

ECOVOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

RARE BREEDS CONSERVATION IN BULGARIA

KARAKACHAN SHEEP
KARAKACHAN HORSES
KARAKACHAN DOGS
KALOFER LONG-HAIRED GOATS

2010

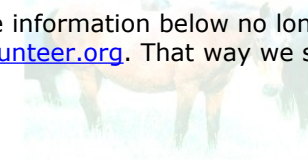
ECOVOLUNTEER PROGRAM

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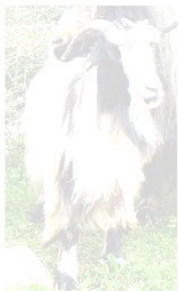
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1 The rare breeds of the Karakachan people

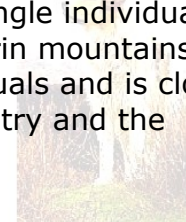
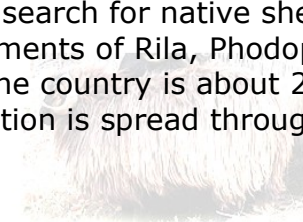
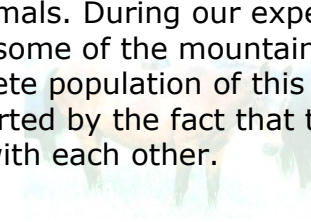
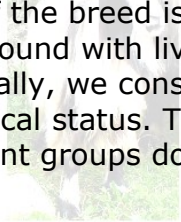
The local breeds of sheep, horse and dog have been reared on Bulgarian lands, as a result of the most primitive type of livestock breeding - nomad livestock breeding. The Karakachans are Balkan nomad livestock breeders, who are considered by most historians as descendants of the ancient Thracian livestock breeding communities. It is considered that thanks to their extremely conservative livestock breeding traditions, they have saved one of the most primitive and pure domesticated forms of animals - a certain type of mountain sheep, a mountain horse and a livestock-guarding dog.

1.1 Karakachan sheep

The local sheep is accepted as the most typical and primitive coarse wool sheep type in Bulgaria. According to Bulgarian authors this sheep is closest to the European Mouflon (*Ovis musimon*). These sheep are small (about 57 cm at withers), and a short and thin tail is typical sign of the breed. Its wool is coarse and long (up to 26 cm). The coloration is grey-black and brown-black, and very seldom white. It is characteristically very vital and energetic, very tough, and almost never gets ill.

In the past this was one of the most wide-spread breeds of sheep in Bulgaria. In the beginning of the 20th century the population was more than 500.000 animals. In 1957, during the nationalization of farming, the number decreased to 158.896 animals. At that time the socialist government decided to replace the local breeds of sheep with foreign, fine-fleeced breeds. As a consequence of the state policy the local breeds had been massively crossbred with other breeds. In the beginning of 1990s the number of sheep from the indigenous breeds was only 1,3% of the whole sheep population in the country.

According to the Red Data List of the native forms of domestic animals included in the National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy of Bulgaria (1994) the Karakachan sheep is categorized as **endangered**. The total population size of the breed is less than 2000 animals. During our expeditions to search for native sheep only single individuals were found with livestock breeders in some of the mountainous settlements of Rila, Phodopes and Pirin mountains. Generally, we consider that the complete population of this sheep in the country is about 200 individuals and is close to critical status. This opinion is supported by the fact that this population is spread through the country and the different groups do not have contact with each other.



1.2 Karakachan horse

In contrast to other nomad people in Asia and on the Balkans, who use donkeys, the Karakachans only use horses for transportation. The Karakachan horse has been consolidated from all the local primitive horses. This is due to the very conservative livestock breeding traditions of the nomads. A specific feature has been the wide use of close inbreeding (A. Petrov, 1940). The nomads have used these horses for the transportation of their whole household during the seasonal migrations from the summer pastures to the winter ones and back. These pastures have been the only food for the horses. The horses that were not currently being used stayed all year round high in the mountains in groups taking care of themselves. Even during cold winters they found food and protected themselves from predators. Each nomad man owned around 50-100 horses in the past. In 1940s this number decreased to 10-15.

