

Project Update: February 2022

After the procurement of the equipment (photo-traps, touring skis, snowshoes), needed for the project, fieldwork and research were undertaken.

The plan of activities included field research on the Maglić and Volujak mountains, where we found signs of the presence of lynx (footprints) in the past 2 years. The photo traps were set in June 2021 and have been on the ground ever since. So far, we have not had any success in photographing lynx individuals.

Efforts to search for footprints and photography have doubled, but there was no success in June and July 2021. Therefore, the research was extended to Mount Zelengora (where the first traces of lynx in this area were found in 2018). This decision proved to be correct, because on August 18 2021, we found a lynx footprint at the Donje Bare site (307764.61 m E, 4798894.06 m N, 34 T: Figure 1).

At the beginning of September 2021, the professional tourist guide in the Sutjeska National Park, Dejan Elez, had an incredible and rare opportunity and luck to see a lynx in the research area. The lynx sighting site is at the foot of Zelengora Mountain (311570.56 m E, 4802437.69 m N, 34 T). Unfortunately, the meeting between Dejan and the lynx was short, so he was not able to take photos. It should be noted that Dejan has completed training for monitoring of large carnivores, which has been organised on several occasions in the Sutjeska National Park, but also in other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that the credibility of his findings is unquestionable.

On October 7 2021, a lynx footprint was found on the territory of Montenegro (314771.00 m E, 4792996.00 m N, 34 T: Figure 2). A footprint was found in the valley (Suha valley) between the Volujak and Maglić mountains. Despite the wet weather, the footprint was relatively dry and looked older than the one found on Mount Zelengora, which indicates that the individual had gone that way a long time previously. The direction of movement indicated that the lynx individual was heading towards Mount Zelengora. This is the third finding of the presence of lynx in the territory of Montenegro in the last 3 years.

So far, 4788 photos from photo traps have been processed. All other species that live in this area have been recorded, and the most interesting species for the project are the grey wolf, brown bear, chamois, roe deer, and hare, i.e., predator competitors and lynx prey (Figure 3).

The search for signs of the presence of lynx in snowy conditions had no effect for several reasons. The snow was quite late (the first snow fell in early January 2022), but even when it fell, icy rains followed and everything was frozen, and as such was not passable for any equipment we have (touring skis, snowshoes and snowmobile). Due to very dangerous weather conditions, the management of the Sutjeska National Park banned all activities in the park area from January 3 to February 3 2022. We managed to go out on the field only twice, but we did not find any traces of the presence of lynx.

These data are definite proof that the lynx permanently inhabits the study area, parts of southeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina and western Montenegro.

Photo documentation:



Figure 1. Lynx footprint and its measurement in B&H, Donje Bare, Zelengora, 2021. © Tijana Trbojević.



Figure 2. Lynx footprint in Montenegro, Suha valley between the Volujak and Maglić mountains, 2021. © Igor Trbojević.



Figure 3. Chamois (mt. Maglić) and Brown bear (mt. Volujak) in NP Sutjeska, B&H, 2021.