



European Bison Friends Society

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REPORT OF THE EBFS ACTIVITY in first half of 2008

The European Bison Friends Society has actively fulfilled goals described in the Statute. We obtained new members, so in the moment EBFS gathers 104 members, including 4 supporting members. In first half of 2008 the Society initiated and participated in following activities:

- 1) „Around European bison” – monthly meetings open for members and friends of EBFS.
 - On January 8th Katarzyna Olbrych, Ph.D., veterinarian, presented her doctoral thesis about morphology of European bison female reproductive organs. Interesting presentation started discussion about future research on European bison.
 - In the beginning of March Mieczysław Hławiczka, veterinarian, described his experience in veterinary care on European bison herd in Pszczyna. The presentation was enriched with interesting pictures of different veterinary interventions and observations.
 - In April Zuza Nowak, Ph.D., from Department of Genetics and Animal Breeding Warsaw University of Life Sciences presented variety of theories on European bison origin and its relations with American bison and other *Bovidae*.
 - On Tuesday, 6 May, we invited Bogdan Jaroszewicz, Ph.D., from Białowieża Geobotanical Station. In his very interesting presentation entitled “For what plants need European bison?” Mr. Jaroszewicz described principles and preliminary results of studies on role of European bison in distributing of seed. Our guest presented European bison menu, much extended comparing with published data, as including several dozen of plant species more.
 - In the beginning of June the meeting participants had opportunity to see almost finished educational program for school students. At the moment some corrections revealed during the meeting are being done and musical background is being composed. Finishing of the project is planned for September 2008. First presentation of the program will take place on Polish annual European bison conference in Bieszczady Mountains and soon we will start showing the program in schools.

- 2) One of important activities of EBFS is gaining money for European bison protection. First six months of this year were really succesfull in this topic – we received financial support from:
 - Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) from USA, which gave a big grant for realization of three activities:
 - European bison Advisory Center development,
 - transport of Lowland-Caucasian European bison to protect genetic variability of metapopulation in East Carpathians,
 - collecting samples and DNA studies.
 - Large Herbivore Foundation, which gave donation for development of European Bison Advisory Center.
- 3) According to the Statute EBFS takes care about people interested in European bison breeding. In April three members of the Society (Iza Bukowczyk, Kajetan Perzanowski, Mieczysław Hławiczka) visited Hungarian Aggteleki National Park. To attract more tourists and to increase biodiversity enclosure for European bison is planned there. The visit included discussions on Park's administration plans, possibilities, perspectives and threats connected with European bison breeding. Aggteleki National Park is on the beginning of project, which is greatly advanced in case of Mr. Andras Mester from Fuzerkomlos (also Hungary). During visiting Mr. Mester Polish group had possibility to see almost ready enclosure with all necessary equipment. Soon five European bison from Poland will be transported there and opening of the enclosure is planned for the end of summer. Work connected with establishing enclosure for European bison are finished in Kiermusy (Poland), where on April 7 landowner Mr. Andrzej Żamojda inaugurated opening of first Polish private European bison enclosure. Unfortunately, because of area diminished than previously was planned, only three females are now in the enclosure.
- 4) Care about the breeders and realization of issues included in grant agreement with WCS, is also connected with advise and organization of transport to provide separate breeding of European bison belonging to different genetic lines. Therefore EBFS organized exchange of three Lowland-Caucasian bison kept together with Lowland ones in Kropp (Germany). Polish Zoological Gardens in Poznan and Łódź donated three European bison for exchange purposes.
- 5) In the end of June the EBFS completed works connected with expertise for Polish Ministry of Environment entitled "Detailed rules of breeding the European bison in captivity, essential for implementation of "European bison conservation strategy in Poland". A material effect of the expertise is publishing of a manual "European bison breeding. Manual of management in captivity".

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