

activity

2013/2014

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: Sunda clouded leopard (Photo S. Kennerknecht/Panthera)

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The Caucasus Cat Summit

Sochi, 7 May 2014



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The conference aimed to gather cat experts, researchers and people working in the field of biodiversity together to discuss preservation of big iconic animals, share their knowledge and experience. The Caucasus Cat Summit was launched on 7 May 2014 in Heydar Aliyev Centre (see photo above). The summit was co-organized by IDEA (International Dialogue for Environmental Action) in partnership with Heydar Aliyev Foundation and Heydar Aliyev Centre. The summit was attended by Azerbaijan's First Lady, President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, UNESCO and ISESCO Goodwill Ambassador Mehriban Aliyeva, head of IDEA, Vice-President of the Hey-

dar Aliyev Foundation Mrs. Leyla Aliyeva, and Mrs. Arzu Aliyeva. Moreover, the event also brought together acclaimed international experts, representatives of international organizations, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature, World Wildlife Fund, Panthera, Smithsonian Institution, Zoological Society of London and the University of Harvard.

Arlo Brady, coordinator of the summit, said the event would provide opportunities for exchanging knowledge and experience in the protection of leopards and other felines. Later, the summit featured presentation of a project on the protection of the Caucasian cat and the establishment of a favourable habitat for the animal. Azerbaijan was located in the centre of the historic Silk Road in the past. The geographical position of the country has made an impact not only on our culture, but also the nature. So nine out of 11 climate zones in the world are located in Azerbaijan, and it provides a rich biodiversity.

IUCN was represented by the Director General Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Jean-Christophe Vié (director of SOS), David Mallon (co-chair of the Antelope SG), and the two of us representing the Cat Specialist Group. Julia Marton-Lefèvre talked about *Red Alert – Challenges of Global Conservation*, Jean-Christophe gave an introduction to the SOS (Save Our Species), Christine presented *Global Challenges in Cat Conservation*, and Urs was part of the final talk *The Caucasian Leopard – Plotting a Future*. The day ended with a banquet in Baku.

On the following day we were taken by plane to Qabala from where we travelled to the countryside to experience the beautiful forests and landscapes. The excursion gave us the opportunity to talk to many colleagues from the region and to plan future activities in the Caucasus.





In recent years, an increasing number of leopard pictures were taken in the Caucasus, especially along the southern border of Azerbaijan. This is great news, but it also revealed that there are only very few individuals. Camera traps provide information of outstanding importance to assess the status of the leopard in the Caucasus eco-region which includes six countries: Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Russia. It is important to appreciate that species do not survive as individuals, but as populations, and that the goal of wildlife conservation, of all recovery programmes and of any reintroduction project must always be to establish and maintain a viable, self-sustaining population. This is much more than “having a few leopards”, because the requirement of a viable population goes far beyond the needs of individuals. The situation of the leopard in the Caucasus eco-region is not good. The source population in the south in Iran has declined in recent years, the few individuals showing up in camera traps in Armenia and Azerbaijan are the same ranging over large areas. Without help the leopard will disappear from this region.

We have been asked by the Zoological Society of London to participate in a feasibility study on how to conserve the leopard in Azerbaijan. The goal must be that Azerbaijan should host a vital population of leopards, or at least a significant part of a viable population of leopards in the entire Caucasus. The objectives of the study were

1. To review the history and the present situation of the leopard in the Caucasus and in neighbouring regions. The focus is on Azerbaijan, but it is important to also understand the international and inter-regional issues to recover the leopard in Azerbaijan;
2. To explore scenarios for the recovery of a viable leopard population in the Lesser and Greater Caucasus and the specific role of Azerbaijan in this conservation process;

3. To review the framework for the conservation of the leopard in Azerbaijan in order to understand enabling conditions and possible shortcomings;

4. To make recommendations for short-, to mid-, and long-term activities to implement a comprehensive and lasting leopard conservation programme in Azerbaijan.

The report addressing these objectives may also provide some guidance for the revision process of the Regional Conservation Strategy and the National Action Plans that are due within the next year and which are very important conservation tools.





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First camera-trap photograph of lynx on Pelister Mountain

Pelister National Park, as part of the wider mountain massive called Baba, was the firstly proclaimed national park in the former Yugoslavia in 1948. When the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme started there was no reliable information on the presence of lynx on Pelister. During the Baseline Survey, only 9 of 33 people answered that the lynx is present on Pelister and all of them stated that it is very rare.

One lynx was now photographed several times on a mountain trail in September 2013 after 6 months of monitoring.

The Balkan lynx team is now negotiating a semi-systematic camera-trapping session with the park administration which will more or

less encompass the whole mountain. This monitoring will help have a better picture on the wildlife present in the area.

