



Moving forward

WWF International Danube-Carpathian Programme



A look back at 2006–07

Moving forward

Significant changes continued to sweep the Danube-Carpathian region last year, presenting new challenges but also many opportunities for conservation and sustainable development in the region. Most significantly, Romania and Bulgaria joined the European Union, taking on innovative legislation, e.g. on water and river basin management as well as nature conservation, but also potentially destructive policies on transportation and development.

The **WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme** focused its efforts last year on restructuring and developing its operations in order to better meet the challenges and grasp the opportunities for conservation in the region. **Two new legal entities** were created to support the staff and projects **in Romania and Bulgaria**, and operational systems were overhauled to ensure that these offices are fully integrated into the programme. We also significantly **expanded our public outreach and fundraising**, led by our first campaigns in Romania and Bulgaria.

At the same time, we continued our **strong conservation work**. For the first time, WWF can truly say that it has a programme in the Danube-Carpathians working from field to global levels. The impacts of our programme for the last six years are showing significant improvements in the protection of biodiversity in every corner of the region and inspiring large-scale conservation efforts across the world.

Our work continued to be guided by the **5-year Strategy (2005–10)** that was developed with and is supported by the 13 WWF stakeholders that are active in the Danube-Carpathian region. The **Programme Implementation Agreement** signed by all parties represents a truly integrated network response to the urgent threats facing this region and the opportunities it offers to ensure that at least one sizable corner of Europe can remain wild.

The following report, which follows the structure and targets of our 2010 Strategy, summarises our work, achievements and challenges over the past financial year (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007).

Michael Baltzer
*Director, WWF-International
Danube-Carpathian Programme*

Conserving the Matrix of Life

2010 Conservation Objective 1:

At least 25% of the region will fall within a protected area network representative of the region's biodiversity and is under improved management against the standards in 2005.

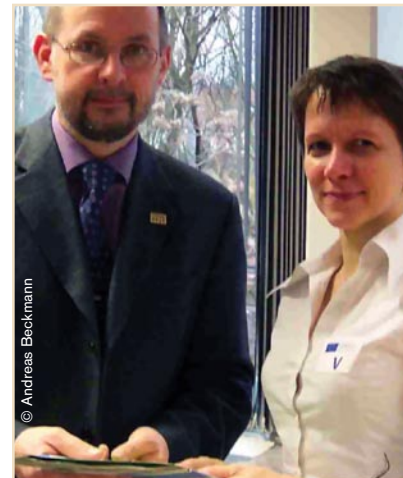
We are well on our way toward reaching this objective, primarily thanks to the EU's Habitats Directive establishing the **Natura 2000 network** of specially protected sites. Efforts until now have been mainly focused on the designation of the sites, but are shifting to emphasise practical implementation, especially financing and management for the sites.

Roughly 18% of EU territory is currently protected under the EU's Natura 2000 network of specially protected sites. The percentage of coverage is likely to be significantly higher across the Danube-Carpathian region.

In Romania and Bulgaria, WWF continued to support national authorities and lead NGO efforts in site identification and designation. WWF has helped to establish national **NGO coalitions** that are pushing for timely and effective designation of Natura 2000 sites.

Working in close cooperation with the WWF-European Policy Office and other European partners, WWF also led efforts in the region to secure and promote financing for nature conservation through **EU rural and regional development programmes**, which will total €34 billion for Romania and Bulgaria in 2007–13.

WWF lost no time in making use of new provisions provided by Romania and Bulgaria's accession to the European Union and submitted to the European Commission 60,000 signatures collected by WWF and NGO partners in support of petitions that called on national authorities to take action to protect their natural heritage. Pictured: WWF-DCP Head of Carpathians/Forests and Protected Areas **Erika Stanciu** and European Commission official **Ladislav Miko**.





WWF project leader **Dr Bohdan Prots** received the prestigious Whitley Award for his work to protect the Transcarpathian riverine forests, “Europe’s jungle” in Ukraine. (Pictured with **HRH Princess Anne**).

WWF also kicked off a major, 5-year programme to support **protected areas across the Carpathian Mountains**, part of a global WWF initiative supported by the MAVA Foundation to support implementation of the Convention for Biological Diversity’s Programme of Work on Protected Areas. WWF supported the creation of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas – a governmental coalition under the Carpathian Convention committed to the effective management of this network.

Progress was also made on gaining protection for a number of valuable areas, including in Transcarpathian Ukraine as well as the Lower Prut River in Moldova.

In Romania and Bulgaria, we focused on securing effective protection for national parks and other protected areas (see below for further details).

