


Rewilding
Europe®

Making Europe a Wilder Place



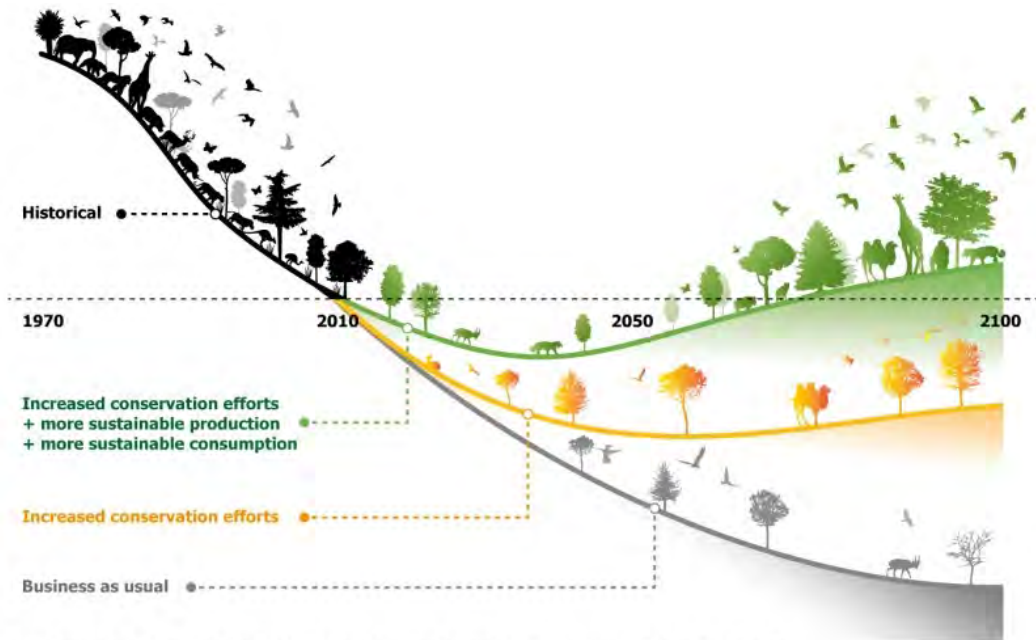
Making Europe a Wilder Place Through Large-Landscape Rewilding

ES Effective Conservation In Action - Valencia, May 2026

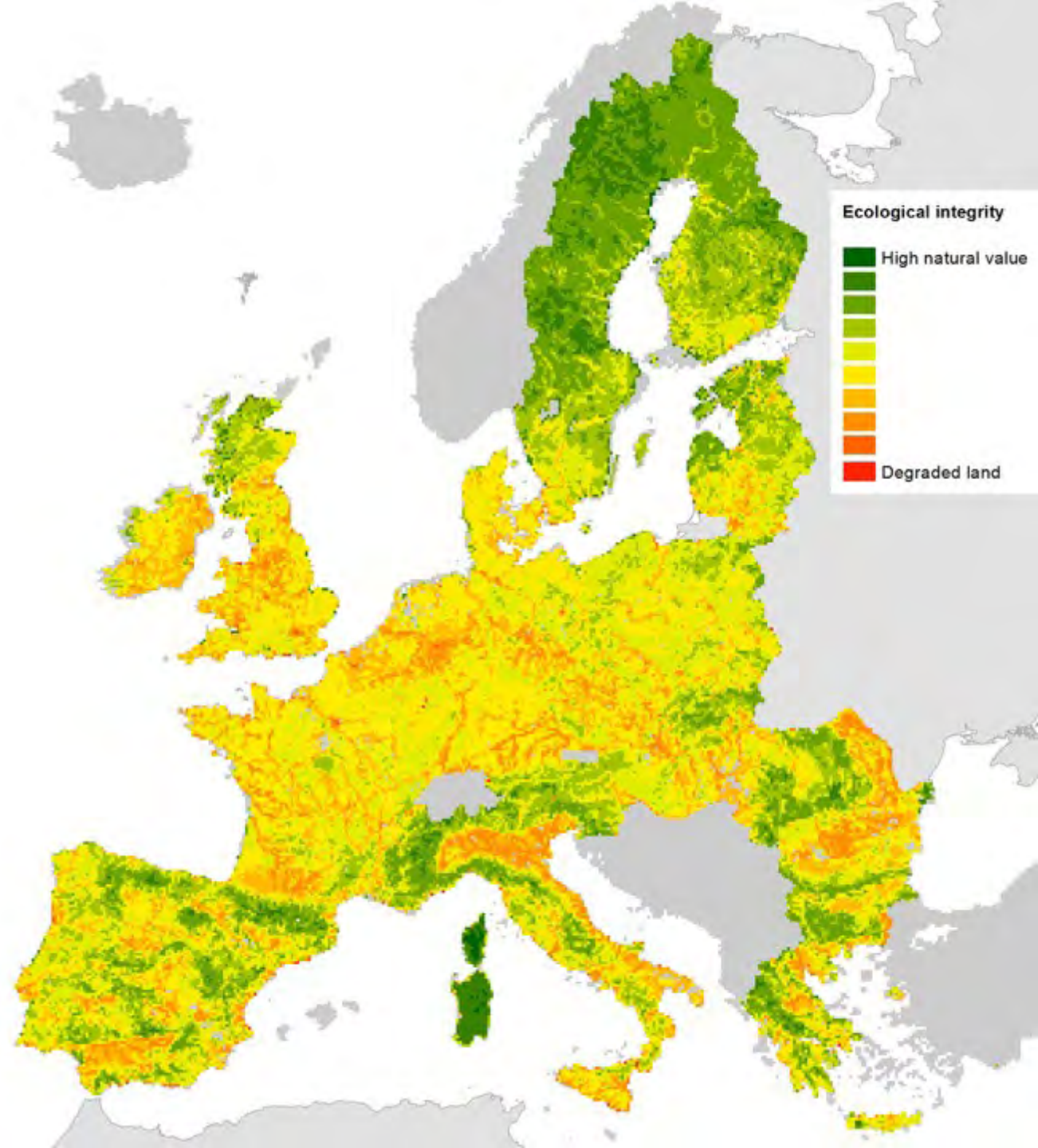
A scenic landscape of rolling hills with mist and autumn foliage. The scene is captured from a high vantage point, looking down into a valley. The hills are covered in green grass, and the trees are in various stages of autumn, with some showing vibrant orange and yellow leaves. A small wooden house with a red roof is visible on a hill to the right. In the distance, a cluster of buildings is partially obscured by mist. The overall atmosphere is serene and peaceful.

A European context

Degradation of European Landscapes



This artwork illustrates the main findings of the article, but does not intend to accurately represent its results (<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-2705-y>)



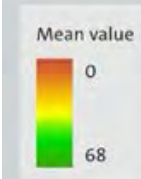
Ecological integrity of protected areas in Europe

Based on a quick scan (2021)

- Ia – Strict Nature Reserve
- Ib – Wilderness Area
- II – National Park
- III – Natural Monument
- IV – Habitat/Species Management Area
- V – Protected Landscape
- VI – Managed Resource Protected Area

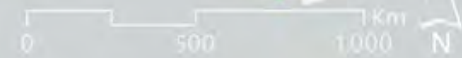


29,081 sites
621,044 km²
(62,1 million hectares)



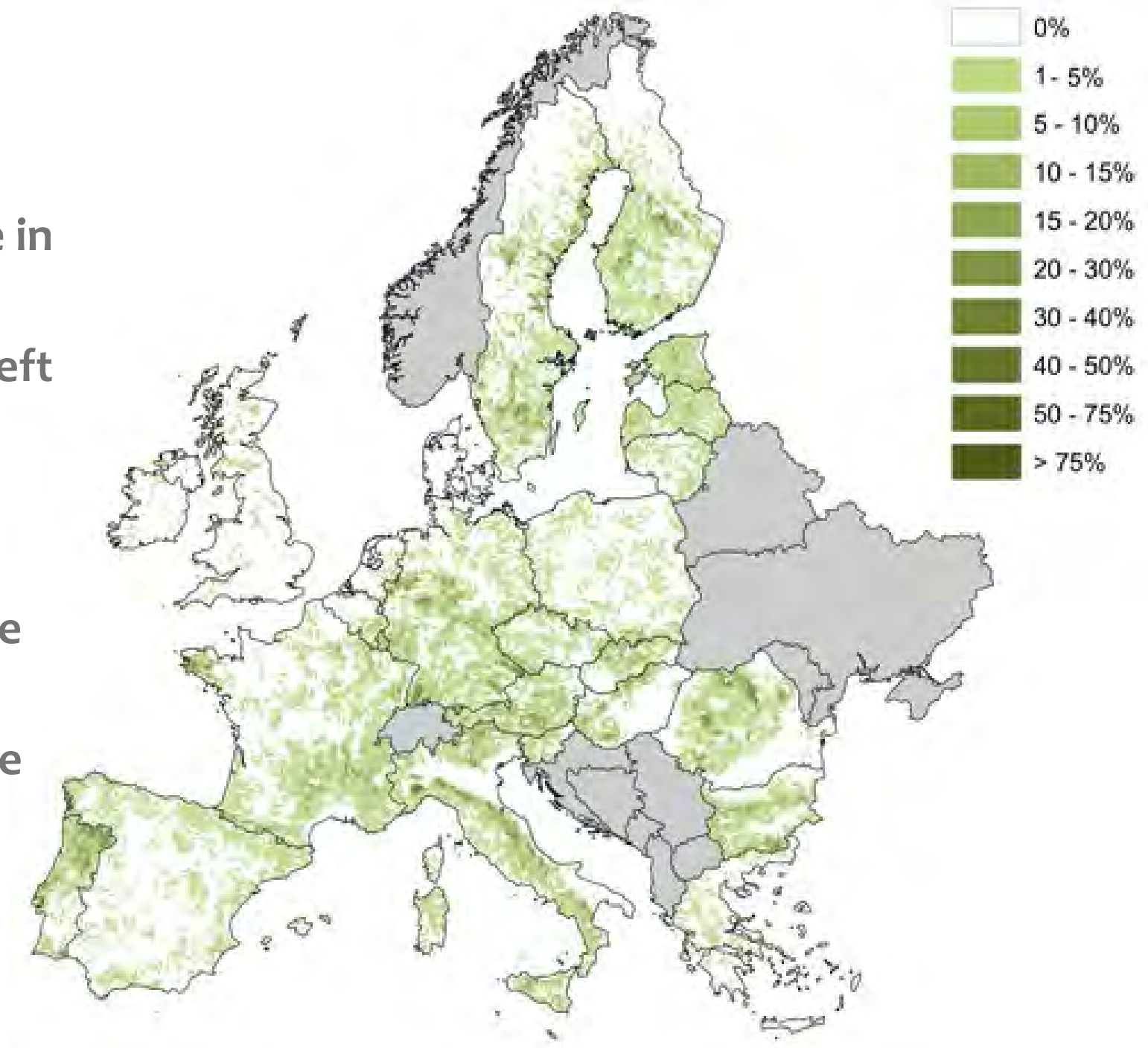
After: Fernandez et al., 2020.

