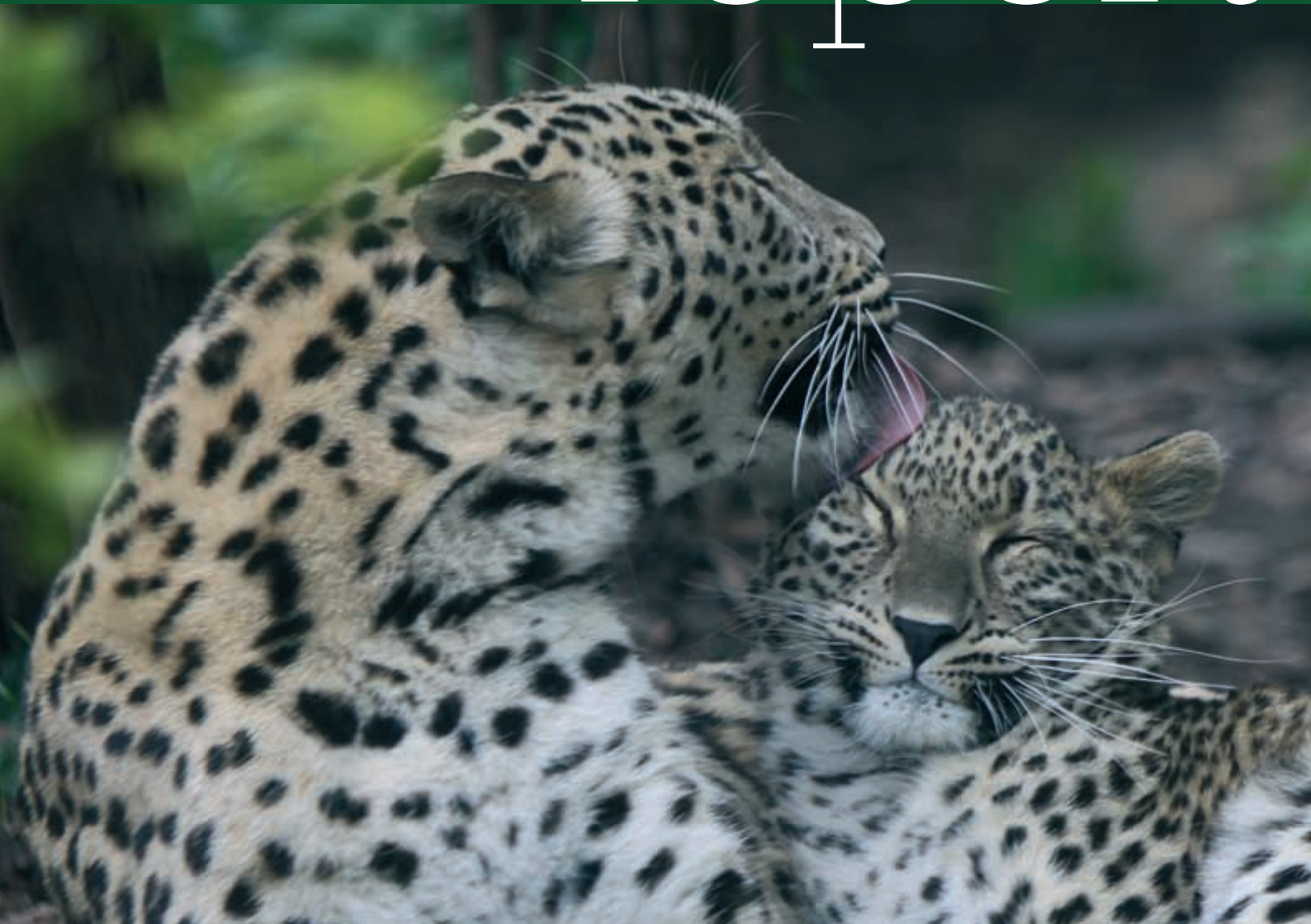


activity

2012/2013

report



The IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group

The Cat Specialist Group is responsible for the global assessment of the conservation status of all 37 wild living cat species. We coordinate and support the activities of currently 203 leading scientists, nature conservation officers and wild lifemanagers in currently 57 countries. The main tasks include:

- to maintain the network of cat experts and partners;
- to continuously assess the status and conservation needs of the 37 cat species;
- to support governments with strategic conservation planning;
- to develop capacity in felid conservation;
- to provide services to members and partners;
- to assure the financial resources for the Cat Specialist Group.

For the activity reports we present some of our achievements against these six main tasks.

