

Help us save and protect habitat for Armenia's precious wildlife



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Caucasus Wildlife Refuge Armenia

Gor Hovhannisyan (right) is one of the wildlife rangers supported by WLT's Keepers of the Wild programme. He is employed by WLT's conservation partner in Armenia, the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC), working in the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge.

"We patrol more than 4,900 acres (2,000 hectares) and temperatures can be extreme. Summers are very hot and dry with temperatures sometimes over 35°C. In winter we have snow up to 40 cm deep", says Gor.



Keepers of the Wild, funded by WLT, protect and record wildlife on reserves created with the help of WLT supporters. They work on the front line of conservation, safeguarding some of the world's most threatened species and the incredible habitats in which they are found. Please donate to help us maintain protection through Keepers of the Wild.

worldlandtrust.org/keepers-of-the-wild



"The fate of the creatures which share our planet lies entirely at the hand of mankind - it is within our power to protect them or watch them become extinct. Let us choose the first route. In terms of saving ecosystems for wildlife I know of no better charity to support than World Land Trust."

Sir David Attenborough, OM CH FRS, Patron, World Land Trust

Cover & page 2: Misad / Dreamstime.com; Pages 2 & 3: FPWC (Lammergeier, Bezoar, leopard and bear), David Bebber (meadow); Back page: David Bebber (Keeper of the Wild), Ellie Kurtz (Sir David Attenborough)



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Saving land, saving species. World Land Trust is an international conservation charity, which protects the world's most biologically important and threatened habitats, with more than 700,000 acres saved to date.

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Armenia: Why the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge is so important



Situated in the southern Caucasian mountain range, Armenia is home to some exceptionally important species. Among them are several large mammals including Syrian Brown Bear, Bezoar Ibex and Caucasian Leopard.

The Caucasus is one of the world's lesser-known biodiversity hotspots: one of the 25 regions which together cover only 1.4 per cent of the Earth's land surface yet contain nearly half of all plant species and a third of all terrestrial vertebrate species.

Natural habitats survive in the Caucasus but they are under immense pressure from overgrazing by domestic livestock. Uncontrolled hunting is also rife, as are human-induced wild fires, and much of the wildlife is considered endangered.

World Land Trust (WLT) has been supporting Armenian project partner, Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) since 2010 and has helped fund the lease and protection of the **Caucasus Wildlife Refuge (CWR)**, which adjoins the 72,000 acre (29,000 hectare) Khosrov Forest State Reserve, and acts as a corridor for wildlife.

The CWR itself protects 24,000 acres (10,000 hectares) and while in 2010 wildlife in the area was nearly non-existent – mainly due to illegal hunting activities – trail camera footage now records large numbers of Bezoar Goats as well as large predators including wolves, bears, lynx and even Caucasian Leopard. The refuge also protects all four species of vulture found in Armenia - Eurasian Black Vulture, Lammergeier, Griffon Vulture and Egyptian Vulture.

Armenia is a landlocked country, spanning the border between Europe and Asia. It lies within the Southern Caucasus and is important for migratory animals, with roughly 350 bird species recorded in the country. Research suggests that a quarter of the animal species in Armenia are internationally endangered.

Location of the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge



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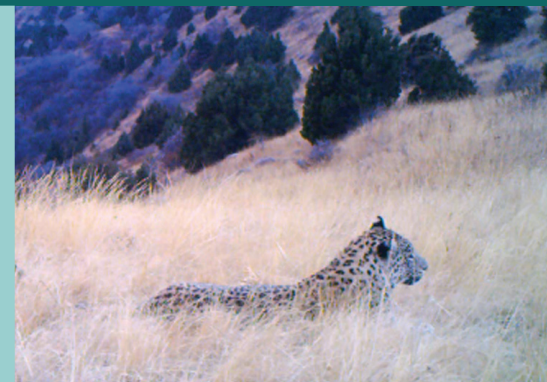
Protecting habitat for Armenia's threatened wildlife



Trail camera footage taken in the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge

The Caucasian Leopard, also known as the Persian Leopard, is the largest subspecies of leopard and believed to number fewer than 1,300 animals left in the wild. In Armenia there are thought to be up to 15 individuals.

The Syrian Brown Bear is a rare subspecies of the Brown Bear. There are as few as 150 left in the wild in Armenia.



FPWC welcomes visitors to its Eco-Centre

The Eco-Centre in the refuge not only provides accommodation for visitors but also serves as a hub for researchers and scientists. Training is also available for communities, aimed at sustainable use of the area's unique natural resources. The centre is perfectly located to see nesting Lammergeiers and Bezoar Goats.



Botanical significance of the refuge

The Caucasus region is one of the most beautiful, and botanically as well as ethnobotanically important regions on Earth. It is synonymous with wild edible plant origins and most orchard fruit trees such as almonds, walnuts, pomegranate, plum, apples and pears, can be found growing in the wild. Three of the four wild ancestors of wheat originate here along with a wide range of herbaceous species. It is thought that Armenia was the origin of cultivation of grapes, leading to the production of the world's first wine and grapes have an important place in Armenia's history.



The flora of this region is exceptional and many of the plants are used for medicinal and culinary purposes. The meadows are reminiscent of the herbal hillsides of Provence