

European Wilderness Network

Central Balkan Wilderness



2018

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Let's get Wild!

Central Balkan Wilderness, Bulgaria

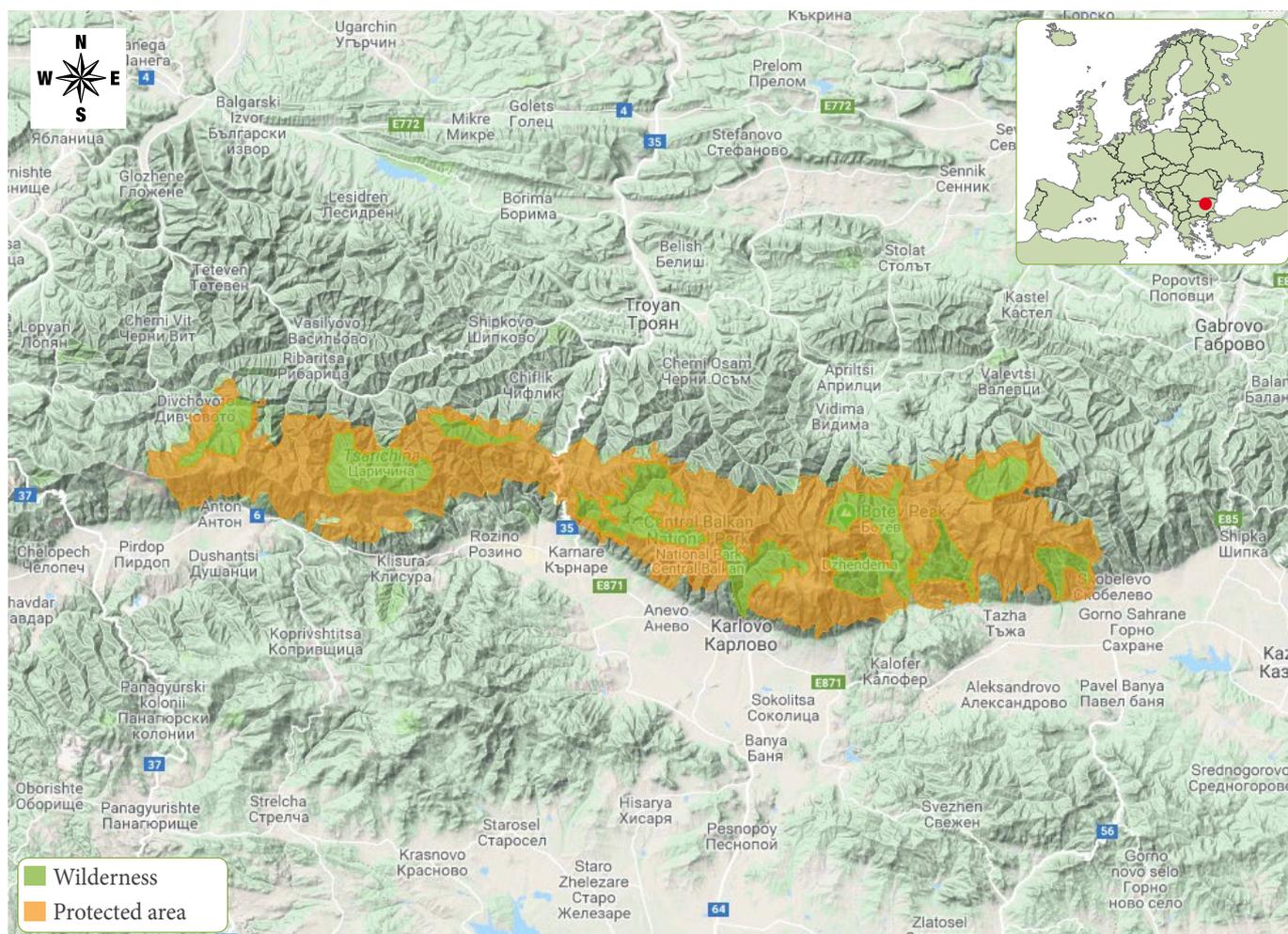
The 20 019 ha Central Balkan Wilderness is embedded in the Central Balkan National Park, Bulgaria. The Central Balkan Wilderness is entirely inside the borders of nine strict nature reserves (IUCN Ia), which fall within the boundaries of Central Balkan National Park (IUCN II). Central Balkan Wilderness is covering 28% of the park territory and consists of the following nine strict nature reserves: Boatin, Tsarichina, Kozya Stena, Steneto, Severen Dzendem, Peesti, Sokolna, Dzendema and Stara Reka.

