



Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process Newsletter

Photo: European robin, *Erithacus rubecula*. Source: Connor Macleod

Season's greetings and welcome to the December edition of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process newsletter! In this final newsletter of 2023, we will update you on the latest information around Natura 2000 conservation issues, reports from recent seminars and an overview of 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
- Meeting reports
- Events calendar
- Other news

Share your Natura 2000 news here!

As of December 2023, the biogeographical process newsletter has over 1,450 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.

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



Photo: Kingfisher, *Alcedo atthis*. Source: Conor Macleod

Preparations for the upcoming terrestrial Mediterranean and Continental, as well as marine Mediterranean and Black Sea biogeographic seminars are ongoing. The 2024 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.

The Continental seminar is still being discussed with possible host countries. Do not hesitate to contact us or the European Commission to express your interest as host!

The Terrestrial Mediterranean Seminar, 17 – 19 April 2024, Larnaca, Cyprus,

The Mediterranean seminar for terrestrial regions will be held in Larnaca, Cyprus, on 17-19 April 2024. The draft programme and invitation for nominations will be sent out in early 2024.

The Marine Mediterranean and Black Sea Seminar, 12-14 March 2024, Marseille, France

The Mediterranean seminar for marine regions will be held in Marseille, France, on 12-14 March 2024. The draft programme and invitations will be sent out in early 2024.

As more information becomes available, seminar announcements will be made on our [wiki](#) and in subsequent newsletters.

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



Meeting reports

Photo: The Baltic marine seminar, Latvia 2023. Source: NatureBureau

Recent Terrestrial Biogeographical Seminars

Since the previous newsletter, the Macaronesian terrestrial seminar has taken place. You can read more about this below, alongside some updates from the previous seminars.

The Macaronesian Seminar, 08-10 November 2023, the Azores

The second Macaronesian biogeographical seminar took place from 8 to 10 November 2023 in Angra do Heroísmo, Terceira Island, Azores, Portugal. It was hosted by the 'Regional Secretariat for Environment and Climate Change'. In total, 38 participants attended the seminar, most originating from the two Member States with islands in the Macaronesian region, as well as experts, the European Commission, some institutions and the organisers.

Besides looking at the current status of the Biodiversity Strategy pledges for protected areas and status improvement of species and habitats, the programme focused on four themes: Ecological restoration of degraded areas; Favourable Reference Values for habitat types; Invasive species control, and; Conservation measures for fauna species. In addition, there were the working groups initiated by the Spanish Government, on the Pilot action plan for Laurel Forest (H9360) and ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network in the Macaronesian region.



The excursion touched upon several themes of the topics discussed during the seminar, including species management, habitat restoration and invasive species management. Participants visited four sites, including Natura 2000 sites and intervention areas of LIFE projects currently being implemented in Terceira Island (namely LIFE IP AZORES NATURA and LIFE BEETLES). Sites visited were Ponta das Contendas SPA (PTZPE0031), Lagoa do Negro, SAC (PTTER0017), and the volcanic site Furnas do

Enxofre SAC, and Eucaliptal do Algar do Carvão, SAC. Unfortunately, the weather was not good,

particularly in the interior of the island where there was rain and mist, and poor visibility. The excursion ended at a local winery, where wine was produced in the protected volcanic coastal area.

The seminar report can be found [here](#), alongside presentations from the event.

The Boreal Seminar, 10-12 October 2023, Nuuk NP, Finland

The previous newsletter contained a brief report from the 2023 Boreal seminar.

The summary report has now been finalised and has been distributed to the participants. The full report will be finished in the coming weeks and will be uploaded [here](#) soon. Most of the presentations from the seminar are already online.

The Atlantic Seminar, 4-6 September 2023, Hannover

The summary report is expected to be online in the coming week, with the full report to be ready at the end of December. All documents will be uploaded [here](#), where the presentations are already available.

