

# Rewilding in Romania

## Wildlife Reintroductions

*A herd of running bison, Southern Carpathians.  
Daniel Mirlea / Rewilding Europe*

### Core topics

- Legal framework and key definitions relevant to species reintroduction
- Rules for reintroducing protected species, including inside Natura 2000 sites
- Licencing procedures for reintroduction and reinforcement programmes, including exemptions and environmental authorisations
- Legal requirements for introducing non-native or invasive species
- Animal transport, health, welfare, and biosecurity obligations during reintroduction projects

### Key takeaways

- 1 Early and sustained collaboration with environmental authorities is essential to ensure legal compliance, facilitate permitting, and align reintroduction projects with national conservation priorities.
- 2 Understanding the legal status of the species – whether strictly protected, native, non-native, or of hunting interest – is crucial, as this determines the applicable legal framework and required procedures.
- 3 The Environmental Authorisation (“**EA**”) is central to most reintroduction projects and often involves environmental assessments. Delays are possible, so early preparation is strongly advised.
- 4 Additional permits and requirements apply for capturing, transporting, importing, or temporarily holding animals. Practitioners must ensure compliance with relevant welfare, health, and biosecurity standards.
- 5 Reintroductions involving species linked to Natura 2000 sites, or introducing non-native species, may trigger additional EU-level procedures, such as appropriate assessments or consultation with the European Commission.

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## 1. What is the general framework applicable to wildlife reintroductions?

Romanian law relies heavily on EU legislation to shape the framework for wildlife reintroductions. In practice, this means that practitioners must be aware of both national and EU-level legal requirements when planning a reintroduction programme. This section outlines the key legal instruments to consider and the main distinctions that arise from them.

### 1.1 Key legal instruments for wildlife reintroductions

To prepare a reintroduction programme, practitioners should be familiar with the following requirements:

- Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57/2007 ("**GEO 57**")<sup>1</sup>: implements the EU Habitats Directive and the EU Birds Directive. It establishes the legal regime for protected natural areas and the conservation of natural habitats, wild flora and fauna.
- Order no. 979/2009 ("**Order 979**")<sup>2</sup> regulates the reintroduction of native species listed in Annexes no. 4A and 4B of GEO 57<sup>3</sup>, the introduction of non-native species, and interventions on invasive species.
- Order no. 1798/2007 ("**Order 1798**")<sup>4</sup> and related orders: set out the procedure for requesting, issuing, and reviewing environmental permits.
- Regulation (EC) no. 338/1997 ("**EU Reg. 338**")<sup>5</sup>, and related acts<sup>6</sup> concern the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating

trade in such species.

- Regulation (EC) no. 1/2005 ("**EU Reg. 1**")<sup>7</sup>: governs the protection of animals during transport and related operations.

Whilst other requirements may apply depending on the circumstances, these instruments represent the core legal framework relevant to wildlife reintroductions and are referred to throughout this note.

### 1.2 Relevant concepts

Before planning a wildlife reintroduction, it is important to understand the core concepts that shape the legal framework in Romania.

The first key distinction is between "reintroduction" and "introduction":<sup>8</sup>

- **Reintroduction** refers to the deliberate action of establishing a viable population of a native species within its natural range where it has suffered a major decline or has disappeared.
- **Introduction**, by contrast, refers to the deliberate or accidental establishment of a viable population of a species outside its natural range.

The distinction above is based on whether a species is "native" or "non-native", defined in Romanian law as follows:<sup>9</sup>

- **Native species** are wild plant and animal species that naturally occur in Romania, whether they are currently present or historically recorded as being present. Their presence must not result from accidental or intentional human introduction.
- **Non-native species** are species that have been introduced – deliberately or accidentally – into Romania or into an area outside their natural range, either from other parts of Romania or from abroad. These species may compete with, displace, or negatively affect native species and their ecosystems. In practice, this means that non-native species are those introduced outside of their natural range, both past and present.

Another important distinction is between protected species and invasive species:

- **Protected species** are any wild plant or animal species granted legal protection under national or EU law.<sup>10</sup>
- **Invasive species** are species – whether native or non-native – that have spread beyond their natural range or have been introduced and have reproduced aggressively. Their expansion negatively impacts native species by dominating or replacing them, resulting in ecosystem changes. A list of non-native invasive species can be found [here](#).<sup>11</sup>

Based on these definitions, Romanian law sets out three general ground rules for species management, each subject to the relevant permissions and legal procedures:

- Native protected species may be reintroduced;<sup>12</sup>
- Non-native species may be introduced under specific conditions;<sup>13</sup> and
- Invasive species are generally prohibited from being introduced deliberately, although legal exceptions may apply in strictly regulated scenarios.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.3 Different legal regimes

Practitioners should be aware that GEO 57 sets out two distinct legal regimes that lie at the heart of any reintroduction programme:<sup>15</sup>

- The regime for species requiring strict protection, which applies throughout their natural range, both inside and outside Natura 2000 or other protected areas.<sup>16</sup>
- The regime for species whose presence requires the designation of a Natura 2000 site to protect their habitat.<sup>17</sup>

For more information on the Natura 2000 network, see *Rewilding in Romania: Obtaining and Protecting Wild Land* and *Rewilding in Romania: Developing Land*.

To illustrate the distinction:

- The wildcat (*felis silvestris*) is a species requiring strict protection, but its conservation does not require the designation of a Special Area of Conservation (“**SAC**”).
- The bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), whilst not requiring strict protection, is a species whose habitat must be protected through the designation of a Special Protection Area (“**SPA**”).

Some species appear in both legal categories. For example:

- Wolf (*Canis lupus*), bear (*Ursus arctos*), lynx (*Lynx lynx*), bison (*Bison bonasus*), beaver (*Castor fiber*), and common crane (*Grus grus*) are species that are:
  - Listed as requiring strict protection; and
  - Identified as species requiring the designation or presence of a Natura 2000 site.

In practice, when a species benefits from both regimes, the strict protection regime applies throughout the national territory, regardless of whether the area is part of Natura 2000 network.

The Natura 2000 framework applies only within designated Natura 2000 sites, where habitat conservation measures are targeted. For such

cases, it is strongly recommended that practitioners seek advice from the competent authorities, as well as technical and legal experts, to clarify how the

## 2. Reintroduction of species requiring strict protection

Species requiring strict protection may be of EU community interest or of national importance.<sup>18</sup> Both categories benefit from the same level of protection, regardless of whether the species is protected at the EU or national level. For instance, elk (*Alces alces*) is considered a nationally protected species in Romania, even though it is not listed as a species of community interest at EU level.

