

NEWS

• NATURA 2000 & THE TWO NATURE DIRECTIVES

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Habitats Directive, of Natura 2000 and of the LIFE regulation. Celebrations have been held in many countries throughout the year. These included an event organised back to back with the annual [EUROPARC Conference](#) in Genk (BE) between 22 and 25 October where the EEA's report on protected areas was launched (see 'Publications' below).

The Habitats Committee meeting in October adopted revised lists of SCI with 235 new sites (nearly 25 000 km²) from 20 MS added to the Natura 2000 network. A large proportion of the additions are marine sites.

Bilateral seminars were held with Bulgaria and Romania in October to review progress since the Sibiu (RO) meeting held in 2008. The Bulgarian proposals for terrestrial sites were assessed as almost complete while the marine part of the network is incomplete for both countries.

The series of biogeographical seminars focused on Natura 2000 site management and cooperation between Member States continues. The Atlantic seminar was held at Bergen (NL) in early December and was attended by some 80 people from 7 countries. A mock-up of a proposed web based communication platform was presented, this is aimed to help share experience. Concrete actions resulting from the meeting will include a workshop on Nitrogen deposition which is important for many habitat types in this region.



The 'heaths & bogs' group visit the IJperveld, part of the Natura 2000 site [NL2003023](#), during the Atlantic seminar

The Boreal seminar took place in early summer 2012 (see previous newsletter) but related activities continue. A post-seminar meeting was held in Tallinn (EE) in November to

discuss, based on the seminar conclusions, achievements so far and the plans for the near future. The current status of all actions proposed at the seminar were discussed. This style of post-seminar meeting seems to be one way to monitor the progress of actions identified in the seminar, alongside the communication platform. A second seminar for the Boreal region may be held in 2016.

The Expert Group on Reporting met in Brussels on November 22 with most Member States present. The meeting included discussion on how results from both Article 12 and 17 reports will be used to measure progress towards targets in the [EU 2020 biodiversity strategy](#), particularly targets 1 and 2. This topic will require further development in 2013. The meeting was reminded that the Reference Portals should be consulted regularly, a corrigendum to the Article 17 guidelines was added in November and the page of 'Frequently asked questions' (FAQs) is regularly updated.

Further information about Natura 2000, including regularly updated statistics, are available on the [ETC/BD website](#).

• THE EMERALD NETWORK

The 4th meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks under the Bern Convention took place on 17-18 September in Strasbourg, (FR). Doug Evans presented work done by the ETC/BD to harmonise Bern Resolution 4 on habitats and Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. This work will continue next year after comments from the countries which are due by the end of February 2013.

At the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention held 27 to 30 November, the first list of Emerald sites was approved by the Committee, i.e. 37 sites for Switzerland. This was described as an "historical moment" by Jan Plesnik, the chairman of the Standing Committee. In addition, candidate Emerald sites for the 7 Central and Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus countries were also approved.

• MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPA)

Marine Protected Areas is an emerging topic which is reflected in the policy agenda. At global level, the 11th CBD "Aichi" target calls for 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas to be conserved by 2020. At EU level, as part of the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Member States are requested to make publicly available by 2013 their information on MPAs. Based on this the European Commission will

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have to report by 2014 on progress in the establishment of marine protected areas under EU legislation and other international agreements, e.g. under the Regional Sea Conventions.

The ETC/BD participated in a number of meetings related to MPAs. Brian Mac Sharry attended the Forum on MPAs in the Mediterranean held in Antalya, Turkey on the 26th-28th November, organised by [MedPAN](#) as well as the first Conference of [MAIA \(Marine protected areas in the Atlantic arc\)](#) which was held from the 3rd to the 6th of December in Arcachon (FR). Dominique Richard attended a workshop on MPAs organised by EUROSITE as part of the EUROPARC Conference.

Topics of discussion at all meetings included the challenges faced to reach the 10% Aichi Target, designation of MPAs in the high seas, the role of the EU Nature Directives and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in terms of the 'Blue Growth' idea of DG Mare, legal mechanisms for designating sites as well as the need for management plans and a coordinated effort by all parties.



*Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas
(from <http://www.medpan.org>)*

During a meeting of the Marine Expert Group under the EU Nature Directives held on 6 November, Marita Arvela made a presentation on the information available on MPAs from the Natura 2000 database and the Common Database on Designated Areas (CDDA). As a follow-up to this meeting a discussion paper was prepared by the European Commission to provide guidance to EU Member States on how to make available their information on MPAs by 2013. The EEA will help streamlining this information at European level through the EIONET priority data flow on protected areas.

