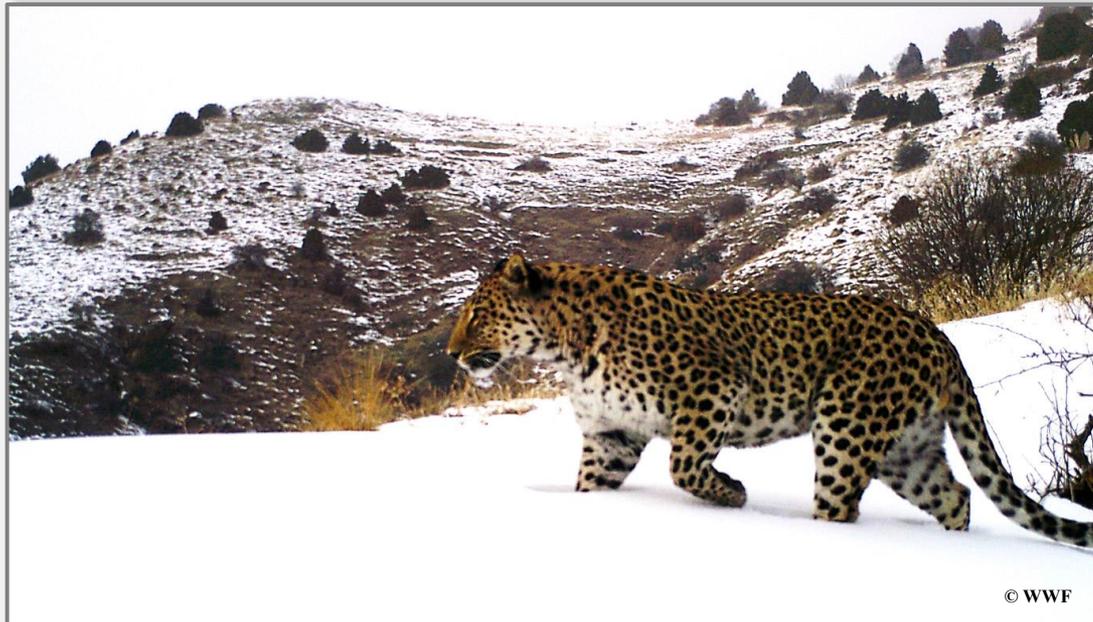




# The Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion and its implementation through National Action Plans



Maka Bitsadze, Regional Conservation Manager, WWF Caucasus Programme Office  
UNEP/CMS/CAMI First Range State Meeting for the Persian Leopard  
20-22 September 2022, Tbilisi, Georgia

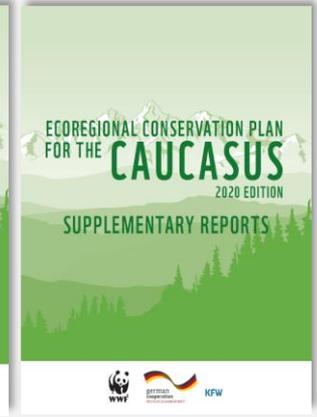
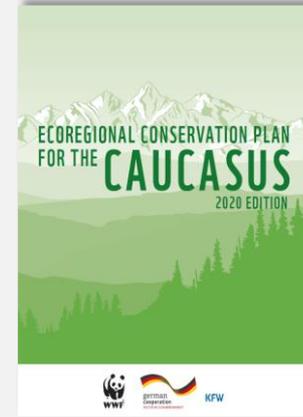
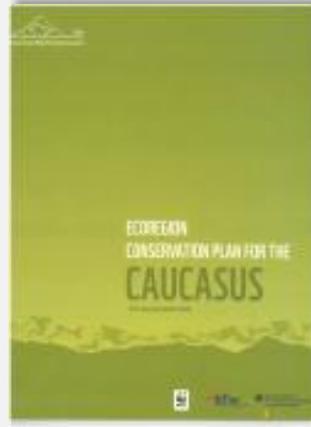
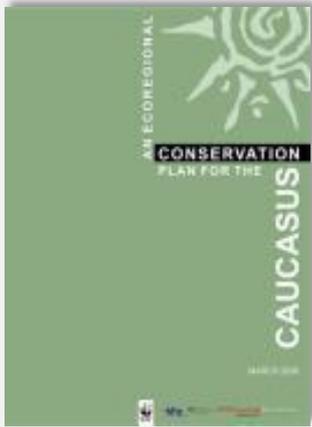
# The Importance of Regional and Transboundary Cooperation

