



## Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process Newsletter

Photo: Bell heather and Dwarf gorse. Source: NatureBureau

Welcome to the October edition of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process newsletter! In this newsletter 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](mailto:natura2000platform@wur.nl)

In this edition:

- Upcoming seminars
- Meeting reports
- Events calendar
- Other news

### Share your Natura 2000 news here!

As of October 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. The final newsletter for this year will be circulated in December 2023.

If you have any updates or news that you would like to see promoted in the December edition, you can send the information to [natura2000platform@wur.nl](mailto: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](#).



Photo: Hoverfly, *Chrysotoxum bicinctum*. Source: Theo van der Sluis

### Upcoming Marine Biogeographical Seminars

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

Following the marine Atlantic + Macaronesian seminar held last week in Dublin, Ireland, we are still working hard to prepare the marine Baltic seminar to be held in November this year in Riga, Latvia! This seminar 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. On the second day of the seminar, there will be three thematic sessions on strict protection, nature restoration, and renewable energy and marine conservation. Registration for this event is now closed.

As previously announced, the **Mediterranean and Black Sea marine seminar** is confirmed to take place in France next year. 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](mailto:BGPMarine@naturebureau.co.uk)

### Upcoming 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 Macaronesian Seminar, 8-10 November 2023, the Azores

As previously announced, the regional authority for nature conservation of the Autonomous Region of the Azores will be hosting the **Macaronesian Seminar**. The seminar will be held from 8-10 November 2023 at the Island of Terceira. This seminar is special in that it involves only two Member States, Portugal and Spain.



Photo: Endemic forest habitat of the Macaronesian region Source: Theo van der Sluis

The seminar will discuss the pledge process for the Macaronesian region. Further topics discussed during the event include ecological restoration of degraded areas; setting Favourable Reference Values for habitat types; Invasive Species control; and conservation measures for fauna species.

In addition, the working groups created from previous seminars on ecological coherence of Natura 2000 and an action plan for the Laurel Forest habitats will feature in the programme.

The preliminary programme is available, soon to be followed by the background document and excursion guide. All documents will be made available online [here](#).

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

The Mediterranean Seminar will be held in Larnaca, Cyprus, on 17-19 April 2024. The draft programme and invitations will be sent out in early 2024.

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

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





Photo: Excursion group during the 2023 Atlantic seminar. Source: NatureBureau

## Recent Terrestrial Biogeographical Seminars

In August 2023 the Atlantic Seminar was held in Hannover, Germany – followed quickly afterwards by the Boreal seminar, held in Nuukio, Finland. You can read more about those below and expect seminar reports to follow soon.

### The Atlantic Seminar, 4-6 September 2023, Hannover

The fourth Natura 2000 seminar for the Atlantic region was hosted jointly by the Lower Saxony Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Climate Protection, together with the LIFE Integrated Project “Atlantic Sandlandscapes”.

In total, 91 participants from eight Member States, as well as several observing organisations and the European Commission attended. The aim for the seminar was to discuss (and prepare for) the pledges, as well as to share knowledge and best practices on Natura 2000 management. The seminar was opened by Mrs. Anka Dobsław – State Secretary for the Environment, Energy and Climate Protection (Lower Saxony). Mr. Humberto Delgado Rosa, Director for Natural Capital of DG-

Environment, then gave a welcoming speech, relating to the history of the seminars and the importance of the pledges for improving the Conservation Status and reaching the 30% Protected Areas target.



Photo: Attendees of the Atlantic Seminar. Source: NatureBureau

The first day focussed on the pledge process, even though only three pledges were submitted for the Atlantic region. Member States presented their approach, or the process they followed to define the pledge.

The second day involved excursions. The Lüneburgerheide excursion focused on the 'sand landscapes' and managing extensive protected areas in cooperation with private landowners. The meadow bird excursion visited the Special Protection Area Dümmer, where some 2,500 ha of fen were purchased and rewetted. In total 80 farmers manage the areas under protective conditions, cooperating with water management and nature conservation. The third excursion group visited the "Hannoversche Moorgeest". Here, raised bogs were heavily drained due to decades of manual peat cutting until the 1950s. The area still has many unique species. The LIFE+ project aims to stop rainwater runoff and restore near-natural water levels with various construction measures.



Photo: Discussing sand landscape restoration at the Lüneburgerheide. Source: Theo van der Sluis

The third day focussed on discussion of the themes of the seminar: on the protection and conservation of meadow birds protection, added value of integrated projects, measures to restore peatbogs in light of climate change and the implementation of pledges on the ground.

The background document and excursion reports are accessible online. The report of the seminar, as well as the presentations, will soon become available on [our website](#).