Unlike species protected under the Natura 2000 framework, the reintroduction of strictly protected species does not require the designation of a Natura 2000 site, unless the species is also listed under that regime. This is because the legal protection follows the species wherever it is found or released, rather than being tied to a specific habitat.<sup>19</sup>

To reintroduce a strictly protected species, practitioners must follow four key steps:

- **Engage with public authorities early:** reintroduction of protected species must be carried out in collaboration with the competent authorities. Practitioners should engage with relevant public bodies from the outset.
- **Select an appropriate site for release:** the release of native protected species must take

two regimes interact, and which specific procedures must be followed.

place in their natural or semi-natural habitat of origin, and preferably within designated protected areas. For more information on the categories of protected land, see *Rewilding in Romania: Obtaining and Protecting Wild Land*.<sup>20</sup>

- **Obtain an Environmental Authorisation ("EA")**<sup>21</sup>: an EA must be issued by the competent environmental authority.<sup>22</sup> This authorisation will include measures to avoid or mitigate environmental harm and specify how compliance with those measures will be verified.<sup>23</sup>
- **Secure favourable opinion from the Romanian Academy:** the Romanian Academy must issue a favourable opinion on the reintroduction programme, based on:
  - scientific analysis of the proposal, and
  - a certificate of genetic provenance for the species issued by a competent authority in the field.<sup>24</sup>

Additionally, if the reintroduction plan involves capturing wild animals from another location for translocation (rather than using captive-bred

See sections 2 and 4 for more details on how these regimes are applied in practice.

specimens), further authorisations may be required for the capture and transport of those animals. These procedures are outlined in section 3 .

### 2.1 Why is an EA important?

Obtaining an EA is a core legal requirement for implementing a reintroduction programme involving strictly protected species. Without it, any damage caused by the project could trigger legal liability.<sup>25</sup>

Beyond being a formal condition, the EA process is critical because it ensures that the reintroduction activity is assessed in terms of its potential environmental impacts and that mitigation measures are properly designed and monitored.

The procedure for obtaining an EA is not straightforward. It involves several steps, including submitting technical documentation and potentially undergoing site inspections and public consultation. Practitioners should familiarise themselves with the process in advance and ensure full compliance with all requirements. Failure to do so can result in substantial fines and the suspension or termination of the project.

An EA is issued as an administrative act by the competent authority for environmental protection.

This is typically the County Environmental Protection Agency where the reintroduction will take place. For example, if the project is located in Braşov County, the relevant authority would be the Braşov Environmental Protection Agency.

Correctly identifying and engaging with the competent authority from the outset is crucial to ensuring a smooth and legally sound process.

## 2.2 What are the necessary steps and documents to request an EA for the first time?<sup>26</sup>

To obtain an Environmental Authorisation (EA) for a reintroduction programme involving strictly protected species, practitioners must demonstrate that the proposed activity will not negatively impact:

Existing populations of the species within the release area, if the programme aims at restoring healthy levels of population (i.e. a reinforcement programme); or

Other native populations living in natural or semi-natural habitats elsewhere (if reintroducing the species to areas where it has disappeared).<sup>27</sup>

As part of the application, the following documentation is generally required:

- The standard application form provided by the competent authority;
- A detailed description, which includes:

- a clear outline of all activities involved, including any planned capture of animals (section 3);
- specific measures designed to minimise environmental impacts<sup>28</sup>;
- a list of the animals to be released, with individual identification forms;
- a certificate of genetic origin (“**CGO**”) for each species to be released, issued by the competent authority (e.g. in the case of bison, the CGO may be issued by the European Bison Conservation Centre);
- Evidence of public notification, demonstrating that the public has been informed of the reintroduction programme;<sup>29</sup>
- A completed project registration form;<sup>30</sup>
- Plans for acclimatisation and quarantine facilities; and
- Proof of payment of the 500 lei fee administrative fee.

Requirements may vary depending on the specific characteristics of the project, such as the location of release, legal status of the applicant, size and type of the site, presence of protected areas, species concerned and whether multiple counties are involved.

It is therefore strongly recommended that applicants consult with technical and legal experts and engage



*Released bison running into the enclosure, Southern Carpathians.  
Daniel Mirlea / Rewilding Europe*

directly with the competent environmental authority early in the process to confirm the list of required documents. Failure to provide a complete application may result in delays or refusal of the request.<sup>31</sup>

### 2.3 Decision-making process and timelines for issuing an EA

Once an application for an EA is submitted, the competent authority follows a structured procedure to assess its completeness and viability:

- Initial review: the authority examines the documentation and may request additional information or clarifications in writing.
- On-site visit: a field inspection is conducted at the proposed release location to verify that the conditions for carrying out the reintroduction match those described in the application.<sup>32</sup>

Once the authority is satisfied with the submission:

- Publication: a notice of the decision to issue the EA is published, along with supporting documentation. This is displayed both at the authority's headquarters and on its official website.<sup>33</sup>
- Public Challenge Period: third parties have 15 working days from the date of publication to file an objection to the decision.<sup>34</sup>

If no objection is made during the challenge period:

- Issuance of the EA: the authority will issue the EA within a maximum of 90 working days from the date the complete application was submitted.<sup>35</sup> In practice, this deadline may be exceeded due to administrative delays, so applicants should plan accordingly.

If the authority refuses to issue the EA:

- The applicant has the right to challenge the decision in court within 30 days from the date the decision is communicated.

### 2.4 What are the obligations after obtaining the EA?

Once the EA is granted, practitioners must ensure ongoing compliance with its conditions. Key obligations include:

- Carefully reviewing the obligations under the EA.
- Tracking and meeting deadlines imposed by the competent authority for different reporting obligations.
- Notifying the competent authority of any changes to the initial conditions under which the EA was issued. Note that it is forbidden to carry out activities pending the adoption of new conditions by the competent authority.

- Undergoing an annual renewal of the EA (see subsections 2.5 and 2.6) where the project will last more than a year.
- Notifying the competent authority within 60 days of completing the activity for which the EA was granted.

### 2.5 What are the necessary steps/documentation to request the EA's annual renewal?

Once the Environmental Authorisation is granted, it must be renewed annually<sup>36</sup> to confirm that project activities continue to comply with the conditions set out in the original approval and that no material changes have occurred.<sup>37</sup>

To ensure timely renewal and avoid disruption to the reintroduction project, practitioners should plan ahead and consult the issuing authority to confirm current requirements.<sup>38</sup>

A renewal application must include:<sup>39</sup>

- A completed application form;<sup>40</sup>
- An annual environmental report summarising the activities carried out and their compliance with the EA;
- A statement of responsibility confirming that the project continues under the same conditions for which the EA was issued and

that no relevant changes have occurred;<sup>41</sup> and

- Proof of payment of 100 lei fee (note: this is not- refundable, even if the renewal is rejected).<sup>42</sup>

The renewal application must be submitted by email or standard mail no earlier than 90 days and no later than 60 days before the anniversary of the date on which the initial EA was issued. If the EA has previously been revised, the timeline is still calculated from the date the original EA was issued.<sup>43</sup>

If the renewal application is not submitted in time, the issuing authority may suspend the EA.<sup>44</sup> In such cases:

- The authority will notify the holder of the EA and grant a maximum of 60 days to fulfil the renewal obligations;
- The EA remains suspended during this time and project activities are prohibited;<sup>45</sup> and
- Suspension cannot exceed 6 months. If the renewal is not completed within this period, further sanctions may apply.