This horse is comparatively short, about 128 cm at withers. It is thickset with good musculature and a wide forehead. The legs are perfectly set and strong. The hoofs are exceptionally solid and strong. Horses often work without horse-shoes. Among the nomads the horses were known for their strength and calm character.

Nowadays, they are mainly used to transport wood material on pack saddles from forest to settlements. They are also used for tourism because of their good character and because they manage very well on rough mountain terrain.

In 1957-58 after the government took away livestock from private owners, and the horses were no longer used by the state farms. They were killed and given to chickens and pigs for food. Recently such horses are being exported for meat, mostly to Italy. Attempts have been made in the state farms to "improve" the breed by crossbreeding with Hucul, Kabardin and Haflinger. The government does not have a policy in place to save the indigenous breeds of horses.

According to the Red Data List of native forms of domestic animals included in the National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy of Bulgaria (1994) the Karakachan horse is put in category II - **disappearing** forms (or **critical**) by Y. Danchev (1994).

According to our research Karakachan horse numbers have decreased so rapidly, that without urgent measures for their conservation they will disappear completely in a few years time. During our expeditions we have seen only isolated animals, or small groups of 2 to 4 horses, usually in the Rila and Rhodopes mountains, but also in Pirin and Stara Planina Mountains and Kraishte region. There are only a few bigger groups of about 50 - 80 animals.



1.3 Karakachan dog

The Karakachan dog is an ancient breed of livestock guarding dog. It descends from the shepherd dogs of the ancient Thracians and from dogs used for livestock protection by the proto-Bulgarians, who came from Central Asia. Karakachan people have selected this dog conservatively and have formed its present type. Due to its perfect working qualities this breed has been also widely used by Bulgarian shepherds. According to literature, in the past some livestock breeders, who had had a huge number of sheep (about 12 000) have owned 100 dogs for protection of these flocks. Until the World War II this dog was also used in the Bulgarian army.

These dogs are large and powerful, with good proportions. Their coat is long and coarse. The coloration is mainly spotted (big contrast spots on white base or white spots on dark base). They can work in different conditions, which are sometimes very hard (rough terrain and a high number of predators). Due to their qualities these dogs have become legends in Bulgarian folklore.

After the nationalization of private livestock in 1957 a large number of these dogs became useless and many dogs were killed. In that period wolves have also been heavily persecuted almost to the point of extinction. In the 1960s - 1980s the socialist government carried out several campaigns for extermination of domestic dogs including Karakachan dogs with the aim to trade with their furs. The main part of the population of the breed was saved in the state livestock farms, particularly in mountainous areas. However, after 1991 when the state farms ceased functioning, these dogs became "homeless" and hunters killed most of them. Due to the extremely low number and in particular a shortage of females, shepherds started to crossbreed them with other mix-bred dogs from similar foreign breeds. Up to this day the government has not supported the survival of the breed in any way, except including it in the Red Data List of native forms of domestic animals. This list is a part of the National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy of Bulgaria, as a **disappearing** breed (or critical).

Until the mid 1990s a decrease of this dog breed population (working and domestic) was observed. The status of the dog became critical. In contrast, since that time the numbers have increased. However, after that time and up to now the number of purebred dogs, owned by dog breeders or by dog lovers, has increased at the expense of the decreasing aboriginal population of the breed. It turned out that almost all the best working, aboriginal dogs were taken by dog breeders and kept by them, with the purpose to save and to breed those dogs. Recently, thanks to our activities and some other breeders and thanks to the projects which work on returning the dog to its natural environment there is a slight trend of increase in working dog numbers.



2 The Karakachan people

The Karakachan nomads are a very small ethnic minority of roughly only 15.000 people.

They are known under different names, they identify themselves as Vlahi in their own language, and they are named Karakachan in Bulgarian and Sarakatsani in Greek.

