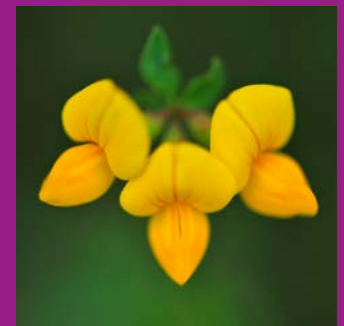


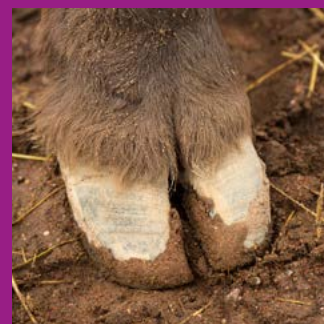


# Rewilding Europe®

Making Europe a Wilder Place



# ANNUAL REVIEW 2014



# Rewilding Europe®

Making Europe a Wilder Place



Rewilding Europe is a proud beneficiary of the Dutch Postcode Lottery

## Initiating Partners



The Supervisory Board of Rewilding Europe formally approved this Annual Review 2014, in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, on 8 April 2015

© 2015 Text: Frans Schepers & Ilko Bosman/Rewilding Europe  
© 2015 Photographs: Wild Wonders of Europe and Rewilding Europe

Editing: Laura Summers/Rewilding Europe  
Graphic design: Kristjan Jung/Rewilding Europe  
Print: Ecoprint

Rewilding Europe

Toernooiveld 1  
6525 ED Nijmegen  
The Netherlands

info@rewildingeuropa.com  
www.rewildingeurope.com  
www.facebook.com/rewildingeuropa







MESSAGES FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR AND THE CHAIRMAN:

# What is rewilding?



Welcome to our Annual Review 2014 in which you can discover and learn about the progress we have made in our initiative and the different rewilding areas across Europe.

In different ways, 2014 was an important year for us with many highlights. As 'Making it Real' was the focus of our message in the previous Annual Review, this year we were able to see the 'real' effect of our efforts, both across the overall initiative and in our rewilding areas. Building a sound base during the first three years of our initiative, to reach lasting results and impact in the longer term started to pay off in various ways. Important milestones and tangible results were achieved within the three main pillars of Rewilding Europe: rewilding, enterprise and communication.

Using an extensive Monitoring Framework that we have developed, we yearly measure our progress based on a range of over 30 indicators. You can see in this Annual Review that this provides a lot of quantitative data – which is key to show the result of our efforts over time. A first, independent evaluation was completed at the beginning of the year, showing a generally positive outcome of this progress and presenting many useful recommendations for our future endeavours.

Rewilding Europe is a learning organisation. Developing 'rewilding' as a new, additional conservation approach is exciting, challenging and dynamic. The term 'rewilding' is being recognised and acknowledged more widely and more frequently, and many initiatives and organisations have started to use the term. But what is 'rewilding'? How do we define it in our European context? Do we now suddenly call all conservation efforts 'rewilding'? To help answer these questions, we have defined our perception of 'rewilding', and here we present a definition for our work in Europe, with further explanation in this Annual Review. Our working definition is:

*'Rewilding ensures natural processes and wild species to play a much more prominent role in the land- and seascapes, meaning that after initial support, nature is allowed to take more care of itself. Rewilding helps landscapes become wilder, whilst also providing opportunities for modern society to reconnect with such wilder places for the benefit of all life.'*

We hope you will enjoy reading this Annual Review 2014 and become, or continue to be, part of the frontier of rewilding in Europe.



*Frans Schepers*

**Frans Schepers**  
Managing Director



*Wiet de Bruijn*

**Wiet de Bruijn**  
Chairman

# 2014 at a glance

**3 January**  
*Eastern Carpathians, Slovakia*

- › Regional wolf hunting ban proclaimed in eastern part of Slovakia

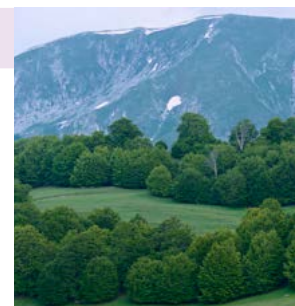


**4 January**  
*Nijmegen, The Netherlands*

- › Rewilding Europe Facebook page reached 10 000 'likes'

**30 January**  
*Central Apennines, Italy*

- › Central Apennines becomes a new rewilding area in our portfolio



**15 April**  
*Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

- › First webinar held with members of European Rewilding Network

**30 April**  
*Armenis, Romania*

- › Nature guides trained in the Southern Carpathians, as bison rangers



**13 May**  
*Madrid, Spain*

- › Odile Rodríguez de la Fuente became a member of the Supervisory Board

**17 May**  
*Armenis, Romania*

- › First reintroduction of European bison into the Southern Carpathians rewilding area

**25 July**  
*Sfantu Georghe, Romania*

- › First REC loan provided in Romania, to a wildlife tourism enterprise in the Danube Delta

**1 August**  
*Armenis, Romania*

- › First bison calf born in Romania, unfortunately died due to injury, probably from a bull

**4 August**  
*Gioia dei Marsi, Italy*

- › Three bear advocates start working in Central Apennines to help reduce human-bear conflicts

**27 August**  
*Nijmegen, Netherlands*

- › New version of 'Wildlife Hides' brochure published, in support of wildlife watching



**17 October**  
*Abbruzzo National Park, Italy*

- › Rewilding Apennines signs 'Memorandum of Understanding' with Abbruzzo NP authority on rewilding

**31 October**  
*Gioia dei Marsi, Italy*

- › Rewilding Apennines provides first electric fences to mitigate human-bear conflict in local villages



**13 November**  
*Sofia, Bulgaria*

- › Rhodope Mountains officially announced as seventh rewilding area in our portfolio

**28 November**  
*Lika Plains, Croatia*

- › New Tauros breeding site started in Velebit rewilding area, with the translocation of 22 Sayaguesa cattle to Lika Plains near Gospic

**5 February**  
*Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

- > At the Goed Geld Gala, Rewilding Europe receives 500 000 Euros as a beneficiary of the Dutch Postcode Lottery

**24 February**  
*Nijmegen, The Netherlands*

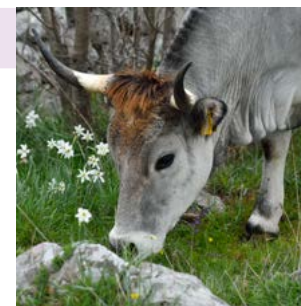
- > Publication of 'Rewilding Seminar Proceedings 2013' at WILD10

**1 March**  
*Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

- > First formal external evaluation on Rewilding Europe concluded positively

**3 April**  
*Velebit, Croatia*

- > New Tauros breeding site started in Malo Libinje, with release of Boskarin cattle



**5 June**  
*Pescasseroli, Italy*

- > 'Memorandum of Understanding' signed to start cooperation with Large Carnivore Initiative Europe



**16 June**  
*Gospic, Croatia*

- > 'Annual Review 2013 Rewilding Europe' presented and published during Supervisory Board meeting in Velebit

**17 June**  
*Lutowiska, Poland*

- > Conservation agreement signed with the Bieszczady National Park authority

**1 July**  
*Nijmegen, The Netherlands*

- > Adessium Foundation and WWF Netherlands sign a new three-year contract in support of Rewilding Europe

**10 September**  
*Eastern Carpathians, Poland*

- > Eastern Carpathians rewilding area restarted with a new team in place

**15 September**  
*Warsaw, Poland*

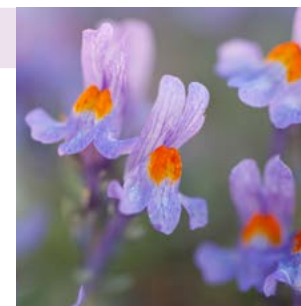
- > 'Memorandum of Understanding' signed to start cooperation with European Bison Conservation Centre (EBCC)

**17 September**  
*Haarlem, The Netherlands*

- > Report 'Rewilding Horses in Europe' officially launched at a Eurosite seminar 'Living with Wilderness'

**9 October**  
*Nijmegen, Netherlands*

- > European Rewilding Network reaches 34 members in 18 different countries



**11 December**  
*Nordens Ark, Sweden*

- > Lena Linden becomes a member of the Supervisory Board

**17 December**  
*Avesta Commune, Sweden*

- > 'Rewilding Bison Plan 2014–2024' published and 'Memorandum of Understanding' signed with Avesta Bison Park

**19 December**  
*Wola Michowa, Poland*

- > Three bison released in the Bieszczady Mountains to augment existing population, in the Eastern Carpathians rewilding area



**22 December**  
*Nijmegen, The Netherlands*

- > First crowd funding campaign started, with three species: bison, brown bear and suslik



REWILDING EUROPE – THE INITIATIVE

# Making Europe a Wilder Place





► Mountain cornflower

## A new approach

Conservation in Europe has long since been rather different from the rest of the world. As much of the wilderness was lost a long time ago, nature conservation focused on cultivated land, ancient farming systems and semi-natural, managed habitats, often depending on public subsidies and private engagement. This ‘compensatory habitat approach’ has its value and has certainly rescued many species from extinction, but an important element in conservation and biodiversity protection was left out: the preservation of wild nature, wilderness and natural processes.

Europe is highly diverse in its landscapes, habitats, cultures and development. While we are still rapidly losing species and natural ecosystems through urbanisation, infrastructure development, and the industrialisation of agriculture, forestry and fishery – new conservation opportunities are emerging. Additionally, there is a growing understanding of the imperative for wilderness and the potential of rewilding.

We have, as a society, begun to recognise the need for wild land, to provide ecosystem services like clean water and air, as base-line scientific

reference areas, for recreation and economic development, and last but not least, to refresh our human spirit and wellbeing. People have begun to understand that wilderness protection and rewilding are at the core of sustainability, and vital in handing over a healthy environment to coming generations and not limiting their choices. The return of species like wolves, beavers, vultures and white storks gives hope.

Initial approaches in rewilding have shown that European ecosystems have a high potential for regeneration, while existing wilderness benefits from strict protection. Europe now has the chance to catch up with the global approach, where conservation is intrinsically linked to wilderness protection and wild nature.

By changing our perspective from traditional nature conservation towards a more development oriented approach, the reference point for European nature changes too. This reference point is no longer based in the past but in the future, and looks towards landscapes that are governed by essential natural processes, which create the necessary space for all of our original animals and plants, including humans. Species that survived in agricultural landscapes can also reclaim their place in a natural setting.

Rewilding Europe aims for a new and additional approach to nature conservation in Europe, where the concept of wild nature and natural processes is accepted as one of the main conservation management principles.



➤ Abandoned house in the Rhodope Mountains



➤ Exmoor pony



➤ Hikers in the Central Apennines

## An historic opportunity

Rewilding Europe is the first and only European-wide initiative that uses a unique and historic opportunity to advocate a vision for a wilder Europe, through creating large areas of wild nature and wilderness across the continent that become inspirational showcases in this process, working in support of both Europe's nature and people. This historic opportunity is defined by:

- Large scale land abandonment in rural areas in Europe (both in agricultural and in forested areas), where socio-economic problems can be turned into new opportunities;
- A substantial comeback of a number of iconic and keystone wildlife species, offering great opportunities for Europeans to enjoy and benefit from this wildlife resurgence;
- An increasing demand – alongside increasing urbanisation – from urban people who want to go out and experience wild nature and see wildlife, combined with an increasing tolerance in society towards wild animals;
- A favourable European policy towards wildlife, wilderness and rewilding, in particular related to the recently approved Wilderness Resolution and the new biodiversity strategy for Europe, the existence of the Natura 2000 Network, the Emerald Network and the Habitat and Bird Directives;
- The opportunity rewilding provides as a cost-effective way to manage Natura 2000 sites – Europe's main network of protected areas.

## Vision

Wild nature is recognised as a vital and inherent aspect of Europe's natural and cultural heritage and as an essential element of a modern, prosperous, and healthy European society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Mission

Rewilding Europe wants to *make Europe a wilder place, with much more space for wildlife, wilderness and natural processes*, to bring back the variety of life for us all to enjoy and to explore new ways for people to earn a fair living from the wild.

### How do we achieve this?

Rewilding Europe brings a *new conservation vision for Europe*, with wild nature and natural processes as key elements, where rewilding is applicable to any type of landscape or level of protection. It treats nature as something that is fully capable of taking care of itself, if given the opportunity to do so. This concept could become the main management principle for many natural areas in the future.

Rewilding Europe focuses on *turning the problems caused by the on-going, large-scale land abandonment into opportunities* for humans and nature, providing a viable business case for wild nature in Europe. Several areas have the potential to become world-class nature tourist attractions, alongside the many other ways of reaping economic benefits from the wild.

Rewilding Europe *aims to rewild at least one million hectares of land by 2022*, creating ten magnificent wildlife and wild areas of international quality, that will work also as examples of a new competitive, sustainable rural economy. They will serve as inspirational examples for what can also be achieved elsewhere.

In these areas, Rewilding Europe wants to *allow natural processes to play a vital role* in shaping

our landscapes and ecosystems. Such natural processes are flooding (including erosion and sedimentation), weather conditions (including storms, avalanches and wind-shaped sand dunes), natural calamities (such as natural fires and disease), natural grazing (the role of herbivores of all kinds in creating vegetation dynamics), predation (the impact of carnivores on their prey species and thereby the vegetation), and the role of scavenging, amongst many others.

Rewilding Europe recognizes the *crucially important ecological role of large carnivores*, as well as smaller predators, raptors and scavengers. The brown bear, the wolf, the lynx, the Iberian lynx, the wolverine, and many other carnivores are necessary for the natural functioning of the ecosystems they live in.

Rewilding Europe recognizes *natural grazing as one of the key ecological factors* for naturally open and half-open landscapes, upon which a large part of Europe's biodiversity is dependent. We want to allow our native herbivores to return again in significant, more natural numbers to the lands where they once belonged, where they can play their ecological role.

Rewilding Europe *emphasizes the joy and the value of wildness*, and takes active part in a mass communication effort to stimulate a greater sense of pride in the wild and to spread a vision of a wilder continent. It aims to do this by using a broad range of media and partnerships to promote our natural heritage and showcase the opportunities for rewilding to many millions of Europeans.

## Making it real

### For nature

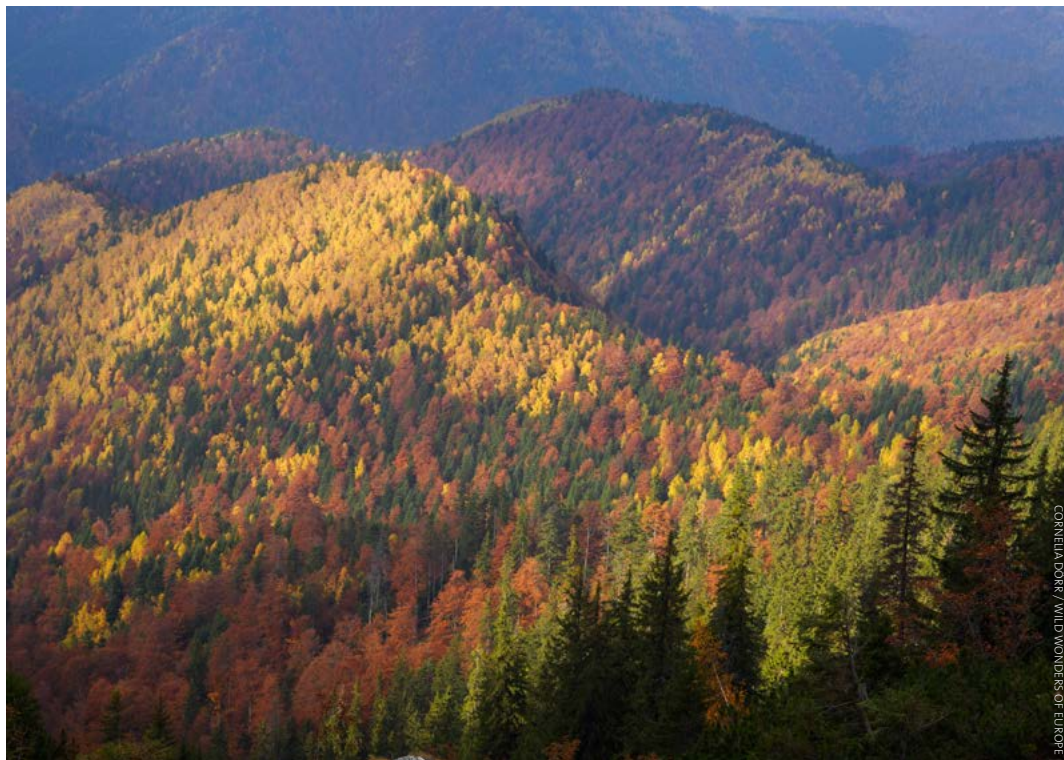
Relating to our vision of the role of natural processes, the crucial role of wildlife in that perspective, and the need to cooperate with landowners and land users, we are using a number of strategic initiatives and tools for rewilding:

- Securing land for rewilding, ranging from community conservancies, Natura 2000 management contracts, purchase of user rights (such as lease, hunting or grazing rights) through agreements with hunting associations and (private) landowners; in some cases even purchase of land;
- Setting up “best hunting practices” with the local hunting communities to improve wildlife populations, develop wildlife watching, create wildlife recovery zones, reduce or eliminate poaching and poisoning, and ensure sustainable hunting;
- Developing a European Wildlife Bank, to provide rewilding areas with wildlife and grazing animals where reproduction of animals serves as an “engine” for scaling up rewilding and where receiving partners become more responsible for good wildlife management;
- Setting up a European Rewilding Network to exchange knowledge and experiences between existing and upcoming rewilding initiatives across Europe, to create and enhance a rewilding movement in our continent,
- Developing wildlife recovery plans and strategic partnerships with leading institutions in Europe on bison, vultures, aurochs, wild horses and large carnivores to support the recovery and comeback of these species in European ecosystems.

### For people

Referring to our vision of the benefit of rewilding for people, new nature-based economies and the involvement of citizens and entrepreneurs in the rewilding movement, we are developing a number of strategic initiatives and innovative tools on enterprise development and communications:

- Support the development of rewilding enterprises, that create incentives for local entrepreneurs and business people to generate income and create jobs based on rewilding;
- Provision of attractive loans and small grants for rewilding enterprises to support local entrepreneurship through Rewilding Europe Capital, our investment fund;



➤ Forest hills in the Southern Carpathians

- Involve local people in the rewilding work, such as herd keepers, bear ambassadors, bison rangers, volunteers, researchers and monitors;
- Setting up Europe’s first safari company, to support developing accommodation and create destinations for the rewilding areas;
- Working with the Wilderness Entrepreneurship Programme, to involve young people in the rewilding movement from all over Europe;
- Helping entrepreneurs to develop wildlife watching facilities and businesses and start developing wildlife watching as an important economic activity;
- Reaching the European audience by various communications tools, and marketing the rewilding areas as attractive destinations to visit.

### Ten showcases

The ten rewilding areas together reflect a wide selection of European regions and ecosystems, flora and fauna. These ten areas are to serve as leading examples and inspirational benchmarks for a shift in land use across Europe towards wilder nature and new ways to use that resource for jobs and income generation.

By the end of 2014, Rewilding Europe is working in seven areas where we have started to put this vision into practice:

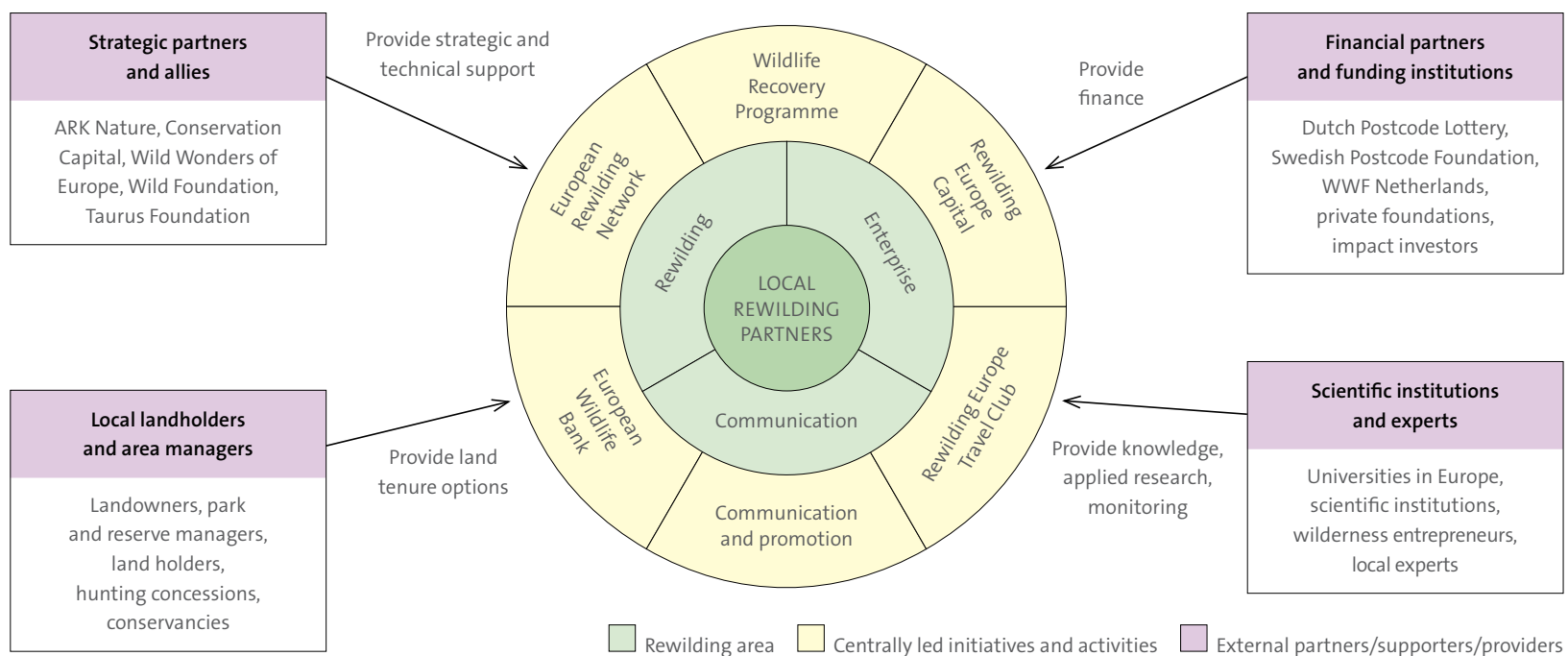
- Western Iberia (Portugal);
- Velebit Mountains (Croatia);
- Central Apennines (Italy);
- Eastern Carpathians (Poland);
- Southern Carpathians (Romania);
- Danube Delta (Romania);
- Rhodope Mountains (Bulgaria).

Detailed information on the areas is presented in the general result section (Building our rewilding area portfolio) and in sections of this Annual Review.

Rewilding Europe’s programme builds on three guiding principles:

- Every area should host complete and naturally functioning ecosystems specific to the region, with the full spectrum of native wildlife typical for the region present (“Planet”);
- The areas should be embedded within the social and cultural fabric of their respective region (“People”);
- The new land use should be based on what nature can offer, be economically viable and competitive with other alternatives (“Prosperity”).

