



State of Nature in the EU (2013-2018)

Results from reporting under the nature directives 2013-2018

Publication

[Report](#)

Citation

EEA, 2020: State of nature in the EU. Results from reporting under the nature directives 2013-2018, Technical report No 10/2020, European Environment Agency, Copenhagen.

The [European Environmental Agency \(EEA\)](#) published their landmark report on the state of nature in the EU on 19th October 2020, representing the most comprehensive assessment of the status of European nature and biodiversity to date. Supported by Ecologic Institute through the [European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity \(ETC-BD\)](#), the publication analyses data reported by the Member States under the [EU Birds and Habitats Directives](#) during the period from 2013 to 2018. The State of Nature 2020 provides invaluable insights about the impact of conservation measures that have been applied as well as remaining gaps. The findings indicate that the majority of Europe's biodiversity continues to decline at an alarming rate, threatening the survival of thousands of animal species and habitats.

Worsening state of protected habitats and species

The State of Nature 2020 highlights that only 15 % of European habitats protected by the [EU Habitats Directive](#) have a good conservation status, while the vast majority have a poor or bad conservation status. For animal and plant species, the results are slightly more positive, but the majority of assessments (63 %) nevertheless still have an unfavorable conservation status. Looking at trends over time, the majority of habitats and species with an unfavourable conservation status are either stable or further deteriorating. Only 9 % of habitats and 6 % of species with an unfavorable status are showing positive trends. A separate assessment on bird populations shows an increase of 6 % in the last 6 years in the proportion of species with poor and bad status, now reaching a total of 40 %.

Pressures and responses in Europe

Findings indicate that the agricultural sector is the major driver behind this ongoing biodiversity loss. Key pressures is the intensification and overuse of fertilisers and pesticides, affecting most European habitats and species either directly or indirectly. Further threats include the overexploitation of the land and seas as well as urban development, pollution and forestry.

EU nature legislation requires Member States to respond to these pressures via targeted conservation measures. The Natura 2000 network of protected areas serves as a key instrument to conserve European biodiversity, covering around 20 % of the EU's terrestrial land area and 10 % of its seas. The network strives to protect core breeding and resting sites for rare and threatened species as well as rare natural habitat types. The State of

Nature 2020 shows that heath habitats and plant species are particularly well covered by the network, whereas forest habitats, marine species and breeding birds have a rather low coverage.

Additional analyses show that for many habitats and species, the [Natura 2000](#) network and other conservation measures are linked to improvements in conservation status. Currently, most measures refer to maintenance rather than restoration activities. This requires a shift in approach, as at least 226 000 km² of habitats have been found to need restorative measures to ensure their long-term viability.

Missing the EU Biodiversity targets to 2020

Finally, the State of Nature outlines the progress made towards achieving targets 1 and 3 of the [EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020](#). Target 1 aims to achieve the full implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives and maintain and restore many species and habitats to a good conservation status by 2020. This target was not met, falling short by 20 % for birds, 12 % for habitats and 2 % for species. Target 3 aims to optimise agriculture and forestry's benefits for biodiversity, but has failed to make real progress, especially concerning agriculture (only 8 % of agricultural habitats are assessed as improving).

With this wealth of information, the report underscores the urgent need to increase efforts to halt the decline of European biodiversity. Amongst other measures, additional effort is needed to tackle the major impacts, develop new indicators to evaluate the impact of the Natura 2000 network on biodiversity policy objectives and ensure sufficient financial and human capacities to fully implement the nature directives and the current [Biodiversity Strategy to 2030](#).

The report is [available for download](#).

Language

English

Authorship

Sandra Naumann

Rebecca Noebel

Dr. Ulf Stein

Lina Röschel

Sophie Ittner

[McKenna Davis](#)

Zelmira Gaudillat (ETC/BD)

Anna Staneva (BirdLife International under contract of the European Commission)

Claire Rutherford (BirdLife International under contract of the European Commission)

Carlos Romão (European Environment Agency (EEA))

Credits

ETC/BD lead authors

Sandra Naumann, Rebecca Noebel, Dr. Ulf Stein, Lina Röschel, Sophie Ittner, McKenna Davis (Ecologic Institute)

Zelmira Gaudillat-Sipkova (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle)

Anna Staneva, Claire Rutherford (BirdLife International under contract with the

European Commission)

Carlos Romão (European Environment Agency (EEA))

Contributions

Sabine Roscher, Nirmala Séon-Massin, Jérôme Bailly Maitre, Pablo Bolanos, Laura P. Gavilán and Michelle Watson (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle)

Manuel Loehnertz (space4environment)

Eleni Tryfon (European Environment Agency (EEA))

Thomas Ellmauer, Dietmar Moser and Helmut Kudrnovsky (Umweltbundesamt Austria)

Lubos Halada (Institute of Landscape Ecology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences)

Angelika Rubin and Sofia Pachini (DG Environment)

Ruta Landgrebe and Katrina Abhold (Ecologic Institute)

Mora Aronsson (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences)

Eresha Fernando (BirdLife International)

Ben Delbaere (NEEMO)

Diverse experts giving feedback during Eionet consultation

Funding

[European Environment Agency](#) (EEA), International

Published by

[Publications Office of the European Union](#) (Publications Office), International

Year

2020

Dimension

146 pp

ISBN

978-92-9480-259-0

ISSN

1725-223

DOI

[10.2800/088178](#)

Project

[European Topic Centre on Biodiversity \(ETC/BD\) 2019-2022](#)

Project ID

[34004](#)

Table of contents

Executive summary

The State of nature report in a nutshell

1 Introduction

2 Status of and trends in bird populations

2.1 Facts and figures

2.2 Population status and trends

2.3 Population status of species with species action plans

2.4 Improvement in trends

3 Status of and trends in habitats and species

3.1 Facts and figures

3.2 Conservation status

3.3 Trends in conservation status

3.4 Improvement in status and trends

4 Pressures and responses

4.1 Key pressures for species and habitats

4.2 Conservation measures

4.3 Restoration needs of habitats

5 Status of the Natura 2000 network

5.1 Facts and figures

5.2 Land use in Natura 2000 sites

5.3 Coverage of species and habitats by Natura 2000

5.4 Effectiveness of the Natura 2000 network

5.5 Actions needed to strengthen the Natura 2000 network

6 Meeting EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets

6.1 Measuring progress towards target 1

6.2 Measuring progress towards target 3

7 Conclusion and outlook

Abbreviations

References

Keywords

[Biodiversity](#)

Nature Directives, Environment, Habitats Directive, Species, Birds Directive, Biodiversity, Ecosystems, Monitoring, Natura 2000, EU Biodiversity Strategy, Europe, Data assessment
Europe

Source URL: <https://www.ecologic.eu/17606>