

Approval of the certificate for the priority project Russia's Wildlife: Protect and Appreciate

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The certificate of the Russia's Wildlife: Protect and Appreciate priority project was approved following the meeting of the presidium of the Presidential Council for Strategic Development and Priority Projects of 11 April 2017.

The main aim of the project is to conceive and test models for developing ecotourism, preserving rare animals and restoring their populations.

The project will be implemented from April 2017 through February 2021.

The project consists of two priorities: Ecotourism Development and Rare Species Preservation.

Ecotourism Development envisages the elaboration of models for developing ecotourism as a means of protecting biological and landscape diversity.

At its first stage the project will be implemented in seven pilot nature reserves. Ecotourism development programmes must be created for them, which should include the building of infrastructure, a marketing system, and the greatest possible reduction of the human impact on local ecosystems. International experts will be engaged in the work.

There are plans for programmes to develop natural areas through public-private partnership and operators with recognised international experience in the comprehensive development of nature reserves.

The second stage will be based on the achievements of the pilot programmes. Ecotourism development programmes will be created for another 15 federal nature reserves.

The Rare Species Preservation priority is aimed at restoring and increasing rare animal populations. The Persian leopard population is expected to grow by 580 percent, Far Eastern leopard 90 percent, Przewalski's wild horse 820 percent, aurochs 50 percent, saiga 210 percent, and argali 130 percent.

The priority also envisages the protection of Teletskoye Lake: improving the area, cleaning up rubbish, and preventing further pollution.