Rewilding Europe

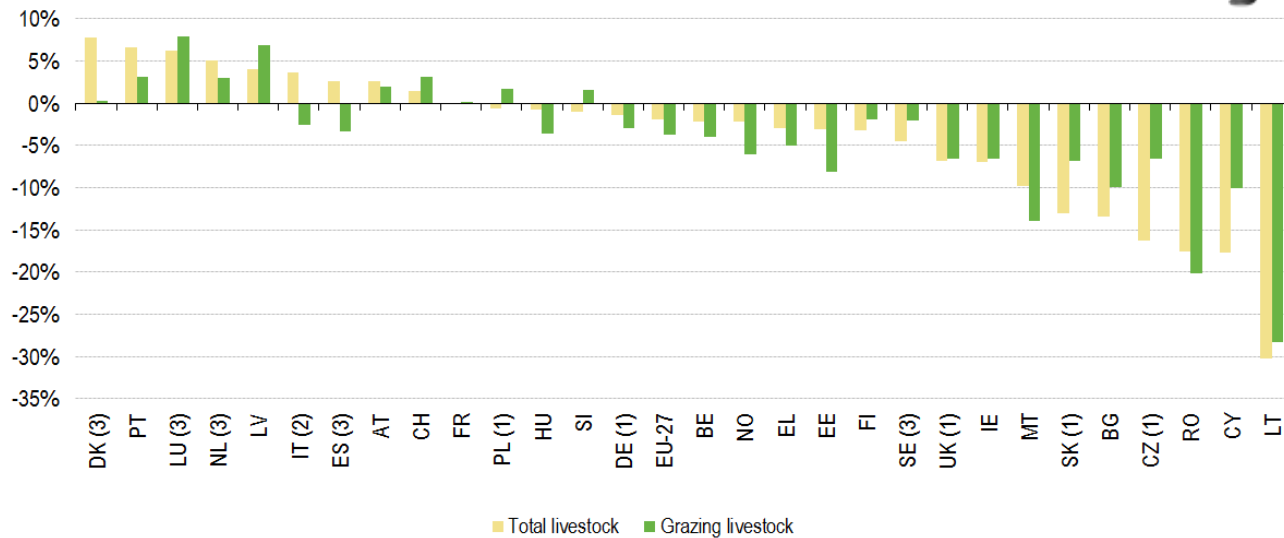


Rural depopulation

- 2020: 4 of 5 Europeans live in urban areas
- 18-25 million ha farmland left abandoned until 2035 (EU)
- For Europe: 46,1 million ha permanently abandoned
- Main drivers: young people leaving, demographics, marginal economy (despite subsidies)

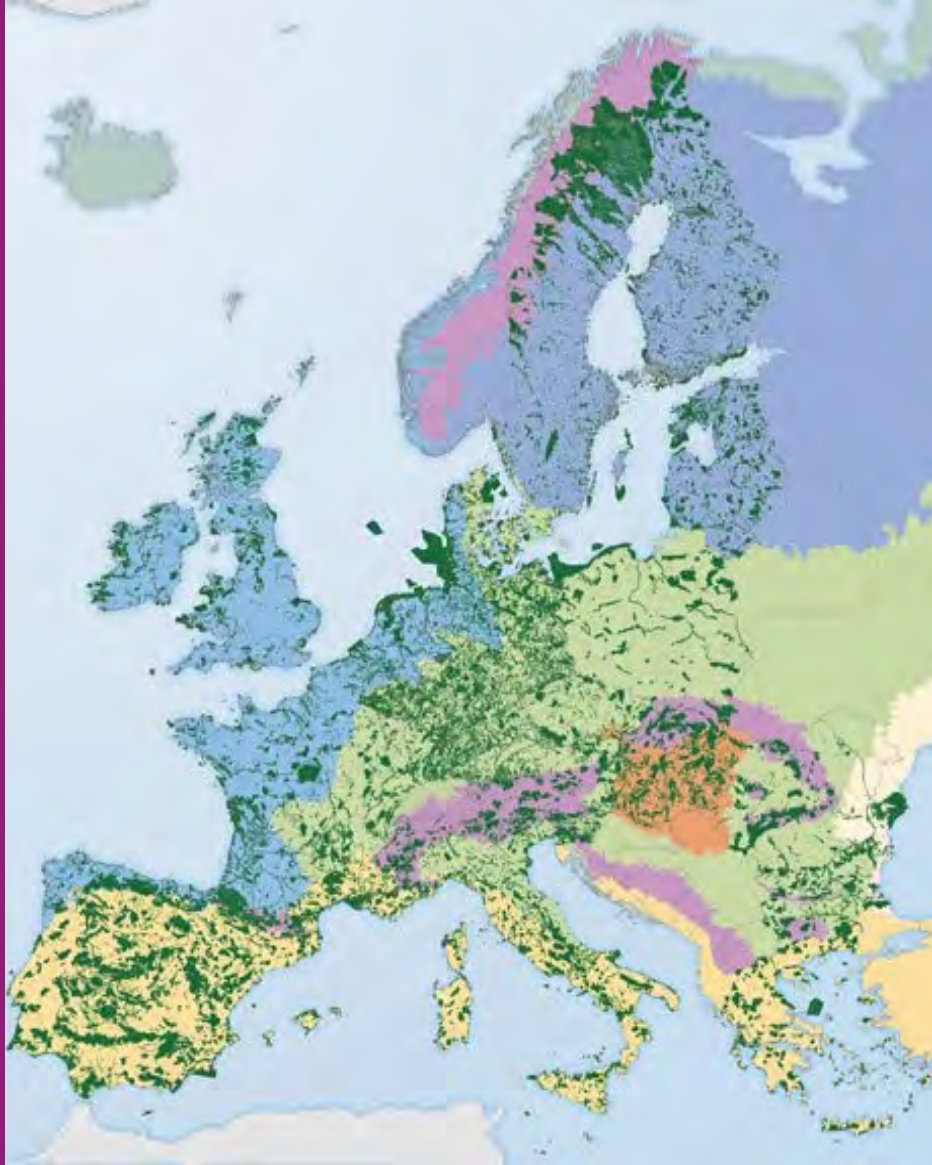


European landscapes without large herbivores - for the first time in a long history





Impact on biodiversity: a digital landscape



Classical nature management in Europe

WILDLIFE COMEBACK

Opportunities and challenges

This report provides a follow up and expansion on the "Wildlife Comeback in Europe" report, which selected species showing signs of recovery and the drivers behind these trends.

A total of 50 European wildlife species have been identified as showing signs of recovery. Based on new analyses, the main drivers for recovery are:

The results reinforce the message that wildlife is recovering in Europe. Natural recolonisation and expansion of species, such as the legal protection of species and sites and the reintroduction of birds. Conservation efforts such as species reintroductions.

Against the backdrop of a climate change crisis, we share a synthesis and outlook of wildlife species recovery in Europe and the region's next steps for further species recovery.