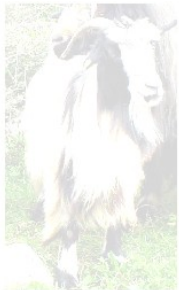
Very little is known about their ethnic origin; it is subject to speculation though it is supposed to be ancient. Their language is a northern Greek dialect.

Their traditional culture is a convergence of Pagan and Christian beliefs: a series of pagan beliefs, rites and customs in unique combination with the Eastern Orthodox Church. Modern Karakachans all belong to the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Until the mid-20th century these people were semi-nomadic shepherds grazing their sheep only on natural pastures. Their horses and sheep were of primary importance and provided all food, clothing and transportation. They were "semi-nomadic" because of their annual travelling in search for pastures for their flocks, from the warm lowlands of the Balkan Peninsula where they spent the winter and the alpine mountain pastures where they spent the summer, and the routes in between.

In the mid-20th century the communist totalitarian regime's policy forced all nomadic people into a sedentary lifestyle and with the abolishment of private property these people lost the possession of their sheep and other livestock. Thus the traditional way of life was abandoned.

Since the 1990s in modern day Bulgaria the expression of ethnic identity is no longer restricted. Karakachans now can organise themselves as an ethnic community, in associations to study and promote their history, traditions, language and the folklore of the Karakachan community, etc. and also raise contemporary issues in their communities.



3 Why these rare breeds are so valuable and need to be saved?

These rare breeds are some of the oldest forms of domestic animals in Europe. They are the connection between modern high-productive breeds and their wild predecessors. These three breeds have been created in a way and in conditions that cannot be repeated. This process has created breeds with high vitality and excellent adaptability to different living conditions. They almost never get ill and are totally unpretentious to the food base. They must be saved for research purposes in the fields of immunology, nutrition, reproduction, etc. The rich genetic potential which these breeds carry will probably be of great importance in future. They are unique for the specific, local conditions, and have great economic potential in the low-producing mountainous areas.

For example this breed of **sheep** is highly resistant to disease and able to survive in the severe mountainous terrain and conditions. It has adapted to long trips on high-mountainous trails. The wool can be used in local handicrafts to make traditional products.

The breed of **horse** is still irreplaceable the in mountains, where it is used in the logging industry. Horses carry wood material down to the settlements without damaging the natural forest ecosystems. These horses have a good character and are perfect for riding and recreation, particularly in mountain regions where other breeds of horses can even be dangerous. They are inexpensive to keep, because they graze all year round and do not need to be fed or kept in enclosures in wintertime.

These livestock guarding **dog** has always been the only effective traditional protection against predators. It is a key factor in solving the predator/man conflict and consequently saving large carnivores. These dogs still prove their irrefutable working abilities in contrast to many other European livestock-guarding dog breeds, which have turned into show-dogs. Without exception, they are selflessly devoted to their owners.

And last but not least, these rare breeds are an integral part of the Bulgarian culture and customs.



4 Goal of the project

The goal of the project is the conservation and restoration of the local, ancient breeds, as some of the most primitive breeds in Europe and as a part of the natural, cultural and historical heritage of Bulgaria. Saving the traditional way of breeding.

About the project implementation

4.1 The Bulgarian Biodiversity Preservation Society – SEMPERVIVA

The project: "Conservation of Karakachan sheep, Karakachan horse and Karakachan dog - one of the oldest breeds in Europe" was initiated by the Bulgarian Biodiversity Preservation Society - SEMPERVIVA (BBPS - SEMPERVIVA). The society was founded in 1993, when a group of people interested in biodiversity conservation and saving of indigenous breeds, joined their efforts in more intensive activities to achieve these goals.

Our society is a non-governmental, non-political, non-profit nature protection organization.

Our priorities are:

- conservation and restoration of biological diversity and wildlife habitats;
- conservation and restoration of the populations of native forms of domestic animals;
- raising public awareness for nature conservation and the common biological and ecological knowledge of Bulgarian people;
- contribution for raising of international prestige of Bulgaria in the field of biodiversity conservation.