## OPERATING MODEL – REWILDING EUROPE



### Our operating model

The Rewilding Europe operating model is centred on the rewilding areas, to ensure they become the showcases of how we put our vision into practice. There are three main components in our operating model, illustrated in the diagram:

1. The rewilding area itself; carefully selected and based on a number of criteria that together determine critical success factors. Each rewilding area works in an integrated way on the three components a) rewilding, b) enterprise development and c) communication. At the centre of this are our local rewilding partners, which are vitally important for all our work in the rewilding areas, either existing NGO's or legal entities specifically set up for our purpose.
2. A number of centrally led initiatives and activities, providing an enabling environment or very tangible support to each of the rewilding areas. These centrally led initiatives are linked to each of the three thematic components:
  - Rewilding: Wildlife Recovery Programme (including the programmes on European

bison, Tauros, European wild horse and other wildlife), European Wildlife Bank;

- Enterprise development: Rewilding Europe Capital, European Safari Company and the Rewilding Europe Travel Club.
  - Communication: outdoor exhibitions, photo missions, media outreach network and publications, website and social media, seminars and events.
3. External partners and stakeholders that provide support in various ways, and which are vital in Rewilding Europe's success and delivery:
    - Strategic partners and allies including the initiating organizations, that provide strategic and technical support: ARK Nature, WWF Netherlands, Conservation Capital, Wild Wonders of Europe, WILD Foundation and others;
    - Financial partners and funding institutions (some of them are also strategic partners) providing finance, such as the Dutch Postcode Lottery, Adessium Foundation, Liberty Wildlife Fund, Fondation Segré and other funding agencies and partners, including

major donors, impact investors and (local) business partners;

- Local landholders, concession owners and area managers. Local partners such as private landowners, park and reserve managers, hunting concession owners and other landholders that can provide land tenure, land access, management or user rights;
- Scientific institutions and experts that provide scientific knowledge and background, and carry out applied research and monitoring: the Wilderness Entrepreneurship Programme with Wageningen University, Zoological Society of London, European Bison Conservation Centre, Large Carnivore Initiative Europe and other experts that do feasibility studies, monitoring and research work.

This operating model is still under development and might change due to new experiences and lessons learnt during the coming years, however, it provides a good overview of how the different activities and components are interlinked and centred around the rewilding areas.

# Five specific, 10-year objectives

Rewilding Europe has given itself five specific, 10-year objectives that are worked on both at the central level and at the rewilding area level. The work in the rewilding areas is designed in a way that all activities and results contribute to these five European-wide objectives. For each objective, the main tools are mentioned that we have developed to help achieve these objectives.

1

**WILDER NATURE:** Create enabling conditions and kick-start the more natural functioning of nature across Europe, in particular in larger, connected landscapes, based on the Vision for a Wilder Europe.

**Main tools:** 10-year shared visions for each rewilding area, landscape planning and zonation, pilot sites in priority rewilding zones where user- or property rights (grazing, hunting, management) are secured, partnership agreements with main landowners and area managers.

5

**MAGNIFICATION:** Inspire the scaling-up and replication of the rewilding approach across Europe.

**Main tools:** European Rewilding Network, support to rewilding initiatives wherever possible, exchanges of knowledge and expertise with initiatives in Europe and across the world.

2

**WILDLIFE COMEBACK:** Ensure the continued comeback of wildlife – including large herbivores, large carnivores and scavengers across Europe, to service both nature as well as people.

**Main tools:** European Wildlife Bank, species reintroductions or rewilding (based on strategic and feasibility plans), mitigation of human-wildlife conflicts, local rangers, herd keepers or ambassadors of certain species.

3

**NATURE-BASED ECONOMIES:**

Demonstrate that rewilding generates new business opportunities, jobs and income for society, thereby creating an alternative and competitive form of land (and sea) use for local people, landowners and communities.

**Main tools:** Rewilding Europe Capital, Rewilding Europe Travel Club, European Safari Company, promotional support and sales of destinations.

4

**INTEREST IN THE WILD:** Create pride, public support, new engagements, and a more positive attitude amongst stakeholders for a wilder Europe with much more wild nature, wilderness and wildlife.

**Main tools:** mass-media campaigns, photo missions and image purchase, high quality design products, media-trips and press releases, website and social media, exhibitions, TV productions, local seminars and branding.



# What is rewilding?

Rewilding Europe believes there is a need for a working definition for 'rewilding' as this is becoming a conservation approach that is used more and more in Europe. We also recognize that there might be differences in how 'rewilding' is defined and practiced in different places across the world. We have therefore developed a working definition that we believe is particularly suited to Europe's history, culture, and condition of landscapes.

We will use this definition for the vision and work of Rewilding Europe and encourage other organisations and initiatives to adopt it as much as possible.

A number of important annotations further clarify the definition for the European situation.

Working definition:

*'Rewilding ensures natural processes and wild species to play a much more prominent role in the land- and seascapes, meaning that after initial support, nature is allowed to take more care of itself. Rewilding helps landscapes become wilder, whilst also providing opportunities for modern society to reconnect with such wilder places for the benefit of all life.'*

## Annotations:

- *Rewilding represents a new appreciation of wilder landscapes, in which people understand the interdependent relationship between the health of wild nature and the health of human society, and act to strengthen this indispensable relationship.*
- *Rewilding creates a new understanding that life-supporting European biodiversity is fundamentally important, and is best derived from natural processes and the habitats that are the result of those processes.*
- *Rewilding can occur in all types of land (and sea-)scapes, on a small and a large scale. While a formal protected status is not required, some form of it is often desirable to assure continued, long-term benefits of rewilding.*
- *Rewilding is future-oriented, and works towards the return of natural processes and wildlife within our modern social context, creating new opportunities to link human activities to such wilder, natural landscapes.*
- *Rewilding often requires some initial supportive measures, to kick-start natural processes again, or to help wildlife species come back in more natural numbers, but always with the goal of less intervention after that point.*
- *Rewilding is a relative and progressive process, and can be understood as occurring on a 'Scale of Wildness', where the process is directed towards moving up on this scale.*
- *Rewilding is not geared to reach any certain human-defined 'optimal situation' or end state, nor to only create 'wilderness' – but it is instead meant to support more natural dynamics that will result in habitats and landscapes characteristic of specific area(s), with abiotic, biotic and social features that together create the particular 'Sense of the Place'.*
- *Reintroductions and population reinforcements of flora and fauna are meant to restore ecosystem functions and processes, but in historically indigenous range of species.*
- *In Europe, even our wildest landscapes are missing certain key natural processes and/or species, making even these areas important and "qualified" for rewilding.*
- *To restore ecosystem functions and natural processes, working with 'ecological replacements' (of extinct species) is also an option (cf. IUCN), however the main focus is on the native species, including those that may be extirpated (extinct in the local area).*



► Iberian ibex

STAFFAN WIDSTRAND / REWILDING EUROPE



► Butterfly orchid

SANDRA BARTOCHA / WILD WONDERS OF EUROPE



► Caterpillar of a geometer moth

DANIEL ZAPRANC / WILD WONDERS OF EUROPE





## GENERAL RESULTS

# General management and development

### Building a track record

Put simply, 2014 was a great year for Rewilding Europe. On all fronts we made considerable progress and our initiative continued to grow, building on the achievements of the previous year.

A sign that we were well on track was provided in the first formal evaluation that was completed in February 2014 by two independent consultants, as requested by two of our major funding partners (WWF Netherlands and Adessium Foundation). The evaluation mainly focused on assessing progress of the initiative to date (2011–2013) and the viability of the enterprise component. Two of the then five rewilding areas were visited.

The overall conclusion of the evaluation was positive in terms of the initiative's relevance, impact, sustainability, partnerships, effectiveness and efficiency during these first three years of

existence. Different recommendations were made on these aspects. Some important remarks were:

- Rewilding Europe is an exciting, ambitious and innovative initiative with a strong theory of change and a clear strategy that addresses major conservation priorities and opportunities at a European level;
- The vast scope and ambition requires long-term engagement, mobilisation of substantial financial and other resources and buy-in by partners and stakeholders, all of which bring risks and assumptions, which have been well identified and are being fully taken into account by Rewilding Europe;
- One of the most challenging aspects of Rewilding Europe is the 'chicken and egg' relationship



**Ilko Bosman**  
*Finance & Operations  
Director*





➤ Wouter Helmer tells Claudio Segre about rewilding during a visit to the Dutch Millingerwaard rewilding area in April 2014



➤ Simon Collier, Wildlife Tourism Manager

*“Rewilding Europe is an exciting, ambitious and innovative initiative with a strong theory of change and a clear strategy that addresses major conservation priorities and opportunities at a European level”* (EVALUATION REPORT, 2014)

between the rewilding and enterprise components. Enterprise development depends crucially on the availability of marketable products, which in turn depends largely on the successful implementation of rewilding. At the same time, large-scale rewilding depends on local community/stakeholder support, which is more likely if the potential for tangible economic benefits associated with nature-based enterprises can be demonstrated. Resolving this apparent dichotomy will take time;

- Rewilding Europe is recognized as having a decentralized structure, but there are challenges in implementing this in practice. A flexible approach is recommended in the operational model, using whichever model is most appropriate to the circumstances in each rewilding area: either working through an existing NGO partner or setting up a new independent entity;
- Despite some issues (delays, remaining a young initiative), the evaluators underline that there have been notable successes to date under all three components and in the rewilding areas visited.

At the end of the evaluation report, the evaluators present a ‘final thought’:

*‘In conducting the evaluation, something we have been keenly aware of – but which does not necessarily come out strongly in the report, is the immense human capital in Rewilding Europe. This*

*is the greatest resource and something that we wish to underline. We have been impressed by the vision, commitment, passion, professionalism and sheer hard work of individual Rewilding Europe staff members from both the central and local teams. Many of our findings and suggestions are aimed at ensuring the potential of this resource is fully realised’.*

The findings and numerous recommendations of the evaluation are very valuable to Rewilding Europe and have been taken into account in the further development of our initiative in 2014 in many ways.

### Strengthening the organisation

Thanks to the support we receive from our financial partners we were able to consolidate and strengthen our organisational capacity and team, ensuring adequate governance and management of the initiative.

The Supervisory Board had four meetings during the year and saw some important changes in composition. Mr. Pierre-André Mourgue d’Algue (Switzerland) resigned from the board, while on 25 March Mrs. Odile Rodríguez de la Fuente from Spain joined the board. On 11 December the Supervisory Board unanimously approved the appointment of Mrs. Lena Lindén from Sweden. The Supervisory Board now consists of four members:

Wiet de Bruijn (Netherlands, chairman), Henrique Pereira (Portugal, based in Germany), Odile Rodríguez de la Fuente (Spain) and Lena Lindén (Sweden).

The great commitment and dedication of the board members enabled us to move forward on many different topics. Important decisions were taken on the expansion of the rewilding area portfolio, the legal structure of Rewilding Europe, our new 3-Year Strategic Plan 2015–2017, revision of our 10-year objectives, our partnerships with local organizations, and many others. On 25 March, the Supervisory Board formally accepted our Annual Review, financial statements and the Auditors Report (carried out by PwC) over our second full year of existence (2013). In early June, the Annual Review 2013 was published.

At the central level, we had a limited growth in staff capacity due to our expansion of work and growth of portfolio. We welcomed a second Regional Manager, a Wildlife Tourism Manager and an Advisor of Fundraising. In the rewilding areas, quite a number of changes took place as well, which is outlined in the rewilding areas section in this Annual Review.

### New local, legal rewilding entities

Rewilding Europe is a groundbreaking initiative and it is natural that this will involve operational and strategic challenges as we grow. One of our main challenges is to find the optimal legal structure through which to work, so as to ensure the overall goals of the initiative are best served. This model involves a balance of local emphasis and control with the need for a significant degree of coordination and consistency at a central level to ensure that the wider Rewilding Europe initiative is cohesive and is understood to be a genuine Europe-wide effort and not simply a scattering of loosely connected individual parts or projects.

We recognise that although it is desirable to create a consistent model across all of our rewilding areas, each local context must be taken into account. As such, we have chosen to adopt what we believe to be our optimal working structure from the outset for new rewilding areas, however we have adopted a tailored approach to best suit the requirements of each of our existing rewilding areas.

So far, ‘Rewilding Velebit’ was our first entity where we have established a commercial entity (a limited liability company), while we have recently started to establish a charitable association as well. ‘Rewilding Apennines’ has started as a non-profit



► Dutch Postcode Lottery Gala 2014 : Ilko Bosman (Finance and Operations Director of Rewilding Europe), Marieke van Schaik (Managing Director of the Dutch Postcode Lottery), Frans Schepers (Managing Director of Rewilding Europe), and Wiet de Bruijn (Chairman of the Board of Rewilding Europe)

entity – an association – from early 2014. ‘Rewilding Rhodopes’ was transformed out of the New Thracian Gold Foundation as a non-profit entity in Bulgaria. In Western Iberia, we established a partnership agreement with Associação Transumância e Natureza (ATN) and in Romania we are working with WWF Danube Carpathian Programme based in Bucharest. We are exploring to set up a special legal entity for the Danube Delta rewilding area.

## Launch of new initiatives and partnerships

First of all, we re-started the Eastern Carpathians rewilding area, after it had been ‘on hold’ for approximately one year. With a brand new team and a formal MoU signed with one of the key stakeholders in the area, the Bieszczady National Park authority, the work in this area will gradually develop. In December, a first milestone was reached by bringing four bison to the area to augment the existing population with additional genetic variability.

A major step for our initiative was to take on board our seventh rewilding area: the Rhodope Mountains in Bulgaria. At the Supervisory Board meeting on Friday 13 June, held in the Velebit Mountains in Croatia, the inclusion of the Rhodope Mountains in the Rewilding Europe portfolio was approved.

Partnerships are instrumental in the success of Rewilding Europe. We are excited to announce we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Large Carnivore Initiative Europe (LCIE) in June, and one with the European Bison Conservation Centre (EBCC) in September. In November, we signed a partnership with Avesta Commune in Sweden, also to work on European bison.



► The four founders of Rewilding Europe: Neil Birnie (Enterprise Director), Frans Schepers (Managing Director), Wouter Helmer (Rewilding Director) and Staffan Widstrand (Communications Director) at the bison release in the Southern Carpathians, May 2014

The main objective of these partnerships is to help create, restore, enhance and maintain healthy populations of large carnivores and European bison across Europe, with a focus on the selected rewilding areas. Also, we renewed our partnership agreement with WILD Foundation in the United States.

Two landmark publications saw the light in 2014: the Bison Rewilding Plan 2014–2024 and the report ‘Rewilding Horses in Europe’. Also, we published the proceedings of the Rewilding Seminar, held at WILD10 in October 2013, and we published a new, completely updated version of the Wildlife Watching Hides – A practical Guide. These high-quality publications generated a lot of media-attention – see the communications section for more details.

## Expanding our funding base

Financially, 2014 was a good year for Rewilding Europe. This was the final year of the funding of the ‘Extra Project’ that was received from the Dutch Postcode Lottery through our partner ARK Nature (the Green Treasures of Europe). As

beneficiary, we received our second year financial support from the Dutch Postcode Lottery at the Goed Geld Gala in Amsterdam on 5 February.

A new funding agreement was signed with the Swiss-based Fondation Segré, to support our work the Central Apennines rewilding area, in particular for the conservation of the critically endangered Marsican brown bear. New funding agreements for another three years were also signed with WWF Netherlands and Adessium Foundation, the latter with a special focus on the Velebit rewilding area in Croatia. The funding from the Swedish Postcode Foundation was completed successfully.

During the second half of 2014, a major fundraising effort took place, hopefully leading to new income in support of our work for the years to come. Also, we launched our first crowdfunding campaign.

Our funding base has been consolidated through renewed commitments from existing funding partners and new funding partners coming on board. In the Financial Overview 2014 a consolidated overview is provided for our financial situation in the reporting year.

# General management and development: facts and figures

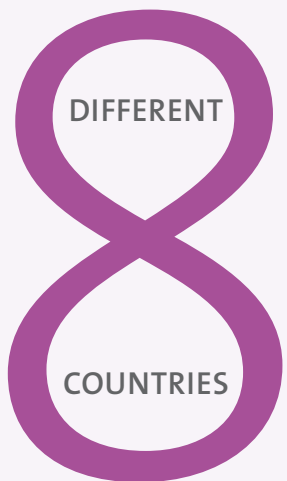


The central team had a capacity of

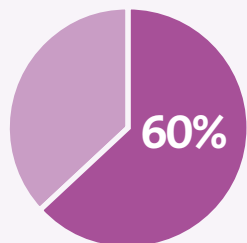
# 9.4

**FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS**

with people working from



This is a growth with 2.2 fte compared to 2013; of this capacity at the central level, 5.5 fte or



is working to support the rewilding areas; the rest is related to central initiatives and general management

# 1

**REWILDING AREA**  
was restarted – Eastern Carpathians



# 7

**REWILDING AREAS**

spanning 6 countries were part of the Rewilding Europe portfolio by 31 Dec 2014

# 2

**MAIN FUNDING PARTNERS**  
renewed their financial support

For 2 areas, we have completed the

# SCOPING PHASE

and both have now nearly completed a start-up phase that will prepare for inclusion in the portfolio in 2015, adding two more European countries

# 3

**NEW STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**  
were set on the conservation of flagship species (bison and large carnivores) while an existing partnership was renewed



Rewilding Europe assigned a second Regional Manager and a Wildlife Tourism Manager; a Fundraising Advisor was assigned to help in particular with public fundraising

In the rewilding areas

# 28

**PEOPLE**

were active working on rewilding, enterprise and communication in the seven rewilding areas that were operational, with a total capacity of around 20 fte

# NEW AREA

was added to the portfolio – Rhodope Mountains

# 2.1

**MILLION EUROS**

Our expenditure in 2014 was nearly

which is an increase of

# +25%

compared to 2013

# 1

**NEW FUNDING PARTNER**  
came on board

The Supervisory Board approved a new rolling Three-Year Strategic Plan (2015–2017), including



# 3

**NEW LEGAL ENTITIES**

were set up and became our local partners: Rewilding Velebit (Croatia), Rewilding Apennines (Italy) and Rewilding Rhodopes (Bulgaria)



## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Bison Rewilding Plan 2014–2024

On the 17th December, Rewilding Europe published its new “Bison Rewilding Plan 2014–2024” at the Avesta Visentpark (Avesta Bison Park) in Sweden, one of Europe’s oldest and finest breeding stations for this endangered wildlife species.

The Wisent, or European bison, is one of the most charismatic symbols for the wildlife comeback in Europe. It is still threatened and listed as vulnerable in the IUCN Red List. The Bison Rewilding Plan has the ambition to help establish several viable long-term populations of this unique animal in a number of European countries during the next ten years.

The Bison Rewilding Plan was made possible through financial support from the Swedish Post-code Lottery. It was developed in cooperation with the Zoological Society of London. The Plan will be reviewed and updated after five years (in 2019) to include lessons learnt from the first period of work.

### The Plan

In the Bison Rewilding Plan, Rewilding Europe sets itself the task of establishing at least five new herds of European bison, each of more than 100 individuals, in up to five selected areas in Europe. This will include one meta-population of at least 500 individuals in the Southern Carpathians by 2025 and an increase of the European bison population living in the wild from 2371 animals (2013) to more than 3500 in 2018, and over 5000 in 2022.

We believe that if we can achieve our ambitions as set out in the Bison Rewilding Plan, this will help to take the bison out of the risk of extinction. Also, the European bison is a strong symbol for the promotion of the wider ecological restoration of European landscapes. Bison-related tourism will provide opportunities for new economic development in our rewilding areas, with local businesses and people actively involved.

### Cooperation and guidelines are essential

The Bison Rewilding Plan is fully in line with the IUCN Species Action Plan and we see it as Rewilding Europe’s contribution to it. Rewilding Europe will apply the “IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations” (2012) for all bison reintroductions and population reinforcements. The European Bison Conservation Centre (EBCC) provides advice on the selection of animals,



► Joep van de Vlasakker preparing for bison transportation from Avesta Bison Park to the Southern Carpathians rewilding area. Joep is Wildlife Advisor to Rewilding Europe and author of the Bison Rewilding Plan 2014–2024

*In the Bison Rewilding Plan, Rewilding Europe sets itself the task of establishing at least five new herds of European bison, each of more than 100 individuals, in up to five selected areas in Europe*

and the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Centre ensures the genetic viability of the herds and the opportunity to establish viable herds in all areas where Rewilding Europe is working.

During the presentation of the Bison Rewilding Plan on the 17th December, a Memorandum was

signed with Avesta Bison Park on the regular provision of bison for our reintroductions and population reinforcements. Some 15 zoos across Europe are already providing support in various ways in the implementation of the plan. Avesta provided six of the 17 European bison that were brought into the Tarcu Mountains in Romania in May 2014.

# Rewilding



**Wouter Helmer**  
*Rewilding Director*

With a major focus on the rewilding areas, we managed to make a lot of progress in the rewilding component of our initiative. The restart of the Eastern Carpathians and taking the Rhodope Mountains on board meant a lot of extra work for the rewilding team. Also, a lot of effort was put into preparing and exploring rewilding work in the Oder Delta and Greater Laponia – two pipeline rewilding areas.

Major efforts were made in securing land for rewilding and supporting the return of wildlife. Actions for the latter were based on wider strategic documents that were published, in particular the 'Bison Rewilding Plan 2014–2024' and 'Rewilding Horses in Europe'. Important cooperation agreements were established with key rewilding partners in Europe, such as the Large Carnivore Initiative Europe and the European Bison Conservation Centre, while others were explored.

## Securing user- and property rights

Within each of the rewilding areas, we have identified priority areas and pilot sites to start the rewilding process. Activities are concentrated at these pilot sites, and we are working to scale up from there. Securing user and property rights is key to be able to change the management of the areas in favour of rewilding. This is done through partnerships with landowners (municipalities, private landowners, management authorities) or land users (farmers, hunters and others).

In 2014, we were able to secure user rights in Velebit (Lagosta hunting rights, Lika Plains grazing rights), Western Iberia (Faia Brava additional purchase and grazing rights), the Southern Carpathians (land for bison grazing & wilderness development) and the Rhodope Mountains (grazing rights in five different areas). In the Central Apennines we are



preparing a lease of land, and in the Eastern Carpathians and the Danube Delta large plots of land are being prepared to start natural grazing. In total, more than twenty thousand hectares of rights have been secured, and another six thousand hectares are in preparation. For more details, see the rewilding area sections in this Annual Review.

## Natural grazing by large herbivores

Within the pilot sites, we work to re-instate natural processes, such as natural grazing, which is a very significant process in an ecosystem. Natural numbers and densities of herbivores is key – in particular we focus on the larger species as they have most impact on the landscape. There is a list of species we are working on to either increase their existing populations, or bring them back in their former distribution: red deer, fallow deer, roe deer, ibex, chamois, bison, beaver, wild horse and Tauros. Such re-introductions and population reinforcements are all based on proper feasibility studies, planning documents and based on IUCN criteria, where applicable.

These herbivores do not only have an important ecological role as grazers, they also improve the prey base for large carnivores and many species of scavengers – both large and small. On top of that, many of these species are an attraction for wildlife watching tourism, which we support in the rewilding areas.

### European bison

Major steps were taken to help the European bison to come back in our rewilding areas, with main highlights being the reintroduction of the species into the Tarcu Mountains and in the Southern Carpathians rewilding area (the first 17 animals in May), and the release of animals with additional genetic background in the Bieszczady Mountains in the Eastern Carpathians (4 animals in December). Important cooperation agreements were signed with the European Bison Conservation Centre, joining us in our efforts and ensuring the right genetic basis for these reintroductions, and with Avesta Commune in Sweden for the provision of animals (see Special Feature).

Several European zoos were helpful in providing or allocating animals, including Avesta, Eriksberg, Kolmarden, Skansen (Sweden), Han-sur-Lesse and Bellewaerde (Belgium), Damerower Werde, Kiel, Springe and Hardehausen (Germany), Thoiry en La-Haute-Touche (France), Parco Natura Viva (Italy) and Bern Zoo (Switzerland).



► Red deer stags fighting during the autumnal rut in the Central Apennines, Italy

### Tauros

Within the partnership with the Taurus Foundation, we extended the number of breeding sites for the Tauros, adding new locations and additional animals in Portugal and Croatia, where we signed agreements with landowners and area managers. Preparations for a breeding site in the Danube Delta are very advanced, but have not materialized yet. We also secured a herd of the rare Maronesa breed from Spain, and have brought these to the Netherlands where they are part of a breeding site in the Keent Floodplains and in Kempen~Broek.