Improving knowledge and raising awareness on lynx in Kosovo and Montenegro

Baseline Survey Kosovo

The Baseline Survey in Kosovo began in August 2013. The main focus of the survey is to obtain information about the Balkan lynx, its prey species, habitat and people's perception towards wildlife. This information will be the cornerstone for a successful future recovery strategy. 35 grids were selected by the Kosovo team, each of these grids representing 10x10 square km (100 km²). They conducted interviews with 181 people in 88 villages in 27 grid-cells in five mountain ranges.

Baseline Survey Montenegro

Interviews were conducted in 41 priority squares. The total number of interviewed people was 242. The following profiles were chosen as most relevant for the conduction of the questionnaires: veterinary doctors, game wardens, foresters, hunters, shepherds, farmers, livestock breeders, beekeepers, naturalists, shop owners and others.

Rediscovery of lynx in the Munella Mts, Albania

During February and March 2014, 40 cameras were set in Puka-Mirdita region and Librazhd region. A lot of pictures of wildlife species were taken, including 5 photos of Balkan lynx. Other species that were pictured are stone marten, wildcat, badger, red fox, wild boar, European hare, wolf, bear and European polecat. The aim of this monitoring season was to know the abundance, distribution and reproduction evidence of Balkan lynx mainly in Puka-Mirdita region.





In 2013 we have launched together with the Slovakian Wildlife Society and Zoo Bojnice the project *Living with Carpathian Spirits*. The project is funded through a Swiss-Slovak Cooperation programme. For the objectives of the project see Activity Report 2012/13.

Monitoring

During the past year, two study areas have been identified for establishing an intensive monitoring program with camera traps: Štiavnické Mountains Protected Landscape Area in central Slovakia and Vel'ká Fatra National Park in northwestern Slovakia. Both study areas were divided into two subunits. Camera-traps were set up and all subunits were subsequently sampled during 60 days resulting in 12 pentades. In Štiavnické Mountains 7 independent lynx individuals were captured from in 27 events and 285 pictures during 2013/14.

9 independent lynx individual were captured during the intensive monitoring 2013/2014 in the National Park Vel'ká Fatra in 14 events and 48 pictures. The number of identified lynx did not level off and the curve of cumulative captures did not steadily increase, so the results have to be taken with caution. The up-coming winter the intensive monitoring will therefore be repeated in this region.

The preliminary density estimate for the Vel'ká Fatra was 1.96 ± 2.49 and for the Štiavnické Mountains 1.11 ± 1.15 . These deterministic camera trapping sessions will help to establish a consistent lynx monitoring in Slovakia. The Slovakian Carpathian Mts are the main source for lynx releases in reintroduction projects or for genetic remedy of extant populations in Europe.

Project meetings

In April 2014 we visited Slovakia for a meeting to review the progress of the project. At the same time we attended the mid-term evaluation

meeting with the Swiss partners, represented by the Swiss Embassy in Bratislava and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC, as well as and the implementing agency ecopolis in Slovakia. The project and its progress were presented and the next steps discussed. It was well received by the Swiss partners.

A second meeting in June 2014 that was held in Zoo Bojnice was dedicated to data analyses of the monitoring part of the project. The Slovak colleagues were trained in data entry and management and in data preparation for subsequent analysis. At the same time the programme for the upcoming winter was discussed and priority were set.



Reintroduction project of the Persian leopard in the Caucasus

Moscow, Russia, 14 April 2014



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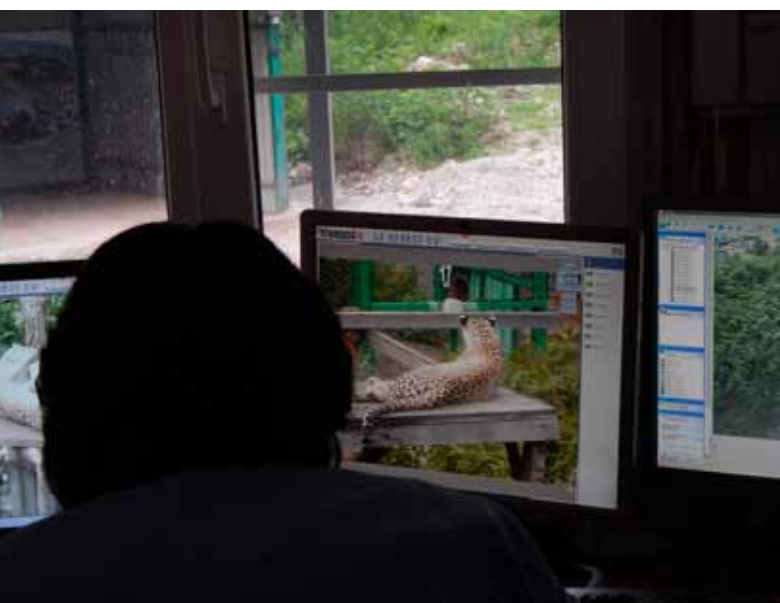
Urs called for a meeting to discuss leopard and tiger issues between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation (MNRE), WWF Russia and the Cat SG. It was held in April in Moscow and was attended by Mr Amirkhanov and Ms Fominykh (both MNRE), Ms Dronova (WWF Russia), Ms Arzhanova (Moscow Zoo), Mr Semenov (Sochi Leopard Breeding Centre) and Mr Aramilev (Centre of Amur Tiger, Russian Far East). The meeting was considered to be timely and important by all participants. The MNRE welcomed the input paper by Urs and mentioned that they agreed with the short analysis and the proposed way forward. The following topics were agreed to be discussed by the all participants of the meeting:

1) *Implementation of the MoU between MNRE, EAZA and IUCN in regard to reporting:*

The EAZA Felid TAG and the EEP coordinator for Persian leopard have asked for an improved reporting from the Sochi breeding centre to be able to help and advise. Communication is a language problem. A reporting form has been provided as well as a weekly enrichment plan to prepare animals for release. MNRE has committed to help with translation to support the regular reporting.

2) *Cooperation in the Caucasus between IUCN, EAZA and MNRE and possible additional partners:*

More actors will be involved in the leopard conservation in the Caucasus. All participants at the meeting agreed that the restoration of the leopard population can only be achieved through international cooperation. WWF and the Cat SG in cooperation with all range countries and institutional partners are preparing this fall the revision of the Regional Strategy. In a first step the status will be re-assessed in a workshop in Tbilisi in October 2014. Then early next year a strategy workshop will take place. The existing MoU provides a good model for institutional cooperation, but it needs strengthening through the working group. The MoU will be complemented with an Appendix defining the members of the working group. WWF Russia will join the agreement, and the EAZA Felid TAG, the Persian Leopard EEP and the Cat SG will be integrated.





A tiger conservation programme managed by IUCN has received EUR 20 million from the German government through the KfW Development Bank. The aim of the programme is to increase the number of tigers in the wild and improve the livelihoods of communities living in and close to their habitat. The agreement was signed in January at IUCN Headquarters in Gland, Switzerland.

This generous support from Germany provides great hope for this iconic species, which is currently on the brink of extinction. Saving the tiger depends on restoring its rapidly shrinking forest habitat. This will regenerate valuable ecosystem services and improve the lives of some of the most marginalised people on our planet.

The five-year Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme will benefit NGOs and conservation authorities from selected tiger range countries which, at the St Petersburg Tiger Summit in 2010, committed to doubling the number of tigers occurring within their territories by 2020. Eligible countries include Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal and Viet Nam.

The programme will involve improving the management of tiger habitats, tackling tiger-human conflicts, increasing anti poaching efforts and law enforcement and involving local communities in tiger conservation work.

The Tiger is listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. There are probably less than 2,500 adult individuals currently surviving in the wild, down from 100,000 a century ago. Out of nine recognized subspecies of tigers, three are Extinct (Javan, Caspian and Bali), one is possibly extinct (South China), one Critically Endangered (Sumatran) and four Endangered (Bengal, Amur, Indochinese and Malayan).

With its membership of conservation organisations and government agencies and the support of its network of experts, in particular the

Species Survival Commission and its Cat Specialist Group, IUCN is uniquely positioned to take on the management of this programme. Drawing on the experience from managing the species conservation fund SOS – Save Our Species, which supports field projects around the world, it will be assured that only the best projects and the best partners are selected in order to have maximum impact on the ground. The signing ceremony took place in Gland on 14 January 2014. The ITHCP will formally be launched at the GTRP conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 14 September 2014. As a first step, a programme coordinator has been hired who is based at IUCN headquarter. The Cat Specialist Group will chair the Programme Advisory Committee for the first two years..





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Wild Tigers are extinct, or effectively so, in Vietnam and there is no meaningful chance of natural recolonization from another country. By contrast, captive Tigers are proliferating in the country: there are at least 100 in private and government hands. Discussions with a range of organizations including WWF and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) led to the notion that both these conservation issues of national importance could perhaps best be addressed by one holistic project using the progeny of the current captives for reintroduction. A successful reintroduction would go a long way to helping Vietnam meet its international commitments, notably the 2010 St. Petersburg Declaration on Tiger Conservation, which in Article 1 commits

the Tiger Range States to: "Strive to double the number of wild tigers across their range by 2022".

However, no previous project exists to use as a template anywhere in the world. Very few reintroductions have used captive-bred cats of any species. This is therefore a risky but potentially game-changing idea. The number of complex issues requires the involvement of species specialists, those familiar with the techniques, and those accustomed to the operational environment including law enforcement and protected area management and robust monitoring of ungulate tiger prey. Given the risks associated with this approach, and after consultation with the IUCN-SSC Chair Simon Stuart, the support of the IUCN-SSC Cat Specialist Group (SG) was sought before deciding whether or not to submit a proposal. The Feasibility Study may conclude that the risks of reintroducing tigers using the progeny of captive animals outweighs the potential benefits or that Yok Don National Park is unlikely to reach the level of management effectiveness required, in which case it would recommend against international support for such a program. Nevertheless, the Cat SG Co-chairs concluded that the basic premise was sufficiently sound to be worth exploring.

