



Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process Newsletter

Photo: River Avon, Hampshire. Source: NatureBureau

Welcome to the April edition of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process newsletter! While spring is knocking on the door, people are preparing for various workshops and meetings. Member States have been or are very busy in preparing the pledges for the Biodiversity Strategy 2030. In this newsletter, we will update you on the latest information around Natura 2000 conservation issues and planned events in the coming months.

If you have any questions, comments or remarks about the content of this newsletter, please do contact us at natura2000platform@wur.nl

In this edition:

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New improved wiki now launched!

We previously launched a wiki which has been promoted in our newsletters over the past year. Having listened to concerns over the complexity of login procedures, we have been working on a new, improved wiki which provides free and easy access with just one click of a button.

As per the previous wiki, this will be kept updated with all the latest news around the pledge and review process, networking events and seminars. You can access it [here](#).

Share your Natura 2000 news here!

As of April 2023, the biogeographical process newsletter has over 1,300 subscribers. As readers will know, these newsletters are used to promote upcoming events, report on relevant meetings, and to share updates on news and achievements related to Natura 2000 across Europe. This year, further newsletters will be circulated in June, August, October and December.

If you have any updates or news that you would like to see promoted in upcoming editions, you can send the information to natura2000platform@wur.nl

We look forward to sharing your news and working together to exchange knowledge and celebrate accomplishments as we move towards a better future for our environment.



Photo: Grey seal, *Halichoerus grypus*. Source: Susan Robinson

Marine Biogeographical Seminars

As the first pledges come in, we are working hard on preparations for three biogeographical seminars in the marine regions to be held this year! As will be the case for the terrestrial seminars, the events will have a scope of reviewing the marine part of the pledges which countries submit in relation to the EU Biodiversity Strategy targets on protected areas and status improvement of species and habitats.

We are pleased to announce that two countries have already volunteered to host seminars. The seminar for the marine biogeographical region of the **Baltic Sea** will be hosted by Latvia, while Ireland have agreed to host the seminar for the regions of **Atlantic and Macaronesia**. Both seminars are planned for autumn 2023 and will take place in October/November. We will share more information soon.

Finally, we are still looking for the host of the **Mediterranean and Black Sea** seminar. If your country or region are willing to volunteer to host a seminar, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

As more information becomes available, it will be updated on our [wiki](#).

Networking Events

In January 2023 a call for marine networking event proposals was launched, inviting organisations and Member States to get in touch with us about proposals for networking events. These marine-related events should be in support of the 30% protected areas targets or the 30% status improvement target of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. There is still time to apply for financial and/or technical support for events to be held in summer 2023, with applications expected to be received by 17 April 2023. Find out more [here](#).

You can also contact us by email at BGPMarine@naturebureau.co.uk

Don't forget to follow our new marine [Twitter account](#)



Photo: Wild daffodils *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*. Source: NatureBureau

Terrestrial Biogeographical Seminars

Preparations for the upcoming terrestrial biogeographic seminars are still ongoing. As with the marine seminars, this year's seminars will focus on reviewing and exchanging on the pledges that countries submit for the targets on protected areas and status improvement of species and habitats in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

We are pleased to announce that the **Atlantic seminar** will be hosted by Germany, by the federal state of Lower-Saxony with support from the LIFE IP project "Atlantic Sandlandscapes". The seminar will take place in Hannover, from 4-6 September 2023. Soon we will send out further information to the Member States of the Atlantic region, with details on the seminar and an invitation to nominate participants. The Azores (an autonomous region of Portugal), are willing to host the **Macaronesian seminar!** This seminar is planned for late September or early October, probably on the island of Terceira. Soon we will provide more detail on the timings and locations of these events.

We previously announced that Sweden has agreed to host the **Boreal seminar** (also covering part of the Northern Alpine region). Sadly, this is no longer a possibility, and we are now seeking alternative host country.

We are still discussing possible venues for the **Mediterranean** and **Continental** seminars. If your country or region can volunteer to host a seminar, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).



Photo: Field excursion during the Macaronesian biogeographical seminar, Madeira 2018. Source: Theo van der Sluis

Networking Events

As announced in previous newsletters there will be no specific call for terrestrial networking events in the coming months. However, if you would like to propose an event which is related to the pledge process or the Nature Restoration Law, please do not hesitate to contact us by mail natura2000platform@wur.nl

Natural river processes as a base for river-related protected areas and river restoration, 20-22 April 2023, Drawa National Park, Poland

This event, organised by Coalition Clean Baltic, is aimed at the protection of rivers and freshwater ecosystems, the strict protection target, and Nature Restoration Law requirements.

