Spot these threatened animals!

4 Caucasian Leopards
4 Darevsky’s Vipers
5 Armenian Mouflons
12 White-Headed Ducks
3 Bezoar Goats
FORESTS ARE LIFE

Forests are one of Earth’s greatest treasures. Here are the many reasons why they are essential for life on Earth.

Oxygen is found in the air around us, and a lot of it comes from trees. People and animals breathe in oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. Plants use carbon dioxide and produce oxygen!

By absorbing carbon dioxide, forests help us fight climate change. Global forests absorb about 15 percent of the planet’s greenhouse gas emissions.

More than 40 percent of the world’s oxygen is produced by rainforests.

Forests provide a habitat for wildlife and pollinating insects.

80% of the Earth’s land animals live in forests.

Forests are home to around 300 million people.

The Efe, also known as pygmies, have lived in the Ituri Forest in the Democratic Republic of Congo for thousands of years.

Forests help lower air temperatures by releasing water vapor into the air.

Forests provide shade and protect us from harmful ultraviolet rays.

Forests create rain—most of the rain that falls inland is caused by the water transpired from tree leaves (as opposed to the rainfall along the shore which is caused by the water evaporated from the ocean).

Forests act as windbreaks and slow the winds that cause soil erosion.

Forests prevent soil erosion. Tree roots hold soil in place during heavy rains or floods.

Forests purify water by allowing rain to filter through the soil instead of flowing on the surface.

By absorbing carbon dioxide, forests help us fight climate change.

Forests provide us with useful materials such as wood, paper, rubber, chocolate, coffee, and medicines.

More than a quarter of modern medicines originate from tropical forests. People visit forests to explore wildlife and enjoy other outdoor activities such as hiking and camping.

Even a dead tree is an important part of forest life. Many animals such as millipedes, beetles, spiders, toads, snakes, and salamanders live under decaying logs.
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- **People visit forests to explore wildlife and enjoy other outdoor activities such as hiking and camping.**

Even a dead tree is an important part of forest life. Many animals such as millipedes, beetles, spiders, toads, snakes, and salamanders live under decaying logs.
The bad news: eight thousand years ago, half of our land was covered by forests. Today forests make up just over 30% of the Earth’s land area.

Deforestation is the removal of a forest to clear land for other purposes.

1. Forests are cut down to provide land for planting more crops and raising livestock.

2. As the population grows, forests are cut down to make room for roads and buildings.

3. Many forests are cleared for the production of wood and paper products and for mining.

4. In recent years, wildfires have contributed to record losses in global forests.

Loss of habitat
The main impact of deforestation is the loss of habitat for millions of species. Animals are endangered and become extinct because of habitat loss.

**THERE ARE PROBABLY LESS THAN FIVE CAUCASIAN LEOPARDS IN ARMENIA.**

Loss of biodiversity
When species become extinct, biodiversity decreases. Biodiversity is the variety of living organisms in a given area. It is essential for sustaining life on Earth because all species depend on one another.

Desertification
When forests are cut down, there is no longer a canopy to block the sun and the soil quickly dries out. There is also less rainfall when forests are cleared (see page 3). Therefore many former forest lands can become deserts.

**THE ARARAT VALLEY IS ON THE VERGE OF BECOMING A DESERT.**

Global warming
Fewer forests results in more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Also, when trees are cut, they release the carbon dioxide they store into the atmosphere. More carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is the main cause of global warming.

**IN ARMENIA, LANDSLIDES ARE THE SECOND GREATEST NATURAL DISASTER AFTER EARTHQUAKES.**

Soil erosion and natural disasters
Deforestation results in soil erosion, flooding, and landslides because the trees are no longer there to hold the soil together and to slow down water runoff.

Almost 82% of the territory in Armenia is threatened by desertification!
SAVING OUR FORESTS

The good news: the effects of deforestation can be reversed by planting new trees, protecting existing forests, and preventing wildfires.

Reforestation is the replanting of trees or whole forests that have been cut down.

ARMENIA TREE PROJECT (ATP) FOCUSES ON PRESERVING AND PLANTING TREES AND FORESTS IN ARMENIA. THROUGH ITS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM, ATP ALSO RAISES AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT.

Forest protection
A protected area is a location where human occupation and use of resources is restricted. The objective of National Parks, Nature Reserves and Wildlife Sanctuaries is to conserve nature and biodiversity.

