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## FRONTLINE DISPATCHES

JUNE 2022

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CONSERVATION NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### NORTH AMERICA



**Fewer moose may mean fewer ticks in Maine.** Ticks surviving shorter winters led to a recent 86% calf mortality in a study area, [according to](#) the *Portland Press Herald*. (Normal mortality is 20% to 30%.) This year Maine will grant 4,080 permits for the fall moose hunt, an increase from 2021, to help biologists determine whether reducing the state's high moose density will result in a healthier herd.



**Los Angeles mountain lions are inbreeding** as urbanization fragments their habitat, and this is leading to deformities in cubs, [reports National Geographic](#). One solution is to connect lion habitats with wildlife corridors. A wildlife crossing will be built over busy Highway 101, which should help not only this cougar in Griffith Park, but also coyotes, deer and other wildlife.

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**Wild hogs are wreaking havoc in Alabama.** Research finds that, in addition to destroying crops, Alabama's wild hogs also impact wildlife. Feral hogs (in a trap, above) outcompete other species such as whitetail deer and wild turkeys, and their manure raises E. coli levels in streams. Across the US, wild pigs cause an estimated \$1.5 billion in damage annually. The [story](#) is in AL.com.





**Coyotes often outnumber wolverines by a thousand to one,** [reports](#) Mongabay. Now human development is leading the two species into direct competition more often than is natural, and the wolverine (above) is usually the loser. Researchers recommend land managers take this potential for conflict into account before approving projects such as roads and pipelines.

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**The future of hunting and conservation seemed dim,** [notes](#) Colorado's *Durango Herald*. Then the pandemic reversed that trend as interest in hunting skyrocketed—but more people outdoors increased the pressure on wildlife and wildlands. Now hunters in Southwest Colorado are uniting behind the long-standing symbiosis between hunting and conservation. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, for example,

contributed \$75,000 to help build a highway wildlife crossing near Pagosa Springs (left, elk cows): “There's this idea of giving back, of doing what's necessary to protect wildlife and wild public lands.”





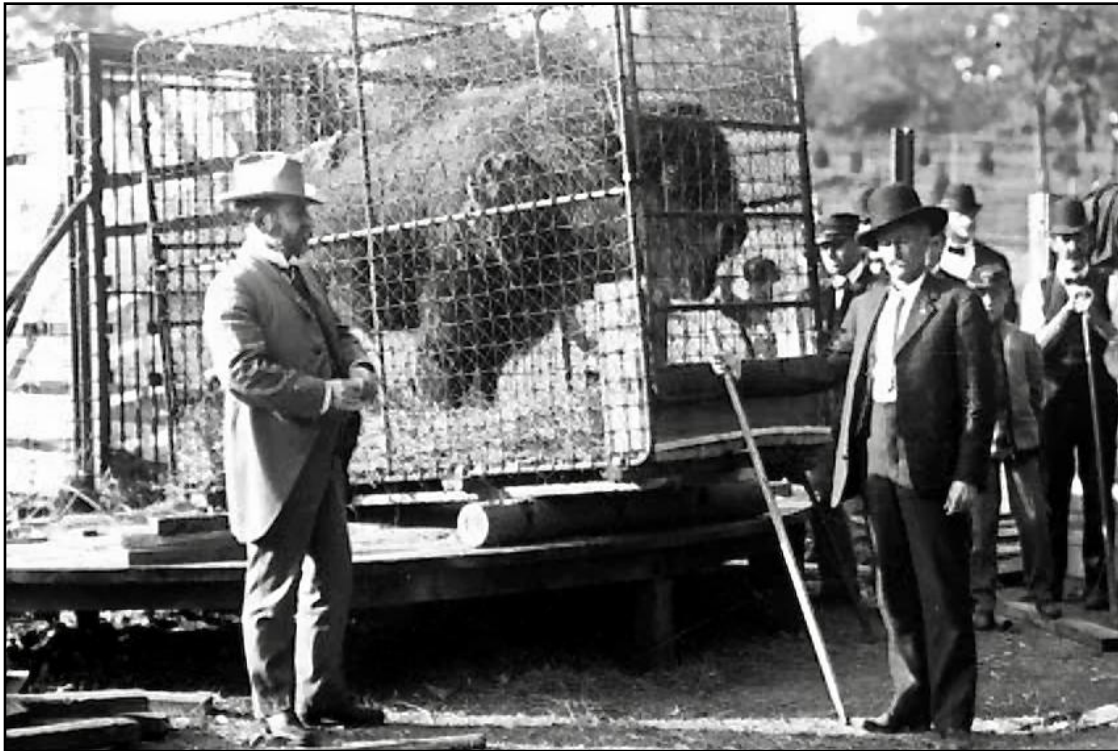
**If you care, leave it there** when it comes to trying to “rescue” deer fawns. They are not abandoned, only hidden while their mothers forage, and handling them does more harm than good. The [details](#) are in [wnypapers.com](#).