4.2 The work done so far

The implementation of the present project was in 2000. However, the work for the conservation of the Karakachan dog started in 1991 when members of the society started studying the breed and its status in Bulgaria and we have been working to save it ever since. Understanding that this local breed of livestock guarding dog does need urgent action to be preserved, we started investigations throughout the country of the Karakachan dog population in Bulgaria, its status and the areas that the dogs were still present. A dog breeding station was established and aboriginal Karakachan dogs with proven working abilities have been bred there. Most of the offspring go back to livestock breeders for the protection of their livestock against predators. This is done with the purpose of returning and preserving the breed in its natural environment - among flocks in the mountains.

The society members have founded a Karakachan dog club and also an International Karakachan Dog Association was also founded. It gathers breeders from the whole country and from abroad. A standard for the breed has been worked out, and many activities for popularising the breed have been undertaken (dog-shows, publications, TV programmes, etc.). Thanks to their ongoing efforts the breed is not in such a critical status as it was ten years ago. In 2006, finally the ancient breed Karakachan dog was officially registered as a breed. This was a long expected success of our work.

While collecting data about the status of the dogs, we realised that similar urgent efforts were needed to prevent the extinction of the Karakachan breeds, the horse and the sheep. Significant information has been collected about these two breeds also.

In 2000, it became possible to start intensive work on the project. The area of the project implementation was defined. It was decided to form and breed the nucleus herds of the project in Pirin Mountains, which had been one of the mountains traditionally inhabited by the Karakachan people during the summer.

Then the project team was formed. It consists of 3-5 people, depending on the season.

So far, a big part of the investigations throughout the country for the remaining aboriginal animals has been completed. But it is still continuing. Long trips have been done in the mountainous regions of Bulgaria and all the pure Karakachan sheep and horses found are described and registered. During these trips we choose and buy animals (sheep and horses) for the nucleus herds.

The team bought a group of 18 horses. This was one of the few compact groups of Karakachan horses the team found in the country. The horses worked in the forest, carrying wood material on their backs, down to the settlements.

In 2001 the group was moved from West Bulgaria to Pirin Mountain. The horses travelled about 200 km on foot, for five days. Later on, several more horses from different genetic lines were obtained and added to the herd. At the moment the project maintains 20 - 25 horses. The group is now based up on the alpine pastures of Pirin National Park. The horses have acclimatised to the new environment very well. We are breeding the horses traditionally. The group is living free in the mountain, protecting itself from predators and finding food, even during winter. Since the project owns the horses we now have three foals and in the early spring we expect the new generation.

Searching for and buying the sheep was also a real adventure. Almost all the sheep we bought were found in remote and isolated settlements in the mountains, some of which are not even on our maps. People there live very isolated lives and it is often very difficult to communicate and reach agreement with them. Despite all of the complications we met we are happy that we saw those wonderful and often undiscovered places.

We had particular problems finding a ram. The fact that we got one was real luck! After much searching, we did not think that we would ever find a pure male. During the first 2 years we managed to buy 45 sheep. Now, after 6 years of breeding the flock number is 300 animals. The males are already 20.

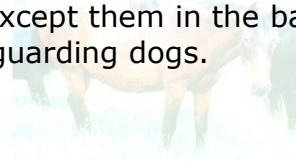
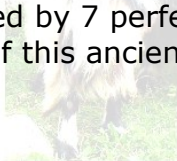
4.3 The present activities of the project

We chose as a project base a village situated in the lower part of the mountain. It is interesting that the nomads founded the village in the past, because the climate and the terrain provide very good conditions for the wintering of livestock. Nowadays the village is almost abandoned, with only a few old people still living there. The project team decided to buy an old house with space for a sheep pen. For the purposes of this project we built farm buildings in traditional style and a house, which is being used for the project team. Concentrating more and more activities connected with rare breeds' conservation the base grew into a rare breeds centre. Our activities revived the dying away village, which already has full chances to develop as an example of eco-village.

