

Innovative management
of a large herbivore
(*European bison*) in the
Zuid-Kennemerland National Park
(North Holland)

**Sustainable management of a protected area &
preservation of a vulnerable species**



WISENTPROJECT
— KRAANSVLAK —

Giulia Variara



European bison: from forest to semi-open dune ecosystem

- ▶ Exterminated in the wild in 1927
- ▶ Reintroduced in 1952 in Poland
- ▶ Listed as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List

- ▶ Bison traditionally seen as forest specialist
- ▶ Recent studies → bison prefer more open habitat



2007: European bison in North Holland





Figure: A geographical map of National Park Zuid-Kennemerland. Kraansvlak is indicated by the red colour. (Source: Tump 2016).

The Kraansvlak area

- ▶ More than 300 hectares
- ▶ Historically been used as private hunting ground
- ▶ Not open for the public until recently
- ▶ Haarlem 8 Km ca. & Amsterdam 30 km ca.
- ▶ Semi-open dune landscape (55% grassland, 25% shrubland, 15% forest and 5% open sand)



Overgrown shrubs and
forest,
high and dense grassland

2007: Why the European bison in the NL?

- ▶ European bison as a management tool: grazer in over vegetated landscape
- ▶ Comparison with other grazers: the bison are roaming together with Highland cattle (*Bos taurus*) and Konik horses (*Equus ferus caballus*)
- ▶ Contribution to the conservation of European bison and to the creation of metapopulation
- ▶ No other studies on the E. bison not winter fed and in a not forest-dominated areas: innovative management in Kraansvlak

International visibility

- ▶ International cooperation for conservation of the species, contribution to EBCC in Poland
- ▶ (Semi)wild European bison in the Netherlands
- ▶ Translocation of the bison to other reintroduction projects also abroad
- ▶ International awareness on the European bison conservation



- ▶ Contribution to the *Rewilding Europe* Network



Why the Kraansvlak project is unique?

The project combines together:

- Innovative management of European bison
 - Conservation purposes
- Scientific research in a completely new ecosystem
- Sustainable management of a natural area (grazers as management tools instead of mowing)

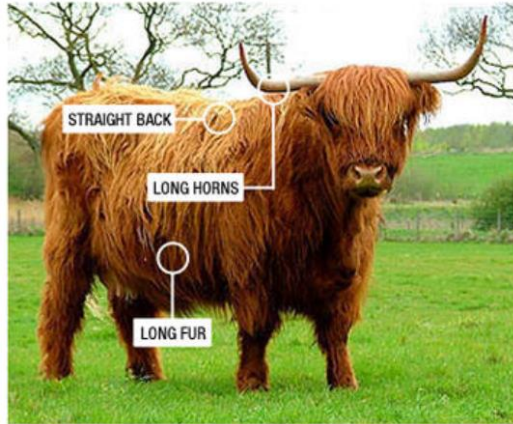
While meeting the needs of visitors in an area characterized by high touristic pressure

Communication

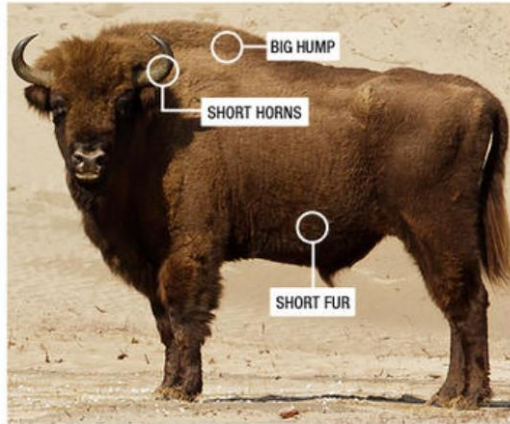
What to communicate

- ▶ The presence of the European bison in the Kraansvlak nature area
- ▶ What is the European bison
- ▶ How to see it
- ▶ How to behave when encountering the herd
- ▶ The difference between the bison and highland cattle

SCOTTISH HIGHLAND CATTLE
(Bos taurus)