To avoid the risk of project delays or legal non-compliance, it is strongly advised that practitioners begin preparing for renewal well in advance of the 90-day window.

## 2.6 Decision-making process and timelines to renew the EA

Once a renewal request has been submitted, the issuing authority will undertake the following steps:

- Step 1: Verification of Documentation (within 15 working days)<sup>46</sup>
  - The authority will review the renewal file to determine whether it is complete.
  - If additional documents, clarifications, or a site visit are needed, the authority will notify the practitioner.
- Step 2: Site Visit (if required)<sup>47</sup>
  - The site visit is carried out in the presence of the practitioner or their representative.
  - Following the visit, the competent authority will draft a verification report outlining their findings.
- Step 3: Assessment and Renewal Decision (within 5 working days)<sup>48</sup>
  - If the authority determines that:
    - the activities remain in line with the conditions of the EA, and
    - no substantial changes have been made to the project, then the renewal will be

granted within 5 working days from the completion of the assessment or site visit.

- Step 4: If Non-Compliance or Substantive Changes Are Identified
  - The authority will allow the practitioner 60 days to remedy any irregularities or non-compliance.<sup>49</sup>
  - Once corrective actions are taken, the practitioner must notify the authority and submit relevant supporting documents.
  - The authority will reassess, which may involve an additional site visit.<sup>50</sup>
  - If compliance is confirmed, the renewal decision will be issued within 5 working days.<sup>51</sup>
- Step 5: If Irregularities Are Not Remedied<sup>52</sup>
  - If the practitioner fails to address the issues within 60 days, the EA will be suspended.
  - If non-compliance persists beyond the suspension period, the renewal request will be rejected and a new EA application must be submitted to resume reintroduction activities.
- Final Step: Annexing the Renewal Decision<sup>53</sup>

- All decisions, whether approval or rejection, are formally annexed to the original EA, becoming an integral part of the document.

## 2.7 Reintroduction of native species of hunting interest

Species of hunting interest are those species that were historically hunted but are now protected, making it illegal to hunt them.<sup>54</sup> Examples include beavers, elk, wolves, minks, wild cats, lynx, bears, squirrels, otters, and bison. For further details see *Rewilding in Romania: Hunting*.

Because these species are both protected and of hunting interest, their reintroduction may be authorised within hunting zones, subject to hunting and environmental regulations, as explained further in the example set out below.

Where a reintroduction involves the import of **wild animals of a native species of hunting interest** from abroad, the following approvals are required:<sup>55</sup>

- Approval of the reintroduction plan by the central public authority for forestry;
- This approval is based on a certificate of genetic origin of the species (CGO) issued by a scientific institution with hunting activity (e.g. Romsilva or the Timisoara Inspectorate of Silvic and Hunting Regime); and

- The CGO and reintroduction plan must also receive the consent of the National Authority for Environmental Protection (“**ANPM**”), for each case.

The final authorisation to proceed with the reintroduction is issued by the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests.

- Even under this framework, practitioners must obtain an Environmental Authorisation prior to the approval of the reintroduction plan. The EA is issued after a favourable assessment by the relevant scientific institution and must be secured before any reintroduction activities take place.<sup>56</sup>



*A bison male with the herd, Southern Carpathians.  
Daniel Mirlea / Rewilding Europe*

## Example 1

Landowner A wishes to use their land to help expand the range of wolves that inhabit the surrounding region. To support this goal, they consider increasing the population of wolves' natural prey: wild boar and roe deer, so that the area can support a stable wolf population.

### 1. Establishing a hunting zone

Both wild boar and roe deer are native game species and increasing their population could support wolf range expansion. Wolves are legally protected, so hunting them is prohibited.<sup>57</sup>

Landowner A's first step is to determine whether their land qualifies as a hunting zone. This involves meeting specific criteria and contacting the competent authorities for guidance (see *Rewilding in Romania: Hunting*).

If eligible, Landowner A can pursue formal designation of the land as a hunting zone and contract its management to a hunting organisation. This organisation could be established by members of a rewilding organisation to ensure rewilding objectives are integrated into management (see *Rewilding in Romania: Hunting*).

Once designated and contracted, the hunting zone can be stocked with roe deer and wild boar, and a

management plan drafted accordingly. As these species do not require strict protection and assuming that the land is outside a Natura 2000 site, the release may only require compliance with rules on capture and transport (see sections 8 and 9.3).

To further enhance prey availability, the management plan could designate a *quiet area* – a zone within the hunting zone where hunting is limited or prohibited (*Rewilding in Romania: Hunting*). Romanian law requires at least 10% of each hunting area to be a quiet area, but this can be expanded with proper justification.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, *unproductive areas* – parts of the hunting zone where game is absent or sparse – can also be excluded from

active hunting under the same management plan.<sup>59</sup>

### 2. Creating a protected area

Alternatively, Landowner A may seek to designate their land as a protected area under the environmental protection framework (see *Rewilding in Romania: Obtaining and Protecting Wild Land* and *Rewilding in Romania: Hunting*).

Roe deer and wild boar are listed in GEO 57/2007, Annex 5B, as species of national interest subject to management measures.

Landowner A could argue that the presence of these prey species supports the viability of a strictly protected species (wolves), strengthening the case for protected status.

While this process may be more complex and time-consuming, it offers stronger long-term protection because: hunting is generally prohibited in protected areas, helping secure the prey population, and indirectly the wolf population. For more information see *Rewilding in Romania: Obtaining and Protecting Wild Land* and *Rewilding in Romania: Hunting*.

### 3. Considerations relating to the capture of protected species

If a reintroduction project involves capturing wild animals in Romania for release in another region, practitioners must be aware of the strict prohibitions in place to protect both fauna and flora, particularly species listed as protected, including birds.

#### 3.1 General prohibitions on the capture of protected species

Romanian law prohibits a wide range of activities that may disturb or harm protected species, whether they are located inside or outside protected areas. These prohibitions apply to all stages of a species' life cycle and include:<sup>60</sup>

- Any form of harvesting, capturing, killing, destruction or harm specimens in their natural environment, in any stage of their biological cycle;
- Intentional disturbance during sensitive biological phases, such as reproduction, growth, hibernation, or migration;
- Damage, destruction or collection of nests or eggs;
- Destruction or degradation of breeding or resting sites;

- Picking, cutting, uprooting, or destroying protected plants in any of the stages of their biological cycle; and
- Possession, transport, sale, exchange, or offering for sale of specimens taken from the wild, in any life stage.<sup>61</sup>

#### 3.2 Specific rules for birds

Bird species, including migratory birds, are afforded additional, species-specific protections. The following actions are prohibited:<sup>62</sup>

- intentional killing or capture, regardless of the method used;
- Damage, destruction or collection of nests or eggs;
- Possession of eggs, even empty ones, from the wild;
- Disturbance during reproduction or maturation that could affect conservation;
- Possession of specimens of species subject to capture and hunting prohibitions; and
- Possession, transport, sale or other offer for sale of live or dead specimens, identifiable

parts, or derived products of protected bird species.

