



Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process Newsletter

Photo: Wood-sorrel, *Oxalis acetosella*. Source: NatureBureau

Welcome to the June edition of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process newsletter! As summer arrives, workshops and meetings are well underway, and Member States are still busy 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

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Share your Natura 2000 news here!

As of June 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 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

See our new wiki for the latest news!

In our last newsletter, we announced the launch of a new wiki which provides free and easy access to the latest biogeographical process news with just one click of a button. You can access it [here](#).

Please note that the biogeographical process platform is undergoing restructuring and information may be outdated until this is completed.



Photo: Crinoids. Source: Michael Carver/NOAA

Marine Biogeographical Seminars

As the first pledges come in, we are working hard on preparations for 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 Baltic Sea seminar, 8-10 November 2023, Latvia](#)

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. The dates of the seminar are confirmed for 8-10 November. Discussions about the themes are ongoing and will be shared as soon as agreed upon.

[The Atlantic and Macaronesia seminar, 11-13 October 2023 \(TBC\), Ireland](#)

As previously announced, the marine Atlantic and Macaronesian seminar will take place in Dublin, Ireland and will be hosted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The final dates of the seminar are still to be confirmed but are tentatively booked for 11-13 October 2023.

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

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.

The Atlantic seminar, 4-6 September 2023, Werkhof Conference Centre, Hannover, Germany

As previously announced, 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, in the Werkhof Centre. Besides the pledges, the seminar will also focus on meadow bird conservation, on peatbog restoration in relation to climate change, and the role of Integrated Projects in improving the conservation status for habitats and species. The Lower Saxon State Department for Waterway, Coastal and Nature Conservation will support the organisation of the excursions.

The Atlantic Member States and key-stakeholders have been invited to nominate the participants for the seminar and the detailed programme is currently being drafted.



Photo: Werkhof Conference Centre. Source: Theo van der Sluis

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 for the seminar are currently being discussed with the host country and will be confirmed soon. Once known, the themes will be shared with the Boreal member states and nominations will be received.

As previously announced, the Azores (an autonomous region of Portugal), are willing to host the **Macaronesian Seminar**, planned for late September or early October 2023.

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

spring 2024, at which time we also hope to host the **Continental Seminar** – for which we are still seeking a host. If your country or region can volunteer to host, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

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

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



Photo: Swan's-neck thyme-moss, *Mnium hornum*. 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. On 15 May 2023, BirdLife Poland hosted the first of marine-related networking events. Find out more in our Meeting Reports below.

This year there is no specific call for [terrestrial networking events](#). 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

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

In addition to designating new protected areas, the identification and reporting of Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs) will be needed for Member States to reach the target of protecting 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 help to bridge narratives and experiences between Member States, EU institutions, international organisations, experts and relevant NGOs currently working on the issue to build capacities and foster a shared understanding of OECMs.

A detailed agenda and exact dates of the event will be shared shortly.

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, with significant mortality caused by accidental catches by the professional fishing industry. This event will provide an opportunity for representatives of Spanish, French and Portuguese governments, fishermen organisations and French fishermen to visit Portuguese fishermen implementing mitigation measures to reduce Balearic Shearwater (and other seabird species') bycatch. This will contribute to strengthening fishermen's involvement 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](#)



Meeting reports

Photo: Participants of the Degraded Landscapes event in Portugal. Source: Rui Rufino

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

One of the EU Biodiversity Strategy targets is “to legally protect at least 30% of the land, including inland waters, of which at least one third (10% of the land) is to be under strict protection”. Various natural habitats may be included in the protected areas of concern – including rivers. Rivers are part of many protected areas but could benefit from strict protection.

On 22 June 2022, the European Commission adopted the proposal for a Nature Restoration Law (NRL), a key element of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The regulation establishes that each Member States will implement, without delay, effective area-based restoration measures that will cover, by 2030, at least 20% of the EU's territory and marine areas, and by 2050 – all ecosystems in need of restoration, including freshwater ecosystems. The implementation of the NRL will be a huge challenge; in some countries of the Baltic Sea Region even 92% of river surface water bodies need restoration.

