CARPATHIA®

FOR COMMUNITIES

FOR NATURE

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NewStories from the Făgăraș Mountains

September 2026



©Gabriel Dudu

1

Forest Conservation and Management



©Ionuț Crețu



The recent drought is a reminder of the vital role forests play in protecting water resources.

65.3% ↓

According to the Romanian National Meteorological Administration, Romania received 65.3% less precipitation in September than the 1991–2020 average.

The forests we protect in the Făgăraș and Leaota Mountains play an important role in safeguarding the water resources for millions of Romanians and their economic activities.

In September, our team continued **monitoring the forests** through 24/7 patrols, supported by surveillance cameras and drones.

We completed our bark beetle monitoring activities, including pheromone trap inspections and drone surveys to identify affected trees.









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We supported the Rucăr-Păpușa Forest District team in fighting a wildfire in the Drăghina area, in the southern Făgăraș Mountains, close to the forests we protect.

In this hard-to-reach area, our colleague Petrișor transported water by UTV and helped extinguish the fire.

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia



2

Habitat Restoration





Restoring a forest doesn't happen overnight.

2 ecological restoration sites

At Zârna and Dobroneagu, in the southern Făgăraș Mountains, we cleared grass and other vegetation around saplings planted in previous years, giving them more light and room to grow.

31 seasonal workers

31 workers from local communities, alongside our team, spent nearly a month working at the two restoration sites.

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We collected sycamore seeds.

The seeds will be taken to our nurseries to grow saplings for future planting. Beech, rowan and Swiss pine produced very few seeds, or none at all.

Sycamore maple

Beech

Rowan

Swiss stone pine

In the areas we monitor, beech trees appear to be producing very few seeds this year. This means fewer beechnuts, an important food source for bears and wild boar at this time of year.

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3

Wildlife Reintroductions



©Diana Bobeș

Good news from the Dâmbovița River!

5 locations

where our team confirmed the presence of beaver kits born this year.

7–10 beaver kits

estimated to have been born this year in the southern Făgăraș Mountains.

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia



© Liviu Ungureanu



© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

© Robert Zeitz

Welcome, Reis!

A new arrival has joined the vultures in the acclimatisation aviary.

Reis (meaning Journey in Dutch) is a juvenile male from Dierenpark Hoenderdaell in the Netherlands.

Born on 26 April 2026, he is the youngest vulture in the aviary.

The reintroduction of vultures in Romania is supported by ING Romania, the Vulture Conservation Foundation, Milvus Group, the local consortium of Lerești, Rucăr and Valea Mare Pravăț, and the Argeș Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate (DSVSA Argeș).

The project is co-funded by the European Union through the LIFE Programme, as part of the REFAG project.

4

Wildlife Conservation



©Octavian Anghelescu



© Foundation Conservation Capathia

© Gabriel Dudu

The wild is calling...

The red deer mating season began in September, marking one of the most spectacular moments of autumn in the Făgăraș Mountains.

This was also a valuable opportunity for our team to monitor the species and photograph the deer.



5

Human-Wildlife Conflict Reduction

Prevention

11 electric fences

installed or maintained around households in areas vulnerable to human–wildlife conflict.

7.3 tonnes

of animal waste collected and sent for incineration to reduce attractants that draw bears close to communities.





© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

Interventions

Responded to 24 emergency calls received through the 112 emergency service.

1 bear captured and relocated, but subsequently removed after repeatedly returning to the village despite numerous attempts to deter it.

Carried out interventions to drive wild boar away from gardens.



© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

Compensation

5
cows

11
sheep

Provided to livestock farmers through our wildlife damage compensation programme.





