



NEWSLETTER

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Talysh mountains © WWF-Caucasus

# CAUCASUS ECOREGION NEWSLETTER

News from the Caucasus

Special



Issue





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## The cubs to start a new population of the leopard in Russia

The Persian leopards, who once ranged across the entire Caucasus, are now among the world's endangered species according to the IUCN Red List. But these charismatic animals were given another chance in the Russian Caucasus. They are currently being reintroduced to their natural habitat as part of the Persian Leopard Reintroduction Program, linked to the Sochi 2014 Winter Games.

Four kittens were born in the Persian Leopard Breeding and Rehabilitation Center at the Sochi National Park in the Caucasus Nature Reserve last summer. Today, the cubs are learning to hunt small prey, thus forming their predatory skills for the future release into the wild. The birth of these animals in captivity is a big event and a remarkable achievement of the Russian scientists. "These kittens will become the founders of a new leopard population in the Russian Caucasus mountains", says WWF-Russia species coordinator Natalia Dronova. "We hope that after the leopard cubs have been successfully prepared for independent life in the wild, they will be released into the Kavkazsky biosphere reserve in the spring of 2015".

The Persian Leopard Reintroduction Program in the Russian Caucasus 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. The experience gained during the implementation of the Leopard Reintroduction Program will be introduced to the Far East region of Russia for similar projects for recovery of Amur leopard population.

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