



WWF

NEWSLETTER

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Ag Göl National Park, Azerbaijan. © H. Müller

# CAUCASUS ECOREGION NEWSLETTER

Issue **1**

*with sad notes...*

## In Loving Memory

### GERA VOSKANYAN

07 April, 1979 – 20 March, 2015

Gera Voskanyan, in age of 35 passed away on Friday, March 20th 2015 in Gland, Switzerland during a business trip.

Gera was born on April 7th, 1979 in Armavir city, Armenia. He was a proud member of WWF-Armenia which he joined in June 2011 as a Project Coordinator. Afterwards, in August 2012 he became the Partnership and Communications Manager.

Since then Gera has done a great job for development of communications and establishment of partnership with many organizations. Gera was the Regional Communication Coordinator for WWF on the FLEG II Program that covers seven countries. He was a key member of the Communication Team and had been working very successfully with his colleagues in Gland immediately before his death. Gera's contribution to WWF work was immense, always finding new ways to help people working on saving the nature of the Caucasus. He was also closely cooperating with representatives of mass media. His recent initiative has been organization of Earth Hour Global Movement in Armenia. Gera adored children and that is why he used to organize many events for schoolchildren and initiated various charity activities in support of orphan children. On professional level Gera was intelligent, enthusiastic, responsible, helpful and very friendly person and it was joyful to have him as part of the team.

He was a great father, loving husband, a caring son and a true friend. Gera was excited about life...He was enjoying it and made others enjoy with his positive attitude. His constant questioning and curiosity. Gera kept us all looking to the future, always searching for the next challenge, always wanting a better future and doing all this with perfect sense of humor.

We at WWF Caucasus and in entire WWF Network Family join his family, relatives and countless friends in mourning his passing.

We will always keep Gera in our memories...



## Ensuring Connectivity Between Protected Areas

The Greater Caucasus is an important landscape for conservation of thousands of living creatures. It is covered mainly by deciduous forest and alpine meadows which is home for many endemic and endangered species. Eastern Caucasian tur (*Capra cylindricornis*), Caucasian Black Grouse (*Tetrao mlokosiewiczi*), Caucasian Snow Cock (*Tetraogallus caucasicus*) are species which could be found only in Greater Caucasus. Other inhabitants of these mountains such as Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), Lynx (*Lynx lynx*), Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), Caucasian chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*), Imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), Cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) are focal species for WWF. The forests and meadows of the Greater Caucasus harbor thousands of plant species, among them many endemic ones.

The Greater Caucasus is covered enough by the system of PAs. Two strictly protected reserves with about 60 000 ha (Zagatala and Ilisu), Shahdag NP (130 508 ha) and six sanctuaries with total area of 106 000 ha have been established for conservation of habitats and species. The protective functions of these areas are ensured in the long term if the areas between them (so called “ecological corridors”) can provide important ecological functions. Unfortunately, areas occupied by ecological corridors are often used unsustainably, resulting in reduction of these ecological functions. The main negative impact is caused by overgrazing, collection of firewood and non-timber forest products, unsustainable use of environmentally important areas, poaching and, partially, unregulated tourism as well as large infrastructure development projects.

For this reason another instruments is being implemented by WWF through “Promotion of Ecocorridors in the Southern Caucasus” project which was started recently through financing from German Government. The project will provide financial resources in support of environmentally sustainable land use practices in selected ecological corridors, thus connecting protected areas to ensure their biological stability. This will contribute to the conservation of biodiversity without reducing income of the poor part of rural population.

As a pilot landscape the Greater Caucasus was selected for this program in Azerbaijan. It is the first program of WWF with long term and large landscape approach in the Caucasus.

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Ilisu State Nature Reserve. © WWF-Azerbaijan



© WWF Russia, U. Semionov

## Leopard Returns to the Caucasus

Within realization of The Persian Leopard Conservation Communication Strategy for 2015 - 2020 it was necessary to develop a logo which would reflect the main idea of the project and will be its integral part in media space. We got it within help of the Region Media Company which created and provided logo for WWF for free. Now you can see this logo on every media materials which are connected with The Persian leopard project.