PROTECTED AREAS OCCUPY AROUND 13% OF THE TERRITORY OF ARMENIA.

Wildfire prevention
90% of wildfires are caused by humans! Tchalo the gampr is a wildfire prevention officer, and he is here to tell you what YOU can do to prevent forest fires.

1. Never play with matches and lighters!
2. Do not build a campfire near dry shrubs and trees.
4. Put out a campfire completely when you leave.
5. Ask your parents not to smoke in nature!

WORD SEARCH! Find the following words to reveal the hidden word!

Biodiversity/Deforestation/Desert/Earth/Erosion/Extinct/Forest/Habitat-Life/Plant/Root/Seed/Soil/Trees/Water/Wildlife

Can you find 8 differences between the endangered rainforest animals on each side of the tree?
**PROTECTED AREAS IN ARMENIA**

**Darevsky’s Viper**

is critically endangered. It is protected in Lake Arpi National Park. Only a hundred of them are known to exist in Armenia.

**Lake Arpi National Park**

**The Asia Minor Ground Squirrel**

is near threatened. It is protected in Lake Arpi National Park.

**Gabrielyan’s Starflowers** and **The Aragatsian Buttercup**

are critically endangered and both are endemic to Armenia, occurring only on Mt. Aragats.

**The Transcaucasian Toad-Headed Agama**

is critically endangered. It is protected in Goravan Sands and Vordan Karmir Sanctuaries. It has experienced a loss of over 80 percent of its habitat due to land conversion for agriculture and urbanization in the Araks River valley.

**Dohl’s Jird**

is endangered. It is endemic to the Ararat Valley. It is protected in Goravan Sands Sanctuary.

**Caucasian Rose Bay Sanctuary**

**Rhododendron Caucasicum**

is endangered. It is protected at the Caucasian Rose Bay Sanctuary.

**Wild wheat** species and other ancient grains are protected at the Erebuni State Reserve.

**Aragats Alpine Sanctuary**

**Erebuni State Reserve**

**Vordan Karmir Sanctuary**

**Khosrov Forest State Reserve**

**Sevan National Park**

**Dilijan National Park**

**Fun Fact!**

The Khosrov forest was founded in the 4th century by the Armenian king Khosrov II Kotak.

**Arash Important Bird Area**

**The White-Headed Duck**

is endangered. The only suitable habitats and nesting grounds are the Armash fish ponds. The number of nesting pairs does not exceed 20–30.

**Did You Know?**

A species is extinct when it is not known to exist in the wild. Currently, Armenia has 26 sites located within the country’s borders where nature is preserved.

**State Reserves,** **Sanctuaries,** and **Important Bird Areas**

established in . Currently, Armenia has three State Reserves, Arevik National Park, Zangezur Sanctuary and Arevik National Park, housed in Armash Important Bird Area, Shikahogh State Reserve, and Dilijan National Park. The first protected areas in Armenia were Khosrov I and Khosrov II Kotak. The Ararat Valley. It is protected in

**Nature**

IUCN, short for International Union for Conservation of Nature

classifies species at high risk of extinction. The IUCN Red List Threatened Species was established in 1963, and it now includes critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable, near threatened, and extinct species. The IUCN categories:

- **Critically Endangered**
- **Endangered**
- **Vulnerable**
- **Near Threatened**
- **Extinct**

A species is considered critically endangered when its population is extremely small and faced with a high risk of extinction in the wild. The major threat is the destruction of nesting habitats and nesting grounds are the only suitable habitats and nesting grounds.

**The Egyptian Vulture**

is near threatened. There are ten pairs known to exist in Armenia. It is protected at Jermuk Forest Sanctuary.

**The Caucasian Leopard**

is critically endangered. It is most likely to be found in Armenia. It is protected in Khosrov Forest Reserve.

**The Caucasian Black Grouse**

is vulnerable. There are twenty pairs known to exist in Armenia. It is protected in Zangezur Sanctuary and Arevik National Park.

**The Bezoar Goat**

is vulnerable. There are ten pairs known to exist in Armenia. It is protected in Arevik National Park.

**The Armenian Mouflon**

is critically endangered. There are ten pairs known to exist in Armenia. It is protected in Zangezur Sanctuary and Arevik National Park.

**The Caucasian Buttercup**

is near threatened. There are ten pairs known to exist in Armenia. It is protected in Erebuni State Reserve.

