



NEWSLETTER

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Teberda Reserve. Russian Federation. ©A. Bok

# CAUCASUS ECOREGION NEWSLETTER

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## Leopards Zadig and Andrea arrived from Portugal to Russia

In the 20th century, the leopard disappeared from the Russian Caucasus because of humans, mostly due to poaching. The Persian Leopard Reintroduction Program is run by the Ministry of natural resources and environment of the Russian Federation with participation of the Sochi National Park, Caucasus Nature Reserve, A.N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution, WWF and Moscow Zoo.

Under this aegis of this project, two leopards, were introduced from Portugal. Zadig (9 years old) and Andrea (7 years old) got so used to the transport cages that they didn't want to leave them at first. Andrea was the first to come out. Zadig walked into the big enclosure several hours later. The event was attended by the Minister of natural resources and environment of Russia Sergey Donskoy, WWF-Russia CEO Igor Chestin, Lisbon Zoo mammal curator José Dias Ferreira, staff of the Sochi national park and Transaero representative Alexander Kotenko. The cats from the Lisbon Zoo will live not far from other four leopards – two males and two females, which arrived in 2009 and 2010 from Turkmenistan and Iran. Those animals had not known each other before coming to the park, and leopards are very picky when choosing a partner, so the Iranian and Turkmen cats have still not formed couples. To fasten up the project development, WWF-Russia organized the transportation of the already formed couple from the Lisbon Zoo, which was approved and supported by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria. Zadig and Andrea already had 8 kittens in three litters.

“Cats are solitary animals, but Zadig and Andrea are getting along very well. They spend most of the time in one enclosure. In the wild leopards usually meet only to mate, when the female is estrous. But Zadig and Andrea often sleep and look for food together. Sometimes they have quarrels, of course, but very short ones and without any serious fighting”, says José Dias Ferreira from the Lisbon Zoo. Zadig and Andrea have different characters. Zadig is calmer, and Andrea is more aggressive. She doesn't like visitors to come too close to the enclosure. When she has kittens, she is very protective and doesn't allow anyone come close – especially while they're totally helpless, up to three months old.

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