SOPHIE E. H. LEDGER
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IAN J. BURFIELD
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ROBIN FREEMAN
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KATE SCOTT-GATTY
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LOUISE MCRAE

*Opportunities
and challenges
for species recovery*

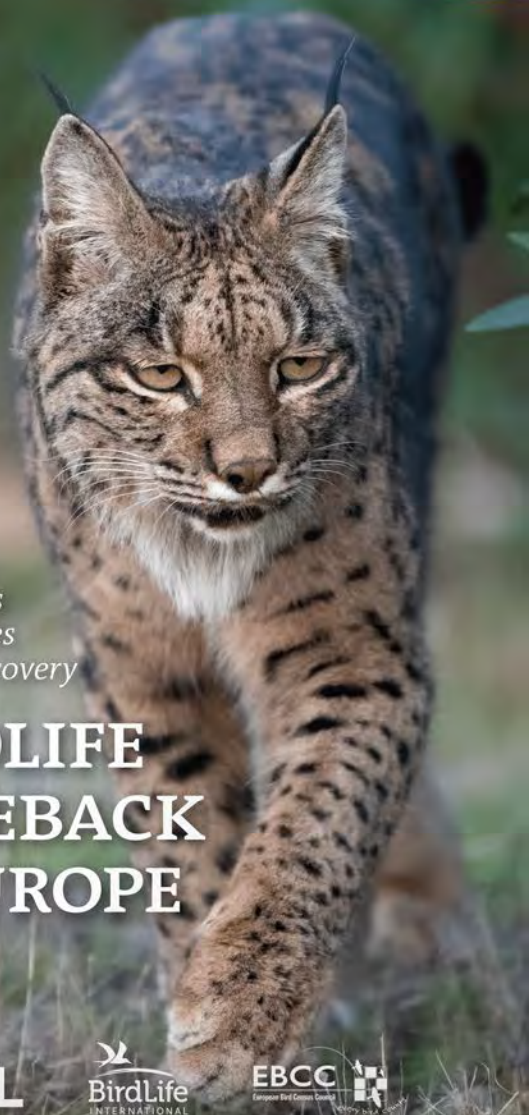
WILDLIFE COMEBACK IN EUROPE

Rewilding
Europe
Making Biodiversity
Count

ZSL

BirdLife
INTERNATIONAL

EBCC
European Bird Conservation
Coalition



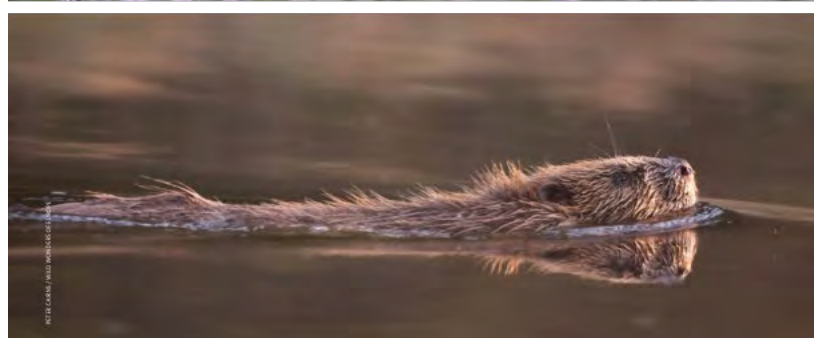




DANIEL MIRLEA



PETER GARNS

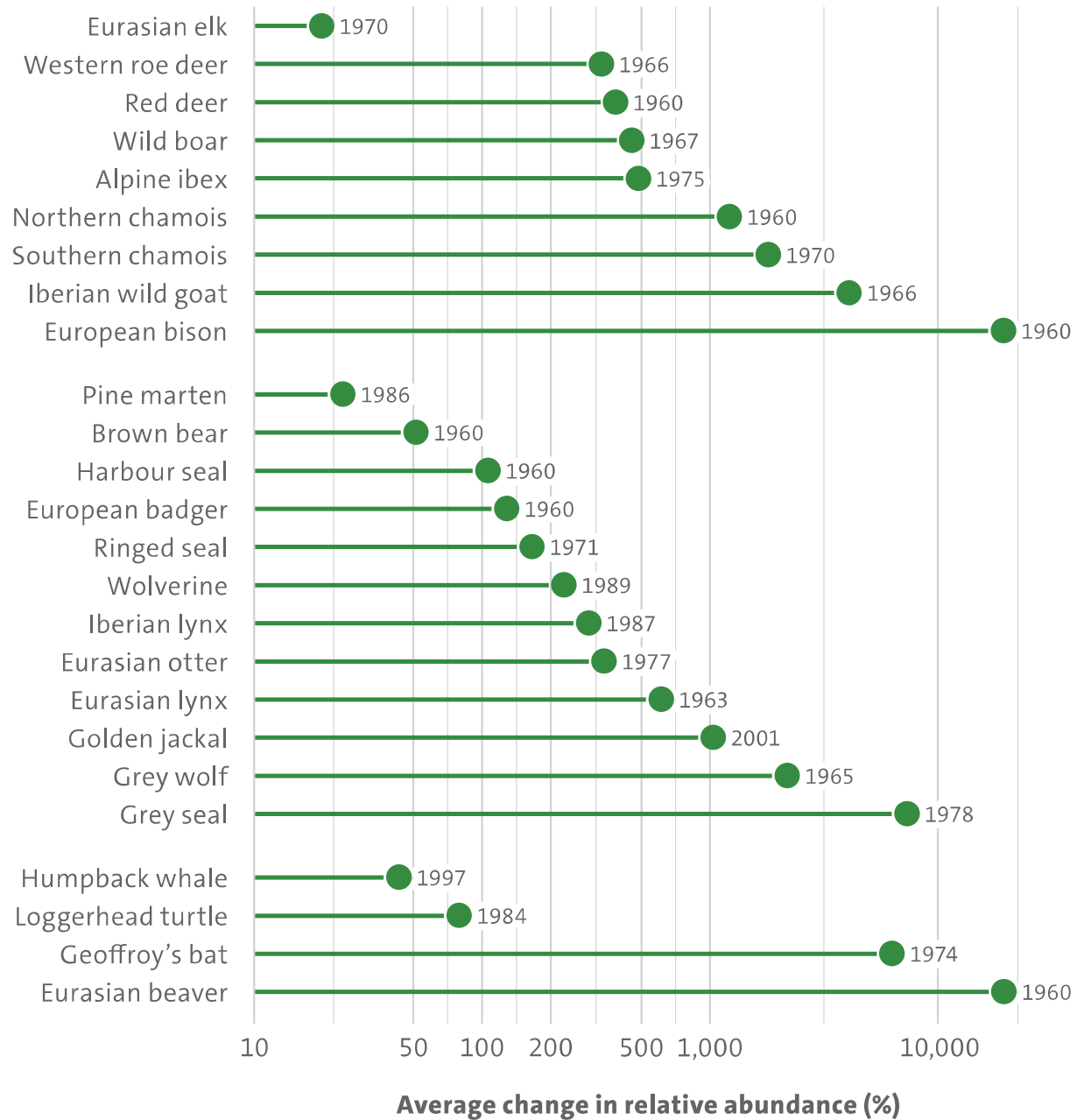


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Ungulates

Carnivores

Other selected orders





**Rewilding:
A paradigm shift in thinking**



Neil Birnie, Frans Schepers,
Wouter Helmer, Staffan Widstrand



Time To Think BIG

- THINK -
BIG

IF YOU CAN DREAM IT,
YOU CAN DO IT.

- WALT DISNEY

The magic to
**THINK
BIG**



By Andreas von der Heydt

THINK
BIG
BIGGER
BIGGEST
!