The total number of breeding sites for the Tauros programme is now five, including the area in the Netherlands where the Maronesa herd is hosted.

In terms of back breeding, we have now three different old breeds involved (Sayaguesa, Boskarin and Maronesa), and we have reached a stage where a third generation of Tauros has been born.

### Wild horses

There are now herds of Konik, Garrano, Bosnian mountain, Karakachan and Retuerta horses grazing in three different rewilding areas: Western Iberia, the Velebit Mountains and the Rhodope Mountains.

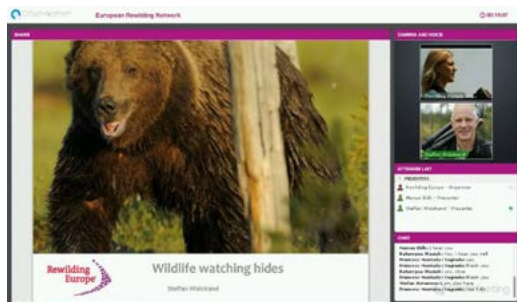
New grazing pilots with horses are planned for the Velebit Mountains and the Eastern Carpathians (with Bosnian mountain horses and Konik horses).

An important milestone was the publication of the report 'Rewilding Horses in Europe, a living document' which is the first of its kind, bringing together a great deal of current knowledge and the latest insights on this subject. The report proposes a selection of horse breeds most suitable for rewilding, based on a number of criteria, which is very helpful for natural grazing projects across Europe (see Special Feature on page 24).

In Bulgaria, a pilot on achieving 'wild status' for horses made considerable progress.

### Red deer and fallow deer

In the Rhodope Mountains we signed agreements with two hunting associations to release in total ca. 50 fallow deer in the beginning of 2015, and ca 20 red deer later that year. With a no hunting period of at least 10 years, this will mark the return of herbivory as a natural process in these areas. At the same time the natural food base for large carnivores and scavengers will be improved by these reintroductions.



➤ European Rewilding Network webinar on 25 November 2014 about successful wildlife watching hides

## The European Rewilding Network is growing

In order to inspire others and to make a fair contribution to other rewilded parts of Europe, in October 2013 Rewilding Europe launched the European Rewilding Network (ERN). Although every initiative is unique and has its own opportunities linked directly to the specific area and people involved, it is very worthwhile to exchange knowledge. The ERN aims to establish a living network of many rewilding initiatives to support rewilding in Europe as a conservation tool.

All initiatives joining the ERN are included in a database and can be easily located. The members are able to directly connect with similar initiatives in Europe, and are connected with Rewilding Europe itself. They become visible to the outside world as being part of a pan-European movement for active rewilding initiatives, and are encouraged to share their knowledge and experiences.

Rewilding Europe facilitates this process through an online network. The first step is to have regular web-based seminars ('webinars'). In 2014 four such webinars were held. Topics covered were wildlife watching, rewilding and hunting, involving local communities and rewilding enterprises.

As a member of the ERN, an initiative or organisation signs up making a so-called 'Declaration of Commitment', which clarifies what is expected from the members and what will be offered from Rewilding Europe. The ERN made great progress, as is shown by the table and map here. A full list of all ERN members is presented on page 75.



➤ Map showing Rewilding Europe areas (in purple) and other rewilding initiatives (in red) across Europe.

## GROWTH OF THE EUROPEAN REWILDING NETWORK

	At launch October 2013	December 2013	December 2014
<b>European Rewilding Network (ERN) – member areas</b>			
Number of member areas	14	19	28
Number of countries involved	8	10	15
Total surface of land (ha)	639 332	729 503	862 283
<b>Rewilding Europe (RE) – portfolio</b>			
Number of rewilding areas	6	6	7
Number of countries involved	7	7	7
Total surface of land (ha)	730 000	730 000	1 060 000
<b>Total ERN member areas + Rewilding Europe areas</b>			
Number of areas	20	25	35
Number of countries involved	13 (Spain and Romania have both RE areas and non RE areas)	15 (Spain and Romania have both RE areas and non RE areas)	18 (Romania Bulgaria Italy and Poland have both RE areas and non RE areas)
Total surface of land (ha)	1 369 332	1 459 503	1 922 283



➤ Central Apennines team leader Alberto Zocchi training bear advocates on wildlife cameras use

## The European Wildlife Bank

Rewilding Europe is playing a proactive role in reintroducing wild herbivore populations on a targeted basis through the creation and management of a European Wildlife Bank (EWB).

The European Wildlife Bank is designed as a live asset-lending model to reintroduce and expand naturally grazing wild herbivore populations across Europe.

The European Wildlife Bank has grown, with now 227 animals in the bank of three different species and breeds. A total number of seven EWB contracts have been signed with landowners in four rewilding areas, with more in preparation.

*The European Wildlife Bank is designed as a live asset-lending model to reintroduce and expand naturally grazing wild herbivore populations across Europe – not money, but animals as interest of at least 20% per year!*

## Involving community members in rewilding

Increasingly, local villagers and community members are involved in rewilding work in our areas as employees, freelancers or volunteers. Local involvement and employment is hugely important for the local support and acceptance of our work.

For instance in the Southern Carpathians, two bison rangers are taking care of the now 14 bison that are being held in the acclimatisation zone.

In the Central Apennines, three bear ambassadors are working on helping the local villagers to avoid human-bear conflicts, and are carrying out anti-poaching patrols, monitoring the animals and doing education work.

In the Velebit and Rhodope Mountains, local herd keepers look after the herds of wild-living horses and cattle that are part of the Tauros Programme.

Finally, in the eastern part of the Danube Delta in Romania, eight interns are involved in the monitoring work of beavers.



# Rewilding: facts and figures

## 3 NEW COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

signed with major rewilding partners in Europe on bison and large carnivores



## 2 BISON TRANSLOCATIONS

to Southern Carpathians (Romania) and Eastern Carpathians (Poland) including 20 animals originating from 4 different countries (Sweden, Germany, Belgium, Italy)

# 2

**MAJOR PUBLICATIONS**

*Bison Rewilding Plan 2014–2024*

*Rewilding Horses in Europe*

## 7 NATURAL GRAZING PROJECTS

in 4 different rewilding areas started, covering a total of ca 3 500 hectares



## 16 PEOPLE

from local communities are involved in rewilding actions on the ground, in particular related to herd keeping, monitoring, patrolling and guiding

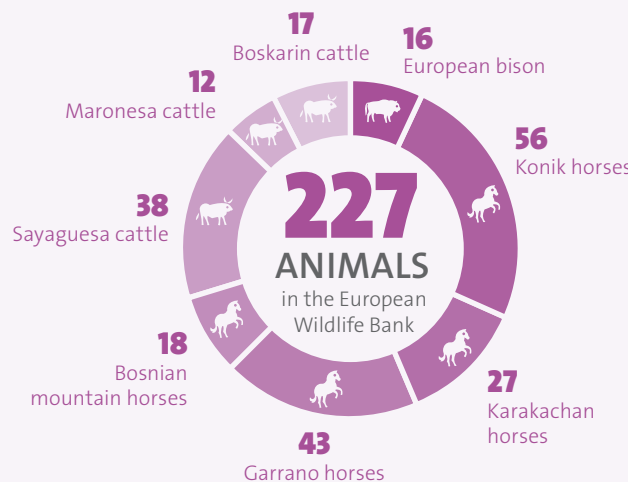


## 20 000 HECTARES

secured for rewilding through user rights, in 8 sites in 4 countries

## 6 FEASIBILITY STUDIES

done or underway for wildlife reintroductions covering 5 species: red deer, roe deer, beaver, European bison and Iberian ibex



## 2 MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING

signed with national park authorities:

Bieszczady NP in Poland and  
Abruzzo NP in Italy

## 35 MEMBERS

in the European Rewilding Network covering 18 countries and a total surface of just over 1,9 million hectares

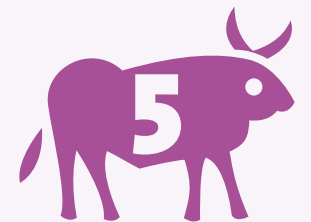


## EUROPEAN REWILDING NETWORK

Cooperation with

## 3 HUNTING CONCESSION HOLDERS

on wildlife comeback in two rewilding areas (Velebit Mountains and Rhodope Mountains)



## 5 TAUROS BREEDING SITES OPERATIONAL

(two in Western Iberia, two in Velebit Mountains and one in The Netherlands), now involving 3 different ancient breeds to breed-back the Aurochs

## 7 EUROPEAN WILDLIFE BANK HERD CONTRACTS

signed with landowners in 4 rewilding areas



Cooperation with

## 14 ZOOS

from 7 European countries on bison translocations in 2014 and preparation for 2015

# Rewilding horses in Europe

On the 17th September, Rewilding Europe launched a new report, called “Rewilding horses in Europe” at the Eurosite workshop “Living with wilderness” in Haarlem, the Netherlands. As part of the re-instating of natural grazing as an important ecological process in various rewilding areas, Rewilding Europe already works with different horse breeds in Europe. With this report, we hope to contribute to an ultimate rewilding goal: well-functioning European ecosystems, with the full range of keystone wildlife species present, with the wild horse being one of the species. The report was made possible by a generous grant from the Dioraphte Foundation in the Netherlands.

## The purpose of the report

The European wild horse is paradoxically both extinct and at the same time still present. Officially it has been extinct since the early 1900s, but its genome is not lost, and still exists across several breeds of ancient, native horses: from Exmoors in the west to Huculs in the east of the old continent.

The document guides the reader through the rich world of European horse types, making a first selection of horses that are suitable for rewilding and then giving guidance on how to rewild horses in the best possible way, according to the latest scientific and practical knowledge. Since this kind of knowledge is developing rapidly, this document is first and foremost meant as a living document, a work in progress, and this is how Rewilding Europe is using it. It reveals our practical experiences of rewilding horses in different ecosystems in Europe, and at the same time presents the latest scientific research finds. Rewilding horses means to work towards a future wild horse and should not be mistaken for recreating extinct wild horses from the past.

## Which breeds to choose and why

The rapidly growing knowledge about the many types of extinct wild horse will be used to choose the right breeds and characteristics of existing horses for rewilding purposes. Several primitive horse types still have many of the characteristics and genetics from the original wild horse and are very fit for rewilding, regaining their rightful place in the European ecosystems: the Exmoor pony from northwest Europe and England, with the



► Wild horse breeds in Europe

possibility of adding the Dartmoor and Welsh ponies to restore genetic diversity, or the Eriskay pony in harsher climates; the Yakut pony for harsh climates in northernmost Europe and Siberia; the Konik Polski from Latvian or Dutch/Belgian free ranging herds in the lowland areas of northern/central Europe (the Netherlands, Belgium, northern France, Germany, Poland and the Baltics); the Hucul in the central and eastern European mountains, ranging to the Alps, and the Pottoko in the mountains of south-western Europe, such as France, Spain and Portugal. The Asturcon, Losino, Monichino, Cabalo Galego/Faco or Garrano/Minho/Geres can be mixed to improve genetic diversity as they all have rewilding qualities and comparable characteristics. The long-legged Retuertas should be used in the more or less open steppe and dehesa areas of Cen-



tral and Southern Spain; the Przewalski's horse for the large East European continental steppes; and in the Balkans a number of ancient horse types are suitable, such as the Karakachan horse, the Bosnian and Serbian mountain ponies, the Myzegea horse and the Pindos pony/Thessalier.

## Rewilding horses in practice

Rewilding Europe is currently working with herds of Konik, Garrano, Bosnian mountain, Karakachan and Retuerta horses grazing in three different rewilding areas: Western Iberia, the Velebit Mountains and the Rhodope Mountains. These animals, now a total of 144, are all part of the Wildlife Bank. New grazing pilots with horses are planned for the Velebit Mountains and the Eastern Carpathians (with Bosnian mountain and Konik horses).



## GENERAL RESULTS

# Enterprise development

Rewilding Europe is building a new business case for wild nature in Europe by turning the problems caused by large-scale land abandonment into new opportunities for people, natural habitats and wildlife. We believe the enterprise component differentiates Rewilding Europe from any other conservation organisation in Europe. It was established to stimulate and develop rural economies directly connected to and reliant upon natural landscapes and wildlife.

The enterprise team, which brings together significant international experience in this field, is dedicated to supporting businesses and communities that have the potential to revitalise rural economies and incubate a rewilding enterprise movement in Europe. We are working to create new nature and wildlife focused economies in key areas of rural Europe. In these areas declining economic productivity connected to historic agrarian land use will be replaced with dynamic and contempo-

rary wildlife and wilderness based businesses that benefit societies reliant on natural environments. Examples of new nature focused enterprise sectors include consumptive and non-consumptive uses, non-cultivated natural products, and sustainable natural resource use.

In 2014, our enterprise development efforts focused upon a combination of:

- Technical support: through provision of expertise and network contacts to relevant enterprises in our rewilding areas;
- Financial support: primarily through Rewilding Europe Capital (REC), but also through efforts helping local businesses access regional, national or international enterprise funding support;
- Promotional support: through marketing and other relationship development activities including business-to-business and business-to-consumer linkages.



**Neil Birnie**  
*Enterprise Director*

We have maintained our focus on certain enterprise enabling initiatives with a continued emphasis on securing property rights (land tenure) for our priority rewilding sites, and on the development of wildlife tourism where possible. Rewilding Europe Capital (REC), Europe's first rewilding enterprise facility, made strong progress.

## Technical support

Currently, there is very little 'consciousness' around the economic potential of enterprise actively engaging with and supporting conservation or rewilding in natural contexts. Nature-based enterprise sectors remain thinly represented – despite the significant natural values across Europe and the accelerating wildlife comeback now occurring. Our technical support to enterprises in our rewilding areas is working to extend consciousness and champion the rewilding enterprise movement across Europe.

In 2014 we engaged and supported over 40 enterprises across our rewilding areas, and through REC we have supported more than 16 enterprises in five different rewilding areas, and created six new businesses covering four different market sectors. The impact of our work is such that we created or consolidated 30+ jobs, which is of great value to the areas concerned, and has leveraged the protection and development of over 20 000 hectares of rewilding land.

In the table, a summary of the REC enterprises supported is presented.

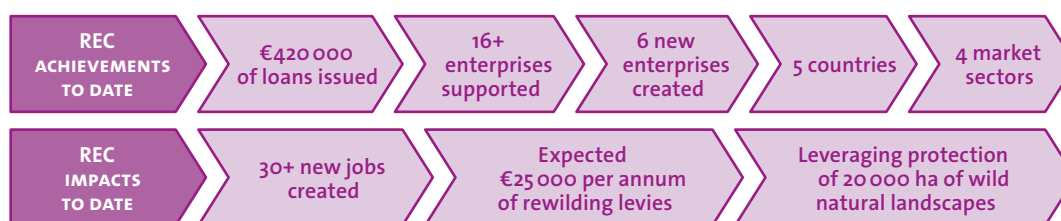
## Great progress for Rewilding Europe Capital

Rewilding Europe carried out a formal public launch of Rewilding Europe Capital (REC) at the WILD10 'World Wilderness Congress' in October 2013. The years 2013 and 2014 comprised the pioneer phase for REC, and we would like to scale up and further expand REC to a new level as of 2015, adding more enterprises to the portfolio and increase funding.

In 2014, an additional 13 financial loans have been provided, allowing 16 enterprises to receive financial support through REC in Western Iberia, Velebit, the Central Apennines, the Southern Carpathians, the Danube Delta and the Netherlands. Enterprises supported range from nature and wildlife tourism businesses (e.g. around bison, wolf and bear), various forms of both traditional and safari-style accommodation to local natural food production.

## REWILDING ENTERPRISES SUPPORTED BY 31 DECEMBER 2014 THROUGH REC (Support provided: T = technical, F = financial through REC, P = promotional)

Rewilding enterprise supported	Link with rewilding	Sector	Support		
<b>Western Iberia</b>					
Casa Cisterna Guesthouse	Local style accommodation actively involved in hosting and guiding visitors to Faia Brava reserve	Tourism	T	F	P
Faia Brava Star Camp	Simple and imaginative bush camp in the Faia Brava reserve, linked with wildlife watching and guiding	Tourism	T	F	P
Rewilding Flycamp	Mobile tented camp, fully serviced and used for wild camping, run by local entrepreneurs (Miles Away)	Tourism	T	F	P
<b>Velebit Mountains</b>					
Linden Tree Ranch & Retreat	Tourist accommodation, offering horse riding, local food and wildlife watching	Tourism	T	F	P
Guslice & Melnice Honey	Production of famous wildflower honey, branded as rewilding honey	Natural products	T	F	P
Mons Baebius Mountain Cottage	Cottage in the middle of Velebit Nature Park, promoting rewilding	Tourism		F	P
Camp Ljubica (Wild Kingdoms)	Low-cost campsite for high quality natural and wildlife focused products	Tourism	T	F	(P)
Lagosta Company	Amending hunting management to allow return of wildlife and watching	Wildlife, tourism	T	F	P
Rewilding Flycamp	Mobile tented camp, fully serviced and used for wild camping, run by local entrepreneurs	Tourism	T	F	P
<b>Central Apennines</b>					
Wildlife Adventures	New series of wildlife and tourist products	Tourism		F	P
Apennines Mountain Cottage	Local nature tourism business managing nature and wildlife tourism activities in a core rewilding zone	Tourism	T	F	P
Gioia Vecchio Wildlife Hides	Development of two wildlife hides in a core rewilding area, exclusively operated	Tourism	T	F	P
Rewilding Flycamp	Mobile tented camp, fully serviced and used for wild camping, run by local entrepreneurs (Wildlife Adventures)	Tourism	T	F	P
<b>Southern Carpathians</b>					
Rewilding Flycamp	Mobile tented camp, fully serviced and used for wild camping, run by local entrepreneurs (AMZA)	Tourism	T	F	P
<b>Danube Delta</b>					
Dimache Jenica Nature Tours	Guesthouse and wildlife tourism provider (principally bird watching)	Tourism	T	F	P
<b>General</b>					
Tauros Programme	Securing an old breed of cattle from Spain (Maremma) for the Tauros Programme	Wildlife		F	





➤ Jeni and Dumitru Dimache run a neat small B&B pension in the Danube Delta



➤ Inside a vulture watching hide in the Rhodope Mountains



➤ Local food served at Linden Tree Retreat & Ranch in Velebit

## TARGETS FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF REWILDING EUROPE CAPITAL (2015–2017)

GENERATING ANNUAL REVENUES EXCEEDING 5 MILLION EUROS	CREATING 250 NEW JOBS	GENERATING ANNUAL REWILDING LEVIES EXCEEDING €250 000
GENERATING ANNUAL GOVERNMENT TAXES EXCEEDING €500 000	REWILDING EUROPE WILL SUPPORT A TOTAL OF 50 BUSINESSES INCLUDING AT LEAST 3 IN EACH REWILDING AREA	CONSTITUTE AT LEAST 5% OF THE FORMAL ECONOMY OF EACH REWILDING AREA
PROVIDE GOODS AND SERVICES TO OVER 10 000 CUSTOMERS PER YEAR	AT LEAST 10 ENTERPRISES SHALL HAVE A DIRECT BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP WITH ANOTHER ENTERPRISE SUPPORTED BY REWILDING EUROPE	INCLUDE OVER 10 NEWLY ESTABLISHED BUSINESSES

By 31 December 2014, a total of 420 000 Euro has been committed to 16 different loan arrangements covering four different sectors: nature-based tourism, local products, sustainable hunting and wildlife.

This finance has been provided to these businesses under a series of conditions ('rewilding covenants'), which oblige the businesses to support

rewilding both directly, for example by collecting rewilding levies from enterprise revenue which are used to financially support rewilding activities; and indirectly, for example promoting rewilding principles and Rewilding Europe to clients and ensuring sustainable natural resource management.

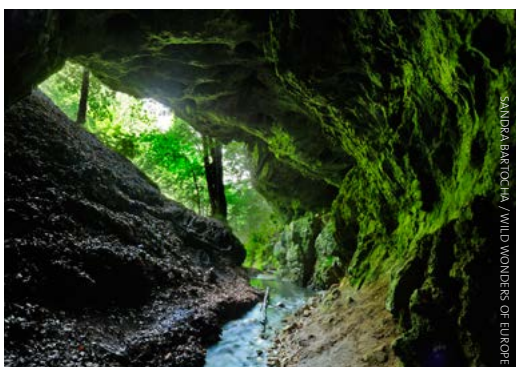
REC is currently working through a second 'development financing' phase, utilising grant

funding converted into business loans to support enterprise in the rewilding areas. REC is demonstrating positive results and impacts that position the loan facility to raise its commercial loan finance in 2016. The investment team is already engaging potential investors, who will provide debt capital to REC, and meetings are taking place with individuals, social impact investors and government-backed development financing institutions.

The track record and current portfolio of REC over its first 'pioneer' phase is well diversified across sectors, in the size of loans and the rewilding areas. The 'pipeline' for the next loan phase is growing, and the ambition for 2015–2017 is for Rewilding Europe Capital to have issued at least 50 different loans to businesses operating within the rewilding areas (including 10 newly formed enterprises), creating a significant impact in terms of total annual revenues generated, number of jobs created, annual rewilding levy level and annual government tax generated, thus contributing to pioneering new nature based economies in the areas we work. Raising a growing capital base for REC is crucial to achieve further development and impact.



› Testing out a tent chair hide in the Danube Delta



› Cave in the Crovul Valley, Southern Carpathians



› Young couple experiencing beautiful nature in the Central Apennines

## Supporting wildlife tourism

The comeback of large and charismatic wildlife in Europe is set to increase people's interactions with wildlife and bring wildlife into ever-closer proximity to human-dominated landscapes. Human perceptions of wildlife are also shifting amongst the population. Despite an overall estrangement from the natural world, increased urbanisation and higher standards of living have caused a shift towards more favourable views of the intrinsic value of wildlife. We believe there are a great many benefits and opportunities linked to this wildlife comeback in Europe.

Rewilding Europe is unlocking these benefits and opportunities by supporting the development of wildlife-based tourism enterprises that provide products like guided wildlife tours, wildlife watching in hides and wildlife photography. In Western Iberia, the Velebit Mountains, the Central Apennines, the Rhodope Mountains and the Danube Delta such hides are available or being developed, while wildlife guides are being trained. Ensuring that the wildlife comeback will continue, we are

working with many local partners from the conservation, hunting and wildlife sectors and local authorities to maintain, restock or re-introduce wildlife species populations.

## Creating destinations

As we help build rural economies that are based on wild and natural values, we work hard to promote these areas and the rewilding enterprises they support, with the goal to build destinations and experiences in nature known throughout the world. Nature-based tourism will involve not only wildlife or wilderness related products, but also local culture, history and gastronomy. Travel itineraries will include all of these different elements as we work to connect different enterprises and share their customer network to encourage visitors to stay in the areas for several days and experience all they have to offer.

One of the tools to develop such destinations is the Rewilding Europe Travel Club that has continued to grow in membership and provision. We have developed 15 different travel itineraries for

Western Iberia (two), the Southern Carpathians (one), the Velebit Mountains (five), the Central Apennines (two), the Danube Delta (two) and the Rhodope Mountains (three), which are easily accessible and bookable through our website. In addition we have provided ten so called 'Special Offers', specifically provided to Rewilding Europe Travel Club members by wildlife tour operators and activity providers from Europe. They can be booked with a discount within a certain period.

The Rewilding Europe Travel Club had two different prize draws, in July and December, with six great trips offered by wildlife and nature tourism businesses to different wildlife destinations in Europe. The last six winners were from five different countries. Rewilding Europe will continue to develop this initiative further with a focus on three main elements for our rewilding areas:

1. Forming partnerships with tour operators who may be interested in developing products;
2. Providing a promotional platform for existing and new nature tourism businesses; and
3. Building a database of potential customers for future rewilding related tourism enterprises.