However, there is an exemption regime relevant for rewilding practitioners because a reintroduction programme may require the capture of animals in the wild to then be released in the designated area. The exemption regime is described below.

#### 3.3 Are reintroduction purposes a basis for exemption? How are exemptions established?

GEO 57 allows the competent authority to issue derogations to the general prohibition.<sup>63</sup> These exemptions may be granted on an annual basis or whenever deemed necessary, provided the following conditions are met:<sup>64</sup>

- there is no acceptable alternative to the proposed activity;
- The derogation will not jeopardise the maintenance of populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range; and
- The purpose of the activity is repopulation or reintroduction of protected species, or reproductive operations necessary to support such actions.

These derogations are granted by the head of the central public authority for the protection of the environment and forests, with the prior approval of the Romanian Academy.<sup>65</sup>

When granted, the order granting the exemption must specify:<sup>66</sup>

- the species concerned;
- the means, methods, or systems authorised for capture;
- the conditions and specific circumstances under which the derogation applies, including risk assessments;
- the authority responsible for certifying that the conditions for derogation are met and for deciding the permitted methods, their limits, and the designated users; and
- the monitoring and verification mechanisms to be applied.

Practitioners should engage with the central public authority early in the planning process to apply for a derogation and ensure the reintroduction programme proceeds in compliance with national law.

### 3.4 What is the procedure to obtain an authorisation for capturing protected species?

Once a derogation has been granted, a separate authorisation is still required to capture protected

species. This process is governed by [guidance](#) issued by the ANPM ("**ANPM Guide**").<sup>67</sup>

The ANPM Guide requires that applications for capture authorisations be well justified and include detailed information about the purpose and methods to be used. Authorisations are only issued following a detailed assessment of the potential impact on the environment and the species involved.

Practitioners should follow these steps:

#### 1. Prepare a detailed application:<sup>68</sup>

- a. Purpose and Justification: clearly explain the objective of the capture and reintroduction, emphasising the conservation benefits and necessity of the action;
- b. Species Information: provide full details on the species involved, including their conservation status and ecological significance;
- c. Methodology: outline humane capture and handling methods, in line with best practices; and
- d. Site Details: include full descriptions of the capture and release locations, with habitat suitability assessments.

#### 2. Obtain necessary endorsements:

- a. Scientifics Approval: secure support from qualified scientific institutions (e.g. the Romanian Academy); and
- b. Local Authorities: notify and obtain any required approvals from local environmental protection agencies or local administrative units with jurisdiction over the area.

#### 3. Submit the application:

- a. Documentation: compile all documentation including the detailed application, scientific endorsements, supporting materials, and proof of payment of the processing fee<sup>69</sup>; and
- b. Submission: submit the complete file to the county environmental protection agency with jurisdiction over the relevant area<sup>70</sup>.

#### 4. Evaluation and decision:<sup>71</sup>

- a. If the file is complete, the competent authority issues a decision within 15 working days; and
- b. If documents are missing, the applicant is notified within 10 working days and must complete the file before it is considered further.

5. Receive authorisation and comply with conditions:<sup>72</sup>

- a. If approved, the applicant receives a formal authorisation setting out the terms and conditions under which capture may occur; and
- b. The applicant must strictly comply with all conditions, including any monitoring or reporting requirements set out by the competent authority.

### 3.5 What are the authorised means, systems, or methods of capture?

Romanian law places strict limits on the methods used to capture wild animals, especially when they are protected species. The general rule is that any method involving large-scale or non-selective capture, or that may cause the local disappearance or serious disturbance of a species, is prohibited, regardless of protected status.<sup>73</sup>

The following methods of capture are forbidden for all wild animals, including during authorised reintroduction programme:<sup>74</sup>

- **For mammals:**
  - use of live captive animals as bait;
  - audio equipment, electrical and electronic devices that can kill or stun;

- artificial light sources, mirrors, or devices that cause blindness;
- devices for lighting targets;
- night shooting using sighting devices with image amplifiers or electronic image converters;
- explosives;
- non-selective nets or traps;
- crossbows;
- poison or anaesthetics;
- gassing or smoking animals from dens; and
- semi-automatic or automatic weapons with magazines holding more than two rounds.

- **For fish:**

- poisoning;
- use of explosives;
- electric current; and
- prohibited net types.

- **For birds:**

- loops, wires, or hooks;
- use of blind or mutilated birds as live decoys;

- audio equipment, electrical or electronic stunning or killing devices;
- artificial light, mirrors, target lighting devices;
- night shooting with image amplifiers or electronic image converters;
- explosives;
- nets, traps, poisoned or sedative baits; and
- semi-automatic or automatic weapons with magazine holding more than two rounds.

The transport of captured animals is also subject to strict regulation.<sup>75</sup> To ensure animal welfare and environmental safety, only the following means of transportation are permitted:

- By air;
- By land, using motorised vehicles with engines running; and
- By water, using boats travelling at speed above 5km/h; for maritime navigation, motorboats of up to 18km/h may be authorised for safety reasons.

Practitioners must comply with additional requirements on the protection of animals during transport and related operations.<sup>76</sup>

## Example 2

*Landowner B wants to use his land to support a programme for the release of the European wildcat (Felis silvestris), a strictly protected species native to the area. To do so, Landowner B plans to capture wildcats from another region of the country and release them on his land.*

The reintroduction of strictly protected species must comply with both national and EU legislation. Landowner B must engage early and continuously with the competent authorities to ensure that the project meets all legal and procedural requirements. It is essential to stay informed about the latest legal documents, procedural updates, and scientific guidelines throughout the process.