Dream **BIG**
Think **BIGGER**

Think **BIG**
do
Bigger

7 Ways How to
THINK BIG
to Achieve Big Success in Life

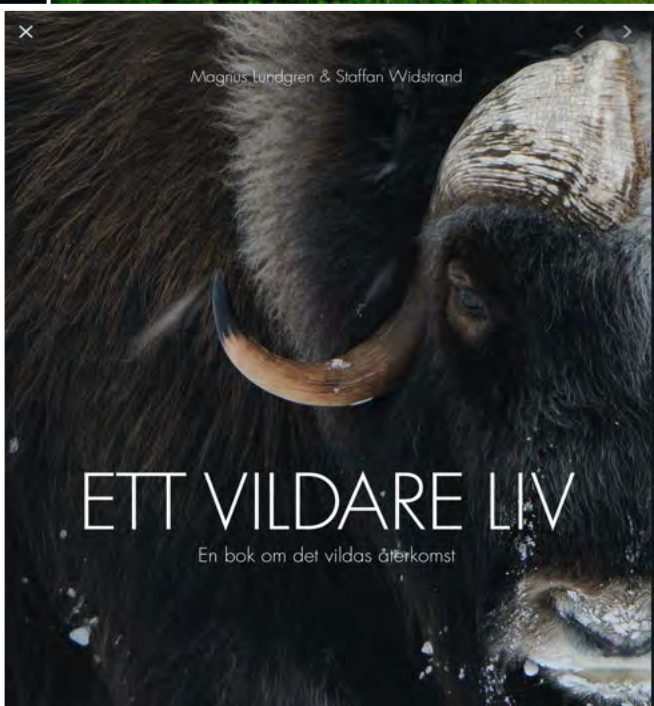
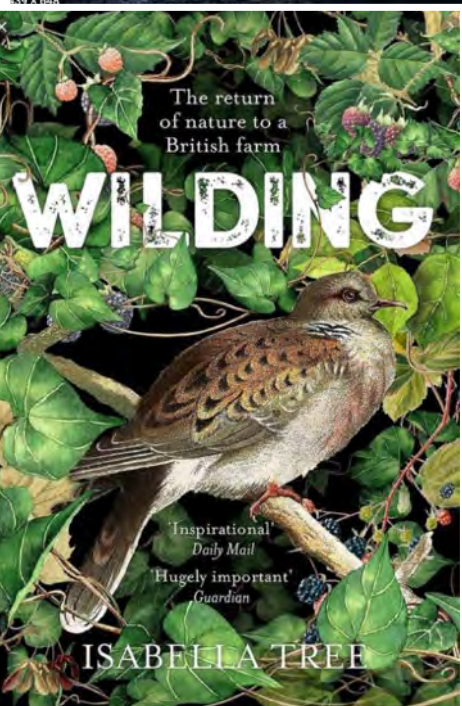
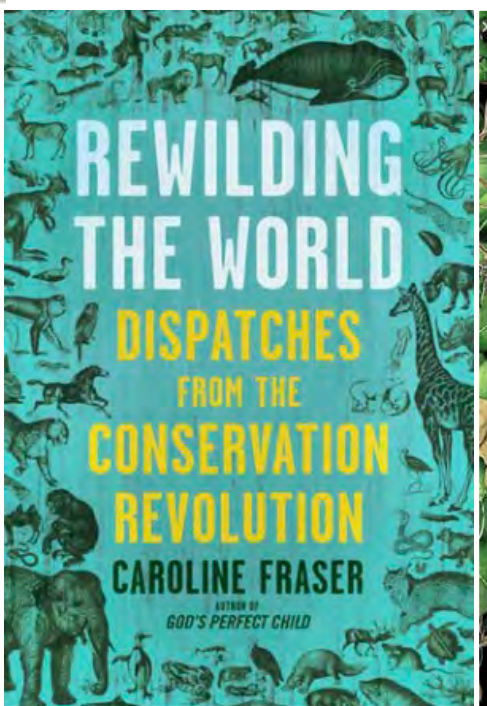
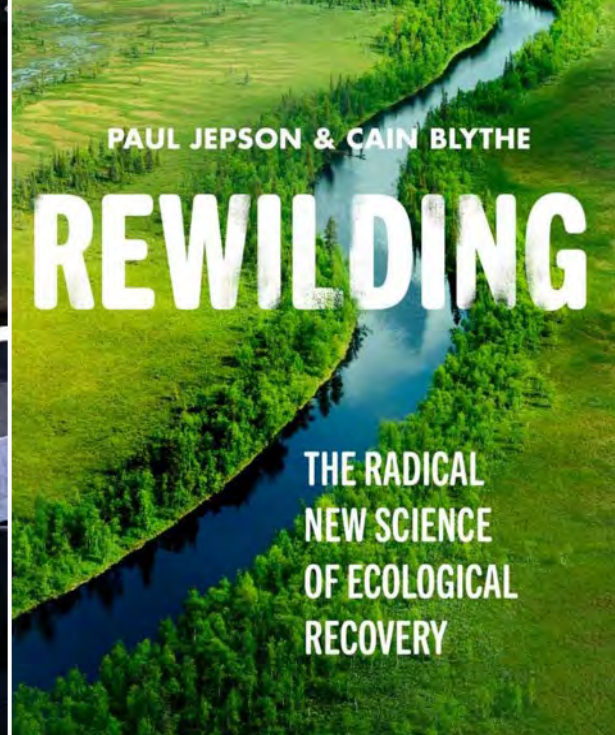
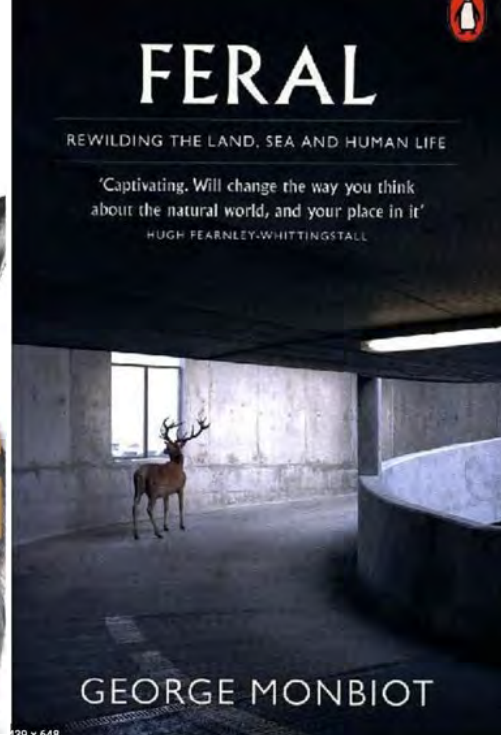
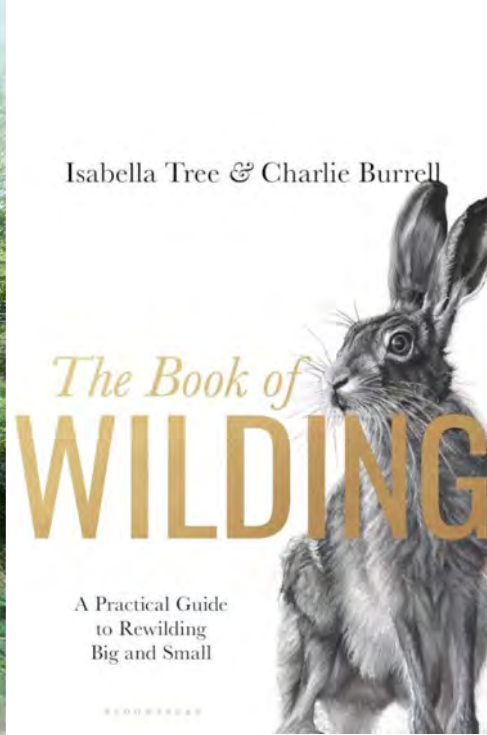
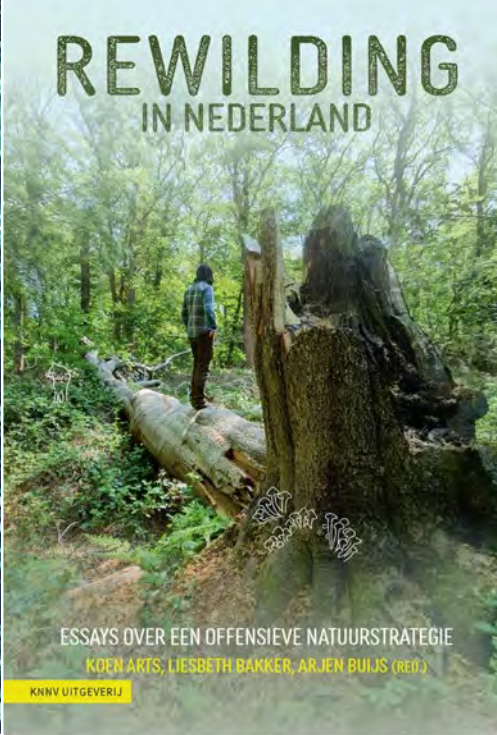
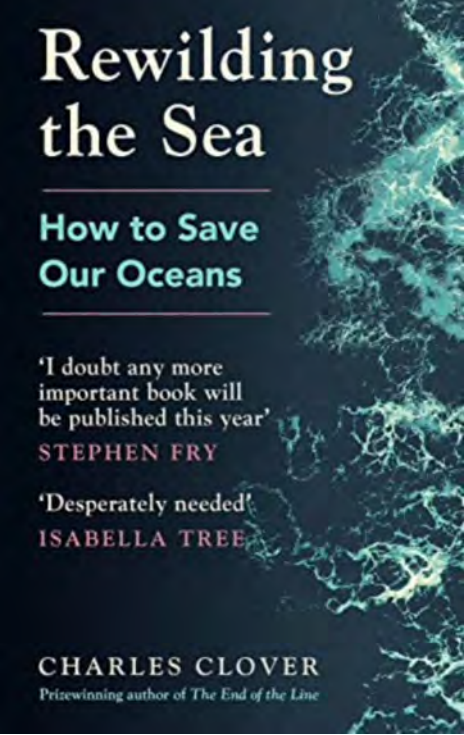
THINK → BIG
DREAM →



OUR MISSION

We want to **demonstrate the benefits of wilder nature** through the rewilding of diverse European landscapes, and to **inspire and enable others to engage in rewilding** by providing tools and practical expertise.







Animate the Carbon Cycle: Scientists call for a decade of rewilding to help achieve the 1.5°C target

Climate Nature Conservation Biodiversity Species Rewilding Wildlands Carbon Blue Carbon



Karl Burkart
Co-founder and Deputy Director, One Earth

A high-level group of 60 scientists, economists, and experts have launched an initiative, supported by One Earth, to establish the technical potential of ecosystem restoration and rewilding to help in rebalancing the global climate system. Entitled "Animate the Carbon Cycle: Supercharging ecosystem carbon sinks to meet the 1.5°C target" (ACC) the collaborative research effort builds upon recent research, demonstrating that healthy populations of wild animal, plant, and fungal species play an essential role in regulating the global carbon cycle.

nature > npj biodiversity > comment > article

Comment | [Open access](#) | Published: 08 February 2023

Rewilding abandoned farmland has greater sustainability benefits than afforestation

[Lanhui Wang](#) , [Pil Birkefeldt Møller Pedersen](#) & [Jens-Christian Svenning](#)

npj Biodiversity **2**, Article number: 5 (2023) | [Cite this article](#)

8011 Accesses | 6 Citations | 53 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Expansive farmlands in Europe and elsewhere are either already abandoned or projected to become abandoned. Afforestation on these abandoned farmlands is highly popular, but it only addresses the climate crisis, not the biodiversity emergency. An alternative to afforestation is rewilding, which would contribute to combating both the biodiversity and climate crises while also facilitating socio-ecological sustainability by increasing ecosystem resilience.