The greatest single risk to successful tiger reintroduction is weak law enforcement. Despite very significant international support over the last 10-15 years, most protected areas in Vietnam remain open access resources with government ranges unable and/or unwilling to enforce wildlife protection laws. The FS must explicitly address these and other risks, provide realistic assessments of the risk of project failure in the absence of mitigation, and propose mitigation measures. The FS will have a strong capacity development component.

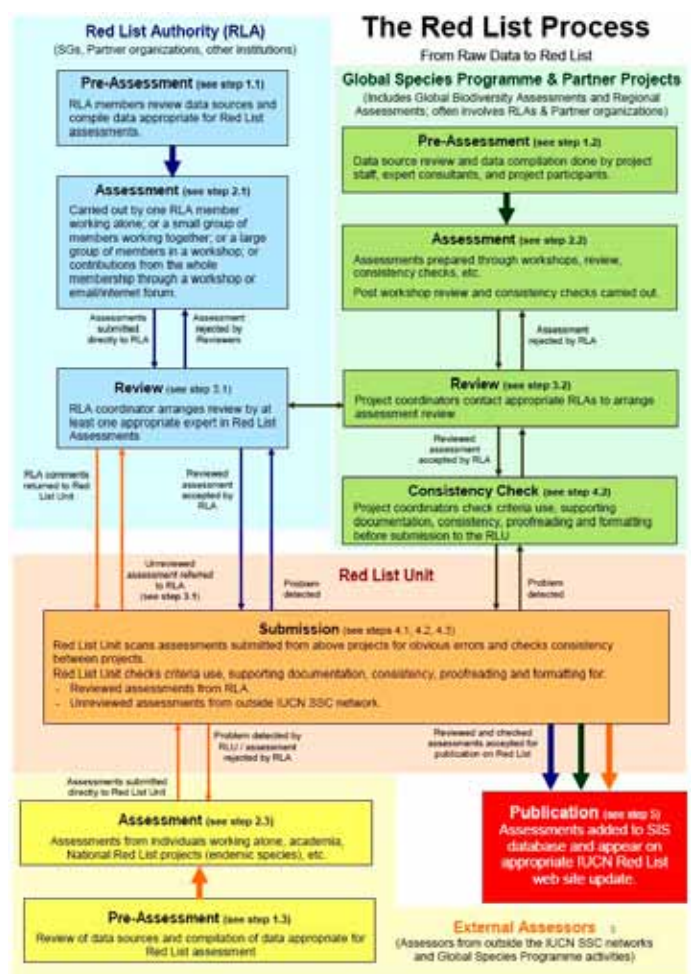
The FS was initiated by the IUCN office in Vietnam and will be financed by the Bundesministerium für Umwelt through KfW.



Update of the cat species assessments on the IUCN Red List

2014

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 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. Sapienza University, a member of the Red List partnership, volunteered to support the mammal Specialist Groups in the reassessment process by providing tools and staff time. Specifically, the Global Mammal Assessment staff at Sapienza carries out a series of tasks that will assist the various stages of the reassessment, including the updating of the distribution maps. The Red List Authority Coordinator of the Cat Specialist Group, Kristin Nowell appointed lead assessors and a group of reviewers for each species at the beginning of the year. The lead assessors were asked to put together a team for the assessment to cover the range and topics of the respective species. The deadline for the reassessment of the species status against IUCN Red List criteria and the identification of the 2015 classification, including a 1-2 paragraph rationale explaining how the determination was made based on more recent information, was 20 April 2014. Lead assessors were then asked to update the species information and range map in the Red List database by 30 June 2014. In July we had to review the reassessments of all 38 species, check the proper application of the guidelines and to provide feedback to the lead assessors. Whereas the status of some of the species was clear and the assessment well done, with others the discussion is still going back and forth. The assessment of a species for the Red List is a complex process, but the integrity of the IUCN Red List is only guaranteed if the rules are strictly applied across all species.



Arabian Sand Cat - One Plan Conservation Workshop

13-14 November 2013, Al Ain, UAE



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An Arabian Sand Cat One Plan Conservation Workshop was organised by Al Ain Zoo on 13-14 November 2013. The aims of the workshop were to develop a conservation strategy for the Arabian Sand Cat, increase collaboration and integrate ex situ and in situ conservation efforts.