The aim of this workshop was to support preparations for these measures. During the event there were discussions directly linked with the “10% of strict protection target” which helped experts better

submit rivers to the national pledges in the biogeographic process. Also, discussions were linked with the “25,000km of free-flowing rivers restored” target (part of them may be restored by natural processes under strict protection; others may be one-off restored and then left to natural processes as strictly protected). The workshop concerned Continental and Boreal biogeographical regions and the importance of the Baltic Sea basin.

All presentations with relevant content are included on the [Coalition Clean Baltic website](#). The summary report can be found [here](#)



Photo: The April workshop team Source: Przemek Nawrocki archive

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

This networking event was organised by Landscape Architects and researchers from Green and Blue Infrastructures Thematic Line from LEAF R&D Unit and took place at the School of Agriculture in Lisbon (ISA/University of Lisbon). In total it brought together 47 participants with the aim to discuss linkages between Green Infrastructure planning and landscape restoration, working towards the goals of the European Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

Participants of the event came from different sectors: academia (landscape architects, agronomists, forestry engineers, biologists, geomorphologists), central administration (Directorate General of Territory (DGT), Institute for Nature Conservation and Forestry (ICNF), Portuguese Environment Agency (APA)), different municipalities, associations (WWF, ANP/WWF, Montis, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)), and the private sector.

The first part of the event included invited speakers under the theme of **‘Landscape Planning: Green Infrastructure and Restoration’**, and the second part comprised a group of invited speakers to share landscape restoration experiences under the theme **‘Landscape Practice: Restoration in Green Infrastructure’**. The invited speakers were from LEAF R&D Unit from ISA (Dalila Espírito-Santo, Maria Manuela Abreu, Manuela Raposo Magalhães, Natália Cunha, Selma Pena, and Sílvia Ribeiro), as well as representatives of the European Commission, Gonzalo González Jurado and Sandra Mesquita and Rui Rufino of the biogeographical process. The panel of speakers also included Fátima Bacharel from DGT, Diana Almeida and João Nunes from ICNF, Duarte Mata from Almada Municipality, João Freitas from Montis Association, and Christian Küpfer from the University of Nürtingen, Germany.

After each session, participants were organised into groups to discuss where and what fundamental linkages within a Green Infrastructure could be designed to connect Natura 2000, how to create a Nature Restoration Plan with Green Infrastructure mapping and identify the priority actions highlighted by the participants.

Migratory seabird-friendly management of marine and/or coastal Protected Areas in the Baltic Sea region, 15 May 2023, Poland (and online)

This networking event was held online on Monday 15 May 2023 with participation of over 30 representatives of governmental institutions, international conservation community, academia, and NGOs from the EU Baltic Sea littoral countries and elsewhere. The event was organised by OTOP (BirdLife Poland), with support of the biogeographical process in marine areas consortium uniting CEEweb for Biodiversity and NatureBureau Ltd.

An overview of issues affecting seabirds in the Baltic was provided by international experts in marine biodiversity protection. These ranged from indirect disturbance and noise to direct impact (especially from bycatch), with staggering numbers of birds affected. The issues of data availability, and new technologies for collection, verification, and assessment were highlighted to reveal deeper insights about the population trends and situation of different species. It was stated that conservation objectives and management measures could help address the identified problems but are currently lacking. As a result, it is difficult to move from strategies and action plans to the enforcement of specific intervention in the marine space. Better coordinated pan-Baltic surveys were proposed, aiming to extend existing Natura 2000 sites, establish marine national parks and other types of marine protected areas, and implement environmentally friendly fishing practices.

Presentations from the event can be found [here](#), with a report soon to follow.



