

Grazelands Rewilding
**Rewilding by Natural grazing and
the Tauros programm;
impact and opportunities**

THE
AUROCHS
BORN TO BE WILD

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- Marchegg 7 November 2023

Grazelands Rewilding

(earlier Taurus Foundation)

Grazelands Rewilding contributes significantly to the **restoration of wild European landscapes**.

By restoring **natural processes** (including restoring soil ecology) we enhance **biodiversity**, contribute to **climate adaptation** and **vitalizing soils** and let **public support** for wild nature grow.

Grazelands Rewilding achieves this

- through sharing **knowledge** and **expertise**
- By reintroducing **herds** of wild grazers
- And with its flagship species, the Tauros.

Grazelands Rewilding

'Grazelands team

Over 30 years of experience with natural grazing (started early 90's)

- 7 employees on daily basis, 3 board members
- around 70 volunteers

Our herd and the Tauros-herd

- Ca 1.200 animals in NL (cattle and horses); ca. 400 Tauros
- around 300 Tauros' abroad in 5 other EU-countries
- Around 400 hectares managed area in the Netherlands, abroad around 10.000 hectares

Main partners – customers

- Nature conservancy organisations and municipalities in the Netherlands
- Rewilding Europe abroad (close cooperation)
- Credit Nature (European outreach and nature finance)

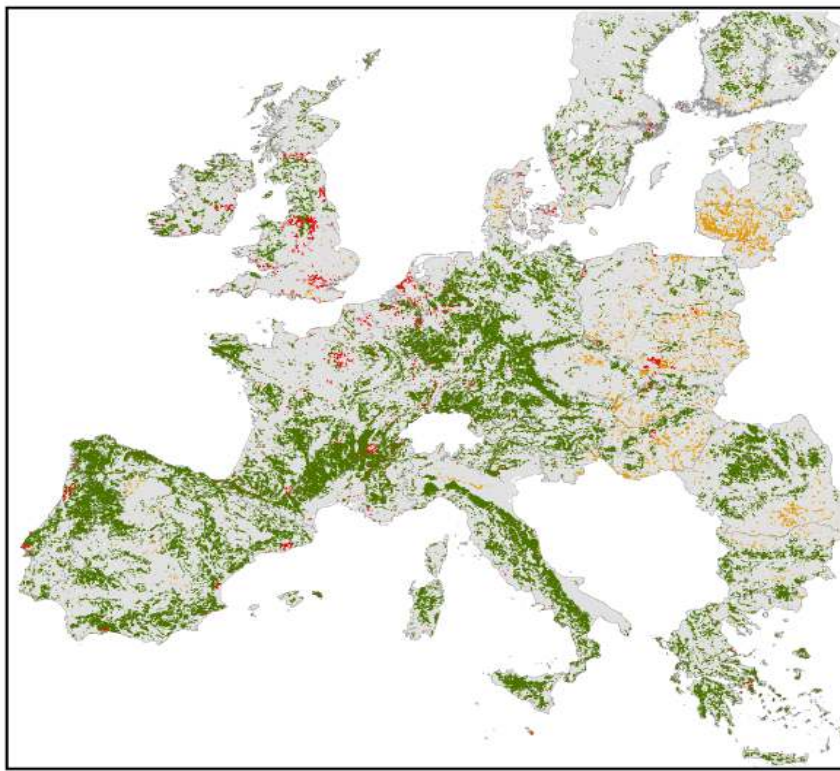
The why of the Tauros-Programm

The reintroduction of large herds of natural grazers (cattle) is key **to restore wild European landscapes**, to enhance **biodiversity** and to create **resilience**. Cattle-herds being self-reliant, cattle-herds having habitat-impact.