The workshop was held in the Danat Hotel, Al Ain. It was attended by 30 participants representing 17 institutions and organizations. The workshop was formally opened by H.E. Mr Ghanim Mubarak al Hajeri, Director General of Al Ain Zoo and was moderated by Dr David Mallon, Co-Chair of the IUCN/SSC Antelope Specialist Group and member of the IUCN Species Conservation Planning Subcommittee. The format

broadly followed the IUCN Species Conservation Strategy (SCS) process. In the preparatory phase, a review of the current status of wild and captive populations of Arabian sand cat was compiled from all available published sources by Al Ain Zoo.

The first part of the workshop consisted of a series of presentations on current conservation efforts, both in- and ex situ. There is a limited amount of information on the range size and density of sand cats. The most detailed project so far is a long-term trapping study of small carnivores undertaken in Saja/Umm Ar-Rimth reserve in Saudi Arabia. The presentations were followed by an extended discussion on the main points raised. Information from the presentations was incorporated into the draft status review and the revised and updated version included in the final document.

The second part involved development of the conservation strategy: analysing the main threats and problems facing the sand cat; formulating a Vision and Goal for sand cat conservation, and the Objectives and Actions needed to achieve them.

The in situ (in the wild) and ex situ (in captivity) strands of conservation have traditionally been practiced separately. To encourage a more integrated, efficient and effective conservation effort in the future the One Plan conservation approach has been increasingly promoted by the IUCN Conservation Breeding Specialist Group in recent years. The approach advocates that there should be only one comprehensive conservation strategy for a species which integrates all populations and individuals whether in situ, ex situ or in between, providing the best chance of securing a sustainable population and a therefore future for endangered species.

The captive population on the Arabian Peninsula currently has 53 animals in six institutions. Al Ain Zoo has with 32 animals the largest collection.



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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). 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, Yemen and isolated spots in Saudi Arabia. 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, some of the best remaining habitat for leopard is found in Jabal Samhan Nature Reserve (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, the National Field Research Centre for Environmental Conservation NFRCEC in collaboration with the Office for Conservation of the Environment OCE and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Affairs MECA invited 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 Jabal Samhan and across the mountains of Dhofar. We have been invited to facilitate the workshop. Additionally, representatives from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Housing, Diwan of Royal Court, Office of the Governor of Dhofar, Environment Society of Oman, Earthwatch Institute, and leaders from the relevant communities have participated in the workshop. The goal of the Arabian leopard conference was to inform all stakeholders of the Critically Endangered status of the Arabian leopard, its prey species and the importance of its core habitat in Jabal Samhan Nature

Reserve, and to identify practical solutions for conservation, agreed by the stakeholders. The greatest threats include habitat degradation due to over-grazing, the persecution of the leopard by local herders and loss of key prey species. The outcome of the conference is the *National Action Plan for the conservation of the Arabian leopard in Oman*, identifying responsibilities of all institutions involved in conservation in the country. The most important points of the Action Plan were: engagement with local people, advancing research and monitoring, capacity development at different levels, improving conservation breeding, awareness and long-term support, and national and international cooperation.



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Living with Carpathian Spirits - Training

21-25 October 2013



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The training week was dedicated to discuss scientific approaches to the conservation of Eurasian lynx populations with emphasis on the Critically Endangered Balkan lynx *Lynx lynx balcanicus* in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania, and the autochthonous and reintroduced Carpathian lynx *L. l. carpathicus* populations in the Ukraine and Slovakia, and in Switzerland, respectively. The participants were from the Living with Carpathian Spirits project in Slovakia and neighbouring Ukraine, and from the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme from Macedonia.

The first three days (Monday to Wednesday) of the workshop were dedicated to half-day sessions with presentations and discussions

providing a short overview of theories and concepts for studying and conserving lynx and practical field applications and data analyses. Thursday and Friday were reserved for group work and individual discussion of specific works of the participants.

During the workshop the following five topics have been looked at:

Human dimension and public involvement

A first talk set the theoretical framework of human dimensions in relation to wildlife conservation and management, describing common methodologies and providing some illustrative examples of their application. The second talk was about human-carnivore conflicts in Slovakia. The practicalities of implementing various conflict mitigation strategies were shown, from damage prevention methods to applied human dimensions workshops with key stakeholders.

GIS habitat modelling for conservation

In this session two lynx habitat models were presented, one for the lynx in the Alps and the other for the lynx in the Balkans, both using Maxent. A third talk was on habitat selection for red deer estimated using RSF (Resource Selection Function).

Camera trapping - spatial concepts

In this session the focus was on approaches to analyse the data gained from camera-trapping using the CMR (Capture-Mark-Recapture) and SCR (Spatial Capture-Recapture), and issues associated with the lynx density estimation.

Camera trapping - applications

The second session was committed to field application such as occupancy or behavioural studies, e.g. marking behaviour.

Health and genetics

Students were introduced to health surveillance and screening protocols, as well as the importance of genetic monitoring and how to collect and store samples.