© Foundation Conservation Carpathia



6

Research and Impact Monitoring



Lynx Monitoring Study

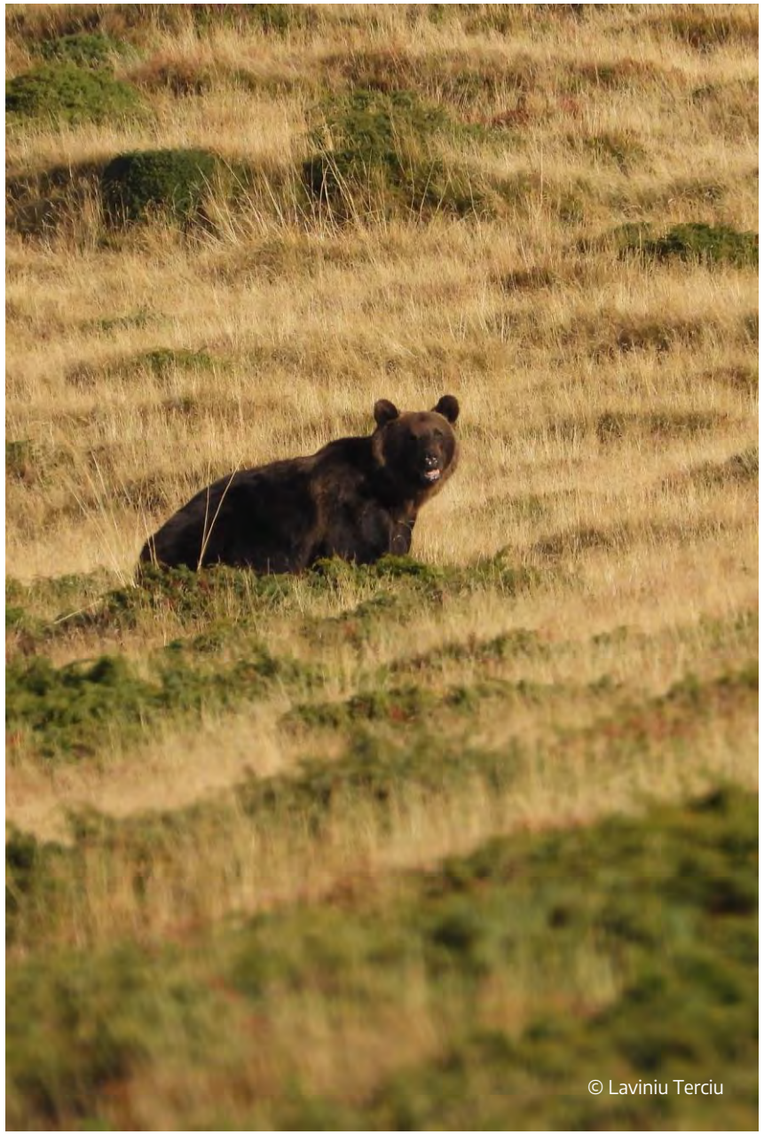
All camera traps have been installed. During the first round of checks, covering 75% of monitoring stations, our team recorded lynx at four locations.

Brown Bear Diet Study

In September, our team surveyed 9 of the 13 transects as part of the bear diet study and collected new samples.

124

samples collected during the second year of the study.


© Laviniu Terciu


© Vlad Dovlecel

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

Monitoring Beechnut Production

We are studying the availability of natural food sources for bears and how this relates to human–wildlife conflict.

In 2025, we measured beechnut production across **49 sampling plots**, with results indicating moderate to low production.

In September, we began preparations for the second year of monitoring. Preliminary data also points to low beechnut production in 2026.





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Wolf Genetic Monitoring Results