During the whole winter the sheep stay in the village. However, they are taken out for grazing every day, even if there is snow. It is important for this primitive breed, because these sheep need movement and it is not desirable to stay in a pen for the whole winter. In spring the flock starts to move towards the alpine pastures. On the way it stops for some weeks on two intermediate pastures. The highest summer pasture is 2400 m above sea level, in the area of the National Park in the alpine zone of the mountain, in a very beautiful location. In fall, the flock retraces its steps back to the winter base. In this way the traditional breeding of the ancient local breeds is being ensured.

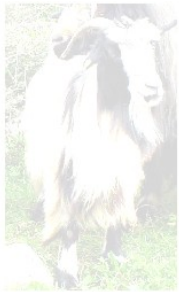
In the winter the project horses also stay in the lower parts of the mountain near the village. At this time of the year they hardly need to work. Starting in spring and during the summer they also go up to the alpine zone of Pirin. When necessary they work in the forest and also transporting baggage and tourists in the mountain. They are also used for horse riding in the mountain as well.

The situation with the livestock guarding dogs is a bit different. The above-mentioned breeding station was established in 1991. Since then dogs have been bred there. The breeding is done in such a way as to save the proverbial working abilities of this dog and its appearance. Most of the dogs coming from the breeding station go to livestock breeders. Its purpose is to increase the population of working dogs in the country, as this is the most natural way of preserving this breed. Actually, shepherds search for such dogs, because extensive livestock breeding is still practised in Bulgaria and the comparably numerous populations of wolves and bears force livestock owners to look for reliable protection against carnivores. More than 100 of the dogs have been given to shepherds free of charge under the project so far. This project continues mainly in regions inhabited by bears. The sheep flock is being guarded by 7 perfectly working dogs. Except them in the base we have 15 more dogs. We now maintain about 50 dogs of this ancient breed of livestock guarding dogs.



In 2005, we started a project aiming to save another ancient Bulgarian breed – the **Kalofer goat**. We have already established a herd of more than 150 goats. The herd is also guarded by Karakachan dogs. The farm building for this project was also build in our village.

At the moment we make investigation about this breed and about another one – the sheep breed Breznishka sheep. The work on the two projects is done in parallel and shared by same people.



5 The project location

The Pirin Mountains are one of three National Parks in Bulgaria. The conditions this area provides are perfect for livestock breeding, especially for such tough, primitive breeds and also for tourism. Pirin Mountain is in Southwest Bulgaria. It is a part of the Rilo-Phodopean massive. Pirin is one of the two highest mountains in the country (peak Vihren, 2914 meters). Rila Mountain is the highest (peak Musala, 2929 meters), is north of Pirin. A large part of the mountain is a National Park (Pirin National Park, about 40 000 hectares). It has been declared as a site of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage Convention (UNESCO). Several nature reserves are within its territory.

The elevation of our village is 550 meters, but in summer our sheep stay in mountain camps which are on various altitudes. The highest camp is on 2000 meters and the sheep go from there everyday to about 2500 - 2600 meters.

The landscape of the mountain has unique alpine character. It looks severe with its high peaks and steep slopes. Numerous glacial lakes make this landscape even more beautiful. Because of the specific longitude and latitude the climate varies from soft Mediterranean at the foot of Pirin to cold and mountainous. The biodiversity in this mountain is one of the highest in the country. A number of rare and endemic plant species, are found in its territory.

The flora in the lower lands is rich in Mediterranean species. Oak forests form the zone up to 1000 meters altitude. Beach forests dominate from 1000 to 1500 meters altitude. The pine zone comes above this level reaching to 2200 meters. The pine forests are formed by Macedonian pine (*Pinus peuce*), *Pinus heldreyhii* (which grows naturally only in Pirin and in North Greece), Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), Black pine (*Pinus nigra*) and Silver fir (*Abies alba*). In the following sub-alpine zone Mountain pine (*Pinus mugo*) and Alpine juniper (*Juniperus sibirica*) are present. The wide alpine pastures of the mountain provide excellent conditions for livestock grazing in summer time.

