

**Updated report
on the preservation of a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site
Western Caucasus (Russian Federation) (№900) in 2016 and 2017.**

**1. Response of the Russian Federation in accordance with the Decision of the
World Heritage Committee 40 COM 7B.101.**

The IUCN Advisory mission to the World Heritage property Western Caucasus was held in November 2016. At the same time, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation was guided primarily by the need to fulfill its obligations and the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (paragraph 172), in search of appropriate decisions guaranteeing the safety of the Property. As a result of the visit of the IUCN expert, a report was received to the indicating all possible risks for the unique ecosystem and biological diversity of the facility. Materials submitted by the international expert are carefully studied and will be taken into account when working with the Property.

On 15 July 2016, it was the first time in the history of the Persian Leopard Reintroduction Program in the Western Caucasus, three animals were released into wild. They were bred at the Sochi Breeding Centre of the Sochi National Park.

It is the first in the world experience of leopard reintroduction – the bringing of the animal back to the territories of its former habitat. The three released leopards are expected to lay foundation for new Persian leopard population in Russia.

In the next decade, the Russian Federation has plans to create the northern population of the Persian leopard in Russia and ensure the restoration of its natural habitat in the countries of Transcaucasia in cooperation with international experts.

the Persian Leopard Reintroduction Program in the Western Caucasus is being implemented with the participation of international partners, for instance, the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature Species Survival Commission (IUCN SSC).

**2. Information on other current issues related to the preservation of the
heritage site**

A brief description of the current natural conditions of the Caucasus Reserve is identical to that given in similar reports of 2008 - 2013.

Within the framework of the above-mentioned programme of Persian leopard reintroduction in the Caucasus (implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, WWF Russia, with participation of Sochi National Park, the Caucasus Biosphere Reserve, Institute of Ecology and Evolution of RAN, Moscow Zoo and also with the assistance of the

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA)) animals adapted to life in natural conditions.

As of December 2017 compared with the data of December 2015, the condition of natural complexes and their components do not demonstrate any negative dynamics.

1. Preservation of the main types of landscapes at the Caucasus reserve:

- mountain-forest landscape - the preservation is complete, economic activity has never been held and is not being conducted. The exception is the natural forest plantations with the inclusion of the Colchis boxwood. In 2014-2017 the entire natural Colchis boxwood in the Western Caucasus was damaged by an insect pest – box tree moth - and died. As a result of the exclusion of the boxwood from the forest, there began a spontaneous transformation of the former boxwood forest on an area of at least 0.5 thousand hectares.

- mountain-meadow landscape - the preservation is complete, economic activity has never been held and is not being conducted;

- mountain-meadow landscape of the biosphere polygon of the Caucasus Reserve on the Lagonaki plateau - the condition of the meadows demonstrates positive dynamics; the restoration of the plant communities of the Lagonaki plateau continues after excessive pasture loads of the 1980s and 1990s;

- Alpine landscape - the preservation is complete, economic activity has never been held and is not being conducted;

- water objects (rivers, lakes) - the preservation is complete, not used in economic activities.

2. Preservation of species on the territory of the Caucasus Reserve:

The preservation of all groups of living organisms is complete, with the exception of Colchis boxwood. Since 2015, Colchis boxwood has been artificially preserved as the flora of the Caucasus Reserve.

- there is no reduction in species richness on the Reserve area (note the artificial preservation of the Colchis boxwood as the flora of the Caucasus Reserve);

- the disappearance of rare protected species of plants (lower, vascular) and lichens \ fungi on the territory of the Reserve does not occur (note the artificial preservation of Colchis boxwood as the flora of the Caucasus Reserve);

- there continues a positive dynamics in the number of main protected species of mammals - the most sensitive to anthropogenic impact.

The number of the main protected animals in comparison with 1999 survey:

Type of animal	1999 г.	2017 г.
Bison bonasus	190	1050
Red deer	892	1704
Capra caucasica	2421	3177

Chamois	1095	1157
Brown Bear	260	450
Persian Leopard	0	3
Wolf	60	70

3. Management of the Caucasian Reserve:

Directly carried out by a legal entity - the Federal State Budgetary Organization "Caucasus State Nature Biosphere Reserve named after H.G. Shaposhnikov", administered by the Department of State Policy and Regulation in the Field of Environmental Protection of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Main directions of management:

- ensuring the preservation of the territory of the Reserve and its natural-and-territorial complexes;
- survey and monitoring of the conditions of the natural-and-territorial complexes of the Reserve and their individual elements;
- the formation of a positive attitude of the population to the Reserve and the Reserve phenomenon through environmental awareness programs and development of educational tourism.

4. Immediate measures to ensure the regime of the Caucasus Reserve:

The Caucasus reserve is protected by a staff of state inspectors, comprising of 76 state inspectors.

During the period from 2016 and 2017, the state inspectorate of the Caucasus Reserve identified 311 violations of the protection regime of the Caucasus Reserve, including:

- Illegal presence on the territory - 239;
- illegal hunting and fishing - 19;
- violation of fire safety rules - 13,
- contamination of the territory - 1.
- other violations - 39.

There have been seized 5 guns, 38.5 kg of illegally obtained fish.

The management of the Caucasus Reserve is executed on the basis of a plan approved by the authorized body of the Russian Federation, supervising the Caucasus Reserve. Relevant planning documentation is drafted, accepted, approved, agreed, executed and stored in the manner prescribed by the current rules and regulations.

3. No major changes are expected within the World Heritage Property.