CARPATHIA®

NewStories from the Făgăraș Mountains

FOR COMMUNITIES, FOR NATURE

carpathia.org

April 2026



Main activities summary

1. Forest conservation and management
2. Habitat restoration
3. Wildlife reintroductions
4. Wildlife conservation
5. Human-wildlife conflict reduction
6. Conservation enterprise programme
7. Communication and community outreach

April, the unpredictable month

The old people of the Făgăraș Mountains used to say that April “tricks you”: spring in the morning, winter again by evening. That is exactly how this month felt in the mountains.


©Ben Pipe

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1

Forest Conservation and Management

©Liviu Ungureanu



Wagtail eggs, carefully hidden in the forest

© Liviu Ungureanu



Young roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)

© Călin Șerban

The forest is raising its young

While we mostly notice the changing weather, the forest quietly follows its own rhythm: birds have begun nesting, young wild animals are appearing, and wildlife has become more active — but also more vulnerable.

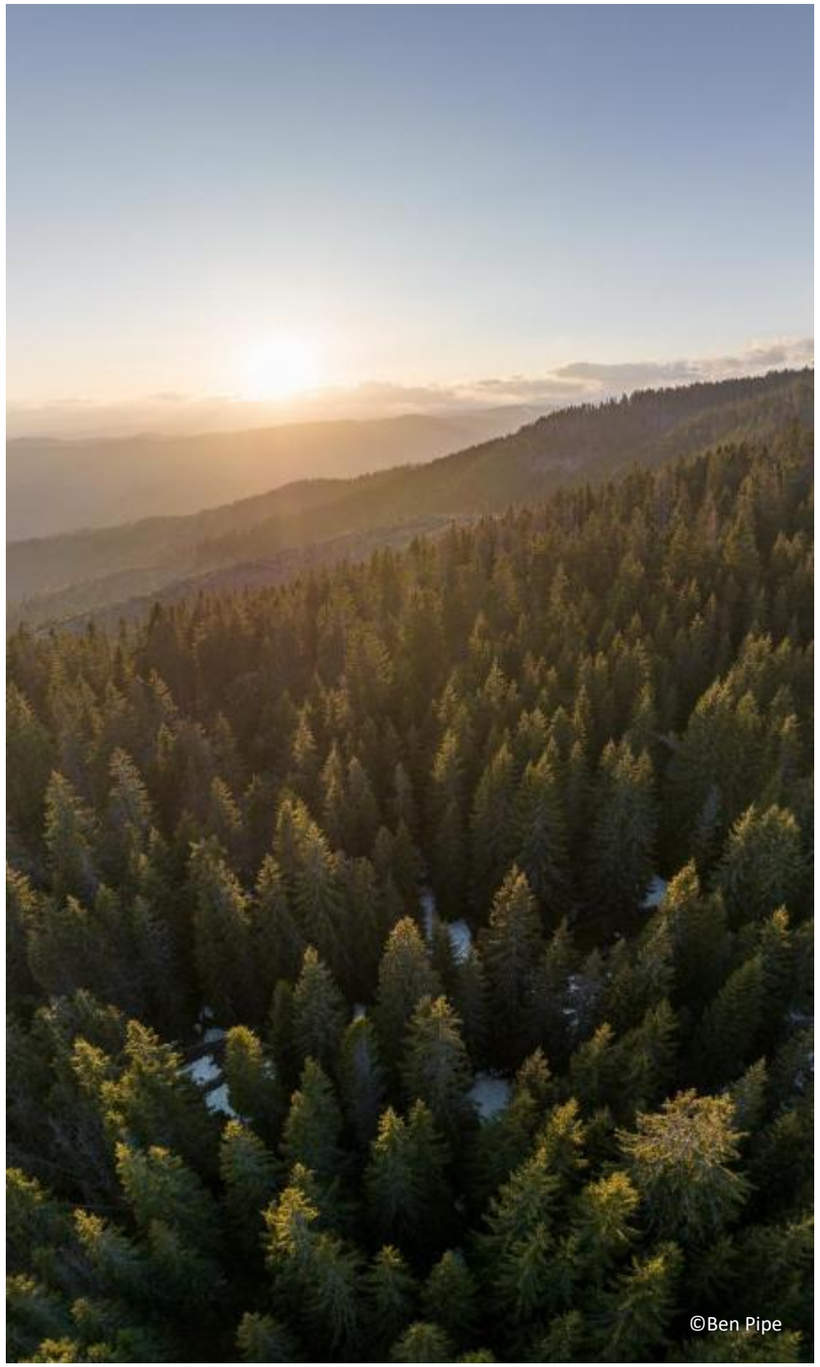
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Forest fires are no longer disasters that happen only in distant, drought-stricken regions.