The fauna of Pirin is also very rich. Many species of Mediterranean amphibians and reptiles inhabit the foothills of the mountain. The large mammalian fauna is represented by chamois, red deer, roe deer, wild boar, wolf and brown bear. The density of these large carnivores is one of the highest in the country. A high diversity of birds of prey (eagles, buzzards, vultures, etc.) inhabits the mountain sky.



6 How you may help

The present project has a lot of activities and help is always welcome. The work is mainly connected with care about animals. In winter, the sheep are fed additionally with hay and forage and the pen is cleaned every day. In this period the lambs are born. This happens mainly during the night and endeavour is needed. You may be present at sheep giving birth and can learn how to proceed in such delicate moments. Later on, when lambs start to eat solid food they need very careful attitude.

You can also learn some veterinary interventions.

In the project area you can help in almost all of the field activities of the team. When the flock is grazing on the pasture, the shepherds will need assistance. You can also help with milking the sheep every morning and evening. Assistance in preparation of milk products, like yoghurt or cheese, which is made up on the mountain, is also possible.

The preparation of food for the dogs and the people is also something you can help every day.

The dog pups need some basic education, in which you may help.

In summertime it is very important to collect hay for the sheep. You can help in the transportation of the hay and storing it in the pen's store.

The biggest need of volunteers is in the winter period when lambs are born and the animals are fed in the pen as well.

However, in the rest of the period your help would be much appreciated.

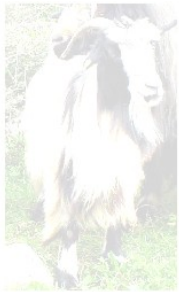
Working with the lambs and the sheep in general may entail a lot of excrements, but not with more than any other species of animals. The case here is that when you work in their pen the excrements are more concentrated there.

As the horses live free, it is necessary to regularly check where they are. When they are needed we transport them wherever is necessary. You can assist in all this activities. You will be able to help a lot in raising and taming of little foals. If there are tourists, horses need to be organised for work again. During its spare time the team organise trips in the mountain on horseback. We keep some of the horses at the project base, with the purpose to train them or to use them for work. Those horses need daily care.

When puppies are born in the breeding station they also need a lot of care (feeding, medical care, training). You can assist in all those activities.

You will learn many things about the traditional building and livelihoods. Giving your support to the activities of this project you will be helping the survival of four unique forms of domestic animals, which are part of the natural and the cultural heritage of Bulgaria, but also of the world.

So you see the work differs depending on the season. There are some things though which are the same every day: cleaning the sheep pen, preparing dog food, taking care of some horses which we have put in the stable and others. When you have to care about so many animals very often there are jobs which are not planned (for instance horses entering someone's meadow need to be brought back or something else). The daily working hours are different each day, so please be flexible about that. Sometimes half of the day can be free for you, while on other days there may be work for a whole day (from about 8 am to about 7 pm, with time for resting, of course).



7 Travel information

7.1 Dates

As specified on the Ecovolunteer website <http://www.ecovolunteer.org>.

7.2 Duration

The minimum period of participation is one week.

7.3 Capacity

No minimum and a maximum of two ecovolunteers.

7.4 Price

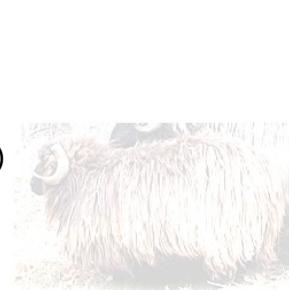
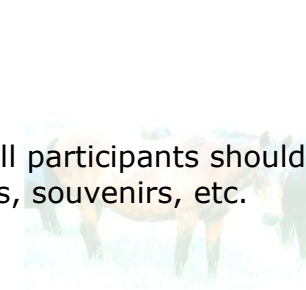
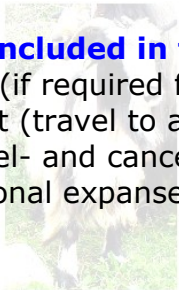
As specified on the Ecovolunteer website <http://www.ecovolunteer.org> (or your national ecovolunteer domains; check <http://www.ecovolunteer.org/contact.html>).

