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## Press release

### **WWF aims to identify and secure cross-border ecological corridors for the safety of humans and wildlife**

**In the current Romanian legislation, there is no methodology to identify and designate ecological corridors.**

Baia Mare, **9 decembrie 2019**

WWF Romania has started the project "Open borders for wildlife in the Carpathians", which aims to identify and secure the network of cross-border ecological corridors, but also to implement practical measures for ecological reconstruction in the respective areas. Thus, habitats used by large carnivores such as bear, lynx and wolf will be improved.

These activities follow the project "Open borders for bears in the Carpathians of Romania and Ukraine" ([www.openbordersforbears.com](http://www.openbordersforbears.com)), which drew the first network of ecological corridors in Maramures, in the Romania-Ukraine border area. Unlike the first project, where the emblematic species was the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), systematic monitoring (using photo-video, drone and genetic tests) will now be performed for three large carnivorous species - bear, wolf, lynx, continuing the activity of identifying the ecological corridors also in Slovakia and Hungary. Large carnivores are at the top of the trophic pyramid, and if their populations are kept in optimal numbers, it means that the other species of animals are in a good state of conservation in their habitats.

#### **Ecological corridors, essential for a healthy population of large carnivores**

The identification and preservation of the functionality of the ecological corridors is mandatory in order to maintain a healthy population of large carnivores along the Carpathian chain. These ecological corridors provide connectivity between habitats where large carnivores travel, for different purposes (feeding, mating, resting, shelter).

Currently, in the current environmental legislation in Romania, there is no methodology required to identify and designate these areas. Through the project, national decision makers will actively participate in identifying and securing cross-border ecological corridors. WWF Romania and the project partners will propose the official recognition of these ecological corridors and their inclusion under legal protection. Also, the general public will be informed about the importance of ecological corridors, the role of large carnivores in the food chain, but also how they can prevent the human-wildlife conflict.

The project "Open borders for wildlife in the Carpathians" started on October 1, 2019 and is funded through the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENI 2014-2020 Cross-Border Cooperation



NGO "Rakhiv EcoTour"





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Program for a period of 30 months. WWF Romania - Maramureş subsidiary, together with the project partners from Ukraine (RakhivEcoTur Organization), Hungary (Aggtelek National Park) and Slovakia (SOS BirdLife) will contribute to the protection of biodiversity in the Carpathian Ecoregion by improving connectivity between habitats and maintaining services ecosystems, support for sustainable development.

**For more information we can be contacted:**

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**About WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature)**

*Established in 1961, WWF is one of the most important international organizations in nature conservation projects in over 100 countries. The mission of the WWF globally is to stop the degradation of the environment and to build a future in which people live in harmony with nature. More details at: [www.wwf.ro](http://www.wwf.ro)*

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