Christine Breitenmoser-Würsten and Urs Breitenmoser
Co-chairs IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group

Cover photo: Persian leopard female with cub (Photo A. Sliwa)

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The Network

The reconstitution of the Cat Specialist Group



04

IUCN/SSC Specialist Groups have to be reconstituted every quadrennium. After the World Conservation Congress in Jeju, Korea in September 2012, the Specialist Groups did formally no longer exist until the chairs and members were reappointed. Before re-inviting experts to join the Cat Specialist Group, we sent a questionnaire to members who have not been very active to evaluate their activities and commitment to continue to serve as members of the Cat SG. The Cat Specialist Group has currently 196 members from 57 countries, among which 27 are new members (see next page) from 19 countries. The new members have further helped to close a few gaps in cat countries mainly in the Americas and Asia (see map). On the Cat SG website www.catsg.org all members are presented with a short CV.



Distribution of Cat SG members around the globe.



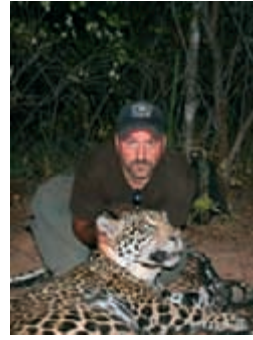
Shivani Bhalla



Karen di Matteo



Taher Ghadirian



Anthony Giordano



Rodrigo Medellin



José Gonzalez Maya



Saksit Simcharoen



Bart Harmson



Amirhoussein Khaleghi



Hana Raza



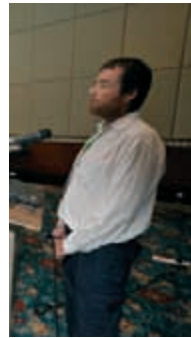
Adam Barlow



Hendra Gunawan



Phil Riordan



Will Duckworth



Lhendup Tharchen



Andreas Wilting



Aaron Haines



Pricelia Tumenta



Rebecca Foster



Than Zaw



Juan Repucci



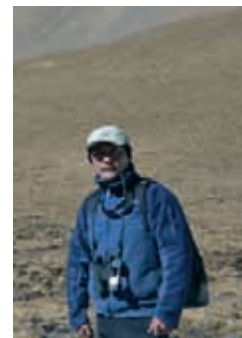
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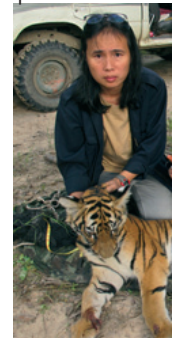
Melvin Gumal



Tshewang Wangchuck



Dennis Ikanda



A. Simcharoen

Leopard survey in Nakhchivan

October 2011 - October 2012



06

Our partner for the leopard project in the Caucasus eco-region in Turkey, Batur Avgan, has coordinated a camera-trapping survey in two areas of Nakhchivan between 9 October 2011 and 3 October 2012 at 46 trap stations. After a brief training of two local Azeri students on camera-trapping techniques at Zangezur National Park, they carried out a first survey at Ordubad Sanctuary and Negramdag Mountains for a total of 1,188 trap days until 29 March 2012. The second survey area was the southeastern parts of Zangezur NP and it was carried out for 1,696 trap days between 4 April 2012 and 3 October 2012. On 9 September 2012, one of our camera-traps took a photo of a leopard at Zangezur NP, approximately 1.5 km from the Iranian border. The photo was taken after 2,749 trap-days of effort. Bezoar goat *Capra aegagrus* accounted for 49% of the species pictured in the surveys and is the



most likely prey for leopard in Nakhchivan. Wild boar *Sus scrofa* (another potential leopard prey species) however was one of the least photographed species and detected only at one trap-station located at a forested area in the northern parts of Zangezur NP.

During interviews, three shepherds claimed to have seen leopard in the last 10 years. Two of these observations were at Zangezur NP and one was in Negramdag Mountains. In 1990, one person was attacked by a leopard in Zangezur NP. We confirmed this incident from an eyewitness (who was with the person at that moment), and also from the signs of injury on the victim's body. Although these anecdotal events seem to be reliable, the general impression was that leopard is a not well-known species to the locals and seems to have been rare already for a while. This impression was confirmed by comparing our findings for other species:

During the survey the team has photographed Eurasian lynx *Lynx lynx* which had been observed several times by all shepherds (n = 8) interviewed. Although a photo of the leopard was taken and the camera trap survey revealed that a sufficient prey base is available in Nakhchivan, only 3 shepherds out of the 8 interviewed had seen a leopard in their entire life. 4 shepherds did not even believe that leopards existed in their region. It is known that local people regularly observe large cats such as leopards when the species has a resident population in their area, as in the case with lynx. In order to continuously observe the leopard's population status (resident or not, hopefully recovering), we recommend continuous surveys in Nakhchivan. The first survey already disclosed an area used by this one leopard in a region in south-eastern Nakhchivan, close to the border with Iran.