7.5 Included in the price

- Accommodation and meals
- Supervision
- Participation in the project
- Slide-shows and lectures about large predators and the ecosystem
- Transfer from Sofia to project location v.v.

7.6 NOT included in the price

- Visa (if required for your nationality)
- Flight (travel to and from Sofia)
- Travel- and cancellation insurance (all participants should carry both)
- Personal expenses like telephone bills, souvenirs, etc.



7.7 Accommodation

There is a house owned by the project. It is located at the project base in the village of Vlahi.

7.8 Food

Together with staff you will prepare the food yourself.

7.9 Insurances

You are required to carry both travel insurance and cancellation insurance. Neither your national ecovolunteer booking agency, nor the Ecovolunteer Program or the Project and their employees will accept any liabilities that could have been covered by travel insurance or cancellation insurance.

All foreign citizens travelling to Bulgaria should be prepared to present valid evidence of health insurance to the Bulgarian border authorities in order to be admitted into the country. The insurance should be valid for the duration of your stay in Bulgaria.

7.10 Conditions for participation

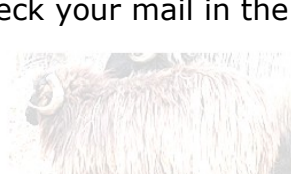
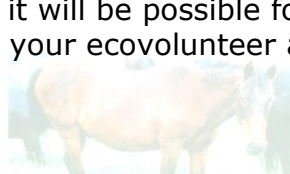
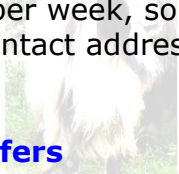
This ecovolunteer project is suitable for everyone in normal physical health, and able to walk long distances. You must speak the English language and you must be able to walk fifteen km a day. You must be committed to nature conservation and animal protection and have a positive attitude towards working with people from different European countries. If you have a hearing problem or if you are very overweight, you may experience some difficulties in participating.

7.11 Attainability

The location of the project is rather isolated. There is mobile phone coverage in the village, but there is no stationary phone at the project base. There is an Internet café (slow connections) and post office 12 km away in a nearby town. Once per week, sometimes more often, it will be possible for you to check your mail in the Internet café. The contact address will be provided by your ecovolunteer agency.

7.12 Transfers

Arriving in Bulgaria by plane, train or bus in the capital Sofia you will be met on arrival and taken by car to the project location. A project member will meet you with a sign "RARE BREEDS PROJECT". It is imperative therefore that



you inform us of your arrival schedule (means of transport including flight number, date and time of arrival) at least two full weeks beforehand.

7.13 Medical information

Always consult your appropriate local health authorities no later than one month before travelling on the current medical advice, and to obtain the necessary inoculations. At the time of publication of this brochure no special vaccinations are necessary for participation in this project.

Beware that as you will be working with dogs and livestock, and therefore you might experience some discomfort from for instance flees and ticks. Insect bites may transmit diseases – during participation in this project you would do well to protect yourself against insect bites; use insect repellent and appropriate clothing.

Medical services near the project base are:

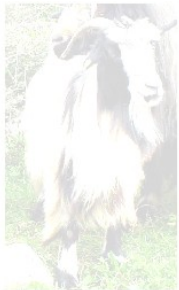
12 km away in the nearest town of Kresna there is a first aid centre.

At 30 km from the project base in the town of Sandanski there is a governmental hospital.

At 50 km from the project base is the town of Blagoevgrad, where there is a governmental hospital and a number of private clinics.

7.14A few additional notes

- In Bulgaria the Cyrillic alphabet is used (actually a Bulgarian invention).
- Most Europeans shake their head when meaning no, and nod their head when meaning yes. In Bulgaria it is the reverse: Bulgarians shake their head when they mean yes, and they nod their head when they mean no. To prevent misunderstandings, in stead of shaking and nodding with your head, you better just say yes and no in words.