The momentum is there; all over Europe **huge areas are being abandoned**; offering opportunities to create half-open landscapes

The Aurochs was a key species in Eurasian ecosystems, adapted to living with big predators. The best adapted bovine for rewilding purposes would therefore be **the Aurochs. We owe this extinct Aurochs a contemporary surrogate.**

The **dedomesticated 'Tauros'** is second-best and a **powerful ally for ecosystem restoration**



Legend

- Stabile
- Abandonment
- Agricultural expansion
- Urbanisation
- Urbanisation and abandonment
- Urbanisation and agricultural expansion

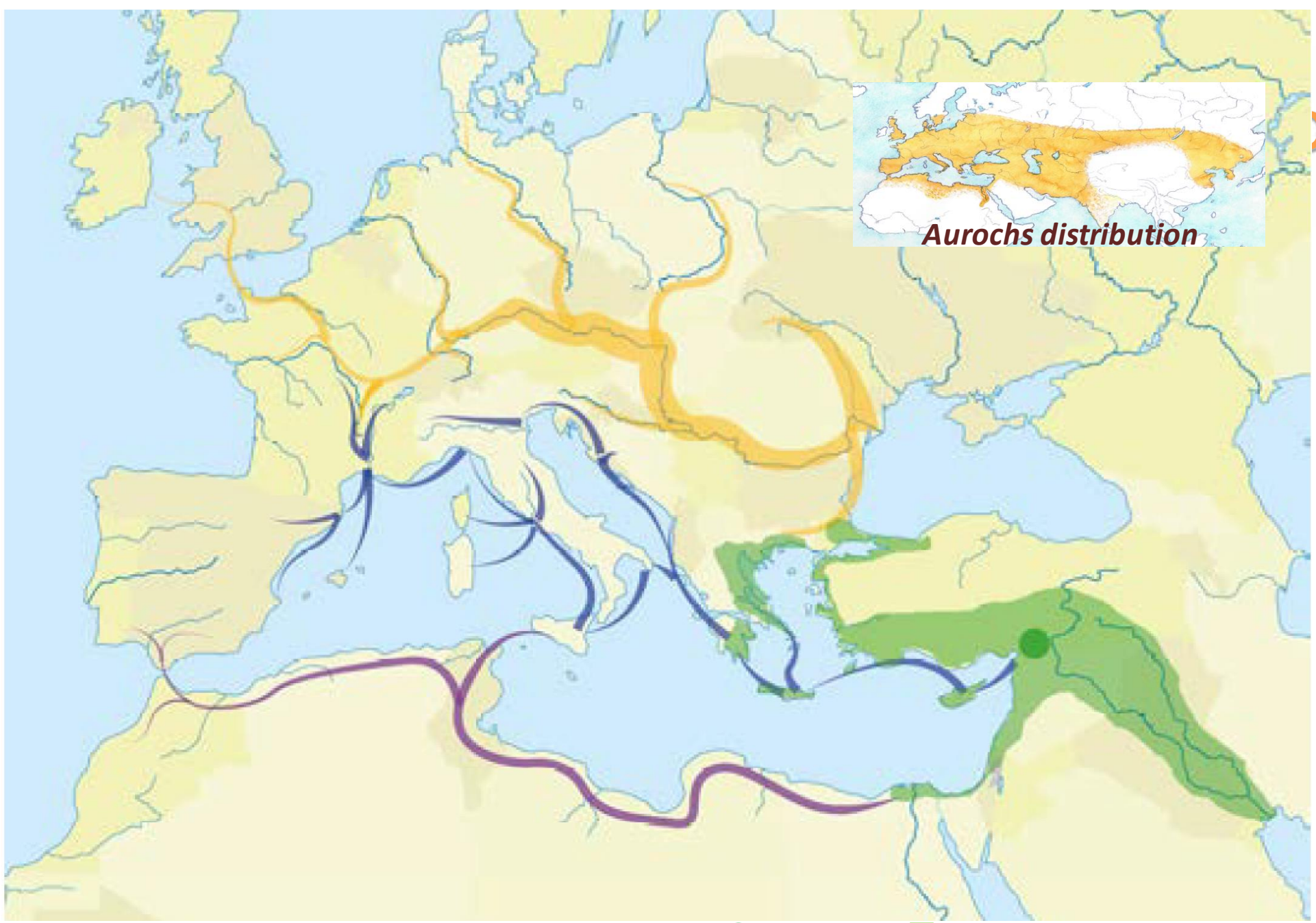
0 250 500 1,000 Kilometers



**Rewilding
Europe**

*Europe changes, every year 1 million hectares of agricultural area being abandoned
(IEEP)*

ochs



Aurochs distribution

Domestication, co-evolution of human mankind and cattle

● Domestication center; ■ Early range; ■ Danube route; ■ Mediterranean route.