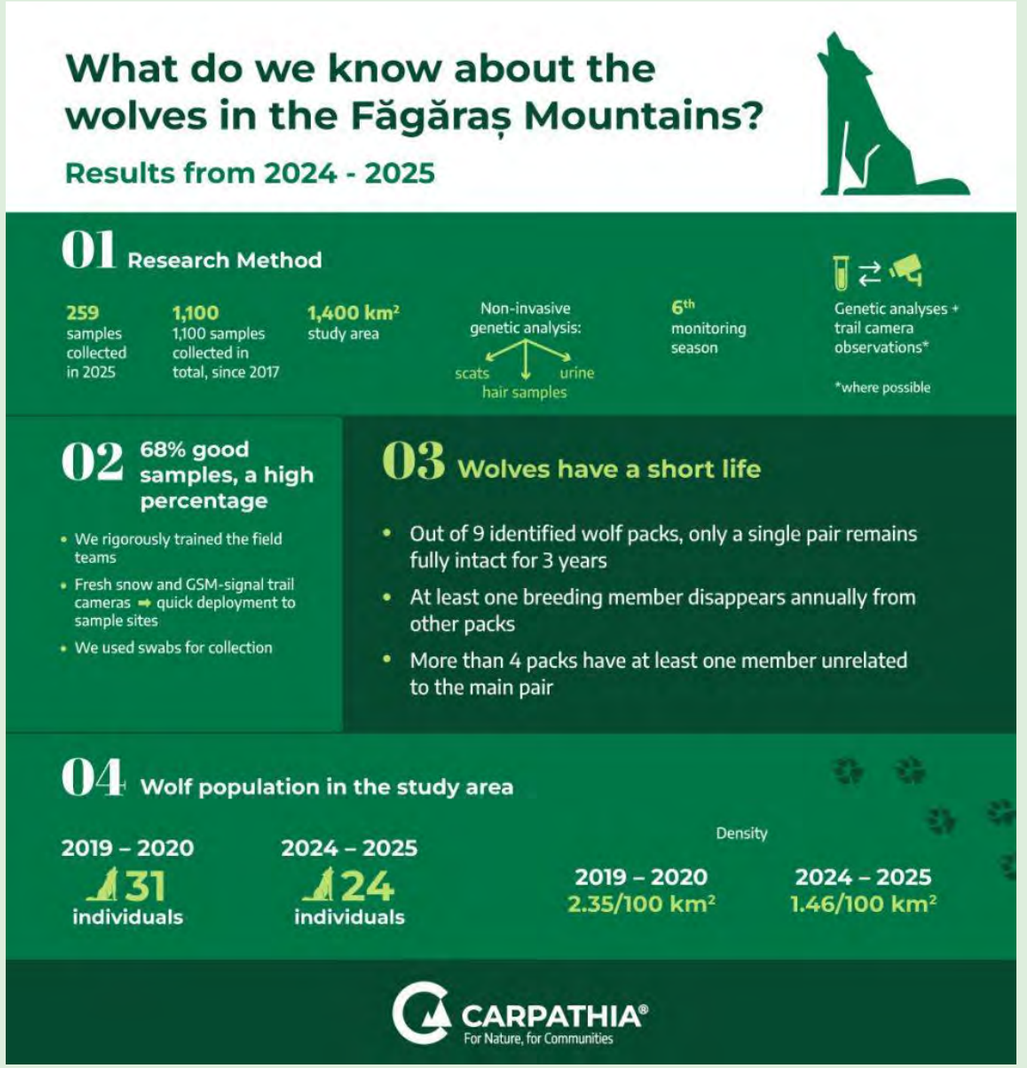
In September, we presented the results of the latest genetic monitoring season:

24
wolves identified

9
wolf packs

across an area of approximately 1,400 km².

The data reveals a wolf population with a changing social structure, as packs reorganise and breeding pairs change frequently.



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7

Communication



Join us for a walk in the park!

A national park in Romania, that is!

Developed in collaboration with Romania's Ministry of Environment, our campaign encourages people to discover and appreciate the country's national parks.
In September, it reached:

1.1–2.2

million people

14,611

unique users visited parcurinationale.ro

Discover Romania's national parks at parcurinationale.ro and explore them with joy and respect for nature.

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

The Făgăraș Mountains featured in *Kleine Zeitung Graz*

An article by journalist Klaus Höfler in the Austrian newspaper Kleine Zeitung explores the wilderness of the Făgăraș Mountains and the ecotourism experiences offered by Travel Carpathia, from hiking and bison watching to horse riding and the warm hospitality of Equus Silvania.



REISE

Reise

Die Villa Vintage in Finnland, Wandern in den Karpaten Rumäniens, Zwischenstopp in Rovereto, Long Island abseits der Hamptons und eine Tour auf die Scheichenspitze am Dachstein. **Seite 2–9**

STRENG GEHEIM

Regina Rauch-Krainer

Inselglück aus zweiter Hand

Die einsame Natur des gigantischen finnischen Schärenmeeres vor Turku fasziniert per se. Doch dann – plötzlich da wie aus dem Nichts – bringt ein Vintage-Paradies auf Lillandet, eine der zehntausenden Inseln des Archipels, nicht nur den Second-Hand-Freak vor Begeisterung ins Strudeln. Das 900 m² große Areal der Villa Vintage, das mehr als 120 Jahre lang eine Dorfschule war, ist heute als romantische Schatztruhe voller Antiquitäten und Designstücke herausgeputzt. Jedes Klassenzimmer von einst birgt ein Retro-Erlebnis: von Biedermeieridylle, Omaflair bis zu Hippiechic und Discowelle. Erworben kann alles werden. Und nicht nur hier! Denn auf jene, die sich von dieser nostalgischen Villa Kunterbunt in nordischem Holzformat nicht losreißen können, warten auch noch die ehemaligen Internatszimmer, die in einzigartige Bed & Breakfast-Bleiben verwandelt wurden. Sie bieten Second-Soul-Erlebnisse vom Feinsten – designt im Jugendstil bis zum Grafittilook. Und wenn Bett und Kästchen gefallen: Die Möbel stehen auch zum Verkauf. Das Essen im niedlichen Restaurant des Hauses ist nicht aus zweiter Hand

Hier steppt der Bär

In den rumänischen Karpaten kann man durch die letzten Urwälder Europas reiten und wandern. Begegnungen mit Bären und Bisons sind dabei nicht unwahrscheinlich.