In the Făgăraș Mountains, our colleagues are already preparing for the growing risks brought by hotter, drier summers.

They have identified areas with high wildfire risk and taken part in training focused on fire prevention and emergency response.

Constant patrols and field monitoring systems help us carefully protect the forests under our care.





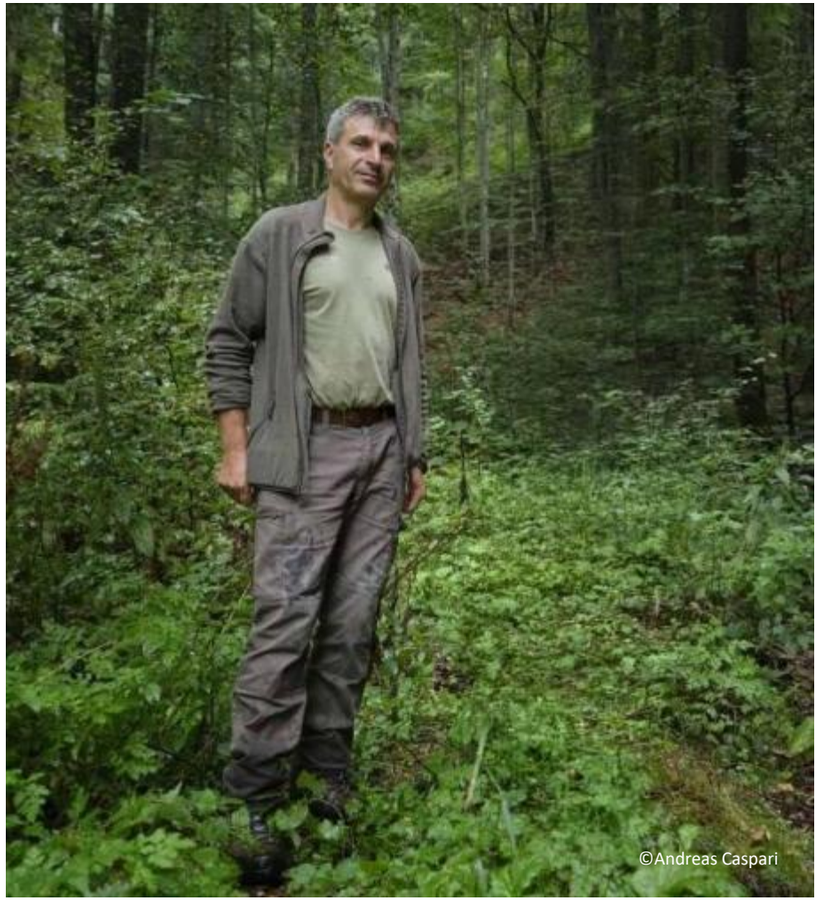
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#OurFieldTeam

- The people protecting the forests of the Făgăraș Mountains are the same people who grew up beside them.
- Constantin Simion comes from Rucăr, one of the key communities on the southern side of the Făgăraș Mountains. He has worked in the forest for as long as he can remember.
- For more than 13 years, he has been part of our team, coordinating forest patrol activities. He witnessed the years of heavy logging in the Făgăraș Mountains and later worked to help restore these forests. "*Many of those problems are now past,"* he says.
- Today, he watches the forests grow back and simply says: "*Nothing feels too hard when it comes to the forest*."