EUROPEAN BISON
(Bison bonasus)



	MALE	FEMALE		MALE	FEMALE
WEIGHT	700 KG (600-800 KG)	470 KG (420-520 KG)	WEIGHT	634 KG (436-840 KG)	424 KG (340-540 KG)
WITHERS HEIGHT	122CM (115-130 CM)	117CM (110-125 CM)	WITHERS HEIGHT	172 CM (158-188 CM)	152CM (134-167 CM)
COLOUR	RED, BLONDE, BLACK, WHITE, GRAYISH		COLOUR	FAWNY BROWN, DARKER BROWN	

Communication

How to communicate

- ▶ Visitor's centre (information and excursions)
- ▶ 3D-animation 'the virtual world of the wisent'
- ▶ The website <http://www.wisenten.nl/nl>
- ▶ Movie "Een nieuwe kennismaking met wisenten"
(<http://www.wisenten.nl/nl/nieuws/2013/wisentefilm-nu-volledig-online>)

- ▶ (Social) media



- ▶ Articles in newspapers and magazines
- ▶ (Great) pictures
- ▶ Brochure

Wisenten veroveren Nederland

Wegens succes geprolongeerd en uitgebreid: straks lopen er op drie plekken in Nederland wisenten.

Gemma Venhuizen 7 maart 2016



zoogdiervereniging

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de Wisent (Bison Bonasus)

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NEM

Invoerportalen

Wintertellingen

Vleermuizen

Algemeen

De wisent is het grootste nog levende landzoogdier op het Europese continent. De wisent wordt ook wel de Europese bizon genoemd en valt onder de familie van de holhoornigen. Sinds 2007 is de wisent aanwezig in de huidige Nederlandse natuur.

Uiterlijk

Wisenten hebben een egaal kaamouflage vormt in een bosrijke geboorte een meer rossige-grijze kastanjebruin wordt. De zomerv...

roots

Midden in de natuur!

REGISTREREN | inloggen

HOME ABONNEMENTEN FOTO VIDEO BLOG ROUTES SHOP

Zoeken...

wyborcza.pl

26 listopada 2014

Kraj Świat Twoje miasto Opinie The Wall Street Journal Jutrzonanci Gospodarka Wideo Nauka Kultura Tech Sport CJK24 Magazyny Więcej

REGULAMIN

Język obcy w małym palcu

3 proste techniki do nauki dowolnego języka obcego w domu

Nauka

Żubr wychodzi z lasu

Wojciech Mikołajczak 26 listopada 2014 | 01:05

NAJCHĘŚCIJ CZYTANE

Sensacyjne odkrycie dużej wężki w piramidzie Cheopsa. To może być ukryta galeria albo komora

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"Kiedy masz na planie Jennifer Lawrence, masz już cały film". To nie tylko opinia zakochanego artysty

Ile kosztuje pochówek i jak go sfinansować? W Polsce machodzi emeryalna rewolucja

Geographical

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Bison - back in business

Written by Yvonne Kemp Published in Wildlife

23 Nov 2015

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roots

Midden in de natuur!

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Zoeken...

Wisenten in Nederland

raansvlak bij Overveen zes wisenten uitgezet.

eren.

raansvlak bij het Noord-Hollandse Overveen zes t de kudde uit 22 dieren. Roots-lezers kunnen ze zien