### **The Boreal Seminar, 10-12 October 2023, Nuuksio NP, Finland**

Earlier this month, the Boreal seminar was held at Nuuksio National Park, not far from Helsinki, Finland. It was hosted jointly by DG Environment and the Finnish Ministry of the Environment.

The seminar was opened by Mr. Kai Mykkänen, Minister of Climate and the Environment, Finland, and Mr. Humberto Delgado Rosa, Director for Natural Capital in DG ENV. The first presentations then focussed on introducing the biogeographical process and the pledge process: where we are now, and how we can achieve the ambitious goals set out by the Biodiversity Strategy. Hanno Zingel of the Estonian Ministry of Climate then provided a recap of the previous Boreal seminar, held in Finland during October 2019, before Moira Wilputte ended the morning session by discussing the LIFE Programme and Natura 2000. In the afternoon, participants listened to presentations on the key themes: protected area (PA) targets and conservation improvement (CI) targets. Approaches to PA pledges were shared by participants from Sweden and Lithuania, whilst approaches to CI targets were shared by Finland and Estonia. Presentations were followed by breakout groups to discuss the targets.

In the evening, a Knowledge Market was held – 10 posters were presented on several projects that were launched in the Boreal regions, including LIFE RestoRED, Life2Taiga, Helmi Habitats Programme



and monitoring of pollinators, amongst others. Also, useful tools (NaturaConnect and Europe Freshwater Prioritisation Tool) were presented to promote cooperation and share knowledge of the best practice methods.

On day 2, seminar participants visited two sites. One site visited was within the [Nuukso National Park](#) to see a range of forest habitats, including a former forestry area that is now recovering through natural succession processes (passive restoration) as well as active forestation r using prescribed burning (active restoration), old growth rocky terrain forest and a restored bog woodland site.

The second site visited was [Espoonlahti \(and Luomalahti\)](#) - a small, protected area for biodiversity and recreation surrounded by suburban areas of the cities of Espoo and Kirkkonummi. It consists of a mosaic of seaside reeds, herb-rich forests, wooded pastures, and meadows. The area and its ecosystems are managed through grazing to maintain the open and semi-open habitat structures important for many species from plants and insects to birds.



Photo: Excursion to Nuukso National Park. Source: Theo van der Sluis

On the final day of the seminar, participants could attend different sessions where discussions during the morning focussed on four themes:

- Planning of restoration and management
- Pollinators initiative in the Boreal context
- What are the criteria for old growth forests?
- Protected area prioritisation in the context of climate change

Following presentations on each theme, break-out sessions allowed for participants to discuss the topics. In the afternoon, discussion outputs from the seminar were reported back to attendees. Frank Vassen of DG ENV then presented on the next steps for the pledge process and the roadmap for the Boreal Region.

Presentations from the event will soon be shared on [our website](#), along with a report when it is becomes available.

## Recent Marine Biogeographical Seminars

### 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. This three-day event was well attended, with around 40 participants, including government officials from almost all the Member States of the regions (excluding Portugal) and representatives of European or regional NGOs.

The event was opened by Niall O' Donnchú, Director General of the NPWS and Andrea Vettori, Head of the Nature Conservation Unit at DG Environment. Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries then addressed the audience via video message. Day one of the meeting focused on the pledges, with presentations on the scientific basis for identifying marine protected areas (MPAs), good examples of projects that contribute to meeting the conservation status improvement target, and several presentations from Member States outlining their countries' pledges and approaches to meeting both targets. This was followed by a discussion among participants on the challenges and ways to overcome them to ensure countries meet the targets by 2030.



Photo: Malcolm Noonan Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Darragh O'Brien, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, joined the gala dinner where he reaffirmed the commitment made by Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform Malcolm Noonan, to protect 30% of Ireland's marine areas by 2030, and highlighted Ireland's significant progress in meeting the EU BDS targets to protect marine areas.

The second day of the event was dedicated to a field trip to several marine Natura 2000 sites and to the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere, where local rangers talked to seminar participants about the biodiversity values, pressures and issues they face in the management of these areas.





Photo: Gannetry on Ireland's Eye Island.  
Source: NatureBureau

The final day of the seminar featured three thematic sessions: the role of Natura 2000 sites and other MPAs in marine restoration, strict protection, and renewable energy and marine conservation. Each of these included an introductory presentation of the policy context and a good case study to serve as an inspiration for discussions, which followed in groups. The event was closed by Malcolm Noonan, Minister of State

for Heritage and Electoral Reform, who highlighted the importance of Natura 2000 sites and cross-sectoral collaboration for biodiversity protection.

The report will be made available soon and uploaded [here](#), where the presentations are already available.