‘All good things are wild and free’

(Henry David Thoreau)

‘Wild landscapes created by free
living herds to liberate (our) minds’



● Domestication center; ■ Early range; — Danube route; — Mediterranean
— African route.

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The how of the Tauros-Programm

1. Selection of '**primitive**' **cattle-breeds** based on knowledge of history, morphology and use of the breeds;
2. By active/(partly artificial) **breeding** under semi natural circumstances;
3. At first in **small** breeding groups, part of natural grazing herds;
In later stages combining the results in **larger** herds;
4. Evaluation of the results, **active selection** in later generations
5. Based on **genetic monitoring** and evidence;
6. Rough estimation of needed time: around 15-25 years (6-8 generations)



Limia



Maremma Primitiva



Maronesa



Sayaguesa



Pajuna



Aurochs 2.0?

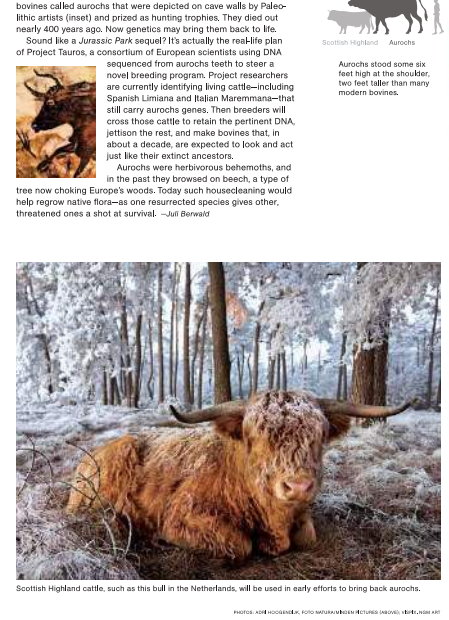
The Tauros Programm: principal breeds being used (mainly formerly used for traction)



Being surprised by the look of Manolo Uno (Maremmana x Pajuna)...2012







Publicity: New Yorker, Science, CNN, National Geographic, Washington Post, Le Monde, Le Temps CH, Volkskrant, AD, NRC, several film-teams (ARTE, BBC, NG), in prep. Documentary Tauros (jan. 2023)



The 'Big five' of natural grazing

Tauros' Unique Values

Being Self-reliant



Better defence against predators

Flooding

Well-developed herd instinct



WHITE HOT

Tauros' Unique Values



Being Self-reliant



Flooding



Better defence against predators



Well-developed herd instinct

Better adapted to diseases

Compatible with a greater diversity of life

Tauros' extra ecological benefits

**Enhancing biodiversity by
'macro-habitat-engineering', supporting a plethora
of other species**



Roaming and move around more

**Increasing wildness and
temperament**

Bigness and behaviour counts



Tauros' extra ecological benefits

Enhancing biodiversity by
'macro-habitat-engineering', supporting a plethora
of other species



