



NEWSLETTER

2013

View to Machakhela Protected Area bordering Jamili Biosphere Reserve. Georgia, Turkey.

# CAUCASUS ECOREGION NEWSLETTER

News from the Caucasus - Issue 2, 2013

## A Forest Nursery will be established in Yerevan

There's no quick solution for halting the loss and degradation of the forests. The only effective way to solve this problem is cooperation with stakeholders, decision makers, NGOs and scientific sector to protect, sustainably manage and restore these ecosystems.

• In the framework of “Forest landscape restoration in Northern Armenia” project WWF- Armenia supports establishment of a forest nursery with about 1.5 ha area on the territory of the Institute of Botany of RA National Academy of Science (RA NAS). The nursery will be specially set-up for two main purposes:

- *Ex-situ* conservation of valuable and endangered species of flora
- Future resettlement of forest ecosystems.



Karen Manvelyan, Director of WWF-Armenia (left),  
Zhirayr Vardanyan, Director of RA NAS "Institute of Botany"

In May 2013 WWF-Armenia and the Institute of Botany of Armenia's National academy of Sciences officially signed a cooperation contract to start the establishment of the forest nursery.

The main goal of the “Forest landscape restoration in Northern Armenia” project is the restoration of forest ecosystems of Northern Armenia restoring the natural habitat of critically endangered plant and animal species as well as generating income for the local population of neighboring communities.

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Future territory of the nursery. © WWF-Armenia

## Monitoring of Caprinids in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan boasts four mountain Caprinids, East Caucasian (Daghestan) tur (*Capra cylindricornis*), Chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*), Bezoar goat (*Capra aegagrus*) and Asiatic mouflon (*Ovis [orientalis] gmelini*) which are the conservation target species in the Caucasus. The monitoring of these mountain ungulates has been conducted in a rather unsystematic way and the quality of data is not sufficient for obtaining sound scientific data on these animals. In 2012, the monitoring of mountain ungulates was conducted by WWF Azerbaijan with support of the GIZ Programme on Sustainable Management of Biodiversity, South Caucasus in the frame of the project “Monitoring of selecting Mammals in Azerbaijan”. The main was to elaborate a programme which would enable the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan Republic to obtain reliable and accurate information on the status and the population trends of mountain ungulate species in Azerbaijan. The data was collected on densities, age and sex structure of these animals, as well as vegetation and terrain types, average group sizes and grouping patterns of the given species during key periods of the biological cycle during the project.

Four monitoring areas were selected for tur and chamois in the Great Caucasus: Zakatala NR, Ilisu NR, Shindarasi (Sheki) game economy and Shakhdag NP. Monitoring of mouflon and bezoar goats were conducted in Caucasus Minor, Nakhchivan AR. The results of monitoring in autumn were very successful. So, there were encountered 601 individuals of Dagestan tur in Zakatala NR, Ilisu NR, Shindarasi (Sheki) game economy and Shakhdag NP, 24 individuals of chamois in Ilisu NR and Khax Sanctuary, 28 individuals of mouflon and 76 individuals of bezoar goats in Caucasus Minor, Nakhchivan AR.

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## Nature park to be established on the Akhmet-Skala mountain

WWF Russia with support of Northern Caucasus Resorts started to create a nature park on the Akhmet-Skala mountain ridge in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic of Russia. The limited territory of the ridge manages to host all major types of nature ecosystems of the north-western Karachay-Cherkessia Republic and habitats of species of the Northern Caucasus. Research showed that the ridge is home to over 20% of regional plant diversity. It is also habitat to 52 endangered species included in the Russian Red List. 88 species of birds nest in the area, which is over 52% of all bird species that breed in the republic. The future nature park is especially important for the conservation of griffon vulture, because 14% of the whole Russian population of this species breed on its territory. The wingspan of this bird exceeds 2.5 meters and watching it is a true pleasure. The park will be created on former agricultural and forestry lands. The total area will exceed 5,000 hectares.

Together with other attractions of this place, the nature park is an excellent location for ecotourism. One of the current problems of the area is the use of the ridge for mountain climbing trainings and competitions. The routes athletes are using cross bird nesting areas scaring them away. The creation of the nature park will allow to maintain tourist and sports activities, but prevent them from damaging the flora and fauna.

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# Happy birthday to Ecological Corridor Fund

The cooperation of German government and WWF in the Caucasus is already spanning for 15 productive years. The first milestone in this work was achieved by establishing the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park - the first protected area in the Caucasus corresponding to the international standards - a member of PANparks network.

The following significant achievement of the cooperation was practical – “in-the-field”- application of regional approach to the nature conservation. On this important road following pillaring documents and instruments were shaped:

- Ecoregion Conservation Plan
- Caucasus Biodiversity Monitoring Network
- Caucasus Biodiversity Council
- Caucasus Nature Fund



During WWF-Germany's 50th Anniversary Event in Berlin on 5th June 2013, WWF Caucasus Programme Office signed a contract with German Government to establishing the Ecological Corridor Fund with starting capital of Euro 8m (with Euro 300,000 co-funding by WWF-Germany).

The **Ecological Corridor Fund** is designed to elevate all above mentioned activities to a higher level: the ecological corridors particularly, conservation of biodiversity on the landscape level generally, and all this in close cooperation with local population is the future of nature conservation avenue. The bearing pillar of this new for the Caucasus (and not only Caucasus) concept is an increased level of motivation and involvement of the local people in the process of nature protection.

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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 Caucasus PO under one vision of Ecoregion Conservation Plan.

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