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**Can the “Right to Food” require hunting on Sundays?** That’s the question posed by a lawsuit filed in Maine recently. One family claims that Maine’s historical ban on Sunday hunting goes against their “natural, inherent, and unalienable right to food,” [reports MeatEater](#). If passed, the lawsuit will be a first-of-a-kind win that may make wild

game meat more accessible in the US. (Above: the Maine State House in Augusta.)



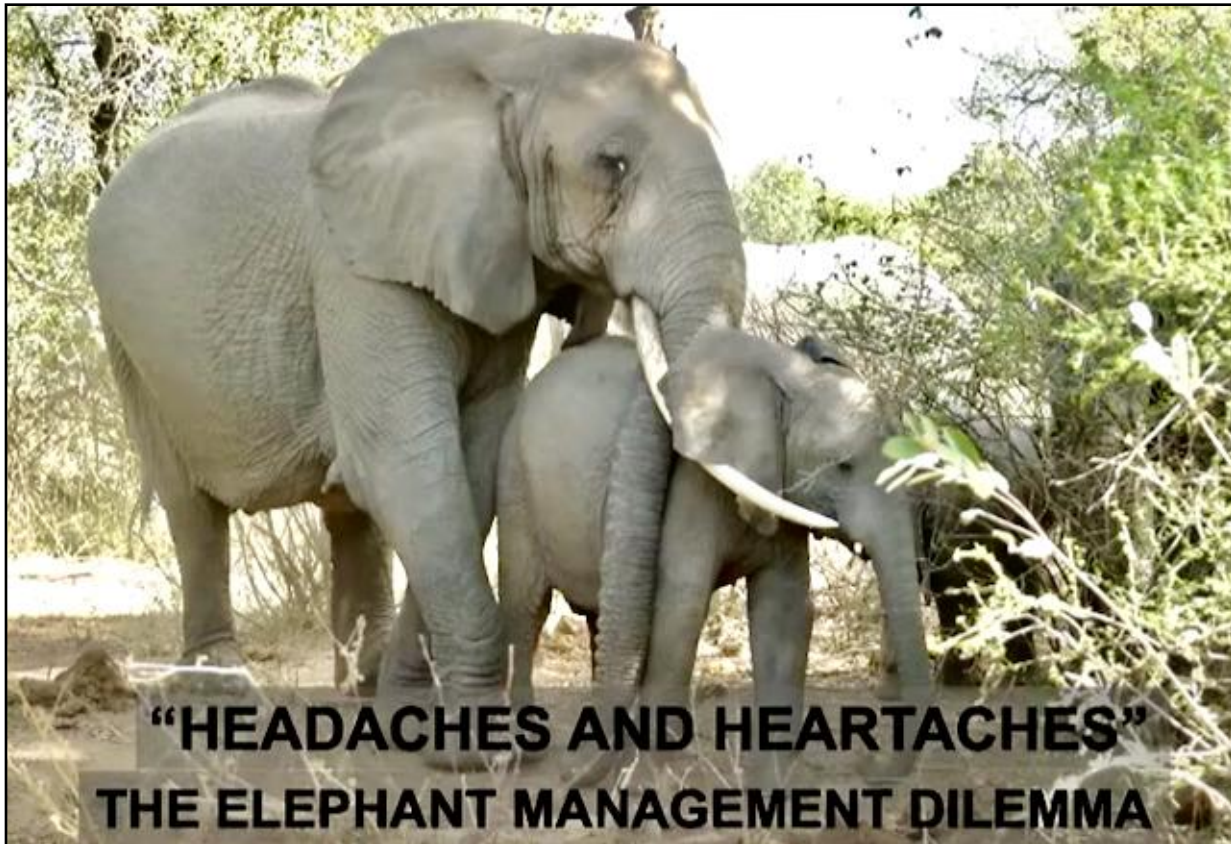
**A pure American bison has no cattle genes**—and 200-plus of these animals now roam the Osage Nation Ranch outside Pawhuska, Oklahoma, [says](#) Tulsa’s News On 6. The Bronx Zoo recently donated four pure bison to the tribe to help bolster genetic diversity within its herd. Bison are of enormous cultural and environmental significance to Western Native Americans. This isn’t the first time the zoo has helped Oklahoma re-establish bison, either; shown is a bull shipped from the Bronx to Wichita in 1907.



**To migrate, or not to migrate?** A new [report](#) details big-game migration pathways in the Western US. This is the second volume of such studies by the U. of Wyoming, intended to help manage migratory species amidst growing human populations. Read a [primer](#) on UW’s study of Wyoming’s Sublette Herd —and consider [supporting](#) postgrad student Anna Ortega’s (left) mule deer migration and habitat research.



# AFRICA



**Video:** Very large animals can create very large problems. SAVA, the South African Veterinary Association, recently invited Dr. Ian Whyte to speak via Zoom about elephant management. He was for many years the Kruger Park’s research manager for large herbivores. His lecture is long—some 40 minutes—but offers important information on how elephants interact with their habitat. Dr. Whyte’s presentation begins at the 5:48 mark.