• EUROPEAN ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENTS

In support to [Target 2, action 5](#) of the European Strategy, the MAES (Mapping and Assessing European Ecosystems and their Services) Working group met for the third time in early September to discuss the analytical framework

proposed by a pilot group including representatives of EEA, Joint Research Centre, DG Environment and a few countries. The importance of this process was acknowledged and support was expressed by Member States representatives during the following meeting of the Coordination Group on Biodiversity and Nature (CGBN).

In November a MAES stakeholders workshop was organised at [INBO](#) in Brussels. The objective was to allow all Member States and stakeholders to be updated on the work of the MAES working group so far and to discuss how this process could be supported and strengthened at EU and national levels. The challenges are three fold: to create broad support and ownership at all levels; to get the research community on board; and provide technical support to MS (typologies of ecosystems and ecosystem services; indicators for mapping and assessments). Based on an analysis prepared by Amor Torre-Marín (ECNC), Sophie Condé made a presentation comparing different aspects of the Ecosystem assessments work already done in Spain, Portugal and the UK. Discussions showed that in general, the concern is how to convince national policy makers including from different sectors on the interest to join the MAES process. There is a need to share information on existing similar initiatives, guidelines and methodologies and discuss multiscale and top-down-top approaches. All documents and presentations are publicly available [here](#).

• 11TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The focus of this conference, held in Hyderabad, India was on resource mobilisation. The conference requested that the Executive Secretariat helps in the implementation of the Strategy and progress towards [Aichi targets](#) at national, subregional and regional levels.

Related to the Clearing House Mechanism (CHM), it is asked to strengthen the communication between National Focal Points on CHM, to share information on results from the monitoring of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets through national clearing-house mechanisms or other relevant mechanisms. Parties and other stakeholders are called to consider how they can most effectively address barriers to data access that are under their direct control with a view to contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Subject to the availability of resources, the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, is requested to establish a standard information exchange mechanism for the clearing-house mechanism to



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interconnect the central and national clearing-house mechanisms, where possible and to collaborate with the other biodiversity-related conventions to ensure mutual compatibility and to avoid duplication of work.

The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services ([IPBES](#)) is asked to develop a work programme including the preparation of the next global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services, to be launched in 2018, focusing on status and trends, the impact of biodiversity and ecosystem services on human well-being, and the effectiveness of responses, including relevant regional, subregional and thematic assessments, as well as on national reports.

On restoration, the Executive Secretariat should facilitate the development of a web portal on ecosystem restoration. It is still asked to develop clear terms and definitions of ecosystem rehabilitation and restoration even if some parties have said definitions can be different from one country to another and each one should use its own interpretation. The Secretariat has already provided an [information report](#) on the most used definitions related to ecosystem restoration.

On protected areas, target 11 must be linked with other targets, the marine component needs to be improved and attention must be given to conservation of wild crop relatives in PAs. In terms of capacity-building, several programmes and initiatives, including the JRC's Digital Observatory for Protected Areas ([DOPA](#)), are asked to coordinate their work in order to help technical guidance.

• EIONET NFPs AND NRCs BIODIVERSITY

The 3rd annual EIONET National Focal Points (NFPs) meeting was held on 17-18 October in Luxembourg. A large part of the meeting was dedicated to discussions in working groups on the effectiveness of the EEA, seen from a national perspective, as a contribution to the [external evaluation led by COWI consultants](#). The on-going process for reviewing current European Topic Centres was explained. As members of the ETC Review Committee, NFPs from Greece and from Italy expressed their interest in having learnt more about ETC work and saw a high potential for capacity building with countries. The results of both the EEA evaluation and the ETC review have fed discussions and decisions to be taken during the EEA Management Board on 11-12 December.

The annual EIONET seminar of National Reference Centres (NRCs) on nature and biodiversity was held from 5 to 7 November, the last day jointly with [National Focal Points on biodiversity Clearing House Mechanism](#). The

topic of the seminar was "Building the knowledge base for the implementation of Biodiversity Strategies". National Reference Centres were invited to discuss on: initiatives at national level to organise the reporting on progress towards the different CBD Aichi targets as well as under national strategies; how to improve current data-flows in particular on protected areas and needs for future data flows.

• EUNIS HABITATS CLASSIFICATION

Following a contract with the [European Vegetation Survey](#) the crosswalk between the EUNIS habitats classification and syntaxa (plant communities) has been revised. The contract also explored some potential uses of phytosociological data for improving EUNIS and a report will be available soon.

