Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme 2006-2015

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Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme

In 2006, in Albania and Macedonia started the programme for the recovery of the Balkan Lynx. This programme is a partnership project between regional and international organizations:

Supported by:

[MAVA logo]

[The Research Council of Norway logo]

[Swiss National Science Foundation logo]
Situation of the Balkan Lynx

Distribution of Eurasian lynx (Lynx lynx) in Europe

Most endemic autocton population

Balkan lynx population: 40-60 estimated individuals

The Balkan lynx is considered Critically Endangered based on red list of IUCN
What is Balkan Lynx? How does it look like?

Wild mammal, carnivore with yellowish-gray color or redish to brown, dark spots and white belly

Body height 0.6-0.7 m

Body length 1-1.3 m

Body weight 15-25 kg

It lives 15-20 years

Main prey (roe dear, chamois, hares and birds)
Main activities of BLRP

- Education/Training
- Surveys and Monitoring
- Protected area
- Model project
- Information and awareness
1. Training & Education

Students trained in different wildlife monitoring methods but also in conceptual and organizational aspects.

We also inform and train anyone interested in learning the methods to contribute to the project, for instance in the monitoring network.
2. Study & Monitoring

Base study:

**Balkan lynx presence**

873 interviews with local people (553 MK, 320 AL)
Balkan lynx prey
Base study: Threats

Illegal killing

Habitat degradation

Prey depletion

Small popullation and fragmentation
Research and study methods

- Literature review
- Transect walk
- Camera trapping
- Lynx capture and radio telemetry
Camera-trapping method
## Results (2006-2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study area (size)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. cam.-traps</th>
<th>No. lynx pictures</th>
<th>Lynx population estimation</th>
<th>Other species (No. of pictures)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mavrovo NP, MK (436 km²)</td>
<td>26.02.- 26.04.08</td>
<td>32 sites x 2 = 64</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7 ± 1,82 independent lynx* = 0,84 ± 0,24 lynx/100km²</td>
<td>badger (12), brown bear (13), brown hare (30), chamois (28), red fox (10), roe deer (36), wild boar (47), wildcat (6), wolf (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galichica NP and northern surroundings, MK (~ 250 km²)</td>
<td>19.11.08 - 14.01.09</td>
<td>19 (13 sites) 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>badger (1), brown bear (1), brown hare (11), red fox (13), roe deer (10), wild boar (3), wild cat (8), wolf (2), [dogs (10)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shebenik-Jablanica NP (340 km²)</td>
<td>02.03.- 17.04.09</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>badger (1), brown bear (2), brown hare (5), red fox (15), roe deer (2), stone marten (7), wild cat (5), dogs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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* Model Mh of programme MARK
SCOPES 2010-2012

Lynx capture and radio telemetry method:

• To learn about their home range

• Distribution and abundance

• Habitat preferences

• Social organization

• Predation and diet

• Health and genetic analyses

The first lynx caught in Mavrovo NP on 14th of March 2010 - Marko
Extensive monitoring with camera-trapping (2010-2011)

42 Camera-trapping in 4 different areas

- Shebenik-Jabllanicë
- Balgjaj Mt.
- Munella Mt.
- Surrej region (Kukës)

Time study: December 2010 – May 2011
The first photo of the Balkan lynx in Albania, Puka-Mirdita region

486 photos of wildlife with 13 species

Martes sp. 55, Mustela nivalis 1, Meles meles 69, Vulpes vulpes 136, Sciurus vulgaris 2, Lepus europaeus 155, Canis lupus 12, Ursus arctos 20, Felis silvestris 9, Erinaceus roumanicus 4, Capreolus capreolus 22, Sus scrofa 2.

Good indication of the prey presence (Roe deer, Brown hare, Fox).
Monitoring season with camera-trapping 2012

22 Camera-trapping in 3 different areas

- Valbona value
- Munella Mt.
- Shebenik-Jabllanicë NP

Time study: July–December 2012

The first photo of the Balkan lynx in Shebenik-Jabllanicë NP

710 photos of wildlife (13 species)
Camera-trapping:

1. Mavrovo PK (MK):
   \[7 \pm 1.82 \text{ lynx} \; 0.84 \pm 0.24/100 \text{ km}^2 \; (2008)\]
   \[9 \pm 3.24 \text{ lynx} \; 0.84 \pm 0.29/100 \text{ km}^2 \; (2010)\]

2. Galichica PK (MK): 0 lynx

3. Shebenik-Jabllanica PK (AL): 1 (2) lynx

4. Pelister PK (MK): 0 lynx

5. Jasen PA (MK): 2 lynx

6. NE Albania: 2 (3?) lynx

7. Valbona valley, Albanian Alps: 0 lynx

Mavrovo NP is the region where the population of the Balkan lynx riproduction

20-44 estimated individuals!
Images from camera trapping season in Albania 2012

Grey wolf (Canis lupus)

Brown bear (Ursus arctos)

Chamois (Rupicapra rupicapra)

Wild boar (Sus scrofa)
Camera-trapping 2013-2015

16 Camera-trapping

2 different areas

Time study: 20 March – 22 June 2013

13 photos of the Balkan lynx in 2013!

4-5 different individuals of lynx in Puka-Mirdita region!
44 Camera-trapping

Shebenik-Jabllanicë NP & Munella Mt.

December 2013-May 2014

In total 45 photos of Balkan lynx

5-6 individuals in Puka-Mirdita region

2 new individuals are photographed during this season

Munella Mt is the second area in Balkan where the Balkan lynx is present
Images from camera trapping season in Munella Mt. 2015

Balkan lynx (Lynx lynx balcanicus)

Brown hare (Lepus europaeus)

Wild cat (Felis silvestris)

Wild boar (Sus scrofa)
Images from camera trapping season in Puke Mirditë region 2016

Grey wolf (Canis lupus)

Roe deer (Capreolus capreolus)

Red fox (Vulpes vulpes)

Badger (Meles meles)
3. Protected areas

Protected areas can play an important role in species conservation.

Shebenik-Jabllanicë is proclaimed National Park in 2008.

Korab-Koritnik is proclaimed Natural Park in 2011.

In the 3rd phase of the BLRP (2012-2015), two other areas are under focus:

- Munella Mountain
- Pashtrik-Morina
4. Small Grant projects

To create **awareness** for the natural value of the region and the need for the **preservation certain areas** as well as the careful use of the natural resources, we encourage locals to **submit their ideas** for small projects related to local sustainable development.

Projects such as:

- Promotion of the natural values
- Sustainable development
- Education and Awareness
5. Information & awareness

Information about lynx and the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme are spread with leaflets and posters, via the media, articles and presentation.
5.1. Education program

“Balkan Lynx Ambassadors”- A peer learning wildlife program with school childrens in the Puke-Mirdite region
Main challenges and obstacles

- Lack of capacities and expertise of local NGOs, GOs and lack of human resources

- Opportunistic NGOs, adopting their scope on the funding prospects that arise

- Lack of, weak coordination and collaboration between national/local organizations

- Lack of continuation/sustainability of the activities

- No access to information or limited access to unreliable data on lynx and its prey
Lessons learned

- Motivation, trust, solidarity and strong commitment

- Involvement of all partner organization’s

- Collaboration and exchange of experiences at national/international level

- Need to enhance the abilities and capacities

- It is crucial to strengthen the collaboration with GIs, and national governments
Thank you for your attention!