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The first protected areas in Armenia were established in 1958. Currently, Armenia has 3 State Reserves, 4 National Parks, and 26 Sanctuaries where nature is preserved.

Did You Know?

The IUCN Red List classifies species at high risk of extinction. Here are some of the IUCN categories:

- **Near Threatened**
  - Likely to qualify for a threatened category in the near future
- **Vulnerable**
  - Facing a high risk of extinction in the wild
- **Endangered**
  - Facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild
- **Critically Endangered**
  - Facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild
- **Extinct in the Wild**
  - Surviving only in captivity or cultivation
- **Extinct**
  - A species is extinct when the last individual has died

The threat levels faced by the animals and plants you see on this map are evaluated by the IUCN, short for International Union for Conservation of Nature.

**The Egyptian Vulture**

*Endangered.* There are ten pairs in Khosrov Forest Reserve, Shikahogh Reserve, Dilijan National Park, and Sevan National Park.

**The Saker Falcon**

*Endangered.* It is protected in Sevan National Park and Khosrov Forest Reserve.

**The Armenian Whiskered Bat**

*In danger of extinction.* It has only ever been located in the Sevan Lake basin in Armenia.

**Karl-Henrikh’s Centaury**

*Critically endangered.* It is protected at Jermuk Forest Sanctuary.

**The Caucasian Leopard**

*Vulnerable.* It is protected in Khosrov Forest Reserve, Shikahogh Reserve, Arevik National Park, and Zangezur Sanctuary.

**The Caucasian Black Grouse**

*Near threatened.* The major threat is the destruction of nesting sites caused by agricultural activities. It is protected in Dilijan National Park and Shikahogh State Reserve.

**The Armenian Mouflon**

*Vulnerable.* It is protected in Khosrov Forest Reserve, Shikahogh Reserve, Arevik National Park, Zangezur Sanctuary, and Sevan National Park.

**The Bezoar Goat**

*Vulnerable.* It is protected in Khosrov Forest Reserve, Shikahogh Reserve, Arevik National Park, Zangezur Sanctuary, and Sevan National Park.

**The Armenian Moufton**

*Vulnerable.* It is protected in Zangezur Sanctuary and Arevik National Park.

**The Manul**

*Near threatened* but is most likely extinct in Armenia. It is protected in Arevik National Park.

**The Oriental Plane**

*(Sosi in Armenian)* *Endangered.* Plane Grove Sanctuary is the only natural plane grove in the Caucasus.

**Jermuk Forest Sanctuary**

**Zangezur Sanctuary**

**Arevik National Park**

**Plane Grove Sanctuary**

**Shikahogh State Reserve**

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**Shikahogh State Reserve**
Until the mid-20th century leopards were relatively common in Armenia's mountains. Today, there are probably less than five leopards in the country.

Alexander Malkhasyan is a wildlife specialist who has been working for the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) program for leopard conservation in the Caucasus since 2002, when there were no leopards in Armenia. One of the first steps of the WWF was the recovery and protection of leopard habitats. A few years later, leopards had returned to Armenia.

Alexander installs cameras hoping to capture photos and videos of them. In order to do his job, he lives in the wild for weeks, or even months at a time. Until recently, he had only seen traces of leopards in the Khosrov Forest State Reserve. That changed in April 2018, when one of the cameras he had installed there captured a young Caucasian Leopard. The last leopards in this area were seen about 18 years ago, but they were forced out of the region since then. The return of this young leopard seemed like a miracle! Alexander couldn't believe his eyes when he first saw the photo!

The leopard's name is Leo-Neo. He was most likely born in the Zangezur mountains in July 2015. This means that he travelled at least 155 miles to get to Khosrov Forest State Reserve, all the time avoiding dangers such as soldiers, herding dogs, and poachers. Leo-Neo, what a hero!

In order for Leo-Neo to stay in Armenia and hopefully start a family, we need to keep protecting our forests and the animals that live in them.
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Astragalus carolynmugarae is a shrub-like plant first found near Lake Sevan in 1989. It is named after Carolyn Mugar, the founder of ATP, because of her help “in the discovery and investigation of the Flora of Armenia.”

More than 50% of the world’s 10 million species live in the tropical rainforests.

Lake Arpi National Park is the only habitat of Darevsky’s Viper in the world!