# Enterprise development: facts and figures

**13** REWILDING ENTERPRISES supported across **5** different REWILDING AREAS, covering **4** different BUSINESS SECTORS



## WILDLIFE HIDES

for a variety of species (bear, wolf, vultures, colonial waterbirds, deer, and many others) operational or prepared to build in 2015 in four different rewilding areas

## 30+ NEW JOBS

created through Rewilding Europe Capital, investees are set to generate 25 000 euros of rewilding levies per annum, and leverage the protection of an estimated 20 000 hectares of wild natural landscapes

First-ever 'safari-style' enterprises developed and ready to become operational in 2015, including

## REWILDING FLYCAMPS

in 4 areas and Faia Brava Star Camp (Portugal)



# 30000

MEMBERS

in the Rewilding Europe Travel Club; three prize draws held, offering six nature tours to different destinations in Europe

## EUROPEAN SAFARI COMPANY

concept developed and explored with potential partners and investors



provided by the Rewilding Europe Capital, in the total amount of

# 411 500

## EUROS

Allocated funds by sector:



TOURISM

€251 500

# 10

## SPECIAL OFFERS

to nature tourism destinations outside the rewilding areas available through the Travel Club



# 5

## WILDLIFE TOURISM BUSINESS PLANS

developed for priority areas in Velebit, Western Iberia, Central Apennines, Southern Carpathians and Danube Delta



## WILDLIFE GUIDES

trained in the Southern Carpathians, connected to the European bison reintroduction



# 2<sup>ND</sup>

version published:  
*Wildlife Watching Hides – A Practical Guide 2.0*

Rewilding Europe Capital ambitions and plans prepared, with a teaser document developed to attract funding for next phase (2015-2017), aiming to raise at least

# 1

MILLION EUROS

# 15

## TRAVEL ITINERARIES

developed for

# 6

## REWILDING AREAS

to support these areas to become nature-tourism destinations

There are now over 3 000 members of the Travel Club, while an extensive database of wildlife and nature tourism operators has been developed and relationships have been established with the key tour operators across Europe (and beyond) in an effort to engage and receive their views on Rewilding Europe and to promote product development possibilities in our rewilding areas.

Last but not least, we made good progress with the development of a European Safari Company, which we will launch in 2015.

### Educating a new breed of European entrepreneur

There is a growing demand for new jobs in the often-depopulating agricultural regions in Europe. To meet these demands, new education is needed to help develop a new breed of entrepreneur who can start up and run new businesses based around wildlife, nature reserves and other wild or natural areas.

The KIGO-project (Knowledge and Innovation in Green education) funded by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs is addressing this, in collaboration with Rewilding Europe and a number of educational institutes in the Netherlands (Helicon Opleidingen, Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences, and Wageningen University). During the final symposium, held at the Knowledge Estate Larenstein in June in Velp, the Netherlands, several ideas from (potential) nature entrepreneurs were showcased and several of them received mini-business consultancy from Rewilding Europe.

During this symposium, Rewilding Europe shared its insights on nature entrepreneurship in Africa and Europe based on experiences at Conservation Capital and in the Rewilding Europe areas and underlined the opportunities in Europe for eco-tourism and wildlife watching in particular.

The Western Iberia rewilding area was chosen as the project's focus area to experiment with educational activities like the Erasmus Intensive Programme on European Wilderness Entrepreneurship. Even though the project has now been closed, the curricula that were developed at VHL University of Applied Sciences, Wageningen University and Helicon Opleidingen will continue. The partners of the KIGO-project European Nature Entrepreneur have the ambition to seek European funds to further internationalise the curricula and collaborative research on European nature entrepreneurship.



> Marin Kurtev, wildlife watching operator beside his vulture watching hide in the Rhodope Mountains



> Popular symbols – wildlife branded restaurant in Velebit



> Participants of the 'Erasmus Intensive Programme



> Students at Peña de Francia mountain in the Western Iberia



# Wildlife and nature tourism championing rewilding enterprise in Europe

Wildlife and nature tourism is growing rapidly throughout the world and is a major economic contributor to many economies, contributing in some countries over 10% to the GDP. In Scotland for example, 56% of all tourist travel is wildlife and nature related and generates £65 million per year to the economy.

While Europe and the rewilding areas present world leading natural and wildlife attractions accessible via high quality infrastructure, European nature and wildlife tourists are missing many opportunities. Initiatives such as 'Natura 2000' ensure that approximately 18% of Europe's land surface area is prioritised for nature and related economic activities, creating environments where tourists are foregoing the Serengeti, Masai Mara and Yosemite for attractions closer to home including the Carpathians, the Velebit mountains and Central Apennines.

Wildlife is playing its part with iconic wildlife numbers at their highest levels in over a century with more than 17 000 bears, 12 000 wolves, and 9 000 Eurasian lynx found throughout Europe, not forgetting many other mammals and rich bird species diversity. The challenge now being faced is that as yet there are very few good quality tourism operators within Europe servicing these wildlife and nature attractions.

## The first rewilding tourism enterprises

Rewilding Europe has set out to widen the growing nature and wildlife tourism market in Europe. This sector, which we are investing in and stimulating in the rewilding areas, provides direct employment, local economic growth and tax revenues whilst indirectly engaging other businesses which supply goods and services to tourist operators and customers, for example local food producers, guesthouses and restaurants.

Over the past year, Rewilding Europe Capital (REC) has provided 251 000 euros of loans to 13 tourism related businesses in our rewilding areas. We are also spearheading five of these products and partnering with private local operators to manage them. For example we are launching four mobile,



➤ *Setting up Rewilding Flycamp in the Southern Carpathians*



➤ *Boating tourism in the Danube Delta*



➤ *Wildlife watching in the Central Apennines*

tented safari camps ('Rewilding Flycamps') in the Velebit mountains, Western Iberia, the Central Apennines and the Southern Carpathians, together with wildlife watching hides and other nature tourism products.

The Faia Brava Star Camp, a 12 bed semi-permanent tented lodge set for launch in 2015, will be the first of its kind in Europe where a tourist lodge has been designed and developed in a private protected nature reserve, Reserva de Faia Brava, with the intention of generating revenues and communication opportunities that will directly conserve and sustain the protected area. This is being achieved through a rewilding levy and lease payment mechanism, which is also applied in other REC loan contexts.

## Nature based tourism

The financial and technical support provided by Rewilding Europe to nature and wildlife tourism enterprises is creating wider positive impacts for the rewilding areas and their communities.

Rewilding tourism promotes the natural attractions of the rewilding areas by marketing them as leading wildlife destinations, whilst also highlighting their cultural, historic and gastronomic attractions. Nature and wildlife is a base attraction, which connects enterprises operating in all of these sectors, increasing the widespread engagement of key local stakeholders through employment, and other social and economic benefits, which in turn encourages local and wider initiatives to conserve and enhance the natural and wildlife attractions of the rewilding areas.

These networks are now facilitating direct access to and enjoyment of nature in the rewilding areas and are showcasing a model of innovative wildlife tourism that will be replicated in other important natural areas in Europe. It is these networks that create benefits and an appreciation for rewilding that defines the rewilding enterprise movement.

This process is set to continue in 2015 with the launch of the European Safari Company, further tourism enterprise support through REC, the inclusion of new rewilding areas and an extension of the European Rewilding Network.



## GENERAL RESULTS

# Communication and promotion

Reaching out and connecting people with our initiative from all sections of society – in our rewilding areas, from different regions of Europe, and outside – is one of the main communication targets of our initiative. Alongside rewilding and enterprise, communication and promotion is the third major component in Rewilding Europe. As in the previous year, this was done in many different ways: press releases, media events, printed material, social media, stakeholder meetings, TV and radio programmes, major publications and partnership building at all levels. Again, our outreach and visibility was remarkable, and our initiative became better known to many different audiences across Europe and the world.

However, as the communication potential seems endless, there is also a need for focus, and to ensure that our communication efforts are directed to support the rewilding and enterprise objectives of the initiative itself. Therefore, in 2014

we conducted an analysis, review and re-design of our communication strategy, and developed a branding strategy as well.

### Media outreach

In 2014 there were numerous news items, blogs and posts on our website, Facebook, Twitter and our external newsletter resulting in further growth in outreach. The number of monthly web page views grew from 13700 at the start of the year to more than 39 000 in December. By the end of the year we had more than 14 600 page likes on Facebook, 776 likes on the Rewilding Europe Travel Club Facebook and 2350 followers on Twitter. Facebook pages of each rewilding area are also getting some good traction – the total number of likes all together is around 4700. The Travel Club had 2669 members by the end of the year, and some



**Staffan Widstrand**  
Marketing &  
Communications Director



> The bison release covered in Le Monde (France)



> Rewilding Europe featured in Suomen Luonto (Finland)



> German TV "Bayerischer Rundfunk" filming team setting up a camera slider in the forests of the Central Apennines

*In 2014, again we reached out to many millions of people – but at least as important is the communication with the local stakeholders in our rewilding areas*

6 000 people receive our monthly newsletter.

The major communication highlight in 2014 was the bison release in Armenis, in the Southern Carpathians, with an estimated number of 95 million people made aware of this across Romania, Europe and beyond. In Romania, the bison were in the news for weeks in literally all media of the country.

Apart from the bison news, Rewilding Europe was featured in major articles in the International New York Times, the New Scientist and others. Major features on Rewilding Europe were published in various media, including TV programmes and radio. BBC World Service broadcasted a one-hour radio programme on 23 September, with Frans Schepers as one of the studio guests together with George Monbiot (UK) and Joan Nassauer (US). In a major feature on the National Geographic website about the co-existence of large carnivores, Rewilding Europe was interviewed, as was the case in a front

page article in the China Morning Post. Newsweek (US) reported on our wildlife work in December in a large article. In Zooquaria, the magazine of EAZA, an article about Rewilding Europe was published, explaining the possibilities of cooperation on wildlife comeback. Other articles were published in Die Süddeutsche Zeitung and Die Zeit (Germany), the International New York Times and the New Scientist.

TV productions were made about the bison translocation to Romania, where Swedish Television broadcasted a one-hour programme about the bison transport to the Southern Carpathians, and the Konik horses in Rhodope Mountains. The Bayerischen Rundfunk broadcasted the work of the Central Apennines in a documentary in November.

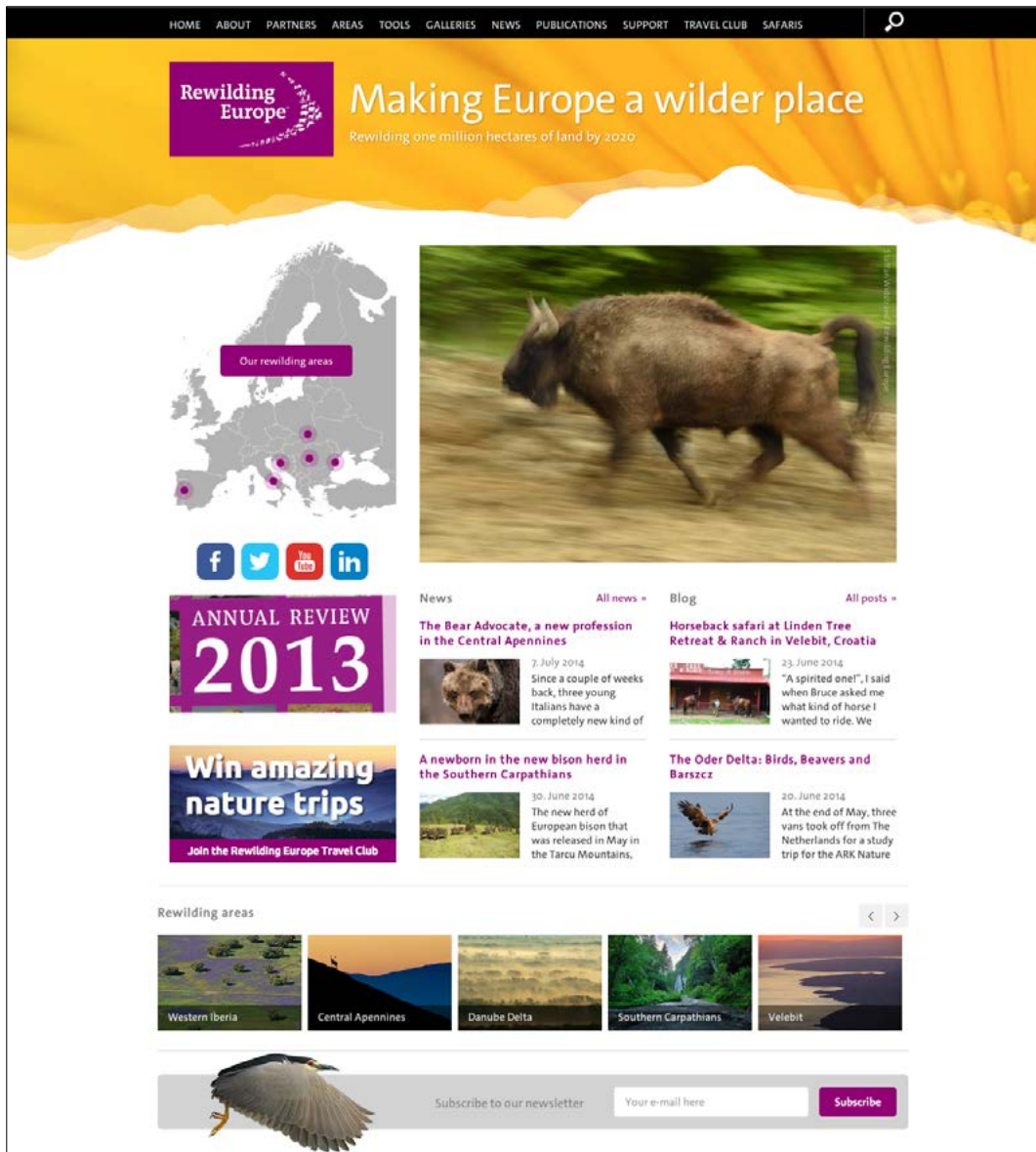
In the countries with rewilding areas, numerous publications in local and national media took place, all building towards greater outreach of our rewilding activities.



> Swedish Television filming the bison preparation in Avesta



> Magor Czibi from WWF Romania interviewed at the bison release in the Southern Carpathians



➤ New website was launched in May 2014



➤ Kristjan Jung filming bison in the Southern Carpathians



➤ 8-year-old Karel wants to become a wildlife filmmaker

## New website

In May 2014, we launched our new website which has been further developed since then, providing much more information and flexibility. The website has new items such as the 'Safaris' section, the 'Galleries' and much more information about the now seven rewilding areas. We have also extended our photo database with the purchase of new imagery, in particular from the Rhodope Mountains and the Eastern Carpathians.

The monthly number of visitors have increased during the year, which is undoubtedly a result of a more accessible and informative website.

## New exciting publications and communication products

In 2014, five exciting new communication products became available:

- **Proceedings of Rewilding Europe Seminar at WILDIO, Salamanca.** Summary and findings of Rewilding Europe's first seminar, published in February.
- **Rewilding Europe Annual Review 2013.** This was published at the meeting of the Supervisory Board in Croatia in June.
- **Rewilding horse in Europe. A living document.** This publication, the first of its kind, was officially launched at a conference of Eurosite in the Netherlands in September.
- **Bison Rewilding Plan 2014–2024.** Rewilding Europe's contribution to the comeback of the European bison. This report was launched during the signing of a cooperation agreement with Avesta Bison Park in Sweden in November.
- **Wildlife Hides – A Practical Guide 2.1.** Updated version, now with new hides and technical drawings.

### From Avesta to Armenis

Kristjan Jung, who travelled together with Joep van de Vlasakker and the bison all the way from Sweden to Armenis in Romania (some 3,100 km on the road), produced a short film about the bison capture, transport and release. Kristjan travelled together with his 8-year old son Karel who had a lifetime experience. The film can be seen on the Rewilding Europe YouTube channel, and gives a nice impression from Rewilding Europe's first bison translocation.

## Give a hairy beast... first crowd funding campaign

In December, Rewilding Europe launched its first crowd funding campaign, as a new, additional fundraising initiative, mobilising our supporters to help with our work, building our own crowd-funding platform instead of making use of already existing ones.

In our first campaign, people could support the wildlife comeback and human-wildlife conflict mitigation, focusing on the European bison, European ground squirrel (or suslik) and Marsican brown bear. This would help our work in the Southern Carpathians, the Rhodope Mountains and the Central Apennines. People chose from different levels of support and received different rewards based on their level of donation. The crowdfunding campaign was running until the end of February 2015.

## Connecting to the United States

There is a growing interest in our initiative in the United States. The-US based WILD Foundation has already been a highly appreciated conservation partner since 2012 (culminating in an intense cooperation in WILD10), and we have made connections with the American Prairie Reserve in Montana through starting an exchange of experience and networks. Last but not least, a large proportion of our Facebook followers come from the United States.

More partnerships with other organisations are underway, illustrating the potential of linking our initiative with this part of the world and with people who have connections and roots in Europe. This has also led to a number of media outings in major magazines and other media in the United States over the past few years.



> Learning from the American Prairie Reserve in Montana, United States

## Communication and promotion: facts and figures

### MAJOR MEDIA AWARENESS

for Rewilding Europe: New York Times International, BBC World Service, Newsweek, Geographical Magazine, Die Zeit, Süddeutsche Zeitung, La Republica, Le Monde, Guardian, The Telegraph, Agency France Press, Reuters and others



### E-MAIL NEWSLETTERS

were issued in 2014 to

# 2750

### SUBSCRIBERS

Internal newsletter called 'Rewilding Updates' distributed to over 80 direct staff, advisors, partners and relationships.

# 5

## MAJOR PUBLICATIONS

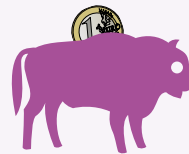
on various topics, including European bison, rewilding horses, the Annual Review and the Wildlife Hide Guide.



# 1<sup>ST</sup>

## CROWD FUNDING CAMPAIGN

started, focusing on 3 species: European bison, the Marsican brown bear and European ground squirrel (suslik).



Bison release in Romania reaches at least

# 95 000 000

featured in many different types of media throughout Europe and other parts of the world

# PEOPLE

### COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND BRANDING MANUAL

developed and operational, including a set of unified logos for our various activities



### THE NUMBER OF WEB PAGE VIEWS

grows by

# 183%

arriving at

# 39 000

per month by December

### NUMBER OF FACEBOOK 'LIKES'

grows by

# 50%

and reaches

# 15 000

just after 31 December 2014



## EXPANSION

# Building our rewilding area portfolio



**Deli Saavedra**  
*Regional Manager*



**Colinda Vergeer**  
*Regional Manager*

### Rewilding areas at the frontline

Rewilding Europe wants to put its vision into practice through working in 10 areas in Europe, to become lead examples of rewilding. The rewilding areas are at the frontline of the initiative, because we believe that by showing our work in reality we can generate support for this new conservation vision for Europe.

Expansion of our portfolio is done with a careful and case-by-case approach, taking into account important lessons and applying the critical success and risk factors. Of course this will always be done based on very careful, thorough assessments and with the involvement of the Supervisory Board.

### Selection of areas

Based on a screening of some 30 nominations from all over Europe submitted by a variety of organizations, five areas were selected in 2010 to serve as the first rewilding areas. The first rewilding areas started work at the end of 2011. We are currently working in seven rewilding areas (the starting year is shown in brackets):

- Western Iberia, Portugal and Spain (2011),
- Velebit Mountains, Croatia (2011),
- Eastern Carpathians, Slovakia and Poland (2011),
- Southern Carpathians, Romania (2012),
- Danube Delta, Romania (2012),
- Central Apennines, Italy (2013),
- Rhodope Mountains, Bulgaria (2014).



► Rhodope Mountains joined Rewilding Europe in 2014. Rewilding officers Stefan Avramov and Hristo Hristov with team leader Stoycho Stoychev

Two areas are in the pipeline and are expected to become part of the portfolio in 2015:

- Oder Delta, Germany and Poland,
- Greater Laponia, Sweden – with extension possibility into Norway.

A 10<sup>th</sup> area, to complete the portfolio, has not been selected yet. In the table below, an overview of the portfolio is presented (situation December 2014).

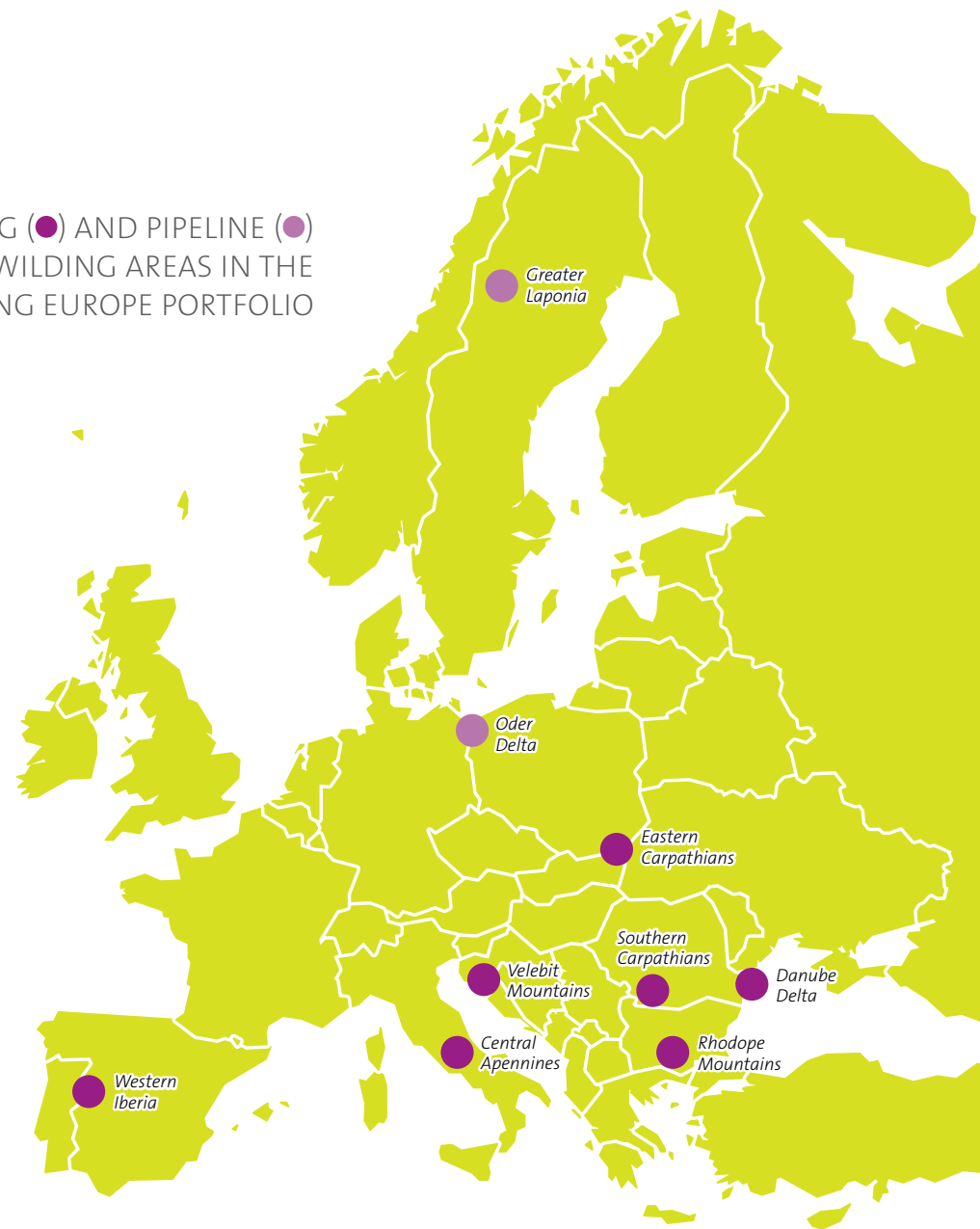
We aim to have a maximum geographical spread and representation of different ecosystems, to ensure the Rewilding Europe portfolio will be as diverse as possible. The main reasons for this are:

- Rewilding Europe would like to prove that rewilding is possible in all regions in Europe, not only in southern and eastern Europe (more remote areas) but also in central, west and northwest Europe (more urbanized areas),
- We strongly believe that rewilding is applicable throughout European ecosystems, and we want to learn how different ecosystems respond to rewilding,
- We would like to work and learn about rewilding in different settings and local socio-economic contexts.

