



WWF

ANNUAL  
REVIEW

DCP

2013

# SAVING THE GREEN HEART OF EUROPE

WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme  
July 2012—June 2013

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# A STRUGGLE FOR THE GREEN HEART OF EUROPE

*“Last year, thousands of Bulgarians poured into the streets in protest over amendments to the Forest Law. Now, thousands of Romanians are thronging the streets of Bucuresti and other cities outraged over the Romanian government’s abrupt approval of gold mining at Rosia Montana.*



Andreas Beckmann,  
Director,  
WWF-DCPO

The protests at Eagle’s Bridge in Sofia finally convinced the government to amend legislation that would have opened the country’s protected forests to development and facilitated corruption; it is still unclear what effect the protests in Romania will have on the Parliament’s final decision regarding gold mining with cyanide in a valuable area of the Carpathian Mountains.

The two incidents brought into sharp focus a struggle over the future of the region’s natural riches and the close link to good governance.

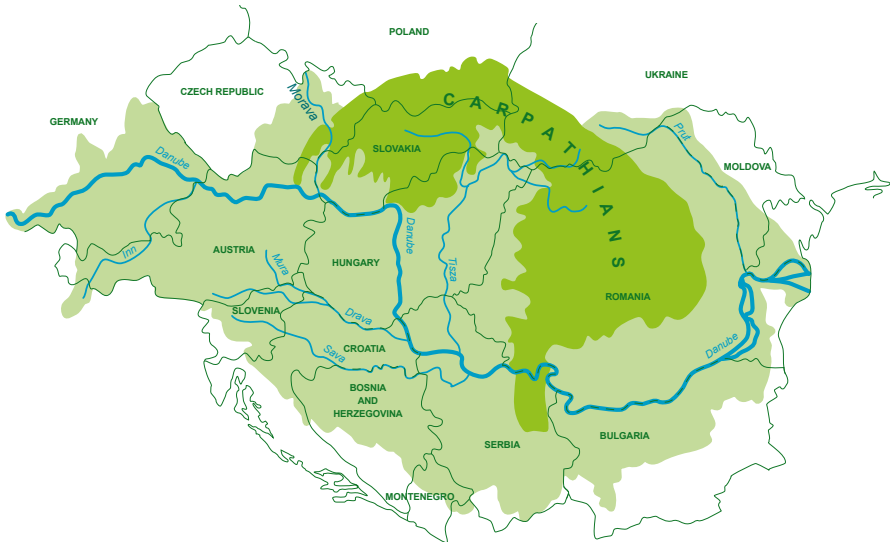
There is indeed much to fight for in the Green Heart of Europe. Our region has many of Europe’s greatest treasures, and these treasures are growing in value as resources become scarce and as we become more aware of their true value to us in providing benefits from clean air and water to flood and climate protection.

Will these treasures enrich a self-appointed few, or serve the broader public? Will they be squandered in the short-term, or survive for the benefit of our children and future generations? How will those decisions be made and by whom?

These are the fundamental issues that are at stake in the streets of Sofia, Bucuresti and elsewhere in our region, and these are the issues that we at WWF will continue to address in the next years, working closely with partners from across sectors and the growing number of people in the region who are taking action for the future – of their countries, their treasures, and themselves.“

*Andreas Beckmann*

Andreas Beckmann



# 15 YEARS IN THE REGION



*“Our goal is to work with others to secure the green heart of Europe, including many of its outstanding rivers and wetlands, virgin and old growth forests as well as wilderness areas.”*

Dr Orieta Hulea,  
Conservation Director

*The Danube River basin is the most international river basin in the world, draining 18 countries on its 2,800 km journey from the Black Forest in Germany to the Black Sea. From the largely untamed middle and lower stretches of the river to the spectacular Danube Delta at its mouth, the Danube is home to some of the richest wetland areas in Europe and the world.*

*The Carpathian Mountains, arching across seven countries from the Czech Republic across Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Hungary, and down to Romania and the tip of Serbia, are Europe’s last great wilderness area – a bastion for large carnivores, with over half of the continent’s populations of bears, wolves and lynx, and home to the greatest remaining reserves of old growth forests outside of Russia. 80% of the Carpathians’ water drains into the Danube.*

WWF-DCPO turns 15 this year. EU Environment Commissioner Potocnik, Bulgarian President Plevneliev and WWF-International Executive Director Conservation Lasse Gustavsson helped us to mark the milestone.



