



Protecting and Restoring Biodiversity Across the Freshwater, Coastal and Marine Realms

Is the existing EU policy framework fit for purpose?

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This paper presents an integrated assessment of how EU policies influence aquatic biodiversity in order to determine how EU policies and laws contribute to achieving and/or hindering EU and international biodiversity targets. The authors from Ecologic Institute, IUCN, and ACTeon also discuss whether European policy has a synergistic or conflicting mix of instruments to address the main problems facing aquatic biodiversity, and whether there are any gaps in the existing policy framework. The article is available for download.

The integrated policy review assessment presented in this paper is based on the application of the drivers–pressures–state–impact–responses (DPSIR) framework to six known pressures on aquatic biodiversity, selected to provide a representative range: nitrogen pollution, species extraction, invasive alien species, water abstraction, alterations to morphology, and plastic waste. The DPSIR framework is used to characterize these pressures and how they are influenced by underpinning socio-economic drivers and major European policies. The conclusions highlight that the policy framework is most developed when it comes to defining environmental targets and sets a number of instruments to reduce pressures by encouraging the adoption of more resource-efficient practices, but it becomes less specific when tackling sectors (drivers) and supporting more environmental sound economic development.

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Authorship

[Dr. Josselin Rouillard](#)

[Dr. Manuel Lago](#)

Katrina Abhold

Lina Röschel

Terri Kafyeke

Helen Klimmek (IUCN)

Verena Mattheiß (ACTeon)

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