



Press Release

Association for the Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania

The Association for the Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) announces that on 21 April 2011, its field research team got the first photo of an alive Balkan lynx (*Lynx lynx martino*) living in nature. The individual had been photographed using camera-trap devices on 26 March 2011 at 18:48, in the northern mountainous region of Albania. The Balkan lynx is one of the most threatened wildlife species living in Albania, and since 2006, PPNEA together with international partners from Switzerland, Germany, Macedonia and Norway is carrying out a programme for the recovery of its population (Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme - www.catsg.org/balkanlynx). Recent expert based estimates indicate that the lynx population in Albania is no more than 15 - 20 remaining individuals. Therefore, it has been classified as a critically endangered species in Albania (CR – Red List of Albanian Fauna, 2007). However, to date, continuous field research conducted by PPNEA, based on contemporary monitoring methods, had not proven the existence of any remaining live individuals. All signs of lynx presence were from dead/killed individuals, which are held as trophies, and from the local knowledge of rural people. As such, this photo represents a great achievement as it definitively proves the presence of lynx in our country and calls for greater and immediate efforts towards their conservation and habitats where they live.

The method applied by PPNEA for monitoring wildlife in Albania, has in its core the use of devices called “camera-traps”, which made possible the photographing of the first wild-living lynx in our country. The camera-traps are automatic photographic devices with an incorporated sensor that detects the movement of warm-blooded creatures and triggers the camera at the moment that animals cross in front. These devices are set on trees or suitable poles along forest trails, where wildlife are known to cross. This is a non-invasive method for studying wildlife as it generates information on the presence and abundance of species without physically disturbing the animals.

The Balkan lynx is a fully protected species and its hunting is strictly prohibited, sanctioned in the Law for Wildlife Protection (No. 10 006 / 2008) and Law on Hunting (No. 10 253 / 2010). The lynx has enjoyed a protection status in the country since 1969. It is classified in the Albanian Red List (Decree no. 146 / 2007) with the status CR (critically endangered species). The lynx also enjoy protection from some international conventions, such as the Bern Convention and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which have been ratified by the Parliament of Albanian Republic. The current situation of the Balkan lynx is particularly alarming when considering that it is a distinct population and a possible subspecies of the Eurasian lynx, genetically different from other lynx populations living throughout the world. As such, it bares great values for the biological diversity and the natural heritage of our country.



The first photo of a Balkan lynx living in Albanian nature taken by the PPNEA team



Camera-trap set in the forest

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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