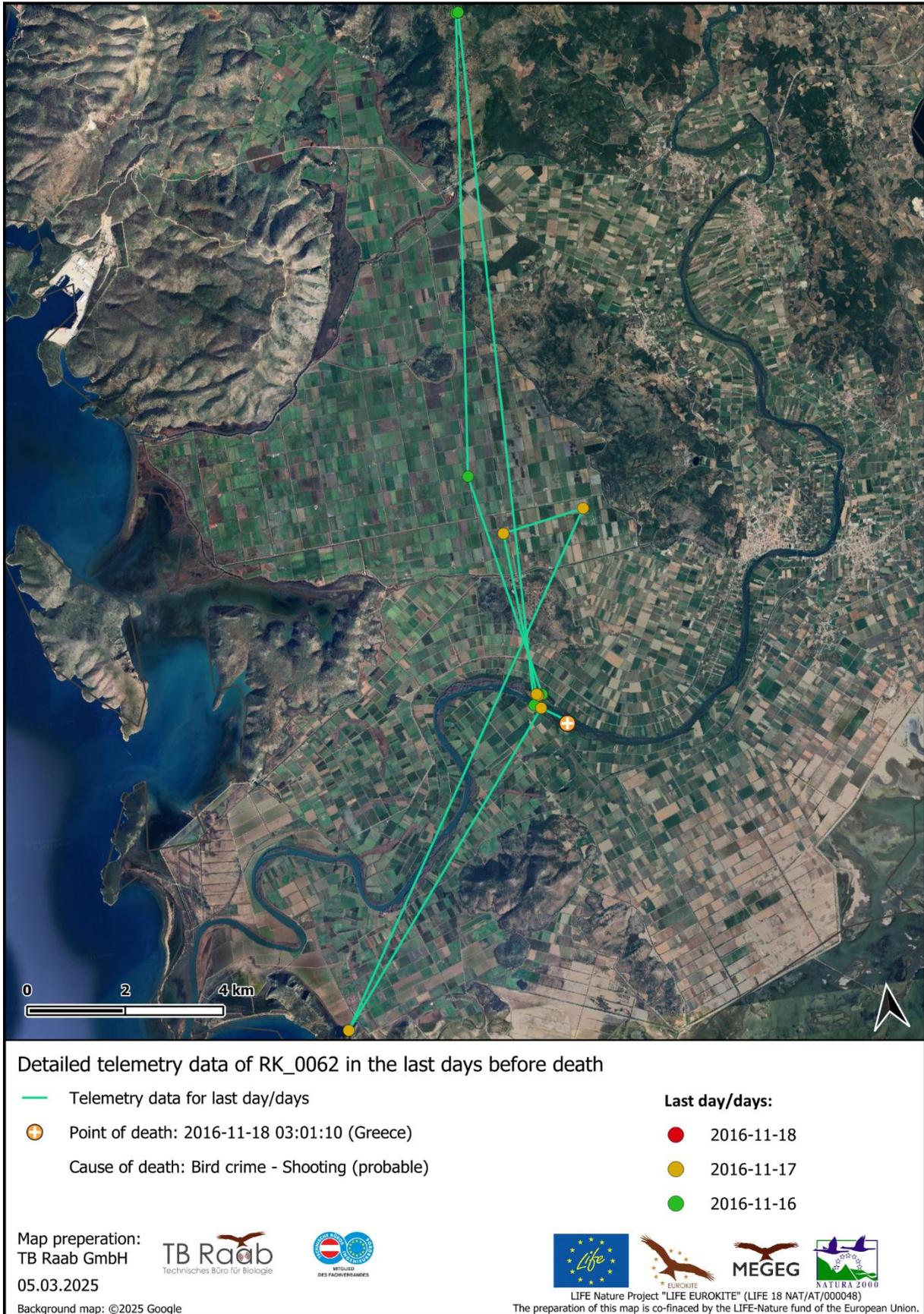


Figure 10: Detailed telemetry data of RK_0062 in the last days before death.