Recent Marine Biogeographical Seminars

The Baltic Marine Seminar, 08-10 November 2023, Riga, Latvia

Last month, the third marine Natura 2000 biogeographical seminar for the Baltic region was held in Riga, Latvia. It was hosted by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Republic of Latvia and the European Commission's DG Environment.

On day 1, the seminar was opened by Dr. Rudite Vesere, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Latvia, and Andrea Vettori, Head of Nature Conservation Unit, DG Environment, EC, who prepared a video message to welcome the participants.

Opening speeches were followed by a presentation from Vedran Nikolić, DG Environment, which focused on introducing the policy context for the biogeographical process.

The rest of the day was organised into two sessions: one focusing on the protected area target (PA), and one focusing on the conservation status improvement target (CI). They were both opened by a brief overview of the target, distance to the target and initial analysis of the received pledges, followed by presentations of relevant projects showcasing good practices and tools that can help Member States (MS) when preparing the pledges. Representatives from Denmark, Sweden and Finland presented their approach in preparing the PA pledge, whilst approaches to CI targets were shared by Finland. Other Member States shared their progress in the plenary. Presentations were followed by breakout groups to discuss the targets.



In the evening, participants had a chance to exchange informally during the Gala dinner hosted by the Ministry.

The second day of the seminar was structured into sessions on three topical themes:

- Role of Natura 2000 sites and other MPAs in marine restoration
- Renewable energy and marine conservation
- Strict protection in the Baltic marine region

Each session was opened by a presentation providing the policy context for the theme, and a case study of a project relevant to the topic. Participants were then split into facilitated groups to discuss the challenges, but also solutions, on each topic. Anna Cheilari, DG Environment, closed the agenda by sharing a summary and her reflections on the discussions that took place over the two days.



In the evening, participants had a chance to enjoy the buffet dinner while hearing about several projects from the region presented at the Knowledge Market.

Finally, on day 3, seminar participants attended the fieldtrip to Veczemju cliffs, where they had a chance to take a walk on the long beach and hear about some of the habitats and species that can be found in the Natura 2000 site.

The seminar background document, agenda, excursion info and presentations from the event are available on [our website](#). The event report will be uploaded there when it is ready.

The Atlantic and Macaronesian Marine Seminar, 11-13 October 2023, Dublin, Ireland

Hosted jointly by the European Commission's DG Environment and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the biogeographical seminar for the Atlantic and the Macaronesian marine regions took place between 11-13 October, in Malahide, north Dublin, Ireland.

As previously reported, presentations from the event can be found [here](#), and the seminar report will soon be available.

Network Event Reports

Marine BGP Event: Advancing the 30 by 30 Target: Insights from the "Understanding OECMs to Achieve the 30 by 30 Target", Brussels, 29 September 2023

As previously mentioned, the first networking event hosted by the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD) took place on 29 September 2023. At this event, key stakeholders gathered in Brussels to deliberate upon "Understanding Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs) to achieve the 30 by 30 target." This event aimed to accelerate progress within the EU Biodiversity Strategy and inform Member States in their pursuit of legally protecting a minimum of 30% of the EU's sea area by 2030, with 10% under strict protection. The report for this event is now available [here](#).



Photo: Macaronesian landscape. Source: Theo van der Sluis

Networking event “Integrating forest biodiversity conservation in forest management: 19-21 March 2024, Rome

The COST Action [BOTTOMS-UP](#) aims at increasing the degree of the biodiversity sustainability of European temperate forest management. The project gathered the most comprehensive knowledge of European multi-taxonomic forest biodiversity through the collaboration of research groups that collect data locally.

The final conference titled “Integrating biodiversity conservation in forest management” is from 19-21 March 2024 and will showcase the project results. This includes shared methodologies and terminologies, and innovative indicators and broad-scale assessments of forest management sustainability. These results will be discussed with stakeholders interested in biodiversity conservation and forest management.

