



THE LARGEST EUROPEAN  
LAND MAMMAL RETURNS TO  
THE SOUTHERN CARPATHIAN  
WILDERNESS.

# URGENT ACTIONS FOR THE RECOVERY OF EUROPEAN BISON POPULATIONS IN ROMANIA

## AN ICONIC SPECIES

Nearly gone extinct in the last century, the **European bison** was rescued from among the last animals living in captivity. The species is still considered vulnerable, with **less than 2.000 free individuals in Europe**, in 14 isolated populations.

Of these, only 5 (located in Poland) are demographically viable.

The bison is a charismatic species with an important ecological role: it helps **maintain a mosaic of forested areas and grasslands**, a landscape which is highly valuable for its biological diversity and role in mitigating climate challenges. Moreover, the bison is an **"umbrella-species"** that helps **maintain ecological corridors on a large scale**, allowing for migration of other wildlife species such as the brown bear, the wolf or the lynx.



## OUR VISION

Romania was part of the bison's native range and the species used to roam freely in the Southern Carpathians until 200 years ago.

**Rewilding Europe and WWF-Romania are aiming to create a free bison population by reintroducing at least 100 individuals in the Southern Carpathians by 2020.**

We strive to keep the **local community actively involved in the preservation of their natural heritage and to foster their pride in supporting the bison comeback.**

We want to see the area **turning into a dynamic showcase** for the conservation of rare species, where ecology, sustainable development and nature conservation become subjects of interest for the youth.



## MAIN PROJECT ACTIVITIES

**Nature conservation:** Two stable and interconnected bison sub-populations are established in the Țarcu and Poiana Ruscă Mountains (Romania), by rewilding individuals from European nature reserves and breeding centres.

**Education:** A multi-disciplinary research programme is developed with (inter)national universities, think-tanks and other projects. A youth bison education programme is rolled out locally to build knowledge and engagement in bison conservation and to create opportunities for further professional development.

**Nature-based tourism:** Innovative services and products are developed for tourists worldwide, based on the bison and other wildlife watching.

**Communications:** Creating awareness about the rewilding of bison and its benefits to both nature and communities, and bringing people closer to nature, in the Southern Carpathians.