The current seven rewilding areas in the portfolio (as of the end of 2014) span different regions of Europe, but have an emphasis on the southern and eastern parts of the continent. Therefore we have been actively engaging and supporting nominations in north and northwest Europe. Also, we see a slight over-representation of mountainous areas, and would also like to include more lowland areas.

The 10 rewilding areas together reflect a wide selection of European regions and ecosystems, flora and fauna, with each of them showing a substantial wildlife comeback.

## EXISTING (●) AND PIPELINE (●) REWILDING AREAS IN THE REWILDING EUROPE PORTFOLIO



### Rewilding at 4 levels

All the rewilding areas have a large size (100 000 ha or more) with the potential to be even larger, when we look at their magnification potential. It is important to us that Rewilding Europe works in areas that have a certain scale and have the potential to leverage significant impact on a landscape level.

However, we have to be careful to work in a tangible way, starting in certain rewilding 'nodes' with physical activities on the ground and scale up from there. We have therefore developed a system of four different scales in which we work. Levels 1 and 2 are the framework and tell the big story, and

levels 3 and 4 signal the priorities and where the physical activities are carried out.

#### Level 1. Larger landscape: magnification area

This is the wider landscape or region, in which the rewilding area is situated. The size can range from some hundreds of thousands to some millions of hectares, e.g. the Southwest Carpathians, the Montado/Dehesa landscape in Iberia, the Greater Laponia, the Apennines or the Rhodope Mountains. It is the context in which our rewilding area serves as an example. The time horizon is more than ten years.



› Oder Delta



› White-tailed eagle



› Results from beavers eating

### Level 2. Rewilding area

This is the area to which we have attached our 10-year vision, and which we want to be considerably rewilded within that period. The size is at least 100 000 ha of connected areas that during those 10 years will develop towards a much wilder state, but not necessarily ending up in a pure wilderness.

### Level 3. Priority area

Within the rewilding area we focus our work on specifically identified priority areas, at least 2–3 for each rewilding area. In these priority areas, each about 5 000–10 000 ha in size, we concentrate our efforts in a combined way (on rewilding, enterprise development and communication) because here the opportunities for rewilding have been seen as the most promising. These selected priority areas become the nodes for the rewilding of the 100 000 ha area. For each of them, we set 3-year objectives and tangible results on a 3-year plan basis.

### Level 4. Pilot site

The pilot sites are situated within the priority areas and are the places where we will actively work on the ground, where property rights have been secured (e.g. hunting concession, tourism concession, grazing rights). Pilot sites are situated inside a priority area and can, by successful elaboration of the pilot, cover a growing part of the priority area.

In the table on the next page, the 4 levels are explained and named for all the existing rewilding areas.

## REWILDING EUROPE PORTFOLIO BY THE END OF 2014

(countries in brackets means we have not started/initiated working there)

Name of area	Status (2013)	Size (ha) <sup>1</sup>	Landscape type	Countries <sup>2</sup>
Western Iberia	Operational	100 000	Montado, dehesa, sierra, rivers and canyons	Portugal, (Spain)
Velebit Mountains	Operational	220 000	Temperate and Mediterranean forest, sub-alpine grasslands, coastal marine, cliffs and canyons	Croatia
Eastern Carpathians	Operational	110 000	Temperate forests, sub-alpine grasslands, river valleys and streams	Poland, Slovakia, (Ukraine)
Southern Carpathians	Operational	100 000	Temperate forest, sub-alpine grasslands, cliffs and steep river valleys	Romania
Danube Delta	Operational	180 000	River delta, reed beds, marshes, riverine forests, coastal grasslands, dune systems, coastal lagoons and forests	Romania, (Ukraine)
Central Apennines	Operational	100 000	High alpine mountains, alpine grasslands and valleys, small rivers and temperate forests	Italy
Rhodope Mountains	Operational	250 000	Mediterranean temperate forests, river valleys, grasslands and steppe	Bulgaria (Greece)
Oder Delta	In pipeline	TBD	Baltic coast with wetlands, tidal zones, reed marshes, sand dunes, alluvial and coastal forests, peat systems and wet grasslands	Germany, Poland
Greater Laponia	In pipeline	TBD	Taiga forest, high tundra and alpine grasslands, free-flowing rivers, lakes and peat marshes	Sweden (Norway)
10 <sup>th</sup> area	Exploration		Unknown	Unknown

<sup>1</sup> The estimated size of the area that can be rewilded which is targeted in each rewilding area; this excludes the wider magnification area.

<sup>2</sup> Countries between brackets are potential countries to work in a transboundary way; in some preparations have started to do so in 2015 and further on.





> Greater Laponia



> Forest reindeer



> Arctic raspberry

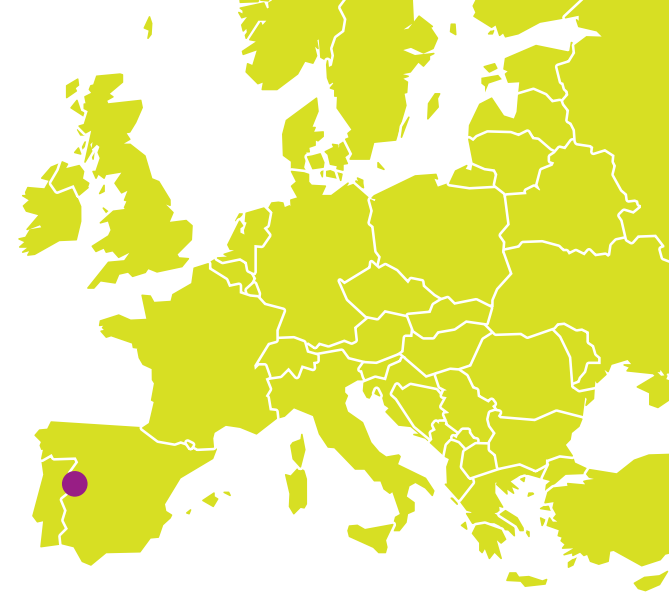
## FOUR DIFFERENT LEVELS OF WORK IN THE REWILDING AREAS AND MAIN TARGET WILDLIFE SPECIES

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	
Larger landscape	Rewilding area	Priority areas 2015–2017	Pilot sites	Main (target) wildlife species
Montado and dehesa landscape between Sierra de Gata in the South and Douro Valley in the north, West-Central Spain and Portugal	<b>Western Iberia (Portugal)</b>	Cidadelhe-Faia Brava, Colmeal, Ribeira das Cabras and Freineda-Jardo-Miuzela	Faia Brava, Faia Brava Star Camp, natural grazing sites, Cihaldele village, flycamp sites	Griffon, black and Egyptian vulture, Spanish imperial and Bonelli's eagle, Iberian lynx, rabbit, red deer, roe deer, Spanish ibex, wolf, wild horse and Tauros
Velebit Mountain range, connected with Slovenia in the north and Dalmatia in the south; including Krbvasko Polje and the marine coast and islands (part of Dinaric Arc)	<b>Velebit Mountains (Croatia)</b>	North Velebit National Park, Paklenica National Park, Lagosta wildlife reserve (Ramino Korito, Lukovo Sugarje and Dolin islands), Lika Plains	Linden Tree, Lagosta wildlife area (hides, flycamp sites), Mala Libinju, Zir	Griffon vulture, wolf, brown bear, European bison, red deer, Balkan chamois, Eurasian lynx, wild horse, Tauros
Apennines mountain range throughout Italy, connected network of protected areas with major national parks	<b>Central Apennines (Italy)</b>	Sirente Velino, Ortona dei Marsi, Gioia dei Marsi, Lecce dei Marsi, Monte Genzana	Gioia land lease, Gioia Vecchio, Montagne della Duchessa, Teve Valley, Monte Velino, Giovenco Valley	Marsican brown bear, wolf, Apennines chamois, griffon vulture, red deer
South-western Carpathian mountain range including a connected series of national parks and protected areas ranging from Danube River valley in the south to Fagaras in the north	<b>Southern Carpathians (Romania)</b>	Armenis municipality within Tarcu Mountains Natura 2000 site	Plopu and Poiana Rusca	European bison, red deer, wolf, brown bear, Eurasian lynx
Overall Danube Delta system consisting of major river branches in Romania and the Ukraine connected with Dobrogea Plateau and middle reaches of the Danube river	<b>Danube Delta (Romania)</b>	C.A. Rosetti, Sfantu Georghe, Crisan, polders and fish farms (both outer and inner delta)	Sfantu Gheorghe communal land, Caraorman Forest, Letea forest and others	White and Dalmatian pelican, sturgeon, red deer, European mink, Tauros, wild horse, beaver
Northern range of the Carpathian Mountains, including the International Biosphere Reserve 'Eastern Carpathians' and various national parks and nature parks (e.g. Bieszczady, Uzhansky, Poloniny)	<b>Eastern Carpathians (Poland)</b>	Upper San and Lower San Valley	Krywka, Krywka, Smolnik, Upper San Valley and Baligrod forest district	Wolf, European bison, brown bear, beaver, Eurasian lynx, red deer, wild horse
Part of a large escarpment between Greece and Bulgaria (the Rhodope and Orvilos Mountains), including a number of national parks	<b>Rhodope Mountains (Bulgaria)</b>	Byala Reka, Madzharovo, Studen Kladenetz and Chernoochene	Studen Kladenetz Hunting Reserve, Bojnic, Chal, Sbor, Kostilkovo, Boturche, Tintyava, Chernoochene	Griffon vulture, black vulture, Egyptian vulture, suslik, imperial eagle, marbled polecat, red deer, fallow deer, wild horse, European bison



## WESTERN IBERIA

# Ancient dehesa, sierra and montado landscapes



### Setting

The Iberian Peninsula, with some of the earliest human settlements in Europe, is home to some of the most ancient natural landscapes of the continent. One typical example is the Spanish *dehesa* or the Portuguese *montado*; traditional wooded pastures with their origins dating back to at least the Middle Ages. The savannah-like appearance shaped by large grazers – especially cattle – is today home to some of the most rare animal species of Europe, such as the Spanish Imperial eagle and the globally endangered Iberian lynx. These species have together with their favourite prey, the European rabbit, decreased alarmingly during the last century and have just only recently begun to slowly come back.

### 10-year vision

Western Iberia's rich and varied dehesa, montado and sierra landscapes, crossed by deep river valleys that straddle the border between Portugal and Spain, has become one of the most exciting wild areas of the Iberian Peninsula.

Core rewilding areas with wildlife breeding zones have been established, that are connected through wildlife corridors and surrounded by transition and buffer zones, where people still use the landscape in relatively traditional, but more sustainable and wildlife friendly ways.

Western Iberia has not become a huge, unbroken wilderness area, but rather a much wilder version of the dehesa/montado habitat, containing several really wild zones where the full original native range of species is back in place. The management principle practiced in the core areas is based on allowing for the natural processes and

### LOCAL REWILDING PARTNERS:



### TEAM LEADER:

Pedro Prata  
(Portugal)



➤ Iberian lynx



letting nature manage itself to as high degree as possible, through a gradual process, from former active management.

The main wildlife attractions are Iberian ibex, Iberian lynx, red deer, wild horse and black stork as well as vultures and many other raptors like the Bonelli's eagle and the Spanish imperial eagle. The area holds one of Europe's first breeding sites for the Tauros, which will roam free in social herds. The Iberian lynx has come back again in a sustainable population thanks to successful reintroduction efforts and a good prey base of rabbits. The Iberian wolf has come back spontaneously and has become accepted as a normal inhabitant of the area.

Western Iberia has attracted new, young people, for whom it provides business opportunities based on these wild values, local products and culture, thereby contributing to its future.

### General progress

In Western Iberia an important change happened, where Associação Transumância e Natureza (ATN), our main rewilding Partner on the Portuguese

*The 'Grande Route of the Côa Valley', launched in October 2014, provides a fantastic opportunity to explore this beautiful part of Portugal along a trail of 200 kilometers that connects the source of the Côa to the river mouth in the Dauro river*

side, became our local rewilding partner organisation after just after summer. After more than three years, the working relationship with FNYH in Spain was ended because of different views of the partnership. This also means that for the years to come, the rewilding efforts will focus on the Portuguese side of this rewilding area, although we still very much welcome work on the Spanish side.

Rewilding on the Portuguese side will focus on the Côa Valley, which has been explored in detail and where, during a joint visit by the central team and the local team in November, new boundaries of the rewilding area and the priority areas were agreed. Also, pilot sites for natural grazing, wildlife reintroductions and connected enterprise activities were identified.

### Rewilding

- Tauros breeding sites saw a further growth: in Spain (Campanarios de Azaba, with 14 Sayaguesa cows) and Portugal (Faia Brava, with 12 Maronesa cows). An exchange of bulls between the two breeding sites took place within the breeding programme for the Tauros.
- The existing herd of 45 Garrano horses living in the Faia Brava reserve was added to the European Wildlife Bank. Through this, the herd will be under the temporary ownership of ATN to graze the Faia Brava reserve but also the surrounding areas in the Côa Valley and other areas in the Western Iberia rewilding area.
- The expert Gonçalo Appleton has selected a new herd of Garrano horses for the new pilot sites,



➤ Côa valley



➤ Students of the Erasmus Intensive programme “European Wilderness Entrepreneurship” studying rock engravings

expected in 2015. A new stretch of fence will increase the surface available for grazing in Faia Brava reserve by some 200 hectares.

- Further preparations were finished to complete a feasibility study on the reintroduction of the Iberian ibex and restocking of roe deer in the Côa valley. Decisions on this by the national authorities are expected in 2015.
- During 2014, further indications of wolf presence were discovered in the area, which was witness to a spontaneous recolonisation of the species in the region.
- There was a beautiful sighting of a Spanish Imperial eagle in Campanarios de Azaba reserve on 14 March, which was the first in many years. This is a spectacular bird species that we hope will start breeding in the area within a number of years.

## Enterprise

- The ‘Grand Route of the Côa Valley’ is a marked trail of 200 kilometres that connects the source of the Côa to the river mouth in the Douro River. In this area, the Côa River meanders across fertile plains and rocky slopes, tracing its path towards the Douro River, uncovering a valley of immense archaeological, cultural and natural heritage. The Grand Route was officially launched in October 2014 and is designed for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. For a territory suffering from depopulation, it is a great opportunity for entrepreneurs to develop new tourist products based on the natural environment.
- The preparations for the building the ‘Faia Brava Star Camp’ have been finalised, the first prototype of accommodation is underway and the building permits have been requested. For the ‘Rewilding Flycamp’ – a mobile tented camp – materials have been received and negotiations with different partners are under way to broaden the spectrum of activities linked with the Fly Camp, as part of the tourism package.
- Specific loan agreements under REC were developed to support the set up if these new rewilding enterprises. Both the Faia Brava Star Camp and the Fly Camp will become operational in 2015.
- A €15 000 REC loan was approved to Casa Cisterna – a guesthouse in a village close to the Faia Brava reserve in Portugal, which is actively involved in hosting and guiding visitors in the reserve and in the wider Côa valley rewilding area.
- The first Erasmus Intensive programme “European Wilderness Entrepreneurship” took place in Western Iberia in April, with the participation of 30 students and 15 lecturers/researchers from six countries.

## Communication

- There was good media attention for the rewilding area, both through visits of international and Spanish journalists.
- A group of students, participating in the Erasmus Programme for Wilderness Entrepreneurship visited the area in April. A final symposium was held in the Netherlands in June, to close this phase of the European Nature Entrepreneur.



➤ Ana Berliner

## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Casa da Cisterna: expanding the business thanks to rewilding

Casa da Cisterna, a boutique bed & breakfast in the Western Iberia rewilding area was the first beneficiary of Rewilding Europe Capital (REC). Ana Berliner and António Monteiro, owners and managers of this fantastic Bed & Breakfast had the chance to expand their project thanks to the REC loan in 2014.

The Bed & Breakfast, located in the historic village of Castelo Rodrigo, one of the most well preserved rural villages in the region, opened to the public in 2004 with four bedrooms. Ten years later, due to great demand, Ana and António decided to expand the Bed & Breakfast and renovated a neighbouring house. Now they offer five more bedrooms than before, where tradition, elegant design and modern functionality come together beautifully, to provide guests with a unique experience.

“With the support of the Rewilding Europe Capital we could attain the co-finance needed for the expansion of Casa da Cisterna,” says Ana Berliner. “Besides infra-structure, it enables us to increase our energy efficiency.” Casa da Cisterna now has an ecological heating system – a heating pump - and solar panels for heating water, reducing the electricity consumption.

“In 2014, the occupation rate of visitors from Central Europe increased 35%,” Ana says. “Some visitors also came through the Rewilding Europe Travel Club. Rewilding Europe, with their different approaches – from funding to promotion – are great partners, supporting the growth of our business.”



VELEBIT MOUNTAINS

# The Wild West of the Adriatic coast



## Setting

Velebit, one of the most important natural areas of Europe and the Balkans is situated on the Adriatic coast of Croatia. This limestone mountain chain is 145 km long from north to south, and lies parallel to the coast. Following a cross section from the crystal waters of the Adriatic in the west, it rapidly rises to 1757 metres, and then flattens out into a higher-level plateau towards the east.

The area hosts an extraordinary diversity of different habitats, from barren Mediterranean landscapes at sea level to almost boreal systems at higher altitudes. This has led to the establishment of the two Paklenica and Northern Velebit National Parks as well as the Velebit Nature Park – all three very well set up and managed. Together the three areas occupy more than 220 000 ha.

The area has also been declared a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve and has been included in the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage Sites. Outside the protected areas in the south and west, there are very interesting further areas for rewilding too, consisting mainly of abandoned farm- and grazing lands.

In a nutshell, Velebit is a climber's and nature lover's paradise, home to spectacular caves and breath-taking scenery, and receives an increasing number of visitors each year. Most popular is the coastal Paklenica National Park with more than 100 000 visitors annually whilst the more remote inland receive far less attention. The tourist infrastructure is also well developed with hiking trails, small overnight cabins, larger dormitories, and professional visitor centres and information panels.

The dramatic coastal landscapes with their steep, barren cliffs, deep canyons, waterfalls, and

## LOCAL REWILDING PARTNERS:



Nacionalni park  
Sjevorni Velebit



## TEAM LEADER:



Davor Krmptic  
(Croatia)



➤ Abandoned grazing lands in the North Velebit National Park



► Mirjan Lacmanović, our proud partner in Lagosta, a 17 000 hectares hunting concession which will become a rewilding pilot area

open, uninhabited plains also have an interesting link to contemporary European film history. In the 1960s, the famous “Winnetou” movies were produced in and around Velebit, which provided ideal landscapes for battling Indians and white settlers.

### 10-year vision

The Velebit mountain chain has, together with the most suitable of its surrounding lowlands and marine areas, been established as one of the finest, wildest, largest, best protected and most famous wildlife and wilderness areas in Mediterranean Europe.

The whole area has much stronger populations of its original, native wildlife species, boosted by reintroductions and population reinforcements when considered necessary. The main wildlife attractions here are Balkan chamois, brown bear, red deer, Alpine ibex\*, wolf, Eurasian lynx, wild horse, European bison\*, wild boar, capercaillie, griffon vulture and other raptors like the eagle-

owl, peregrine falcon, short-toed eagle and golden eagle.

The unbroken ecological integrity of the Velebit ecosystems has been preserved, and at the same time large areas have become much wilder, with a number of core rewilding areas that hunting-free zones, especially along the main ridge of the mountain chain. In the core rewilding areas, natural ecological processes regulate nature to a great extent, with wildlife in fully natural densities and with all the original, native species present.

This situation has provided examples of new or additional ways to make a living here, based on the wild resources. The negative spiral of land abandonment, rural exodus, loss of biodiversity and fading traditional culture has instead turned into new opportunities, attracting new, young and entrepreneurial people as well as many more visitors, coming also from far outside the region, and thereby increasing the variety Croatia's tourist industry, as well as extending the country's tourist season.

### General progress

Thanks to a generous grant from Adessium Foundation Velebit, we could build further on the work in the Velebit Mountains. A 3-year plan was developed that describes all the activities and results we are planning to achieve until 2017. A dedicated 'Rewilding Velebit' entity was established, while a communication officer and a rewilding officer were added to the Rewilding Velebit team.

Apart from these important developments, a lot of time was invested in establishing and further strengthening working relationships with key stakeholders in Croatia. Important meetings were held with a number of authorities about Rewilding Velebit, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, in particular the heads of the Hunting and Forestry Departments, the State Institute for Nature Protection, the Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection, the directors of Paklenica and North Velebit National Parks and the Velebit Nature Park. We presented and discussed our vision, plans and objectives for the area and explored further cooperation with these institutions.

By December, we nearly completed a lengthy process to purchase the majority of the shares in a newly established company (Lagosta d.o.o.) which owns a 17 000 hectare hunting concession. This will be a very relevant and significant development for our work in Velebit. Some important developments also took place relating to natural grazing and the Tauros breeding.

### Rewilding

- Further work was carried out to complete the negotiations for securing a 17 000 ha large hunting concession in the heart of the rewilding area including three offshore islands, called the Lagosta concession. The final steps are underway to open up the way for the signing of a final agreement and to start the rewilding and enterprise work in this area.
- In April, the 30 wild living Bosnian mountain horses in the natural grazing project in the Malo Libinje area gained company from a herd of 11 Boskarins. These are primitive Croatian cattle (5 cows, 5 heifers and 2 calves) that were brought into the area to mark the start of the Tauros breeding project in Velebit. By the end of 2014, the herd of Boskarin cows in Malo Libinje had 18 individuals. In September, two Sayaguesa bulls were added to the herd, as well as five Bosnian mountain horses.

\* Both species currently not regarded as native species by Croatian authorities.



- A European Wildlife Bank contract has been signed with two families holding grazing rights in Licko Polje, in Lika Plains. This is a huge plain (some 53 000 hectares) of abandoned grasslands that is part of the Natura 2000 network. Thanks to the agreement, at the end of November a herd of 22 Sayaguesa cattle were brought from Spain, starting a second Tauros breeding site in Velebit.
- In December 2014, unfortunately a tragedy occurred in Malo Libinje, with a person killed by one of the Sayaguesa bulls. These animals had been translocated from the Netherlands (where they were grazing in a larger herd in a public nature reserve with many visitors) to be part of the Tauros breeding programme in Velebit. At the time of writing of this Annual Review, the details of the tragedy are still not available to us.

### Enterprise

- The Velebit Mountains now champion REC with six loans provided in support of rewilding enterprises in the area. After Linden Tree Ranch & Retreat, Guslice & Melnice Honey, three more loans were granted (see also the general enterprise section in this Annual Review).
- The third and fourth loans were provided to 'Mons Baebius' Mountain Cottage to advertise

through a new website and a loan for Velebit was provided to Camp Ljubica (Wild Kingdoms). The latter is a low-cost campsite for high quality nature and wildlife focused products.

- A fifth and sixth REC are both linked to Lagosta: for the limited company, to start up the management and development of the area, and a loan for setting up a Rewilding Flycamp – a mobile tented camp, fully serviced and used for wild camping, run by local entrepreneurs.
- A business plan for Lagosta has been developed that will come into effect as part of the signed agreement. This will include wildlife restocking, creation of wildlife breeding zones, increasing wildlife densities and promoting wildlife watching.

### Communication

- Several factsheets (Tauros, Wild horses, ERN, REC, EWB and Bison) have been translated to Croatian and produced in hard copies. The Rewilding Velebit Facebook page has already more than 800 likes.
- At the end of the year, an attitude survey took place in the area, investigating the response of local people and stakeholders towards rewilding in general, and Rewilding Velebit in particular. The results of this survey will become available in 2015.