Also, representatives of the WWF in cooperation with the Oleg Deripaska Foundation Volnoe delo has held some thematic meetings with the public and pupils of the region devoted to the project of conservation of Persian leopard in the Russian Caucasus. During these meetings we provide the information about the Persian Leopard, its tragic history on the Russian Caucasus, about actions, which took part from our side to restore its population to local people. The main aim of these meetings is an educational work with local people to avoid any wrong opinions about the Persian Leopard and about the project of its reintroduction.

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**Как выжить?**

Переднеазиатский леопард — один из красивейших хищников планеты и в мире. Длина тела самца может достигать 1,8 м, длина хвоста — 80 см. Вес — 100 кг. Окрас шерсти — рыжий, с черными пятнами. Леопарды обитают в горах и на равнинах. Встретиться с леопардом можно в горах Кавказа, в частности в Грузии, Армении и Азербайджане. Леопарды — хищники, питающиеся копытными животными, зайцами, кабанами и дикими птицами. Леопарды — одиночные животные, которые живут поодиночке. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц.

**Как себя вести при встрече с леопардом?**

- 1. Не паниковать. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц.
- 2. Не приближаться к леопарду. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц.
- 3. Не пытаться убежать. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц.
- 4. Не пытаться бороться с леопардом. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц.
- 5. Не пытаться кричать. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц.
- 6. Не пытаться бегать. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц.
- 7. Не пытаться прыгать. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц.
- 8. Не пытаться вставать на задние лапы. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц.
- 9. Не пытаться делать шаг назад. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц.
- 10. Не пытаться делать шаг вперед. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц.

**Переднеазиатский леопард: простые правила добрососедства**

Вы можете увидеть этого красивейшего хищника в Грузии, Армении и Азербайджане. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц. Леопарды — хищники, которые охотятся на копытных животных, зайцев, кабанов и диких птиц.

## Ecological Corridor Project in the Turkish Caucasus

WWF-Turkey is conducting the Caucasus Ecological Corridor Project in the Turkish Caucasus. This project aims to contribute to the establishment of ecological corridors in the region, assist with the establishment and implementation of the national species conservation plan for the leopard in Turkey and to redevelop a new Caucasus Programme for WWF-Turkey.

During this project, the potential habitat of the leopard and other large mammals in the area will be studied and the ecological corridors will be based on the results of this work. In this regard, WWF-Turkey hosted a scoping meeting on the 26th-27th of March, 2015 in Istanbul to kick-start the project and increase regional cooperation on this matter. During this meeting, a scoping study was conducted to determine the area and the methodology for the field work and discuss the strategy of the project including potential areas of collaboration and coordination.

During this meeting, participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran and Turkey presented the methodology and results of their work and provided expert opinion and guidance for the conservation activities in Turkey. Among topics discussed during the meeting were the possible current condition of the leopard in the Turkish Caucasus, the potential routes of leopard for entering into Turkey as well as the threats on the leopard and other large mammals and their prey in the region.

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## Transboundary Joint Secretariat in South Caucasus

On 26th of March, 2015 the closing meeting of second phase of the project “Transboundary Joint Secretariat for Nature Conservation in the Southern Caucasus” financed the German Bilateral Financial Cooperation (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development - BMZ), through KfW development Bank was organized In Tbilisi.



WWF-Caucasus Director G. Sanadiradze (left) and KfW Development Bank representative A. Weitzel during signing ceremony.

Purpose of the meeting was to inform the stakeholders on the final results of the project. The representatives of KfW and other donor organizations attended the meeting and the members of governmental bodies and NGOs of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan participated in the meeting.

Main purposes of a second phase was the harmonized development of environmental protection sector; with the purpose of proper implementation of a sectorial policy elaboration and improvement of operational mechanisms and promotion of sustainable funding of the Protected Areas of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan has been essential.

The grant agreement on initiation of the third phase was signed at the meeting in consequence of which the project will be implemented by WWF Caucasus Programme Office within a period of five years. The grant sum for southern Caucasus amounts to 5 million Euro.

TJS facilitates to the Ministries and Agencies of Protected Areas of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan to improving regional cooperation and development and harmonization of nature conservation sector.

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### Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

[www.panda.org/caucasus](http://www.panda.org/caucasus)

Regional projects in Turkish and Russian parts of the Caucasus are coordinated and implemented accordingly by WWF-Turkey and WWF-Russia in close cooperation with WWF Causus PO under one vision of Ecoregion Conservation Plan.

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