- Acknowledgment of the importance of close collaboration and coordination among biodiversity-related conventions (CBD, CMS, BERN, RAMSAR, CITES, WHC) as they share the overall goal of biodiversity conservation.
- Growing recognition of the importance of regional and transboundary collaboration to achieve the biodiversity conservation goals.
- Seeking mechanisms for promoting regional and transboundary cooperation for the implementation of the Conventions.
- Regional and transboundary approaches allow actions to be designed and implemented at a scale large enough to achieve ecologically viable results and the persistence of biodiversity.

- 
- The Ecoregional Conservation Plan for the Caucasus (ECP) - a blueprint for biodiversity conservation in the region.
  - The regional dimension of the ECP promotes and enhances national level actions by allowing them to be viewed and considered from the regional perspective.



# The Ecoregional Conservation Plan for the Caucasus (ECP)



**2006**

Armenia  
Azerbaijan  
Georgia  
Iran  
Russia  
Turkey

**2012**

Armenia  
Azerbaijan  
Georgia  
Iran  
Russia  
Turkey

**2020**

Armenia  
Azerbaijan  
Georgia  
Iran  
Russia  
Turkey

# The Eco-regional Conservation Plan for the Caucasus (ECP 2020)

- Long and widely participatory process of the ECP revision = ECP 2020.
- ECP 2020 applies the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) approach and introduces the relatively new concept of Large Conservation Landscapes (CLs).

Conservation and Bridging Landscapes and KBAs

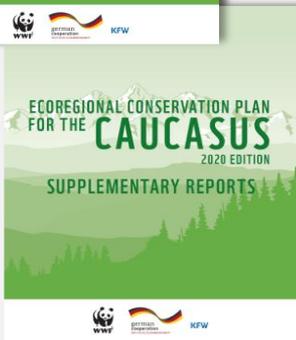
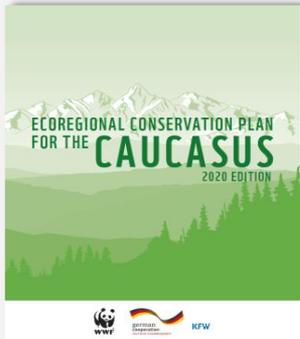


## Conservation Landscapes:

- 1 - Kuma-Manych;
- 2 - Western Greater Caucasus;
- 3 - Central Greater Caucasus;
- 4 - Eastern Greater Caucasus;
- 5 - Caspian;
- 6 - Kolkheti;
- 7 - Western Lesser Caucasus;
- 8 - South Caucasus Uplands;
- 9 - Sarikamish-Maku;
- 10 - Eastern Lesser Caucasus;
- 11 - Iori-Mingachevir;
- 12 - Arasbaran;
- 13 - Hyrcan.

## Bridging Landscapes:

- A - Likhi;
- B - Trialeti-Gombori;
- C - Algeti-Loqi;
- D - Sarikamish-Posof;
- E - Aras;
- F - Bazum;
- G - Aragats.



# The Ecoregional Conservation Plan for the Caucasus (ECP 2020)

The ECP 2020 sets **Targets for 2035** and **Actions by 2025** arranged in **four priority thematic areas**:

**A. The Ecological Network** - Promotion and Development;

**B. Wildlife** - Conservation of threatened animal species;

**C. Forest** - Sustainable management, restoring and maintaining the ecological connectivity of forest ecosystems;

**D. Freshwater** - Sustainable management, restoring and maintaining the ecological connectivity of freshwater ecosystems.

The Leopard Conservation - a need of regional collaborative efforts and coordinated national actions.

- Regional and national conservation planning, reintroduction, strengthening protection, monitoring.



## Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion



Results from the Strategic Planning Workshop on  
Leopard Conservation in the Caucasus

Tbilisi, Georgia, 30 May - 1 June 2007

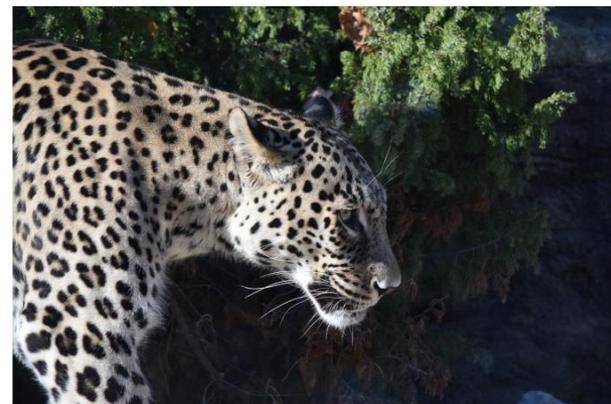


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**IUCN**  
The World Conservation Union



## Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion Revised Version 2017



Results from the Strategic Planning Workshop on  
Leopard Conservation in the Caucasus

Tbilisi, Georgia, 25 – 26 April 2017



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### 2007

Armenia  
Azerbaijan  
Georgia  
Iran  
Russia  
Turkey

### 2017

Armenia  
Azerbaijan  
Georgia  
Iran  
Russia  
Turkey

# Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion Revised Version 2017

Strategic Planning Workshop on Leopard Conservation in the Caucasus,  
25-26 April 2017, Tbilisi, Georgia



# Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion

## Revised Version 2017

Distribution of leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion (2017)

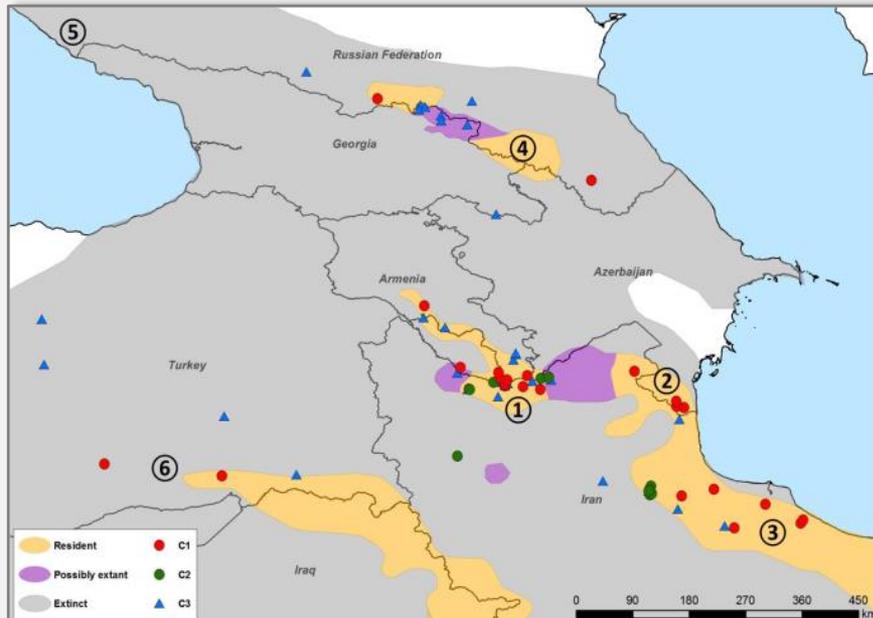
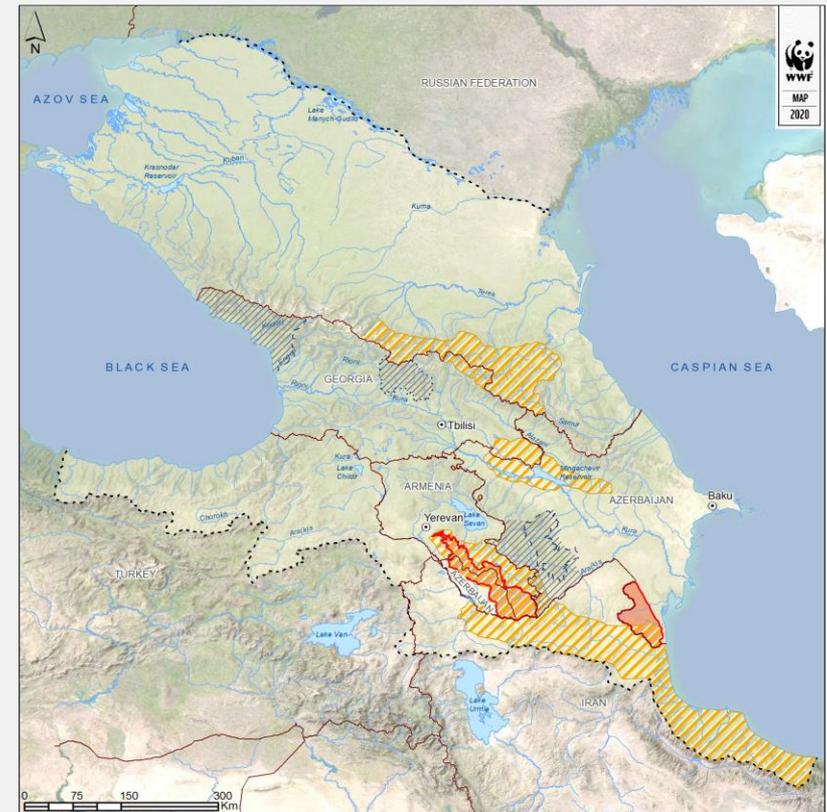


