



**WORLD
LAND
TRUST**

Registered Charity No. 1001291

FPWC

A RESTORED CORRIDOR FOR ARMENIA'S LEOPARD AND LYNX

The 700,000 trees your donations will bring to one
of the world's lesser-known biodiversity hotspots



Eurasian Lynx

Project summary

World Land Trust (WLT) partner FPWC have spent decades protecting a global biodiversity hotspot and starting this year, they can reforest a crucial section – with your help.

Since 2010, backing from WLT supporters and other organisations has allowed FPWC to create the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge, safeguarding 26,000-plus hectares (ha) for the remarkable life of these mountain valleys of Armenia. A vast protected network has been established along a corridor used by leopard, lynx, bear, wolf and now, the corridor needs restoring, at scale.

This is where WLT supporters come in. What you donate to this project, starting this year, will help FPWC plant 700,000 trees to restore 300 ha of degraded habitats within the Refuge, from 2023 to 2027. Coming off the back of a 20,000-sapling pilot in this area, this new reforestation wave will bring native trees – wild almond, apple, hawthorn and more – to areas with the right elevation, orientation and slope for the saplings to thrive.

Together, we can give this scarred landscape a fresh start. We can regenerate it by planting the right trees in the right places. A canopy right along the migratory routes of leopard, lynx and more so that they can travel, feed and rest in safety; protected water sources and tree-planting jobs for Armenians.

Main threats to the area

Though the bulk of deforestation took place in the 1990s, nature in this stretch of Armenia has not been since given much of a chance to recover. Illegal logging, overgrazing, unsustainable plant gathering, human-induced wildfires, poor enforcement and other threats complicate the comeback of habitats crucial to roamers such as Caucasian Leopard. Amid climate change and creeping desertification, these forests won't heal on their own. Active reforestation is needed – and that is what your donations will deliver.

Global prioritisation

The trees you fund will help restore part of the Caucasus Biodiversity Hotspot, one of the world's 35 most biodiverse regions and a crossroads where European, Asian and Middle Eastern species meet along with flora and fauna found nowhere else. No temperate forest region boasts a greater biological diversity and in the case of the Refuge, its leased areas fall within two Important Bird Areas (IBAs) – Khosrov Forest and Noravank – and border the third IBA of Gndasar.

Biodiversity

The trees funded by your donations will restore a corridor used by 44 of the Caucasus's 150-plus mammal species, from Syrian Brown Bear to Grey Wolf, Eurasian Lynx, Bezoar Ibex, and Armenia's rare and Endangered subspecies of Mouflon. At stake is also reforesting habitats used by the Caucasian Leopard, with three of the ~15 individuals thought to be living in Armenia having been recorded at the Refuge.

And that's not all your support will do. Your donations will help restore a habitat rich in flora diversity – Armenia as a whole is home to 7,500 plant species – for the benefit of 150 bird species, including all of Armenia's four vulture species and the Caspian Snowcock and European Roller, both of which are listed as Vulnerable in the country.

Local Communities

Community benefits have long been built into the conservation of the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge. Since its creation, FPWC has enlisted over a dozen communities of Armenia's Ararat and Vayots Dzor provinces, who cede land to the Refuge and benefit through lease payments they can use for village improvements. With your help, this project will build on this track record of community support. The trees you fund will not only protect water sources key to local people; they will also get communities trained and employed across every stage of reforestation: the gathering of seeds, their stratification – this process is already being handled by local women – and management at nurseries, as well as actual planting. This is an area of Armenia many are forced to leave from a lack of opportunities but with your support, FPWC can advance conservation that brings jobs.

Key species¹

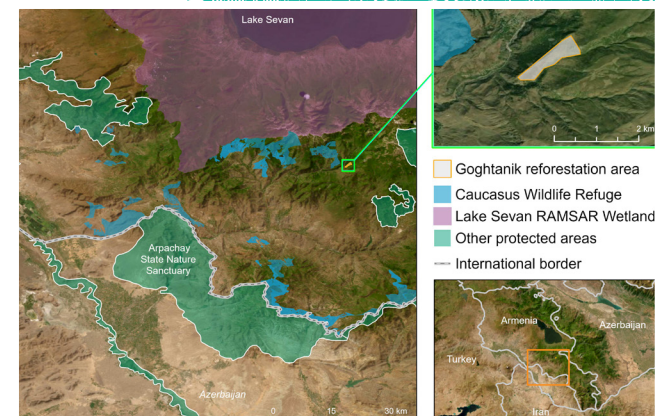
Your donations will deliver these trees...

Wild Almond (*Prunus fenzliana*, DD); Wild Pear species (*Pyrus caucasica*, LC, *Pyrus salicifolia* NT, and others); Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia* var. *Orientalis*, LC); Wild Apple (*Malus orientalis*, DD); Barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*, LC); Oriental Hawthorn (*Crataegus orientalis*, NT); Caucasian Oak (*Quercus macranthera*, LC); and Juniper (*Juniperus excelsa* subsp. *polycarpus*, LC).

...To restore habitat for these species:

Caucasian Leopard (*Panthera pardus saxicolor*, EN); Syrian Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos syriacus*, EN); Grey Wolf (*Canis lupus*, LC); Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*, LC); Armenian Mouflon (*Ovis orientalis gmelini*, EN); Bezoar Ibex (*Capra aegagrus aegagrus*, VU); Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*, EN); Caspian Snowcock (*Tetraogallus caspius*, LC); European Roller (*Coracias garrulus*, LC); Armenian Viper (*Vipera raddei*, NT).

¹The Red List of Threatened Species, maintained by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), includes categories of Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT), Least Concern (LC) and Data Deficient (DD).



Syrian Brown Bear



Caucasian Leopard

Country

Armenia

Partner/Organisation

Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC)

Biome

Temperate grasslands, savannas and shrublands

Ecoregion

Eastern Anatolian montane steppe

Habitats

The Caucasus Wildlife Refuge covers a vast ring along the south of Armenia's Sevan Lake, some 50 km to the southeast of the capital (Yerevan) of this landlocked nation. This land of snow-capped peaks and fast-flowing rivers was once carpeted in high-altitude oak and juniper woodland, but large forest tracts were logged during Armenia's post-Soviet years, at a time of energy crisis in the country. The habitats left today span forested areas, wooded steppe, grassland (alpine, sub-alpine and boreal), semi-desert and rivers and streams.



Partner/Organisation

Your donations will see you support a project that has spent decades working to save Armenia's natural heritage. FPWC launched in 2002, when worried by low environmental concern in their home nation, filmmaker Ruben Khachatryan and zoologist Hrach Ghazaryan

teamed up to drive change. The network of protected spaces they created – the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge, where the trees you fund will be planted – has majorly expanded over the years, and since 2010 we at WLT have been helping them. The Refuge aside, FPWC have been running

initiatives to inspire a new generation into conservation, from the annual SunChild International Environmental Festival to the Eco-Village Network or the Wildlife Rescue Centre that takes in captive bears from around Armenia.

UN Sustainable Development Goals directly advanced by this project:



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