CARPATHIA®
For Nature, for Communities



Annual Report 2025

FOUNDATION CONSERVATION CARPATHIA

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Foreword

Reformer Martin Luther is often quoted as saying, “If I knew that the world would end tomorrow, I would still plant an apple tree today.” Looking at the current global crisis in politics, democracy, biodiversity, and climate, it can feel as though the end of the world is near. This can either drag you into the abyss or lead you to become more motivated to make a difference. We opted for the latter.

For our project, 2025 was an incredible year, full of amazing activities and successes. Each of our departments was extremely busy with impactful activities and we believe that we have made significant progress towards establishing the Făgăraș Mountains National Park. We restored more ecosystems and wildlife communities, increased our engagement with local communities at various levels, built and launched additional National Park infrastructure, established working relationships with different government institutions, and achieved more conservation impact at an international level. We also formed many new partnerships on local, regional, national, and international levels. It is wonderful to see how more and more people are truly committed to rewilding our natural world and to preserving the Făgăraș Mountains.



Thank you for joining us on this journey and enjoy reading about the impact we made in 2025!

Liviu Ungureanu



“Conservation is a state of mind - an awareness that we are linked to the rest of the living world”

Aldo Leopold



Daniel Mîrlea

Nature conservation

From the outside, it may appear as though the focus of our work has shifted in recent years, given the considerable increase in activities targeting local communities and improving people's lives. Our table tennis programme for young people, our support for the football club Bison Lerești, our eco-tourism programme and the ancient trees of Nucșoara have received widespread coverage and are considered innovative conservation solutions. However, we are still a conservation organisation and every hectare secured for conservation is important to us. We care for every animal roaming the mountains and forests and bringing degraded habitats back to life is important to us. But conservation involves more than just protecting forests or wildlife. It is about finding smart solutions to enable the coexistence between wildlife and people and about steering tourism in directions that allow people to experience nature without harming it. Conservation is not about going against human interests, it is about promoting them for the benefit of all.

Many of our conservation activities have become routine and are well advanced. We hope that in the coming years we can shift from ecosystem restoration to a hands-off approach, and let nature take its course. Other activities, like the reintroduction of vultures, are new and exciting and we are thrilled to soon see the first vultures circling over the Făgăraș Mountains.

We continue to invest our work in restoring these ecosystems, to secure the very foundation upon which human communities depend; ultimately, as nature recovers its vitality, people too will flourish economically and socially. In this reciprocal cycle, the thriving of the Făgăraș Mountains and the communities around them become inseparable.



1. Land Conservation

Dan Dinu

Forest Guarding and Protection

We couldn't guard the forests without our team of rangers. They rigorously patrol, without interruption, the areas under their care, maintaining close cooperation with colleagues from other forestry structures, police and gendarmerie forces, as well as people from neighboring communities. Technology is also vital: automated motion-sensor cameras and drones that identify 'intruders' play an ever-increasing role in security activities.

The forests under our care are organised into

16

forestry districts meaning 16 rangers supervised by 3 forestry district heads and one forest district security officer.

46 cubic metres of wood – the total volume of illegally logged trees in 2025. This is a microscopic percentage, considering we manage 25,427 hectares of forest.

We notified the police and contributed to identifying those responsible.



Dan Dinu

Forest protection, as a forestry term, refers to monitoring and taking all necessary measures to mitigate tree dieback phenomena exceeding 1.5 cubic metres per year per hectare. We implemented these measures in the privately owned forests of the Carpathia partners.

We monitor spruce bark beetle attacks: using drone imagery and by counting the beetles caught in specially installed traps.

381 pheromone traps and trap trees: containment measures to limit attacks, especially in the vicinity of neighbouring forest owners.

249 new trees infested with bark beetles: a significant decrease compared to 2024, when we located 1,243 newly infested trees.

Conclusion: The bark beetle population is in decline; both the population and the intensity of the infestation have decreased as a result of a natural evolutionary cycle.



2.

Ecological restoration

Daniel Rosengren

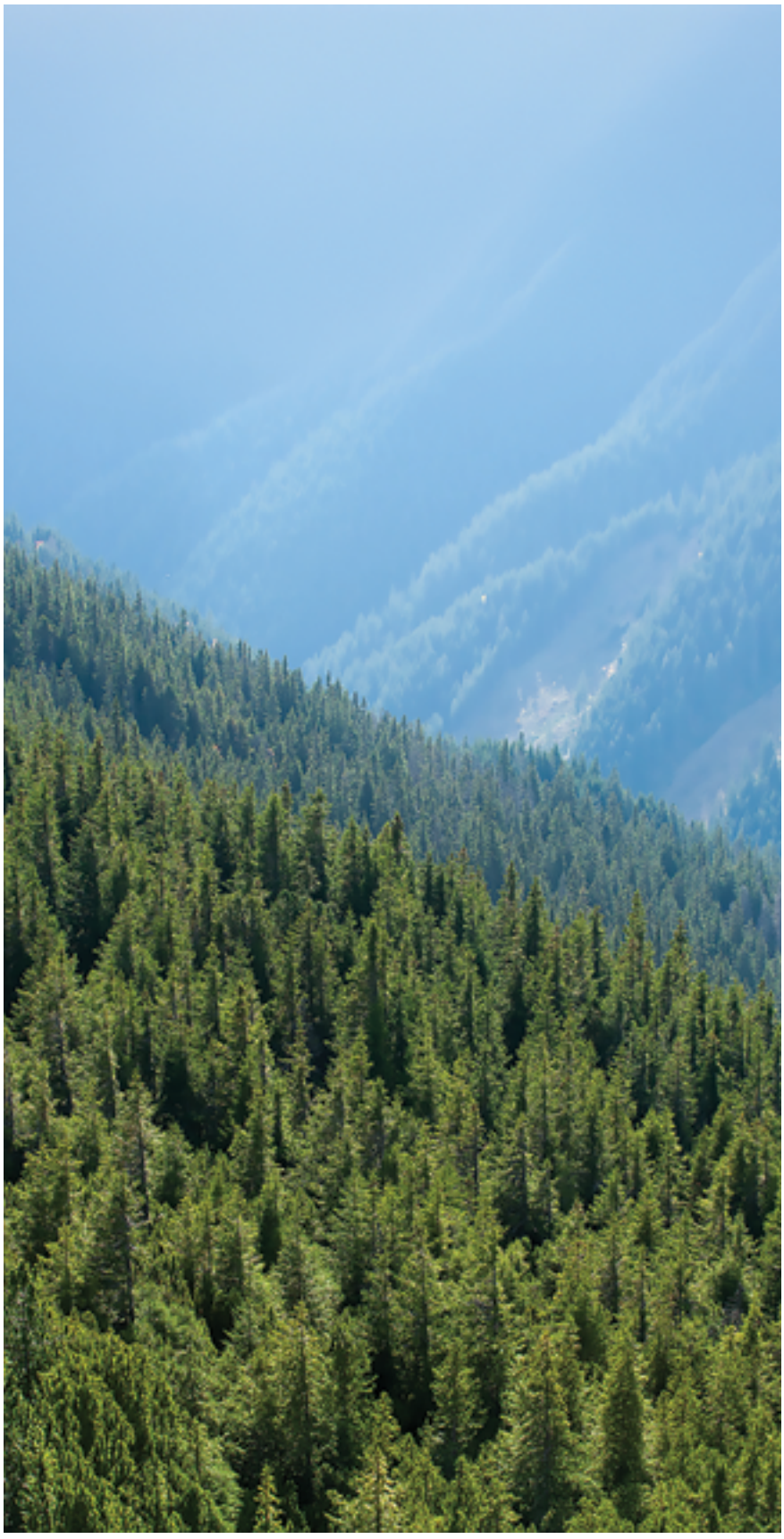
In 2025, we marked an important milestone in our ecological restoration activities: we completed the main planting works across our major restoration sites. These are forest areas previously affected by illegal logging and windthrows, which we have been acquiring since 2010. This effort translates into over 1,667 hectares replanted by Carpathia with support from:

European partners, through environmental funding projects: LIFE 2011, LIFE 2018, SUPERB, and NRRP (National Recovery and Resilience Plan).