The programme for young conservationists continued in Montenegro and Kosovo

From 18-22 October 2013 in Shtavna, on the foothills of Mountain Komovi (Montenegro) and from 8-11 November 2013 in Prizren (Kosovo) two capacity building workshops for young conservationists from Western Balkans were held. Both workshops were carried out in the framework of continuing activities to strengthen the capacity of environmental NGOs in Montenegro and Kosovo.

The November workshop focused on the ongoing Baseline Survey in Kosovo and Montenegro within the third phase of the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme and sharing experiences with colleagues from Macedonia and Albania, the workshop in October mainly dealt with topics related to protected area management: achievements and challenges in the development of protected areas in the region of the Western Balkans and examples of good practices in the development of protected areas in South East Europe were discussed.

In addition to the theoretical part of the workshops, participants of the trainings visited several mountain regions and National Parks in Montenegro and Kosovo. During these field trips they gained an insight on the possible habitats of Balkan lynx in these countries and received information about problems and challenges which these areas are facing.

Lynx monitoring training course

The training course in Switzerland from 3-8 March 2014 included a practical and a theoretical part. The field training took place in the Jura Mountains in western Switzerland and in the Simmental valley in the Swiss Alps. Participants in this training were Azem Ramadani from the NGO FINCH Kosovo, Aleksandar Perovi from CZIP Montenegro and Parësim Sanaja from the ERA group in Kosovo.

The first day in the field was dedicated to the practical work around camera-traps. Camera-traps were checked for functionality and when it was needed batteries and SD cards were changed. All participants had the possibility to check, set and program a camera-trap on one of the controlled sites. The other field days were spent in the Alps where a life-trapping program was running. The participants learned to check box traps at two different sites and received some training in telemetry with one of the lynx that was GPS-collared. They also gained experience on how to search and find a kill and how to recognise typical signs of a lynx kill (throat bite, starting eating from hind legs, digestive track remains untouched). The setting of foodsnare including an alarm system was demonstrated. The training also included the identification of tracks of different species.





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The last renewal of the Cat SG website www.catsg.org dates back to 2005. The site is technically and in regard to the content outdated. In a big effort we have renewed the entire website in both respects. From finding the appropriate design to defining the content, writing the texts, choosing the photos and uploading things is a long way. We are using now a content management system which facilitates the maintenance. It will go online in fall 2014. The new website has six sections:

1) The Cat Specialist Group

This includes the history of the group, the cat manifesto, the Terms of References for members, members' portraits – each member presents itself with a picture and a short CV – and our reporting.

2) Cats

With the help of many members, we have completely renewed the sections on the currently recognised 38 cat species. Each species has the following sub-chapters: Description, Status and Distribution, Habitat, Ecology and Behaviour, Prey, Main Threats and Conservation Efforts and Protection Status. Members and a number of wildlife photographers have shared their fantastic cat photos which makes this section of the new website quite unique. We also have considered the recent split of the *tigrina* into two species, the northern tiger cat and the southern tiger cat.

3) Conservation Centre

Here we have a section on cats and the Red List, Strategic Conservation Planning, Status Reports sorted according to species, Strategies and Action Plans, CITES, and the other Conventions. The Conservation Planning section will be further develop in parallel to our activities and the recommendations of the IUCN/SSC Sub-Committee for Species Conservation Planning where we are participating.

4) Library

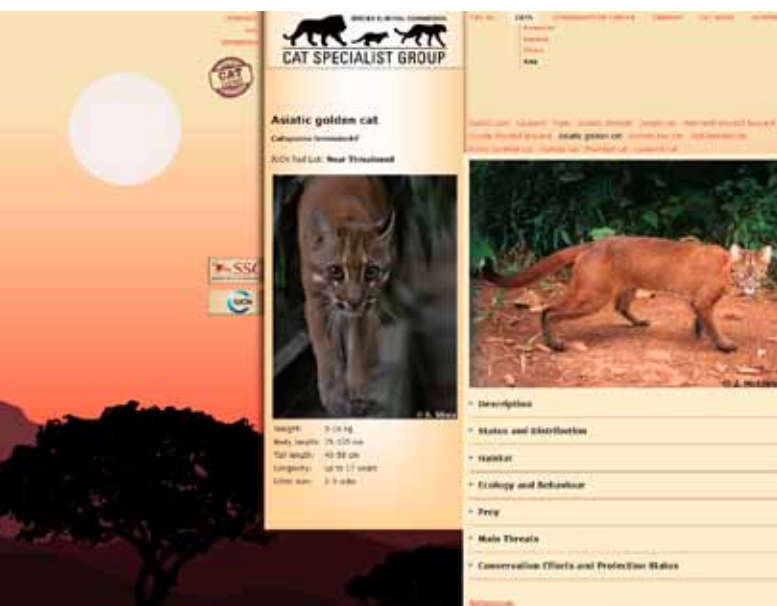
The Digital Cat Library now containing well over 9,000 cat conservation relevant documents is linked in here. The same is for the species compendia (cheetah, Iberian lynx and Balkan lynx). Cat SG members and Friends feature their work under Project of the Month. We have also a section where we present new books on cats, and list of links.