Photo: Herb-Paris, *Paris quadrifolia*. Source: NatureBureau

Development of a Pilot Action Plan for a Habitat Types of Community Interest in the Mediterranean Region, 8 June 2023, Online

Within the framework of the biogeographical process and following the conclusions of the 2nd Mediterranean Biogeographical Seminar, held in November 2017 in Limassol (Cyprus), [five workshops](#) to standardise procedures for monitoring, assessing and conserving habitat types of Community Interest in the Mediterranean region (hereafter referred to as MED Workshops) were organised between 2019 and 2021. MED Workshop #5 was conceived as a tool for the practical convergence and compilation of the concepts and methodologies set out in the other four workshops, concluding with the preparation of a table of minimum contents for an Action Plan for a type of habitat, which was agreed with those attending the workshop.

As a result of the work of the MED Workshops, a proposal was made to set up a Working Group with participants from all the Member States of the Mediterranean region. This Working Group will elaborate a Pilot Action Plan for a habitat type of Community Interest. Taking into account the rich discussion had at the meeting on the [23 November 2021](#), following the expert criteria and focused on finding a habitat type that is present in all the countries within the Mediterranean region, the habitat type chosen is the 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes.

The kick-off meeting of the Working Group was held online on 8 June 2023, attended by 18 experts from most of the Member States of the region. It is intended that the next meeting will take place by the end of July 2023.

The Dune Roadmap: Conservation of coastal dune habitats in the Atlantic Biogeographical Region – now updated!

The windswept Atlantic region, from northern Portugal to the tip of Denmark, holds about 40% of the coastal dune habitat in Europe. Dunes are identified as a special feature of the Atlantic region and the challenges for habitat protection and management have featured in discussions at each of the Atlantic biogeographical seminars since 2012. In 2016 a practitioner-focused LIFE platform meeting within the framework of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process helped to prepare the first version of a dune roadmap for knowledge exchange and networking.

Now, in 2023, a fourth version of the dune roadmap marks over 10 years of productive networking between policymakers, scientists and coastal dune managers across the Atlantic region. The roadmap is directly linked to the Natura 2000 biogeographical process and identifies a series of actions that would help progress towards Favourable Conservation Status.

The updated roadmap follows an analysis of the state of coastal dunes in the Atlantic region. It directly supports the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the pledge process by showing where habitat improvements are achievable by 2030 and where actions are required at regional scale. Specifically, it shows where the 'low hanging fruit' approach could achieve genuine improvements in habitat status by 2030.

The roadmap presents eight targeted actions arising from workshops at the biogeographical seminars and shows what progress has been made and what further steps are needed. It is supported by experts from eight of the countries in the Atlantic region, by all recent and current LIFE projects and by the '[Beach and Dune Network](#)' coordinated by EUCC-D.

Coastal sand dunes in the Atlantic region, and across Europe, remain threatened and the contributors to the roadmap urge Member States to consider a more concerted effort to address the known pressures and threats to these valuable habitats.



You can view the latest roadmap [here](#).

Photo: Excursion at the network event on dunes, 2018. Source: Theo van der Sluis

LIFE Calls now open!

We would like to inform you that the LIFE 2023 Calls have been launched and they are published on the [Funding & tender opportunities portal](#).

Natura 2000 Award – 2024 applications now open!

On 22 May 2023, The European Commission launched the call for applications for the 2024 edition of the Natura 2000 Award. This 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.

You can read about previous winners and find out more about the 2024 awards [here](#). Also, on 15 June 2023 at 14.30 – 16.00 CET, the Natura 2000 Award Secretariat will host an [information webinar](#) where they will respond to questions on the Award.

Natura 2000 Day, 21 May 2023

This year marks 31 years of the EU Habitat Directive and the LIFE programme. The Commission once again invited everyone to celebrate the **21 May, the European Natura 2000 Day** and share actions on social media using hashtags such as [#Natura2000](#) and [#Natura2000day](#).

You can follow these hashtag links to discover how people all over Europe chose to celebrate!

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. You can follow related activities and news by searching [#EMDinmycountry](#) on social media.

European Maritime Day itself was celebrated live in Brest, France, on 24-25 May 2023. Find out more about the event [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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