► Mons Baebius mountain cottage

*The Velebit rewilding area now champions Rewilding Europe Capital with six loans provided in support of rewilding enterprises of different kinds*



## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Guslice & Melnice: rewilding helps business, business supports rewilding

Pollination is a key ecological process in natural systems: more than 70% of flowering plant species rely on animal pollinators, primarily bees, for reproduction. Rewilding efforts to keep the grasslands open by the natural grazing of large herbivores contributes to the sustainability of this essential element of the ecosystem, because without bees there would be no fertilisation, thus no fruits and no seeds leading to widespread instability of our ecosystems.

Ines and Sanjin Žarković, honey producers in Velebit, were one of the first local entrepreneurs who received a Rewilding Europe Capital loan (30 000 euros in total). Rewilding Europe supports the family to expand their business and develop new products, including several types of honey, the breeding queen bees, and the collection of bee venom for medical use. These are products and activities

that all benefit rewilding processes. “Driven by our love of nature and bees, we started to explore bee keeping seven years ago and installed four bee hives next to our house. With learning by doing, our honey business grew and this was a great opportunity, because we needed a loan to develop it further,” Ines says.

The REC loan was secured after several meetings and discussions of their business plan. The support does not only have financial dimensions. “Rewilding Europe not only offered us financial help and a loan, but also provided us with business advice and promotion,” says Ines.

The relationship is reciprocal: Guslice & Melnice Honey contribute towards rewilding as the business has pledged 2.5% of their future total gross income to directly help support rewilding activities on Velebit.

Since receiving the REC loan Guslice & Melnice honey continued to develop their infrastructure, expanded their product line, developed several types and sizes of packaging with Rewilding Europe’s logo on their label, and are now also set to start the production of raw propolis and higher quantities of bee venom.

Ines and Sanjin are successfully selling their honey at many local and national festivals of natural products, in shops in central Zagreb, and online from their web page. Guslice & Melnice honey is also well known in the local community, and their gift packages are used for the promotion of the town of Senj. As Ines says: “Honey and rewilding – maintaining biodiversity and developing local business for the benefit of nature and people.”



## CENTRAL APENNINES

# The wild heart of Italy

### Setting

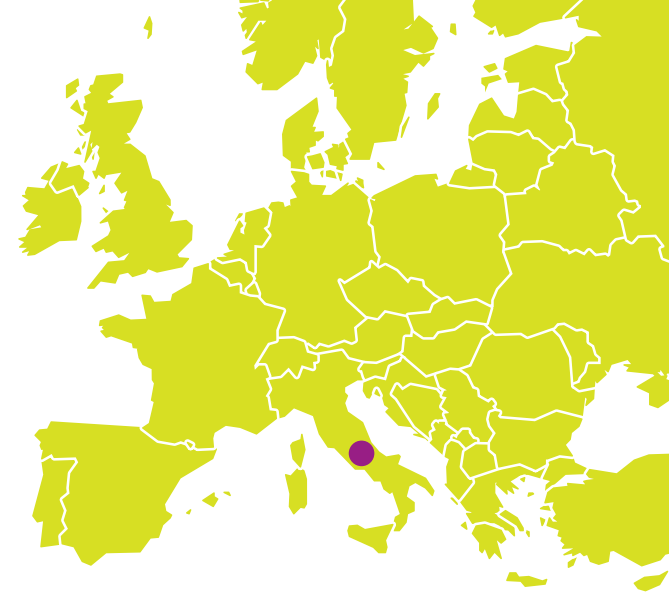
The Central Apennines, a majestic range of limestone peaks reaching an altitude of almost 3 000 meters, concealing caves, deep canyons, some of Europe's oldest beech forests and a wide range of grasslands – inhabited by the brown bear, wolf, wild cat, Apennine chamois, red deer, wild boar, golden eagle, vultures and an astonishing set of endemic species.

The Central Apennines is a vast natural area, with many reserves and Natura 2000 sites, like the Abruzzo and Majella National parks, the Gran Sasso-Monti della Laga National Park and the Monte Velino and Monte Sirente Regional Park. The Abruzzo National Park was one of the first national parks in Italy and Europe. It was created in 1923 with the purpose to protect species like the Marsican brown bear and the Apennine chamois, and it is also very famous outside Italy. More than 2 000 000 visitors are claimed to visit the area each year.

From all the way from the high plateau via the slopes to the foothills of the mountains, traditional livestock herding and mountain farming have been increasingly abandoned for socio-economic reasons and nature here has been left to a natural rewilding process. Vast areas have been allowed to become much wilder than before. Large herbivores, carnivores and scavengers are coming back in their natural numbers to this rich mosaic landscape.

### 10-year vision

The Central Apennines is now a true biodiversity hotspot, with real wilderness at the very heart of bustling Italy, only 1.5 hours from Rome. This proximity to an urban centre is something that inspires people in other natural areas to also use rewilding as a tool to create opportunities from the challenges they face.



### LOCAL REWILDING PARTNERS:



### TEAM LEADER:

Alberto Zocchi  
(Italy)



➤ Marsican brown bear habitat near Gioia dei Marsi

Vast areas have been allowed to become much wilder than before. Large herbivores, carnivores and scavengers are coming back in their natural numbers to this rich mosaic landscape. People, previously struggling to be able to remain in their villages through making a living in the traditional style, have now found new, additional or alternative sources of income from wildlife, wild nature and the potential of the wild.

A number of large core rewilding areas that have no-hunting zones, are connected through wildlife and wilderness corridors and surrounded by zones for different kinds and levels of sustainable use. This provides opportunities for truly Mediterranean wilderness experiences. Once again, large herds of red deer and chamois roam the grandiose landscapes. The wolf and bear are allowed to play their important roles in the ecosystem, influencing the movements and numbers of deer, wild boar, chamois, and providing the food base for the many scavenging species. Hundreds of griffon vultures soar the skies in search of carrion, followed by majestic bearded vultures that take care of the remaining bones.

The oak woodlands and grasslands are roamed by wild boar; lynx pursue Apennine chamois along the steep rocky cliffs, with golden eagles and choughs soaring above them. Rumbling streams are full of brook trout, patrolled by otters and wolves, and with large patches of endemic orchid species growing on their banks. A vast wild landscape is dotted by charming, thousand-year-old villages that fit perfectly into their natural surroundings, there is a unique mix of history, culture, gastronomy and nature which is attractive both to its inhabitants, as well as to its visitors from near and afar.

## General

The Central Apennines rewilding area was officially announced as the sixth rewilding area in our portfolio in October 2013. An association called 'Rewilding Apennines' was established in Italy, completely dedicated to the rewilding of this area according to the long-term vision and 3-Year Action Plan agreed with Rewilding Europe.

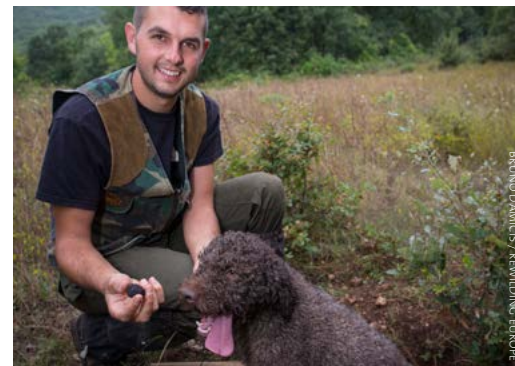
*The Central Apennines is a true biodiversity hotspot, with real wilderness and spectacular wildlife at the very heart of bustling Italy, only 1,5 hours from Rome – how unique is that!*

The rewilding strategy for the first three-year period aims at connecting the existing protected areas (Abruzzo, Lazio e Molise National Park and Sirente-Velino Regional Park) with corridors for large mammals, especially the brown bear, red deer and wolf. The strategy also includes an increase of the wildlife populations. At the same time, this area is one of the best spots in the whole region to see bears, wolves, red deer, roe deer and wild boar.

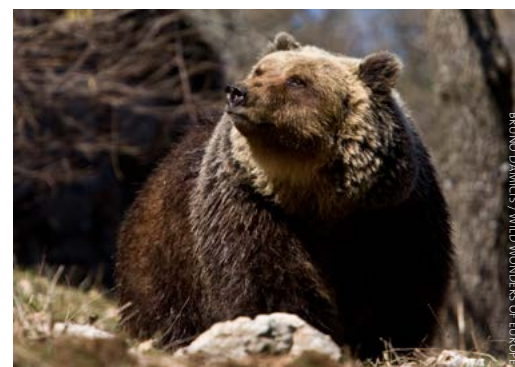
One of the main goals is to improve the situation for the Marsican brown bear; this work will be carried out in three communities strategically located at the northern border of the Abruzzo National Park, which is still a home to many of the only 50 remaining bears of this kind. Among the planned activities is a long-term lease of a critical area in order to eliminate existing problems with poisoning, poaching and transfer of disease from livestock.

## Rewilding

- The Municipality Council of Gioia dei Marsi officially agreed to sign an agreement with Rewilding Apennines to have direct control of a core area with a minimum surface of about 400 ha (Macrana Gorge and Gioia Vecchio area) used by the bears all year around (including denning).
- Also, an agreement between Rewilding Apennines, the municipality and the main livestock owner will be signed on the proper management of the pasture for livestock, the bears (and other wildlife) and tourism development. Rewilding Apennines is working to conclude these agreements in spring 2015.
- Three villagers hired as Bear Ambassadors were assigned to work in three communities regularly inhabited by bears. They are the 'eyes and ears' in the field by making observations, collecting information from third parties, checking possible bear damage and instances of poisoning. Since they started working, they have been managing and operating 10 camera traps, distributing project information leaflets to some 200 local stakeholders, interviewing 60 wildlife watching tourists, going on 16 patrolling



► Bear advocate Matteo Simonicca



► Marsican brown bear

missions and interviewing 5 livestock owners and 9 hunters where they introduced the project.

- There is a great need for their work, as was shown by a very unfortunate case that occurred where a bear was shot in Pettorano sul Gizio area, following the presence of three bears in the village causing some damage. This created a critical situation in the village and Rewilding Apennines was asked to support the installing of electric fences as a mitigation response. A number of 20 electric fences have now been purchased and are providing help in the community.
- To further reduce the road mortality of bears by spring 2015, works on the Gioia Vecchio – Pescasseroli and Pescasseroli – Opi road sections were completed with optical asphalt bands, panels & lights diverters, over a total of 35 km.
- Last but not least, an important milestone in the Central Apennines was the signing of a MoU with Abruzzo National Park in October, with the aim to cooperate on extending the bear ambassador network, developing wildlife watching possibilities inside the park, and further reducing road mortality of the Marsican brown bear.



➤ Central Apennines pansy, endemic in and around the Abruzzo National Park



➤ Apple and bear fest in Ortona dei Marsi

## Enterprise

- The Central Apennines has high potential for wildlife-tourism. Support of local entrepreneurs has started with the development of business plans for wildlife watching hides in several places.
- As a result, four REC deals have been completed, focusing on developing a new series

of wildlife and tourist products, a mountain cottage, two wildlife hides and a Rewilding Flycamp.

- Several tourism packages have been developed to attract visitors, focusing on the Municipality areas in connection with the Abruzzo National Park.

## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Wildlife Adventures: Wildlife watching creates incentive for rewilding the Central Apennines

Wildlife and adventure is an appealing combination for a business if you have a passion for experiences in wild nature. A young guy from the Central Apennines has made it his destiny – “Wildlife Adventures” – became the name of his tourist business. Umberto Esposito is an experienced mountain guide, a dedicated environmentalist, an experienced wildlife photographer and moreover, a passionate promoter of the wild beauty of the Central Apennines.

Born in the town of Pescasseroli in the heart of the picturesque Abruzzo Park, Umberto has explored the beautiful mountains in the area since his childhood. A close encounter with a brown bear family some ten years ago shaped his life and he made the courageous decision of becoming a professional guide. Since then he has been working towards his dream: to take people out to discover

“his” wild mountains. It was in 2009, Umberto started his company “Wildlife Adventures”, alongside managing two mountain refuges: “Prato Rosso”, a romantic hut in the middle of an old beech wood, and the stunning “Refugio del Falco” in the Molise sector of Abruzzo.

Rewilding is not only for nature, but also for people who truly understand and share its values, like Umberto. No surprise then, that Rewilding Europe supports him and his mission of life: to encourage more people to come to see the Central Apennines. Wildlife Adventures received the first Rewilding Europe Capital loan in the Central Apennines.

“In cooperation with Rewilding Apennines and through the REC loan I am improving the promotion of our activities with the aim to attract more international and Italian tourists to discover and experience

## Communication

- A ‘Bear and Apples’ festival was held in Ortona dei Marsi 11–12 October, which included stands for the sale apples and local products, the Wildlife Adventures company, hiking and biking activities (including an educational hike for young people), and a specific stand for the bear project. Around 300 people visited the festival.
- In addition, a conference on the Rewilding Apennines Bear Project in the area was organised with around 60 participants.
- An illustrated leaflet presenting the Rewilding Apennines initiative and the Marsican Brown bear Project was printed (+250 copies) and distributed in all the towns (administration centres, bars, restaurants, stores, travel agencies) within the rewilding area.
- Various media approached the team, and the area was featured in regional and national TV programmes and newspapers. A German TV mission broadcast a 25-minute programme about the area, people, wildlife and rewilding opportunities.
- The communication manager, who is a professional photographer, conducted a photo mission, resulting in many high quality images of the area and its landscapes, wildlife and people.



➤ Mountain guides Umberto Esposito and Carlo Vitale

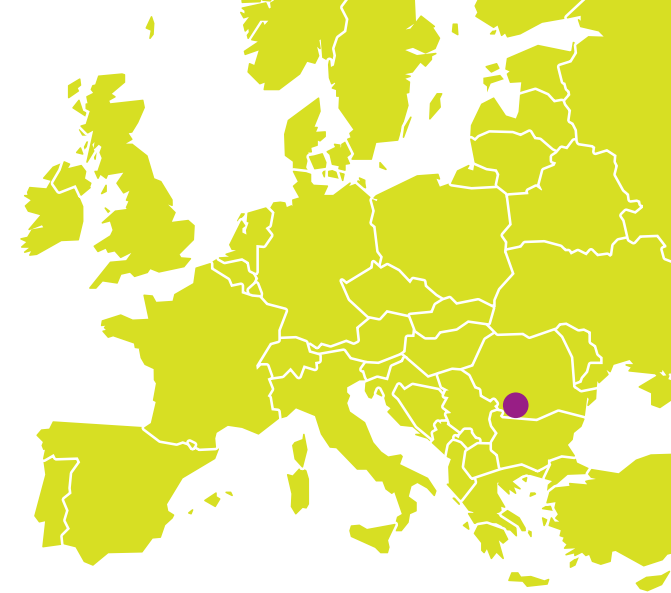
the unique nature of the Apennines,” says Umberto. More and more people discover the rare Marsican bear, deer, Apennine Chamois, the unforgettable flowers and scents of the Apennines all the year around.

Umberto concludes: “Showing nature tourists our special wildlife and beautiful nature, in special arrangements, will make the local people benefit from living with these wild animals and support their survival and return to the area, thus creating an incentive for rewilding the Central Apennines.”



## SOUTHERN CARPATHIANS

# A wilderness arc at the heart of Europe



### Setting

Like a huge green crescent, the Carpathians arc over an area of more than 20 million hectares, from the Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary and Poland in the north and northwest, via the Ukraine in the northeast, to Romania in the southeast and Serbia in southwest.

At the southern end of the mountains in Romania, an initiative is underway to create one of Europe's largest wilderness landscapes south of the Arctic Circle. With a backbone of more than a million hectares of protected areas already in place, rich wildlife, large intact forests, a high concentration of biodiversity, un-fragmented landscapes, wild rivers, and large mosaic landscapes kept open by sustainable farming practices, there is a unique opportunity to realise this vision.

The starting point is in three areas – the Tarcu Mountains Natura 2000 site with an extension to the east in Retezat National Park and north to the Rusca Montana-Tarcu-Retezat corridor Natura 2000 site, which together cover around 121 421 ha.

Ranging from the 2 509 m Peleaga Peak in Retezat Mountains to the Danube River at 150 m in the south, the area covers a wide variety of ecosystems – alpine meadows and grasslands, old beech and fir forests, steep cliff formations, and undulating mosaic landscapes with open grasslands intersected by woodlands (with a mixture of deciduous tree species, including oak) closer to the Danube. With dramatic, steep cliffs, deep canyons, waterfalls and untamed smaller rivers, it is a very attractive part of Romania and the Carpathians.

### LOCAL REWILDING PARTNERS:



### TEAM LEADER:

Adrian Hagatis  
(Romania)



› Hiker on limestone ridge in Mehedinți Plateau Geopark



➤ Bison truck arrives at the release site in the Tarcu mountains nature reserve



➤ Armeniș mayor Petru Vela and Frans Schepers from Rewilding Europe signing the contract about letting the bison out into their area, on the village old grazing grounds



➤ Alexandru Bulacu shows the quarantine area for the bison



➤ Bison branded local products

## 10-year vision

This unique area of old-growth forests, wild mountains and a mosaic of open and farmed landscapes has been established as one of the finest, wildest, largest, most well protected and famous wildlife and wilderness areas in this region.

The main wildlife attractions are European bison, red deer, chamois, bear, wolf, lynx, wild boar, eagles and griffon vulture, owls and capercaillie. The large carnivores are seen as a normal part of the fauna and are accepted by the community members in becoming attractions for the area, as well as other wildlife species.

In the core wilderness areas, natural ecological processes are allowed to a great extent regulate nature, with wildlife in fully natural densities and with all the original native wildlife species present. In these core areas, industrial usage of the landscapes has taken a clear step back, and humans are no longer actively managing the landscape or the wildlife.

The rewilding efforts are providing examples of new or additional ways to make a living here, based on the existence and the availability of the wild resources, attracting young and entrepreneurial people as well as many more visitors, contributing to increased incomes and new employment opportunities.

## General

All the work in this area concentrated on the preparations to start building up a free-roaming population of European bison in the Tarcu Mountains Natura 2000 area.

May 17 was the day when the release took place of the first groups of animals: 17 European bison were brought into a pre-release site in the Municipality of Armeniș, which has set aside a large part of their communal land for wildlife. The animals came from wildlife parks and breeding stations across Europe – from Sweden in the north to central Italy – in a complicated logistical operation, arranged by Rewilding Europe and its partner WWF-Romania. The bison that were brought in two big trucks came from sources in several European countries: Avesta Visentpark and Kolmårdens Djurpark in Sweden, Springe, Hardehausen and Hirschfeld Zoos in Germany, Parco Natura in Italy, Han-sur- in Belgium and Hateg in Romania.

The Dutch Postcode Lottery, The Swedish Postcode Lottery and Liberty Wildlife Fund provided the financial support, which made this amazing



bison reintroduction in the Southern Carpathians possible. The Municipality of Armeniș, where the animals were released, has been instrumental and is extremely supportive. Five different (local, regional and state) authorities in Romania provided support and the legal permission needed for the release.

## Rewilding

- Reintroduction of 17 European bison in Armeniș, with the fencing of a 150-hectare pre-release enclosure.
- With this first release, a completely new bison population is being established in an area that within ten years is planned to have a population of about at least 300 animals.
- A first-born calf, discovered in the herd on 30 June, unfortunately died due to an injury from an adult animal. Also, we lost three adults during the subsequent months; two of them were proven to have blue tongue as the cause of death.
- Due to this, we decided not to do a second release in 2014, and also not to as yet release the herd into the wild before wintertime. So we kept all animals in the pre-release area, and provided additional feeding.
- During winter, the animals improved their condition and no further casualties occurred. Wolf tracks were found in the pre-release area.

## Enterprise

- Locally hired people have been trained to take the role of bison rangers and the first bison guides. From the very beginning, even at a start in the acclimatisation and re-wilding zones, the bison have already begun to serve as an important regional tourist attraction, to help bring business opportunities and jobs to the local community.
- Different tour operators, tour enterprises and local guesthouses were identified and contacted regarding the opportunity to develop a wildlife tourism initiative in the Tarcu Mountains. The



► Moving towards freedom – bison release in Armeniș

first initiatives will be connected with the bison reintroduction.

- Two local bison rangers were contracted, providing the first jobs for local villagers.
- A Bison Visitor Centre has been established, from which several bison and nature related activities are organised, such as bison safaris.
- Other relevant non- tourism businesses that could be supported by the initiative were identified in the area.
- We have been working with tour operators to help develop itineraries for tourists to visit the area and see the bison, as well as other interesting features in the Southern Carpathians rewilding area.

## Communication

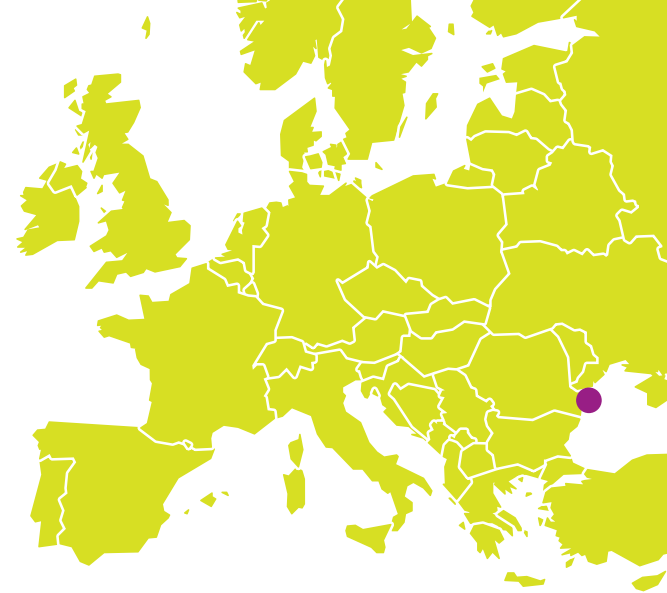
- More than 250 people gathered from far afield to take part in this huge wildlife release event on 17 May. Guests included the Deputy Minister of Environment, leaders from the state forestry company ROMSILVA, from hunting organisations and from the media across the globe. Local people from Armeniș village, led by their village priest and their Mayor Petru Vela, joined them.
- A lot of information and education materials have been developed to inform people about the bison, such as information panels and leaflets to inform local people on how to live with the bison in the area.
- The bison reintroduction generated a huge media outreach, most intense in the Romanian media itself but also in numerous other countries in Europe and beyond.

*With the first release of a herd of 17 animals, a completely new bison population is established in an area that within ten years is planned to have a population of at least 300 animals*



DANUBE DELTA

# Europe's unrivalled wetland



## Setting

The Danube Delta on the border between Romania and the Ukraine is outstanding in Europe – due to its size (over 500 000 ha), unexploited coastline (shaped by the Danube River and the Black Sea together), wide horizons, and large-scale landscapes without significant infrastructure. It also has the largest reed beds in the world, in addition to millions of nesting and migrating birds, many of them rare and some even globally endangered. The unique mosaic forest savannahs Letea and Caraorman Forests, situated in the Romanian section, are two of the few “primeval” forests of the country that have trees up to 700 years old.

As a result of the designation as UNESCO Biosphere Reserves by both the Romanian and Ukrainian governments, with some strictly protected core areas, the delta enjoys a high level of formal protection. Buffer areas and economic zones around these also provide opportunities for local developments without jeopardizing the natural environment.

## 10-year vision

The Danube Delta, the largest river delta wetland in Europe, has become one of the finest, wildest, best-protected and most famous wildlife areas of the whole continent.

The main wildlife attractions in the Danube Delta are red deer, fallow deer, beaver, golden jackal, wolf, European mink, wild horse, wild boar, pond terrapin and birds like the white-tailed eagle, lesser spotted eagle, white and Dalmatian pelican, many species of heron, black and white stork, great and pygmy cormorant, red-footed falcon and bee-eater. Three species of sturgeon are together with

LOCAL REWILDING PARTNERS:



TEAM LEADER:



Alexandra Panait  
(Romania)



› White pelican and yellow-legged gull waiting patiently for the fisherman to empty his net



► Traditional fishing with fyke net



► A large leech investigating a snail shell on the bottom of the Danube river



► Pool frog on a leaf of the yellow waterlily

Black Sea shad (locally called 'Danube herring') and Wels catfish some of the most important attractions among the fish species. Further explorations have been carried out to reintroduce other key stone wildlife species.