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2

Habitat restoration

©Dan Dinu

Spring in the nurseries smells of damp humus and freshly turned soil.

April was a busy month in our forest nurseries.

Our colleagues removed young spruce seedlings from the greenhouses in preparation for transplanting — a process through which small seedlings are replanted farther apart so they have enough space to grow.

At the same time, they prepared the greenhouses for a new sowing season, and selected the seedlings strong enough to begin their journey uphill, toward the ecological restoration sites in the mountains.



Dragosloveni nursery – spruce seedlings being carefully lifted for planting season



Stoenești greenhouse: preparing and refreshing humus-enriched seedbeds

©Flavius Răuță



Valea lui Coman Nursery – fir seedlings ready to begin their journey into the mountains



Spruce seedlings temporarily stored in protective trench beds

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

Before we share some numbers from this year’s planting season in the Făgăraș Mountains, we’d like to invite you to take part in a small physical exercise.

Step onto a treadmill. Set the incline to 30 degrees. Put a heavy backpack on your shoulders and climb like this for one hour.

Only now have you reached the restoration site. Pick up a shovel. It’s time to start digging, planting holes and placing the seedlings in the ground.

For our field teams and the seasonal workers involved in ecological restoration, this is not a weekend challenge or a motivational workout. It’s an ordinary workday during planting season.









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And now, the numbers we promised:

This spring, we are replanting across two ecological restoration sites: Zârna and Dobroneagu.

We are working alongside seasonal workers from nearby communities in Argeș County, including Dragoslavele and Cetățeni.

Zârna restoration site

15,500 spruce seedlings already planted

Dobroneagu restoration site

Our goal: 42,200 spruce, fir and beech seedlings. More than one third have already been planted.

The work continues.









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3

Wildlife Reintroductions

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©Liviu Ungureanu

In April, we climbed to Vârful Căpitanu, above the village of Rucăr in Argeș County, near the griffon vulture acclimatisation aviary, for a gathering dedicated to the reintroduction project.

Together with partners from academia, NGOs and public institutions, we discussed the next steps and the return of these remarkable birds to Romania's skies.

Thank you to everyone who joined us on the mountain.

The griffon vulture reintroduction project is supported by ING Romania.









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Sometimes we see them through snowfall. Other times basking in the sun.

Inside the acclimatisation aviary in the Făgăraș Mountains, the griffon vultures are gradually adjusting to their new habitat.

Live cameras allow us to observe them without disturbing their peace.

This spring, we also began organising small-group guided visits for those who wish to see the birds before their release, in a way that respects the quiet they need during the acclimatisation period.



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4

Wildlife conservation

©Dan Dinu

Some of the clearest signs that the forests under our protection are healthy and thriving reveal themselves in moments like these, captured by our colleagues in the field.

Across more than 79,000 hectares managed without sport or trophy hunting, wildlife is finding quietness and safety once again.


Brown bear, ©Daniel Bădileanu


Red deer hind, ©Gabriel Dudu


European bison, ©Daniel Bădileanu


Wild boars


Eurasian lynx

#Upclose

Western Capercaillie



In April, capercaillies begin their mating display: a spectacular ritual through which males try to impress females.



They fan out their tails, make strange sounds and compete for attention in a ritual as old as the forest itself.



This year, our colleagues once again monitored the species in the Făgăraș Mountains, observing both males and females during the mating season — an encouraging sign that these mountain forests continue to provide suitable habitat for this sensitive species.

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5

Human-Wildlife Conflict Reduction

©Dan Dinu









Prevention

With the arrival of spring, wildlife becomes more active again, and our colleagues continue prevention measures in communities around the Făgăraș Mountains.

During this period:

- we installed three new electric fences and carried out maintenance work on existing bear prevention systems;
- we monitored the presence of wild boar in hay meadows and safely drove them away when needed;
- we continued patrols and monitoring activities in areas where bears may approach communities.