The Persian leopard (*Panthera pardus saxicolor*) in the Caucasus has suffered a major decline in numbers and the extent of occurrence, and is now thought to occur in a few populations mainly in north-western Iran. However, this perception stands on sporadic field observations and, more importantly, a sign survey conducted in 2004. To establish an updated basis for current status of Iranian leopard populations, Ehsan Moqanaki carried out extensive field surveys in June–October 2012 in the frame of a master thesis with our support, using noninvasive genetic sampling of feces and non-structured interviews with key local informants at five priority leopard reserves in northwestern Iran: Lisar Protected Area (LPA), Agh Dagh Protected Area (ADPA), Arasbaran Biosphere Reserve (ABR), Kiamaky Wildlife Refuge (KWR), and Marakan Protected Area (MPA). MPA, KWR, and ABR are located in the Qara Dagh Landscape sharing borders in north with Armenia and Republic of Azerbaijan along the Aras River. Habitats are similar and predominantly consist of forestless high mountain ecosystems. LPA lies within Talysh Mountains eastward to the Caspian shores where, together with ABR, patches of temperate broadleaf and Hyrcanian mix forests spread over. ADPA expands southern to the Talysh, where Alborz Mountains form a barrier between the Caspian Sea and the Iranian Caucasus. Climate varies from dry continental (MPA) eastward to semi-humid Mediterranean (LPA), with mean annual rainfall varies from 200–1,035 mm. Little effort has been made so far to document the region's biodiversity.

Within the surveyed areas he found no leopard genetic samples, and very few reliable evidence of the species presence. In particular, there was no evidence that resident leopard population(s) may exist in two previously thought leopard reserves, namely Arasbaran Biosphere Reserve and Lisar Protected Area. Ehsan cautions that

leopards in the Iranian Caucasus are in unfavourable status and if no urgent statutory conservation measures applied, their long-term survival is uncertain. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the so-called source population of leopards in north-western Iran is presently able of supporting the natural re-colonization of the Caucasus as a whole. He presents a number of recommendations to meet practical needs of leopard monitoring and conservation in the Iranian Caucasus.

The designation of new protected areas and promoting the protection status of reserves in north-western Iran (e.g. in East Azarbaijan province) provide hope that more remaining fragments of the leopard and wild ungulate habitats will be conserved. There is now growing evidence that connectivity to the Alborz range determines the long-term persistence of leopards in the Iranian Caucasus.



Progress evaluation of the reintroduction project of the Persian leopard in the Northern Caucasus

Sochi and Moscow, Russia, 5 – 9 July 2013



08

The Sochi leopard reintroduction project was initiated as part of the “green record” of the Sochi Olympic Games, but it goes back to a much older idea by Russian scientists and conservationists to bring the leopards back to the NW Caucasus. There is almost 10'000 km² of suitable habitat with little or no human impact and use in a chain of PAs (cat I and III) available, and the project can be regarded a meaningful part of the efforts to conserve the leopard in the entire Caucasus. Indeed, the Project only/mainly makes sense in this larger conservation-strategic approach. The approach of the Project is to locally breed leopards and then to re-wild the offspring. The

IUCN Cat SG was asked to endorse the Project some years back, but we did not do so for principle reasons and because we had several concerns about the approach, the lack of cooperation with neighbouring countries (very difficult in the Caucasus).

In April 2012, IUCN, EAZA and the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment MNRE signed a MoU on a cooperation regarding the Project. EAZA agreed to provide leopards from the EEP for the project. Two EEP leopards (1/1) from Lisbon zoo arrived in October 2012 in the Sochi Breeding Centre. There are now 6 leopards in the breeding centre at breeding age.

The team managing the leopards at the Centre has little experience with breeding animals. In June 2013, team members were able to do a training course in Lisbon Zoo (Poland) and Nordens Ark (Sweden). On 5-9 July, Urs together with Alex Sliwa from EAZA and Marianne Hartmann, enrichment expert of the Cat SG, visited the breeding centre to review the progress since last year and to give advice on husbandry and enrichment. Ten days after the visit the first two Persian leopard cubs have been born at the Persian Leopard Breeding and Rehabilitation Centre in the Sochi National Park to the two leopards that have been provided by Lisbon Zoo to the Centre in October 2012. Only one month later the second litter was born in mid-August. The mother is a young female originating from Iran, and the father from Turkmenistan. It was her first litter and she only accepted one cub. The second one is hand raised and will be integrated into the breeding programme. This pair is from the point of view of genetics very valuable for the breeding programme as they enlarge the gene pool. It is planned to release the young leopards to the wild in the Kavkazsky Nature Reserve around 2015, after they're prepared for an independent life. The visit in Russia ended with a meeting in Moscow with all partners and organisations involved.





