



# EU Nature Directives & Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

towards a coherent Trans-European Nature network  
& an EU Nature restoration plan

BIOGOV Interreg Europe Conference on “Improving Biodiversity Governance”  
Aud. Toots Tielemans, Herman Teirlinck Building, Brussels, 17 November 2021  
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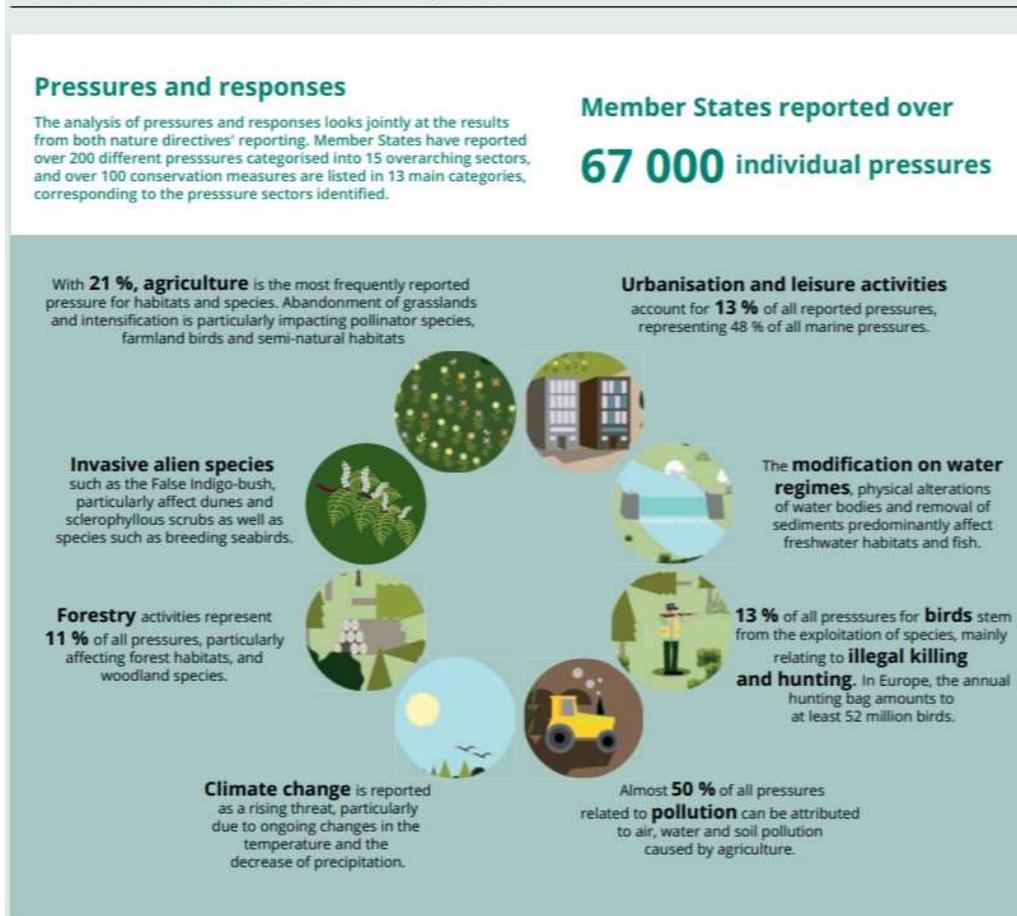
# EU State of Nature report (2019) – key messages



- **Only 15 % of habitat assessments at EU level show a good conservation status**, while the majority continues to show poor (45 %) or bad (36 %) status
- **Grasslands, dunes, and bog, mire and fen habitats show strong deteriorating trends**, while forests have the most improving trends.
- Around one quarter of species have a good conservation status at EU level. However, **over 60 % of the species assessments report a poor or bad status**.
- Reptiles and vascular plants are the species with the highest proportion of good conservation status (more than 35 %), while **fish have the highest proportion of bad conservation status (38 %)**.
- **Marine mammals (cetaceans)** are among the species with the highest proportion of **unknown assessments (over 78 %)**.
- **The Atlantic and Continental regions contain highest share of poor and bad conservation statuses** among all biogeographical regions for both habitats and species.
- A **high percentage of unknown data** indicates a need to establish or reinforce appropriate and ideally coordinated and state-supported monitoring schemes in all Member States.

# Key pressures on habitats and species (SoN)

Figure 4.1 Summary of pressures and responses



- Although drivers of habitat degradation and species decline are diverse, **changes in agricultural activities** such as abandoning extensive management and intensifying management practices are the most important pressures overall.
- **Urbanisation** is the second largest pressure, especially affecting habitats such as dunes and coastal and rocky habitats.
- **Pollution of air, water and soil** negatively affects a wide range of habitats and species.
- **Hunting, illegal killing and poisoning** remains a major pressure for many breeding, wintering and passage birds.
- Further pressures include:
  - **invasive alien species**,
  - **Modifications to hydrological flow regimes and physical alterations to water bodies** (freshwater habitats and fish),
  - **Hydropower installations** (affecting river habitats, freshwater fish, etc.);
  - **Collisions** with electricity and communication transmissions (mostly affecting birds),
  - as well as **climate change related droughts and decreases in precipitation** (affecting bogs, mires, fens, amphibians, etc.).



# Natura 2000 network

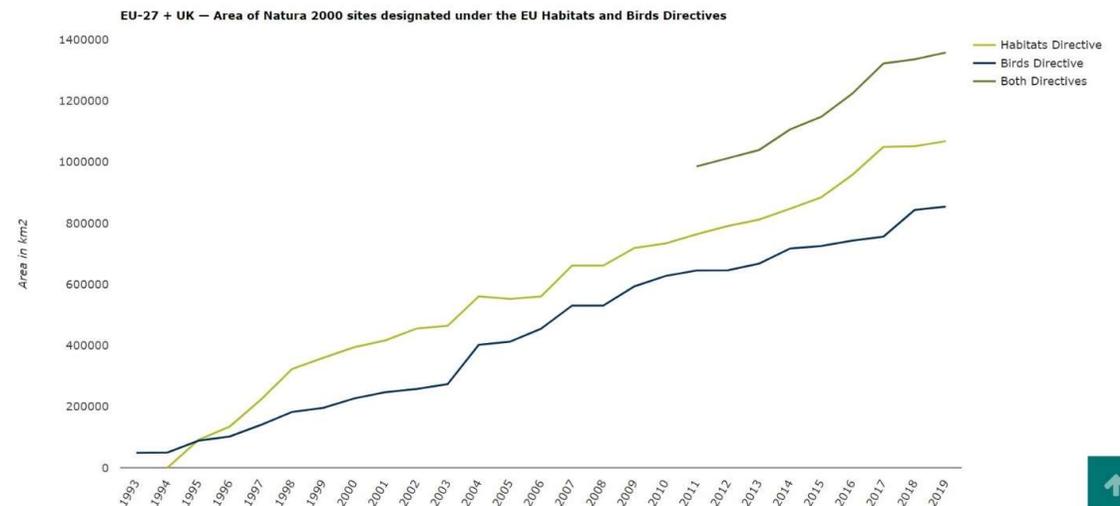
Total number of sites (EU27): 26.935

18,5 % of EU27 land area (764.222 km<sup>2</sup>)

Large variation of coverage: 8,3 % (DK) - 37,9 % (SI)

< 8 % of EU marine area (450.795 km<sup>2</sup>)

Source: Natura 2000 barometer



# *Natura 2000 - key challenges for the coming years*



- Complete any remaining gaps in the network of sites (in particular marine) & **ensure that the network remains robust** in the face of increasing external pressures
- **Complete legal designation & effective protection of sites**, to ensure non-deterioration of habitats and species
- **Establish clear site-specific conservation objectives**, designed to maintain or restore Favourable conservation status of habitats and species
- **Ensure the necessary investments in terms of staff, capacity and financing are available**, to ensure that sites are effectively managed and restored in partnership with landowners and users
- Ensure knowledge/conservation science base is sufficient, and that **sites are effectively monitored**

