



NEWSLETTER

2012

# Caucasus Ecoregion Newsletter



Photo © Giorgi Tsintsadze

News from the Caucasus - April 2012

# Hyrkan National Park is providing reliable shelter for leopards in Azerbaijan

Hyrkan National Park has been established in 2004 by enlarging of Hyrkan Reserve (2906 ha) to total area of 21,435 ha. The NP occupies subtropical zone in the Lankaran Nature Province with important relict forests – remnants of the Tertiary Period. In 2008 the area of the NP has been enlarged further to 40,358 ha - enough to harbor 2-3 leopard families. Hyrkan NP covers also 18 small villages with 2-20 houses in each of them which live in a harmony with nature. Leopards live in close vicinity with local population. Sometimes one finds leopard footprints in 50-60 m from the residential area. This leads to conflict between locals and animal attacking occasionally domestic animals. But still for millenniums people and leopards coexist in this small part of land which looks like a paradise. WWF is active in this area from early 2000 and took active participation in establishing NP infrastructure, management plan, etc. This small nucleus of leopards is under the close attention of WWF. The local supporters help to monitor this flagship species' population's dynamics. Our local supporter Mr. Babakhan Rakhmanov reports on increasing leopard activity in stone caves in Istisuchay river valley this spring. After establishment of Hyrkan NP in these forests leopards became more visible. Their footprints are easily found in forest trails now, whilst in early 2000 we could hardly find one track in a week.

Elshad Askerov  
easkerov@wwfcaucasus.az



Photo © Hartmut Mueller





Photo © Hartmut Mueller

## Establishment of Ecotourism Program in Dsegh Community, Lori Province, Armenia

In the framework of “Improving Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in the European Neighborhood Policy East Countries and Russia – ENPI FLEG Program” WWF-Armenia is supporting Dsegh community in Lori Province in the establishment of a ecotourism program as one of the pilot projects on alternative forest use by communities aimed at local livelihood improvement and sustainable use of forest resources. The project is aimed at protection and sustainable use of Dsegh and neighboring forests through development of ecotourism possibilities. It will in its turn provide possibilities for alternative income for the communities and will decrease the pressure on natural recourses improving the condition of forests.



The project includes establishment of ecotourism infrastructure in Dsegh community and neighboring areas, such as tourist shelters, other necessary equipment (tents, sleeping bags, garbage bins, etc.) at Lake Tsover (Tsover Resort Area), establishment of three B&B facilities in Dsegh community to enable local households to accommodate tourists and visitors, installation of directional and information signs (for tourist attraction areas, B&Bs and ecotourism trails), organization of awareness raising and cleaning campaign for Dsegh school-children and others.

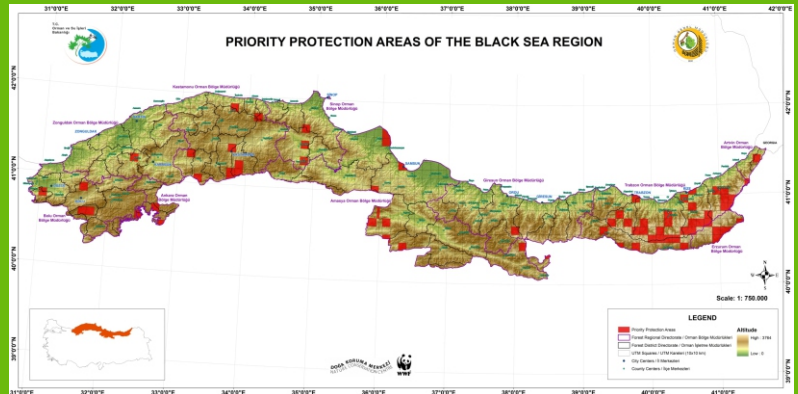
The Memorandum of Understanding was signed between WWF-Armenia and Dsegh community on cooperation for development of ecotourism in the community. WWF-Armenia through ENPI-FLEG project in contribution with Dsegh community is providing support for implementation of the works on renovation, construction, establishment of Tsover Resort area, B&B facilities and others. The main activities were started in December 2011 and are scheduled to be accomplished at the end of June 2012. The launch of the project is planned afterwards.

Gera Voskanyan  
[gvoskanyan@wwfcaucasus.am](mailto:gvoskanyan@wwfcaucasus.am)



# Black Sea Region Systematic Conservation Planning

Ministry of Forest and Water Works (MoFW), Nature Conservation Centre and WWF-Turkey finalized “Black Sea Region Systematic Conservation Planning” in Turkey including Turkish part of West Lesser Caucasus. Thanks to financial support of MAVA Foundation and MoFW General Directorate of Forestry who make it possible. The aim of the study was to assess sites of conservation priority by taking into account biological and socio-economical criteria, and also identifying sustainable development opportunities. The sites which will become vulnerable because of climate change was also identified and incorporated into the assessments. To ensure the implementability of the outcomes, management guidelines detailing conservation targets, threats and conservation-sustainable development opportunities in the selected priority areas were prepared targeting the official personnel responsible for the management of these sites.



Systematical Conservation Planning is based on the optimization process, which can be accepted as multi-criteria decision making process. Priority areas identified the biodiversity value they possess, amounts of threat, cost of conservation and opportunities for conservation. However rare species with high threat values play an important role in the general structure of final portfolio, as these sites are irreplaceable. Therefore, when developing conservation management approaches in these sites, the experts should take into account not only the rare and point endemic species but also information on other biodiversity aspects and the plant communities present in the sites.

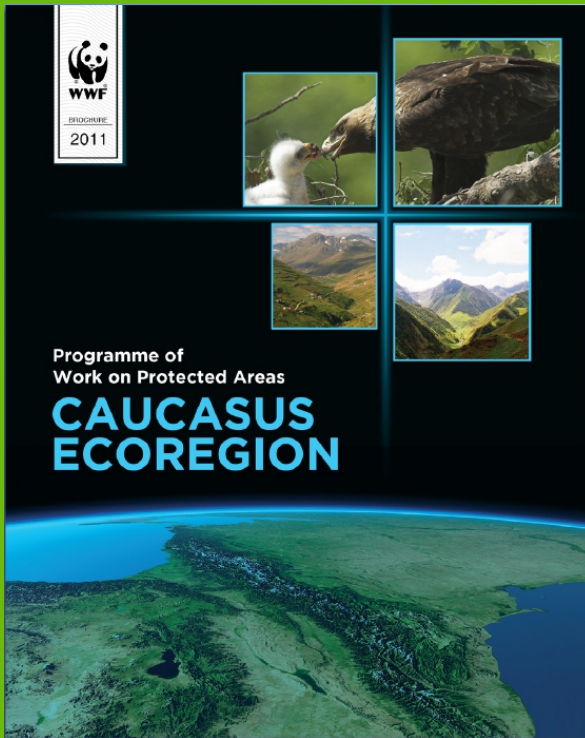
The results of this study will help governmental, non-governmental and research organizations to focus on defined priority areas for better conservation of the biodiversity.



Photo © G. Tsitsadze

# Delivering on CBD Commitments

## CAUCASUS ECOREGION



The Protected Areas for a Living Planet (PA4LP) project - a collaboration of the Swiss-based MAVA Foundation and WWF - to support the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has run its five year road full of many achievements and lessons learned.

From 2007 to 2011 PA4LP has enabled governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders to come together to support the establishment of new PAs, the creation of management plans of existing PAs, the drafting of legislation and the coordination of efforts between countries on achieving CBD targets.

The results of the 2011 review of implementation of the CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) in the Caucasus Ecoregion are summarized in the special brochure, which gives an overview of progress on the implementation of the CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas between 2004 and 2011 and identifies future priorities for Protected Area work and CBD implementation in the Caucasus Ecoregion.