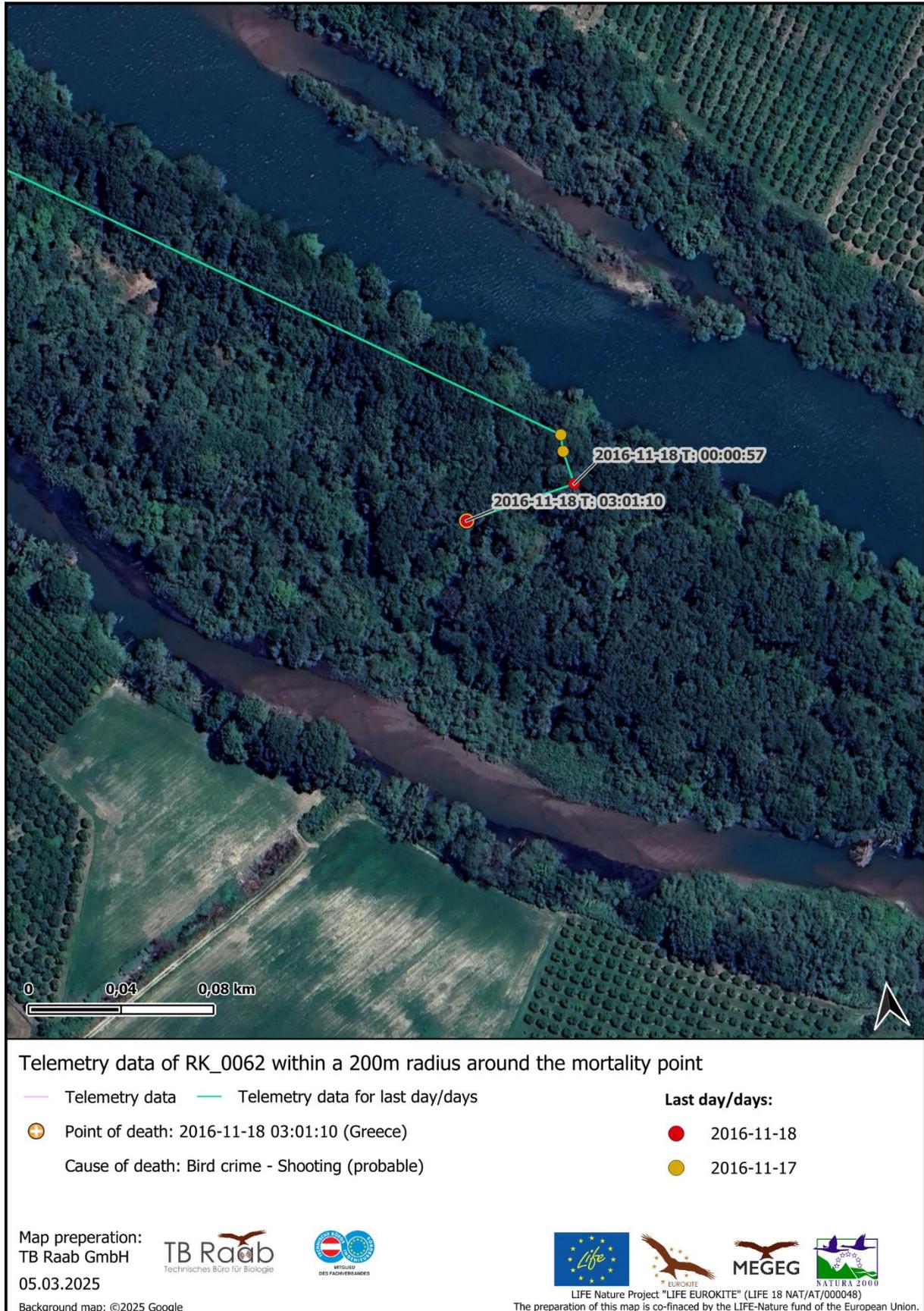


Figure 11: Telemetry data of RK_0062 within a 200m radius around the mortality point.

3.2 Summary of the Greek 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 4 tagged birds died in Greece. Of those, 1 raptor (Red kite) died due to illegal activities as it was shot (Table 1 to Table 2 & Figure 12).

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

Mortality reason	Red kite	Total
Bird crime - Shooting	1	1
Total	1	1

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

Federal State	Bird crime - Shooting	Total
Western Greece (Dytiki Elláda (Δυτική Ελλάδα))	1	1
Total	1	1

Result of the investigation

No information available.

4 References

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5 List of tagged individuals which died in Greece

Red kite

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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