Temporarily overgrazing

Roaming and move around more

Increasing wildness and
temperament



Re-distribution of minerals

Bigness and behaviour counts

Tauros extra ecological benefits

**Enhancing biodiversity by
'micro-habitat-engineering'**



Trampling

Habit of creating bull-pits



Bigness and behaviour counts

Tauros extra ecological benefits

**Enhancing biodiversity by
'micro-habitat-engineering'**



Trempling

Habit of creating bull-pits



Lying on the ground

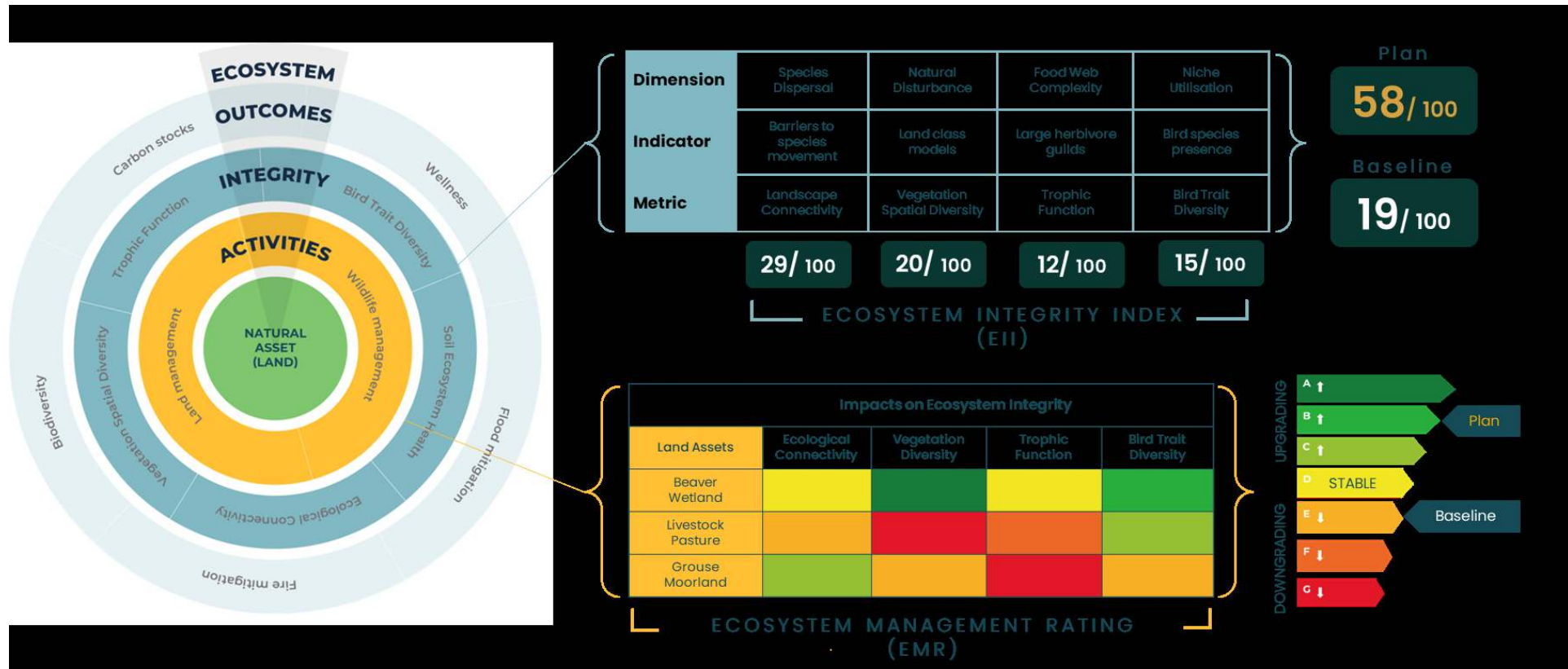
Depositing dung



Bigness and behaviour counts

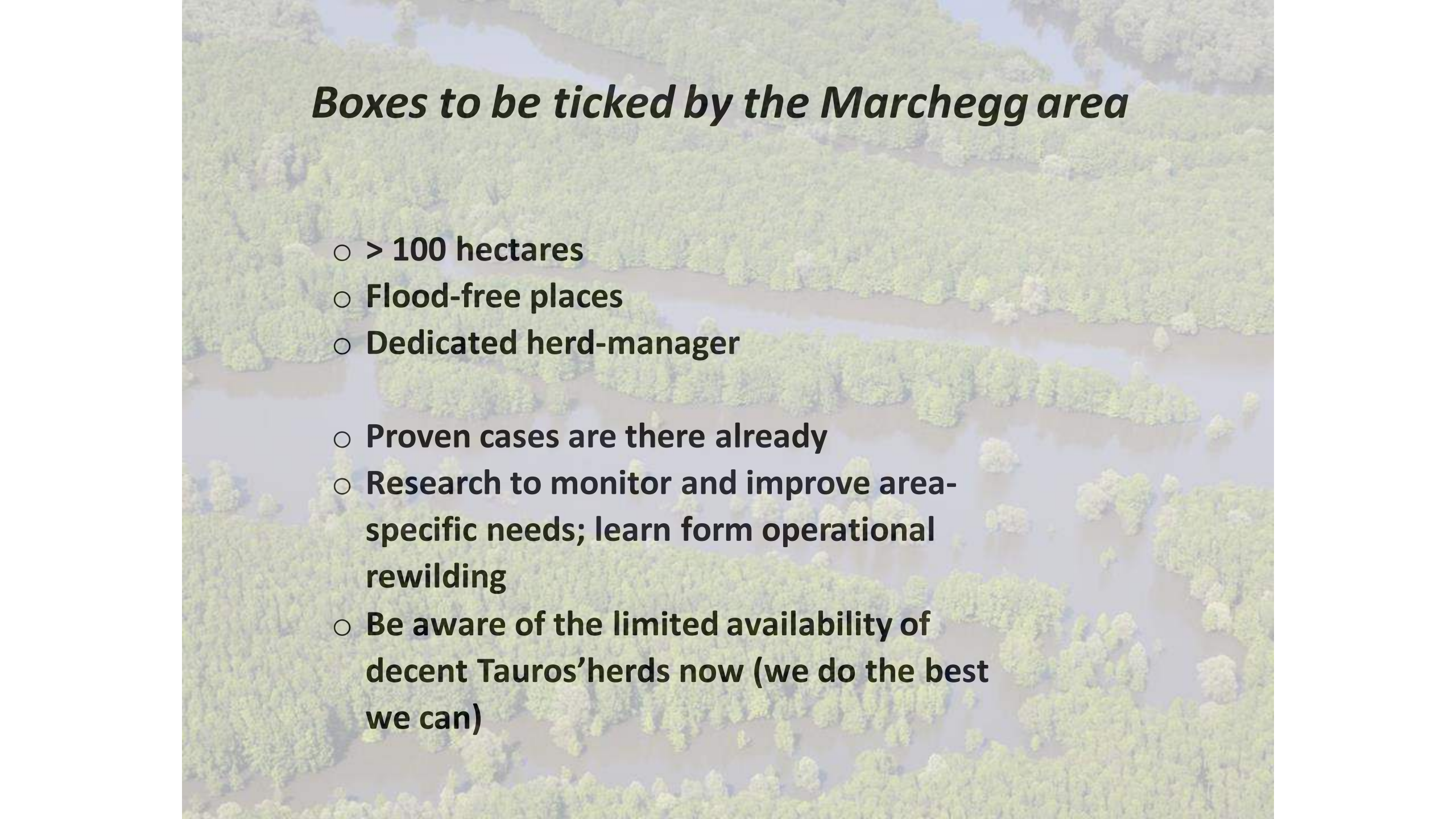
Financial feasibility by Innovative nature finance: 'Tauros Tokens'

Cooperating with CreditNature (UK)



The possible role of a herd of Tauros in the Marchegg River plains

- Restoring Natural grazing being an important ecological process in this floodplain-area; re-opening former grasslands and forests, creating half-open landscapes
- Significant biodiversity impact
- Significant resilience impact and climate adaptation
- Local economy impact. Tourist attraction for Marchegg daytrips: businesses wildlife-watching
- International publicity and funding opportunities
- Free roaming, unfenced. Would be unique in Europe and the truly rewilding of Aurochs. Part of the animals being collared (track & trace)

An aerial photograph of a lush green forest landscape. A wide, winding river or floodplain cuts through the center of the image, surrounded by dense, vibrant green trees. The water appears calm and reflects the surrounding greenery. The overall scene is a natural, undisturbed environment.

Boxes to be ticked by the Marchegg area

- **> 100 hectares**
- **Flood-free places**
- **Dedicated herd-manager**

- **Proven cases are there already**
- **Research to monitor and improve area-specific needs; learn from operational rewilding**
- **Be aware of the limited availability of decent Tauros' herds now (we do the best we can)**

Let's be honest

***“Wouldn't it be wonderful,
your Cinderella being kissed awake by Tauros”***



Bert van Beek
PHOTOGRAPHY

Join the Tauros Programm!