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**Direction régionale de l'environnement,
de l'aménagement et du logement
Service eau biodiversité paysage**



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INTERNATIONAL HAMSTER WORKGROUP 2022

The French National Action Plan for the protection of the common hamster and lowland biodiversity in Alsace 2019-2028

Marie-Cécile VIRION

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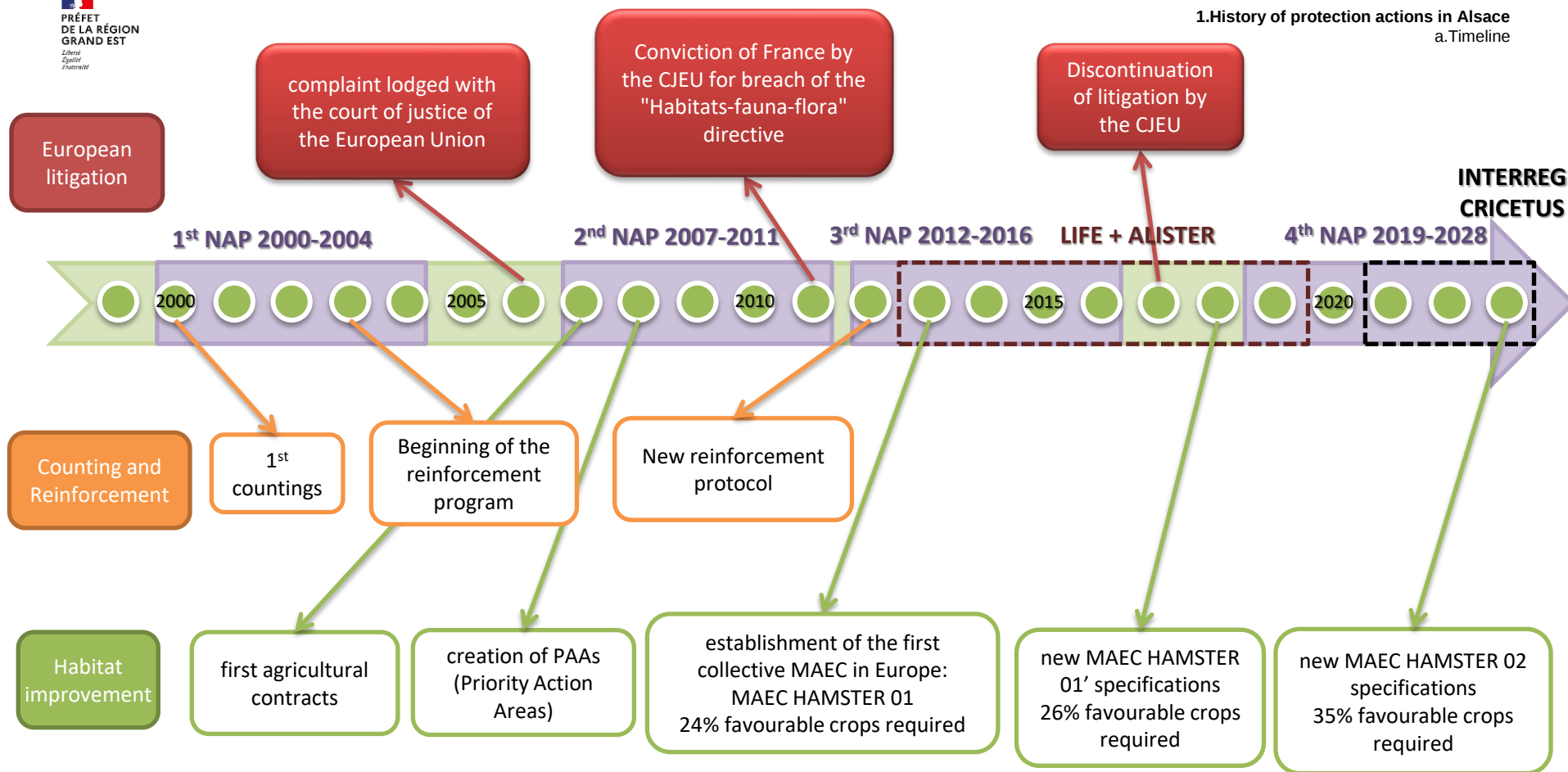
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1. History of protection actions in Alsace



