



Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process Newsletter

Photo: Bronze furrow bee, *Halictus tumulorum*. Source: NatureBureau

Welcome to the August edition of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process newsletter! 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:

- Upcoming Seminars
- Networking events calendar
- Meeting reports
- Other news

Share your Natura 2000 news here!

As of August 2023, the biogeographical process newsletter has over 1,400 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 October and December 2023.

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

See our new wiki for the latest news!

Don't forget – you can keep updated with the latest biogeographical process news with just one click of a button. You can access our wiki [here](#).

Please note that the biogeographical process platform is undergoing restructuring and information may be outdated until this is completed.



Photo: Excursion on a biogeographical process event. Source: Theo van der Sluis

Marine Biogeographical Seminars

We are still working hard to prepare the biogeographical seminars in the marine regions to be held this year! These seminars will focus on reviewing the marine part of the pledges which countries submit for the targets on protected areas and status improvement of species and habitats in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

[The marine Atlantic and Macaronesian seminar, 11-13 October 2023, Ireland](#)

On 11-13 October 2023, the marine Atlantic and Macaronesian seminar will be hosted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in Dublin, Ireland. With the event fast approaching, a preliminary draft programme and invitation letter was shared with Member States and interested stakeholders. In addition to reviewing the submitted pledges in the Atlantic and Macaronesian marine regions, participants will discuss the following themes on the last day of the event:

- Role of Natura 2000 sites and other MPAs in marine restoration;
- Strict protection in the Atlantic and Macaronesian marine region, and;
- Renewable energy and marine conservation.

A document providing further background information on the pledges and the four themes is being prepared and will be shared shortly. All updated documents and information will be shared on our wiki which can be found [here](#).

[The Baltic Sea seminar, 8-10 November 2023, Latvia](#)

On 8-10 November 2023, the Baltic Sea seminar will be hosted by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia in the coastal city of Jurmala, not far from Riga. We are currently finalising the themes and the preliminary agenda and will share it very soon!

[Mediterranean and Black Sea, France](#)

We are pleased to announce that the **Mediterranean and Black Sea** seminar is confirmed to take place in France next year! As more information becomes available, it will be updated on our [wiki](#).

For any comments or questions on marine-related events, you can contact us by email at BGPMarine@naturebureau.co.uk - and you can also follow our marine [Twitter account](#).

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. Besides the pledge process three or four themes have been identified for each seminar with the Member States to discuss.

For all upcoming seminars, a knowledge market is being organised - usually to be held during the first evening. The knowledge market is an informal event where projects and organisations can present themselves and their activities in an informal setting. In particular, these include LIFE and Interreg projects, but any organisation and NGO involved in conservation activities can also participate. We therefore invite participants and regional LIFE projects to present themselves at the knowledge market and invite anybody who would like to attend to [contact us](#) to discuss the opportunity.

[The Atlantic seminar, 4-6 September 2023, Werkhof Conference Centre, Hannover, Germany](#)

With only three weeks to go until the Atlantic seminar, preparations are in full swing. The nominees have been invited to register for the event and the programme has almost been finalised and will soon be available. Next to a review of the progress of the pledges in the Atlantic region, four themes have been identified which will be the topic for discussions:

- 1) Protection and conservation of meadow birds;
- 2) Restoration of peatbogs;
- 3) Integrated Projects (LIFE), and;
- 4) Implementation of pledges on the ground.

A document providing further background information on the pledges and the four themes is being prepared and should be available with the other documentation very soon. All updated documents and information will be shared on our wiki which can be found [here](#).

The Boreal seminar, 10-12 October 2023, Nuuksio (Helsinki), Finland

The Boreal seminar will be hosted by Finland on 10-12 October 2023. The seminar will be held at Nuuksio National Park, not far from Helsinki.

The themes that have been identified for the seminar are:

- 1) Planning and restoration management;
- 2) What are criteria for old growth forest?;
- 3) The EU Pollinators Initiative;
- 4) Prioritisation of protection areas and habitats.

The detailed program is currently being prepared, and Member States of the Boreal region (as well as stakeholder representatives) have been invited to nominate people to attend the seminar. Soon, they will be invited to register for the event.

Updates about the seminar and any related documents will be shared [here](#).

The Macaronesian seminar, 8-10 November 2023, Terceira, the Azores

As previously announced, the Azores (an autonomous region of Portugal), 'Secretaria Regional do Ambiente e Alterações Climáticas, Governo Regional dos Açores', agreed to host the Macaronesian Seminar. The seminar will be held from 8-10 November 2023 at the Island of Terceira. This seminar is special as it involves only the Atlantic Island parts of two Member States, Portugal and Spain. The first meetings with the Azores for the preparation of the seminar has been held and in the coming weeks the themes will be identified.



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DOS AÇORES**

**Secretaria Regional do Ambiente
e Alterações Climáticas**

We are also very pleased to announce that the **Mediterranean Seminar** will be hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development, and Environment, Cyprus. This seminar will take place in the coastal city of Lárnaca, in spring 2024.