Journal for Nature Conservation

Volume 73, June 2023, 126382



Addressing challenges for large-scale trophic rewilding

[Deli Saavedra](#) ^a  , [Néstor Fernández](#) ^b  , [Jens-Christian Svenning](#) ^c  

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HOME > SCIENCE ADVANCES > VOL. 9, NO. 45 > SUBSTANTIAL LIGHT WOODLAND AND OPEN VEGETATION CHARACTERIZED THE TEMPERATE FOREST BIOME...

RESEARCH ARTICLE ECOLOGY



Substantial light woodland and open vegetation characterized the temperate forest biome before *Homo sapiens*

[ELENA A. PEARCE](#) , [FLORENCE MAZIER](#) , [SIGNE NORMAND](#) , [RALPH FVFE](#) , [VALERIE ANDRIELI](#) , [CORRIE BAKELIS](#) , [ZOFIA BALWIERSZ](#) , [KRZYSZTOF BIŃKA](#) 

[STEVE BDBREHAM](#) , [\[...\] AND JENS-CHRISTIAN SVENNING](#)  [+27 authors](#) [Authors Info & Affiliations](#)

SCIENCE ADVANCES · 10 Nov 2023 · Vol 9, Issue 45 · DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.ad9135

8,158



EU Nature Restoration Law

- EU's first continent-wide legislation on long-term recovery of nature
- Legally binding targets for EU member states
- Aiming to restore 20% of the EU's degraded ecosystems by 2030 and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050
- Member states to develop ambitious National Restoration Plans by end of 2026



Rewilding
Europe

IMPLEMENTING THE NATURE RESTORATION
REGULATION THROUGH REWILDING:

Guidelines for drafting the National Restoration Plans



Toni Lobett



11 Principles of Rewilding

- Offering Natural Solutions
- Letting Nature Lead
- Complementary Conservation
- Providing Hope and Purpose
- Thinking Creatively
- Working at Nature's Scale
- Acting in Context
- Long-term Focus
- Building Nature-based Economies
- Knowledge Exchange
- Working Together



Iconic European Rewilding Landscapes



DAUPHINÉ
ALPS

FRANCE



IBERIAN
HIGHLANDS

SPAIN



RHODOPE
MOUNTAINS

BULGARIA



GREATER
CÔA VALLEY

PORTUGAL



SOUTHERN
CARPATHIANS

ROMANIA



CENTRAL
APENNINES

ITALY



NORDIC
TAIGA

SWEDEN



VELEBIT
MOUNTAINS

CROATIA



DANUBE
DELTA

UKRAINE
ROMANIA
MOLDOVA



ODER
DELTA

GERMANY
POLAND



AFFRIC
HIGHLANDS

SCOTLAND



GALWAY BAY
& ISLANDS

IRELAND

Our rewilding landscapes

- Currently 11 (->15) landscapes, 13 countries
- Each at least 200,000 hectares, part of larger ecoregions
- Total surface 6,5 million hectares
- Each focusing on specific themes
- Locally anchored and led by dedicated rewilding entities
- Many protected areas included



NORDIC TAIGA

Sweden



- Restoring waterscapes and riverine forests
- Restoring reindeer migration routes along major rivers (blue-green corridors)
- Supporting Sami communities
- Promoting co-existence with wildlife



SOUTHERN CARPATHIANS - Romania



- Reintroduction European bison (15 -> 250 animals 2014-2026)
- Recovery of a forest landscape, natural grazing
- Griffon vulture (planned 2026) – restoring trophic networks
- Nature –based economy & local culture








Wilder Nature



A black water buffalo with large, curved horns stands in a rocky, fern-filled landscape. The buffalo is the central focus, facing left. The background features large, grey rocks and dense green ferns under a clear blue sky. A text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**2050 large herbivores
released grazing on
350,000 hectares of land**

An aerial photograph of a vast wetland restoration project in the Danube Delta, Ukraine. The image shows a large, irregularly shaped body of water in the upper half, surrounded by a dense network of smaller water channels and green, vegetated islands. A prominent, winding channel flows from the bottom center towards the larger water body. The landscape is a mix of green and brownish-green, indicating diverse vegetation and water levels. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. A white-bordered text box is overlaid in the bottom left corner.

**37,500 ha of wetlands restored
in the Danube Delta, Ukraine**

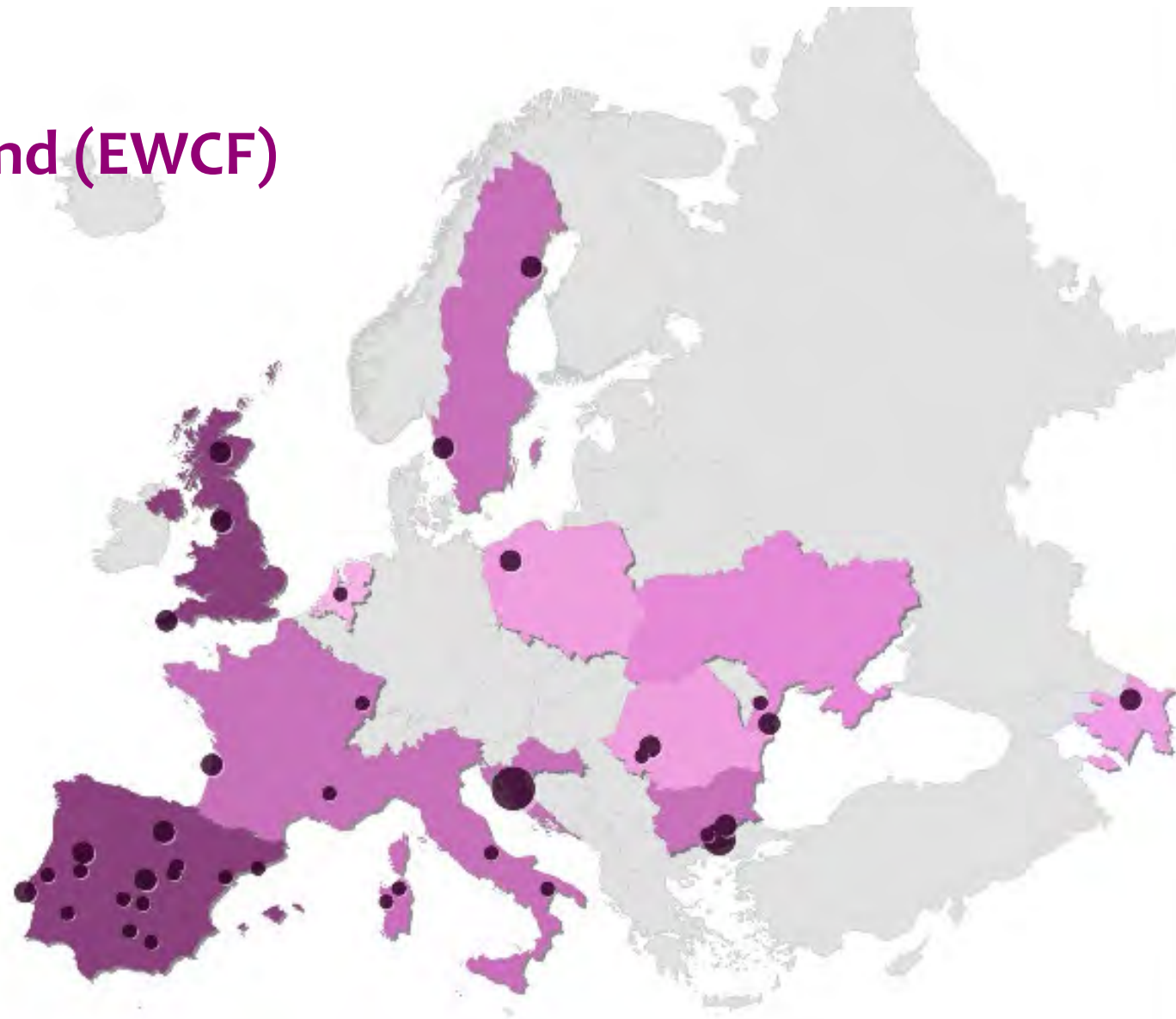
Wildlife Comeback





European Wildlife Comeback Fund (EWCF)

- Launched in 2022, scaling up reintroductions and population reinforcements of keystone wildlife species
- Since start, 75 applications, 59 supported, 15 species involved, 13 countries
- In 2025, 23 applications backed, 19 species in 9 countries
- From bark beetle to European bison, from sturgeon to lynx, from wildcat to eagles and vultures
- So far 6 million euros secured, big potential or further growth



EWCF applications accepted since September 2022.