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# THE BEAR NECESSITIES



If one bear could speak for all of the 7,000 bears living in the Carpathians, then this would have to be Martin, also known by his code name WWF 11621. Martin was a young male of about 6 to 8 years, weighing 150 kg. He knew many things that are helpful to our work, such as where bears feed, shelter and breed. In June 2012, we started following Martin by placing a GPS-GSM device on him. From the Strâmbu Băiut Forest, where we captured him, he took us places that had previously been inaccessible. We could see how his habitats were fragmented and that connectivity between them was weak. We discovered the corridors that we need to preserve and restore for his species to survive. Sadly, we could not help Martin against poachers. In August he was found dead in a hunting range belonging to a local hunting association in Maramures in northern Romania. His death triggered a long and much needed national debate, in politics and media, regarding the management of large carnivores in Romania. Our priority now is to address poaching and bear management more generally while working to secure key corridors linking bear populations.





# OUR MAIN ACTIONS IN 2012-2013

## RIVERS AND WETLANDS

500,000

HECTARES OF WETLAND AREAS  
IN ROMANIA AND BULGARIA RECEIVED  
PROTECTION UNDER THE RAMSAR  
CONVENTION ON WETLANDS



*“Our dream is a healthy, living Danube that secures benefits and services for people and nature. To do this, we are promoting effective protection and restoration of rivers, their floodplains and wetlands, and addressing threats to the river system.”*

Laurice Ereifej,  
Regional Head of  
Danube/Freshwater

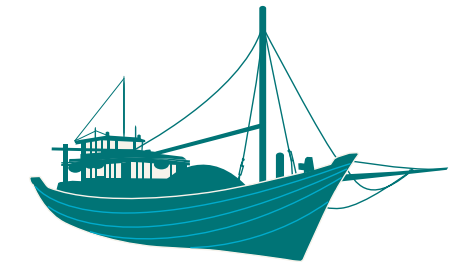
WWF supported the Romanian government as host of the Conference of the Parties of the Ramsar in Bucharest in July 2012, organizing side-events, exhibits and excursions. We leveraged the conference to secure protection for over 500,000 ha of wetland areas in Romania and Bulgaria.

Wetland restoration moved forward at sites across the Danube basin, including new projects on the March/Morava in Austria, in the Danube Delta in Romania and near the Drava-Danube confluence in Serbia and Croatia. To date, we have 25 wetland restoration projects across 9 Danube countries that are ongoing or completed.

In September 2013 our initiative to establish the Mura-Drava-Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, which will be the largest riverine protected area in Europe, was shortlisted for the European Riverprize.

## HYDROPOWER & NAVIGATION

PROJECTS TO DEVELOP NAVIGATION  
AND HYDROPOWER ALONG THE DANUBE  
AND ITS TRIBUTARIES POSE THE  
GREATEST THREAT TO THE HEALTH  
OF THE RIVER SYSTEM.



*“We want to ensure that inland navigation and hydropower development are based on strategic planning and latest knowledge in order to maintain freshwater biodiversity and ecosystem services.”*

Irene Lucius,  
Head of Policy and  
Green Economy

Danube governments adopted guidelines for development of hydropower that include designation of “no go” areas – a key WWF demand in negotiations with the hydropower industry and other stakeholders.

We continued to support implementation of guidance for development of inland navigation endorsed by Danube governments while keeping on hold harmful approaches to improving navigation in Romania and Bulgaria. In Serbia, we worked closely with authorities to identify solutions for navigation and conservation on the Serbian stretch of the Danube – a best-practice approach that we hope to apply elsewhere as well.

## STURGEON

STURGEON ONCE FLOURISHED  
IN THE DANUBE, MIGRATING AS FAR  
AS GERMANY – BUT THEY ARE  
NOW ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION.



*“We want to keep viable populations of sturgeon in the Danube and tributaries. For this, we need to address illegal trade and poaching, secure spawning areas and restore migration across the Iron Gates dams, permitting sturgeon to migrate and double their range.”*

Vesselina Kavrakova,  
WWF Bulgaria  
Country Manager

In May 2013, WWF organized the first scientific expedition to identify sturgeon spawning habitats along the Bulgarian Danube.

We launched major efforts to identify and protect remaining spawning areas on the Lower Danube in Bulgaria and joined forces with TRAFFIC to address illegal trade.

We started working with fishermen and customs officers to raise their awareness on the illegal caviar trade.