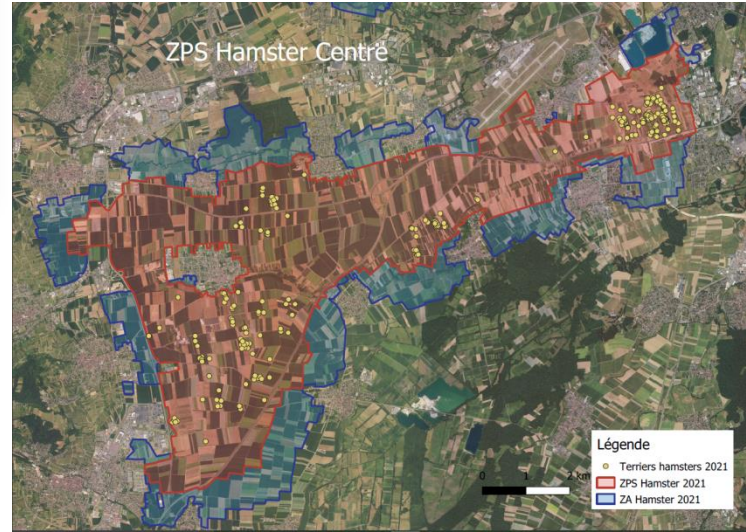
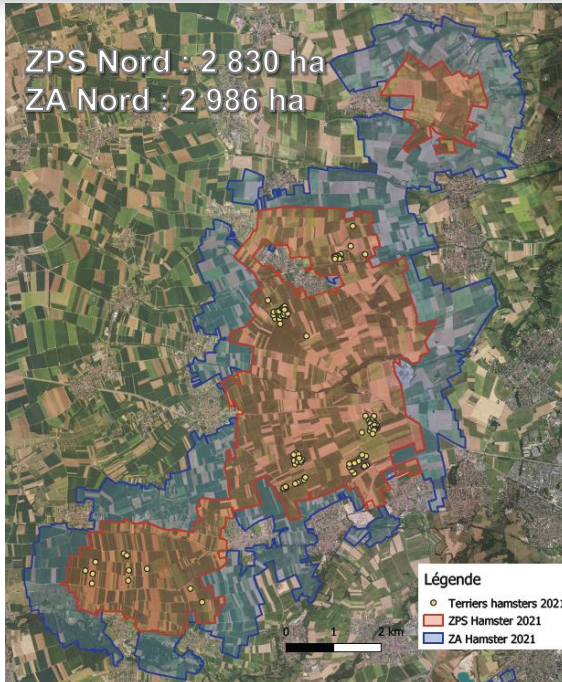
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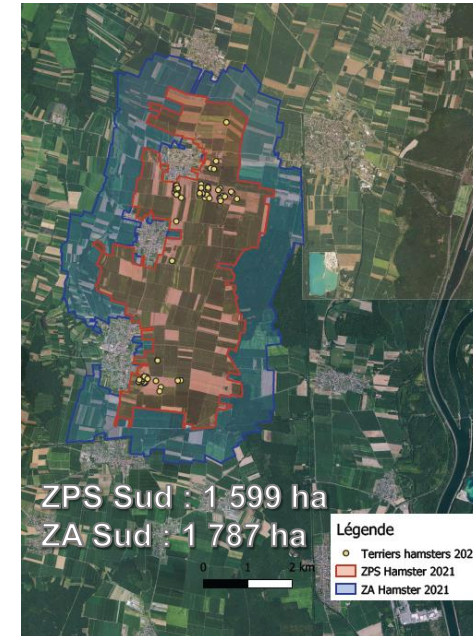