Private donors: One Tree Planted, Mossy Earth, Foresta Futura, Oak Foundation, Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme, Zentiva, Forests Without Frontiers, and Agent Green.

We thank them all—these results are thanks to them, and they can be proud of their decision to support the restoration of the forests in the Făgăraș Mountains!

Spruce is a species which is well adapted and plays an important ecological role in the subalpine zone. However, over the last decade, forestry has planted them in many places below its natural occurrence, which now leads to ecological problems. For this reason, we convert planted spruce monocultures back into mixed forests.



Another major achievement was completing the first cycle of interventions to convert spruce monocultures (on our property) into natural, mixed forests. These interventions involved performing thinnings in the artificial spruce forests and planting saplings of missing native species - particularly beech and fir - in the canopy gaps opened up by the process. We are monitoring the results and beginning a new cycle of interventions wherever necessary.

52

hectares of former clear-cuts and windblows received

194,100

saplings planted within the recent EU-LIFE project.

14,250

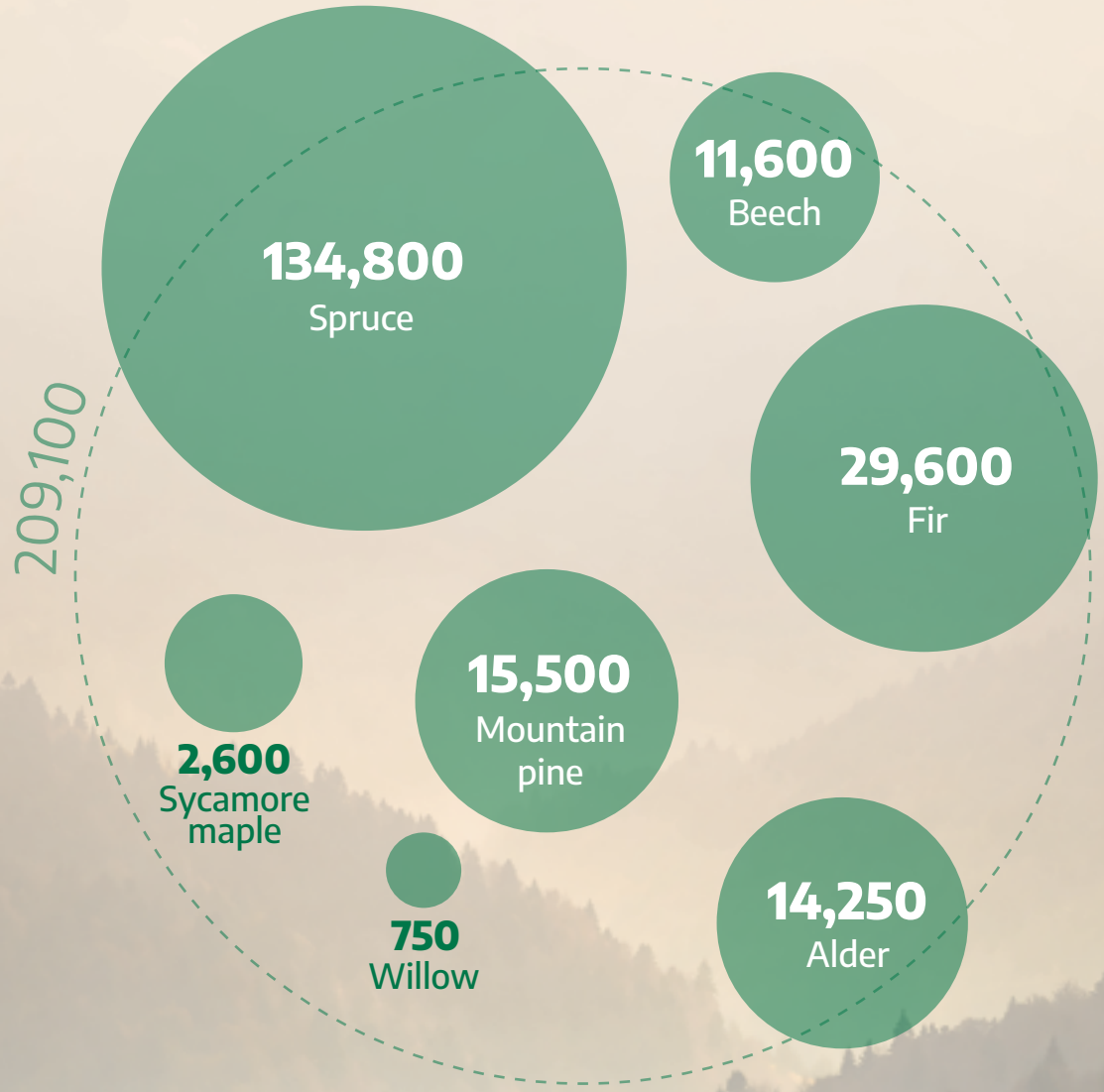
grey alder saplings and

750

willow saplings were planted along the upper course of the Dâmbovița Valley to restore the riparian alder galleries.

Total Saplings Planted:

209,100



Dan Dinu

Spruce Monoculture Conversion

145

hectares of spruce monocultures underwent ecological interventions: we created canopy gaps to allow other tree species to develop.

14,500
fir saplings and
14,500

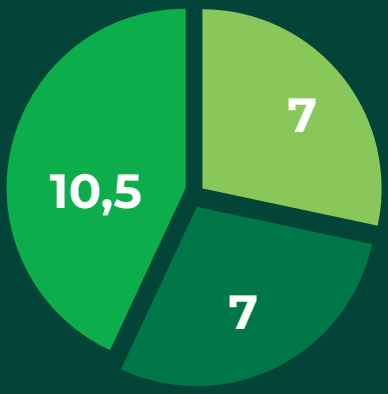
beech saplings were planted in these newly formed clearings. Combined with the retained spruce trees (approximately 20%), this structural mix aims to return the area to a diverse, close-to-nature forest state.

Nurseries and Greenhouses

15,500

mountain pine (*Pinus cembra*) saplings were produced for the first time in our own nurseries, located in the Groapele area near Nucșoara commune.

New nursery crops were established over a total area of 0.245 hectares (approx. 2,450 m²):