# DREAMS BECOMING REALITY

Zdenka Mitić has a dream, and it is becoming reality. The seed was planted ten years ago by David Reeder, a WWF staff member, who encouraged Zdenka and her neighbours to see a bright future for their small village of Bački Monoštor connected with the rich cultural and natural heritage of their area, located near the Danube where Serbia abuts with Croatia and Hungary, part of the future Mura-Drava-Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. Reeder helped Zdenka, her friends and neighbours to establish a group, Podunav, that has been promoting local development and conservation. Ten years on, they are succeeding. Many local people now offer home stays to a growing number of visitors, who come to the area to enjoy the rich mixture of Serbian, Croatian and Hungarian culture as well as for birding and other nature tourism. The annual Bodrog Fest that the group initiated now draws thousands of visitors from the region and beyond. As a result, young people see a future for themselves in their village and are no longer moving away. Zdenka's dream is contributing to – and benefiting from – the much larger dream of the Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve, Europe's largest riverine protected area. David Reeder tragically died in 2006, but his memory lives on in "David Reeder Square", at the centre of Bački Monoštor, and in his smaller and larger dreams that are becoming reality.





# FORESTS



THE DANUBE-CARPATHIAN REGION HAS THE GREATEST REMAINING AREA OF VIRGIN AND NATURAL FORESTS IN EUROPE OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA AND NORTHERN SCANDINAVIA.

3,000,000  
HECTARES OF FORESTS  
ARE ON TRACK FOR FSC  
CERTIFICATION  
IN BULGARIA AND ROMANIA



*“Our region has many of Europe’s greatest remaining forest treasures. We want to save them. By 2020, we aim to ensure legal protection for all virgin forests in the Carpathian and Balkan Mountains, using EU and national legislation as well as the Carpathian Convention. We also want to secure close to nature forest management, including through FSC certification, for at least 3 million hectares of forest.”*

Costel Bucur,  
Head of Forests and  
Protected Areas

We followed up on the Romanian government’s 2011 commitment to protect the country’s remaining virgin forests, moving quickly forward with identification of these areas so that they can be secured. We also supported the work through the Carpathian Convention to secure protection for virgin forests across the region.

With help from our supporters and the public, we managed to halt damaging amendments to the Forest Laws in Bulgaria and Romania, and stopped government plans in Bulgaria to fell 4,500 ha of riverine forests. Logging in Csarna valley, the largest intact forest in Hungary, was stopped thanks to a campaign organized by WWF-Hungary.

We continued promoting responsible forest management, providing training and technical support for FSC certification as well as identification of High Conservation Value Forests in Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine.

# WILDERNESS AND PROTECTED AREAS



In contrast to the Danube, the Carpathian Mountains have until recently remained remarkably preserved. But pressure for development is mounting.



*“We want to secure effective protection for Europe’s greatest natural treasures in our region. At this point, most areas in our region that should be protected are protected – but more on paper than actual practice. We want to ensure that these areas are protected and managed effectively, and that they support – and are supported by – development of local communities.”*

Dr Bohdan Prots,  
Ukrainian Carpathians  
Programme Coordinator

We continued our long-term efforts to support protected area management and the development of local communities. We did this by working directly with protected area management in selected locations in Ukraine, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania, such as in Podisul Hartibacului in central Romania, Balgarka Nature Park in Bulgaria, Karpatskyi National Nature Park or Gorgany Nature Reserve in Ukraine. We also supported protected area management by supporting the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and partners such as ProPark, a foundation that was co-founded by WWF and is dedicated to training and capacity building for protected area managers in Romania and neighbouring countries.

In partnership with Rewilding Europe, we launched new initiatives to protect wilderness areas in the Southern Carpathians and Danube Delta and promote them as premier ecotourism destinations.

# LARGE CARNIVORES

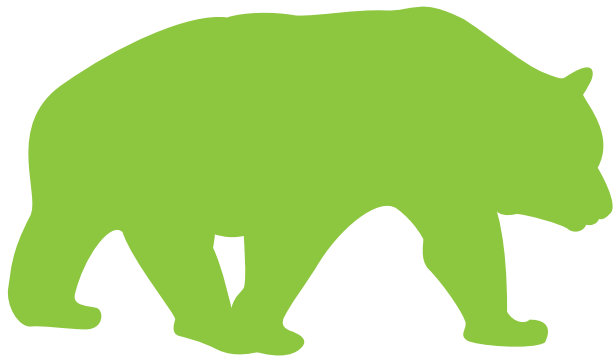


*“We want to maintain the existing healthy populations of large carnivores in the Danube-Carpathian region. To do this, we are seeking to maintain their critical habitats and corridors and address poaching and other management issues.”*

Magor Csibi,  
WWF Romania  
Country Manager

We radio-collared 5 bears in northern Romania to identify critical corridors across the border to Ukraine. We managed to put on hold construction of the Deva-Lugoj highway in Romania to consider mitigation and compensation measures for the project, which will bisect a critical wildlife corridor between Apuseni and the Southern Carpathians.