1. History of protection actions in Alsace

b. Location and population evolution



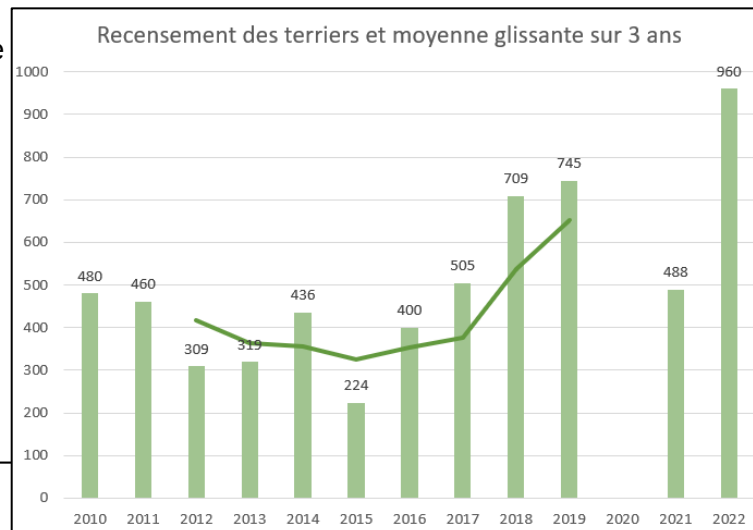
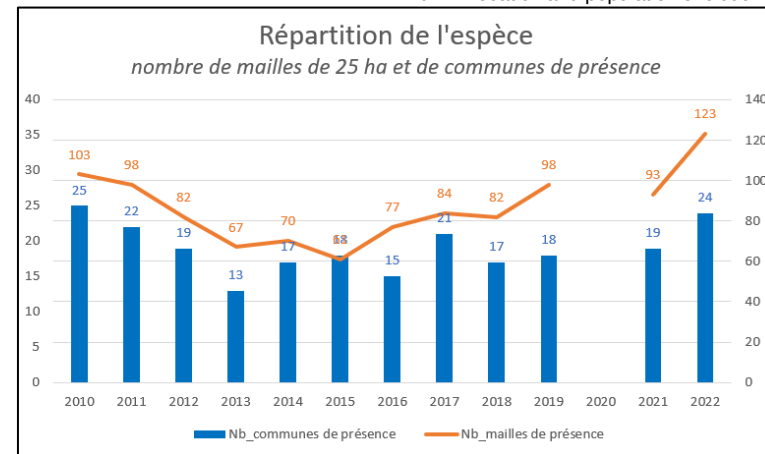
ZPS Centre : 4 174 ha
ZA Centre : 2 027 ha