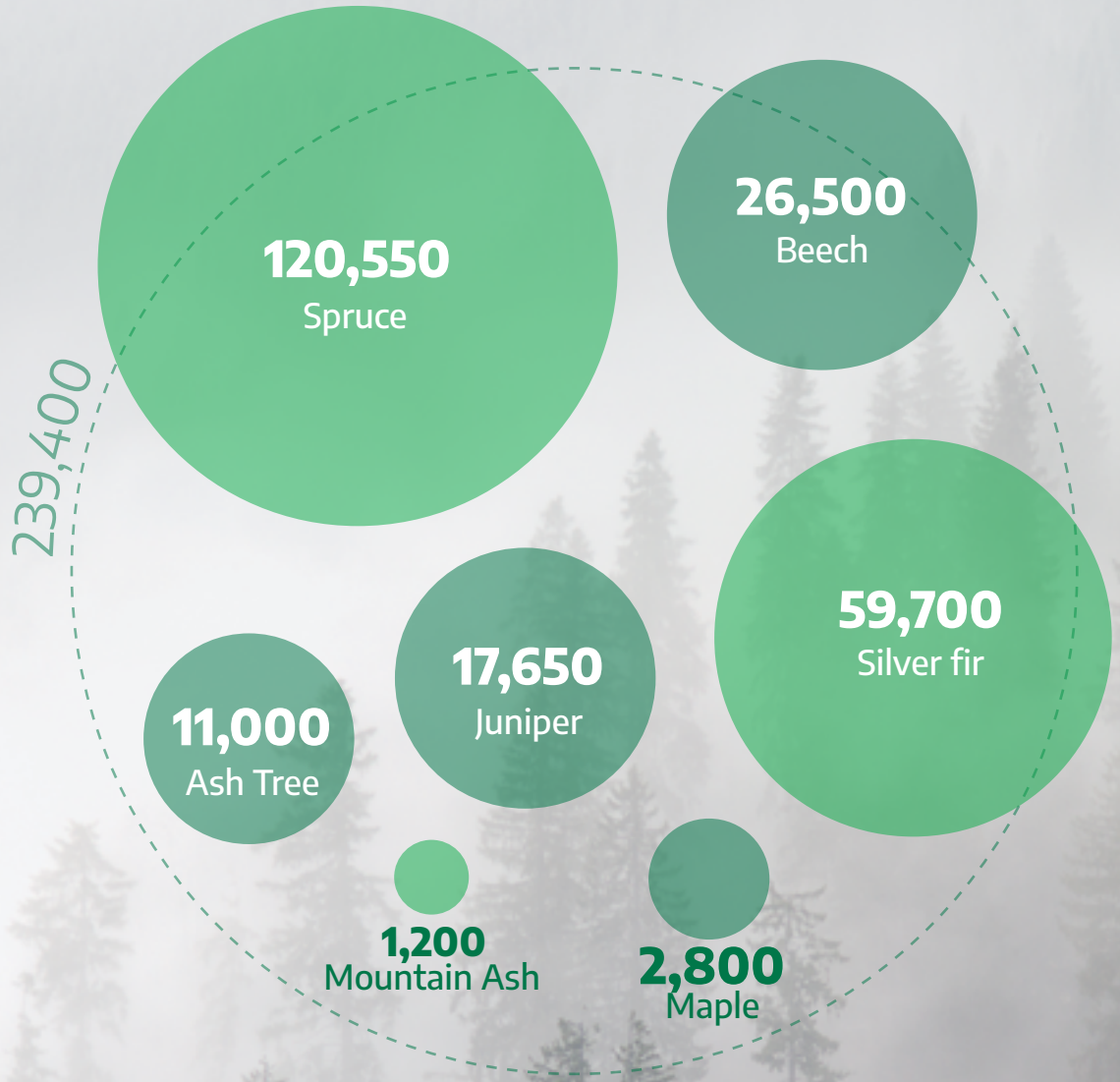


- Ares of spruce
- Ares of beech (area established in autumn 2025)
- Ares of mountain pine (area for saplings transplanted from the greenhouse)

Future Projections

- **50,000** beech saplings will be ready for planting in 2027
- **77,000** spruce saplings will be viable for planting in spring 2028
- **40,000** mountain pine saplings will be ready to plant in 2029

239,400
saplings were taken out of our nurseries.
They were used for planting on both the
Foundation's lands and those of our partners.



Sebastian Mastahac



3.

Species reintroduction

© Călin Șerban

The reintroduction of key species represents a central pillar of our conservation efforts. The European bison, the beaver, and the griffon vulture are not only essential links in the food chains, but also vital species for revitalizing degraded areas. Beyond the ecological stakes, we want these programmes to have a meaningful impact on local communities. For them, the reintroduced species become a subject of education, as well as an impetus for the development of ecotourism, local production, job creation, and strengthening the relationship with the environment.

Beaver

Monitored **40** individuals, totaling 14 families.


Călin Șerban

Tracked beaver activity across the river basins of **Dâmbovița, Râul Târgului**, and **Argeșel**.



Recorded **three kits** in the Dâmbovița Valley, alongside 2 mortalities.

Installed two water-level management systems to prevent flooding or damage to local residents' properties.

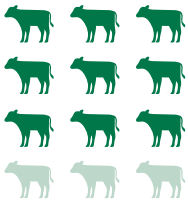
European Bison



Andrei Dumitrescu

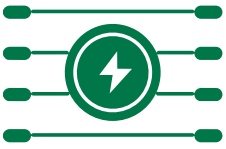


Daniel Mîrlea



9 calves born, with 3 losses due to natural causes.

We assessed the presence of bison from the beginning and tracked them because of the human-wildlife conflict potential. Furthermore we intervened repeatedly, alongside representatives of the Argeș Gendarmerie, and herded them away safely.



Installed **three electric fences** to protect the affected households and properties.

Griffon Vulture

Launched the reintroduction project by successfully obtaining all necessary permits and approvals.



Began construction on the acclimatization aviary in the Rucăr commune area: featuring 33 ground screws, a **160 m²** surface footprint, and a maximum height of 6 metres.



The aviary creates a controlled, low-stress environment where vultures can become familiar with the habitat before being released into the wild.



Trout and Other Fish in the Făgăraș Mountains

Activities carried out alongside our partners from the Aqua Crisius Association



Over 600 kg of native brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) introduced into the streams of the Făgăraș Mountains for restocking.



Restocking initiatives for the Danube salmon (*Hucho hucho*), another iconic fish species native to the Făgăraș Mountains.



Organised a cleanup event at Lake Sătic in the Cheile Dâmboviței area.



Engaged **350 students** from local schools within the project area through interactive workshops focused on aquatic ecosystems.



Hosted **150 participants** at interactive workshops detailing the aquatic fauna of the Moașa Valley during Făgăraș Fest.



4.

Wildlife management and conflict reduction

To protect wildlife from sport and trophy hunting, CARPATHIA has leased several hunting concessions in the project area's core, covering a total of 79,000 hectares so far. Although we are proud to see wildlife populations recover and our policy is to avoid interfering with wildlife in their natural habitats, we are also aware that protecting wildlife comes with a responsibility to the communities adjacent to the conservation areas. Shifts in land use and global warming make it challenging for people and wildlife to coexist in this landscape. Ensuring that both can live and thrive together in an increasingly changing world is at the core of our wildlife management team's activities, following our principles of Prevention – Intervention – Compensation, always keeping the safety of people as one of the highest priorities.
Unlike traditional hunting management, we aim to promote all available tools and measures – old, local traditions and new, smart technologies – towards resolving conflicts with human interests and to work together with communities to tackle the problems at its roots.

Wildlife Population Trends



Red Deer and Roe Deer: The population is increasing.





Chamois (Alpine zone and surrounding areas): Stable population, though a low kidding rate (few offspring) was observed.





Wild Boars: The population is showing a slight recovery following waves of African swine fever. A higher concentration of individuals has been noted in the Stoenești and Râul Târgului areas (Argeș county).



Wildlife Conflicts and Prevention

Between March and September, Carpathia's intervention teams experienced very high demand. We stepped in both post-conflict (where damages had already occurred) and preventatively—deterring bears, installing electric fences, and removing animal waste that could attract large carnivores into residential areas.

Key factors, which might have impacted the high number of conflicts:



A lack of beech mast (poor seed production) in the autumn of 2024.



A relatively warm winter during 2024–2025.



Late spring frosts which severely impacted wild raspberry crops and orchards, resulting in a significant food shortage for bears.

Conflict Interventions

145 field deployments carried out by our rapid response teams.

68 active conflict incidents required direct intervention. These actions included deterring bears, chasing them off using specialised dogs, installing electric fences, capture attempts, and lethal removals.

8 bears extracted 2 of which had already been known from previous years as problem bears, responsible for repeated and dangerous encounters within local communities.

