



The Wisent: European Bison

[Source: DTE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the ongoing war in Ukraine has cast a shadow over conservation efforts aimed at preserving the **wisent**, also known as the **European wood bison**.

- This majestic creature, once abundant across the European continent, faced near-extinction by **1927**.
- Despite successful conservation endeavors in **Ukraine** and **Russia**, the **Russian [invasion of Ukraine](#)** in February 2022 poses a significant threat to the revival and restoration of the wisent.

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What is the Wisent (European Wood Bison)?

- **About:** The **European wood bison (*Bison bonasus*)** stands as the **largest** and **heaviest** terrestrial mammal in Europe.
 - Once comprising three subspecies, only one, ***Bison bonasus bonasus***, remains extant, with the other two having succumbed to extinction.
- **Habitat:** Thriving in [grasslands](#), [deciduous](#), and **mixed forests**,
 - Noteworthy for its role as an **ecosystem engineer**, the wisent plays a crucial part in **restoring grassland habitats**.
- **Distribution:** Belarus; Lithuania; Poland; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Ukraine
- **IUCN Red list Status:** Near Threatened
- **Threats:** Rapid environmental change and hunting by humans were the main drivers of the

wisent's extirpation across Europe.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. 'Invasive Species Specialist Group' (that develops Global Invasive Species Database) belongs to which one of the following organizations?(2023)

- (a) The International Union for Conservation of Nature
- (b) The United Nations Environment Programme
- (c) The United Nations World Commission for Environment and Development
- (d) The World Wide Fund for Nature

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- The Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) is a global network of scientific and policy experts on invasive species, organized under the auspices of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). **Hence, option (a) is correct.**
- It was established in 1994.
- The ISSG manages the Global Invasive Species Database (GISD), which provides information on invasive alien species worldwide. The ISSG also maintains other online resources such as the Aliens-L listserv, the Invasive Species Compendium, the Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species, and the Environmental Impact Classification for Alien Taxa.

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