



IUCN SSC Caprinae Specialist Group



Conservation Success Stories

Community-based conservation helps mountain ungulate recovery in Golestan National Park, Iran



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IMPLEMENTED BY

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THREAT ADDRESSED

Poaching

TARGET

Advise, collaborate and endorse initiatives
related to Caprinae conservation. (T-005)

Community-centred approaches are key to long-term conservation success



Success category: Local people involvement

Success story:



Community-based conservation has become a vital strategy for safeguarding wildlife and their habitats, as recognised by the Global Biodiversity Framework in 2022. Despite overall benefits for people and nature, the conservation outcomes of this approach are rarely quantified within protected areas. We evaluated the effects of inclusion of local people in the conservation of Golestan National Park, Iran, which has suffered from illegal activities in recent decades. We used a before-after design to compare various conservation and human pressure indicators along two five-year periods (2014-2018 and 2019-2023), reflecting the shift in the park's management approach. The results demonstrated mixed outcomes. There was a reduction in fires – from 17.2 to 7.2 km² despite a drying trajectory – and poaching – from 0.4 to 0.2 detections/100 km patrol – as well as significant increases in the populations of Urial (*Ovis vignei*) from approximately 4,800 to 10,300 individuals, and Wild Goat (*Capra aegagrus*) from approximately 240 to 1,050 individuals.

However, incidents of illegal grazing remained relatively stable between the two periods, while illegal logging incidents showed an increase from 0.02 to 0.06 detections/100 km patrol. The establishment of the park Steering Council, functioning as a supervisory body with local community representation fostered a sense of ownership among locals, enhancing monitoring and enforcement, leading to positive ecological outcomes. Nonetheless, challenges persisted, notably an increase in illegal logging possibly linked to economic pressures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our study demonstrates the potential of community-based conservation but emphasises the importance of continuous monitoring and addressing local communities' needs for long-term success. ■ JUAN HERRERO



SUCCESS LEVEL

Highly successful



REASONS FOR SUCCESS

Local people involvement

Vulnerable Northern River Shark,
(*Glyphis garricki*)
Photo: Grant Johnson

Interviews about human wildlife
interactions with local inhabitants
Photo: Kiran Thapa Magar

Vicuña management by Cooperativa
Agroganadera de Santa Catalina and Comunidad
Aborigen Atu Shapi de Morritos.
Santa Catalina, Jujuy Province, Argentina
Photo: Yanina Arzamendia

Story photo credits

Urial herd at the Golestan National Park
Photo: Hassan Moghimi

Urial (*Ovis vignei*)
at the Golestan National Park
Photo: Jafar Panahpour

Community songbird monitoring and
protection, Indonesia
Photo: Asian Songbird Trade SG archives

Cacti from genera *Copiapoa* and *Eriosyce*
confiscated in Italy and repatriated to Chile in 2021
Photo: Andrea Cattabriga