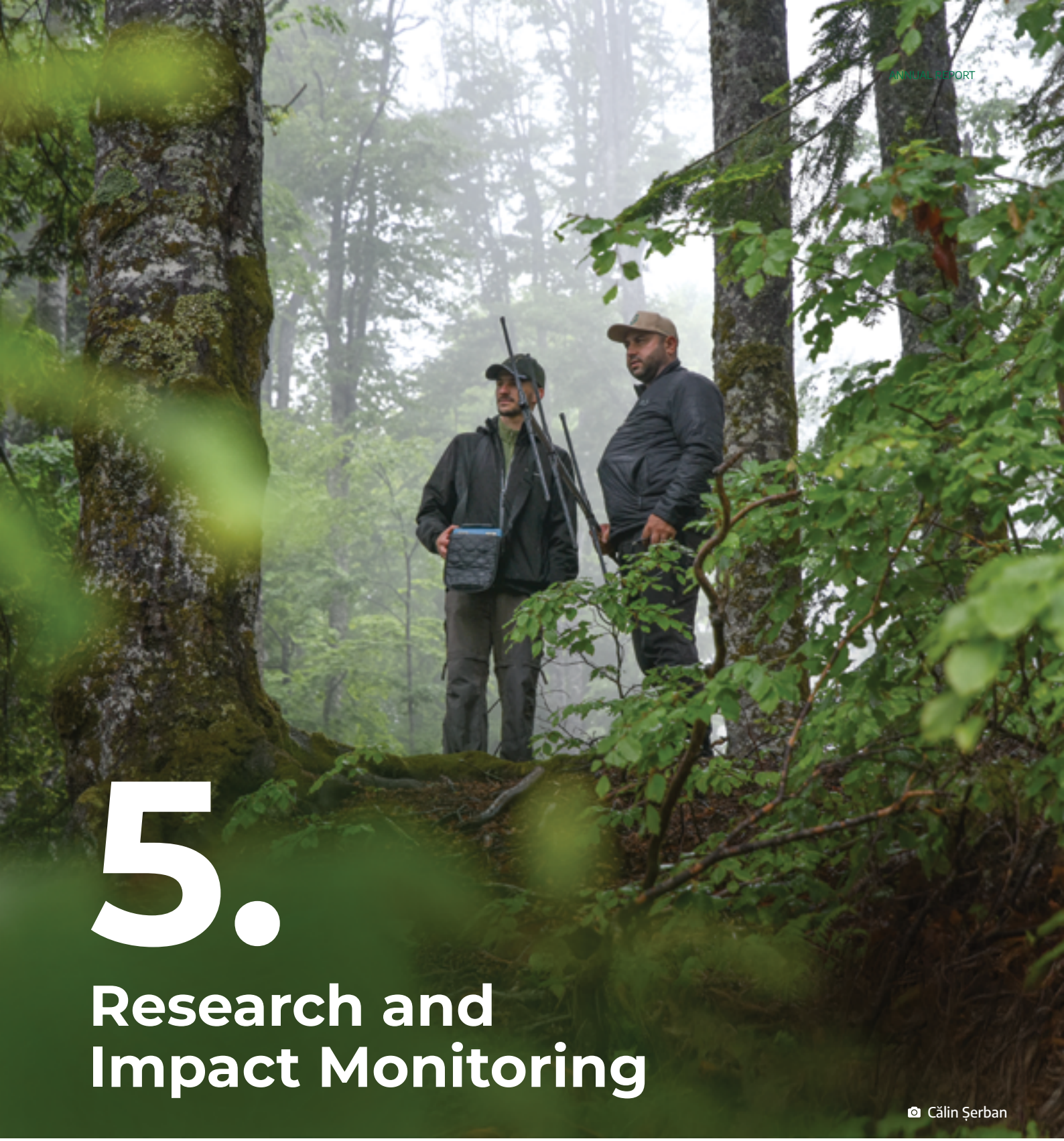
63 electric fences installed by Carpathia teams over the years remained operational throughout 2025. Of these, 15 were repaired or replaced over the course of the year.

4 electric fences were set up specifically to mitigate damage caused by wild boars. In one social case our team manually restored a heavily damaged garden, repaired its perimeter fence, and removed the problematic animal.

58 tonnes of animal waste (from livestock slaughter) were collected, transported, and incinerated by the Carpathia team to eliminate attractants that draw large carnivores into inhabited areas.



Sebastian Mastahac



5.

Research and Impact Monitoring

Călin Șerban

We don't do things just for the sake of ticking boxes. We pay close attention to results and the impact of our actions, which we measure to ensure we are making real progress. It is vital that our projects lead to tangible improvements. We apply this rigorous approach across all our areas of activity to maintain a clear, data-driven picture.

We have brought all our research together under a single umbrella: Research and Impact Monitoring. Here, we share the insights from the studies carried out under this initiative, whether they focus on wildlife species, evaluate the long-term impact of ecological restoration, or assess our communication campaigns.

Wildlife Monitoring

For 8 years, we have been continuously monitoring wildlife in the Făgăraș Mountains. Today, we possess the results of a coherent monitoring programme for bears, wolves, lynx, and red deer populations running since 2017—data that is unique for this part of Europe.

Brown Bear Diet Study

We have begun studying the feeding habits of local bears. We are tracking how their diet varies by season and in relation to the availability of natural food sources (such as beech mast and wild berries). We are also evaluating how this correlates with the frequency of human-wildlife conflicts.



Ruben Iosif

469

DNA samples were collected from bear scats in 2025.

49 sampling zones were used to measure available natural food resources (beech mast).

We mapped the distribution of fruit trees along the boundary zone between villages and the forest to measure the annual availability of fruit for the bear population.



Daniel Mîrlea

Wolf Study

This marks our seventh consecutive season of genetic monitoring.

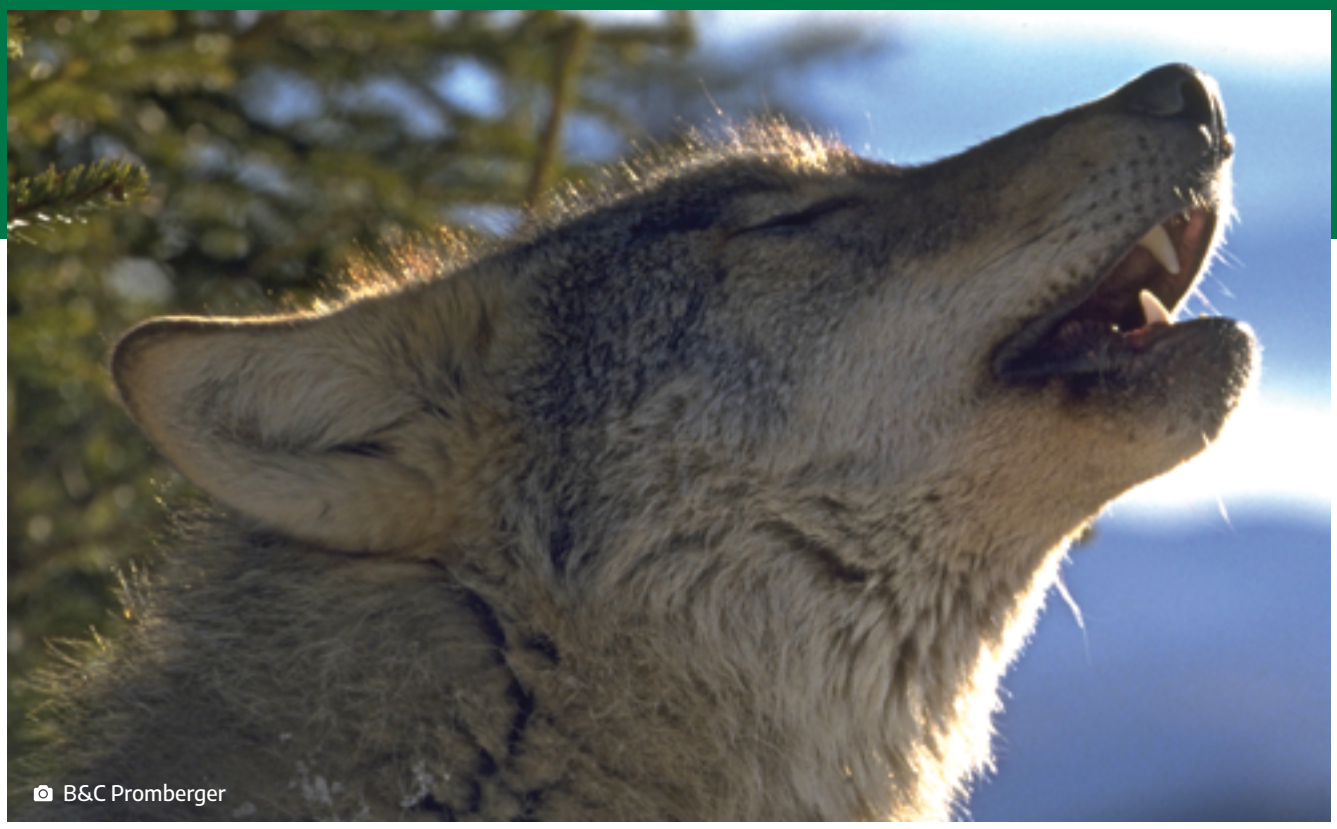
24

wolves (10 females and 14 males) were detected across an area of 1,400 sq km.

