

**About WWF**

Established in 1961, WWF is one of the largest environmental conservation organizations with an extensive experience in carrying out field projects related to protection of biodiversity and sustainable natural resources management. WWF currently runs about 700 field projects in close to 100 countries and employs over 5,000 people worldwide. Based in Switzerland, the secretariat for WWF's global conservation organization began its activities in the Caucasus in 1992 and extended its conservation work by establishing a local office in Yerevan, Armenia in 2001. As of November 2006, WWF-Armenia has been registered as an official branch of WWF and currently implements and coordinates more than 20 projects focused on environmental issues, and contributing to solution of socio-economic problems in rural areas.



**How You Can Help**

From volunteering to financial or in-kind contributions, WWF-Armenia welcomes all kinds of support to help deliver on its mission - from Armenia and abroad. For more information about how you can support WWF's conservation work in Armenia, please visit the "How you can help" section of the WWF-Armenia's web site: <http://www.panda.org/armenia> or contact our office in Yerevan.

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View to Mt. Ararat from "Khosrov" Reserve

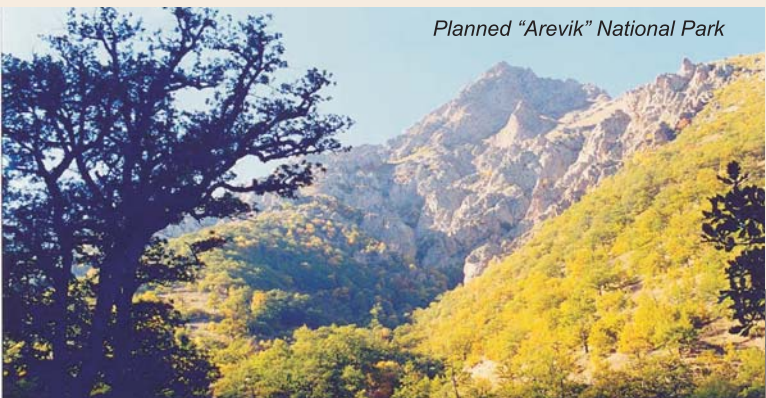


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**WWF's overall mission** is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature by:

- Conserving the world's biological diversity
- Ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- Promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.



Planned "Arevik" National Park

The vision of WWF-Armenia is to Keep Armenia Healthy and Beautiful for now and for generations to come.

Armenia has a unique natural heritage, found in its rich biodiversity and picturesque landscapes. Our country is our national treasure that must be protected for present and coming generations. This is the responsibility of all Armenians to keep Armenia healthy and beautiful.

WWF-Armenia achieves this vision through being active in the following focus areas:

- Assisting the Government of Armenia to establish new protected areas and develop a protected area network (Econet) including reserves, national parks and others;
- Providing support for institutional strengthening and capacity building via consultancy and technical assistance to protected areas;
- Restoring degraded ecosystems, enhancing the habitats of flora and fauna, conserving priority biomes (forests, high mountains, wetlands);
- Conserving threatened species (Caucasian Leopard, Armenian Mouflon, Bezoar Goat, etc.);
- Promoting alternative livelihood through sustainable use of natural resources and ecotourism development, thus contributing to income generation and poverty reduction and mitigation of threats to biodiversity;
- Promoting public awareness on environmental issues through environmental education, mass media and communications among all Armenians.



Anti-poaching unit rangers in "Shikahogh" Reserve

**Armenia and the Caucasus**

The Caucasus, one of the most biologically rich areas on the Earth, is included in WWF's list of Global 200 Ecoregions for its outstanding biodiversity. The region is also ranked among the planet's 25 most diverse and endangered hotspots by Conservation International.

Armenia occupies only 6.7% of the Caucasus territory but shelters more than 3,500 species of wild-growing vascular plants, or over half the wealth of the Caucasus ecoregion flora (about 6,000 species total). The density of vascular flora species is more than 100 species/km<sup>2</sup> - one of the highest in the world.

There are about 500 vertebrate animals in Armenia. 387 species of plants and 99 species of animals are registered in the Red Data Book of Armenia, correspondingly 1 and 28 - in the IUCN Red List.

Unique biodiversity of Armenia is conditioned by existence of a wide array of landscape zones (deserts, semideserts, mountainous steppes, forests, sub-alpine and alpine meadows) as well as wetlands and freshwaters.



Existing and planned protected areas where WWF-Armenia works

**Challenges**

The major threats to biodiversity in Armenia are tied to three broad root causes – socio-economic, political and institutional. These include mining, illegal logging, poaching and illegal wildlife trade, overgrazing and overfishing, infrastructure development (pipelines, road construction, etc.), and pollution of rivers and wetlands. These threats lead to habitat degradation, decline of species populations, and disruption of ecological processes - all contributing to an overall loss of biodiversity.

WWF-Armenia strives to mitigate the impact of these threats in order to conserve rich biodiversity of Armenia. It has been carrying out projects such as conservation of Caucasian Leopard, recovery of Bezoar Goat in its natural range, promotion of sustainable use of resources among local communities, etc. Currently WWF-Armenia is also coordinating CEPF/WWF Grants Program designed to ensure that civil society is engaged in efforts to conserve biodiversity in the hotspots of the Caucasus region.

WWF initiated and coordinated the development of an Ecoregional Conservation Plan (ECP) for the Caucasus, a comprehensive strategy for the region that was endorsed by the Environmental Ministers of the South Caucasus countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) during the Ministerial Conference (Berlin, 2006).



Caucasian leopard (taken by camera trap in Southern Armenia)



Bezoar goats in the planned "Arevik" National Park

**Partnerships and Collaboration**

WWF-Armenia actively and efficiently collaborates with national authorities (Ministry of Nature Protection and Ministry of Agriculture), local administrations and communities, NGOs, scientific institutions, the international donor community, and other partners. Working from the grassroots to the governmental level assures that collaborative projects will yield the best solutions for nature conservation.

WWF believes that business, trade, and industry have a crucial role to play in supporting conservation efforts and promoting greater environmental responsibility for our planet. WWF strives to build environmental awareness by working with businesses to help improve their environmental performance, as well as boost their economic bottom line. Governed by the principle *Good for the Earth, Good for Business*, WWF-Armenia is committed to partnering with companies who are willing to become a *WWF Conservation Partner*.



Schoolchildren-participants of Leopard Education Program (Shikahogh village)



Promoting alternative livelihood in rural communities