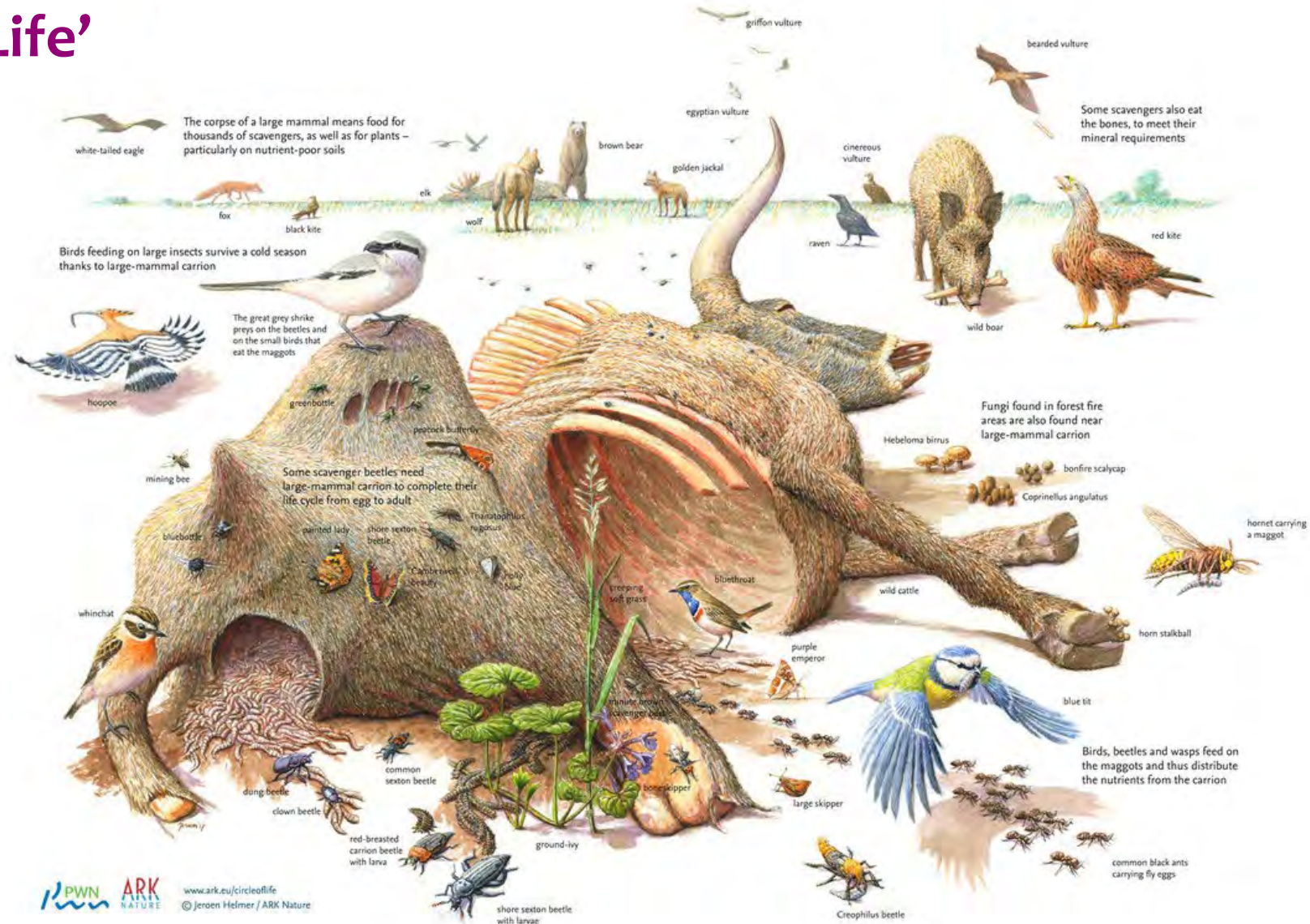
Larger dots represent 2+ applications in the same area. Darker shades represent more EWCF applications within the country.



**250 European bison roaming
free in Southern Carpathians**

Restoring the 'Circle of Life'

- Interactions between carnivores, herbivores and scavengers are fundamental for functional and healthy ecosystems
- Carrion provides life to many species of all sizes
- Largely missing from European landscapes





DÉCOUVRIR le LIFE GYPACT



PROJET DE CONSERVATION DE LA BIODIVERSITÉ
ET DU PAYSAGE MARIN



Le projet LIFE GYPACT vise à protéger et restaurer les habitats naturels et les espèces menacées de l'archipel de la Grande Terre et de la Petite Terre. Il s'agit d'un projet innovant qui associe les savoirs locaux et scientifiques pour assurer la pérennité de nos écosystèmes marins et terrestres.

Nature for People

UN NUEVO ALIENTO PARA EL SISTEMA IBERICO SUR
EMMANUEL RONDEAU

UN NUEVO ALIENTO PARA EL SISTEMA IBERICO SUR
EMMANUEL RONDEAU
DINO EUROPE presenta "UN NUEVO ALIENTO PARA EL SISTEMA IBERICO SUR" en colaboración con EMMANUEL RONDEAU y con el apoyo de FRANCIS SCHAPIRA y el apoyo de LAUREN MONTIER - PABLO SCHAPIRA con el apoyo de DELI SAMI - LONGOUR PABLO SCHAPIRA - FERNANDO MORAN - PABLO SCHAPIRA - ANGEL VENTURA - PABLO SCHAPIRA - ARDO ALMA...





BRUNO D'AMICIS/REWILDING EU

ERMO DAS AGUIAS

Área rewilding do Grande Vale do Côa
Greater Côa valley rewilding area

GRANDE VALE DO COA
PORTUGAL

Ermo das Aguias é uma área-chave para a conservação do património do Grande Vale do Côa. Esta a Reserva da Biosfera apresenta o maior de rochedos antigos do mundo. O Grande Vale do Côa tem lugar onde encontramos cultura e natureza. O Ermo das Aguias é um espaço único.

Espécies / Species

Mais informações / More info
rewilding.portugal.com
271 038 038 / info@rewilding.portugal.com

Visit WilderPlaces.com

The platform for unique rewilding stays & experiences in Europe's wild nature

Enjoy thrilling wildlife encounters while actively supporting nature's revival in some of the continent's most dramatic landscapes.

Q SEARCH FOR AN ADVENTURE

➤ BECOME A HOST

Wild nature experiences

Easy & secure booking

What type of adventure would you like?

Category ▾

Where would you like to go?

Country ▾

What is the budget?

Price ▾





SIDRO
2021
MELAGUSTO
33 Cl.

Miele di Scagnum
Cultura Carfagnini

eramo
Tutto
Miele

MILLEFIORI
MILLEFIORI
MILLEFIORI

breezy
Bear Smart box
Made in Central Annines

Dolce Arte
MILAGUSTO
33 Cl.

Dolce Arte
MILAGUSTO
33 Cl.



Building Engagement



Rewilding Europe

PRESENTS



BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO THE IBERIAN HIGHLANDS

A FILM BY EMMANUEL RONDEAU



REWILDING EUROPE PRESENTS "BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO THE IBERIAN HIGHLANDS"
FILMED AND DIRECTED BY EMMANUEL RONDEAU EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FRANS SCHEPERS
DELEGATE PRODUCERS LAURIEN HOLTJER AND PABLO SCHAPIRA FEATURING CONTRIBUTORS DELI SAAVEDRA
PATRICE LONGOUR PABLO SCHAPIRA FERNANDO MORÁN PABLO VILLA ÁNGEL VELA
BENITO LACASA SILVANA POL RICARDO ALMAZÁN OSSIAN DE LEYVA

SUPPORTED BY



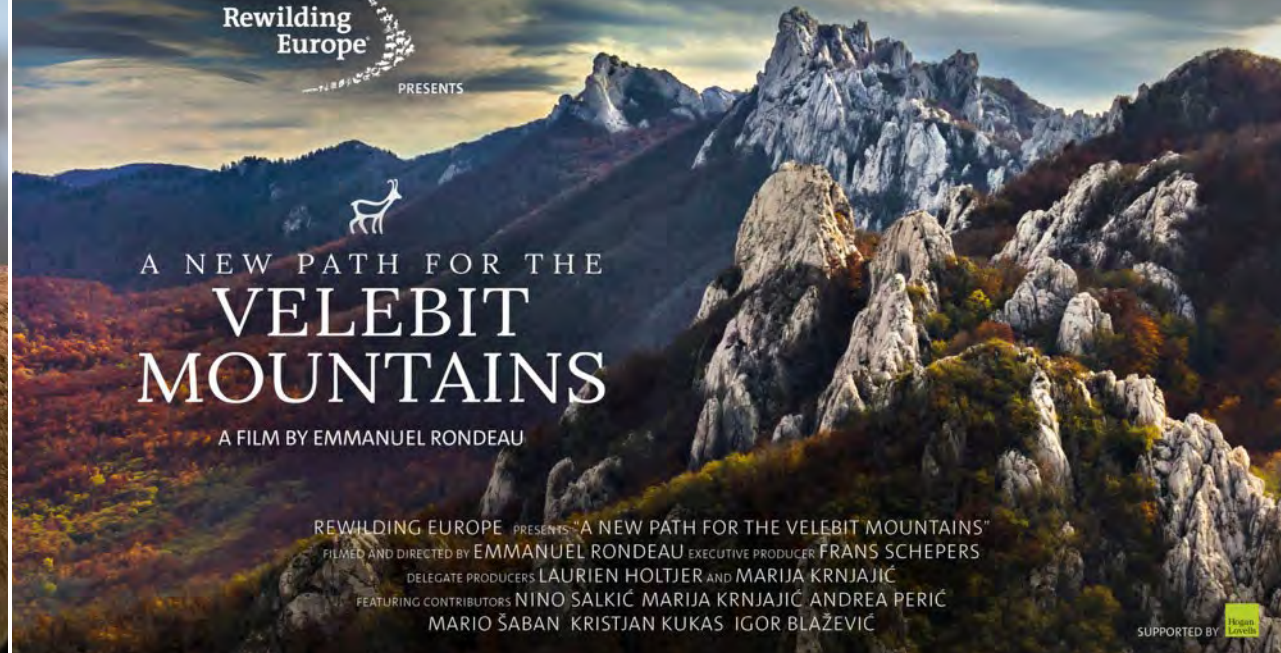
Rewilding Europe

PRESENTS



A NEW PATH FOR THE VELEBIT MOUNTAINS

A FILM BY EMMANUEL RONDEAU



REWILDING EUROPE PRESENTS "A NEW PATH FOR THE VELEBIT MOUNTAINS"
FILMED AND DIRECTED BY EMMANUEL RONDEAU EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FRANS SCHEPERS
DELEGATE PRODUCERS LAURIEN HOLTJER AND MARIJA KRNJAJIĆ
FEATURING CONTRIBUTORS NINO SALKIĆ MARIJA KRNJAJIĆ ANDREA PERIĆ
MARIO ŠABAN KRISTJAN KUKAS IGOR BLAŽEVIĆ