5) Cat News

This allows access to the content of the current issue, the special issues, the archive back to CN41, the possibility or order an Archive CD, and the Guidelines for authors.

6) Support

We acknowledge our supporters and offer possibilities on how to support the activities of the Cat Specialist Group.



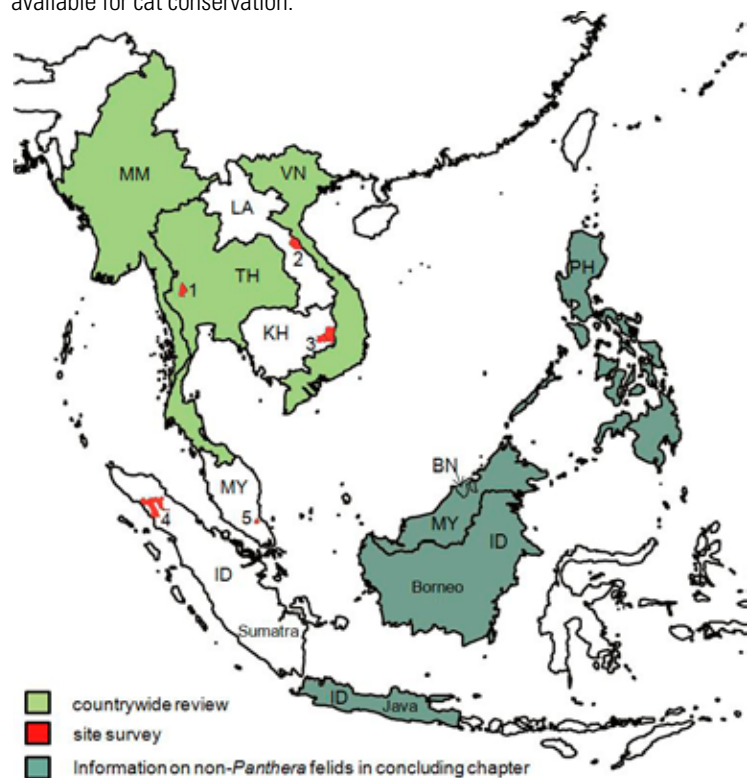


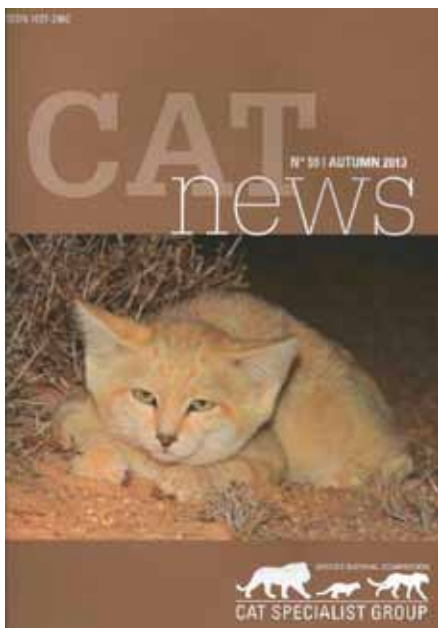
South-east Asia covers about 3% of the world's land area yet supports 11 cat species. The region's significance is heightened by three of these 11 species (flat-headed cat, bay cat and Sunda clouded leopard) being confined to South-east Asia and another three (Asiatic golden cat, marbled cat and mainland clouded leopard) occurring mostly there. High endemism in South-east Asia is typical of many taxonomic groups. Yet the region is changing very quickly, with rapid natural habitat change and intensive trade-driven hunting on a scale never seen anywhere else in the world. Many of its species are highly threatened with extinction.

One of the region's cats, the tiger, is among the highest profile species for the conservation world and the general public, and another, leopard, has a huge world range. But the other nine species, here called non-*Panthera* cats, are barely studied anywhere in their range, historically or recently. Ironically, the one species researched in many countries, leopard cat, is the only one of these species known to face no serious threat in South-east Asia. The others represented, until recently, a serious challenge even to be detected, let alone studied. Their populations are assumed to be declining at least in proportion to conversion of natural habitat into agriculture, human settlement and infrastructure, and probably through the effects of hunting, in part driven by illegal trade.