Von Klaus Höfler

Tak-Tak. Tak-Tak-Tak. Vor jeder uneinsichtigen Biegung des steil ansteigenden Wegs schlägt Elena ihre Wanderstöcke aneinander. Tak-Tak-Tak. Ob sich die Tiere davon wirklich abschrecken lassen? Zumindest vorgewarnt wären Braunbären und Bisons, Wildschweine und Wölfe, dass da Menschen in ihrem Revier unterwegs sind. Parallel zum Klopfalarm streift der Blick der erfahrenen Wanderführerin immer wieder hochkonzentriert durchs dunkle Unterholz.

Wer in den Făgăraș-Bergen im Herzen Rumäniens wandert, ist nie allein unterwegs. Als hätte man nach einem Beweis gefragt, zeigt Elena auf frische

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

8

Community Relations



In Lerești, bison bring the community together!

70 participants



attended the unveiling of ACS Zimbrii Lerești's new football kit and took part in a raffle for supporters.

32 participants



took part in traditional craft workshops held at the Casa Zimbrului Visitor Centre.

50 participants



attended a screening of the documentary Nature's Architects.

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Learning from Communities Living Alongside Bears

We organised a visit to Băile Tușnad, **the first town in Romania to implement a Smart Bear programme,** for **23 representatives from Argeș County**, including mayors, local government officials, members of community advisory councils and representatives of the Argeș Gendarmerie.

We discussed local measures to prevent human–bear conflict and coexistence solutions that could also be adapted for communities in Argeș County.





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Nature education







Nature Education Camps at Richita

We organised four camps where **59 children** explored and learned about the natural world of the Făgăraș Mountains.

Junior Ranger

11 children took part in a trip to Piatra Craiului National Park.

70 participants, including children and parents, came together for the Junior Ranger Family Picnic in the Rucăr area.

Adopt a Corner of Nature

We organised a trip to Suru Mountain Hut for children in the programme and their parents, with **23 participants** in total.

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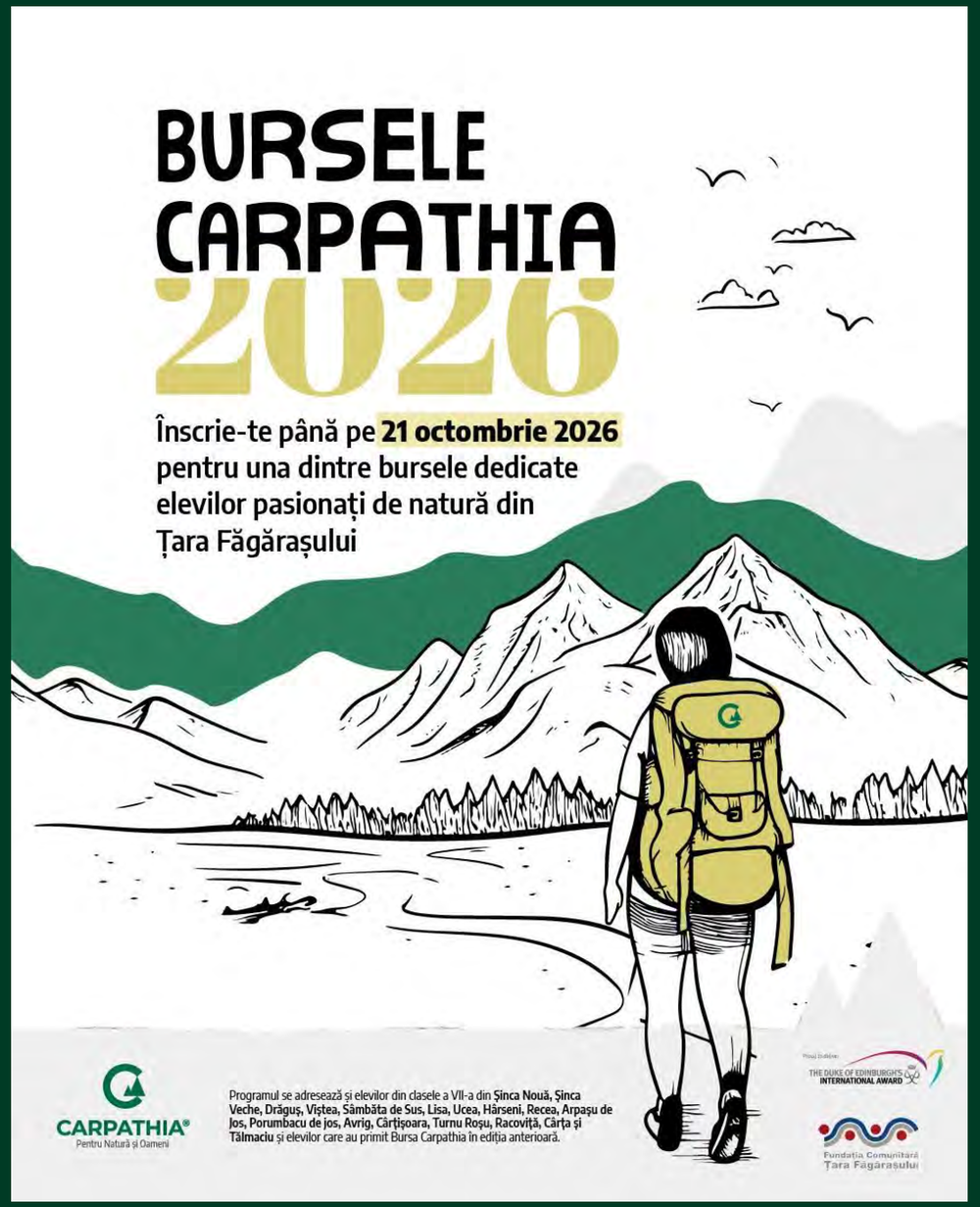
Carpathia Scholarships