Prevention measures help both people and wildlife share the same landscape more safely.

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Prevention

Animal waste left near farms and villages can attract bears from long distances because of its strong smell.

In 2023, we established a temporary animal waste collection point in the village of Rucăr, on the southern side of the Făgăraș Mountains.

Since then, local residents have started bringing animal waste there instead of leaving it near fields or at the edge of the forest.

So far, more than 120 tonnes of animal waste have been safely collected and incinerated, removing an important attractant for bears in the area.





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6

Conservation Enterprise Programme



©Ștefan Lungociu

One Year of Casa Zimbrului

One year ago, we opened Casa Zimbrului — the European bison visitor centre — in Lerești, a mountain community at the southern foothills of the Făgăraș Mountains, near the area where the first European bison were reintroduced.

Since then, more than 2,000 visitors have crossed its doorstep, including 615 adults and 1,432 children.

If you are passing through the area, please stop by for a visit.

- Voinești village, Lerești commune, Argeș County, Romania
- Tuesday–Sunday | 10:00–17:00 (break 13:00–14:00)









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In April, we organised two workshops for local entrepreneurs from both the northern and southern sides of the Făgăraș Mountains.

Owners of guesthouses and mountain lodges, alongside families running local gastronomic points from Țara Oltului, Nucșoara, Rucăr, Dâmbovicioara and Sătic gathered to discuss authentic promotion, local tourism experiences and the role collaboration can play in making the region more attractive to visitors.

Special thanks to ecotourism consultant, Stelian Burduhos for facilitating these workshops.

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A new Local Gastronomic Point joins the Roadele Munților Făgăraș network

Some places stay with you because of the landscape. Others because of the taste.

At the foot of the Făgăraș Mountains, in the village of Corbșori, La Cocoș în Deal is the newest Local Gastronomic Point authorised with the support of the Roadele Munților Făgăraș team and recently added to the network.

Here, guests are welcomed with ingredients grown in the family garden and flavours that bring back mountain summers and meals shared slowly around the table.

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© Sorin Onișor



7

Communication and Community Outreach

Făgăraș Fest 2026: more than 30 ways to discover the Făgăraș Mountains

10–12 July | Sebeșu de Sus, Sibiu County | 7th Edition

At Făgăraș Fest, the mountains are not just a backdrop. They become part of the experience.

This year's festival brings more than 30 guided tours and nature experiences: sunrise birdwatching, hikes through the Făgăraș Mountains, wildlife explorations, family activities and cultural walks through Sebeșu de Sus.

Everything happens in small groups, alongside guides and specialists who help people discover the mountains step by step.

Details and tickets: www.fagarasfest.ro



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Less scrolling, more nature

This April, more than 1,600 children explored ecosystems, beavers, bison and vultures alongside our education team during Romania's Green Week programme.

They listened to stories, learned through play and discovered nature in visitor centres, forest nurseries, schools and along the trails of the Făgăraș Mountains.

Sometimes, nature is best understood when you see it up close.









© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

Sometimes nature enters the classroom

In April, our ‘Nature in the Classroom’ caravan once again travelled through communities around the Făgăraș Mountains.

More than 1,000 students learned about beavers, bison and vultures through role-playing games, storytelling and situations inspired by the real life of nearby villages and forests.

At the end, they had the chance to take part in a competition with an exciting prize: a nature camp at the Richita Nature Exploration Centre or a one-day trip into the wild.



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Results

4,528,254

trees planted

79,000 ha

protected for wildlife, with no sport or trophy hunting

353 people from local communities

are involved in CARPATHIA project’s activities, receiving a fair pay

28,570 ha

of forest under permanent protection and safeguarded for future generations

8000

students and teachers involved in environmental education projects

>30

local producers are part of the Roadele Munților Făgăraș initiative

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How can you help?

Get in touch and let’s discuss ways that you can get involved, as an individual and/or as a company.

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