Also, the **Continental Seminar** will be held in spring 2024. We are currently discussing with the host country about the time and venue for the event and hope to update you further in the next Newsletter!

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



Photo: Bog pimpernel, *Anagallis tenella*. Source: NatureBureau

Following the success of our call for [marine networking events](#) published earlier this year, we are now in the process of confirming selected events and will announce more information in the coming weeks.

Marine: Understanding OECMs to achieve the 30 by 30 target, Brussels, 29 September 2023

In addition to designating new protected areas, identifying and reporting Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs) will be needed for Member States to reach the target to legally protect a minimum of 30% of the EU's Sea area of which 10% must be strictly protected by 2030. This event, organised by the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD), will analyse case studies of potential fishery OECMs, showing how areas under fishery management measures with high level of protection can enable Member States to reach the objectives set out in the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

We wish to draw your attention [to the call to submit case studies](#) of OECM candidates within EU waters, focusing on fisheries management measures that may qualify as OECMs. To register for the event, see [here](#).

Marine: Sharing experiences to reduce Balearic Shearwater bycatch in Portuguese and French waters, Peniche, Portugal, 16-20 October 2023

The critically endangered Balearic Shearwater's adult survival rate is excessively low, mainly explained by significant mortality caused by accidental catches by professional fishing. This event will provide an opportunity for fishermen to exchange experiences on mitigation measures to reduce Balearic Shearwater and other seabird species' bycatch, strengthen the involvement of fishermen in activities aiming to reduce the negative impact on sensitive species and habitats and consolidate international collaboration.

The detailed programme will be shared soon.

Subsequent updates can be found on our [website](#)



Photo: Great black-backed gulls, *Larus marinus*. Source: Bernard Spragg

Natura 2000 and the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People: identifying/mobilising expertise to reach 30x30, 4 September 2023, Hannover, Germany.

The High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People (HAC for N&P) was instrumental in the adoption of the 30x30 protected areas target at COP15 in December 2022, which the EU's Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 had anticipated.

To date, the HAC for N&P gathers 117 countries united for the implementation of the 30x30 and is now developing tools to support its members' ambition and efforts, identifying technical assistance for countries and guidance on the 30x30 target. At global scale, it is indeed essential we showcase and share all the expertise available on protected areas designation and effective management, including in EU Member States. The Coalition therefore wishes to invite Natura 2000 management organisations and experts to concretely support this endeavour and fuel the Coalition's matchmaking work with information on their expertise on protected area management.

More details on the goals and work of the coalition will be presented at the upcoming Atlantic biogeographical seminar on September 4, 2023.

EU Grassland Watch: Launch Event, 12 September 2023, Brussels, Belgium

We are delighted to invite you to the launch of EU Grassland Watch, an expansion and upgrade of the European Parliament-funded pioneering project, COP4N2K. This event will take place on 12 September 2023 at the Albert Borschette Conference Centre, Room AB-4C, Rue Froissart 36 - and online.

Grasslands, essential for biodiversity and food production, also play a crucial role in ecological processes such as pollination, water regulation, carbon sequestration, and climate regulation. Effective satellite monitoring of grassland area is paramount to supporting conservation efforts on the ground. The aim of EU Grassland Watch is to expand upon the work performed in the COP4N2K project to create a service that is:

- More user-oriented, comprehensive, and flexible;
- Informative and accessible;
- Time and cost-effective, and;
- Transparent and integrated with Copernicus Land Monitoring Service products.

This launch marks the beginning of numerous user engagement activities ranging from promotional events, evaluation, training sessions, to thematic consultation workshops.

If you think you might be interested in joining us for the EU Grassland Watch Launch Event, you can sign up [here](#).

European Conference: “Riverine and coastal wetlands for biodiversity and climate”, 26–28 September 2023, Bonn, Germany

Coastal wetlands and river floodplains are rich in nature and vital to humans, yet their stability is increasingly threatened by climate change and biodiversity loss. To preserve the essential functions that wetlands provide and to achieve the conservation of numerous valuable habitat types, large areas of riverine and coastal wetlands across Europe are protected under the Natura 2000 Network.

The European Conference “Riverine and coastal wetlands for biodiversity and climate” on 26–28 September 2023 in Bonn, Germany will bring together experts from science, policy and practice to discuss how to jointly advance the conservation and restoration of riverine and coastal wetlands in Europe.

Registration is now open and submissions for poster contributions are still being accepted. Read more [here](#).



Photo: European Conference banner. Source: Simone Wulf

EUROPARC Conference 2023 "Tribute to our landscape, where nature and people meet in harmony", 3-6 October, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands

The EUROPARC Federation is the largest network of Protected Areas in Europe. It unites National and Regional parks, Nature and Biosphere reserves, Marine and Landscape Protected Areas, together with a large number of Natura 2000 sites, with the common aim of protecting Europe’s unique variety of wildlife, habitats and landscapes. The organisation facilitates international cooperation in all aspects of Protected Area management to improve the management and conservation of our shared natural heritage.

