

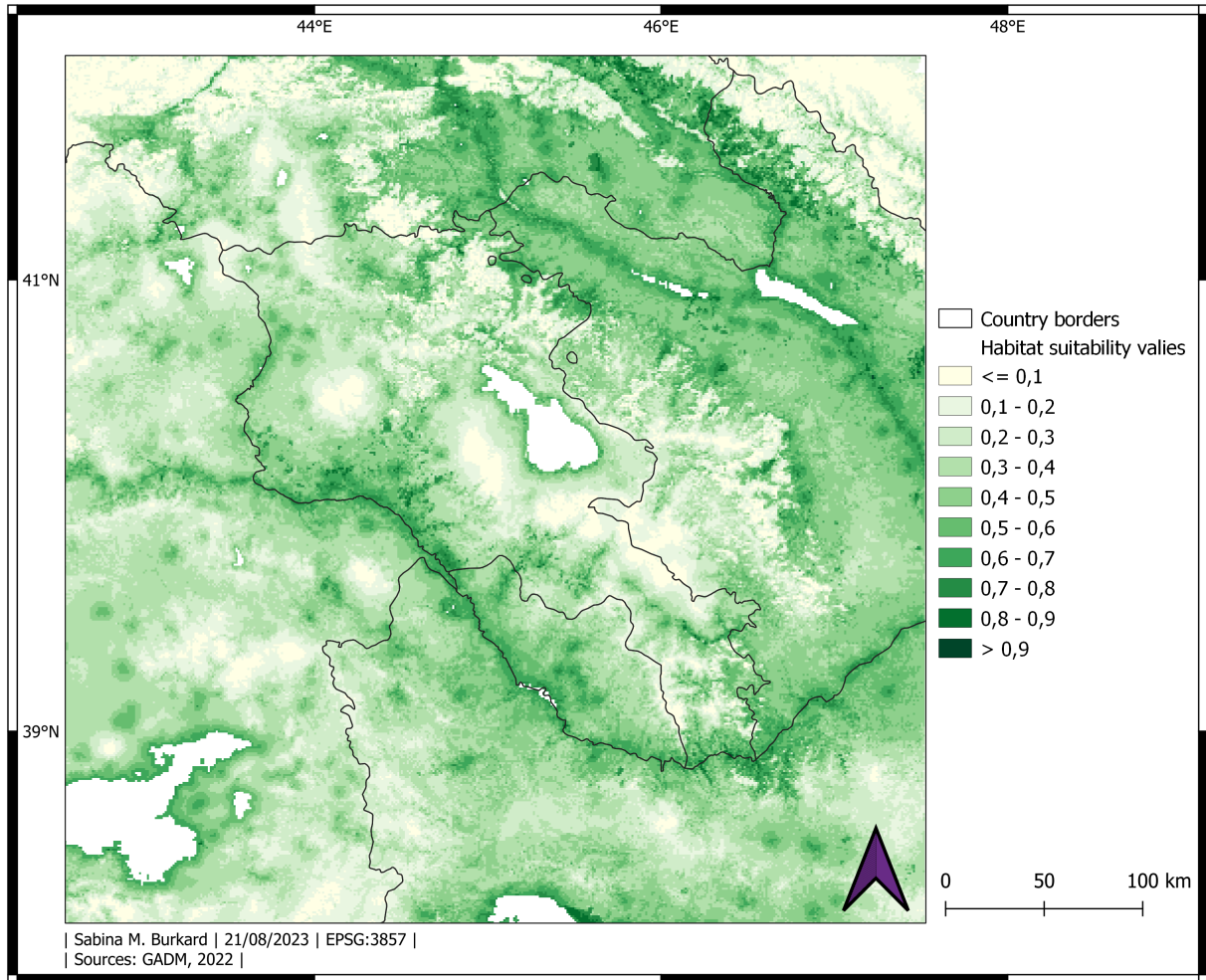
Expansion of golden jackals in Armenia

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Abstract

Golden jackals (*Canis aureus*) are currently rapidly expanding mesopredators. The range expansion of golden jackals into great parts of Europe has drawn more attention recently. However, jackals in Armenia have not been of great scientific interest but could provide interesting insights into possible drivers for this species' rapid range expansion beyond the Caucasus region. I examined the range expansion of golden jackals in Armenia and its surroundings using a presence-only data set of 128 C1 observation points from 2000 to 2023. This was done through the creation of species distribution models with the Maxent algorithm. Snow cover days, forest cover and distance to waterbodies are the main predictors influencing jackals' distribution in the research area. The potential distribution of this species covers a minimum of 23% of the study area, and interaction with apex predators is mainly expected to happen with wolves. In Armenia, the potential area of distribution is 6 to 30 times larger than their historic range and consists of areas where there have not been C1 observations so far. My investigation presents one of the first approaches to understanding the distribution of jackals in this region, but also leaves open questions that need further investigation.

Golden Jackal habitat suitability



Golden Jackal potential distribution