THE DANUBE-CARPATHIAN REGION  
IS EUROPE’S LAST BASTION FOR LARGE  
CARNIVORES, HOME TO OVER  
HALF THE CONTINENT’S POPULATION  
OF BROWN BEARS, WOLVES  
AND LYNX OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA.



# FINANCE AND GREEN ECONOMY



*“We want to promote development of a long-term, sustainable economy in our region that benefits from green infrastructure and healthy ecosystems.”*

Ákos Fáth,  
CEO,  
WWF-Hungary

In the run-up to decision-making in Brussels and EU capitals regarding the use of EU funds in the next financial period 2014-20, we continued our efforts to improve the targeting and delivery of EU funding programmes available for nature conservation and green economy, both through our involvement in relevant monitoring committees and working groups as well as through support for local farmers and other beneficiaries.

With local authorities and stakeholders we established Payment for Ecosystem Services Schemes related to ecotourism for the benefit of conservation of Russenski Lom Nature Park in Bulgaria and protected areas in Maramures in Romania. We also assisted relevant authorities in Romania and Bulgaria to value their natural assets – as a first step toward their better management.

We led development of a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Danube Delta and supported development of a similar strategy for the Carpathian Mountains. We also extended our partnership with the Red Cross to promote Climate Change awareness and adaptation in the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and Caucasus.



A long-time focus for our work has been on agriculture and rural development policy, particularly within the new EU member states of Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.

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# PEOPLE POWER AT EAGLE'S BRIDGE

Bulgarian Mihail Mihov is the quintessential nature envoy. He is a professional mountain guide, leading hiking, adventure and ecotourism groups across the country, “advertising” Bulgaria’s natural beauty. He also takes part in many events and actions by environmental groups such as For Vitosha (member of For The Nature coalition of organisations co-founded by WWF) and talks to university students about the future of alternative tourism in Bulgaria.

In the winter of 2012 Mihail anxiously followed moves by the Bulgarian government to amend the Forest Law, opening the door to logging and development within protected areas such as Vitosha Nature Park, overlooking the nation’s capital. For Mihail, who sees that alternative tourism is already suffering from infrastructure development, more of the same would be a disaster. He supported the increasingly desperate efforts of WWF and other environmental groups to stop the controversial legislation.

When the amendments were finally passed by Parliament in June 2012, Mihail was among the first to head to Sofia’s Eagle’s Bridge, one of thousands of people who took to the streets, day after day, until the President finally vetoed the legislation. People power prevailed. For Mihail it is an indication that Bulgarians are beginning to appreciate and care for their natural treasures.

Mihail says that environmental groups are the experts who are at the forefront of identifying problematic legislation. They sound the alarm both inside and outside of Bulgaria, and work alongside civic groups who mobilize society. Environmental groups have claimed the greatest victories in the past, and abolition of the Forest Law amendments is one of them. At stake are not just Bulgaria’s treasures but also the future for its people. Something worth fighting for.





# MOBILIZING SUPPORT

1,158,617

NUMBER OF INTERNET  
PAGE VIEWS\*

\*INCLUDES HUNGARY



*“Nearly 300 cities and towns participated in Earth Hour across our region. In Serbia alone we signed up 50 cities, a string of ministries, all major national media and many local TV stations and other media in support of what may be the world’s largest ever mass participation event and certainly the largest Mexican wave of all time!”*

Duska Dimovic,  
Serbia Country Manager



*„For the 5th year running, we brought together school teachers and children from 11 countries across our region to develop and implement environmental projects as part of the initiative European Schools for a Living Planet.”*

Barbara Tauscher,  
Head of Education for  
Sustainable Development

7,640

NUMBER OF MEDIA HITS\*

Time and again, we worked with partners to raise awareness and mobilise pressure to promote good governance and defend our region’s natural treasures.

We continued long-standing partnerships with the private sector, including with IKEA to promote forest protection and with The Coca Cola Company for wetlands and water. Among new partnerships was one with Société Générale Expressbank in Bulgaria to restore rare and endangered tree and plant species in ten nature parks.

We also organized exhibits and awareness raising campaigns on freshwater and wetlands as well as the natural treasures of our region.