Fig. 2.1. Distribution of leopard in the Caucasus ecoregion. The coloured shapes indicate the distribution according to the IUCN Red List assessment (Stein et al. 2016). Yellow = Resident, purple = Possibly extant, grey = Extinct (i.e. historic distribution). Point distribution records from 2007–2014 were collected for the expert workshop 2014 in Tbilisi, Georgia (Breitenmoser et al. 2014a) and were categorised according to SCALP (Status and Conservation of the Alpine Lynx Population). Red dots, C1 = “Hard facts” such as leopards found dead, images, captured animals or genetic records; green dots, C2 = verified reports from trained people such as kills of livestock and wild animals, tracks; blue triangles, C3 = kills, tracks and scats that are not verified, and signs that are not verifiable such as animal sounds or sight observations.

- ① Meghri (AR), Zangezur Mountain (AR, AZ) and Marakan-Kiamaki Priority Conservation Area (IR). Reproduction confirmed, population probably isolated.
- ② Talysh-Zuvand Priority Conservation Area (AZ). Reproduction confirmed. Connectivity to Alborz population.
- ③ Alborz population (IR). Crucial source population for the Caucasus. Western-most confirmed reproduction in Deylaman-Dorfak no-hunting area (M. Soofi pers. comm.).
- ④ Khevi-Tusheti and Lagodekhi-Zagatala-West Dagestan (AZ, GE, RU). Rare, scattered observations. No confirmed reproduction.
- ⑤ Reintroduction project in Caucasian Biosphere Reserve (RU) with captive-bred animals. First release of 3 animals in 2016 (Hartmann et al. 2016, Rozhnov et al. 2017).
- ⑥ The two C1 observations in Turkey consist of 2 dead individuals (Breitenmoser et al. 2014a, Avgan et al. 2016). All recent observations in Turkey belong to the Zagros population, not the Caucasus ecoregion.

Map of the Leopard’s assumed range in the Caucasus (2020)  
(Conservation Summary since 2000, WWF)



- **Yellow hatching** - the assumed Leopard range in the Caucasus Ecoregion.
- **Red contoured areas** - focal places for WWF’s project on the Leopard conservation in South Caucasus.
- The assumed range of Leopards reintroduced in north-western Caucasus (from Sochi Breeding Centre) is not depicted.

# Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion

## Revised Version 2017

**In-depth problem analysis** (threats and gaps and shortcomings) for the revision of the strategy performed according to **four key themes/areas**:

- Species and Populations
- Important Places - Habitat and Corridors
- Human Dimension and Socio-economic Circumstances
- Policy, Legislation and International Cooperation

### **Vision**

Leopards and all wildlife prosper in natural habitats across the Caucasus ecoregion in harmony with people.