# *EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030*

- On 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 the European Commission adopted **its EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030**
- **Overall goal:** to put biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030
  - ↳ **Protecting and restoring** nature and ecosystems in the EU
- **Headlines targets:**
  1. Establish a **coherent & EU-wide Trans-European nature network of protected areas that includes both Natura 2000 sites and nationally protected areas**
  2. Develop a ambitious **EU Nature Restoration Plan**
- The Strategy targets have been **endorsed by the Council**

# *EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030*

## Protected area target: key commitments by 2030

1. **Legally protect** a minimum of 30% of the EU's land area and 30% of EU's sea area as part of a true Trans-European Nature Network, and integrate ecological corridors.
2. **Strictly protect** at least a third of the EU's protected areas, including all remaining EU primary and old-growth forests.
3. **Effectively manage** all protected areas, with clear conservation objectives and conservation measures, and monitor these areas appropriately.

# EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

## Commission Guidance on the target for protected areas

- Member States are responsible for identifying and designating additional protected areas, either to complete the Natura 2000 network or under national protection.
- All protected areas should have clearly defined conservation objectives and measures.
- The target is an EU-level target, that needs to be achieved for each of the EU biogeographical regions → this requires cooperation between Member States to ensure effort sharing and trans-boundary coherence and connectivity of the network
- By the end of 2022, each Member State is expected to submit to the Commission a list of existing protected areas which fulfil the criteria as well as an initial pledge for new areas to be designated explaining:
  - (1) which criteria were used for their identification;
  - (2) the scientific evidence that leads to their selection for designation;
  - (3) the mechanism that will be put in place to ensure adequate site management and monitoring

# *EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030*

## EU Nature Restoration Plan: key commitments by 2030

1. Ensure there is no deterioration in conservation status of habitats and species; at least 30 % of those not already in favourable conservation status reach that category or show a positive trend.
2. Restore significant areas of degraded and carbon-rich ecosystems.
3. Reverse the decline in pollinators.
4. Reduce the risk and use of chemical pesticides and reduce the use of more hazardous pesticides is reduced by 50%.
5. At least 10% of agricultural area is under high-diversity landscape features.
6. At least 25% of the EU's agricultural land is under organic farming management, and the uptake of agroforestry is increased.
7. At least 3 billion new trees are planted in the EU.
8. Significant progress is made in the remediation of contaminated soil sites.

# *EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030*

## EU Nature Restoration Plan: key commitments by 2030

9. At least 25,000 km of free flowing rivers are restored.

10. 50% reduction in the number of Red List species threatened by IAS.

11. The losses of nutrients from fertilisers are reduced by 50%, resulting in the reduction of the use of fertilisers by at least 20%.

12. Cities with a least 20,000 inhabitants have an ambitious Urban Green Plan.

13. No chemical pesticides are used in sensitive areas such as EU urban Green areas.

14. Negative impacts on sensitive species and habitats, including on the seabed through fishing and extraction activities, are substantially reduced to achieve good environment status.

15. Eliminate or reduce the by-catch of species to a level that allows species recovery and conservation.

# EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

## Commission Guidance on the “30% status improvement target”

- The target is closely aligned with the reporting under Article 17 Habitats Directive and Article 12 Birds Directive.
- The target is a national-level target, that needs to be achieved by each Member State individually. There is no further breakdown of the target below the national level.

By the end of 2022, Member States are expected to submit to the Commission a list of pledges that includes the following:

- (1) a list of habitats and species that should at least show a strong positive trend by 2030;
- (2) an explanation on the criteria used for selecting these habitats and species
- (3) an additional list of habitats and species for which further measures should be taken to achieve non-deterioration by 2030
- (4) an explanation on the measures need to achieve the desired positive/ stable trends by 2030
- (5) If relevant, an explanation on why certain habitats and species are not expected to achieve the target, despite all possible measures taken; and a list of these habitats and species
- (6) If relevant, an explanation on measures that will be taken to improve the quality of monitoring

# *EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030*

## **Next steps in December 2021**

- > Launch of **EU biogeographical seminar and networking process**, with Member States and stakeholders (“pledge and review process”):
  - Target for a Trans-European Nature network (Protected area targets)
  - Target for halting deterioration and achieve an improvement for at least 30% of habitats and species currently in unfavourable/ non-secure status
  
- > Commission proposal for legally binding restoration targets  
(proposal date uncertain !)