With Bucharest University we developed the first university course on environmental education and active citizenship, and with Trendconsult, an executive training company, we developed Leaders for Life – the first sustainability training for executives in Romania.



© DOBRI OPRISAN PHOTOGRAPHY

At Bestfest music festival near Bucharest, music fans meet Sturgy, WWF’s life-size sturgeon, and are astonished to learn about this ancient fish, now on the brink of extinction.



# FINANCIALS

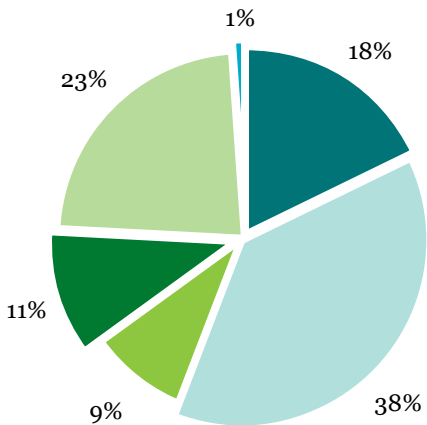
## 2012–2013

'000 of EUR

Income*			Expenses		
WWF Network	823	18%	Forests & Protected Areas, Large Carnivores	2 086	47%
EU	1 674	38%	Freshwater & Sturgeon	1 355	31%
Other Public Sector Donors	381	9%	Policy & Green Economy	295	7%
Foundations	502	11%	Environmental Education	178	4%
Corporates	1 002	23%	Individual Fundraising	86	2%
Individuals	62	1%	Management, Office & Administration	419	9%
Others	7	0%			
Total	4 451	100%	Total	4 420	100%

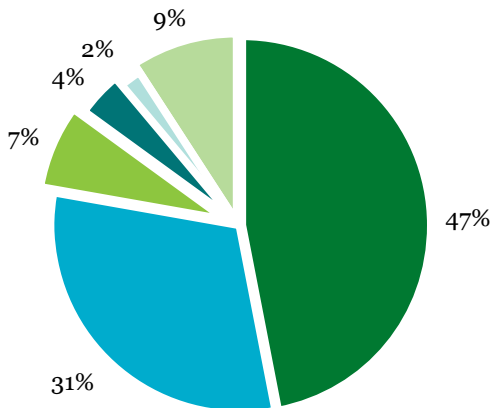
\* cash flows

Income 2012/13



- WWF Network
- EU
- Other Public Sector Donors
- Foundations
- Corporates
- Individuals

Expenses 2012/13



- Forests & Protected Areas, Large Carnivores
- Freshwater & Sturgeon
- Policy & Green Economy
- Environmental Education
- Individual Fundraising
- Management, Office & Administration

# OUR DONORS

The work that WWF does to conserve endangered species, safeguard threatened habitats, and address environmental threats would not be possible without building strong and lasting relationships with a wide range of WWF offices, public authorities, private companies, individuals and other partners. The following provided financial support to WWF-DCPO in FY2013:

EUROPEAN COMMISSION, ROMANIAN OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ENVIRONMENT (EU), BULGARIAN OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ENVIRONMENT (EU), UNEP, SWISS COHESION FUNDS, KFW, VISEGRAD FUND

MAVA FOUNDATION, REWILDING EUROPE FOUNDATION, ERSTE FOUNDATION, ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP FOUNDATION ROMANIA

IKEA, THE COCA COLA FOUNDATION, LAFARGE ROMANIA, GARANTI BANK ROMANIA, SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE EXPRESSBANK (BULGARIA), COSMO BULGARIA MOBILE EAD, ROEL 98, SNAPSHOT COMM & ING ASIG DE VIATA, SYNCRO SOFT ROMANIA, Telenor Serbia

WWF-AUSTRIA, WWF-BELGIUM, WWF-GERMANY, WWF-INTERNATIONAL, WWF-NETHERLANDS, WWF-SWEDEN, WWF-SWITZERLAND

## OVER 3,000 INDIVIDUALS

Note: Donors and financial figures are provided only for the WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme and does not include activities e.g. of WWF-Austria or WWF-Hungary that are relevant to the Danube-Carpathian region.



# WWF IN NUMBERS

100%  
RECYCLED



12

WWF is active in 12 countries  
in Central and  
Southeastern Europe

80

WWF-DCP has 80 staff

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4.4

The total budget of WWF-DCP  
last year was €4.4 million

500,000

WWF has nearly 500,000  
members and followers in Central  
and Southeastern Europe



## 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.

## How to contact us

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