



NEWSLETTER

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Talysh mountains © WWF-Caucasus

CAUCASUS ECOREGION NEWSLETTER

News from the Caucasus

Special



Issue

Leopard Booom in Azerbaijan

Six different leopards have been photographed or filmed in Azerbaijan in the past year – four in the Nakhchivan Republic and two in the Talish Mountains. This is remarkable, since not so long ago no-one believed that leopards were left in the Caucasus at all. For 30 to 40 years it was nigh on impossible to find any reliable scientific data about the presence of the big cats.

The programme for leopard conservation in the Caucasus started in early 2000. In those days, the WWF field team had to spend weeks or months in the Hyrkan forest or arid landscapes of Zangezur to find any trace of leopards.

The long-term programme, which includes support for PAs in leopard habitats and active communication work among the local population, has resulted in an increase in the number of leopards. Intensive monitoring of the leopard population and other associated species was established in Talish Mountains and Zangezur (Nakhchivan), using camera traps. In the past year 50 photos and 12 movies have been taken of four different leopards in the Nakhchivan AR and eight photos of two leopards in the Talish Mountains.

At the end of 2013 onwards leopards were photographed in pairs so we are looking forward to seeing their cubs in summer or autumn when they follow their mother for a photo session.

All this success has been possible due to the coordinated work of the WWF team and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan. This year is the last year of National Action Plan for Leopard Conservation in Azerbaijan, approved in 2009. A New Action Plan will be developed for the next five years. The size of PAs in leopard habitats during the programme period has more than quadrupled. According to the camera trap monitoring, the number of prey species for the leopard is also increasing. This is behind the leopard boom in Azerbaijan in recent years.

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