

**Ten years of
the Nature Park »Bol'shoj Thaç«
(Adygeâ, Russia, Caucasus)**

**Natural conditions, biodiversity
and conservation value**

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Preface

In the year 1995 the association »Umwelt & Bildung e.V.« was asked for support from its Russian partners to evaluate whether the environment of the mountain »Bol'šoj Thač« was worth protecting. Nobody could foresee the commencement of a long-lasting commitment of German researchers in the northwestern part of the Caucasus. The shortly-following designation of the nature park »Bol'šoj Thač« of the Republic of Adygeâ in 1997 was not the end of these activities.

After drawing attention to this area, several approaches for the examination of different questions arose. These questions contained the central aspect of conserving the biodiversity of the »hotspot« Caucasus as well as ecosystem-based and biogeographical issues. This rapidly led to the necessity of taking a closer look at the taxonomical and geological backgrounds.

Looking at the achieved results, on the occasion of the decennial existence of the nature park »Bol'šoj Thač«, we should not consider them as final but as a momentary view of the development in research.

We would like to thank everyone without whom these results could not have been achieved:

Above all, Lûdmila Karataeva and Vladimir Karataev (Majkop), further to the Socioeconomic Union of Russia, the Soûz Slavân Respubliki Adygei, the Adygeân State University (especially Fatimat Tlehurstaj and Kazbek Temzokov), the Caucasian State Biosphere Reserve, the Committee for Natural Resources of the Republic of Adygeâ and especially the State Museum of Natural History Görlitz as well as numerous friends for their manifold support.

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