### Step 1: Obtain a legal exemption

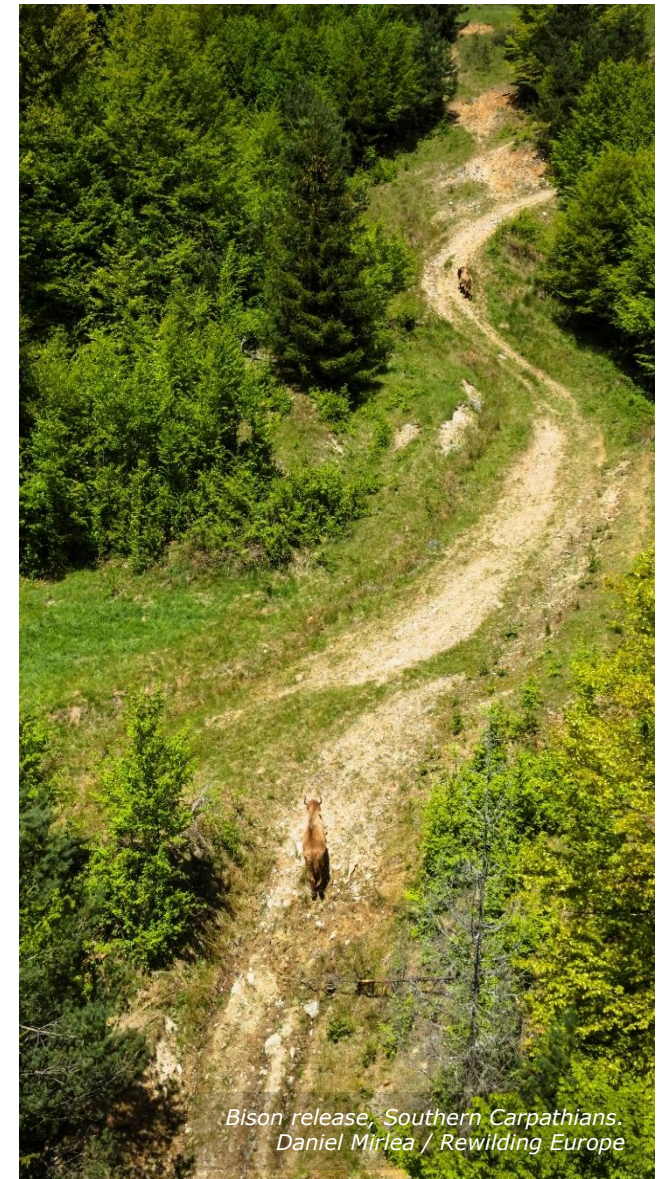
As wildcats are a species of community interest requiring strict protection, Landowner B must first request an exemption from the general prohibition on disturbing or relocating the species. This exemption may only be granted if the release is scientifically justified and serves an ecologically relevant purpose (see section 3.1). To support the application, Landowner BA should gather scientific endorsements from relevant institutions (see subsection 3.2).

### Step 2: Obtain an environmental authorisation (EA)

If the exemption is granted, the next step is to obtain an EA for the reintroduction plan (see sections 2). This authorisation assesses potential impacts and ensures that the project aligns with conservation objectives.

### Step 3: Apply for capture and transport permits

Once the EA is in place, Landowner B must apply for a separate authorisation to capture wildcats in their original habitat (see subsection 3.2). Additionally, permits are required for the transport of wild animals – these vary depending on the route, terrain, and distance involved (see subsection 7.2.).



*Bison release, Southern Carpathians.  
Daniel Mirlea / Rewilding Europe*

## 4. Reintroduction inside a Natura 2000 site

Practitioners planning to reintroduce species within a Natura 2000 site should be aware that such projects may trigger the requirement to undertake an Appropriate Assessment (“**AA**”). This assessment is required if the reintroduction is not necessary for the management of the site and:

- May damage natural habitats for which the site was designated;

- May disturb species the site aims to protect; or
- May otherwise have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of the site.

In practice, this means that any reintroduction project likely to have a significant negative impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site will be subject to an AA. The procedure for undertaking an AA is

explained in more detail in *Rewilding in Romania: Developing Land*.

It is important to note that if the reintroduction project involves a species requiring strict protection, then both an Appropriate Assessment (AA) and an Environmental Authorisation (EA) will be necessary (see sections 2 above).

## 5. Introduction of non-native species

The introduction of **non-native species** is subject to the same core requirements that apply to the reintroduction of species requiring strict protection. This includes the obligation to obtain an EA (see sections 2).<sup>77</sup>

As part of the EA process, an Environmental Impact Assessment (“**EIA**”) must be conducted to evaluate the potential effects of introducing the non-native species on the local fauna and flora. If the EIA identifies likely negative impacts, the competent authority is unlikely to grant the EA.<sup>78</sup> For more

detail on the EIA process, see *Rewilding in Romania: Developing Land*.

Additionally, the results of the EIA must be communicated to the European Commission.<sup>79</sup> If the non-native species to be introduced is a bird species, prior consultation with the EU Commission is required before proceeding.<sup>80</sup>

### 5.1 Introduction of non-native game species<sup>81</sup>

Game species are wild animals that may be legally hunted. For more information, see *Rewilding in Romania: Hunting*.

Where **non-native game species** are to be introduced into hunting zones where they are not currently present, the following conditions must be met:

- Carry out prior studies by, or under the supervision of, a research institution or university that specialises in the study of species with hunting interest; and
- Carry out an impact study, approved by both the central public authority for forestry and the ANPM

## 6. Introduction of invasive species

As a rule, the **introduction of invasive species** is prohibited.<sup>82</sup> However, two narrowly defined exceptions exist where the introduction of invasive species may be permitted:

- For research and development purposes, in controlled isolation, and only by specific legal entities authorised to undertake such activities; or

- For ecological reconstruction purposes, where introduction is justified in areas outside of protected natural areas that have been irreparably degraded due to human activity or climate change.<sup>83</sup>

If a proposed activity falls within one of these exceptions, practitioners must follow the same licencing and authorisation procedures applicable to

the introduction of non-native species (see section 5).<sup>84</sup> This includes obtaining an EA and conducting an EIA.

In the event of a deliberate or accidental introduction of invasive species into Romanian territory, practitioners may be held liable for all damages assessed up to the complete eradication of the invasive species.<sup>85</sup>

## 7. Considerations on import, transport, and holding for release

### 7.1 Import of animals

A reintroduction programme may require the import of animals either from within the EU or from third countries. Cross-border animal movements are subject to complex regulatory frameworks, and it is strongly advised that practitioners seek specialised legal guidance before initiating any steps. Ensuring lawful import is critical to avoid delays, non-compliance, or invalidation of the reintroduction efforts.

The international movement of species is governed by CITES<sup>86</sup>, which is implemented in the EU through the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations<sup>87</sup>. These EU Regulations often impose stricter obligations than CITES and apply even to species not listed in CITES.

Considering that most of the cross-border movements to import animals to Romania are likely to happen within the EU, this section considers the EU Regulations because they offer the highest standard and are most likely to apply.