2010 Conservation Objective 2:

Lateral and longitudinal connectivity on the Danube will be restored sufficiently for sturgeon to return to the river and habitat connectivity in the Carpathians will be sufficient to support viable populations of large carnivores and herbivores.

In the Danube, our efforts to protect and restore populations of Sturgeon experienced a major breakthrough when the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) agreed to make the **Sturgeon an indicator species for river connectivity** for implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive. Building on that significant policy landmark, WWF is now working with the ICPDR to investigate options for restoring fish movement across the Iron Gates dams, which are the major barriers to fish migration on the lower 2000 km of the Danube. Restoration of sturgeon migration would be a landmark for the success of the Water Framework Directive across Europe and would have significant implications for other major river basins across the globe.

The EU's innovative **Water Framework Directive**, which sets out a blueprint for achieving good ecological status of water bodies through integrated river basin management, continues to provide an important framework for developments and WWF's work on the Danube.

WWF has also taken the lead on the identification and protection of **High Conservation Value Forests** and **High Nature Value Farmlands** to increase the natural matrix and protect critical habitat outside of protected areas.

Across the Carpathian Mountains, WWF worked with other organisations in the **Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative** on a major project to identify and protect ecological networks which is to be completed next year. In terms of **bear conservation**, in addition to continuing involvement in policy making, WWF initiated in northern Romania the first demonstration project focused on community managed bear tourism and conservation activities in the Carpathians.



© WWF-Canon / Hartmut Jungius

From the largely untamed middle and lower stretches of the Danube to the spectacular Danube Delta at its mouth, the Danube is home to some of the richest wetland areas in Europe and the world.

2010 Conservation Objective 3:

Two major landscape initiatives, the **Lower Danube Green Corridor** and the **Upper Tisza**, will have secured two of the most important large conservation areas in Europe and will have effectively demonstrated a vision for sustainable development and integrated biodiversity conservation in the region.

The **Lower Danube Green Corridor** is now showing significant results on the ground. We have focused our efforts on ensuring that the EU's Natura 2000 network of specially protected sites pieces together the main pearls in the chain of wetlands strung along the Lower Danube. The target set in 2000 to create **1 million hectares of protected areas** is now close to being achieved.

Spurred on by the floods of 2006, the Lower Danube governments are reconsidering their mitigation plans for flooding on the river and are looking to wetland restoration as the answer. It now looks as if the target of **240,000 hectares of restored wetlands** may in fact be exceeded.

Furthermore, WWF has just begun a large-scale project with support from the European Union to protect the chain of Danube Islands that still mark the Danube as one of the world's last major rivers in a relatively natural state. To counter persisting threats to one of the world's most spectacular natural areas, WWF developed a **vision for the sustainable development of the Danube Delta** and launched a major initiative to support its implementation over the next several years, focusing on wetland restoration, sustainable tourism, agriculture and shipping.

In September 2006, WWF organised the first **People's Summit** bringing together communities and individuals from all walks of life to catalyze grassroots support for the Lower Danube initiative.

In 2006, WWF expanded its work in the Upper Tisza river basin in northern Romania, Hungary and Ukraine. We focused on developing new businesses and financing schemes to maintain biodiversity in this remarkable corner of Europe.



A wide range of WWF initiatives are converging to ensure the protection and sustainable development of the **Upper Tisza river basin** in Romania, Ukraine and Hungary, including development of payments for ecosystem services, sustainable forestry and agriculture as well as tourism.



© WWF-Canon / Anton Voraizer

Facilitated by WWF, the **Lower Danube Green Corridor Agreement** is the most ambitious transboundary wetland protection and restoration initiative in Europe.



© WWF-Canon / Andreas Beckmann

The Bulgarian State Forestry Company committed to securing **FSC certification for 1 million ha** of forests, following the example of the Romanian State Forests which secured FSC certification for 1 million ha of forests in 2005.

2010 Conservation Objective 4:

The threat to sustainable development and biodiversity from two major drivers for change in the region, agriculture/forestry and infrastructure development, will have been abated and their influence used instead to support biodiversity conservation.

WWF continues to be a driving force for **sustainable forestry management** in our region. Our efforts continued to pay off last year when the Bulgarian Forest Administration committed to securing **FSC certification for 1 million ha** of forest, following on FSC certification for 1 million ha of Romanian forests in the previous year. We have also been driving identification and promotion of High Conservation Value Forests in the region, work which we have also begun extending to Ukraine and Slovakia. Unfortunately, illegal logging continues to be a major problem. In response to this challenge, WWF is now working to bring together major timber companies and governments to consider practical solutions.