The ecological integrity of the Danube Delta ecosystem has been improved, and at the same time some of its vast areas have become much wilder than before. The Rewilding Europe initiative has firstly focused on the outer delta to achieve this. A number of large core rewilding areas that have no-hunting zones, are connected through

wildlife and wilderness corridors and surrounded by areas for different kinds and levels of sustainable use. In the core rewilding areas, nature is regulated to a great extent by natural ecological processes, with wildlife and fish in natural densities and with the original native species present. Some areas are run as community conservancies where local people have an important role in the sustainable management of the natural resources and development of their communities.

The rewilding process has also provided examples of new or additional ways to make a living,

based on these wild resources. In combination with sales of products from the surrounding areas where people still use the landscape in traditional, sustainable ways, this is a vital part of the income for people in the region.

## General progress

The main focus in the Danube Delta rewilding area in 2014 was to start up a number of pilot activities on rewilding and enterprise development. For rewilding, these were focused on the reintroduction of beaver and red deer, and the start of a Tauros breeding site. Also, a pilot for sustainable fisheries was developed, through the local fishing association. All these pilots prepared well, however before the closing of the year we did not manage to start them up due to complications in governance and the decision making processes. The Danube Delta is a challenging area to work in, because of many governance layers and institutions that all have a role and say in such processes.

However, we are determined to move forward and work on various opportunities and alternatives; we are currently reviewing our strategies and possible actions for the years to come. Also, our cooperation with WWF Danube Carpathian Programme has been reviewed and we have proposed a number of changes to further strengthen our cooperation and ability to deliver results. Our contacts with the Ministry of Environment and a number of other key stakeholders (including local communities, entrepreneurs, individuals) are encouraging us to move forward.

## Rewilding

- Although the feasibility study for the reintroduction of beaver is positive about bringing back this species to the delta, the Scientific Committee of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority did not conclude positively about this reintroduction.
- We have now started a different approach to find the necessary support, which is monitoring and collecting data to propose conservation measures for the recently discovered presence of this protected species just upstream of Tulcea, in the Somova-Parches lakes network. It shows that the species is already present in the area and could spontaneously colonize the Danube Delta, if supported and allowed.
- The feasibility study for reintroduction of red deer in the Caraorman Forest has been finalized.



The results of this study are positive as well, however the report concluded the area could only have very low densities of red deer. We have worked on a reintroduction plan and have submitted a formal application for this important step.

- After a long negotiation process, we did not yet reach a final agreement to start a Tauros breeding site with Casla Vadanei (a small cattle breeders association that owns around 450 head of cattle and has grazing rights). However, the Tauros Programme start-up was postponed for 2015, which will be connected with an enterprise development initiative on the communal land of Sfantu Gheorghe village.

### Enterprise

- The first REC loan for the Danube Delta was prepared and agreed for Jenica Dimanche Pension, a guesthouse and wildlife tour provider (principally for bird watching), located in Sfantu Gheorghe village.
- A second and third possible REC loan related to a Tauros breeding project and sustainable fisheries business have not been concluded,

*The Danube Delta is a challenging area to work in, because of many governance layers and institutions that all have a role in decision making processes*

due to negotiations still ongoing on these enterprises.

- Three small workshops were organised with the members of the Sfantu Gheorghe community. They covered basic information and knowledge about the incredible bird diversity in the Danube Delta, and the link between tourism and conservation, how to set up and operate a photographic hide, and how to host wildlife tourists or deliver wildlife guiding.

### Communication

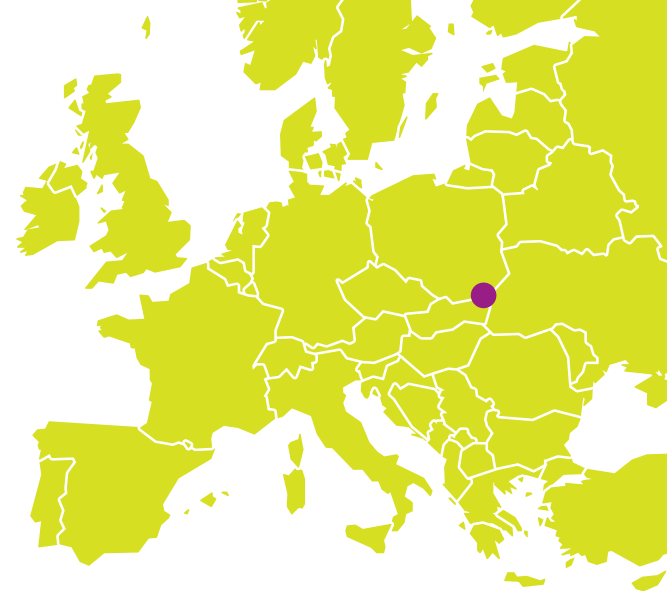
- During a 3-day monitoring effort an occupied beaver lodge was found, and trap cameras were installed to film the beavers. This revealed interesting results, showing a beaver family with young. This was communicated widely in Romania, creating a lot of media interest and support for the comeback of the species.

- Communication activities included setting up a Facebook page called 'Rewilding Romania' (also including the Southern Carpathians), the photo exhibition "Fresh Perspectives on the Danube Delta" launched in partnership with the Pelicam Film Festival (13–15 June) and publicity around the discovery and the monitoring of the beaver small population just upstream Tulcea.
- The touring "Fresh perspectives on the Danube Delta" photo exhibition shows in 40 images taken by Magnus Lundgren, Florian Möllers, Staffan Widstrand and Cristian Mititelu-Răileanu, covering the underwater world, aerial landscapes and the daily stories of the people living in the Delta. The photo exhibition has also toured to Covasna County and Tulcea during the last months, and in December was presented in Bucharest as part of the Business Days Events. We also used the opportunity here to also promote the Rewilding Europe Travel Club.



## EASTERN CARPATHIANS

# One of Europe's top wildlife areas



### Setting

The Eastern Carpathians – a triangular area situated on the border area of Poland, Slovakia and the Ukraine – is one of the wildest corners of Europe: vast, extensive forests with untamed rivers, low undulating mountains with scattered alpine meadows, and pockets of old-growth forests.

Here one of Europe's largest free-ranging populations of bison lives side by side with red deer, roe deer, wild boar, lynx, wolves, bears, beavers and otters. Few other regions of the continent have more protected areas than the Eastern Carpathians – in total around half a million hectares of national parks, biosphere reserves, forest reserves, landscape parks, nature parks and Natura 2000 sites.

### 10-year vision

The unbroken ecological integrity of the region has been secured; while at the same time large parts have become much wilder. The wild values of the Eastern Carpathian ecosystems are better preserved, with a number of well protected, large core wilderness and rewilding areas that have no-hunting and no-logging regimes. These are connected via wildlife and ecological corridors and surrounded by buffer and transition areas for different kinds and levels of sustainable use.

In the core wilderness areas, ecological processes to a great extent regulate nature, with wildlife in natural densities and with a range of native species present. In these core areas the human usage of the landscape has taken a clear step back and the management principles are based on nature managing itself to a high degree.

### LOCAL REWILDING PARTNERS:



### TEAM LEADER:

**Katarzyna Wasiak**  
(Poland)



➤ Artist's vision of the Eastern Carpathians rewilding area



► *European bison roaming freely in the Bieszczady forest*



► *Dormouse*



► *Orange hawkweed*



► *Bison release event in the Bieszczady Mountains, 19 December*

The rewilding efforts are providing examples of new or additional ways to make a living here, based on the existence and the availability of the wild resources, such as the rich wildlife, local products and culture. In combination with sales of the products from the surrounding areas, where people still use the landscape in traditional or other sustainable ways, this new economy has shown itself to be an important part of the future for people in the area. This has also gone hand in hand with socio-economic development, providing new opportunities and attracting young and entrepreneurial people. These contribute to increased incomes and new employment opportunities in the region, as well as expanding the tourism offers in the area and extending the duration of tourist seasons.

### General progress

Starting in November 2013, we have worked hard to re-establish the Eastern Carpathians rewilding area as it was put on hold since early that year. An important step was to build working relationships with key authorities in the area, in particular the Bieszczady National Park Authority in Ustrzyki Górne and the State Forest Department in Krosno.

An important milestone in this process was the signing of an Agreement of Cooperation with Bieszczady National Park (BNP) Authority on 17 June in Lutowiska, Poland, witnessed by the entire Scientific Board of the National Park.

Although an MoU with the State Forest has not yet been concluded, the commitment of the National Park was an important condition for us to restart the work on the Polish side. The main areas of cooperation between Rewilding Europe and the park authority are, amongst others:

- 1) Experimental study on the influence of free-living herds of Polish Konik on non-forest ecosystems in the Upper San Valley.
- 2) Participation in the European bison restoration program in the Upper San Valley, after a period of quarantine associated with the occurrence of tuberculosis.
- 3) Exploring the possibilities of a European bison reintroduction in Uzhansky NP in the Ukraine.
- 4) Exploring the possibility of improving the conditions for the altitudinal migration of wildlife between areas of BNP and State Forests, especially in the Upper and Lower San valleys.
- 5) Exploring funding opportunities for the recycling of biomass generated due to maintenance of non-forest ecosystems in BNP.





GRACJAN LISIENSKI

*The cooperation agreement with the Bieszczady National Park authority was an important step to allow for re-starting this rewilding area with a completely new and motivated local team*

So, for the restart of this rewilding area we have decided to commence on the Polish side only; the Slovakian side and possibly the Ukraine will be added when timing is appropriate.

Alongside the efforts to establish partnerships with the authorities, we have also been able to form a new team that has become responsible for the work. In the second part of the year, this new team started working. The main focus was on restarting this rewilding area, including planning exercises and building good working relationships with key stakeholders in the area. In December, a first tangible rewilding step was taken.

### Rewilding

- After their transportation in November from the Swedish Eriksberg Wildlife Park, two European bison females were brought to an acclimatization enclosure at Wola Michowa in the forest district of Komańcza (Bieszczady Mountains) for about a month.
- Two bulls, which were relocated from the demonstration enclosure at Muczne run by the Polish State Forest, were brought to the area to build a group with the two females.
- On 17 December they were released into the wild, with the attendance of the main stakeholders and a lot of media attention at a special release ceremony. New individuals will help to reduce the degree of inbreeding and making the herd more viable in the long term.

### Enterprise

- During this first half-year, we have not yet started with enterprise development activities; apart from exploring the potential of this area in particular for wildlife related tourism.

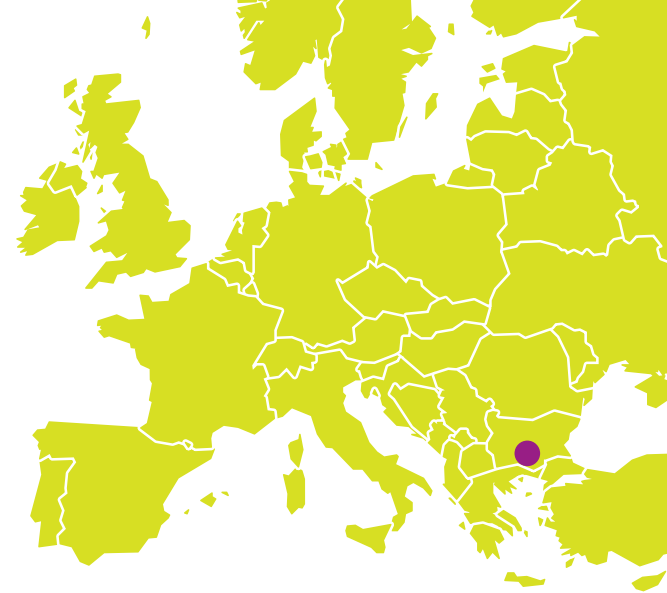
### Communication

- The release of the bison symbolized the official re-start of the Eastern Carpathians rewilding area, with some good communication and outreach to local stakeholders and media in the region and even at the national level.
- A Facebook page was started, to create awareness and support for this new rewilding area. It soon had a lot of followers.
- A selection of high quality images from a famous nature photographer was purchased for communication purposes on the Eastern Carpathians.



## RHODOPE MOUNTAINS

# Raptor paradise in wild borderland



### Setting

The rewilding area covers the Rhodope Mountains in Bulgaria, which are geographically connected to the southern slopes of the Rhodope and Orvilos Mountains in Greece, and to the west reaching the northern Pirin and Rila National Parks. Hence the project region forms the core of the Rila-Rhodopean Mountain Massive – the largest compact mountain formation in the Balkans extending over more than or 4 million hectares.

Although geographically connected the Rhodope, the Slavyanka and Southern Pirin Mountains are quite distinct. The landscape ranges from the Aegean Sea near Porto Lagos to 2 212 m asl at the highest peak in the Slavyanka mountains. The region contains the oldest land on the Balkan Peninsula – the Western Rhodope. This diverse physical geography predetermines the rich and specific biodiversity of the region.

Especially characteristic is the high plant diversity with more than 50% of the Bulgarian vascular flora, giving the Rila-Rhodopean massive the status as one of the most important on the whole Balkan Peninsula.

The fauna of the Rila-Rhodopean massive is also impressive – it is inhabited by 13 of all 19 species of amphibians occurring in Bulgaria, 30 of 37 species of reptiles, 293 of the total of 431 species of birds, and most of the Bulgarian mammals. Especially striking is the high concentration of raptor and bat species. Thirty-six of the thirty-eight species of Europe's raptors can be found in the Rhodope Mountains, with the Eastern Rhodopes having one of the highest aggregation of diurnal raptors in the whole of Europe. In total twenty-seven of Europe's 36 species of bats are also found in the region.

### LOCAL REWILDING PARTNERS:



### TEAM LEADER:

**Stoycho Stoychev**  
(Bulgaria)



► Artist's vision of the Rhodope Mountains rewilding area



STEFAN WIDSTÄND / REWILDING EUROPE

The wild mountains are inhabited by many rare species of European and global significance such as the black, griffon and Egyptian vultures, the golden, white-tailed and imperial eagles, the black stork, brown bear, wolf, otter, Balkan chamois, suslik, wall creeper, eagle owl, and Apollo butterfly.

For the first phase of Rewilding Rhodope Mountains, it has been decided to focus on the eastern part covering a total area of 1.4 million hectares, with about 250 000 ha identified as important for conservation in Bulgaria alone.

### 10-year vision

The eastern Rhodope Mountains, comprising of a mosaic of open landscapes, oak and beech forests as well as rocky slopes and cliffs, have become one of the most exciting wild areas in south eastern Europe. The area is mostly regulated by ecological processes, in which wildlife thrives in natural densities. In combination with some of the old traditions and local products, this new landscape creates new sources of income and pride for the people who live here and for Bulgaria as a country. The experience of the Rhodope Mountain rewilding area inspires

## *The rewilding efforts in the Rhodope Mountains will build on the achievements of the former New Thracian Gold project which was active between 2009 and 2014*

people in adjacent areas that have similar natural settings, to also approach their problems and opportunities using rewilding as a tool.

The unbroken ecological integrity of the region has been secured while at the same time large parts have become much wilder. Large core rewilding areas are connected through wildlife corridors, and are surrounded by small transition and buffer zones, where people still use the landscape in traditional ways.

The Rhodope Mountains will become wilder containing larger zones where the full range of native species is back in place. The management principle practiced in all core areas is based on allowing for the natural processes and letting nature manage itself to a high degree.

The Rhodope Mountains have attracted young

people, for whom it provides business opportunities based on these wild values, local products and culture, thereby contributing to its future. The negative spiral of land abandonment, loss of biodiversity and diminishing local culture has turned into new prosperity, attracting and inspiring many visitors from outside the region, and thereby increasing the variety of the total tourism offer of Bulgaria and also extending the country's tourist season.

### General progress

The Rhodope Mountains were officially included in our portfolio by a decision of the Supervisory Board of Rewilding Europe in June; however it took until November until we officially announced the 7<sup>th</sup> rewilding area to the larger public.



➤ Griffon vulture



➤ Grey wolf in front of a wildlife hide in Studen Kladenets



➤ Villagers in the Arda river valley

The concept of rewilding is already quite well known in this area. The efforts here will build on the experiences from and achievements by the New Thracian (NTG) project, which was active in the Eastern Rhodopes between 2009 and 2014, where ARK Nature and the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB) were the key partners.

To date, among the main achievements of NTG are the successful reintroductions and restocking of large grazing mammals like red deer, Konik horses, Karakachan horses and fallow deer as well

as a grazing experiment with European bison. This has led to around 55 Konik now roaming freely in two sites, and more than 50 fallow deer and 20 red deer roaming three sites here. The NTG project also produced an Eastern Rhodopes nature travel map, a Nature Travel Guidebook for wildlife lovers (Crossbill Guide) that covers both the Bulgarian and Greek parts of the Eastern Rhodopes and a Trans-Rhodope biking and hiking tourist map, all in order to promote the area as a quality nature tourism destination.

The second half of 2014 was a 'bridging period', where the team covered work between the end of the New Thracian Gold Project, until the new start of the project as 'Rewilding Rhodopes' in January 2015. A new foundation called 'Rewilding Rhodopes' has become the local legal entity responsible for the rewilding work in the Rhodope Mountains. This new foundation has been transformed from the former NTG Foundation and has been formally registered in Bulgaria.

## Rewilding

- One of the activities was preparing the restocking of fallow and red deer. Agreements have been signed recently with two hunting associations for the restocking of 60 fallow deer in Chernoochene and Tintyava areas. By the end of 2014, more than 40 individuals were captured and transported to an enclosure, to be released into the wild. The team is working on similar agreements for the restocking of red deer.
- Another activity in the bridging period was the continuation of building up wild horse herds, both Konik and Karakachan breeds. At his moment there are more than 80 horses grazing in five different sites.
- Through wildlife cameras, animals already translocated to Studen Kladenetz reserve are being monitored. A first internship with a student from Lithuania has helped the team with monitoring activities on European bison (two animals) and the Konik herds.

## Enterprise

- During the bridging period, we have not yet started with enterprise development activities; apart from exploring the potential of this area in particular for wildlife related tourism.

## Communication

- On the 13th November, we publically announced that the Rhodope Mountains have become part of the Rewilding Europe initiative. This was well received in much of the media, in particular in Bulgaria.
- A new 'Rewilding Rhodopes' Facebook page was set up and maintained, which already has 700+ likes, while the public announcement of the project generated a lot of positive publicity in Bulgaria.

# Financial overview 2014

## Introduction

The accompanying summary of consolidated financial statements, which comprise the consolidated statement of financial position as at 31 December 2014, the consolidated statement of income and expenses for the year 2014, changes in both restricted and unrestricted reserves and related notes, are derived from the audited consolidated financial statements of Stichting Rewilding Europe for the year ending 31 December 2014.

PWC have audited these accounts and have expressed an unmodified audit opinion on those consolidated financial statements in their report dated 8 April 2015. The Rewilding Europe Supervisory Board officially accepted this report on that same date. The consolidated financial statements and the summary consolidated financial statements do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequently to the date of the audit report on these statements.

These summary consolidated financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the Dutch Civil Law (Book 2, Chapter 9). Therefore, reading these summary financial statements is not a substitute for reading the audited consolidated financial statements of Rewilding Europe. The detailed Rewilding Europe financial statements 2014 are available upon request.

## Background

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Dutch Law Book 2 Chapter 9 and the Guidelines of the Dutch Accounting Standards Board (RJ650). All amounts are in Euros.

The consolidation accounts comprise the fully consolidated information for Stichting Rewilding Europe and its wholly owned subsidiaries in which Stichting Rewilding Europe has majority control (Rewilding Europe B.V. and Rewilding Europe-Velebit d.o.o). The financial statements of the parent and its subsidiaries are combined on a line by adding together like items of assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses. Intercompany transactions and intercompany balances have been eliminated.



## Income

Rewilding Europe realised a total income in 2014 of €1 434 784, which was slightly lower than in 2013, when the total income was €1 791 180. However, a significant carry-forward was allocated on top of this income, as can be seen from the expenses section of this summary. The breakdown of income in comparison with the budget and last year is as follows:

	2014	Budget 2014	2013
Income from own fundraising	458 271	207 500	505 000
Income from third party fundraising	945 030	917 933	1 253 685
Other income	9 602	5 000	2 585
Interest and similar income	21 881	18 100	29 910
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1 434 784</b>	<b>1 148 533</b>	<b>1 791 180</b>

## Overall expenses

In 2014, Rewilding Europe spent €2 069 408 on its activities, which includes an amount of €634 624 that was spent from funds received in previous years and is captured in the reserves on Rewilding Europe's balance sheet. This reflects the momentum that was gained especially in the rewilding areas, after a year of re-planning in 2013.

The 2014 expenditure is broken down into the following categories, which are explained further below:

	2014	Budget 2014	2013
Rewilding area allocations	985 153	943 213	300 447
Rewilding activities	188 166	258 125	376 077
Communication & marketing activities	142 620	178 425	375 228
Enterprise & development	201 514	227 548	215 557
Management, development & administration	457 457	397 077	300 462
Trainings and seminars	46 100	10 000	48 230
Travel costs	48 010	56 000	39 054
Interest and similar expenses	388	0	231
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>2 069 408</b>	<b>2 070 388</b>	<b>1 655 286</b>

## Rewilding area allocations

On top of the six active rewilding areas, the Rhodope Mountains were added to the portfolio as a seventh area starting July 2014. Besides these, for an additional two areas an explorative start-up phase was begun (the Odra Delta and Greater Laponia). These developments led to a significant increase in expenditure in the rewilding areas to a total of €985 153, meaning 48% of the overall expenses (compared to 18% in 2013). The graph below shows the distribution of expenses for the seven rewilding areas and two pipeline areas. The achieved results of each of the areas are explained on page 40–67 of this Annual Review.

	2014	2013
Western Iberia	199 880	24 469
Velebit	231 869	55 268
Southern Carpathians	208 810	100 354
Eastern Carpathians	44 819	0
Danube Delta	55 216	105 556
Central Appennines	166 719	14 800
Rhodope Mountains	37 511	0
Odra Delta	17 770	0
Greater Laponia	22 559	0
	<b>985 153</b>	<b>300 447</b>

## Rewilding area support

The Rewilding Europe Central Team provides important support services to the rewilding areas. For instance, through a number of overarching initiatives that are instrumental in the success of the rewilding areas. This relates to rewilding, enterprise development, marketing and communication. The total expenses for this work were €532 300 and equated to 26% of the overall expenses.

This central support work is explained in the general section of this Annual Review (on page 14–39). The main work concentrates around the European Wildlife Bank, Rewilding Europe Capital, European Rewilding Network and the technical support that is provided by experts from the central team towards the now seven rewilding areas.

## Travel and training in support of rewilding areas

In 2014 a total of €94 110 was spent on costs for travel by Central Team members to the rewilding areas for supporting activities and on training and seminars in support of the areas (such as the annual Round Table meeting).

## Management, development and administration

Expenses for management, development and administration only include those activities that are dedicated to both strategic and operational levels of the initiative, such as daily management, strategic planning, finance and operations, fundraising, board meetings, etc. The total expenses for management and administration were €457 457, which equates to 22% of the overall expenses.

## Reserves

During the years 2011–2014, Rewilding Europe received a number of funds restricted to certain purposes. To some extent these funds are spent over a number of years and therefore are carried forward as part of an appropriated reserve. In addition, Rewilding Europe has allocated €500 000 of a grant of the Dutch Postcode Lottery into its Rewilding Europe Capital fund. Since this money is used for debt finance, this remains on the foundation's balance sheet. As of 2014, this is reported separately as a dedicated appropriated reserve.

The balance of the appropriated reserve at year-end 2014 was €663 428, consisting of €500 000 for Rewilding Europe Capital and €163 428 for the rewilding areas. This amount was not yet spent to the purposes set by the Board of Directors and is appropriated to planned deliverables in 2015.