Zero wolf-dog hybrids were detected during this period.

259 non-invasive DNA samples (urine, tracks in the snow, and scat) were collected.

We successfully extracted amplifiable DNA from 69% of the gathered samples.



B&C Promberger


Daniel Mirlea

Red Deer Study

93%

We collected samples from red deer scat, achieving an impressive 93% success rate for DNA extraction.

316 distinct individuals were identified: 170 females and 146 males.

Population density values have remained stable, holding steady at around 20 individuals per 100 sq km.

Samples were analysed by our partners at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia.

Acoustic monitoring

23

acoustic recorders deployed in different forest habitat types.

We identified 79 bird species and 22 bat species, including the greater noctule bat (*Nyctalus lasiopterus*).



Liviu Ungureanu

It is still too early to draw definitive conclusions from this monitoring regarding the long-term effects of different forest management approaches on biodiversity.



Bison Impact on Vegetation

Promoting seed germination: In clear-cut areas, bison graze the dense grass, creating open 'gaps' in the ground cover. This allows the seeds of characteristic native trees—such as fir, beech, spruce, sycamore maple, and rowan—to successfully germinate.

Accelerating forest recovery: Without the presence of bison, forest regeneration would be a significantly longer and more stagnant process.

Controlling shrub overgrowth: By feeding on wild raspberry, goat willow, and red elderberry shrubs, bison suppress aggressive undergrowth, which favors the development of core woody species and speeds up forest re-establishment.

Dynamic grazing patterns: Once released into the wild, bison move constantly and spend very little time in any single area. This roaming behavior prevents overgrazing and dynamically stimulates healthy forest growth.

Impact of Ecological Restoration Activities

Boosting sapling growth: In former clear-cuts, our interventions have accelerated the emergence and growth of spruce and beech saplings, driven successfully by both manual planting and natural regeneration.

Riparian restoration: **69.07 km of rivers** regained their native vegetation (alder, poplar, and willow) as a result of our restoration efforts carried out between 2021 and 2024.

113%

Habitat improvement: We recorded a 113% increase in the total length of river sectors achieving a ‘favourable conservation status’.



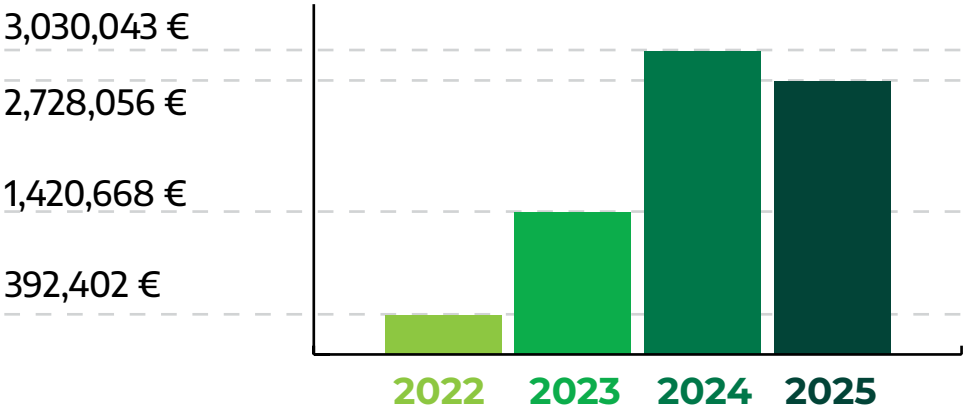
George Soare



Invasive species management: The coverage of invasive alien plants dropped significantly in areas where our rangers actively worked to eradicate them through cutting and uprooting.

The challenge of Japanese knotweed: *Reynoutria japonica* proved to be the most resilient invasive species we tackled. Its coverage saw only a minor decrease—dropping from 92% in 2022 to 80% in 2024—proving that this specific plant requires much more aggressive control methods.

Socio-economic impact in communities



The impact of communication about the organisation

We measure public awareness and support for our projects.

Foundation Conservation Carpathia's awareness

2021 - 11%

2024 - 31%

Opinion about the Foundation (2024)

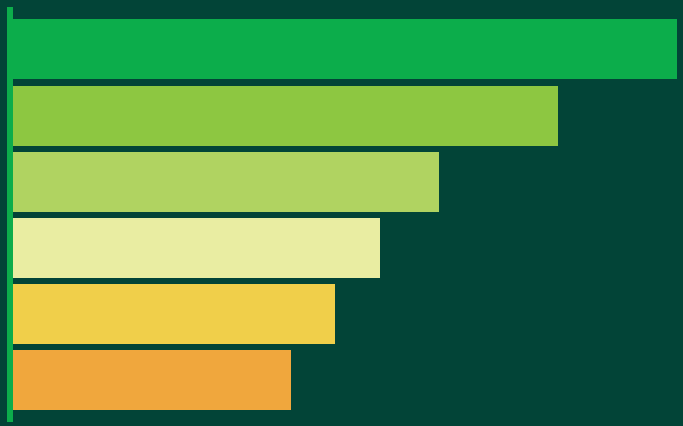
73% Very Good

25% Neutral

3% Very Bad

How people find out about us

- 45% - mass-media
- 37% - social media
- 29% - from a friend
- 25% - other NGOs or environment organisations
- 22% - education activities
- 19% - events



Around **80%** of the public hold a positive view regarding the idea of establishing the Făgăraș Mountains National Park.

Impact of communication campaigns

Attitude towards beavers

We conducted a communication campaign about beavers in 2024 – 2025

Positive towards species

18% - 2022

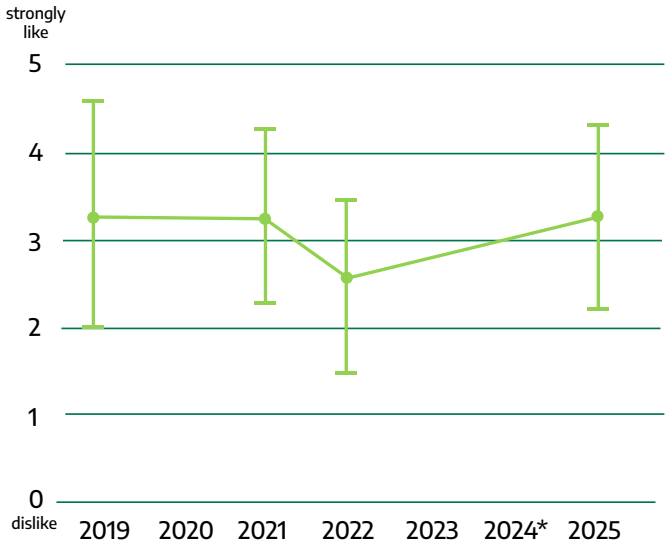
30% - 2025 **(+12%)**

Favourable to beaver reintroduction

18% - 2022

40% - 2025 **(+22%)**

Change in attitudes towards beaver reintroduction over time



*Communication campaign starts





Positive attitude towards griffon vultures

45% - 2023

54% - 2025 **(+10%)**

At the beginning of the communication campaign. We will repeat the study in 2027.



6. Communication

Roland Aron

From a communication perspective, as well as in our relationship with communities, 2025 was a true emotional rollercoaster. Many of our projects came to fruition, and the impact of our hard work resonated further than ever. We received strong support from local communities, and new partners joined our efforts to generate even greater backing for nature conservation.

However, success also comes with challenges.

This increased exposure has also made us vulnerable to the phenomenon of fake news, AI-generated content, and disinformation campaigns – a dangerous enemy for nature and environmental NGOs.

In the face of all these pressures, we responded every single time with calmness and balance, presenting the actual facts and defending our position with concrete arguments.

We know that opposing views are natural in an initiative of this scale. Nevertheless, we trust that well-intentioned people can discern the truth and understand that our mission transcends personal or short-term interests, aiming for a collective, long-term good. As always, we remain open to an honest, reasoned, and balanced dialogue with everyone interested in our work.

Our events


Fisheye

Făgăraș Fest

7,000 participants enjoyed music, guided tours, and local experiences at the sixth edition.