ROOTSBOEK ZO FOTOGRAFEER JE DE NATUUR

ZO FOTOGRAFEER JE DE NATUUR

Inspiratie Informatie Veel tips

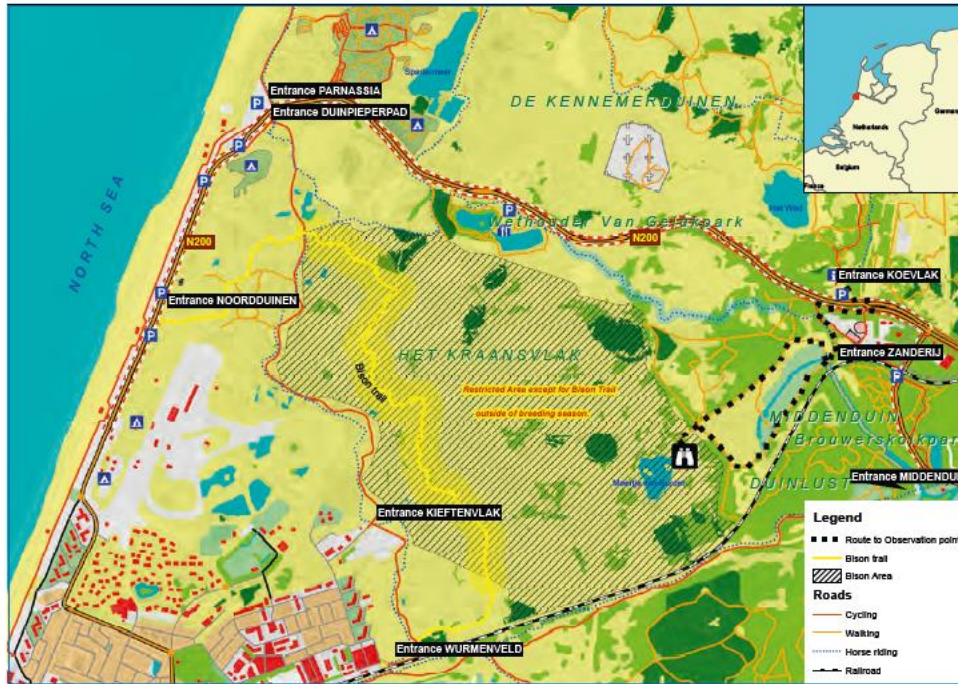
Bestel nu het inspirerende boek voor beginnende natuurfotografen. Met heel veel tips en prachtige inspiratiefoto's. "Je krijgt direct zin om naar buiten te gaan met je camera." Klik hier om te bestellen.

WANDELLEN IN HET KUIJDERBOS

WISENTPROJECT — KRAANSVLAK —

European bison in Kraansvlak

The brochure for the visitors



From visitor center 'De Kennemerduinen' (entrance Koevlak), a marked walking route leads to the observation point of the bison area. You find the center at Zeeweg 12, 2051 EC Overveen.

The bison trail can be reached from the following entrances of the N.P Zuid-Kennemerland: Duinpieperpad, Noordduinen, Kieftenvlak and Wurmenveld.



Project partners:



The bison project has been made possible through support from:



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at the typical fauna and flora become endangered or lost. Open dunes are internationally important in Europe, an unique landscape that should be protected. The expectation is that bison, in combination with sheep, stop and decrease vegetation encroachment on open dunes, back opened landscapes. Bison feed on grasses, sedges and shrubs. They debark even full-grown trees and bark from trunks. Besides, bison love taking sand and they enable the wind to blow the loose sand again. European bison behaviour plays a unique role in the dune system, with a different impact on it than horses, sheep or other grazers.



At the start of the project in 2007, research on bison was taking place in Kraansvlak. The animals live under natural conditions and no supplementary feeding is offered during the year. Studies on foraging behaviour, habitat use, vegetation and landscape, habitat use, social interaction with other animal species, as well as the impact on humans, and public perception are the main focus of this pilot-project.

In 2012, the pilot was evaluated and a report covering the five years of experience became available (in Dutch at www.wisentent.nl). The results of the diverse studies may be of interest to managers of other natural areas in order to gain knowledge and experience about this emblematic and protected species and its important role in the ecosystem when living under natural conditions.

More natural sand dunes

Due to different factors, the dunes started to become overgrown by grasses and shrubs, turning dynamic open dunes into thickly covered fixed dunes. This brings along changes to such

Welcome to visit

Thanks to the use of GPS collars, anyone can check the position of the herd in the project website and consider the chance to see the animals.

Close to the main drinking spot is the **observation point**, bison are

often seen here, especially during warm days. Along most part of the perimeter of Kraansvlak there are public walking- and biking paths from which the bison are frequently spotted by recreants of the National Park. Uniquely for areas in which bison live, there is **the bison trail: a free-access walking route through the western part of the bison area** (check our website for opening periods). This route offers to visitors the chance to see European bison roaming freely through the dunes. An unforgettable experience!

