



60 YEARS
OF ACTION FOR NATURE

ROMANIA

FORESTS

Virgin and so-called “quasi-virgin” forests are particularly complex and valuable ecosystems. In addition to the variety of trees, their structures and different stages of development provide a specific habitat for many species of plants and animals. Romanian legislation extends protection to these exceptional forests, so identifying them is the first step toward securing their protection. So far, WWF has evaluated over 600,000 ha of Romanian forests. We have identified 65,000 ha of virgin and quasi-virgin forests and are currently in the process of securing official recognition for another 14,800 ha. Some of these forests have already been included in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites.

Such untouched forests were once widespread across Europe, but today only few areas survive - and many of these are in Romania as well as in other countries of Central and Southeastern Europe. The latest data presented by the Romanian Ministry of Environment shows that, by November 2020, some 44,000 hectares of forests have been officially recognised as virgin or quasi-virgin forests and thus are officially protected. This means that there is still some way to go to secure all of these unique forests in Romania.

WWF’s forest team has dedicated itself to saving, protecting and caring for this exceptional natural heritage. With your help, we can ensure that this unique European heritage is saved also for future generations.

RESTORING WETLANDS

Wetlands are vital for people and for nature. They provide us with drinking water, provide a source of food for millions of people, protect us from floods, droughts and other natural disasters. Last but not least, wetlands store more carbon than any other type of ecosystem. Almost half of all plant and animal species live in wetlands. Directly or indirectly, wetlands provide almost the entire amount of fresh water needed for human consumption worldwide. Restoring floodplains helps regulate and filter water while reducing the impacts of floods and droughts.



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In Romania and in other parts of the Danube basin, WWF has been working with a wide range of partners and stakeholders - from local communities to businesses and relevant authorities - to restore wetlands and floodplains for the benefit of people and nature. At Mahmudia on the Sfântu Gheorghe arm in the Danube delta, 924 hectares of former agricultural land have been “given back to nature” - restoring a vibrant and diverse wetland ecosystem, teeming with fish and other wildlife, where until recently there were only relatively barren fields. Another 950 hectares of Danube floodplains have been restored at Balta Geraiului. Restoration of additional floodplain areas upriver at Gârla Mare will be completed by the end of the year.

There are many former floodplains and wetlands that can still be restored. 80% of the floodplains of the Danube and its main tributaries have been lost over the last century and a half, and with them ecosystem goods and services, from fish and fowl to flood regulation and carbon sequestration that they once provided. With your support, we can restore more of these valuable areas.

WE WILDER: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WITH NATURE

The return of bison to the Țarcu Mountains in Southwestern Romania is creating new opportunities not only for nature but also for local development. Two hundred years since these stately creatures disappeared from the area, over 100 European bison now roam this remote part of the Carpathian range, benefitting nature and humans.

More than 500 animal and 200 plant species benefit from the presence of these large animals. But the return of this legendary species has also inspired local inhabitants to look at nature with a different eye and consider ecotourism as an opportunity for local development. For the past seven years, WWF Romania has been supporting local people in the small village of Armeniș to develop products and services linked to the new presence of the bison in the area. 30 households have developed tourist offerings, from food to accommodation, tours to transportation as well as local products, which they are offering to the growing number of visitors to the area. To provide a community hub and support for these activities, WWF has been working with local people to develop and construct WeWilder - a “campus” of minimalist houses made of natural material that “melt” into the landscape. Here locals and visitors will exchange ideas, use the community kitchen and consult the library full of books about living in harmony with nature.

There are still many challenges and much remains to be done - to further develop the WeWilder centre, to develop local products and services, and to promote sustainability among visitors and local people. With your support, we can return bison to the Southern Carpathians, and sustainable hope to the people of the area.



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So far, in Romania, we have evaluated over 600,000 ha of forest, we have identified about 65,000 ha of virgin and quasi-virgin forests and, currently, we have the process of approval another 14,800 ha at national level. Some of the identified forests have already been included in the UNESCO World Heritage.

These are fairy-tale forests that were once widespread. Today we have only a few samples left, and the Carpatho-Danubian region is home for a significant area of such forests.

BE PART OF OUR JOURNEY!

Help build a world where people and nature thrive!

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