## **Network Event Reports**

### [Advancing the 30 by 30 Target: Insights from the "Understanding OECMs to Achieve the 30 by 30 Target", Brussels, 29 September 2023](#)

At the first networking event hosted by the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD) on 29 September 2023, 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.

Attended by approximately 40 participants, including representatives from the European Commission's DG Environment and DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, as well as delegates from Member States, prominent international NGOs, and leading research centres, the event provided a platform for a multifaceted exchange of insights and experiences.

The discussion started with an introductory presentation about the Natura 2000 Biogeographical process by NatureBureau. This was followed by a comprehensive overview of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the 30% protection target by DG Environment, and a presentation by Serge Garcia, an expert from the IUCN Fisheries Expert Group, whose insights added depth to the discussions.

The focus of the event were three case studies showcasing potential OECMs in the United Kingdom, France, and in the Mediterranean basin. These studies gave a practical perspective to the theoretical discussions, aiding in a shared understanding among participants.



Based on the discussions, the event report will include recommendations for Member States. These suggestions aim to provide practical guidance for the identification of potential OECMs, offering insights for their consideration and use. It is anticipated that this resource will serve as a tool to assist Member States in achieving the 30 by 30 target. The report will be made available soon and uploaded [here](#), where the presentations are already available.

[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: Chamomile, *Chamaemelum nobile*. Source: NatureBureau

### **Conference on forest biodiversity conservation through management sustainability, 19-21 March 2024, Rome**

European forests have been altered by management actions aimed at timber production for millennia. Forest habitats acknowledged by the Habitat Directive (92/43/EC) make no exception, and in the last State of nature in the EU Forestry is reported as the main pressure to forest habitats, of which about 80% are in an unfavourable conservation status. The current indicators of forest sustainability are mostly based on forest stand structure and landscape properties that may, but not always are, related to forest biological diversity.

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 is planned for next spring (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.

These issues will be addressed in the event to be held in the Botanical Garden of Rome titled “Integrating biodiversity conservation in forest management” which 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.

The event will be a two-day seminar, followed by an excursion day. Being funded by a COST Action, there are no attendance fees.



Photo: Barn owl, *Tyto alba*. Source: Connor Macleod

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

In Brussels on 12 September 2023 a consortium of commercial service providers, domain experts and stakeholder representatives launched the development project which will update and expand the EU Grassland Watch (EUGW) platform. The platform provides Earth Observation-based land information to support site managers, national representatives, EC staff and the public in the monitoring and reporting of Natura 2000 sites dominated by grassland. The event highlighted the policy and environmental drivers behind EUGW, the status of the prototype service and the enhancements which will be delivered during this project to support three use cases: National / EU-level nature reporting; Characterisation of grasslands; and Linking EU Grassland Watch information with local knowledge.

The updated platform will be more user-driven with a strong user community that is closely involved in the specification of developments. It will include additional Natura 2000 sites and provide more thematic detail. It will be more informative and relevant by evolving its content from only technical indices to more interpretable information and insights, e.g., “what is the impact on the environment?”. Finally, EUGW will be more closely integrated with Copernicus Land Monitoring Service products, thus avoiding duplication of effort and increasing consistency across environmental monitoring applications.

To find out more about EU Grassland Watch check out the [prototype service](#), the [project team website](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#). If you wish to join our mailing list, let us know at [Info@cop4n2k.eu](mailto:Info@cop4n2k.eu).