Discussion will focus on the Odra River basin, Drawa National Park, and the wider river conservation issues in the Boreal and Continental biogeographical regions.

Registration for this event has now closed, but you can find more information on this dedicated [webpage](#), and in time, a report will be made available on our [platform](#).

Restoring degraded landscapes through Green Infrastructure; University of Lisbon & Leaf, 10-11 May 2023, Portugal

This event will focus on restoration of degraded landscapes through Green Infrastructure. Organised by the School of Agriculture (ISA/University of Lisbon), R&D Linking Landscape Environment, Agriculture and Food (LEAF), this event will have different invited speakers covering academia, central administration, municipalities, and local associations with restoration and planning practice and various group discussions.

During a field trip in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, it will be possible to see restoration examples, analyse pressures and visit two Natura 2000 Special Areas of Conservation.

More information will soon be available on our [events calendar](#).



Photo: Landscape in Portugal. Source: Theo van der Sluis

Further updates can be found on our [website](#), or by following our [terrestrial Twitter](#) account



Photo: Eurasian curlew, *Numenius arquata*. Source: Michele Lamberti

Europe's freshwater fishes and the Biodiversity Strategy targets, 24 and 25 November 2022, Committee of the Regions, Brussels

On 24 and 25 November 2022, the European Commission and [Living Rivers Europe](#) hosted a networking event on Europe's freshwater fishes. The aim was restoring and improving rivers and freshwater habitats within the context of the Biodiversity Strategy targets for protected areas and conservation status improvement of habitats and species.



Photo: Attendees of the freshwater fish event. Source: Theo van der Sluis

This event gathered national and European freshwater fish experts, conservation NGOs and stakeholder groups, as well as national or regional representatives in charge of preparing the pledges. In total some 70 people were present in Brussels, with almost 100 registered participants online. The event aimed at highlighting opportunities for improving the protection and management of Europe's freshwater fishes, including in terms of transnational cooperation, covering both the species listed in the annexes of the Habitats Directive, and IUCN Red listed species.

At the event various aspects of fish conservation were discussed of particular relevance for the pledge process under the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Presentations during the plenary session focussed on the Grayling, and on migratory fish species like Danube Sturgeon and Salmon, but also the opportunities to restore river connectivity by removal of (many) obsolete dams.

The event report can now be found on our [platform](#), along with a link to presentations from the event.



Photo: Green Hellebore, *Helleborus viridis*. Source: NatureBureau

LIFE in forest marketplace, 6 June 2023, Rome, Italy

The LIFE in forest Marketplace is a side event of the International Conference 'The Forest Factor' (Rome 5th - 7th June 2023) organised by Arma dei Carabinieri. The event is addressed to the LIFE projects which focus on forest management and conservation. It will be a networking occasion aimed at illustrating and promoting the project activities, disseminating results, and sharing good practices, thus encouraging exchange of ideas, and fostering the development of new partnerships.

This informal event will include the use of promotional material (e.g., posters, leaflet, booklets, gadgets), demonstration activities, and direct communication with project staff. Within this open space, congress participants can freely explore, learning about the ongoing projects, getting in touch with other researchers in the same field, and developing collaborations.

You can find more information [here](#), or scan the QR code below.

Should you have any question or inquiries, please write to: lifeinforest.marketplace@gmail.com

Projects get together at the

LIFE in forest Marketplace

side event of the International Conference

The Forest Factor

Information June 6th - 7th 2023 - Rome Application

Forest Management and Biodiversity across Europe, *International on-site postgraduate course*, 10 - 17 September 2023, Białowieża, Poland

According to Natura 2000-reporting, forests exhibit the highest proportion of improving trends among assessments, with 14% of the forest assessments having a good conservation status. However, 31% of forest assessments still show a bad conservation status and 54% a poor conservation status. This suggests that European forests have not escaped the global trend of biodiversity loss, and one of the targets of forest management is to increase biodiversity to improve this. European forests have a central role to play in biodiversity conservation, but how to solve conflicting issues locally and regionally, taking into account local demands and stakeholders, remains a problem.

This one-week course is supported by the Euroleague for Life Sciences ELLS and coordinated by the Graduate School of Production Ecology and Resource Conservation of Wageningen University & Research. It welcomes PhD candidates from ELLS partner institutes to:

- compare divergent views regarding European forest resource management and biodiversity conservation, also in relation to Natura 2000;
- engage with multiple disciplines and goals;
- cover ecological and social aspects, as well as economics, silviculture, and governance;
- resolve conflicts.