**Kenya’s mountain bongo rewilding program** has repatriated 18 bongos from 14 zoos across the US. Now, five descendants of the US herd, above, have been released into the Mawingu sanctuary, [reported](#) *The Guardian*. The critically endangered mountain bongo is one of the largest forest antelopes. A recent [wildlife census](#) counted just 96 mountain bongos in the wild in Kenya.



**Video:** In the ongoing struggle between African and European countries about sustainable utilization of wildlife, the Hon. Pohamba Shifeta (above), Namibia's Minister of Environment, Forestry & Tourism, shares his views and concerns. The minister was in Brussels to attend a conference called "[Is Africa Being Heard?](#) What European Decision-Makers Should Know About Hunting, Conservation and Livelihoods."



**Vulture survival in Southern Africa** partly depends on rural communities. Birdlife International and local VSGs, vulture support groups, are successfully driving [vulture conservation](#) efforts in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana. Vulture populations across Africa have declined drastically due to poisoning, use in traditional medicine and accidental electrocution. This sign alerts farmers to the dangers of wildlife

poisoning.

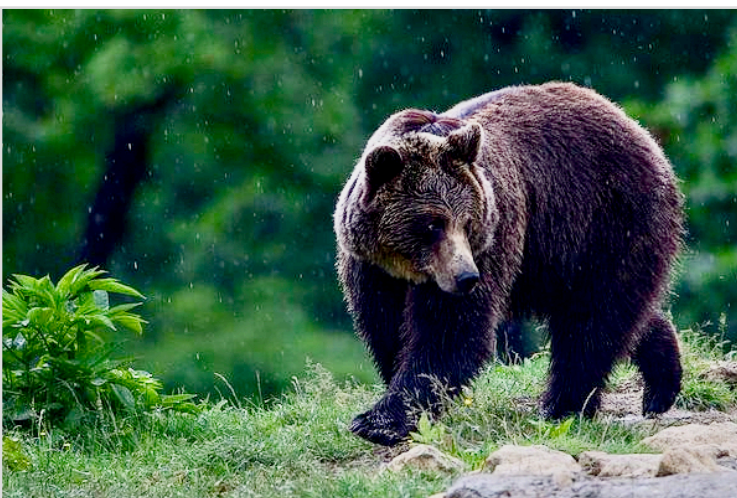


## EUROPE



**Where the buffalo roam once more:** Bison, that is—in Europe, where rewilding is returning this keystone species to forests and meadows. “Keystone” species have an outsized influence on their habitat, reshaping the landscape and, in this case, promoting biodiversity through grazing and spreading seeds. There are now several thousand free-range bison across Europe. The *NY Times* recently [described](#) a bison “safari” in Transylvania.

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**Bear-human conflicts in Romania** have led the Ministry of Environment to authorize the shooting of 13 identified animals. The brown bear population in that region is estimated at around 1,800; overall, Romania is thought to have more than 6,000 bears, the most of any EU country, and Romania has one of the largest areas of undisturbed forest in Europe. Bear hunting is currently illegal in Romania. The full

[story](#) is on [Romania-Insider.com](#).





[Video](#): **Proposed anti-hunting laws in the UK and Europe threaten** long-standing successful conservation models across the globe, says Prof. Amy Dickman of Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit. She discusses common misconceptions about hunting and stresses the need for less sensationalism and more nuanced coverage of wildlife conservation. Dr. Dickman has been a frequent [contributor](#) to Conservation Frontlines.

## WORLD



**If a tree falls in the forest, someone's got to hear it.** That's the thinking of NatGeo Explorer Topher White and other environmental stewards who are listening for the sounds of illegal logging—truck engines and chain saws—through hundreds of recycled cell phones mounted high in treetops from Indonesia to Eastern Europe. White (above, with a cellphone array) [spoke](#) recently to *National Geographic* about the novel plan.

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**How to 'de-colonize' conservation** is the subject of a recent [article](#) in British Columbia's *Hakai Magazine*: While Indigenous Peoples have been managing landscapes more or less sustainably for thousands of years, the [North American Model](#) of Wildlife Conservation is based on the idea that colonizers will overexploit a region's resources. (The recent UN



[Convention on Biological Diversity](#) focused on Indigenous rights as a key strategy in reversing extinctions.) Above: one of BC's Coastal Guardians, Native people who watch over the province's ecosystems.

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[Video](#): A 13-foot, 400-pound stingray accidentally caught in the Mekong River in Cambodia was released unharmed after examination by scientists. The megafish is evidence of the outsized ecological and biological significance of the very deep pools of the Upper Mekong River. The area is also home to rare Irrawaddy dolphins and giant softshell turtles. The leader of the USAID-funded Wonders of the Mekong research project [told](#) NatGeo, “This is the last place on Earth where we find these creatures together.”



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Conservation Frontlines® and the free electronic distribution of its media are funded by the

**Conservation Frontlines® Foundation**

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