In terms of agriculture, the thrust of WWF's work has continued to be on influencing **programming for use of EU agriculture and rural development funds**, which have a major positive and negative influence on **high nature value farmland**, from wetlands to mountain meadows. Here too, WWF has been an important force working with relevant authorities to promote nature-friendly use of EU funds.

On the Danube, the thrust of our efforts has been on fighting old-fashioned approaches toward development of navigation, which threaten to turn the living river into little more than a transport canal (the EU's **Transportation Corridor Number 7**). WWF is involved in the ongoing dialogue process organised by the International Commission for the Danube River on the future development of shipping on the Danube.

2010 Conservation Objective 5:

WWF has a significant impact on the development of sustainable business, responsible government and biodiversity-based livelihoods in the Danube-Carpathian region.

Recognising the importance of finding strong incentives for conservation and limiting the growing footprint of businesses and consumers on the region and its resources, we made sustainable business and biodiversity-based livelihoods one of the three main pillars of WWF's work in the Danube-Carpathian region.

In order to scale up efforts as well as encourage the engagement of people and business in the region, we launched the **Carpathian Opportunity** – an ambitious initiative that aims to establish a "conservation economy" as the basis and foundation for the region's economy, thereby making conservation and sustainable development relevant to people and business and ultimately the government.



In 2007 WWF completed its work with local stakeholders in Apuseni in Romania for local development and conservation of *Arnica montana*, having established a **community led business**, improved harvesting and marketing techniques and established the first international commercial linkages.



WWF-DCP is working with Pelicano, a Portuguese developer, and WWF's **One Planet Living Programme** to establish a model eco-community near Brasov in Romania.

We also sought to engage proactively the business communities in Romania and Bulgaria in particular. In cooperation with **Romanian and Bulgarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry**, WWF organised a series of events, including seminars on EU nature conservation policy and implications for business. We also began making inroads into business media, including the **Money Channel** in Romania.

Payments for Environmental Services (PES) continue to be one instrument we are developing for conservation finance. In cooperation with the WWF-Macroeconomic Policy Office, we continued promoting PES in Europe, including organisation of a **Private Sector Forum on PES** that took place in Vienna in November 2006. We are currently developing a number of local PES schemes in Maramures, Romania (focused on water services) and in the Lower Danube focused on tourism, and are leading an EU project to investigate options for PES and other opportunities for conservation financing in Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey.



© WWF-Canon / Chris Martin Bahr

Last year saw the first meeting of the **Carpathian Convention**, which was initiated by WWF's pioneering work to protect the Carpathian ecoregion.

The Carpathian Mountains are Europe's last great wilderness area – a bastion for large carnivores, with over half the continent's populations of bears, wolves and lynx, and home to the greatest remaining reserves of old growth forests outside of Russia.

Mobilising support

2010 Communications Objective:

15% unprompted recognition in Bulgaria and Romania.

Our **first campaigns in Romania and Bulgaria**, which were focused on stopping construction and other illegal activities in national parks and protected areas, gave WWF nationwide coverage and reached an estimated 75% of our target audience in both countries (25–45 years, urban).

70,000 people supported calls by WWF and partner organizations for authorities in Romania and Bulgaria to take action to address the problems. To date, no practical solutions have been achieved, but we have raised the problems of protected areas to national and even international attention.

Pro bono advertising developed by **Ogilvy Bulgaria** featured in virtually all print, internet and outdoor advertising outlets in Bulgaria, from *National Geographic* to leading dailies. In Romania, 3 TV clips produced by **Ogilvy Romania** were aired on 3 national TV channels with **broadcast time worth an estimated €1 million**.

Ongoing press work generated ca. 2000 media mentions of WWF and its work in Bulgaria, Romania and across the region. In Bulgaria and Romania, WWF has positioned itself as a leading source of information and opinion for the media on environmental issues.

