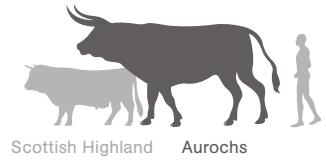


CONSERVATION

Ox Redux For centuries they roamed Europe's forests—massive bovines called aurochs that were depicted on cave walls by Paleolithic artists (inset) and prized as hunting trophies. They died out nearly 400 years ago. Now genetics may bring them back to life.

Sound like a *Jurassic Park* sequel? It's actually the real-life plan of Project Tauros, a consortium of European scientists using DNA sequenced from aurochs teeth to steer a novel breeding program. Project researchers are currently identifying living cattle—including Spanish Limiana and Italian Maremmana—that still carry aurochs genes. Then breeders will cross those cattle to retain the pertinent DNA, jettison the rest, and make bovines that, in about a decade, are expected to look and act just like their extinct ancestors.

Aurochs were herbivorous behemoths, and in the past they browsed on beech, a type of tree now choking Europe's woods. Today such housecleaning would help regrow native flora—as one resurrected species gives other, threatened ones a shot at survival. —Juli Berwald



Aurochs stood some six feet high at the shoulder, two feet taller than many modern bovines.



Scottish Highland cattle, such as this bull in the Netherlands, will be used in early efforts to bring back aurochs.