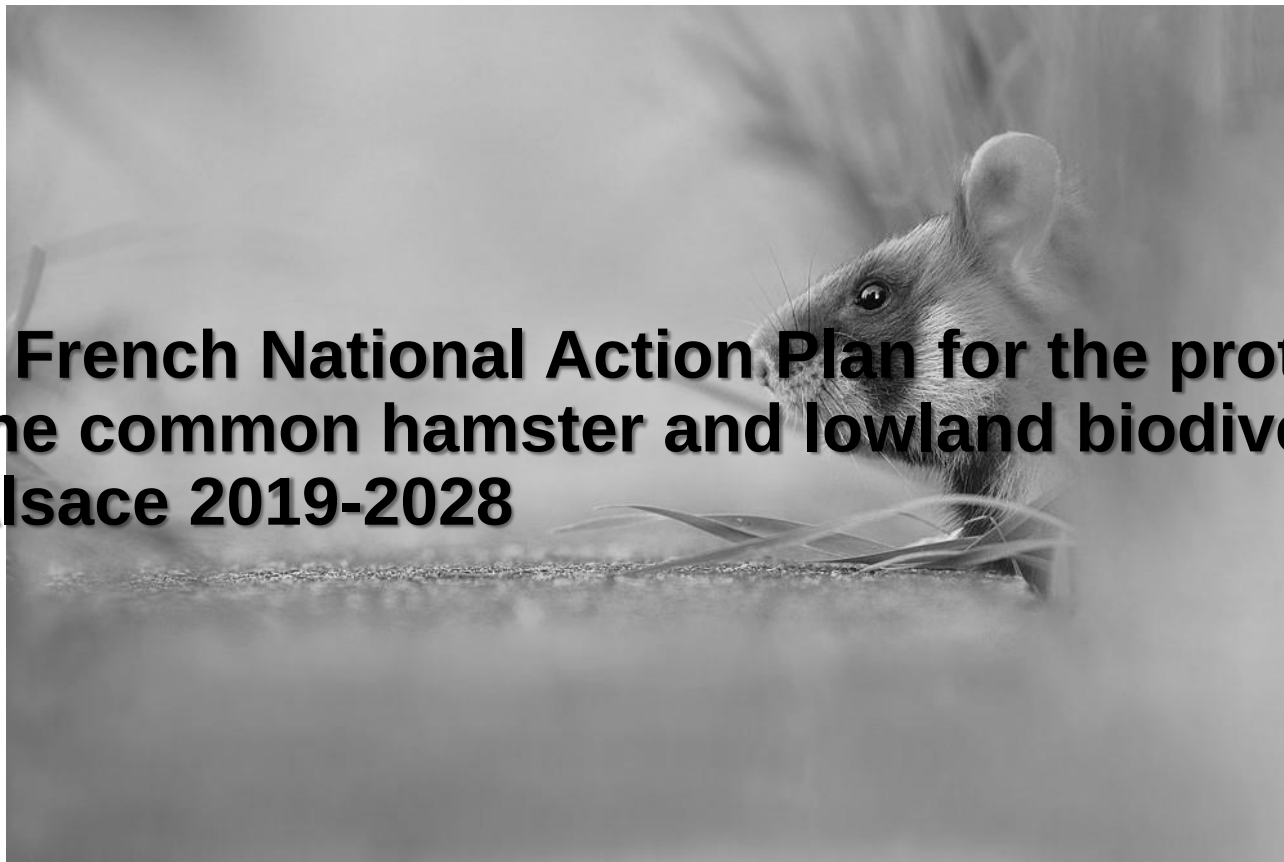
Population evolution in France

Actual protocol (by French Biodiversity Office) :

- Counting of the hamster burrows in favourable fields
- Each year from april to may
- No counting in 2020 (Covid)
- Nice results in 2022 : more burrows and a wider range
- But, in some places, populations are still decreasing
- Have some “good” years and “bad” years, we can’t explain it for the moment
- **Improve quality of hamster habitat and reinforcements are still needed to reach a viable population**



2. The French National Action Plan for the protection of the common hamster and lowland biodiversity in Alsace 2019-2028



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Definition of a NAP and actors involved

National Action Plan (NAP) :

- Built in cooperation with all the actors involved
- Not a regulatory tool
- The aim is to set up a local strategy (research, fields measures...) in order to save threatened species
- Divided in topics, and in actions
- The actions must be prioritized : 1 (very important); 2 (important); 3 (less important)

The French NAP 2019-2028

- Written by all the partners involved : Chamber of Agriculture, Association of farmers, National Center for Scientific Research, French Biodiversity Office, Breeding centres, Environmental NGO, Departmental Direction of territories...
- Plan coordinator : Local office of the Ministry of Ecology (= DREAL in French)
- 10 years program

Aim and actions

- Aim : To « save the hamster » by reaching 1500 hamsters on 600 hectares & to consider also the biodiversity in the Alsace plain.
- Contains 22 actions distributed in 5 topics
- Each topic and each action has a partner for coordinator

1. Transversality of knowledge and actions in favor of the lowland ecosystem

3. Protect the habitat of the hamster

5. Make the hamster known as an umbrella species

2. Improve our understanding about the hamster biology and how it uses its environment

4. Protect and reinforce weak populations

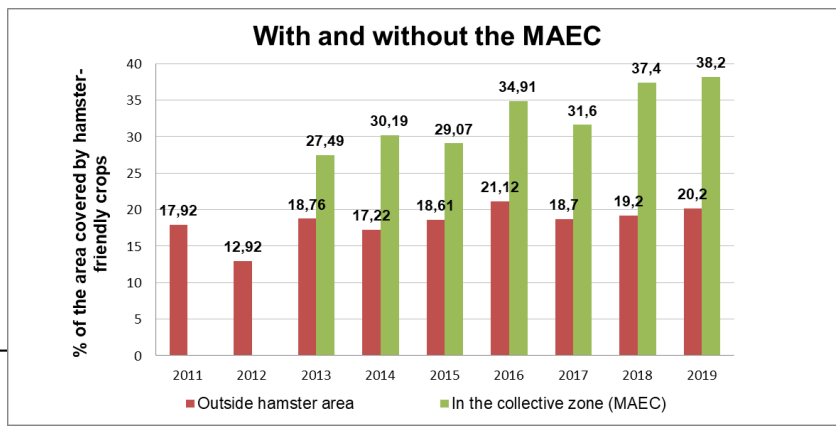
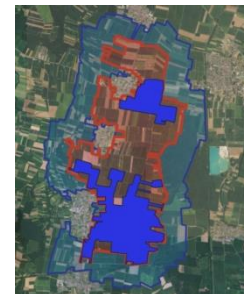
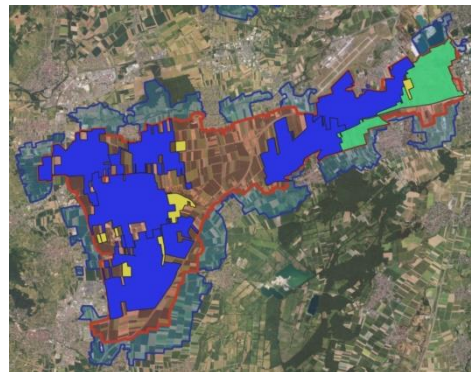
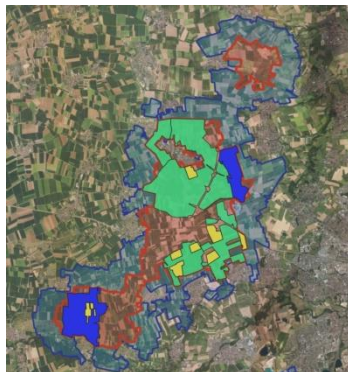


Focus on actions to improve hamster habitat

Action 3.1 : Organize and develop the collective MAEC

- Agri-environmental measure approved by Europe
- Aim : build a mosaic of favourable culture to preserve the hamster
- 5 years contract
- Since 2013
 - Almost 150 farmers
 - 12 collective areas
 - Almost 3 000 ha

Real improvement of the habitat can be noticed :



The new specifications for 2023

Before 2023

- Cover of hamster-friendly crops > 26% (452 to 520€/ha/year)
- 50% of the wheat surface near hamster burrow isn't harvested (1 800€/ha)
- Alfalfa can't be harvested at once : the max is 50% of the parcel
- Sow an interculture (mix of a grass, legume, sunflower) before 1st august on 50% of the fields
- Bonus payment of 250 € for 1 burrow/parcel
- Participate at the meeting to organise the crop rotation



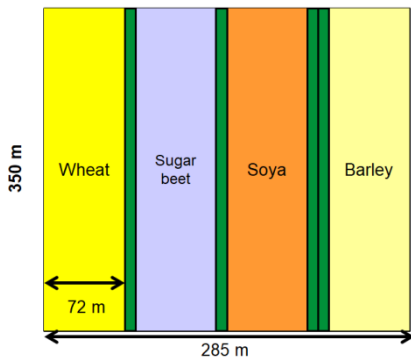
After 2023

- Cover of hamster-friendly crops :
 - **30% winter crops (525 €/ha)**
 - **5% winter crops or winter plants (525€/ha)**
 - **3% spring plants (441€/ha)**
 - **5% alfalfa (1039€/ha)**
- 50% of the wheat surface near hamster burrow isn't harvested (1 800€/ha)
- Alfalfa can't be harvested at once : the max is 50% of the parcel
- Sow an interculture (mix of a grass, legume, sunflower) before **15 days after harvest** on 50% on the fields. **And on 100% of the fields 1 month after harvest.**
- Bonus payment of 250 € for 1 burrow/parcel
- Participate to the meeting to organise the crop rotation

Intensive compensation measure

French regulations :

- If a project destroy hamster habitat, the project leader will have to try to avoid it, then reduce it, and at last, compensate the impacted surface.
- For small projects : project leader will have to pay hectares for MAEC
- For bigger projects : project leader will have to pay hectares for intensive measure : specifications are more favourable for hamsters



- Area of 10 to 15 ha
- Cover of hamster-friendly crops > 50%
- Maize is forbidden
- At least 3 different crops
- Max 20% potato
- Max crop strips length = 72m
- Between each crop strip, 6m of a mix with a grass, legume, sunflower
- Interculture must be sown 5 days after harvest and no destruction before 15 october
- No rodenticide, no deep ploughing
- Must attend the meetings
- 10 years contract

3. Interreg Cricetus



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Interreg CRICETUS

Cooperation Research project In favor of *Cricetus cricetus* consErvaTion in agricUltural landScapes

- Aim :
 - Cross-border cooperation
 - Sharing, exchanging and pooling knowledge
 - Experimentation with new tools and methods
 - Optimization of the network of breeding centers, improvement of genetic knowledge and success of releases
 - Raise awareness about hamster
- Coordinator : Department of Alsace
- Partners involved : Stiftung Natur und Umwelt Rheinland-Pfalz, Landesamt für Umwelt Rheinland-Pfalz, RLP Agrosience, Regierungspräsidium Karlsruhe, Stadt Mannheim / DREAL, National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), group for the study and protection of mammals in Alsace (GEPMA), Chamber of Agriculture.
- Budget : 2 084 250,48 €
- 2,5 years : from january 2020 to june 2023





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Thank you for your attention

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