

Report: Endangered Bison Died of Overdose on Speed

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A European bison, whose sudden death at a Moscow region nature reserve earlier this month sparked outrage among conservationists, was felled not by food poisoning, but by an overdose on speed, according to a forensic study, RIA-Novosti reported.

The bizarre death of Shponti, a mating bull imported from Germany to boost Russia's breeding program, was initially chalked up to rotten fruits.

But an independent study revealed that the 1,300 kilogram animal had elevated levels of amphetamines in his kidneys, enough to cause cardiac arrest, the state-owned news agency reported.

It was not immediately clear how Shponti could have ingested the powerful drug.

The Priosko-Terrasny reserve has been at the center of efforts to save the European Bison

since Soviet times, but has been scandalized in recent years by apparently open warfare between employees and the park's management.

An earlier statement on reserve website, which appeared to be written by disgruntled employees, said KaMaZ trucks dumped several crates of rotten mandarins and tomatoes in the Bison enclosure sometime before New Year's, according to the statement.

The statement laid the blame for Shponti's death squarely on the park's director.

Three bison have died at the reserve under murky circumstances in recent months. A female bison, Madonna, perished on Jan. 7, the same day as Shponti, and an eight-year-old breeding bull named Multon was euthanized in October after he apparently broke his jaw.

The results of an official inquiry into Shponti and Madonna's death are expected in mid-February.

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