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Rewilding Europe

PRESENTS



THE CIRCLE OF LIFE IN THE RHODOPE MOUNTAINS

A FILM BY EMMANUEL RONDEAU



REWILDING EUROPE PRESENTS "THE CIRCLE OF LIFE IN THE RHODOPE MOUNTAINS"
FILMED AND DIRECTED BY EMMANUEL RONDEAU EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FRANS SCHEPERS
DELEGATE PRODUCERS LAURIEN HOLTJER AND ANDREANA TRIFONOVA FEATURING CONTRIBUTORS ANDREANA TRIFONOVA
HRISTO HRISTOV STEFAN AVRAMOV TODOR TODOROV NELLY NAYDENOVA JELLE HARMS
JORDAN IORDANOV SERGEY PANAYOTOV MARIN KURTEV

SUPPORTED BY

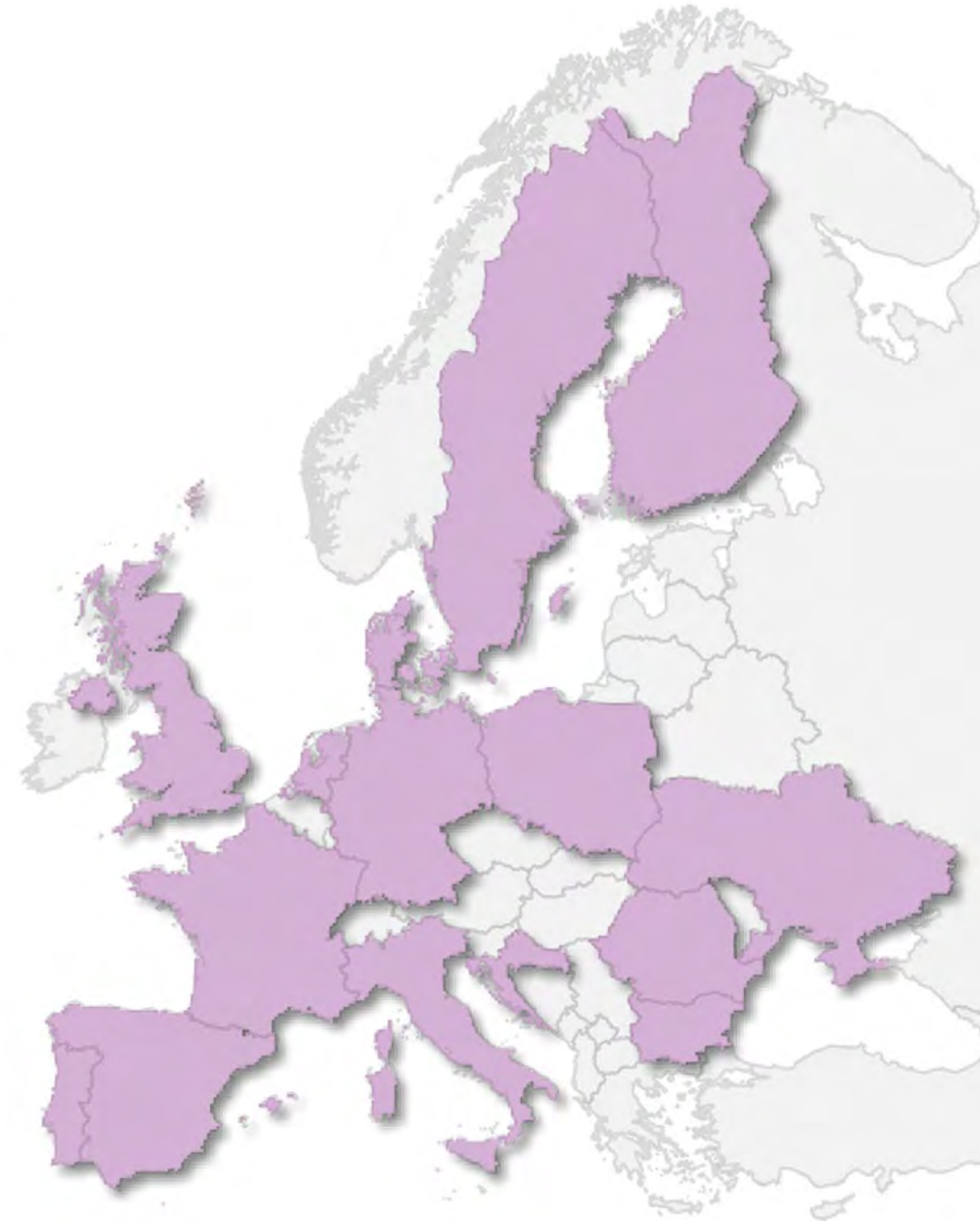


Scaling up

Making Europe a Wilder Place

Working together for a wilder Europe

Leading organisations joining forces to scale up practical rewilding across Europe (Vienna, 2023)



WILDER PARKS

- 10 frontrunner parks starting their rewilding journey
- Add another 10 parks before 2030
- Scaling up e.g. through EUROPARC Federation





1) LOWER SAXONY WADDEN SEA NP

Germany
345,000ha



2) CILENTO NP

Italy
190,000ha



3) ENTRE-SAMBRE-ET-MEUSE NP

Belgium
22,000ha



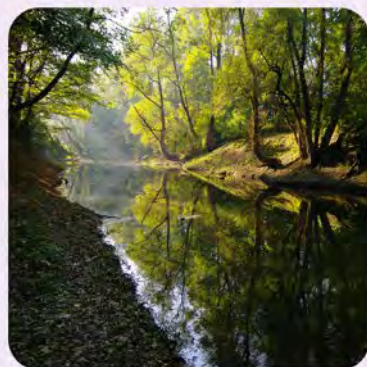
4) VASHLOVANI PA

Georgia
49,000ha



5) SWISS NP

Switzerland
17,000ha



6) LONJSKO POLJE NP

Croatia
50,000ha



7) LAKE SKADAR NP

Montenegro
40,000ha



8) ĶEMERI NP

Latvia
36,000ha



9) WILD NEPHIN NP

Ireland
15,000ha



10) FONT ROJA & SERRA MARIOLA NP

Spain
23,000ha

Management & Development

Finance & Operations

Wilder Nature
Functional Ecosystems

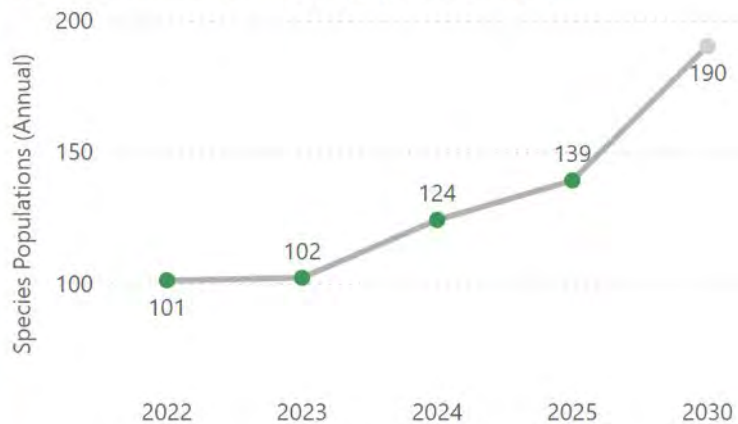
Wilder Nature
Wildlife Comeback

Nature for People

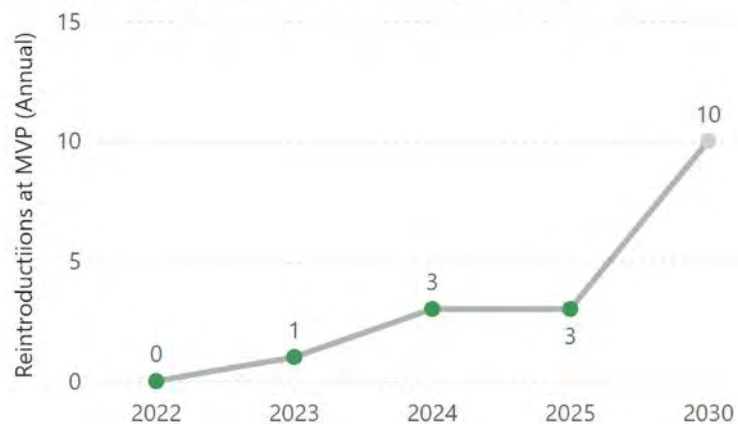
Building Engagement

Scaling Up
1 2

2.1.1 Species populations, naturally present, that have reached minimum viable population level



2.2.3 Species reintroductions and reinforcements that have reached minimum viable population level



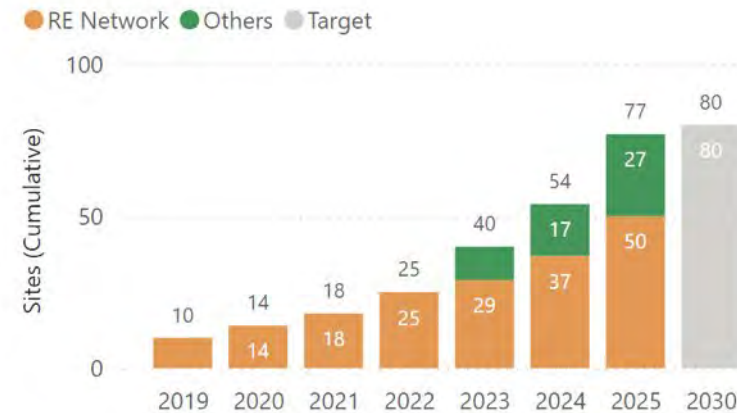
2.2.1 Species with active reintroductions and reinforcements