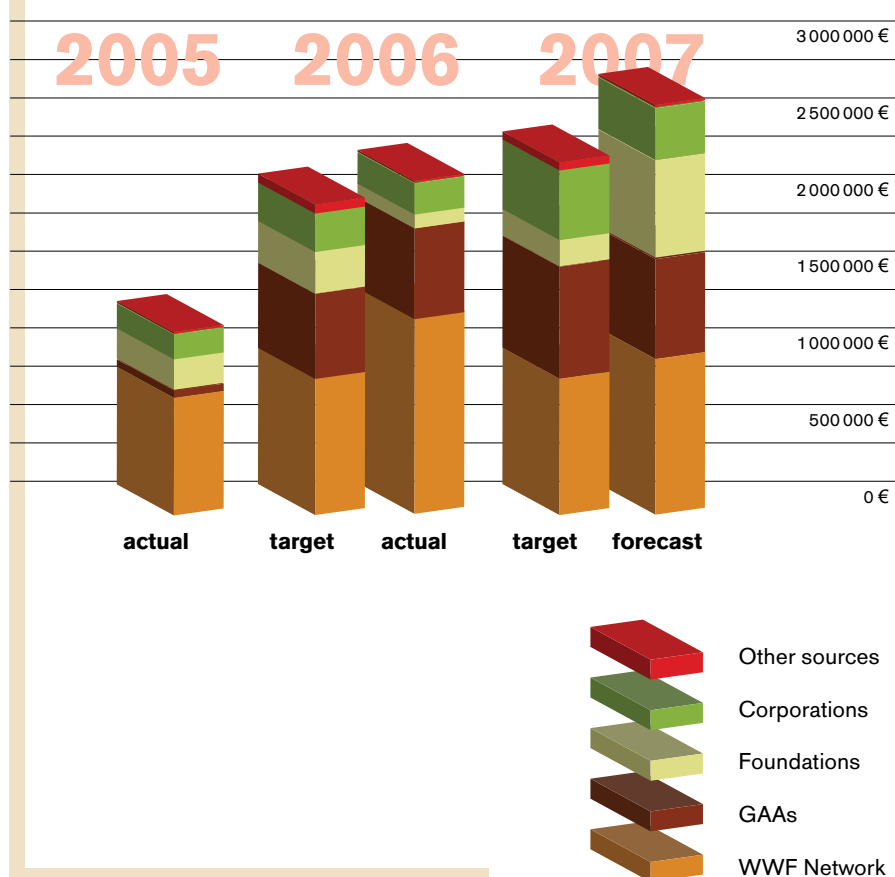


In Summer 2007 WWF will run an international campaign focused around the Danube tour of popular musician **Hubert von Goisern**. "Fit the ships to the river, not the river to the ships" is the basic message WWF is giving policy makers at EU and national levels.

WWF-International's **Top Ten Threatened Rivers** report, which featured the Danube, gained wide coverage across Europe, **reaching an estimated 12 million people** in Germany alone. An international campaign for sustainable shipping on the Danube is planned for this summer and will focus on the Danube concert tour of popular musician **Hubert von Goisern**. Climate change campaigns are planned for next year.

We have extraordinary opportunities in the Danube-Carpathian region to hold onto existing wilderness and cultural landscapes while improving livelihoods.

WWF-DCP Income FY 2005-7 by category of funding



2010 Fundraising Objective:

Total funding target €3.5 million from a diversified base of support, with majority coming from external (non-WWF) sources.

We have significantly outstripped all of our fundraising targets, raising **€2.76 million in FY2007** – compared with our target of €2.4 million, and more than double our income two years ago.

Our dependence on WWF support is steadily decreasing: out of our total budget of €2.76 million in FY2007, WWF-DCPO currently receives ca €926.000 in support from the WWF network, with the remainder coming from a mixture of Government Aid Agencies, private foundations and corporations.

In FY2007 we received our first in-country corporate and individual support, including support from **Lafarge Romania** and **Tetra Pak** in Bulgaria. **IKEA** remains a major supporter of our forest programme in Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine.



Cooperation signed between **Lafarge Romania** and WWF-DCPO in November 2007 (Picture: WWF-DCP Deputy Director Andreas Beckmann, left, with heads of Lafarge Aggregates and Cement Romania).

Our **2% campaign** in Romania in spring 2007 – focused on the possibility that Romanians have to assign 2% of their taxes to the nonprofit of their choice – has provided our first experience with canvassing for individual support.

FOR SALE

РИЛА
Национален парк

- парцел **810460** с/ка
- подходящ за ски, хотел
- в близост до манастир
- дървен материал на място
- риболов, дивеч

Има кой да плати. С живота си.

Застъпниците територии, обитавани от застрашени растителни и животински видове, са едва 5% от територията на България. И имат нужда от защита.
16 000 декара от Национален парк Рила ще бъдат засенчани от ски пистите на проектирания се в момента нов ски курорт. Въпреки забраната за строеж на нови спортни съоръжения в Рила.
Всеки ден гъби интереси поувяват дивата природа.