Third lynx captured and radio-collared

Martin is the name of the third male lynx captured in Macedonia as part of the radio-telemetry study. 24 kg of weight and almost a meter long, Martin was captured on 31 October 2012 on the hunting ground Dusegubica, owned by the public enterprise Macedonian Forests. Macedonian Ecological Society (MES) started a very solid cooperation with the hunters of this ground and this already resulted in capturing two lynx individuals and confirming the presence of at least one more.

Third systematic camera-trapping survey in Mavrovo National Park, Macedonia

During winter 2012/2013, the Macedonian Ecological Society conducted the third systematic camera-trapping survey in the area of the Mavrovo National Park, Macedonia, as part of the activities foreseen in the third phase of the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme 2013-2015. The study resulted in 60 lynx pictures from 13 different camera-trap sites. During the comparison of the pictures, 9 different lynx individuals were identified. Compared to the previous camera-trapping studies in Mavrovo NP (in 2008 and 2010), this was the highest number of lynx pictures and positive sites.

More lynx in the northern mountains of Albania

In 2011 PPNEA, our partner organisation in Albania photographed the first Balkan lynx in Albania using camera-traps. To further monitor a possible remaining sub-population in Albania, the study continued further in 2012 and 2013 in the regions of Puke and Mirdit. Three months of camera-trapping resulted in 157 photographs of wildlife species, including 13 photos of Balkan lynx. The pictures so far suggest that 4-5 individuals of Balkan lynx roam the mountains of Puke-Mirdite regions.

