



PPNEA

Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania

PRESS RELEASE

The second Balkan lynx picture in Albania

The Association for the Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) is pleased to inform you that on April 21st, 2012, the field researchers Aleksandër Trajçe and Bledi Hoxha, got the second photo of a Balkan Lynx (*Lynx lynx balcanicus*) living in the wild in Albania. The picture was taken by means of camera-trapping devices, on March 28th 2012, at 08:33 AM, in the northern mountainous region of Albania.



Photo credits © PPNEA/SCOPES/BLRP

Since the first picture of a Balkan Lynx in Albania was also taken on April 21st, 2011, (exactly one year before) at the same area, it is more probable now to believe that there is an established population of lynx in our country. The Balkan lynx is considered as a flagship species for conservation in the Balkans, and starting from 2006 PPNEA has

been cooperating with international partners from Switzerland, Germany, Macedonia and Norway in carrying out activities for the recovery of its population (Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme - www.catsg.org/balkanlynx). The current field research is being supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) under the SCOPES programme for cooperation with the western Balkans.

The information collected so far implied that the lynx population in Albania might have gone extinct or was, at best, consisting of few migrating or wandering individuals from nearby core populations in Macedonia. Previous estimations of a population of 15-20 individuals are considered too optimistic at this stage, as five years of field research conducted by PPNEA have shown. Most of the positive signs we had so far were originating from the local knowledge of rural people and killed individuals of lynx which are preserved as trophies. The species is classified in the Albanian Red List (Decree no. 146 / 2007, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration) with the status CR (critically endangered). It is especially preoccupying that the Balkan lynx is endangered, due to the fact that it is a distinct population and a possible subspecies of the Eurasian lynx, genetically different from other lynx populations living throughout the world, and as such it represents a unique natural heritage of our country and the region.

The Balkan lynx has been de jure protected in Albania since 1969. Moreover, it is also protected by different international ratified conventions, namely The Bern Convention, and the International Convention for the Endangered Species Market (CITES). But in reality, the situation for this species remains alarming, since the current facts indicate a scarce presence of lynx in the Albanian territory. The remaining individuals will continue to be constantly threatened if no measures are taken against illegal hunting and habitat destruction. According to the PPNEA research team, after the second lynx being photographed there are more reasons to hope that there is still a small surviving population in the country that is in urgent need of attention and conservation measures.

The Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme is a multi-national initiative, undertaken by the Association for the Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA – www.ppnea.org) and the Macedonian Ecological Society (MES – www.mes.org.mk) in collaboration with international partners, KORA (www.kora.ch), Euronatur (www.euronatur.org), Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (www.nina.no) and IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group (www.catsg.org).

If you require further information on the Balkan lynx and the ongoing of the project, please do not hesitate to contact us at PPNEA:

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