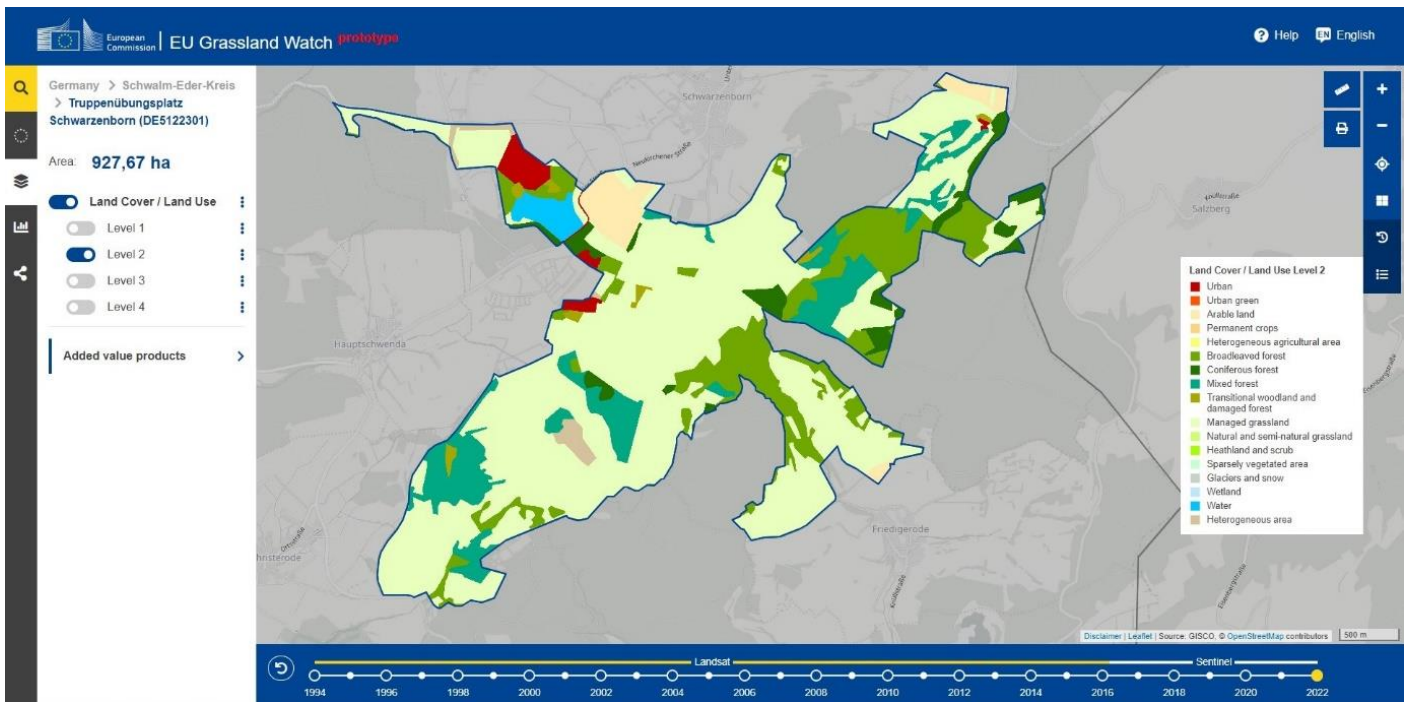


Photo: Interactive map. Source: EU Grassland Watch

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

From 3 to 6 of October, 470 participants gathered in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands, for the annual [EUROPARC Federation Conference](#). Networking, knowledge exchange and information sharing about current and future trends experienced in Protected Areas and Natura 2000 Sites in Europe were at the core of this major event.

The theme of the Conference was: "Tribute to our landscape: where nature and people meet in harmony". The 4-day programme contained a rich mix of plenary sessions, international key-note speakers, 12 participative workshops, 14 organised field trips and 14 Inspiration Sessions. A variety of EU projects were profiled and discussed, including EUROPARC's [LIFE ENABLE](#) capacity building initiative, which has created the European Nature Academy, and the [H2020 NaturaConnect](#) project. At the Conference, a [call for applications for LIFE ENABLE's European Nature Academy](#) was launched.

Delegates discussed nature's decline, biodiversity loss and climate change. The programme focussed on practical steps and opportunities to increase contact and interconnectedness with nature, through protection measures, new knowledge and more integrated approaches for nature in protected areas as part of vibrant cultural landscapes. The Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation was included at the Conference. The achievements of over 40 years of cooperation were presented and present issues discussed. Participants had the possibility to have an immersive experience at the mobile planetarium of the University of Groningen.

Over 60 young people actively participated in the Conference. Throughout, the audience was engaged in highly interactive exchanges to discuss common solutions and best practice examples from other Protected Areas. The event concluded with a clear statement of intent and action to increase harmony between nature and people.



**Contacts:** <mailto:neil.mcintosh@europarc.org> / <mailto:esther.bossink@europarc.org>

**Webpage:** [www.europarc.org](http://www.europarc.org)

**Follow us** on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), or [LinkedIn](#)

Discover EUROPARC's 50 year history through the voices of its members – check out our [digital, interactive storybook](#).

#EUROPARC2023 #EUROPARC50 #enatura2000 #lifeenable #enatureacademy

#### 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.

#### Disclaimer

This newsletter is financed by the European Commission. The Natura 2000 Biographical Process Consortium is solely responsible for the content. Content does not represent the opinion of the European Commission, nor is the European Commission responsible for any use that might be made of information appearing herein. The European Commission is committed to personal data protection. Any personal data is processed in line with the Regulation (EU) 2018/1725. Please read the [privacy statement](#).

© European Union, 2023. Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Our mailing address is: [natura2000platform@wur.nl](mailto:natura2000platform@wur.nl)

Want to change how you receive these emails? You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).