



Biosphere Expeditions & Land Rover partnership



Biosphere Expeditions became a partner of Land Rover's environmental sponsorship programme "Fragile Earth" in 2002. Since then Land Rover has been instrumental to the running of many field projects such as lion and cheetah conservation in Namibia, snow leopard research in the Altai, Arabian leopard studies in Oman, jaguar and puma conservation in Brazil, and work on chamois, wolves and bears in Slovakia.

Kathy Wilden, a Director of Biosphere Expeditions, says *"We are delighted to be part of Land Rover's Fragile Earth programme. In Land Rover we have found an excellent Global Partner with a strong corporate conscience."*

Highlighting the importance of the Land Rover partnership for Biosphere Expeditions, Wilden continues *"Land Rovers are crucial to the running of our expeditions. They enable us to run expeditions to some of the most remote and inaccessible places on the planet, reducing our running and expedition costs by providing the ultimate expedition vehicle and sponsorship. Knowing that we have reliable and effective vehicles means that we are able to support scientists and conservation efforts all over the globe."*

By partnering with Biosphere Expeditions, Land Rover has been helping to save species and their habitats all around the world. Past achievements include:

- Fewer lions, leopards and cheetahs killed in farmer-predator conflict in Namibia.
- Declaration of a protected area in Altai Republic, Central Asia which provides the habitat for a number of endangered species including the snow leopard.
- An active role in saving 50 wolves from being declared legitimate hunting targets in the Bieszczady mountains in Poland. This was achieved by providing accurate information on the predator numbers and by influencing the local authorities who reversed their decision to cull wolves.
- Our recommendations for the management and protection of jaguars have been incorporated into national and state-wide jaguar action plans in Brazil's Atlantic rainforest.

Case study: Snow Leopard expedition in the mountains of the Altai Republic, Central Asia.

The Altai Republic is located in Central Asia between Mongolia, China and Kazakhstan. The Altai mountains provide the habitat for a number of endangered species including the snow leopard. However, it is one of the poorest regions of the former Soviet Union whose collapse has increased pressures on exploitation of natural resources.

Little is known about situation of the globally endangered snow leopard and its interaction with prey animals in this area. The research carried out by Biosphere Expeditions in partnership with Land Rover will provide vital data, which will help to protect the habitat and wildlife of these pristine mountains. The data are collected by searching in the mountains and valleys for signs of snow leopards and other animals. Land Rover Defenders and Discoverys are being used to access the study and observation points.

Volodymyr Tytar, the expedition scientist in Altai, explains *"The survey locations are remote, and the terrain rough so having Land Rovers is absolutely vital. With the support of four Land Rovers, we can study huge areas each day, and access sites that would normally be out of our reach."*

Case study: Tracking wolf and lynx in winter Slovakia

This project is set up in the Tatra mountains of Slovakia to monitor wolf and lynx populations and their interrelationship with prey species. Negative aspects of their presence and conflicts with local people often make news headlines, promoting a heightened sense of fear. Such conflicts often lead to calls for culling, which is the approach that almost eradicated large predators from Slovakia in the past. Also, the economic development presents new threats to wildlife and habitats. A more sensitive approach is needed to resolve these issues.

Dr. Matthias Hammer, the Managing Director and founder of Biosphere Expeditions, says *"The snowy mountains of Slovakia are only an hour's flight away from the UK and their forests harbour species, such as the wolf and lynx, long gone from Britain. These animals are under threat and we are very excited to be playing a part in their conservation with the help of our volunteers from all over the world and Land Rover."*

See www.biosphere-expeditions.org/landrover for more details about the partnership between Biosphere Expeditions and Land Rover as well as an image archive.