The ANPM is the competent authority for issuing import permits of the species provided for in the [Annexes](#) of EU Regulations.<sup>88/89</sup>

Depending on the classification of the species, different obligations apply:

- Species listed in Annexes A and B: practitioners need to present an import permit to the customs authorities before import. This permit is only valid if accompanied by a valid export permit from the country of origin.<sup>90</sup>

- Species listed in Annexes C and D: practitioners need to present a pre-import notification (import notice) and a valid export licence to the customs authorities before import. For Annex C species, a certificate of origin or re-export is also needed. For Annex D species, proof of purchase or receipt is sufficient.<sup>91</sup>

It is worth noting that the validity of an import permit is contingent on the validity of the corresponding export or re-export documentation. Without this, the permit cannot be used.<sup>92</sup>

To apply for an import permit with the ANPM, practitioners must submit:

- A completed application form (Annex 2 of Order 255);<sup>93</sup>
- Proof of payment of the application fee (RON 100, approx. EUR 20);<sup>94</sup>
- Applicant's registration form;<sup>95</sup>
- Proof of identity (copy of ID or company registration);<sup>96</sup>
- In the case of legal entities, a certificate of registration or authorisation for relevant activities;<sup>97</sup>
- For Annex A species, a statement if the import purpose;<sup>98</sup> and
- For Annexes A and B, a description of transportation and post-import conditions, showing compliance with animal welfare rules to avoid injury, illness, or death.<sup>99</sup>

The ANPM must decide within 30 days of submission of a complete application.<sup>100</sup> If cross-border consultation is necessary. Applicants must be notified of any resulting delays.<sup>101</sup>

Once issued, an import permit is valid for **12 months**.<sup>102</sup> Export permits and re-export certificates are typically valid for no more than 6 months.<sup>103</sup>

Practitioners should be aware that after expiration, permits cease to be valid and may not be used. One scenario that causes invalidation is the release of

the animals into the wild.<sup>104</sup> In such cases, the practitioner must return all unused or expired original permits and their copies to the ANPM.<sup>105</sup>

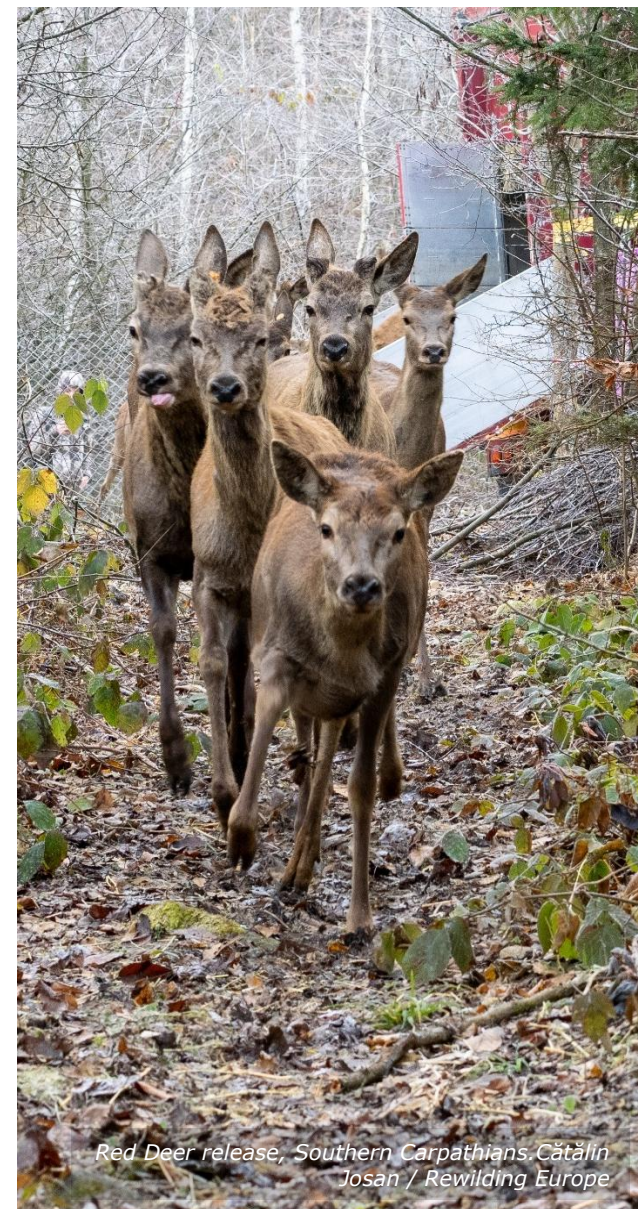
## 7.2 Transportation of animals

Wildlife reintroductions often involve transporting animals over short or long distances. Whether within Romania, across the EU, or from third countries, the transport of animals is strictly regulated to ensure animal welfare and compliance with biosecurity standards.<sup>106 /107</sup>

The rules on animal transport apply to all animals, including wild animals. Romanian national legislation mirrors these requirements and ensures that the same degree of protection applies to animals transported domestically.<sup>108</sup>

Before transporting animals, practitioners must ensure the following general requirements are met:<sup>109</sup>

- The transporter holds a valid authorisation for transporting living animals and a certificate of professional competence in live animal transportation;
- All necessary arrangements to meet the animals' needs during the journey and to minimise the journey's length are made;
- The animals are fit for the journey, and steps are taken to minimise stress and suffering, including:



*Red Deer release, Southern Carpathians. Cătălin Josan / Rewilding Europe*

- meeting all nutritional, hydration, and rest needs, and
- minimising journey length and ensuring appropriate acclimatisation, if needed.
- The means of transport and loading/unloading facilities are well-designed and maintained to avoid injury or suffering, offer sufficient floor space and appropriate height for the species; and
- Staff involved in the transport are properly trained and do not use violence or harsh methods, and act in ways that minimise fear or injury to the animals.

Transport must be accompanied by written documentation detailing:<sup>110</sup>

- The origin and ownership of the animals;
- The departure location and date/time of departure; and
- The destination and the expected duration of the journey.

When transporting wild animals, the following specific rules apply in addition to the general conditions and requirements described above:

- The means of transport must be accompanied by:<sup>111</sup>

- a notice indicating that the animals are wild, timid or dangerous; and
- written instructions for feeding, watering, and care during the journey.
- Animals that require acclimatisation to the mode of transport must be given time to do so before the journey begins.<sup>112</sup>

The organiser of the transport must appoint a person responsible for notifying the National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (“**ANSVA**”) regarding the planning, execution, and completion of each journey.<sup>113</sup>

Keepers at the place of departure, transfer, or destination must ensure that all transport conditions are fulfilled.<sup>114</sup> On arrival, the keeper must inspect the animals, especially after long journeys. They must also check and sign the journey log, confirming all details are accurate.<sup>115</sup>

Practitioners must register all animal movements in [TRACES](#) (Trade Control and Expert System), the EU’s online system for sanitary certification of live animal movements both within and outside the EU.<sup>116</sup>

It is important to note that the current EU transport regime is under revision. In late 2023, the EU Commission adopted a proposal for a new regulation to replace the current one.<sup>117</sup> As the legislative process continues, practitioners should

remain updated on developments and prepare to comply with new rules when they enter into force.