In September, we launched the fifth edition of the Carpathia Scholarships programme, dedicated to students from the Făgăraș region who are passionate about nature.

Total scholarship funding: RON 75,000.

25
scholarships

3,000
RON each



© Foundation Conservation Carpathia



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Conservation Enterprise Programme

Travel Carpathia in September

80

guests explored the Făgăraș Mountains on guided tours organised by Travel Carpathia in September.

53

guests enjoyed experiences at Equus Silvania.





We took part in the Sibiu Ecotourism Fair, sharing stories about nature and guided tours, and challenging visitors to find Romania's national parks on the map.

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia



A New Experience in the Făgăraș Mountains

We've launched Wild Women of Romania, a four-day journey through the Făgăraș Mountains designed exclusively for women.

The experience includes hiking, wildlife tracking, meeting women working in nature conservation and discovering stories from local communities.

Roadele Munților Făgăraș at the Sibiu Ecotourism Fair

The jams, syrups and zacusca made by small producers in the Făgăraș Mountains returned to the Sibiu Ecotourism Fair this year. Sales and the feedback from visitors to our stand gave us plenty of reasons to celebrate.

+7.2% in sales compared to last year.



© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

Sharing Best Practices within the Roadele Munților Făgăraș Community

3

producers from the Roadele Munților Făgăraș community

8

local businesses and initiatives visited

At the end of September, we travelled to Cluj and Sălaj counties for an exchange of experiences with small-scale producers, farms, cooperatives and local gastronomic points.



© Foundation Conservation Carpathia









Thank you

to the Association for the Support of Smallholder Agriculture (ASAT) for facilitating this exchange, and to all our wonderful hosts for their warm welcome.

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#OurFieldTeam

Cosmin Vorovenci, Conservation Enterprise Officer

At 14, Cosmin left Sătic (Rucăr), dreaming of one day returning home to become a ranger in Piatra Craiului National Park. After attending a forestry high school and university in Timișoara, followed by several years working in Germany, he returned home to Rucăr to work towards the creation of a national park in the Făgăraș Mountains.

He started as a volunteer in 2020, coordinating a programme to support isolated elderly people during the pandemic. That initiative marked the beginning of Roadele Munților Făgăraș, a network of local producers bringing communities and nature together.

Today, he plays a key role in the food hub's day-to-day activities, supporting local producers. "*If you're honest and sincere, everyone will stand by you.*"

"Building a national park is no easy task. But working towards one? That's pretty cool."



Results

4,913,229

trees planted

79,000 ha

protected for wildlife, with no sport or trophy hunting

353 people from local communities

earn income from CARPATHIA project activities

28,690 ha

of forest under permanent protection and safeguarded for future generations

10,572

students and teachers involved in environmental education projects

>30

local producers are part of the Roadele Munților Făgăraș initiative

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FOUNDATION CONSERVATION CARPATHIA

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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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