A paper based on discussions at the meeting held by the [MESH Atlantic](#) project in San Sebastian earlier this year (see previous newsletter) has been published in Marine Pollution Bulletin Journal - Galparsoro et al. (2012) [Using EUNIS habitat classification for benthic mapping in European seas: present concerns and future needs](#).

• ETC/BD MANAGEMENT MEETING

The ETC/BD management meeting was held in Paris, France, hosted by the MNHN. Following discussions on final deliveries from the Implementation Plan 2012, two were presented in detail: - a working paper on biodiversity and ecosystem assessment reports by Amor Torre Marin ([ECNC](#)) and a review of ecosystem services mapping experiences in Europe by Thomas Ellmauer ([UBA](#)). In addition, the EEA 2013 Annual Work Programme was presented and discussion started around the 2013 ETCBD Implementation Plan. Michael Hosek, Deputy Director of [AOPK CZ](#) (Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic), was elected as the new chair of the ETC/BD management committee for a one year period, renewable once. Participants expressed their thanks to Johan Bodegård ([SLU](#)) for his efficient and pleasant chairmanship of the Committee over the last two years.

• OTHER MEETINGS

Several staff from the ETC/BD and its partners attended the 3rd European Congress of Conservation Biology (28 August -1 September) in Glasgow and Doug Evans and Karel Chobot (AOPK-CR) gave presentations.

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Marcus Zisenis presented the EEA's ['List of EU research projects about biodiversity and ecosystems'](#), gathered by the ETC/BD, during the workshop of the EU FP7 project Science-Policy Interfaces for Biodiversity: Research, Action, and Learning ([SPIRAL](#)) in Brussels on 20 September 2012.

Marcus Zisenis also participated in the Steering Committee meeting of the EU ERA-Net project – Utilising the Ecosystem Services Approach for Water Framework Directive Implementation ([ESAWADI](#)) in Brussels on 13 November 2012, providing advice for the completion of the final report. Based on three case studies respectively in France, Portugal and Germany, the survey shows that the ecosystem services approach enriches and clarifies the different benefits of integrated management of waters, but does not really influence management decisions. Involvement of the stakeholders and people concerned is crucial for the evaluation of different ecosystem services, and management decisions.

Doug Evans participated in two international meetings organised by the French habitat mapping project (CarHab) held in October in St Mandé, close to Paris (FR). The first meeting focused on European vegetation, including Red lists of plant communities and habitats while the second was on vegetation mapping in Europe.

Sophie Condé attended the 6th meeting of the United Kingdom biodiversity indicators Forum held in Cambridge (5-6 December 2012). The main topics of discussion were on options for addressing gaps in the current UK set of biodiversity indicators and on how to support the preparation of the 5th CBD national report by mid 2014. DEFRA and JNCC have contracted UNEP-WCMC to support these specific activities.

NEWS FROM THE PARTNERS

• MUSEUM NATIONAL D'HISTOIRE NATURELLE

A partial translation of the EUNIS habitats classification into French will be published by the museum's [Service du Patrimoine Naturel](#) (Natural Heritage Service) covering all the terrestrial habitats thought to be present in France.

The *Cahiers d'habitats* series has been completed with 3 books covering 274 Annex I and migratory bird species regularly present in France. The species accounts can also be accessed via the SPN's [Inventaire national du Patrimoine naturel](#).

• EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

During the conference 'Biodiversity as a Boost for Local and Regional Economy', held by ECNC on 12 December 2012, ECNC offered the first copy of its new publication 'Nature works for regions!' to François Wakenhut, Head of Biodiversity Unit at EC DG Environment.



ECNC's Executive Director Rob Walters presents the first copy of the new ECNC publication 'Nature works for regions!' to François Wakenhut (photo ECNC)

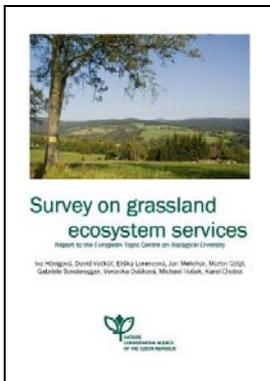
In recent years, ECNC has collected an extensive number of practical examples which aim to encourage people who wish to become involved with biodiversity, inspire them and show them that local biodiversity is beautiful and can effectively deliver services. As part of this collection, numerous examples of biodiversity activities by local and regional authorities and businesses from around Europe have been included.

A number of these examples are presented in the booklet 'Nature works for regions!' to illustrate how biodiversity and ecosystem services inspire or work in local and regional situations. The booklet is divided into six themes which deal with food, water management, climate change, pollution, human well-being and biodiversity conservation. Each theme is briefly introduced, together with a few practical suggestions for action (what can you do?), and illustrated with selected real-life examples. Many of these examples have multiple benefits beyond the topic in which they are placed.

The booklet, produced with support from the European Commission LIFE+ programme, and conference are a contribution to the activities of the European Learning Network for Regions and Biodiversity, an initiative coordinated by ECNC and UNEP. It can be downloaded from the [ECNC website](#).

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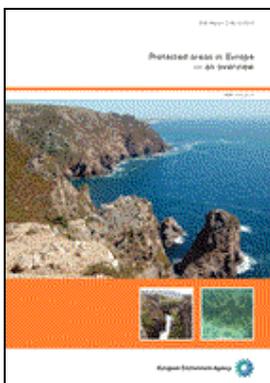
- **AGENTURA OCHRANY PŘÍRODY A KRAJINY ČESKÉ REPUBLIKY**



The Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic has published a report on grassland ecosystem services based on work done for the ETC/BD and exploiting the high quality habitat mapping available for the Czech Republic. The report can be downloaded from [the AOPK website](#).

PUBLICATIONS

- **PROTECTED AREAS IN EUROPE - AN OVERVIEW**



This review of protected areas in Europe is largely based on work by the ETC/BD and is the first in-depth review to be published. It includes sections on Natura 2000, sites under national designations and their interplay and is likely to become an essential reference for anyone working on protected areas. The report can be ordered from the [EU bookshop](#) or can be downloaded as a PDF from the [EEA website](#).

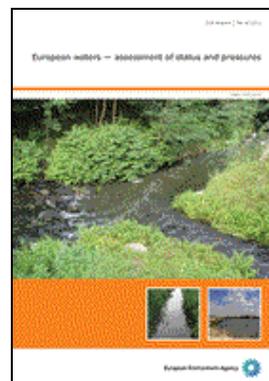
- **STREAMLINING EUROPEAN BIODIVERSITY INDICATORS 2020: BUILDING A FUTURE ON LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE SEBI 2010 PROCESS**



This report marks the end of the current SEBI cycle, it notes SEBI milestones and draws lessons for further improvement of the process and the indicator set.

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/streamlining-european-biodiversity-indicators-2020>

- **EUROPEAN WATERS - ASSESSMENT OF STATUS AND PRESSURES**

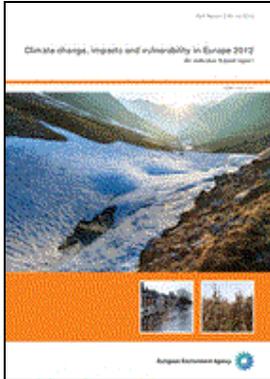


This report is based on reports from Member States under the EU Water Framework Directive covering the status of 104 000 rivers, 19 000 lakes, and 4000 transitional and coastal water bodies. The ETC/BD mainly contributed to this report, through its partner AOPK. The authors conclude that water bodies are generally improving, but not quickly enough to meet the targets set by the WFD – in fact only 52 % of water bodies are predicted to achieve good ecological status by 2015, according to Member States own plans.

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-waters-assessment-2012>

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• CLIMATE CHANGE, IMPACTS AND VULNERABILITY IN EUROPE 2012



This report presents information on past and projected climate change and related impacts in Europe, based on a range of indicators. The report also assesses the vulnerability of society, human health and ecosystems in

Europe and identifies those regions in Europe most at risk from climate change. ETC/BD partner UBA contributed to the section on Terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity. The report can be found on the [EEA website](#).

• SCALES & EBONE

ETC/BD staff have contributed to two papers from the EBONE FP7 project recently published in a special issue of Ecological Indicators – '[Field identification of Habitats Directive Annex 1 Habitats as a major European biodiversity indicator](#)' and '[The significance of habitats as indicators of biodiversity and their links to species](#)'.

Doug Evans (ETC/BD core team) has also contributed to 2 papers from the SCALES FP7 project published in volume 3 of [Nature Conservation](#) – 'National responsibilities for conserving habitats – a freely scalable method' and 'Mind the gap – how well does Natura 2000 cover species of European Interest'.

This newsletter produced twice a year is from the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity. It aims at providing information on activities led by the Consortium in the framework of the multi-annual European Environment Agency's Strategy 2009-2013.

If you have any contributions for the next issue of this newsletter please forward them to Doug Evans (evans@mnhn.fr).

Visit our website at <http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/>



Photo –Otars Opermanis