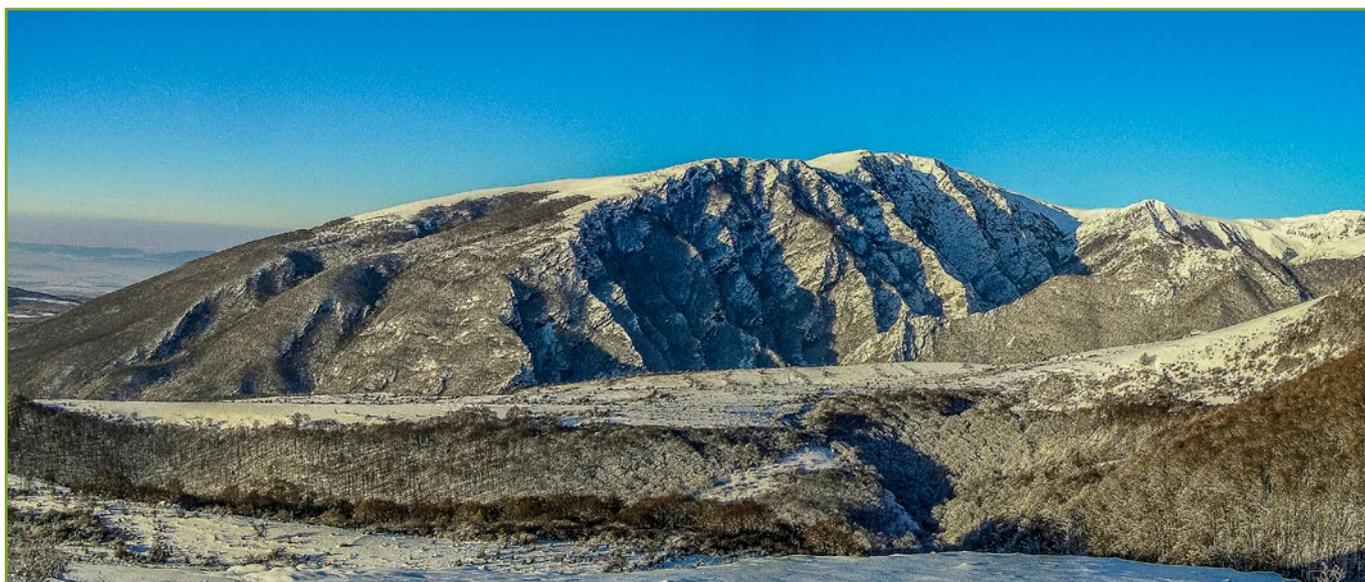
The Central Balkan National Park is one of the largest and most valuable of all protected areas in Europe. It is the third largest protected territory in Bulgaria, spanning an area of 71 669 ha. Recently, nine components of Central Balkan National Park were added to the UNESCO World Heritage Site – Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe.

European Wilderness Quality Standard Audit System

The 20 019 ha Central Balkan Wilderness was audited in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009 and 2010 and meets the Platinum Wilderness Quality Standard. A European Wilderness Quality Standard Renewal-Audit is scheduled for 2020.

Wilderness information	
Protected area	Central Balkan National Park
Wilderness	Central Balkan Wilderness
Country	Bulgaria
Size of the protected area	71 669 ha
Size of the Wilderness	20 019 ha
First Audit	2003
Most Recent Audit	2010
Wilderness Uniqueness	Old-growth Rhodope mixed forest, alpine meadows, deep canyons, gorges, waterfalls, rare- and Wilderness indicator species such as bear, wildcat, chamois, wolf, and eagle
Number of visitors per year to the protected area	approx. 60 000
Number of visitors per year to the Wilderness	approx. 35 000





Biodiversity

The Central Balkan Wilderness includes large high-mountain meadows, vertical rock faces, deep canyons, waterfalls, compact and often untouched beech forests as well as numerous peaks with altitudes higher than 2 000 m. The Central Balkan Wilderness is home to an overwhelming biodiversity with rare and endangered wildlife species and communities, self-regulating ecosystems, as well as historical sites of global cultural and scientific significance.

In Central Balkan Wilderness, you can find the brown bear, wolf, red deer, chamois, river otter and – amongst over 200 bird species - the imperial and golden eagles. Some individual species, particularly the chamois, have been affected in history by illegal hunting in the Central Balkan National Park.

Wilderness Tourism Experience

Tourists, naturalists, and scientists alike appreciate the Central Balkan Wilderness as a favourite spot. The highest waterfall of the Balkan Peninsula, the deepest cave of Bulgaria or a large protected beech forest are just some of the attractions you'll encounter around here. A set of specialised routes including ten equestrian and four mountain bike trails are carefully managed and monitored, as well as thematic routes for bird, plant, and large mammal watching. Additionally, you can explore local culture and history, caving, photography, alpine skiing experiences. There are multiple tourist chalets scattered throughout the Central Balkan National Park, some of them close to the border of the Wilderness with a combined capacity of over 1 000 beds, all operated by the Bulgarian Tourism Union.



Contact

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Let's
Get
Wild!

European Wilderness Society

Founded on more than 20 years of Wilderness work by our members, the European Wilderness Society is the only Pan-European, Wilderness and environmental advocacy non-profit, non-government organisation.

It has a dedicated multi-cultural and experienced team of Wilderness and wildlife specialists, nature conservationists, researchers and scientists, tourism experts, marketing and business professionals, legal advisors and Wilderness advocates, whose mission is to:

- ▶ identify
- ▶ designate
- ▶ steward
- ▶ promote

Europe's last Wilderness, WILDCoasts, WILDForests, WILDIslands and WILDRivers. Here non-human intervention leads to open-ended, dynamic processes.

This is conveyed through a range of projects that facilitate Wilderness knowledge exchange, including education, culture and science, from local community through to scientific and governmental level.

European Wilderness Network

The European Wilderness Network connects Europe's wildest places. Certified by the European Wilderness Quality and Audit System, these unique areas host diverse wild ecosystems governed by dynamic open-ended processes, with no or minimum human-intervention. The Network includes, for example, Europe's last primeval beech forests, the arctic tundra, and mountain landscapes in different climate conditions. It aims to promote Europe's last Wilderness, WILDCoasts, WILDForests, WILDIslands and WILDRivers, with a comprehensive marketing strategy. The European Wilderness Network offers a platform to share Wilderness Stewardship best-practice examples and Wilderness research. It connects like-minded Wilderness managers and advocates and fosters the exchange of ideas and knowledge across Europe and the world through the European Wilderness Exchange Programme.

For more information please see <http://european-wilderness.network>

European Wilderness Society

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