## Fundraising

As a young initiative, Rewilding Europe is completely dependent on donor income. In 2014, 98% of funds came from own or third party fundraising, i.e. donor income. In order to establish a level of funding security on which Rewilding Europe can budget with confidence and with a balanced mix of funding sources, Rewilding Europe has developed a fundraising strategy. This strategy works to a targeted income of approximately 2.5 million per year as of 2015 to cover both central level costs and rewilding area costs, for a 10-year period, as per the objectives of the initiative. As an important part of this strategy, Rewilding Europe has applied for three large EU-Life programmes and is working to strengthen its funding base with new financial partners.

## Consolidated statement of income and expenses for the year 2014

	2014		Budget 2014		2013	
	€	€	€	€	€	€
Income from own fundraising		458 271		207 500		505 000
Income from third party fundraising		945 030		917 933		1 253 685
Other income		9 602		5 000		2 585
Interest and similar income		21 881		18 100		29 910
<b>Total income</b>		<b>1 434 784</b>		<b>1 148 533</b>		<b>1 791 180</b>
Rewilding area allocations		985 153		943 213		300 447
Rewilding activities		188 166		258 125		376 077
Communication & marketing activities		142 620		178 425		375 228
Enterprise & development		201 514		227 548		215 557
Management & administration		457 457		397 077		300 462
Training and seminars		46 100		10 000		48 230
Travel costs		48 010		56 000		39 054
Interest and similar expenses		388		0		231
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>2 069 408</b>		<b>2 070 388</b>		<b>1 655 286</b>
<b>Net income and expenses</b>		<b>-634 624</b>		<b>-921 855</b>		<b>135 894</b>

### NET INCOME AND EXPENSES OF -634 624 EUROS:

	€
Withdrawn from: Appropriated reserve	-481 498
Withdrawn from: Other reserve	-153 126
<b>Total</b>	<b>-634 624</b>

\* Within the original 2014 budget an amount of €435 000 was budgeted as Rewilding Europe Capital (REC) loan allocations. However, since these are recorded as financial fixed assets on the balance sheet, this amount has been excluded from the rewilding area allocations budget line.

## Consolidated balance sheet as at 31 December 2014

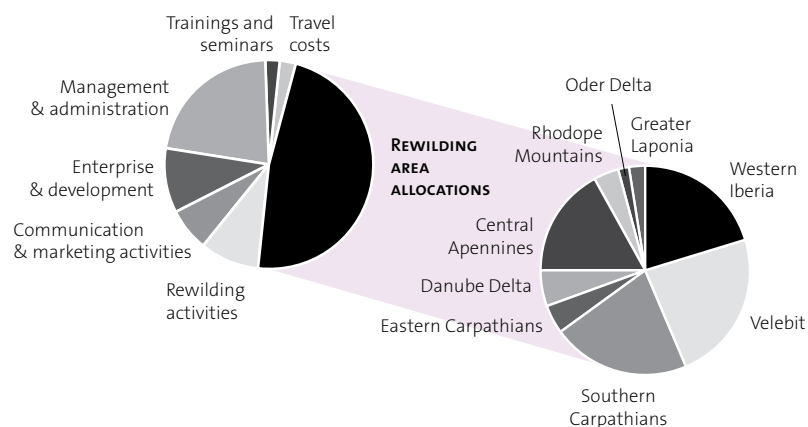
(after appropriation of net income and expenses)

ASSETS	31-12-2014		31-12-2013	
	€	€	€	€
<b>Fixed assets</b>				
Tangible fixed assets		9 426		3 604
Financial fixed assets		162 061		65 418
		171 487		69 022
<b>Current assets</b>				
Receivables				
Debtors		0		525
Other receivables and accrued assets		484 370		442 941
		484 370		443 466
Cash and banks		394 933		1 056 692
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>1 050 790</b>		<b>1 569 180</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
		€	€	€
<b>Reserves</b>		710 339		1 344 966
<b>Short-term liabilities</b>				
Amounts owed to credit institutions		0		0
Creditors		87 314		109 170
Other liabilities and accrued expenses		253 137		115 044
		340 451		224 214
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>1 050 790</b>		<b>1 050 790</b>

## Reserves

	Appropriated reserve	REC	Other reserve	Total
	€	€	€	€
Balance as at 1 January 2014	644 926	500 000	153 126	1 344 966
Appropriated result	-481 498	0	0	-634 624
<b>Balance as at 31 December 2014</b>	<b>163 428</b>	<b>500 000</b>	<b>200 039</b>	<b>710 341</b>

## DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENSES





## THE REWILDING EUROPE TEAM

In 2014, the Rewilding Europe Team had no less than 52 people involved in the initiative: Supervisory Board (5), Special Advisors (2), Executive Board (2), Central Team members (11), External Advisors (4) and rewilding team members (28). All in all, in 2014 Rewilding Europe was working from 15 different European countries. An overview of all the Rewilding Europe team members of 2014 is presented below, including their position and the country they are working from.

### SUPERVISORY BOARD



**Wiet de Bruijn**  
chairman  
(The Netherlands)



**Pierre-Andre Mourgue d'Algue**  
member (until 1 Aug)  
(Switzerland)



**Professor Henrique M. Pereira**  
member  
(Portugal)



**Odile Rodríguez de la Fuente**  
member  
(Spain)



**Lena Linden**  
member  
(as of 11 December)  
(Sweden)

### SPECIAL ADVISORS



**Princess Laurentien van Oranje**  
(The Netherlands)



**Dr Claude Martin**  
(Switzerland)

### SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM



**Frans Schepers**  
Managing Director  
(The Netherlands)\*



**Ilko Bosman**  
Finance & Operations Director  
(The Netherlands)\*



**Staffan Widstrand**  
Marketing & Communications Director  
(Sweden)



**Wouter Helmer**  
Rewilding Director  
(The Netherlands)



**Neil Birnie**  
Enterprise Director  
(United Kingdom)



**Deli Saavedra**  
Regional Manager  
(Spain)



**Colinda Vergeer**  
Regional Manager  
(Netherlands)

\*Executive Directors

### CENTRAL TEAM

**Violeta Giurgi**  
Finance & administration manager  
(The Netherlands)

**Kristjan Jung**  
Communications manager  
(Estonia)

**Iva Tontcheva**  
Communications manager  
(Bulgaria)

**Matthew McLuckie**  
Enterprise development manager  
(United Kingdom)

**Simon Collier**  
Wildlife tourism manager  
(The Netherlands)

**Yvonne Kemp**  
Coordinator European Rewilding Network  
(The Netherlands)

### WESTERN IBERIA

Spain, until 1 August:

**Carlos Sanchez**  
Team leader

**Diego Benito**  
Rewilding officer

**Carlota Pérez Ruiz**  
Communications officer

Portugal:

**Pedro Prata**  
Team leader  
(as of 1 May)

**João Quadrado**  
Rewilding officer  
(until 1 April)

**Alice Gama**  
Enterprise officer

**Antonio Monteiro**  
Project coordinator

**Barbara Pais**  
Communications officer

### VELEBIT

Croatia:

**Davor Krmpotic**  
Team leader

**Milan Nekić**  
Rewilding officer

**Mei Elderadzi**  
Communications officer

**Tanya Krk**  
Volunteer

### DANUBE DELTA

Romania:

**Alexandra Panait**  
Team leader

**Cristian Tetelea**  
Project coordinator

**Cristian Mititelu**  
Rewilding officer

**Ioana Cenusă**  
Communications officer

### SOUTHERN CARPATHIANS

Romania:

**Adrian Hagatis**  
Team leader

**Anca Georgescu**  
Communications officer

**Alexandru Bulacu**  
Rewilding officer

**Adrian Grancea**  
Rewilding officer

### CENTRAL APENNINES

Italy:

**Alberto Zocchi**  
Team leader

**Bruno D'Amicis**  
Communications officer

**Manuela Osmi**  
Fundraising and administration

### RHODOPE MOUNTAINS

Bulgaria:

**Stoycho Stoychev**  
Team leader

**Stefan Avramov**  
Rewilding Officer

**Hristo Hristov**  
Rewilding Officer

**Iva Tontcheva**  
Communication Officer

**Ada Kartanaite**  
Volunteer  
(Lithuania)

### EXTERNAL ADVISORS

**Magnus Sylvén**  
Advisor Rewilding  
(Switzerland)

**Giles Davies**  
Advisor Business  
(France)

**Joep van de Vlasakker**  
Advisor Wildlife  
(Belgium)

**Annette Mertens**  
Advisor Public Fundraising  
(Italy)



SUPPORT

# How can you become involved in Rewilding Europe?

To reach its full potential, Rewilding Europe is looking for partnerships with conservation organizations, public or private institutions, foundations, companies and private individuals to help us make Europe a wilder place. We welcome contributions of all kinds – pro-bono work, joint PR and marketing efforts, financial investment in conservation enterprises, donations, grants, media coverage, presentation possibilities at conferences and seminars, land donations, practical services, sponsorships and business partnerships.

Maybe you yourself or your organization or company would be interested? If you have the desire to make a difference for wildlife, wild nature and local people in our rewilding areas, we would really like to talk to you about it. Rewilding Europe can offer you many different possibilities in which to do this, including becoming personally involved in a project, if you would like to. Here are some options:

## Become a strategic partner

Organizations, public or private institutions, foundations, companies and private individuals which have the ability and desire to make a substantial and long-term impact on a wilder Europe, are invited to become a strategic partner. Strategic partners believe in our approach and their contributions have a substantial and long-lasting impact



› As a strategic partner or major donor, you can be invited to attend a bison release...



› ...or a birdwatching trip in the Danube Delta...



› ...or stay in one of the attractive accommodations like the Linden Tree Retreat & Ranch in Velebit

on the success of Rewilding Europe. Funding contributions from strategic partners typically exceed €100 000 per year, for a period of minimum 2 or 3 years.

### Become a major donor

Major donors to Rewilding Europe are individuals, foundations or NGOs who have the means to engage with us at a substantial level. Funding contributions start from €10 000 a year, and make a substantial difference to one of our projects, our portfolio in general, or a specific activity or component of Rewilding Europe.

### Become a donor

These are primarily corporate entities and individuals who are prepared to donate €1 000 or more on an annual basis to our conservation work, typically focused on activities in one of our projects.

### Invest in rewilding enterprises: Rewilding Europe Capital

Rewilding Europe is supporting the development of conservation-based businesses across our project areas and beyond. We identify relevant local entrepreneurs and businesses, welcoming any opportunity to introduce them to environmentally

minded investors or potential business partners.

For this purpose, we have launched 'Rewilding Europe Capital' which allows private individuals, companies and environmentally minded investors to help Rewilding Europe Capital to grow. This, we hope, will serve as a precursor to a larger and more conventional conservation investment fund model as the initiative builds momentum and an investment track record. If you are interested in these opportunities, we invite you to contact us for more details.

### Contribute to the wildlife comeback

Rewilding Europe is setting up a European Wildlife Bank, to boost the numbers of wildlife in the rewilding areas, in particular large herbivores such as red deer, European bison, chamois, Spanish ibex, wild horses and wild bovines. This is a very innovative mechanism that has been proven to work already at national levels and will now be scaled up to the European level. You can join us in the European Wildlife Bank, by supporting the purchase, translocation or management of animals.

### Donation details

You can choose to donate through the tax-efficient funding structures that have been set up for Rewilding Europe in the Netherlands, as a not-for-profit

foundation. For further information on donations to Rewilding Europe, you are welcome to contact us. We will do everything we can to match your support with your ideas and desires.

### What can Rewilding Europe offer you?

- As an important supporter of Rewilding Europe, you are invited to visit any of the rewilding areas and we would be delighted to show you the rewilding work done on the ground.
- Depending on your level of contribution, you will also be invited to participate in exciting conservation activities, such as the translocation of animals, research work or European wildlife and wilderness safaris.
- As a strategic partner, you will be invited to an annual gathering of like-minded individuals where we will provide you with insights into conservation issues across Europe.
- We will offer individuals or companies who make a significant contribution, the opportunity to join us on an inspiring experience in one of our rewilding areas.
- Regular updates on progress from the rewilding projects and invitations to Rewilding Europe activities.
- Rewilding Europe publications and gifts.



## LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN REWILDING NETWORK

by 31 December 2014, showing size, location, member organisation and main rewilding topics addressed. The Rewilding Europe areas are not included in the list. See the map on page 21 for location of the areas.

Area or topic	Country (region)	Size (ha)	Member organisation	Main rewilding topics
Kempen~Broek	Belgium (Brabant & Limburg)	25 000	Regional Landscape Kempen & Maasland	Rehabilitation of natural processes, including restoring hydrology. Supporting comeback of herbivores, carnivores and scavengers. Tauros breeding site. Transboundary with the Netherlands.
Meuse Valley River Park	Belgium (Limburg)	1 200	Regional Landscape Kempen & Maasland	Restoring river dynamics and ecosystems along a free flowing river (including natural grazing) with a strong recreational component. Transboundary with the Netherlands.
Central Balkan National Park	Bulgaria (Lovech)	72 021	Central Balkan National Park Directorate	Rehabilitation of natural processes, including herbivores, carnivores and/or scavengers. Nature based tourism as new perspective.
Western Rhodopes	Bulgaria (Plovdiv)	400 000	Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation	Rehabilitation of natural processes, including herbivores, carnivores and/or scavengers. Nature based tourism as new perspective, including sustainable hunting.
Kresna Gorge	Bulgaria (Sofia Province)	10 000	Fund for Wild Flora and Fauna	Reducing impact of indirect threats on birds of prey and restoring the populations of species emblematic for the area.
Lake Arresø	Denmark (North Zealand)	50	Danish Nature Agency	Beaver reintroduction and expansion, allowing a more dynamic and varied landscape.
Trégor's Wildlife Reserve	France (Brittany)	60	Association pour la Protection des Animaux Sauvages (ASPAS)	Rehabilitation of natural processes along the Léguer river, allowing wildlife comeback and creating a network of reserves.
Grand Barry Wildlife Reserve	France (Drôme)	110	Association pour la Protection des Animaux Sauvages (ASPAS)	First private reserve in France, supporting wildlife comeback and natural processes (Réserve de Vie Sauvage).
Rothaargebirge	Germany (Nordrhein-Westfalen)	6 000	Trägerverein Wisent-Welt-Wittgenstein	Bison reintroduction, to create a free-roaming population.
Saviore Valley	Italy (Lombardia)	8 200	Associazione Uomo e Territorio Pro Natura	Rehabilitation of natural processes, including herbivores, carnivores and/or scavengers. Nature based tourism as new perspective.
Salso Lake Oasis	Italy (Puglia)	1 000	Centro Studi Naturalistici ONLUS	Restoring Mediterranean wetlands and grassland on former agricultural land, and supporting wildlife comeback.
Dviete River Valley	Latvia (Selija)	400	ARK Nature and Latvian Fund for Nature	Restoring the natural river valley with natural processes including natural grazing, and developing rewilding enterprises.
Pededze Valley	Latvia (Latgale)	300	ARK Nature and Latvian Fund for Nature	Natural grazing to restore the river valley and developing rewilding enterprises.
Ķemeri National Park	Latvia (Zemgale)	1 000	ARK Nature and National Park authority	Restoring the valley of the Slampe river with river restoration, natural grazing and predation.
Engures Ezers wetlands	Latvia (Zemgale)	500	ARK Nature and Nature Park Engures Ezers	Rehabilitation of natural processes, including herbivores, after former agricultural use.
Millingerwaard	Netherlands (Gelderland)	500	State Forest Service	Floodplain restoration and rewilding with natural grazing in combination with flood protection.
Kraansvlak	Netherlands (Noord-Holland)	330	PWN Waterleidingbedrijf Noord-Holland, ARK Nature	European bison in a Dutch dune system, natural grazing together with konik horse, fallow and roe deer. Strong focus on research on the impact of grazing.
Pila and Szczecinek forests	Poland (West Pomerania)	0	Western Pomeranian Nature Society	Reintroduction of Eurasian lynx in the state forests, to establish a viable population.
Vanatori Neamt Nature Park	Romania (Neamț County)	30 000	Vanatori Neamt Nature Park Administration	Establishing a viable population of European bison in this part of Romanian Carpathians.
Wolf & Bio	Spain (Castilla y León)	120 760	WildWatching Spain	Supporting wolf conservation, enterprise development based on wolf watching and reducing human-wolf conflict.
Iberian Wildlife Photography Network	Spain (Catalunya)	300	Photo Logistics	Build a network of hides all around the Iberian Peninsula for the most emblematic species of Southern Europe, in close collaboration with tourism companies and farmers.
La Muntanya d'Alinyà	Spain (Catalunya)	5 352	Fundació Catalunya-La Pedrera	One of the largest private nature reserves in Spain, restoring natural processes and supporting wildlife comeback and sustainable human use.
Atapuerca Reserve	Spain (Castilla y León)	800	Paleolítico Vivo	Restoring wild megafauna species in Comarca de los Juarros, working towards a 10 000 hectares area.
Malingsbo-Kloten Nature Reserve	Sweden (Örebro)	100 000	Nordic Discovery	Successful agreements with forestry entities about changing forestry practices into more nature-based management systems. Focus on nature-based tourism.
Wildlife watching in Sweden	Sweden (Västmanland)	0	WildSweden	Successful example of enterprise that is based on economic values of the wild and that contributes to rewilding.
Swiss National Park	Switzerland (Graubünden)	17 000	Foundation Swiss National Park	Large-scale rehabilitation of natural processes, including herbivores, carnivores and/or scavengers comeback. Strong role of science and public outreach.
Knepp Wildland	United Kingdom (Sussex)	1 400	Knepp Castle Estate	Restoring natural processes of former farmland using herds of free roaming ungulates.
Coigach Assynt Living Landscape	United Kingdom (Scotland)	60 000	Scottish Wildlife Trust	Large-scale rehabilitation of natural processes, creating a living landscape, with forest regeneration.

# Words of thanks

Many organisations and individuals provided indispensable support in 2014, for which we are very grateful. First of all our strategic and initiating partners were crucial to help Rewilding Europe further develop in this third full year of existence: ARK Nature, Conservation Capital, Wild Wonders of Europe and WWF Netherlands. We are also very grateful to all other organisations and people we worked with over the last year and who helped us to move forward, including our funding partners, advisors, photographers, conservation partners, business partners, scientific partners, partners in the Travel Club, European zoos, media and free-lance journalists and many more. We very much appreciate their support and look forward to working with all of you on the rewilding of Europe.

## Initiating Partners

ARK Nature  
Conservation Capital  
Wild Wonders of Europe  
WWF Netherlands

## Funding partners

Adessium Foundation  
Dutch Postcode Lottery  
Fondation Segré  
Stichting Dioraphte  
Svenska Postkod Stiftelsen

## Advisors

Clifford Chance – Adam Eagle (UK)  
Egon Zehnder – Rudolf Jordaan (Netherlands)  
Ivo Brautigam (Netherlands)  
Kingsday – Sander Volten (Netherlands)  
ldng – Derk Bothe (Netherlands)  
PwC – Bram Verhoeven, Martin van Dam (Netherlands)  
Remmers Financieel Centrum – Frank Remmers (Netherlands)  
Royal Dirkzwager – Ton Lekkerkerker, Marcel Hielkema (Netherlands)  
UNIT4 – Edo-Jan Meijer (Netherlands)

## Photographers

Ann Dahlberg (Sweden)  
Bruno d'Amicis (Italy)  
Grzegorz Leśniewski (Poland)  
Magnus Lundgren (Sweden)  
Martin Stańczyk (Poland)  
Staffan Widstrand (Sweden)

## Conservation partners & relations

African Parks Network – Peter Fearnhead, Sophie Vossenaar (South Africa)  
American Prairie Reserve – Sean Gerrity, Kayla Gerrity, Dick Dolan (US)  
Bieszczady National Park – Leopold Bekier, Tomasz Winnicki (Poland)  
European Bison Conservation Centre – Wanda Olech, Kajetan Perzanowski (Poland)  
Large Carnivore Initiative Europe – Luigi Boitani (Italy)  
Taurus Foundation – Ronald Goderie, Paul Jans (Netherlands)  
Vulture Conservation Foundation – José Tavares (Switzerland)  
WILD Foundation – Vance Martin (US)  
Wildlife Monitoring Solutions – Lennart Suselbeek (Netherlands)

## Business relations

DJEnvironmental – Tim Jones (UK)  
Neuw Ventures SA – Keith Tuffley (Switzerland)  
Life-Line – Sebastiaan van Beek (Netherlands)  
Wild Business – Chris Sandom (Denmark)  
Wilderness Safaris – Derek de la Harpe, Keith Vincent (South Africa)

## Partners in Rewilding Europe Travel Club

Associação Transumância e Natureza (Portugal)  
Brittany Wildlife Tours (France)  
Focus on Mediterranean Wildlife (Spain)  
Knepp Safaris (UK)  
LAPONIA Circuit (Sweden)  
Nature's Best (Sweden)  
Wildlife Worldwide (UK)  
Wildlife Adventures (Italy)  
Wild Sweden (Sweden)

## Scientific partners

Aarhus University – Jens-Cristian Svenning (Denmark)  
German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research (iDiv) – Laetitia Navarro (Germany)  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences – Mats Niklasson (Sweden)  
Forest Research and Management Institute (ICAS) – Georgeta Ionescu, Claudiu Pasca,  
George Sirbu (Romania)  
University of Aveiro – Carlos Fonseca (Portugal)  
Wageningen University – Judith Jobse, Arjaan Pellis, René van der Duim (Netherlands)  
Zoological Society of London – Monika Böhm, Jennifer Crees (UK)

## Media & freelance journalists

Bayerischen Rundfunk (Germany)  
Brigitte Kramer (Germany)  
BBC World Service (UK)  
China Morning Post (China)  
Deutschland Radio (Germany)  
Daniel Allen (US)  
Der Standard (Austria)  
Die Zeit (Germany)  
International New York Times (US)  
La Repubblica (Italy)  
La Stampa (Italy)  
Le Monde (France)  
National Geographic (US)  
New Scientist (US)  
Newsweek (US)  
Nordkurier (Germany)  
Süddeutsche Zeitung (Germany)  
SVT, Sveriges Television (Sweden)  
The Guardian (UK)  
The Telegraph (UK)

**A special word of thanks to the European zoos and wildlife parks that supported the bison translocation to Armenia in the Southern Carpathians. They provided of animals, transport, veterinary support, VHF/GPS collars and animal care. We very much appreciate their in-kind support and look forward to continue to work with the following persons and their teams:**

Avesta Visent Park and Avesta Commun (Sweden) – Mikael Jansson, Richard Wiklund, Anders Friberg, Hans-Ove Larsson†, Lars Isacsson and Sven Björck  
Hirschfeld Tierpark (Germany) – Ramona Demmler  
Kolmarden Zoo (Sweden) – Thomas Lind  
Réserve d'Animaux Sauvages Han-sur-Lesse (Belgium) – Etienne Brunelle  
Parco Natura Vivo – Camillo Sandri and Cesare Avesani Zaborra  
Wisent gehege Springe (Germany) – Thomas Hennig  
Wisent Gehege Hardehausen/Landesbetrieb Wald & Holz NRW (Germany) – Rainer Glunz



# Rewilding Europe®

Making Europe a Wilder Place

## Rewilding Europe is working to make Europe a Wilder Place

With much more space for wildlife, wilderness and natural processes. Bringing back the variety of life for all of us to enjoy, and exploring new ways for people to earn a fair living from the wild.

Any initiative aiming to rewild a continent will need a lot of support. We would love it if you, in one way or another, would like to become part of this groundbreaking initiative.

You are invited to be a part of Making Europe a Wilder Place!

[www.rewildingeurope.com](http://www.rewildingeurope.com)

Rewilding Europe • Toernooiveld 1, 6525 ED Nijmegen, The Netherlands • [info@rewildingeurope.com](mailto:info@rewildingeurope.com)