### 7.3 Holding and registration of animals

EU members may prohibit the holding of specimens, particularly live animals of species listed in Annex A.<sup>118</sup> These include, among others, lynx, wolves, bison, and bearded vultures, all of which are relevant to rewilding efforts.

However, exemptions from this prohibition may be granted by the competent national authority, which can issue a holding certificate for specific cases. Exemptions may apply when the animals meet one or more of the following conditions:<sup>119</sup>

- The specimen was introduced into the EU legally under the provisions of [EU Reg. 338](#) and is intended for purposes not detrimental to the survival of the species concerned;
- The specimen was born and bred in captivity;
- The specimen is held for breeding or propagation, where such activities bring conservation benefits to the species;
- The specimen is used for scientific research or education aimed at preserving or conserving the species; or
- The specimen originates in a EU Member State and was legally taken from the wild under national legislation.

Where the EU Regulations require registration, the holder of the specimen must register it once a holding certificate is granted.<sup>120</sup> Practitioners should seek this information from the competent authority.

As the temporary keepers of animals prior to release, practitioners must request the registration of the animals.<sup>121</sup> The request is submitted to the local competent authority for the administrative-

territorial unit in which the practitioner is established or headquartered. It must be submitted within 15 days from the date of obtaining the specimen, unless already registered.<sup>122</sup>

## 8. Considerations relating to animal health, welfare, and biosecurity

The conditions under which animals are kept are critical to ensure their welfare and health. Practitioners involved in rewilding projects must ensure that animals are kept in accordance with high standards of care, health monitoring, and disease prevention.

There is a set of behavioural and physiological needs that must be safeguarded, and it is up to the keeper of the animals to take all necessary measures to ensure these are satisfied. Some of these measures are described below.

Within EU borders, the EU Animal Health Law lays down rules for the prevention and control of animal diseases which are transmissible to animal or humans.<sup>123</sup>

Practitioners transporting live animals as part of a reintroduction project are likely to be considered an “operator”<sup>124</sup> under the EU Animal Health Law and will, therefore, be responsible for:<sup>125</sup>

- The health of kept animals under their responsibility;

- The prudent and responsible use of veterinary medicines;
- Taking steps to minimise the risk of disease spread;
- Ensuring good animal husbandry practices; and
- Adopting appropriate biosecurity measures for both kept animals and, where relevant, wild animals.

Practitioners, as operators, are required to monitor and document animal health status, including laboratory test results and veterinary visits. While veterinarians are encouraged to record this information themselves, practitioners are ultimately responsible for ensuring a complete and up-to-date record is maintained.<sup>126</sup>

The movement of wild animals may only take place if biosecurity concerns are met. These conditions include, but are not limited to:<sup>127</sup>

- Animals must be fit for transport and free from signs of communicable diseases;

- Health checks and, where necessary, quarantine must be conducted in accordance with veterinary requirements;
- Proper identification, registration, and documentation must accompany each animal; and
- Movements from or into areas affected by disease outbreaks must comply with specific control measures, including movement restrictions or mandatory testing.

Before moving animals, practitioners should consult with the ANSVA or the local veterinary directorates to verify applicable conditions.

#### End Notes:

1. Consolidated version [here](#).
2. Consolidated version [here](#).
3. GEO 57, article 34(1) provides that this regulation should be adopted "to protect natural habitats and native species".
4. Consolidated version [here](#).
5. Consolidated version [here](#).
6. [Regulation \(EC\) no. 865/2006](#) laying down detailed rules concerning the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 (EU Reg. 865); Order no. 255/2007, of March 1, as amended ([Order 255](#)), article 1(1). Annexes to Order 255 were replaced by [Order no. 855/2013](#), of 26 April (Order 855).
7. Consolidated version [here](#).
8. Order 979, articles 3(2)(3).
9. GEO 57, article 4(24)(25)(26)(27).
10. GEO 57, Annexes 3, 4A, and 4B.
11. Order 979, article 9, which provides that "until the list of invasive species at national level is approved, the list of invasive species" used at EU level shall be used.
12. Order 979, article 4.
13. GEO 57, article 34(2).
14. Order 979, articles 5 to 10.
15. GEO 57, Chapter III – Conservation of natural habitats and wild species of flora and fauna.
16. GEO 57, article 34 and Annex 4A, which lists the species of plants and animals of community importance requiring strict protection.
17. GEO 57, article 31 and Annex 3, which lists the species of animals and plants whose conservation requires the designation of special areas of conservation and special protection areas.
18. GEO 57 goes beyond the Habitats Directive, creating a list of animal and plant species of national importance requiring the same level of protection as the species listed in the Habitats Directive. Species of community importance are listed in Annex 4A to GEO 57 and species of national importance are listed in Annex 4B to GEO 57.
19. GEO 57, article 34(1).
20. Order 979, article 4(1).
21. Order 979, article 4(1)
22. Order 1798, article 4 and article 5. In sum, the competent authority for environmental protection is defined as the central public authority for environmental protection, the National Agency for Environmental Protection, or the territorial public authority for environmental protection, which are the county agencies for environmental protection and the "Danube Delta" Biosphere Reserve Administration. The way the competent authority is designated is provided by articles 6 and 7 of Order 1798 and by article 12 of [Emergency Order 195/2005](#), of 22 December, regarding environmental protection (GEO 195/2005).
23. Order 1798, article 5(1).
24. Order 979, article 4(1).
25. Order 979, article 4(3).
26. Order 1798, article 8(1).
27. Order 979, article 4(2).