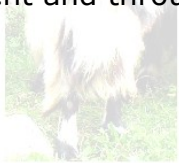
8 Your Personal Equipment

You do not need any special clothing, but you should keep in mind that you are spending much time in woody and mountainous terrain. Strong walking shoes are an absolute must.

It is strongly recommended that you bring waterproof and windproof clothing. The mountain temperatures change a lot from day to night. It is also probable that in the middle of the summer, high up in the mountain it can be very cold. So, it is advisable to wear several layers of clothes, so you can take off a layer when you are getting warm.

A list of some items you are recommended to bring:

- a print out of this brochure and of the additional information that you will receive after booking
- proof of medical and travel insurance
- valid passport
- warm clothing
- waterproof clothing
- strong, waterproof shoes / rubber boots (mostly for winter and spring)
- waterproof work gloves, scarf, hat or cap
- sleeping bag
- small rucksack
- compass
- binoculars
- thermos
- good flashlight
- alarm clock
- sunglasses
- sunburn lotion
- also consider taking a good book with you to the project, and maybe a phrase book
- insect repellent – you will be working with dogs and livestock; therefore be prepared to experience possibly some discomfort by insects and other arthropods. Their bites may transmit diseases - so protect yourself with insect repellent and through appropriate clothing.



8.1 Clothing

Beware that as you will be working with dogs and livestock, and therefore you might experience some discomfort from for instance flees and ticks. Insect bites may transmit diseases – during participation in this project you would do well to protect yourself against insect bites; use long sleeves and long trousers to cover exposed skin.

When in nature, when in the presence of wildlife, so as to impact their environments as little as possible please follow the following guideline. Don't wear brightly coloured or high-contrast clothing and rucksack, but do wear subdued, muted or neutral colours, like khaki, tan, beige, green brown, etc. Also don't use material that cracks when you walk or when you use it. And don't wear perfume or after-shave lotion, do refrain from smoking and use unscented deodorant. You do not want to pollute the environment of the wildlife with foreign sights, sounds and smells.

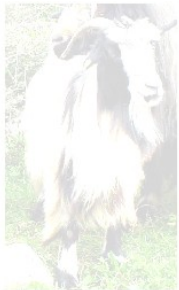
8.2 Are you a smoker?

Cigarette-stubs are waste. It may take one to five years for a cigarette filter/ stub to decay. Therefore, take for example an empty film canister to put your stubs in. Such canisters have tight lids and you can conveniently empty them in a waste bin.

8.3 Literature

Finally, we suggest you to take some time and prepare for participation in this project by checking out some basic information on the country that you are going to visit and on rare breeds conservation.

Good information is easily available through the Internet and good travel guides on Bulgaria are available through bookshops. Be well informed and you will double the quality of your participation, both for yourself as well as for the project.



9 Your participation climate neutral

The Ecovolunteer Program aims to offset all carbon dioxide emissions caused by your participation in the project. For this we cooperate with the Trees for Travel Foundation.



The Trees for Travel Foundation finances the planting, regeneration and maintenance of forests that will lock up greenhouse gases. The Foundation does her work in collaboration with local people and organizations to not only create a greener planet but also to fight against poverty. So we keep the greenhouse effect in check by contributing a modest amount to Trees for Travel to compensate your greenhouse gas emissions while participating in the Ecovolunteer project. Thus you help to make the world a better place at the same time.

The cost for climate compensation is not added to the price you pay, but is fully covered by the Ecovolunteer Program.

Please note that we only care for making your participation in the project climate neutral. Your traveling from your home to the project is not included. We recommend that you yourself will make your travels climate neutral as well. You could ask your travel agent or your airline to do so, or you can arrange that directly yourself through:

Trees for Travel Foundation:

Website: <http://www.treesfortravel.info> Mail: info@treesfortravel.nl