Besides, **guided excursions** are offered for groups and photographers. Get to know all about bison with an experienced forester. Availability, prices and booking of excursions can be checked via www.np-zuidkennemerland.nl.

Guide lines:

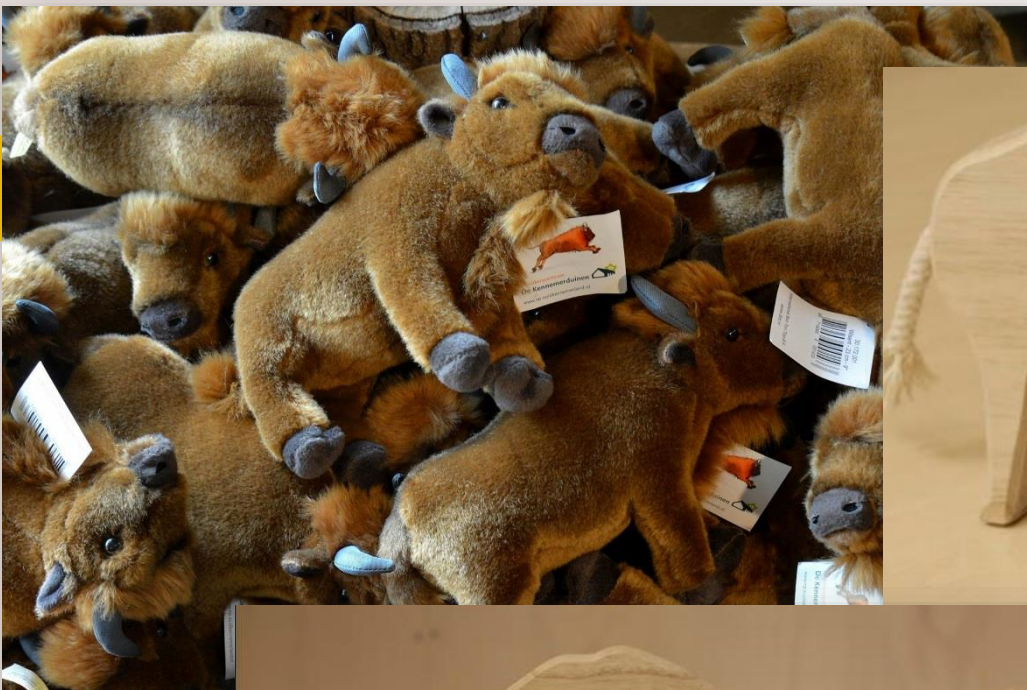
- The bison area is a restricted access terrain except for the bison trail outside of the breeding season.
- Please stay on the bison trail.
- Keep at least 50 meters distance with the animals.
- Do not feed animals.
- Let the animals choose their way freely and give them space. Do not approach or walk behind them.
- Turn around and walk back when the animals are on the trail or walk towards you.
- Keep larger distance from calves, all large grazers protect their young.

Stay updated!

We offer up to date information via:
www.wisentent.nl
www.facebook.com/wisententkraansvlak
www.twitter.com/Wisentent