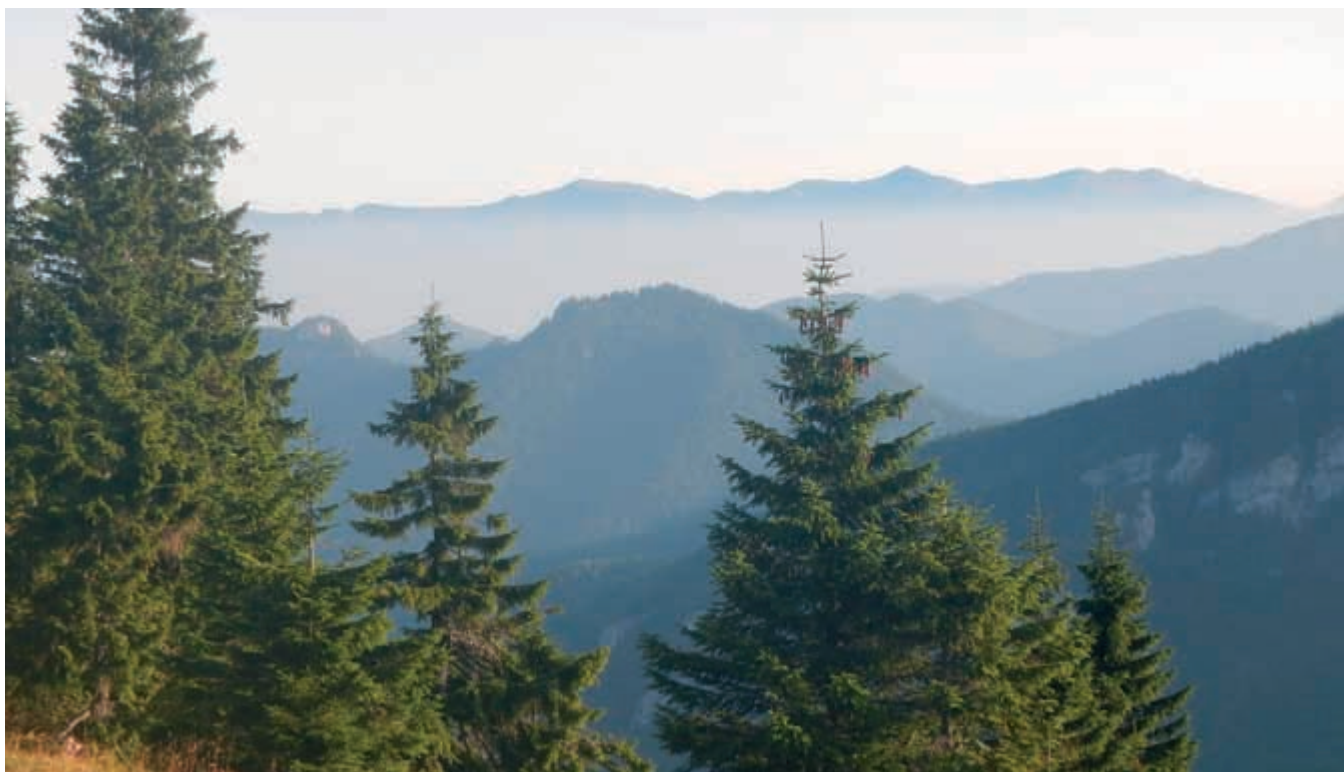
BLRP Phase III - 2013-2015

The Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme (BLRP) has received the official notification of approval from the MAVA foundation. The mutual signing of the grant agreement in May 2013 marks the beginning of a new phase of our longstanding transboundary conservation programme. The programme now also expands to Kosovo and Montenegro.



Living with Carpathian Spirits – kick-off meeting

Bojnice, Slovakia 19 July 2013



10

The Slovak Republic is home to one of the best preserved populations of Carpathian lynx (*Lynx lynx carpathicus*) in central Europe. For all reintroduction projects of Eurasian lynx in Central and Western Europe in the 1970s and 1980s the animals came from this part of the Carpathian Mountains. Some of the reintroduced populations showed positive trends in population parameters (abundance, genetic heterogeneity) during the first decades after the reintroduction but according to the latest studies, this has declined significantly recently. The reasons for the decline are not clear but illegal hunting and inbreeding caused by spatial separation of local

populations are considered most likely to be responsible. The solution to reverse this negative process is to add new genotypes from the maternal population into the threatened target populations and so extend their heterogeneity. The primary precursor for this process is a detailed evaluation of the state of the autochthonous lynx population in Slovakia.

Together with the Slovakian Wildlife Society and Zoo Bojnice, we launched the project Living with Carpathian Spirits. The project is funded through a Swiss-Slovak Cooperation programme which is based on the bilateral agreements of Switzerland and the EU. The enlargement contribution contributes to the reduction of economic and social disparities within the EU by supporting the 12 new EU countries. On 19 July 2013 we participated in the kick-off meeting of the project held at Bojnice Zoo.

The goals of this project are: (1) to build a top quality long-term European reintroduction and research programme for the Carpathian lynx with emphasis on a sustainable approach in conservation management of the species at multiple spatial scales by monitoring trends in population parameters of lynx in survey areas; (2) to promote cooperation of a wide range of interest groups and volunteer involvement in lynx monitoring; (3) to collect and archive samples for genetic analyses, and (4) to develop the education of students and the information of the public via publications, presentations and discussions adjusted for the particular age and expert level of the audience. Project partners will cooperate closely with state authorities in Slovakia, the national parks and forestry services in the process of data collection and monitoring. The project is also an opportunity to demonstrate a new approach to using the presence of large carnivores in the area to develop wildlife tourism for the benefit of forestry as well as national parks and the general public.





Urs' visit started with a meeting in Moura, Portugal and continued with an examination of future release sites. The reunion was to discuss the selection of further reintroduction areas. It was attended by most of the Iberlince Life partners (GOs from Portugal, Andalucía, Extremadura, Castilla la Mancha, and NGOs WWF Spain, CBD Habitat, IberLinx) and gave the opportunity to meet the new partners, especially the delegations from the environmental agencies of Portugal and the Spanish provinces. The delegations presented the potential reintroduction areas as chosen according to the protocol for the selection of reintroduction areas for the Iberian lynx.

The protocol bases on a habitat model for the Iberian lynx, a metapopulation concept developed as a strategic model in the previous years, a preliminary gross estimation of rabbit abundance and a (on-going) connectivity analysis. Potential reintroduction sites need to fulfil a number of criteria such as (1) habitat quality and (2) size (at least 10,000 ha of suited habitat, or room for a population of 50 mature lynx (30 females, 20 males), (3) sufficient prey base (spring density of ≥ 2 rabbits/ha), (4) connectivity with and distance to the next potential lynx subpopulation of ≥ 42 km. For the detailed analysis and final selection of designated site, additional criteria are considered: legal status (e.g. protection, land ownership) of the area, threats and risks to the survival of lynx, and the support of local people and stakeholders. The partners reached consensus on the pre-selected areas. The crucial feature of the reintroductions sites is clearly the rabbit density and the perspectives to maintain a sufficient prey base. Considering the high availability of lynx from the conservation breeding programme and the uncertain prey supply, the metapopulation approach (which foresees to create a number of subpopulations along the Sierra Morena) was not strictly applied regarding the Monfragüe PA (Extremadura) and the Montes de Toledo (Castilla La Mancha). The only controversial-

ly discussed site selections considered Guadiana valley and Moura-Barrancos, both Portugal, where for political reasons priority seems to be given to Moura-Barrancos, although the rabbit population in the Guadiana river valley is higher.

The Life Iberlince is working well also with the larger partnership in the new project phase. The Moura meeting has achieved consensus on the priority areas for the new population nuclei and the next releases and preparatory steps, respectively. Availability of lynx is no longer the problem, as the conservation breeding programme is working smoothly and the 4 breeding centres are presently producing more lynx than needed for the immediate releases. The major challenge today is the desperate situation of the rabbit population.



Natioanl Action Plan for the Arabian leopard in Oman

Preparatory meeting, Muscat, Oman 25-30 May 2013



© Hadi al Hikmani

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The Arabian leopard (*Panthera pardus nimr*) is a flagship species for Oman's mountain habitats. It is classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red list (IUCN 2008) and is listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). This subspecies has disappeared from most of its range in the Arabian Peninsula and the total remaining wild population is estimated at less than 200 individuals and is confined to the mountains of Southern Oman and Yemen. Habitat loss and over-hunting of both the leopard and its prey species (including the Arabian gazelle, *Gazella gazella cora* and Nubian Ibex, *Capra nubiana*) over the last 50 years have squeezed the formerly widely ranging Arabian leopard into small

fragments of remaining mountain habitat. In Oman, the best remaining habitat for leopard is found in Jebel Samhan (4,500 km²) in the acacia dominated scrub of the southern escarpment and the semi-desert of the interior and north aspects. Using the Arabian leopard as a flagship species, this conference looks forward to inviting stakeholders to contribute to finding solutions that will help safeguard the long term viability of the Arabian leopard, its wild prey populations and the integrity and connectivity of their core habitat in Jebel Samhan and across the mountains of Dhofar.

There is a growing concern among Protected Area professionals that Protected Areas around the world are not achieving the objectives for which they were established. The present wild Arabian leopard population is dangerously close to extinction. If the Arabian leopard population can be encouraged to recover and thrive, Oman will have saved its top predator an important indicator of ecosystem health and integrity and will have saved this leopard sub-species.

Oman made a good start to protect the Arabian leopard by creating the Jebel Samhan Nature Reserve, initiating research and appointing rangers. But more effort urgently needs to be taken by specialists and by the whole community – government, researchers and members of the public. All stakeholders must work together if we are to save the remaining wild population from extinction in the near future.

The aim of the upcoming workshop at the end of September 2013 is to inform all stakeholders of the critically endangered status of the Arabian leopard, the importance of its core habitat in Jebel Samhan Nature Reserve, and to identify practical solutions for conservation, agreed by the stakeholders. The outcome will be a National Action Plan. During the preparatory meeting, the agenda, the lists of speakers and workshop participants were developed together with the Scientific and Conservation Committee of the conference.





We attended the third meeting of the IUCN/SSC Species Conservation Planning Sub-Committee SCPSC which was held at WildCru in Tubney, UK, organised and chaired by Mark Stanley Price. Four new members joined the group: Ken Lindewall (Chair of the Grunts and Snappers SG) representing the SSC Marine Conservation Sub-committee; Nigel Maxwell (Chair of the Crop Wild Relatives SG), representing the Plant Specialist Groups; Lee Pagni, member of the Iguana SG and keen on evaluating conservation plan effectiveness, and Amielle De Wan, from RARE Conservancy, an expert on planning systems. Ken Lindewall and Lee Pagni were not at the meeting, but joined the group discussion remotely by Skype™ and Adobe Connect, virtual tools presented during the last meeting in Abu Dhabi.

On the first day, the goals for the running term 2013-2016 were reviewed. The group identified the need for the SCPSC to work towards the deliverables in the Species Strategic Plan which outlines a number of targets relating to species planning.

During the tool development session Phil Miller from CBSG presented their new meta-modelling approach. Amielle deWan presented the work of RARE and their work with social marketing. It works to link campaigns to changes in behaviour relating to conservation activities using research, design and implementation. RARE does pre and post campaign surveys to see whether changes are due to the campaign.

The next agenda item was climatic change and its incorporation in strategic planning. There was a suggestion to treat climate change like any other stressor. There was also a suggestion for obtaining more citations on climate change to work with – particularly relating to planning workshops where climate change was given attention.

A gap so far was multispecies planning in speciose groups. Ken Lindemann described planning for these groups, protected areas and ecosystem-based management. Fisheries management has been dominated

by industry, now the only options for management and planning are through Marine Protected Areas or fisheries agreements. Bringing planning into fish management would be very valuable. Groups that seem further ahead in this process are the Shark SG, Groupers & Wrasses SG.

