

Diet and Habitat Use

Goals

- Implement monitoring protocol agreed with the Life Bison manager to assess movement patterns of bison herds, but also individuals (males or rejected animals) in relation to food availability;
- Overlap behavioural data with habitat use, home range and habitat type for the free living bison to identify patterns according to season, habitat and carrying capacity of the area using web arcGIS tools (WWF-Globil platform);
- Work closely with the bison rewilding team, especially rangers, CTO, field research interns, Life-Bison manager and Cohesion facilitator to share insights and co-design measures to help reduce HWC, damage prevention, improve species management;
- Nurture a culture of knowledge sharing, learning and support amongst members.

Deliverables

- Gather relevant insights and feed field data based on agreed monitoring work plan developed with the team (Life Bison manager, Taskforce coordinator and communities developments specialist) including calibration of vegetation modelling done on webArcGIS
- Fecal analysis study to determine diet working closely with the Life Bison manager, partner universities and WWF-International Specialists. Bison are herbivores that have a particular bacterial community (gut microbiota) in their stomachs that help them digest their food. Perhaps some plants they take in or other factors are negatively affecting this community over the different seasons and can cause weakness and problems in the rewilding process of the bison.
- Assist the Bison Rangers and Field Officer on planned bison monitoring (direct observation), applying the agreed monitoring protocols, working closely with the Life-Bison manager. At least 2 field research days/week, use of WWF android app and database for data capture.
- Provide bi-weekly photos and video records of moments in nature and selected camera trap content to content producer and wider team, documenting field activities. Include a quantitative or qualitative summary or the highlight for the week.
- Weekly short update with “Highlights of the week” and “Lessons of the week” to feed blog, interactive website as well as reference to reflect on work, potential challenges and new opportunities.
- Participate in workshops related to embedded systems development, multi-sensor wildlife monitoring, adaptive wildlife management, HWC mitigation with Bison Hillock Lab team and partners in Romania and abroad;