The official website



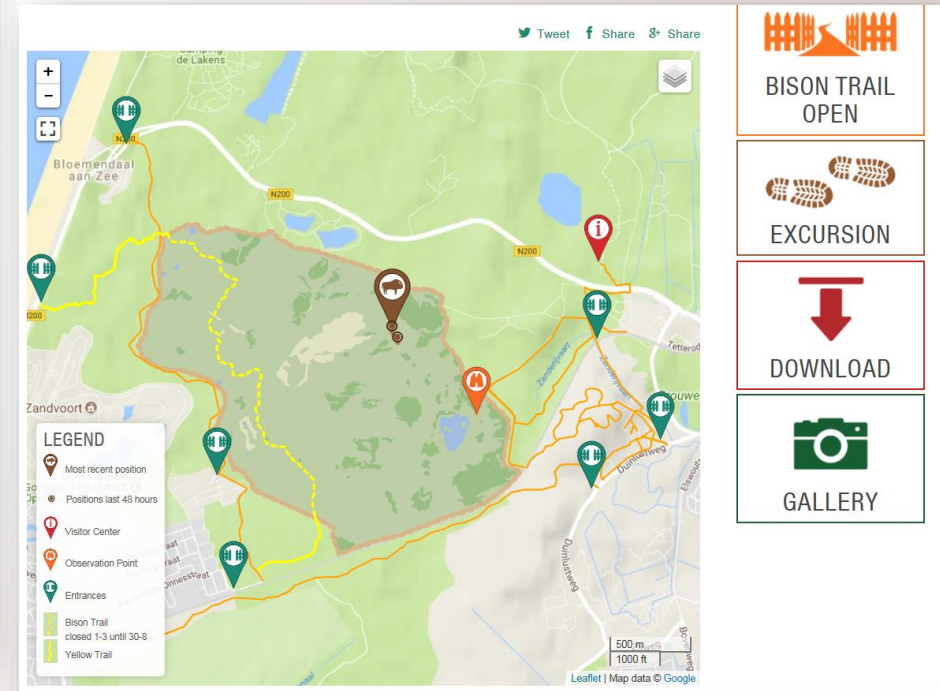
IN KRAANSVLAK EUROPEAN BISON LIVE UNDER NATURAL CONDITIONS

- COME AND VISIT
- WHERE ARE THEY?
- BY YOURSELF
- WITH A GUIDE
- GETTING HERE

COME AND VISIT

Would you like to see the bison yourself? That's possible! These are your options:

- OBSERVATION POINT

Tweet Share

BISON TRAIL OPEN

EXCURSION

DOWNLOAD

GALLERY

LEGEND

- Most recent position
- Positions last 48 hours
- Visitor Center
- Observation Point
- Entrances
- Bison Trail closed 1-3 until 30-8
- Yellow Trail

500 m
1000 ft

Leaflet | Map data © Google

Other social networks



Wisenten in
Kraansvlak
@wisentenkraansvlak

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Wisenten in Kraansvlak

208 views 2 years ago

www.wisenten.nl / From 2007, European bison roam freely in a long time public-restricted area, the Kraansvlak (N.P Zuid-Kennemerland). This impressive animal that once was totally extinct in to the wild, is close related to the American bison and feels home in the Dutch dunes. Video made by project-partner ARK Nature

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Wisenten Kraansvlak

@Wisenten

From 2007 European bison live freely in the Dutch dune area the Kraansvlak (NPZK). Started with 6 individuals from Poland, the herd grows every year from

Tweets 553 Following 94 Followers 577 Likes 486

Following

Wisenten Kraansvlak Retweeted

Dylangaatnaarbuiten @dylangaatnaarbuiten · Oct 27
Daar zijn ze weer, de @Wisenten in het Kraansvlak, @NPZK.

Translate from Dutch

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VSK Follow Promoted
- Esther Linnartz @Apis1Apis
Follow



Public interest and response

- ▶ Positive public opinion to the presence of the European bison in the dunes
- ▶ Biggest herbivore in EU roaming in the Netherlands
- ▶ Bison path open since 2012: + **>19.000** visitors so far
- ▶ (Horseback) guided excursions often fully booked
- ▶ Strong recreational interest
- ▶ Interest at national (and international) level



“Living together with a wild species”



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Conclusion



Management of
a natural area



**The Kraansvlak
project**

Conservation
purpose

Recreational
interest

- ▶ Conservation of a wild vulnerable species combined with educational aspect CAN BE A WIN-WIN STRATEGY
- ▶ Sustainable management in the Kraansvlak area: biodiversity protection and recreational use of the landscape
- ▶ European bison is thriving in the Dutch dunes and visitors have the possibility to admire this majestic animal



Thank you for your attention

Question(s)?



Photos:
Ruud
Maaskant

Partners:

