The manuscript is very clear and well-written. I appreciate the fact that the main text was kept short, with all necessary details in appendices. I reckon there might need just a little more on the structure/logic of the model in the main text, if one wants to get a general idea without referring at all to the appendices (for instance, one large figure to summarize how it works, especially the part on habitat selection, which is the trickiest).

The main result is that population sizes stabilize quite quickly, although favourable habitat does not seem saturated. So dispersal capacities clearly seem like the limiting factor here. It would be interesting to have some perspectives on the expansion speed observed after the different reintroduction events mentioned lines 145-149, and compare with the predictions that are made. Is the environment less permeable now?

I found it hard to understand why some large chunks of perfectly good habitats are not occupied (e.g., the southern part of the Vosges population). The discussion seems to point degraded functional connectivity, but it is not obvious when looking at Fig 4 where breeding habitat seems continuous across the Vosges area. Maybe adding the main barriers to the plot would help visualizing things. Indeed, my main concern is that I was impressed by the quality of the modelling and the data, but a bit frustrated that I failed to understand fully the dynamics at work here. A few summary statistics on the model outputs might help: proportion of males/female individuals that die during dispersal ; the average distance/duration of the dispersal phase ; average life span ; proportion of individuals killed by collisions; etc…

I might have missed it, but I did not see any sensitivity analysis, which maybe could also help understanding better why the population does not manage to expand and fill the available habitat?

One of the major strengths of this model stands in the highly detailed spatial layers for collision risk and habitat quality, but there are a few things that I did not understand :

* what is the quality of the regression model for collision risk ? How much data was it fitted with
* Collision risk for residents is calculated as the mean risk over an individual’s territory: don’t you think it gives enormous weight to high-risk roads that might be avoided by individuals in practice? The collision risk seems huge to me, but it is difficult to infer on Fig A2 because the colour scale is all red from 0.01 to 1 (please adjust the colour scale ☺).
* I am also not sure I understood the habitat layer model correctly: lynx presence data from France are used to evaluate the influence of different landscape or habitat elements. But the lynx population in France was quite small, so the absence of individuals at a given location does not imply that the habitat is unfavourable? Further details on model fitting might help here (maybe a map of the area used for model fitting, relatively to the area in which habitat quality was extrapolated?)

Fig 4 : which cells are represented? Only breeding habitat with >0 occupancy? The legend should be clearer, also it might be interesting to visualize favourable habitat that is not occupied at all.