Wild animals have been camera-trapped since the 1890s. This technique has exploded in use in South-east Asia since the mid 1990s. Non-*Panthera* cats are rarely camera-trap programme targets in the region, but many significant records are generated as bycatch, as evidenced by any issue of *Cat News*. Beyond the newsworthy individual records lies a vast, presently dissociated, pool of photographs of cats. Together with colleagues from the region we have produced a Special Issue of *Cat News* that includes nine contributions (see map): three (for

Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam) are countrywide reviews of available non-*Panthera* cat records, considering surveys of many sites. Five others digest information from individual survey landscapes. Finally, the concluding article combines information from all the surveys to discuss the regional conservation status of each species. We are very grateful to the institutions for making these important bycatch data available for cat conservation.





Cat News

In 2013 and 2014 (until mid-year) we have published the regular issues Cat News 59 (48 pages) and 60 (56 pages) with 33 peer-reviewed articles, and Cat News Special Issue 8 on non-*Panthera* cats in South-east Asia (68 pages). This is the largest ever produced Cat News.

Digital Cat Library

We have newly integrated 384 publications into the Digital Cat Library DCL in 3 uploads during the past year. These frequent updates are possible thanks to the support by Panthera. DCL hosts currently 9,319 reports and publications relevant to cat conservation and is constantly growing.

Work in progress

Cat SG website

The new website is almost ready to go online (see p. 16). The last texts are being revised and technical steps implemented.

Cat Classification Task Force

The taxonomy of cats has undergone considerable changes in the past few years. We have therefore initiated the review of the currently used taxonomy by an expert group, the CCTF. In January we met with the Chair of the CCTF, Andrew Kitchener and discussed the next steps. Time is marching on and although this has provided the opportunity for new publications which have provided a clearer picture of geographical variation in some species, we could wait forever. Therefore, we have decided that Andrew creates species accounts for all species for wider comments in order that there is a consistent approach and to provide some information for those species for which we currently have nothing. The first batch of 29 species went out for wider review in August.

Global Mammal Assessment update due in 2015

We have been busy with reviewing the reassessments of all cat species, and the back and forth discussion is going on. Until the end of the year we will have to review the text that will go online on the Red List website and support lead assessors where needed with the updating of the maps.

AZA SAFE

Association of Zoos and Aquariums AZA has launched the SAFE (Saving Species from Extinction) Programme and has chosen the cheetah as one their pilot species. Together with the Range Wide Conservation Programme for Cheetah, we will advise AZA on how they can best support cheetah conservation.

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. We have now all manuscripts in and the review process is under way.

Status of the leopard

The leopard is one of the most widespread mammal of the world and listed as Near Threatened in the IUCN Red List. However, the five subspecies assessed are all in a threatened category, and recent reports indicate that leopards may be declining in most parts of their range. The leopard is a neglected species, and the conservation focus in the leopard range often is on other large cats such as tiger, lion, cheetah or snow leopard. We want to join up with the leopard specialists worldwide to make a complete review of the status and the conservation needs of the leopard and its subspecies and publish it as a Special Issue.

Staff and ...

We wish to thank all the dedicated colleagues and members of the Cat Specialist Group for their hard work during the reporting period 2013/2014. Working very closely with the Cat Specialist Group Co-chairs were Manuela von Arx (Assistant to the Chair, Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme), Tabea Lanz (Assistant to the Chair, new website, Red List Assessments), Anna Huber (book keeping), Kristin Nowell (Cat SG Red List Authority Coordinator): a great thank you to all of them. We would like to thank the many dedicated people who helped develop and run the various projects in 2013/2014: Fridolin Zimmermann and Andreas Ryser (Balkan lynx project, Carpathian Spirits), Alex Sliwa (Sochi leopard reintroduction, Cats in Iran), Marianne Hartmann (Sochi leopard reintroduction), Keith Richmond, Sultana Bashir, Brian Bertram and Javier Pereira (associate editors Cat News), Barbara Surber and Dieter Lehmann (renewal of the website), Will Duckworth and Antony Lynam (guest editors Special Issue on non-*Panthera* cats in South-east Asia). We would also like to thank the many colleagues who have contributed to the website, Cat News and the Digital Cat Library. Alex Sliwa, Patrick Meier and Sebastian Kennerknecht have generously made available their superb cat pictures for Cat SG purposes, also for this report. Many thanks!

... Sponsors

Although much of our work as an IUCN/SSC Specialist Group is done on a voluntary basis, our projects would not be possible without financial support from many committed institutions and private persons. We would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their partnership and support: Friends of the Cat Group, Wild Cat Club, Panthera, MAVA Foundation, Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, Zoo Leipzig, Forestry Bureau of the Taiwan Council of Agriculture, Parrotia Stiftung, Fondation Gérard Pierre, Nakuso Stiftung, tierschutz.ch-Stiftung, Erlenmeyer Stiftung, Fondation Pierre et Nouky Bataillard, Earthwatch, Zoological Society of London, Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme, Innflow AG, Stämpfli Publikationen AG, and especially Patrick Meier, Peter Stämpfli, and Jean-Claude and Annemarie Tschumper.