Carpathia Bike Tour

Our fourth edition brought together around 150 participants. For the first time, we had to reschedule the event, a decision made necessary by severe flooding.


Fisheye

The European Ranger Congress – brought 270 people from 33 countries to Romania. We received congratulations and appreciation for the excellent organisation of the event.


Ștefan Lungociu

Completion of the LIFE project and communication of the results to the general public



Ștefan Lungociu

Inauguration of the 'Casa Zimbrului' (The Bison House) visitor center


Fisheye

The Goulash Competition, the culinary event at the Cobor Biodiversity Farm

We were delighted to be main partners for events with a diverse audience deeply passionate about nature:



European Experts Hub: the LIFE platform meeting on forest restoration, an event that brought experts from all over Europe together to discuss the new European Nature Restoration Law.



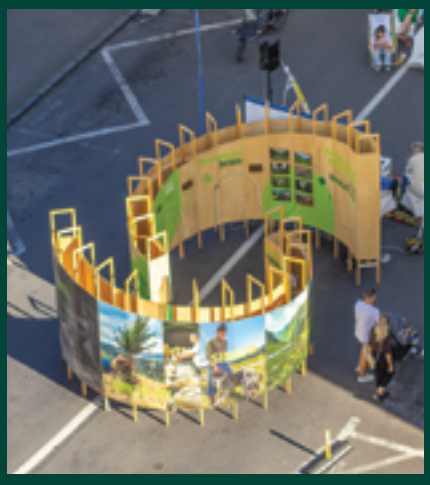
At the **Aspen – GMF Bucharest Forum,** we participated in a panel discussion about nature as a country brand.



Lynx Festival – already a tradition for nature film lovers in Brașov and beyond.



Sibiu Ecotourism Fair We presented all our activities, focusing on the ecotourism and education projects.



Street Delivery Brașov we celebrated Brașov's heritage, and took part in the creative dialogues with the local public.

Projects and Campaigns



Our wildlife reintroduction specialists at the Q&A session after a projection of Architects of Nature.

The vulture communication campaign, focused on educating the public about the ecological role of this species.

The 'Nature's Architects' (Arhitecții Naturii) screening caravan brought the documentary on the reintroduction of bison and beavers to even more nature lovers, with more than 40 projections throughout the country.

We continued to provide fresh field updates month after month through our newsletter, *PoveȘtiri din Munții Făgăraș* (Stories & News from the Făgăraș Mountains). In 2025, our subscriber base grew fourfold! We are thrilled by the high level of interest in the unfiltered reality of our work.

The invasive plants campaign continued to raise awareness about the dangers these plants pose to the environment.

We produced two new videos highlighting the Foundation's activities: a summary of the projects funded by the Endangered Landscapes & Seascapes Programme (ELSP), and a manifesto for Foundation Conservation Carpathia, created by British producer Charlie Ottley.

Even more ancient beech trees in the Nucșoara commune area were adopted through the 'Trees with Stories' (Arbori cu Povești) project.

Awards and Distinctions

The German Order of Merit, a highly prestigious distinction, was awarded by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier to Foundation Conservation Carpathia's directors Barbara and Christoph Promberger for their engagement to protect forests and nature in Romania.

The Special Publications Award, granted to the photo book Memorable Encounters in the Făgăraș Mountains (Întâlniri memorabile prin Munții Făgăraș) at the Romanian PR Awards. The photo book is the result of a successful collaboration with SmartPoint PR.

The Transylvania Mountain Festival Trophy, awarded by Romania's mountain-loving community, recognising our entire mission and activity.

The Sustainable Leadership Award, received at the CARIERE Gala.

Media exposure


Fundația Conservation Carpathia invită elevii să Adopte un colț de natură

Vlad Andriescu

Pentru al treilea an consecutiv, Fundația Conservation Carpathia invită elevii din jurul Munților Făgăraș să adopte un colț de natură din comunitatea lor. Elevii cu cele mai bune proiecte pot câștiga o excursie de 7 zile în Parcul Național Pădurile Bavareze din Germania.

A reflection of our growing reputation and media outreach, our activities received extensive coverage on both national and international channels in 2025. This effort resulted in 3,212 total media appearances, articles, reports, interviews and news features highlighting our work.

Three mass-media focused events were organised:



Closing of the LIFE project and opening of the Bison Visitor Cetre



Getting to know the entrepreneurs who received grants through Carpathia Fund



Launch of the ‘Architects of Nature’ trail in Nucșoara

Top three topics presented by the media:

Făgăraș Fest 2025

Vulture reintroduction education campaign

European Ranger Congress

International Media Appearances

Our projects were featured in six languages, including English, French, Dutch, Danish, and German.





Articles about our project and the nature of the Făgăraș Mountains appeared in prominent outlets, helping to build the image of Romania and attract visitors to the splendid beauty of its nature.



7.

Community Relations

Ștefan Lungociu

Starting in January 2025, through an extensive reorganisation process, educational activities and community engagement were taken over by the newly established Community Relations department.

This restructuring reflects our organisation's commitment to prioritising our relationships with local communities.



Educational Programmes

We restructured the team, so that by the end of 2025, we had three full-time colleagues and one part-time colleague in the Education department.

Over **1800 children** participated in the activities organised as part of the *Natura la Clasă* (Nature in the Classroom) caravan.



Ștefan Lungociu



674 students participated in the educational camps hosted at the Richita Activity and Nature Exploration Centre, involving 10 nature educators in their organisation.

20 children were selected for the Junior Ranger programme. To date, the junior ranger community counts 75 students.

15 Junior Ranger members participated in an experience exchange with Vânători Neamț National Park.



We organised the first photography workshop for students involved in the Foundation's educational activities.



We awarded 25 Carpathia scholarships to students with outstanding academic results and an interest in natural sciences. The programme is run in partnership with Țara Făgărașului Community Foundation.



15 students were selected through the 'Adoptă un colț de natură' (Adopt a Corner of Nature) competition and visited the Bavarian Forest National Park.



We participated in the 2025 National Ecotourism Fair – 'Culture Develops' from 25th-28th September, 2025, organising educational activities in Sibiu's Grand Square (Piața Mare) over the course of four days.

In 2025, a total of 2,700 children participated in the educational activities carried out by the Foundation's team and the involved teachers.

Other Community Programmes





Nearly 200 students from 11 schools benefited from the *Învață să joci cu clasă tenis de masă* (Learn to Play Table Tennis with Style) programme. 15 of them attended the World Table Tennis U19 Championships held in Cluj-Napoca, where they had the opportunity to watch Romania's champions and meet representatives of the Romanian Table Tennis Federation.

Six projects by local organisations were funded through Carpathia Fund, in partnership with the Țara Făgărașului Community Foundation.

Seven representatives from local communities in Argeș and Sibiu counties and the Sibiu County Council visited the Bavarian Forest National Park, a case study that demonstrates the real economic and social benefits enjoyed by communities located near a national park.

32 km of hiking trails in the Făgăraș Mountains were rehabilitated in collaboration with the Argeș Mountain and Speleological Rescue Public Service (Salvamont Salvaspeo Argeș).

We participated in experience exchanges with representatives of the Sibiu County Council to develop joint future projects.

The consortium formed by the communes of Valea Mare, Lerești, and Rucăr became an official partner in the vulture reintroduction project. Through this initiative, local communities are no longer mere spectators in the reintroduction process, but actively participate in decision-making and in identifying real benefits for local residents.

Volunteers



In 2025, we once again had the joy of working alongside volunteers from all over the world – 21 in total, a growing number compared to 2023. Their trust honours and encourages us. We thank them for their commitment, energy, and the openness with which they joined our work, becoming part of the story of Foundation Conservation Carpathia.

Germany (DE)

Albert Friebolin, Anna Böhm, Carla Rokitte, Christopher Köster, Felix Zimmermann, Hannah Höltermann, Katharina Arnold, Klara Grunenberg, Laura Grages, Lucie Leclere, Marlene Gauter, Nils Pithan, Steffen Schwarz

France (FR)

Maia Lemarignier, Matteo Perbet

Netherlands (NL)

Jochem von Driessen, Xophe Gerritsen

Romania (RO)

Gropan Alexandru, Ionuț Cioacă

United Kingdom (UK)

Christophe Darnley Brede

Our English-language materials, of which there are quite a few, benefit from the keen eye of Dr Ruth Rusby, who misses absolutely nothing. We are deeply grateful to her for her help!