The group spent a good amount of time to develop an action plan for its activities for the current quadrennium. The activities range from reviewing existing plans and highlighting best practices to identifying training needs, developing a communication concept, internally - we have set up a Google Site - and externally, reviewing and analyzing the Conservation Measures Partnership for potential alignment, just to name a few.



Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme - Training

Vevcani, Macedonia, 1-2 October 2012



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On 1 October 2012 a Balkan lynx range-wide meeting took place in Vevcani, MK. 21 participants from Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia and Albania, together with project members from KORA and Euro-Natur gathered to review the Balkan lynx project, the situation of the lynx in the range countries as well as its conservation. The five goals of the Balkan lynx recovery program were presented:

1. to generate the baseline knowledge (lynx, prey, habitat, conflicts);
2. to establish a reliable survey and monitoring system;
3. to create additional protected areas in the Green Belt of the southwest Balkans;

4. to raise awareness and build national/international partnerships for lynx conservation;

5. to facilitate political commitment of national authorities and international institutions;

For all five goals the achievements from the past years have presented including the genetic analyses and the Red List assessment. The meeting was followed by a workshop on 2 October where the monitoring of lynx and prey and the establishment of monitoring networks were presented. The principles and possibilities of baseline surveys in Kosovo and Montenegro were discussed – taking the surveys undertaken in Albania and Macedonia in Phase I of the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme as examples. The prerequisite for this is the creation of a regional Balkan lynx team.

During our efforts to establish an enduring partnership with Kosovar and Montenegrin NGOs we encountered a great interest and highly motivated conservationists newly joining the BLRP. It has become evident that in these countries the BLRP is perceived as a trans-boundary conservation initiative of high renown.

Travelling exhibition

The English version of the Balkan lynx travelling exhibition is now available. 8 panels inform about Balkan lynx and its prey, display relevant topics concerning their conservation and introduce the activities of the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme. Besides the meeting in Vevcani, the exhibition has so far been displayed at the Congress of Ecologists in Ohrid, MK and at the Dinaric Arc Parks Conference in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are currently working on translations into Albanian and Macedonian in order to also display the exhibition in the rural areas of the Balkan lynx range countries.





Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) together with its partners from the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme organised a capacity building workshop on wildlife monitoring and human dimension methods. The workshop was held from 24-30 June 2013 in the National Park of Valbona/Albanian Alps. This event was the continuation of various efforts carried out by the NGO coalition comprised by MES, PPNEA, EuroNatur and KORA for the establishment of national monitoring networks in Albania, Macedonia and eventually in the two neighbouring countries Kosovo and Montenegro in order for data on Balkan lynx and its prey to be collected in a systematic way. Following the first capacity building workshop held last year in Vevcani/ MK, the workshop in Valbona was a further step towards the extension of the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme beyond Albania and Macedonia and an important step on the way of implementing the regional conservation strategy and national action plans developed according to SSC standards and facilitated by the Cat SG. The workshop was attended by representatives from organisations such as PPNEA, MES, FINCH, ERA, CZIP, OZONE, representatives from Sharr National Park in Kosovo and the National Parks of Montenegro, and members of the Regional Environmental Agency of Kosovo. The participants were trained on the basics of monitoring principles, methods, tracking, and human dimensions in wildlife monitoring. Along with theoretical presentations on wildlife monitoring methods, results and lessons learnt from the implementation of the Programme in Albania and Macedonia. An essential part of the workshop was also the field training, which helped participants to actually discover themselves the biodiversity of the area, and implement one of the Balkan lynx monitoring methods. During the field excursion the participants set two camera-traps along strategic paths and gained knowledge on the quality of the habitats and the

high values of flora and fauna in the area. Equally important was the talk of the local BLRP contact point Catherine Bohne, who emphasized the importance of engaging the local community in wildlife monitoring and raising their awareness on the importance of wildlife conservation. At the end of the workshop the organisers highlighted the fact that the experience and work results of MES and PPNEA may very well serve as a model which can be further improved by the colleagues in Kosovo and Montenegro. Subsequently, the expansion of the network for the monitoring of the Balkan lynx gives a new burst of energy and raises the level of commitment for the conservation of the remaining Balkan lynx population.



Cooperation with zoos - EAZA Felid TAG

EAZA Felid TAG Meeting, Leipzig, 8-10 April 2013



16

The objective of the session *Building Partnerships between the ex situ and in situ communities* at the IUCN/SSC Chair's meeting in Abu Dhabi in 2012 was to allow the SSC network to discuss the benefits and challenges of, and opportunities for, closer collaboration between the in-situ work being done by the SSC network and the ex-situ work being done by zoos, aquaria, herbaria, etc. The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria EAZA would like the SSC network to help them to identify species that would benefit most from captive breeding programmes. For the SGs, there are several benefits from cooperation with EAZA :

(a) possibility of EAZA members 'hosting' SGs (or staff working on SG projects), or contributing a percentage of staff time for SG Programme Officers; (b) financial and in-kind support for day-to-day operations and (c) an active role for helping EAZA to guide captive breeding programmes, etc. EAZA would like to see real partnerships between EAZA Taxon Advisory Groups TAGs and institutions and SGs.

