

Info Bulletin 3 – February 2008



Welcome

Welcome to the Alertis info-bulletin. Within this bulletin, Alertis will give regular up-dates about our main activities and about the projects, Alertis supports. We will keep it short and in case you would like to know more about any of the subjects mentioned here, you can always mail to project@alertis.nl.

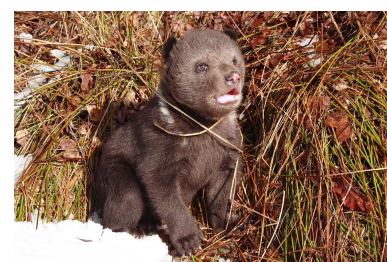
Brown bear population status in Albania and Macedonia

Little is known on the population Brown bears in Albania and Macedonia. Alertis will support a project executed by ARCTUROS. The project will provide base-line information on the status of the species especially in the trans-bordering areas with Greece. To collect these data, a new method, only recently developed in Greece will be used. This method is based on the marking behaviour of bears and uses signs and genetic material (i.e. hair) found on electrical power poles. Part of the study will focus on assessing welfare problems with captive bears in Albania and more specifically the existence of dancing bears in Albania.



Monitoring bear orphans in Romania

Alertis will start supporting a monitoring program of rehabilitated bear cubs in Romania. Leonardo Bereczky from ACNV (Association for Conserving Natural values) has set up a special rehabilitation program in the Eastern Carpathians. Since 2004, already nine bears have been released and upon their release fitted with a VHF collar. Although, radio-tracking these animals is very difficult in the terrain, so far the bears have not shown any problem behaviour. The project that Alertis will support, concerns the release of at least 8 more bears the coming two years. The young animals are released in their second year and will be daily followed for 2-4 years with the aid of GPS collars. In addition, flights with an ultra light aircraft will be carried out to assess the habitat where the animals are and their closeness to human activities. At the same time a similar monitoring project with wild animals will be set up to have a scientific sound comparison of bear behaviour in the same area and habitats. This fall, Alertis started to support a new project in Romania. The Danube-Carpathians program of WWF will build a watch tower in the Tibles Mountains. This area is famous for its pristine forest including Brown bear, lynx, wolf, red deer etc. The watch tower is meant as a stimulus for eco-tourism. In combination with other activities this project will show alternative ways of income to the local inhabitants.



Large Carnivore Education Centre, Bulgaria

The centre, which has been established on initiative of BALKANI Wildlife Society and BBPS – SEMPERVIVA, is going to open doors for visitors in March 2008 (see also: www.balkani.org). The LC centre is located in a mountain village called Vlahi, in the heart of a wolf pack home-range and near brown bear summer territories. The LC centre contains rich information about the four species of large carnivores, which are found in Bulgaria. These are the grey wolf, the brown bear, the Eurasian lynx and the golden jackal. The information is presented through diverse interactive materials, which aim to make the visitor a participant in the life of those species and to understand better their way of life and why their conservation is crucial. There is a special section, where the history of human – large carnivore relations can be tracked. There are also two ambassador animals which are part of the centre and a very important educational tool. Here people can see a wolf and a bear in semi-natural conditions. The bear is a rescued former circus bear. His name is Medo and he is an excellent ambassador for the centre. Medo's enclosure was constructed with the kind support of ALERTIS and the Dutch Animal Protection Society. For the first five years Medo's food and all other needed costs for him are supported from the above organizations.



Alertis has a new director!

Last year our previous director, Mrs. Annette Visser, left our organisation. After an intermediate period of several months, we can happily announce that our new director, Mrs. José Kok, will start in March 2008. José Kok is currently working for Ouwehand Zoo as Head of the Biology & Education Department. José is also a member of the Project committee of Alertis. As a studbook keeper of the European Brown Bear and Polar Bear she got insight in the captive problems of these species and is looking forward to be able to contribute to the welfare and survival of bears in the wild, as a member of the Alertis team.

Information / contact

This bulletin is published by **Alertis - fund for bear and nature conservation**. The purpose of this bulletin is to inform NGO's, governments, our partners and other interested parties about our mission and projects. If you have any remarks or questions regarding this information or our projects, please feel free to contact us. If you do not want to receive this bulletin anymore, you can contact us at: projects@alertis.nl.

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