Corporate Partners

Ursus Breweries has stood by us for the fourth consecutive year, donating 1% of sales from URSUS Premium and URSUS Alcohol-Free during November–December 2025. Their contribution supports the protection of bear habitats in the Făgăraș Mountains, the reduction of human–bear conflicts, and the implementation of a study on this species' diet.

BCR, our strategic partner for education, continued to support environmental programmes for local communities in 2025, providing children with access to the activities at the Richita Centre. Furthermore, BCR clients can support the Foundation through donations made via the George platform.

ING Bank Romania supports our ecosystem restoration efforts in the Făgăraș Mountains, contributing to the reintroduction of the griffon vulture and the rollout of an awareness campaign on the ecological role of this species.

Aenova Romania has been a steady partner since 2022, supporting projects aimed at protecting and restoring ecosystems in the Southern Carpathians.

BRD protects 1,400 hectares of mixed forests, including mixed spruce–beech–fir–maple and old-growth remnants, alongside spruce monocultures where ongoing ecological restoration is supporting the gradual return to more natural forest conditions.

Premium Aerotec SRL (Airbus) contributes to the biodiversity conservation activities of the Foundation, through the protection and maintenance of forests, grasslands, flora and wildlife.

Alpha Bank Romania (now UniCredit Bank) supported the organisation of Făgăraș Fest, helping to bring the public closer to nature and our mission.

Zentiva, our reforestation partner, has stood by us for the sixth consecutive year, contributing to the planting of 25,000 saplings and the restoration of approximately six hectares of forest in the Făgăraș Mountains.



8.

Conservation Enterprise Programme

Diana Bobeș

The establishment of the Făgăraș Mountains National Park also means adapting the local economy to become more nature-friendly and free from negative environmental impacts. Ecotourism, nature-based services, and responsibly made products are essential steps in this transformation.

In 2025, our initiatives, Travel Carpathia and *Roadele Munților Făgăraș* (Fruits of the Făgăraș Mountains), went through a year full of challenges arising from the socio-political and economic context. We managed to navigate them successfully and are pleased with our steady results, which confirm that we are on the right track.

Travel Carpathia

In 2025, Travel Carpathia continued to transform ecotourism into a driver for regional development, harmoniously combining nature conservation with education and economic support for local communities. Through international partnerships with tour operators and academic organisations, we successfully put the Făgăraș Mountains on the global map of sustainable destinations. This approach demonstrates that responsible tourism can generate profit while securing a safe future for both people and the environment.



Approximately 2,000 tourists visited Travel Carpathia's locations. Number of overnight stays: +5% compared to the previous year.

We provided permanent jobs for 19 people from rural communities and nine from urban areas, alongside collaborations within an extensive network of guides.





The Guide Academy continued to offer professional development courses and workshops, with a focus on storytelling, wildlife tracking and identification, and hospitality excellence.

We welcomed 165 students from schools and universities across the UK. They learned about the Făgăraș Mountains ecosystems directly in the field through hikes where they collected DNA samples, set up monitoring cameras, worked in the tree nursery, and tackled more complex challenges in the form of interactive games.



We expanded our portfolio of offers to include one-day tours tracking the bison in the Făgăraș Mountains, as well as comprehensive one-week packages.



For the international public, we attended three travel fairs: Destinations Travel Show London, ITB Berlin, and World Travel Market London.



We organised two press trips: one dedicated to the German and Austrian markets, and another focused on the UK market, carried out in partnership with The European Nature Trust (TENT).



Locally, we presented our tourism offers at ecotourism fairs in Brașov and Sibiu.

Roadele Munților Făgăraș (Fruits of the Mountains)

We continued our collaboration with

40

local producers.



Over

300

participants attended events where Roadele Munților Făgăraș provided an authentic gastronomic experience from the Făgăraș Mountains.

23

guesthouse owners and small local producers participated in two experience exchanges focused on ecotourism and local gastronomic points.



5

journalists experienced the hospitality of the Făgăraș Mountains communes during two specially organised trips.



We organised two experience exchanges for guesthouse owners in the Făgăraș Mountains area, as well as for those aspiring to open local gastronomic points. Local entrepreneurs acted as both hosts and guests, and following these visits, we were able to support the opening of two new local gastronomic points.



We provided catering for the diplomatic event Aspen–GMF Bucharest Forum, as well as for two highly prestigious events, held at the German

Embassy and the British Embassy in Bucharest



9.

National Park Infrastructure

A thriving national park requires a thoughtful infrastructure that seamlessly connects wilderness protection with local communities and field operations. Over the past year, Foundation Conservation Carpathia has anchored this vision through key regional projects.



We made progress for the future Rucăr Logistics Hub, planned to be finished in 2027/2028



Bison Visitor Centre in Lerești was inaugurated

In 2025 we finished renovating the Comisu cabin, that can now host up to eight people

We acquired land to build a future education centre in the north of the Făgăraș Mountains, planned to be opened in early 2028



Nature's Architects Trail in Nucșoara was inaugurated



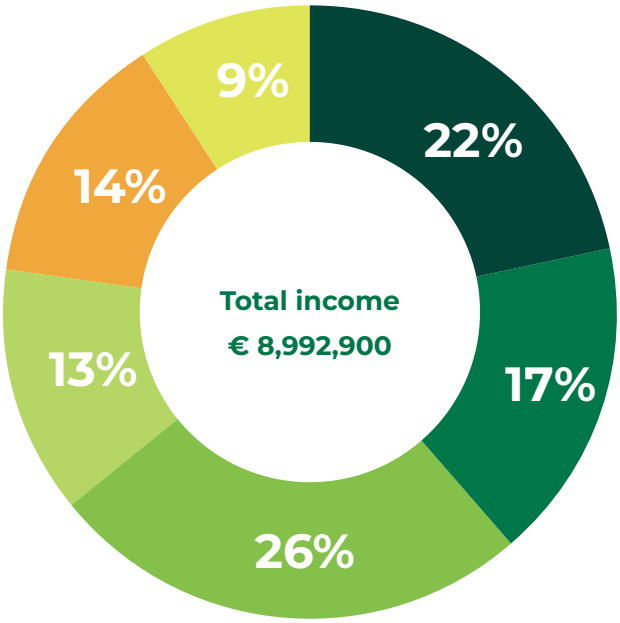
We purchased land to build the future Vulture Visitor Centre in Valea Mare, in the south of the Făgăraș Mountains

Financial report

Income

All the financial resources we secure are directed exclusively towards supporting our conservation projects and activities, with the sole purpose of advancing the organisation's mission for the benefit of nature and local communities.

- Private Entities and Foundations
- Public Funds
- Individuals and other private donations
- Corporations
- Conservation Enterprise
- Other sources of income



The following projects concluded in 2025:

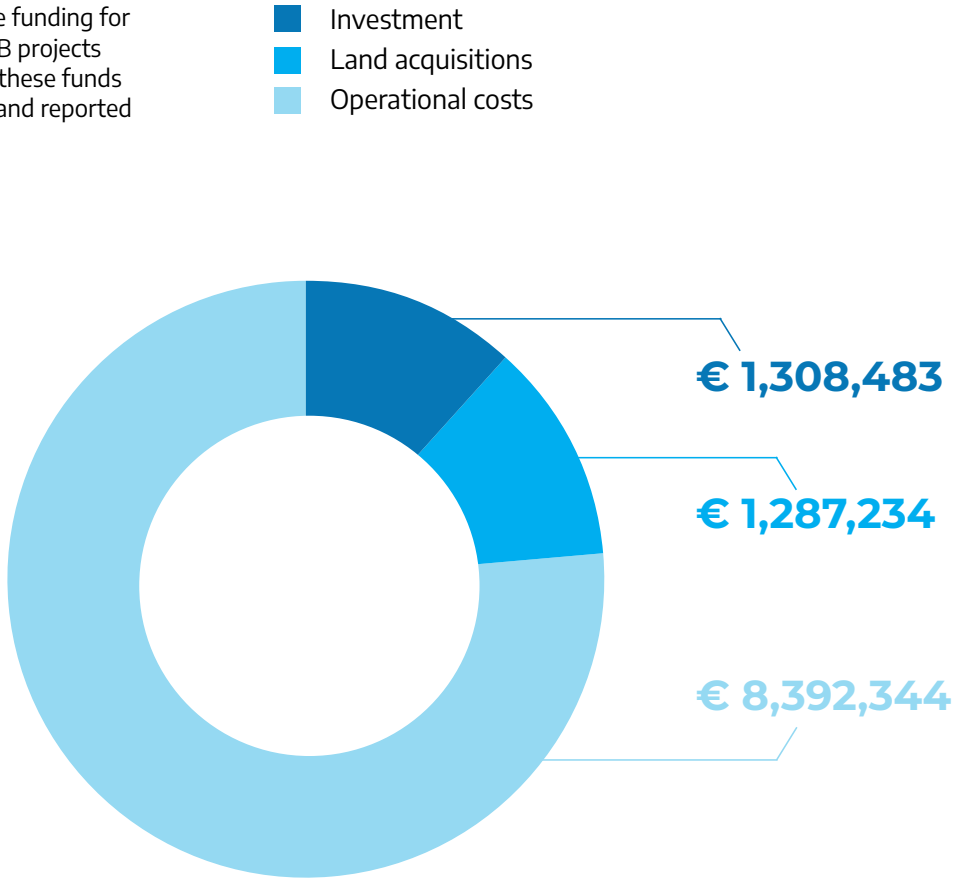
- LIFE18/RO/NAT/001082 – 'Creation of a Wilderness Area in the Southern Carpathian Mountains, Romania', funded by the European Commission;
- Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme – 'Creation of a Wilderness Area in the Southern Carpathian Mountains, Romania', funded by the Arcadia Foundation, through the University of Cambridge;
- SUPERB – Systemic solutions for upscaling of urgent ecosystem restoration for forest related biodiversity and ecosystem services, funded by the European Commission Horizon 2020.

Private Entities and Foundations	€ 1,952,286
Alv Foundation	
Ascendis	
Fondation Babelle (Telios)	
Forests Without Frontiers	
Frankfurt Zoological Society	
Friends Of Conservation Carpathia	
Lawson Family Trust	
Mossy Earth	
Murrma Kulturstiftung	
Pancivis Foundation	
Stichting Forestpeace	
The European Nature Trust	
Ubs Optimus Foundation	
University Of Cambridge	
Welttierschutzgesellschaft E.V. D	

Public Funds	**€ 1,485,829**
EU SUPERB H2020 - Systemic solutions for upscaling of urgent ecosystem restoration for forest-related biodiversity and ecosystem services	
Compensation payments for protected forests	
APIA - Agro-conservation practices	
Individuals and other private donations	**€ 2,333,411**
Other private donations (UBS Optimus Foundation, Friends of Conservation Carpathia, ING Bank - Online Donation Button)	
Corporations	**€ 1,172,075**
Aenova (Swisscaps Romania SRL)	
AEROTEC	
Alpha Bank	
Ascendis	
Ayvens	
Banca Română de Dezvoltare	
Bebetei Investments Group	
Discovery RO SRL	
Farmacia Tei SRL	
ING Bank	
Journeys With Purpose	
Prosus Services BV	
Romanian Commercial Bank	
Ursus Breweries	
Zentiva	
Conservation Enterprise	**€ 1,244,580**
Ecotourism, small entrepreneur food hub, organic farm	
Other sources of income	**€ 804,718**
Income from pasture renting, land leasing, woodland fees, etc.	
Total income	**€ 8,992,900**

Expenditure

A significant portion of the funding for the EU LIFE18 and SUPERB projects was received in 2023, and these funds were subsequently spent and reported on during 2024 and 2025.



Investment	**€ 1,308,483**
Renovation and construction of the Rucăr Logistics Hub, Rucăr Visitor Centre, Lerești Visitor Centre, Nucșoara Info Centre, maintenance of wildlife observatories	
Infrastructure and field equipment	
Land acquisitions	**€ 1,287,234**
Operational costs	**€ 8,392,344**
Costs including funds spent on activities directly related to our mission, wildlife monitoring, ecological restoration, field supplies, sociological research studies, etc.	€ 3,072,588
Salaries (including the employer's contribution to the state budget)	€ 4,455,395
General and administrative costs (includes financial, administrative, legal, IT consulting, HR, audit, and other costs necessary for organisational development)	€ 737,245
Non-operational costs (includes various taxes and fees)	€ 127,116
Total expenditure	**€ 10,988,061**



What is next

The natural world and its conservation are losing ground on a global scale, and while we see that there is still a lot of scepticism towards National Parks in Romania, we also do see that the interest of local communities in the economic opportunities of a Fagaras Mountains National Park is growing. The National Park as a solution that combines securing ecosystem functions with creating an attraction for tourism and enhancing rural development is gaining momentum.

So, we need to continue to deliver. We need to create the National Park infrastructure, including visitor attractions – beautiful infrastructure is hard to criticise. We need to promote tourism – the voice of tourists against logging and for intact ecosystems will be heard. We need to grow activities for youths and for adults – people who know about nature will respect it. We need to make conservation count financially – local communities will embrace it. This is the content of our 2026 Masterplan, which sets out our activities for the next five years.



How you can get involved and support us?

Călin Șerban

Our activity is made possible thanks to the people and organisations that choose to stand by us for the long term. We build genuine partnerships based on trust, transparency, and shared goals for protecting nature in the Făgăraș Mountains.

Become a strategic partner:

If you are an organisation, a public or private institution, a foundation, or a company, we invite you to join us as a strategic partner. For us, a strategic partner means a medium- or long-term collaboration built over time, with constant involvement in one or more of our projects. It is a relationship based on trust and shared objectives, allowing us to plan for the long term and develop initiatives with a real impact.

Become a corporate partner:

Companies can get involved through sponsorships or donations within their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies, either through dedicated projects or by supporting our general operations.

In Romania, corporate involvement is facilitated by the Sponsorship Law, which allows companies to redirect up to 20% of their corporate income tax due (up to a limit of 0.75% of their turnover). Thus, a portion of the taxes that would have been paid to the state can directly support conservation and local community development projects around the Făgăraș Mountains, at no additional cost to the company.

Collaboration can take different forms depending on each company's objectives and resources. You can choose to support a specific project or our general activity, involve employees in campaigns and actions dedicated to nature, develop communication or education projects together, or contribute through services, expertise, or products.

Become a major donor:

Major donors of Foundation Conservation Carpathia are individuals or private foundations that choose to support us at a substantial level. Your general contribution can be directed where it is needed most, or you can opt to make a dedicated donation to support a specific project. These contributions provide us with additional security regarding resource planning, as we know in a timely manner what funds are available to us and for our activity.

Become a private donor:

Sometimes, the most significant changes start with a simple gesture. Your donation, whether a one-time gift or a recurring one, directly helps us protect forests, restore habitats, and carry our field work forward. For us, every contribution shows that we are a community that believes in the same cause.

At the beginning of the year, you can also support us by redirecting 3.5% of your income tax. It costs you nothing extra, but for us, it means continuity and stability for the projects we are driving forward.

Some of our supporters choose to turn special personal milestones—an anniversary, a marathon, or another personal challenge—into an opportunity to do good, inviting friends to donate instead of giving gifts. Others choose to contribute discreetly and consistently, month after month. Whatever the form, every gesture matters and brings us closer to long-term nature protection.

FOR COMMUNITIES
FOR NATURE

CARPATHIA®

To all partners, donors, and friends of the CARPATHIA project:

thank you

for your support in 2025.

Together, we are making a long-term difference.



CARPATHIA®
For Nature, for Communities

www.carpathia.org/ro/donatii/

EURO donation account:
IBAN: RO86RNCB0061114278450049

LEI donation account:
IBAN: RO16RNCB0061114278450048

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