With the overarching theme "Tribute to our landscape, where nature and people meet in harmony", the EUROPARC Conference will celebrate the beauty and diversity of the many natural and cultural European landscapes. By bringing together experts in the field of nature conservation, Protected Area and Natura 2000 management, the event aims to help create a better, greener, more sustainable and

climate-resilient Europe, with Protected Areas at the forefront. This year promises to be extra special, as the EUROPARC Federation celebrates its 50th anniversary.

The programme includes thought-provoking keynote speakers, interactive workshops, inspirational field trips, and of course plenty of time to network and learn from your peers! Furthermore, there are various opportunities for participants to present their work, area, project or programmes.



Photo: EUROPARC Conference Banner: Source: EUROPARC

Registration closes on the 20 September 2023. All information can be found on the official Conference website [here](#).

Wind farms force suspension of a LIFE Bearded Vulture reintroduction

The massive development of wind farms in Teruel, Spain, has forced the suspension of the reintroduction of the Bearded Vulture in Maestrazgo (Teruel) in the framework of the LIFE Pro Bearded Vulture project (LIFE 20 NAT/ES/001363), run by the Foundation for the Conservation of the Bearded Vulture (FCQ).

Changes in environmental legislation for the development of renewable energies has encouraged the indiscriminate development of wind power plants all over the country. One of the regions most affected is the Maestrazgo de Teruel, in Aragon. It is a remote mountainous area of the country, with one of the lowest population densities in Europe (< 3 hab/Km²). The reintroduction feasibility study selected this region as the best option for the reintroduction of the Bearded Vulture in this area of the country, specifically Rio Guadalupe-Maestrazgo SPA ES0000306, where the first birds were released in June 2022.

However, a year later, the energy situation has prompted the development of a macro wind power plan in the region, which foresees the installation of 13 wind power plants, and another 62 in the adjoining districts, with turbines with a total height of 200 metres high (including the blades), which is equivalent to a building of 66 floors. The future wind power plants will surround the entire SPA and some will even be installed inside Natura 2000 sites, protected as SPAs and SAC.

To evaluate the potential impact of the wind power plants, the Foundation FCQ has overlaid the geolocations of 10 bearded vultures and 10 griffon vultures marked with satellite beacons in the area, with the future location of the wind turbines. The result is that they could have collided up to 745 times with the wind turbines, which makes the reintroduction of the bearded vulture in the area unfeasible, forcing to halt the LIFE project in this site.

This study has been complemented with official data on bird mortality in wind power plants in Aragon and Navarre. According to these data, between 2021 and 2022 in both regions died, among others 1.081 griffon vultures, 24 golden eagles, 198 black kites, 128 lesser kestrels, 48 short-toed eagles, 60 red kites, and hundreds of other birds. If we consider that, according to the scientific community, only

between 10 and 30% of the carcasses are found (del Valle *et al.*, 2020), everything seems to indicate that we are at the tip of an iceberg.

This situation calls for serious reflection and debate. A fast and unprecedented deployment of wind farms in Europe can become a threat for biodiversity. It may jeopardise the objective of restoring nature and recapitalising rural areas.

More information can be found [here](#).

Commission Staff Working Document: Guidelines on closer-to-nature forest management; a 2023 publication

The Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 highlights the importance of sustainably managing forests as a nature-based solution in the fight against climate change, and it calls for biodiversity-friendly forestry practices to continue and to be further developed. The EU Forest Strategy for 2030 echoes this commitment and defines closer-to-nature forest management as a set of practices to ensure multifunctional forests by combining biodiversity goals, carbon stock preservation and timber-related revenues. The aim of these guidelines is therefore to promote biodiversity-friendly and adaptive forest management as part of a common framework for closer-to-nature forest management. They present relevant practices and showcase the benefits of these practices for forest multifunctionality and climate change resilience without neglecting socioeconomic benefits.

The guidelines can assist competent authorities and key stakeholders in forest management across different scales, discussing challenges and opportunities. The guidelines will help public authorities, forest owners and forest managers across Europe by taking biodiversity and climate change into greater consideration in their operations. These guidelines are for forests that have a commercial use for timber and non-timber forest products, and that are not explicitly designated as protected areas. Some aspects might nevertheless also be suitable in protected areas or on other land with tree cover.

You can download this new working paper [here](#).



Photo: Biogradska Gora National Park (Montenegro). Source: Theo van der Sluis

Natura 2000 Award – applications open until September 2023

Just a reminder that applications for the European Natura 2000 Award 2024 are open until **29 September 2023!**

The Natura 2000 Award provides a unique opportunity to showcase nature conservation success stories; celebrating excellence in the management of Natura 2000 sites in [five categories](#): Conservation on Land, Marine Conservation, Working Together for Nature, Cross-Border Cooperation and Communication. Any public or private organisations involved in managing Natura 2000 sites across the European Union can apply – from national authorities and environmental NGOs, to businesses, farmers and landowners, education institutions to media organisations, even individuals.

Applications can be submitted in all official EU languages via the [Award website](#). Do you have questions on the Award? Contact the Secretariat via n2000awards@adelphi.de

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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