28. Order 1798, Annex 2.
29. Order 1798, Annex 3. Any proposed reintroduction activity must be disclosed to the public (e.g. the scope and place of reintroduction and general information on the measures for the environmental protection). The general requirement is that the public is informed, and the practitioner should provide proof of informing the public (e.g. picture of the display in the area where the authorized activity will take place and at the headquarters of the public local authority, posting on the website, public debates, etc.). In the note for public information, the practitioner should include the deadline until which the public may submit their proposals. Finally, the practitioners should highlight in a statement how they have taken into consideration the public views (if any).
30. Order 1798, Annex 5, may be taken as template.
31. Order 1798, article 8(2).
32. Order 1798, article 8(3).
33. Order 1798, article 8(4).
34. Order 1798, article 8(5).
35. Order 1798, article 10(1).
36. The procedure to renew the EA is set out in [Order 1150/2020](#), of June 11, regarding the approval of the Procedure for applying the annual environmental authorisation and the integrated environmental authorisation. The Procedure is available [here](#).
37. Order 1150 Procedure, article 3.
38. Order 1150 Procedure, article 5(1).
39. Order 1150 Procedure, article 5(1).
40. According to the model provided in [Annex 1 of Order 1150 Procedure](#).
41. According to the model provided in [Annex 2 of Order 1150 Procedure](#).
42. Order 1150 Procedure, article 8(1).
43. Order 1150 Procedure, article 5(4).
44. Order 1150 Procedure, article 5(6) with [GEO 195/2005](#), article 17(3), as amended.
45. Order 1150 Procedure, article 5(6) with GEO 195/2005, article 17(3)(4), as amended.
46. Order 1150 Procedure, article 6(1).
47. Order 1150 Procedure, article 6(3) and in accordance with the model provided in Annex 3.
48. Order 1150 Procedure, article 6(4).
49. Order 1150 Procedure, article 6(5).
50. Order 1150 Procedure, article 6(5).
51. Order 1150 Procedure, article 6(7).
52. Order 1150 Procedure, article 6(6).
53. Order 1150 Procedure, article 7(2).
54. Practitioners should note that this prohibition is not absolute and the killing of protected species for reasons related to damage to crops and safety of people has been (and continues to be) allowed to happen in some circumstances. The conditions under which these killings happen are not settled and are constantly evolving. Therefore, practitioners should always contact the relevant authorities to get information about the authorised hunting of protected species.
55. Hunting Law ([Law 407/2006, as amended](#)), article 21(2). Although not specifically provided, these requirements should also be considered in case of translocation of a population.

56. Hunting Law, article 21(1)(3).
57. See above endnote 54.
58. Hunting Law, article 1(af) and article 20(1)(2).
59. Hunting Law, article 1(z) and article 12(5).
60. GEO 57, article 33(1).
61. Idem.
62. GEO 57, article 33(2).
63. GEO 57, article 38(1)
64. Idem.
65. GEO 57, article 38(2).
66. GEO 57, article 38(2.3).
67. Procedura de autorizare a activităților de recoltare, capturare și/sau achiziție și/sau comercializare, pe teritoriul național sau la export, a florilor de mină, a fosilelor de plante și fosilelor de animale vertebrate și nevertebrate, precum și a plantelor și animalelor din flora și, respectiv, fauna sălbatică și a importului acestora din 11.04.2008 - Parte integrantă din Ordin 410/2008, available [here](#) (hereafter ANPM Guide).
68. ANPM Guide, article 6(2a) and Annex n. 3.
69. ANPM Guide, article 6(2c) and Annex n. 11.
70. ANPM Guide, article 2(i).
71. ANPM Guide, article 7.
72. ANPM Guide, article 8(1).
73. GEO 57, article 37(2).
74. GEO 57, article 37(3) and Annex 6, para. a.
75. GEO 57, Annex 6, para. b.
76. EU Reg. 1, see endnote 7.
77. GEO 57, article 34(1) and Order 979.
78. GEO 57, article 34(3). Consultations with the European Commission is an obligation set out for EU states based on the provisions of article 11 of the [Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds](#). Therefore, such consultation should take place between the local authorities (i.e. *such as the local authority for environmental protection, relevant for issuance of the EA*) and the Commission, not between the applicant and the Commission.
79. GEO 57, article 34(2).
80. GEO 57, article 34(3).
81. Hunting Law, article 21(1).
82. Order 979, article 5(1).
83. Order 979/2009, article 5(2).
84. GEO 57, article 34(1) and Order 979, article 1.

85. Order 979, article 8.
86. You can find the text of the convention and related information, including the species it covers, [here](#).
87. EU Reg. 338 and EU Reg. 865.
88. Order 255 and Order 855.
89. ANPM may impose special conditions in permits/certificates to ensure compliance with the provisions of the CITES and national legislation on the conservation of biological diversity and the one regarding the protection of animals (Order 255, article 3).
90. For species in Annex A: Order 255, article 5(1) and EU Reg. 338, article 4(1); for species in Annex B: Order 255, article 6(1) and EU Reg. 338, article 4(2)
91. Order 255, article 7(2) and Annex 5, with EU Reg. 338, article 4(3) for species in Annex C, and EU Reg. 338, article 4(4) for species in Annex D.
92. EU Reg. 865, article 10(1).
93. Order 255, article 1(2a).
94. Order 255, article 1(2b) and Annex 9, amended by Order 865, Annex 4.
95. Order 255, article 1(2d).
96. Order 255, article 5(2a) for species in Annex A, and article 6(2a) for species in Annex B.
97. Order 255, article 5(2b) for species in Annex A, and article 6(2b) for species in Annex B.
98. Order 255, article 5(2c).
99. Order 255, article 5(2d) and article 6(2c), respectively.
100. Order 255, article 4(1).
101. Order 255, article 4(2).
102. EU Reg. 865, article 10(1).
103. EU Reg. 865, article 10(2).
104. EU Reg. 865, article 11(1b).
105. EU Reg. 865, article 10(4)(6).
106. EU Reg. 338, article 9(6).
107. EU Reg. 1.
108. For example, please refer to art. 14 of the Sanitary-Veterinary Norm of 28.12.2022 of the National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority.
109. EU Reg. 1, article 3.
110. EU Reg. 1, article 4(1)(2).
111. EU Reg. 1, Annex I, Chapter II, section 1.3.
112. EU Reg. 1, Annex I, Chapter III, section 1.1.
113. EU Reg. 1, article 5.
114. EU Reg. 1, article 8(1)(2) with Annex I, Chapters I and III, section 1.
115. EU Reg. 1, Annex II, sections 4 and 6.

116. See more information [here](#).
117. [Proposal for a Regulation on the protection of animals during transport and related operations](#). More information [here](#).
118. EU Reg. 338, article 8(2). You can find Annex A [here](#).
119. EU Reg. 338, article 8(3).
120. Order 255, article 17(1).
121. Idem.
122. Order 255, article 17(4).
123. [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429](#), of 9 March, on transmissible animal diseases and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health (“EU Animal Health Law”), article 1.
124. EU Animal Health Law, article 4(24): as any natural or legal person having animals or under his responsibility, including for a limited duration of time.
125. EU Animal Health Law, article 10.
126. EU Animal Health Law, articles 24 and 25. For more detailed regulations, see [Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2020/689](#) of 17 December 2019 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429, concerning rules on surveillance, eradication programmes and disease-free status for certain listed diseases and emerging diseases; and [Regulation \(EC\) 1069/2009](#) of 21 October 2009, laying down health rules concerning by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 of 3 October.
127. [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429](#), of 9 March, on transmissible animal diseases and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health (“EU Animal Health Law”), article 155. Wild animals being held by practitioners are legally considered kept animals until their release.

## Contact Us

More information about rewilding and the issues addressed in this guidance note is available on [The Lifescape Project](#) and [Rewilding Europe](#) websites.

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*This publication does not necessarily deal with every important topic or cover every aspect of the topics with which it deals. It is not designed to provide legal or other advice. You should not assume that the case studies apply to your situation and specific legal advice should be obtained.*