There are more than 3,500 species of plants and 17,500 species of animals in Armenia!

At the current rate of deforestation, the world’s rain forests could completely vanish in 100 years!

Deforestation is responsible for up to 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions, more than all the cars, trucks, planes, trains, and boats in the world.

In Alaska Denali Park visitors explore the park by bus, bicycle, or on foot. Personal vehicles are prohibited in order to reduce traffic and protect the natural resources.

ATP has planted over 5.5 million trees in Armenia!

331 million people visited national parks in the U.S. in 2017!

Did You Know?

The oldest tree in the world is in Sweden. It is 9,560 years old!

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Thank you to the 75 schools throughout the United States that have participated in Building Bridges! Congratulations to the incredible staff, teachers, PTO members, and parents for working so diligently to engage your students and encourage them to learn and explore the world around them!

If your school is visiting Armenia and is interested in planting trees at our Youth Forest in Ashtarak Village OR if you would like us visit your school, contact us and we can help facilitate a fun and rewarding experience.

info@armeniatree.org

#GetRooted

We’re so proud of our youth ambassadors!
Joey Basralian took us up on our "coin bank challenge" and raised funds to sponsor a tree in Armenia using a cardboard coin bank, just like the one enclosed in this newsletter. Here he is with an ATP Building Bridges tree planting certificate, during a hike with his family in a local forest.

B.E.G. U. Manoogian-Demirdjian School, Canoga Park, CA

"I am convinced that this project will become an example for many others and people will change their attitude toward nature and that we will be able to restore the damage that has been caused for many years, since we should nurture the mother land, and not exhaust it." - Nare Baghdasaryan (on right of photo)

"Being able to start a foundation on my homeland means the world to me. I cannot wait to go back and visit ATP and see the growth of my plant." - Tamar Chobanian

Thank you also to the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation for supporting the Building Bridges program.

A.G.B.U. Manoogian-Demirdjian School, Canoga Park, CA

"I do things that have a positive impact on the environment. I use a reusable water bottle, recycle, think of ways to help people, and smile. I do this to help the world be free of pollution, cut down on waste, and to create a positive mood in our world." - Sarine Markarian

Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School, Yerevan, Armenia

"Building Bridges Friends

Thank you also to the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation for supporting the Building Bridges program."
Did you know the Khosrov Forest State Reserve dates back to 1700 years ago?

Really? I thought it was founded in 1958!

Oh, so that’s how the forest got its name?

Yes! It covers an area of around 23,000 hectares, which is the same as 33,000 soccer fields!

Wow! Look! I can see Juniper and oak trees.

These are protected ancient trees. Look! Hayastanyan pear is an endangered pear tree which is also protected in this reserve.

I recently heard about a leopard cub who was spotted here. Do you think we can see him?

I don’t think so! But look over there! Those bezoar goats are also protected in this forest.

Oh, that’s one animal I hope we don’t meet! But I really wish we could see that leopard!

Yes, it is a near threatened species and it’s venomous!

What other animals are protected in this reserve?

The brown bear, Saker falcon, Egyptian vulture, and the Armenian viper are a few examples.

I don’t think that will happen, since they are very elusive creatures and it took scientists years to finally spot one! But you can read about it and see photos in ATP’s Building Bridges newsletter!

Cool! Can’t wait!

I’m in it too! I talk about how to prevent wildfires to protect forests!
GLOSSARY

Carbon dioxide- the gas released into the air when you exhale, burn waste, or drive a car.

Climate change- a change in climate factors including rain, snow, wind, and temperature, caused by global warming.

Deforestation- the removal of trees, most often due to human activity.

Erosion- the wearing away of the surface of the earth due to wind and water movement.

Endangered- a species facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the world.

Global warming- an increase in the earth’s average surface temperature.

Habitat- the place where a plant or animal naturally lives or grows.

Reforestation- the replanting of trees or whole forests that have been cut down.

We would like to dedicate this edition of the newsletter to Eleanora Gabrielyan. Dr. Gabrielyan is a doctor of biological sciences, a professor and a specialist of taxonomy of higher plants. She is the head of the Department of Plant Taxonomy and Geography of the Institute of Botany at the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia and the President of the Armenian Botanical Society. On behalf of all of us at ATP, thank you for all of your hard work and dedication toward the preservation of Armenia's fragile ecosystem.

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