Погрешенето WWF, защитете защитените територии.


www.panda.org/bulgaria

Last year WWF ran its first major public awareness campaigns in Bulgaria and Romania. The national campaigns, which helped mobilise **support from 70,000 people** and covered all media, focused on the problem of illegal construction, logging and poaching in national parks and other protected areas. They marked a strategic shift in WWF's work in the region, including development of communications capacity, both in-house and through pro bono relationships with **Ogilvy** and other media companies. (Image from outdoor and print advertisement developed by Ogilvy Bulgaria to raise awareness of threats to Rila National Park).

Developing our capacity

WWF-DCP Programme Implementation Agreement signatories:

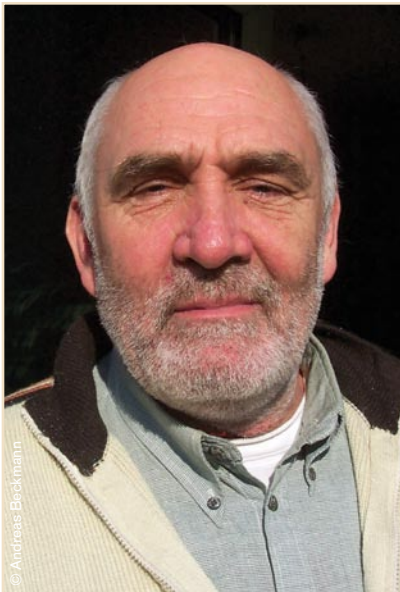
WWF-Austria
WWF-European Policy Office
WWF-Germany
WWF-Hungary
WWF-International
WWF-Int'l Freshwater Programme
WWF-Int'l Forest Programme
WWF-Mediterranean Programme
WWF-Netherlands
WWF-Poland
WWF-UK



As an organization, WWF-DCPO undertook a number of steps that have significantly strengthened WWF's capacity to deliver conservation and mobilize support in the Danube-Carpathian region.

Within the framework of its **Programme Implementation Agreement**, WWF-DCPO continued to lead and coordinate efforts of a wide range of WWF stakeholders, including WWF-Netherlands, WWF-UK, WWF-Germany, WWF-Austria, WWF-Hungary, WWF-Poland, WWF-EPO as well as WWF-International, including forest and freshwater programmes.

In October 2006, WWF formally opened **registered organizations in Romania and Bulgaria**, developing WWF's long-term capacity to implement conservation and mobilize support.



© Andreas Beckmann

In September 2006 our colleague and friend **David Reeder** died very unexpectedly. David represented WWF in Croatia and Serbia, where he played a leading role in networking NGOs and establishing the Drava League dedicated to conservation and sustainable development on one of Europe's last natural rivers.



Accompanying these developments, we significantly **boosted our capacity for finance and administration**, and established new capacity for monitoring and human resources.

We also made strategic investments to develop our **capacity for public outreach and communication** in Romania and Bulgaria in particular. Drawing especially on experience from WWF-International and partner WWF organizations, we also made concerted efforts to develop our capacity to engage with the private sector.

Supporters and partners

The following organizations provided generous financial and in kind support for WWF's efforts for the protection and sustainable development of the Danube and Carpathian ecoregions:

WWF Network

- WWF-Austria
- WWF-Denmark
- WWF-European Policy Office
- WWF-Germany
- WWF-International
- WWF-International Freshwater Programme
- WWF-International Forest Programme
- WWF-Hungary
- WWF-Macroeconomic Policy Office
- WWF-Mediterranean Programme
- WWF-Netherlands
- WWF-Poland
- WWF-Sweden
- WWF-UK
- WWF-USA

Foundations

- Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU)
- DOEN Foundation
- Environmental Partnership Foundation Romania
- MAVA Foundation
- REC Moldova

Governments and international organizations

- European Commission – DG Environment
- Netherlands (BBI Matra)
- UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project
- UNEP Regional Office for Europe
- Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)
- Darwin Initiative (UK Government)
- Romanian Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development
- Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Waters
- European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism
- DEFRA Romania

Corporations

- Bulgarian Chamber of Industrialists
- IKEA
- Kronospan
- Lafarge Romania
- Mondi
- Ogilvy Group Bulgaria
- Ogilvy Group Romania
- Reload Film
- Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Holzindustrie Schweighofer
- Tetra Pak Bulgaria

Other Organisations

- Association for Integrated Rural Development (AIRD), Sofia
- Association of Parks in Bulgaria
- Balkani Wildlife, Sofia
- Romanian Ornithological Society (SOR), Bucharest

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WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption

for a living planet[®]