Participants will propose and develop strategies to protect and enhance biodiversity while maintaining other forest uses and values. More information can be found [here](#).

**Implementing the National Conservation Status Pledges of the EU Nature Directives:
Restoration needs and good practice in and outside Natura 2000 sites, 25-26th May 2023,
Offices of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, Bonn, Germany**

The German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation is hosting a conference addressed to representatives of federal and state authorities in the field of nature conservation, Biological and Natura 2000 stations and Natura 2000 management experts.

The conference focusses on needs arising from the EU biodiversity target of ensuring favourable conservation status for protected species and habitats or at least improving the conservation status or trend. To this end, EU Member States must submit national pledges to the European Commission to prioritise the species and habitats whose conservation status or trend should be improved by 2030. In the course of 2023, reviews of the pledges are planned in biogeographic seminars with the European Commission.

In light of implementing future measures to enhance conservation status, the following questions arise:

- What species and habitat restoration measures are already being implemented in other EU member states and what good practices can also be implemented in Germany that lead to the improvement of conservation status?
- Which good practice examples for restoration measures (related to species and habitat conservation status) and cross-border planning mechanism exist across the EU?
- To which extent are potentials for restoration already known, mapped or prioritised to address future management both inside and outside Natura 2000 sites?

The conference will take place at the offices of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation in Bonn, Germany. You can find out more and keep an eye out for registration [here](#).



**Bundesamt für
Naturschutz**

LIFE in Dunes: Dynamic Dunescapes and LIFE DUNIAS

Many of us know sand dunes as beautiful coastal landscapes, but they are also important biodiversity hotspots. These dunes are a sanctuary for rare species which are perfectly adapted to live in sand. At a healthy dune, you could find orchids, toads, birds and lizards thriving! Dynamic Dunescapes is a project which aims to rejuvenate some of England & Wales' most important sand dunes for people, communities, and wildlife. In March 2023, the project held a conference to celebrate their achievements so far and to look towards the future of dune conservation. You can find out more [here](#).

Also, the LIFE DUNIAS project has recently produced a report on the horizon scanning of Invasive Alien Species, which can be found [here](#).

Both projects will contribute towards the dune roadmap, to be presented at the next Atlantic seminar later this year!

Mind the gap in data poor Natura 2000 sites and how to tackle them using Earth Observation and scientific diving surveys: Research paper

Charismatic species drives decisions for the conservation of marine areas in the view of the coverage of the Natura 2000 sites in the European Union and other forms of Marine Protected Areas in Europe. However, when used solely, critical seascapes and habitats are systematically ignored and practically it can take decades to fulfil baseline needs on habitats distributions, habitats conservation status and species distributions and biodiversity assessments.

Luckily, in the last decade, the use of new technologies in conjunction with scientific diving and budget friendly hydroacoustic tools and applications, has allowed to fill the gap in knowledge in such situations and seascapes. The current work demonstrates the use of Earth Observation and Science Dive to fill the gap of knowledge in a newly established Natura 2000 area in Crete, Greece, East Mediterranean, paving the road for replicable approaches in similar situations.

A newly published research paper on this topic can be found [here](#).

Natura 2000 Day, 21 May 2023

This year marks 31 years of the EU Habitat Directive and the LIFE programme. The Commission once again invites you to celebrate the **21 May, the European Natura 2000 Day**. You can do this by visiting local sites, or by organising public events dedicated to nature in Europe and sharing these actions on social media using hashtags such as #Natura2000 and #Natura2000day.

Naturally, awareness-raising actions and communication efforts should focus on the key role of the Natura 2000 Network in safeguarding biodiversity across the European Union.

European Maritime Day in My Country 2023: Atlantic Strategy events

The [Atlantic Strategy](#) has now launched 'EMD in My Country' 2023, following the success of this initiative in 2022. From 1 April to 31 October, organisers will host physical, virtual and hybrid events, including initiatives such as beach cleaning, guided tours and boat excursions, workshops and seminars, marine camps for youths, and many other activities where the sea is a central theme. European Maritime Day itself will be celebrated live in Brest, France, on 24-25 May 2023.

You can follow related activities and news by searching #EMDinmycountry on social media.

Follow us on Twitter

Visit our [Biogeographical Process Twitter](#) account for the latest updates on seminars and networking events, as well as live postings from ongoing meetings. We also cover news from related projects such as LIFE+ projects or the work of organisations working towards Natura 2000 objectives.

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