PoWPA implementation was reviewed in five countries of the Caucasus Ecoregion - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia and Turkey. In these countries PA4LP supported strong national and regional level partnerships of donors, governments, scientists and civil society which assisted

governments in delivering on CBD Protected Areas commitments. This partnership approach made a significant contribution to meeting CBD targets and the strengthening of PA systems in the Caucasus.

This five year project would not have been successful without good will and effective partnership between all stakeholders. But much remains to be done to strengthen PA systems in the region: the last chapter highlights key developments and defines future priorities to meet targets of the PoWPA as well as setting out further opportunities for partnerships.

We would like to express our gratefulness to MAVA foundation for making all of this possible and assure all stakeholders that WWF will not stop following up and developing further many achievement realized within the scopes of the Project.



# Earth Hour 2012



“Earth Hour” is a global WWF climate change initiative. Individuals, businesses, governments and communities are invited to turn out their lights for one hour on Saturday March 27, 2010 at 8:30 PM to show their support for action on climate change. The event began in Sydney in 2007, when 2 million people switched off their lights. In 2012 on March 3 Earth Hour completed a record journey across more than 6,525 cities, towns and municipalities in 150 countries and territories worldwide - the biggest participation growth for the largest voluntary action for the environment since 2009.

switched their non-essential lights off for Earth Hour 2012, the world's largest voluntary action for the environment. Georgia has been participating in this campaign since 2009. Starting at 8:30pm, a spectacular torchlight performance by the Movement Theater and a concert were held at the darkened UN Square in Tbilisi. The Tbilisi Youth Palace hosted an event showcasing children's Earth Hour posters. The events were covered by both local and international media. Information support was provided by TV stations and the Georgian Public Broadcaster, newspapers and regional media companies. This year Earth Hour 2012 in Georgia spread out beyond Tbilisi to some of the country's regions for the first time.



ARMENIA. This year for the first time in addition to capital city of Yerevan, two more cities in Armenia – Vanadzor and Kapan joined to switch off the lights of buildings, streets, avenues, and squares. A press conference was convened by WWF-Armenia to inform the public of the upcoming Earth Hour and opportunity to make their own commitment beyond the hour. Representatives from the Ministry of Nature Protection, RA, focal point for convention of climate change in Armenia, and representatives from HSBC Bank Armenia and Yerevan Congress Hotel also attended the event.



Photos © CENN

WWF-Caucasus Programme Office  
11 Aleksidze St.  
Tbilisi 0193 Georgia  
Tel: (+ 995 32) 237 500  
Fax: (+ 995 32) 237 501  
Email: [office@wwfcaucasus.ge](mailto:office@wwfcaucasus.ge)  
URL: <http://www.panda.org/caucasus>

WWF-Armenia  
11 Proshyan St.  
Yerevan 0019 Armenia  
Tel/Fax: + 374 (10) 58 89 83  
+374 (10) 54 61 56  
Email: [office@wwfcaucasus.am](mailto:office@wwfcaucasus.am)  
URL: <http://www.panda.org/armenia>

WWF-Azerbaijan Branch  
101/103 Magomayev St.  
Baku 1004 Azerbaijan  
Tel: (+ 994 12) 497 4972  
Fax: (+ 994 12) 497 4973  
Email: [office@wwfcaucasus.az](mailto:office@wwfcaucasus.az)

WWF Turkey  
Büyük Postane Cad. 43-45 Kat 5  
Bahçekapı İstanbul 34420 Turkey  
Tel: + (902 125) 282 030  
Fax: + (902 125) 282 040  
URL: <http://www.wwf.org.tr>

WWF Russia (office in Moscow)  
19 Nikoloyamskaya St., 3 building  
Moscow 109240 Russia  
Tel: + 7 (495) 727 09 39  
Fax: + 7 (495) 727 09 38  
Email: [russia@wwf.ru](mailto:russia@wwf.ru)  
URL: <http://www.wwf.ru>



## 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 Caucasus PO under one vision of Ecoregional Conservation Plan.

To subscribe, unsubscribe, contribute or for further information please send an email to [tgamkrelidze@wwfcaucasus.ge](mailto:tgamkrelidze@wwfcaucasus.ge)