The network event will be held in the Botanical Gardens of Rome and will involve researchers, Natura 2000 site managers, and policy makers in the discussion of two main themes related to forest management sustainability for biodiversity:

1. Harmonising methods for the monitoring of forest multi-taxonomic biodiversity.
2. Increasing the sustainability of forest management for biodiversity through improved planning and practices.

Two outstanding keynote speakers will open the discussions in the Botanical Garden of Rome: [Prof. Georg Winkel](#) and Prof. [Lena Gustaffson](#).

A final day of excursion will feed the discussion walking through: maple-lime water-catchment protection forest (habitat 9180*), extensive chestnut groves (habitat 9260) and thermophilous beech forests (habitat 9210*).

All the info on the event can be found [here](#).



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

This event, due to take place in Portugal earlier this month, was unfortunately cancelled due to adverse weather conditions and has been proposed to take place in spring 2024.

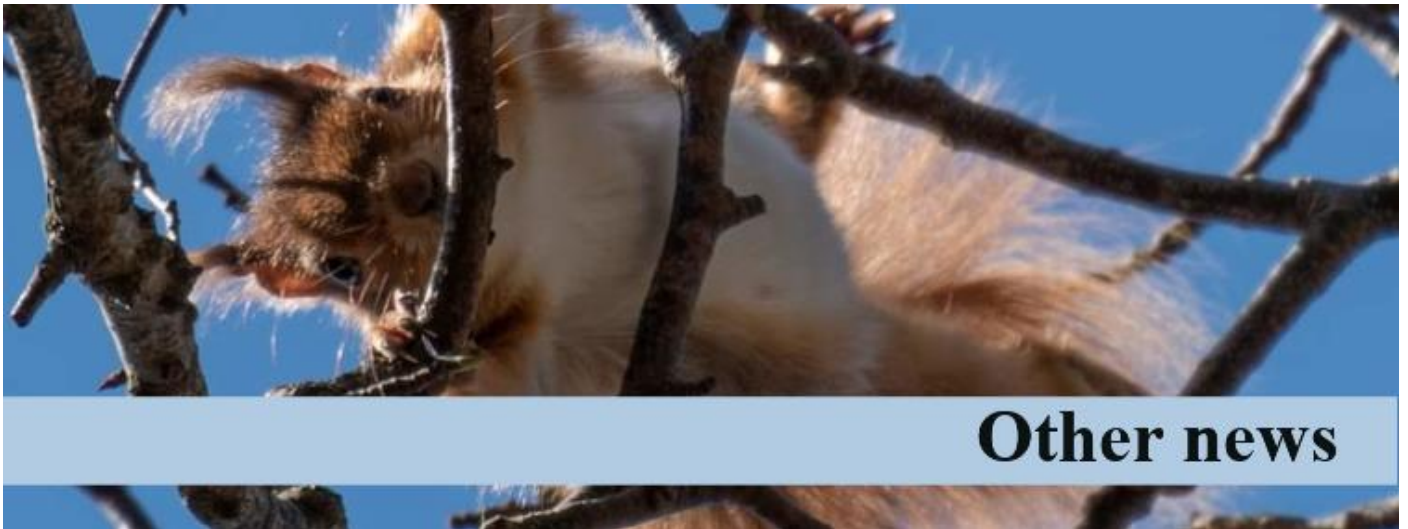


Photo: Red squirrel, *Sciurus vulgaris*. Source: Connor Macleod

Natura 2000 Awards – 2024 applications announced!

The European Natura 2000 Award rewards excellence in the management of Natura 2000 sites and showcases the network's added value of conserving nature for local communities and economies across the European Union. The European Commission has announced the receipt of 96 eligible applications, representing 25 Member States. Between now and Spring 2024, the evaluation team will assess the applications received. The shortlist of finalists will be announced in March 2024, when you will be invited to vote for your favourite.

You can view the applications [here](#).

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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