### **Goal**

Ensure the conservation and sustainable management of viable meta-populations of leopard and wild prey and their habitats, and build sustainable coexistence mechanisms with local communities across the Caucasus ecoregion.

# Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion

## Revised Version 2017

### Objectives

**Objective 1.** Increase the viability of the leopard and prey populations in the ecoregion.

**Objective 2.** Continue survey for leopards and wild prey across the ecoregion and to establish a joint standardized monitoring system and research programme, and a central database.

**Objective 3.** Promote the foundation of new leopard populations through reintroduction.

**Objective 4.** Establish effectively managed networks of protected areas and corridors.

**Objective 5.** Improve leopard and prey protection outside of protected areas.

**Objective 6.** Ensure long term support from local communities through minimizing human-leopard conflicts and creating mechanisms for involvement of local people.

**Objective 7.** Ensure that awareness, education and training (capacity development) for the leopard conservation in the Caucasus is improved for target groups.

**Objective 8.** Strengthen international, regional and transboundary cooperation for leopard conservation.

**Objective 9.** Optimize existing policies and if necessary develop new policies.

**Objective 10.** Improve and coordinate efforts to secure international funding for conservation activities.

- 
- All Objectives organized under four key themes
  - Covering Overall - 29 Results and 76 Activities

# Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion

## Revised Version 2017

Table 6.1. Number of Results and Activities per Objective and level (national/international) of main implementation. Some Activities need to be addressed at an international (e.g. development of protocols) and at national level (e.g. implementation of protocols).

Objective	# of Results	# of Activities	Activities to be implemented mainly at level:	
			international	national
1. Population viability of leopard and prey	3	8	1.2.1; 1.2.2; 1.3.1	1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.1.3; 1.2.3; 1.3.2
2. Monitoring of leopard and prey	3	11	2.1.1; 2.2.1; 2.2.2; 2.2.3; 2.3.1; 2.3.2	2.1.2; 2.1.3; 2.2.4; 2.2.5; 2.2.6; 2.3.1
3. Reintroduction	3	7	3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.1; 3.2.1; 3.2.2; 3.3.1; 3.3.2	–
4. Protected areas and corridors	3	7	4.3.1; 4.3.2	4.4.1; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.2.1; 4.2.2
5. Protection outside protected areas	3	8	5.2.1; 5.2.3	5.1.1; 5.1.2; 5.2.1; 5.2.2; 5.2.3; 5.2.4; 5.3.1; 5.3.2
6. Support from local communities	3	9	6.1.2; 6.1.3; 6.3.1	6.1.1; 6.1.2; 6.1.4; 6.2.1; 6.2.2; 6.2.3; 6.3.2
7. Capacity development	4	9	7.2.1; 7.2.2; 7.3.1; 7.3.2; 7.3.3; 7.4.1; 7.4.2	7.1.1; 7.1.2; 7.3.1; 7.3.2; 7.3.3
8. International cooperation	4	10	8.1.1; 8.2.1; 8.2.2; 8.2.3	8.1.1; 8.1.2; 8.2.3
9. Optimise policy	2	5	–	9.1.1; 9.1.2; 9.2.1; 9.2.2; 9.2.3
10. Improve fund-raising	1	2	10.1.1; 10.1.2	10.1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>(36)</b>	<b>(45)</b>

# Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion Revised Version 2017

## Implementation of the Strategy through National Action Plans

### Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion 2007

- Three National Action Plans for the Leopard Conservation developed:
  - Armenia - National Action Plan 2010-2020 (2008)
  - Azerbaijan - National Action Plan 2009-2014 (2008) and
  - Georgia - National Action Plan 2010-2014 (2010)
- Iran - A roadmap for the conservation of all cat species including the Persian leopard.

The effectiveness of the implementation of the NAPs was reviewed through a questionnaire and an expert workshop in 2014 (Tbilisi, Georgia).

Based on the expert workshop results (2014) and a new/revised Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion 2017,

- Two National Action Plans have been updated:
  - Armenia - National Action Plan 2020-2030 (2019)
  - Azerbaijan - National Action Plan 2022-2027 (2020)



**Thank you  
and  
passing the floor to the presenters of  
the National Action Plans**