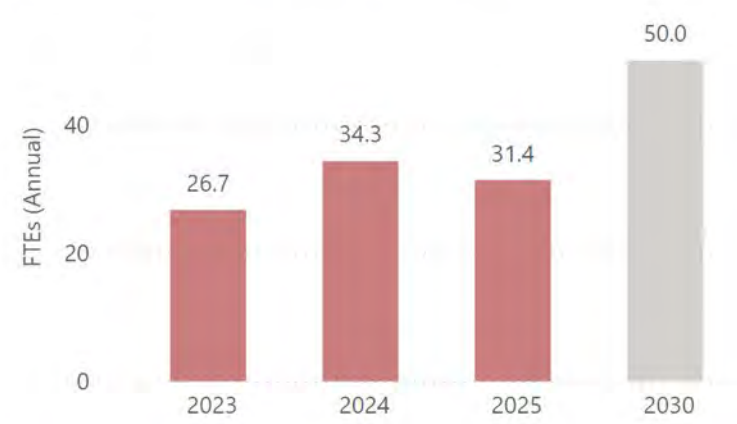
2.2.4. Large herbivore individuals reintroduced



2.2.2 Sites with species reintroductions and reinforcements



2.3.1 Staff time dedicated to human-wildlife coexistence



Management & Development

Finance & Operations

Wilder Nature
Functional Ecosystems

Wilder Nature
Wildlife Comeback

Nature for People

Building Engagement

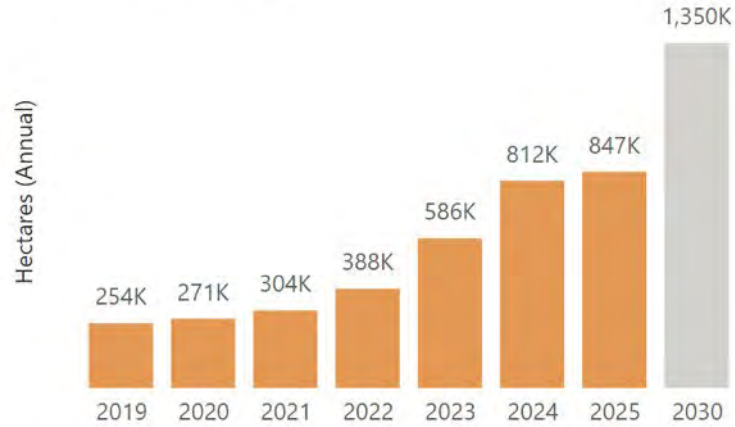
Scaling Up

1 2

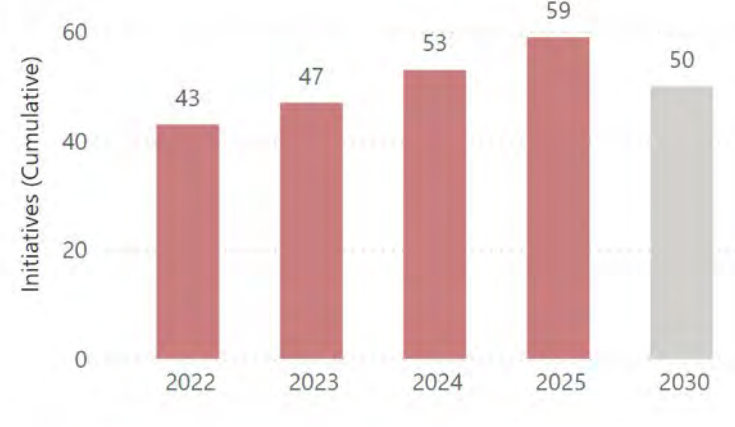
7.1.1 Sites with rewilding models operational within rewilding landscapes



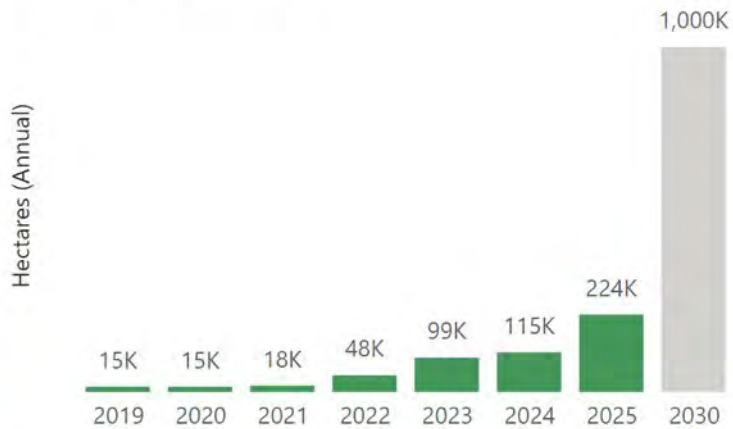
7.1.2 Land influenced towards rewilding inside rewilding landscapes



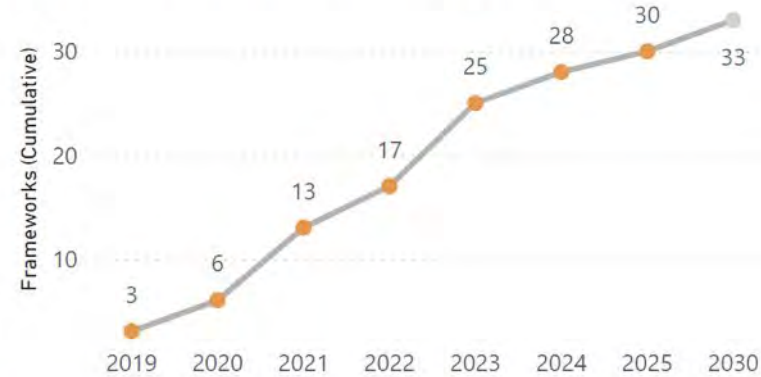
7.2.1 Initiatives covering at least 1,000 ha each using rewilding principles outside Rewilding Landscapes



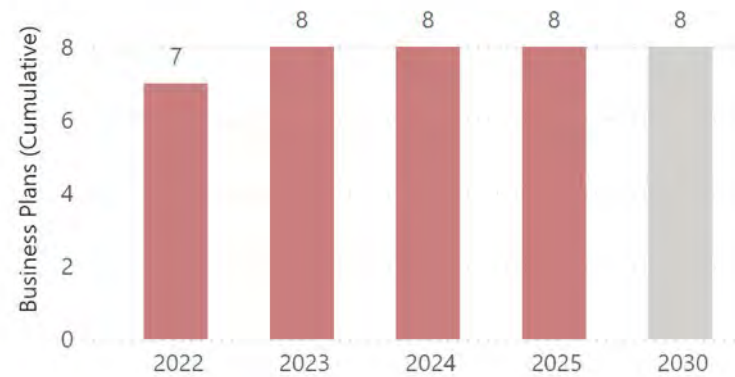
7.2.2 Land using rewilding principles outside Rewilding Landscapes



7.3.1 Rewilding is meaningfully embedded state-of-art research programmes across European universities, EU policies and in the EU Restoration Directive



7.4.1 Rewilding is integrated into business and operational plans of market-leading/influencing entities



Where are we now?

- A **dynamic, growing movement** across Europe
- **11 rewilding landscapes** operational, 1 start up, 1 new nomination
- **European Rewilding Network** > 115 members in >30 countries
- 1000 members of **European Young Rewilders**
- **12 grassroots rewilding organisations** set up
- Wide-scale application of rewilding **tools, principles and models**
- Myriad of **results, real impact** starting to show
- Moving towards **rewilding becoming a mainstream approach** to nature recovery





Main lessons learnt



How we want it to be



How it actually is



Main lessons learnt & challenges (1)

- Importance of a strong vision – thinking big, long term and aiming at systems change
- Rewilding principles: applicable in all contexts – there are no blueprints or silver bullets!
- Dealing with shifting baseline syndrome (what could wild nature in Europe look like?)
- Start working with early adopters and build coalition of the willing (20-60-20 rule)
- Differentiate between results and real impact



Main lessons learnt & challenges (2)

- Balancing demonstration and upscaling
- Dealing with growth:
 - From a start up to a scale up
 - Staying lean and mean
 - How to keep our DNA
- Governance & management becoming more demanding
- Learning from and being inspired by peer initiatives
- Building financial sustainability in a ‘growing market’





Making Europe a wilder place

Annual Review 2025

Rewilding Europe



Landscapes

Gitaspit remolluptio quidenis noncum volores trumquosae eum sandaes ent.

Upscaling

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Wildlife

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People

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See our Annual Review 2025 (coming soon)

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