The Cat SG has been able to partner with Leipzig Zoo, and we are very grateful to Dr. J. Junhold and his team for their support.

In April 2013, we attended the mid-year Felid TAG meeting with 30 participants, which was hosted by Zoo Leipzig. Besides the presentations on the various species breeding programmes by studbook keepers or their representatives, Frank Görlitz from IZW Berlin gave a talk on Assisted Reproduction Techniques ART and Artificial Insemination AI in cats. Jochen Lengger talked about Multiple Ocular Coloboma (MOC) in snow leopards in captivity. Coloboma is defined as the absence of tissue in the eyes, for instance the iris, eyelid, the optic nerve could be missing. The origin of the problem in snow leopards has not been found yet. Frank Oberwemmer from Leipzig Zoo presented first results of genetic analyses of the zoo lions. This is a difficult project as it is not easy to find reference samples. Andreas Wilting from IZW Berlin gave a talk on cat phylogeny. His analyses show that there is a lot less subdivision in tigers and leopards than previously thought. We presented the Cat SG, its main tasks, some current projects and possibilities for cooperation between zoos and the Cat SG (a.o. provide information on species, suggest advise on insitu projects, help with sub-species and health issues by providing samples and performing standardised necropsies, help spread the message of conservation).





Cat News

In 2011 and 2012 (until mid-year) we have published the regular issues Cat News 57 (48 pages) and 58 (56 pages) with 36 peer-reviewed articles.

Digital Cat Library

We have newly integrated 750 publications into the Digital Cat Library DCL in 6 uploads during the past year. These frequent updates are possible thanks to the support by Panthera. DCL hosts currently 9,033 reports and publications relevant to cat conservation and is constantly growing also thanks to contributions from our members and friends.

Cat SG website

Our current website www.catsg.org went online in 2005 and is now technically outdated. We have started with the renewal of the content, the layout and the technical standard. Cat SG members will help with the species profiles and illustration.

State of the Cats

Together with the cat conservation organisation Panthera we have started the project State of the Cats, which has three objectives:

1. To improve the assessment of the conservation status of a cat species in a certain region;
2. To improve the evaluation of the efficiency of cat conservation projects;
3. To strengthen the cooperation and synergistic use of approaches, tools and data between cat conservation organizations, foremost between Panthera and the Cat SG.

These three objectives will be imbedded in a concept of evaluating the status of the cat and the effect and efficiency of conservation measures. The assessment and evaluation will focus not only on the status of the cat population, but also on the "conservation environment" (e.g. socio-economic conditions, threats and enabling conditions) and on the direct and indirect impact of conservation measures implemented. For both the conceptual approach and the tools, we review existing concepts and instruments, especially those used by leading conservation organizations, in order to be compatible to other similar approaches and profit from already established tools.

Cat Classification Task Force

One of the main tasks of the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group is the continuous review of the conservation status of all cat species and subspecies according to the IUCN Red List process. A critical subject in this task is the systematic classification of the family of the cats, the FELIDAE. The taxonomy of cats has undergone considerable changes

Work in progress

in the past. We have therefore initiated the review of the currently used taxonomy by an expert group, the CCTF

Global Mammal Assessment update due in 2015

Five years have passed since the completion of the first IUCN-SSC global assessment of the status of terrestrial and marine mammals. There is a commitment from SSC to reassess all mammals by 2015, in time to contribute an updated Red List Index to monitor the progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The reassessment includes updated distribution maps. We have started to capture new geo-referenced information in a GIS project to facilitate this process.

Special issues of Cat news

Cats in Iran

The data on the status and conservation needs of all cat species in Iran that have been compiled during a workshop in November 2011 will be published as a special issue with species chapters including the two extinct species tiger and lion.

Camera trap by-catches for non-Panthera cats

South-east Asia covers about 11% of the world's land area yet supports 11 of the world's 37 cat species. Although non-Panthera cats are rarely the target of camera-trap programmes in the region, many significant records have been generated as bycatch. But beyond the newsworthy individual records lies a vast, presently dissociated, pool of photographs of non-Panthera cats. We have been able to motivate colleagues to analyse their by-catch data and they present in eight articles information on six non-Panthera cats from Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam and Lao PDR.

Staff and ...

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... Sponsors

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