

**23– 12 – 2023**

**News:** Wisent / European Wood Bison

- Recently, the ongoing war in Ukraine has cast a shadow over conservation efforts aimed at preserving the Wisent.
- This majestic creature, once abundant across the European continent, faced near-extinction by 1927.
- Despite successful conservation endeavours in Ukraine and Russia, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 poses a significant threat to the revival and restoration of the wisent.

**Wisent / European Wood Bison**

- Wisent, or European Wood Bison, stands as the largest and heaviest terrestrial mammal in Europe.
- Once comprising three subspecies, only one, *Bison bonasus bonasus*, remains extant, with the other two having succumbed to extinction.
- Habitat: Thriving in grasslands, deciduous, and mixed forests.
- Noteworthy for its role as an ecosystem engineer, the wisent plays a crucial part in restoring grassland habitats.
- Distribution: Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

- IUCN Red list Status: **Near Threatened** (NT).
- Threats: **Rapid environmental change and hunting by humans** were the main drivers of wisent's extirpation across Europe.