

Project Update: February 2020

After the procurement of the equipment, fieldwork and research were undertaken, interviewing the rural population, hunters, workers of the Sutjeska National Park, setting up photo traps and hair traps, and searching for the presence of lynx in the research area. In 8 months of work, seven findings were documented and collected in the Sutjeska National Park:

1. Interviews - six findings:

a) In the area of Zelengora Mountain: three findings of the C3 category (sighting of an animal, a footprint and feces) and one finding of a C2 category (photograph of a lynx footprint).

b) In the area of Volujak Mountain: two findings of the C3 category (animal sighting and a footprint).

All respondents observed signs of lynx in 2018. There were no signs of lynx present in the years before.

2. Fieldwork - one finding, lynx footprint in the area of Maglić Mountain (C2 category) (11 October 2019).

There was no success in photographing lynx using photo traps or collecting hair using hair traps. Still, the results so far are more than excellent.

After the results achieved, cooperation and joint work with a colleague from Montenegro were established (Aleksandar Perović - The Center for Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro).

On 19 October 2019, we found a footprint (C2 category) of a lynx in the territory of Montenegro. This finding is just 1.1 km from the border of the Sutjeska National Park (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and about 10 km from the lynx footprint on Maglić Mountain (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Until now, findings on the presence of lynx in Montenegro have been unconfirmed information through interviews (Melovski et al., 2018) and trophy of the killed lynx (from the border Montenegro - Kosovo). This is the first finding of a living lynx in Montenegro!

All evidence of lynx (footprint photos) was forwarded to other world experts in the field: Urs Breitenmoser, Co-chair IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group; Dime Melovski, Macedonian expert for Balkan lynx and member of IUCN/SSC Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe Specialist Group; and Professor Đuro Huber and Slaven Reljić, members of IUCN/SSC Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe and Bear Specialist Group.

All experts confirmed that the evidence of the footprints was from lynx.



Above: Lynx footprint in Montenegro. Below: Lynx footprint at Maglić Mountain, NP Sutjeska.



Urs Breitenmoser emphasised that these are significant findings for exploration of the Eurasian lynx, whether it is the Carpathian or Balkan subspecies.



Tijana Trbojević doing fieldwork in NP Sutjeska.