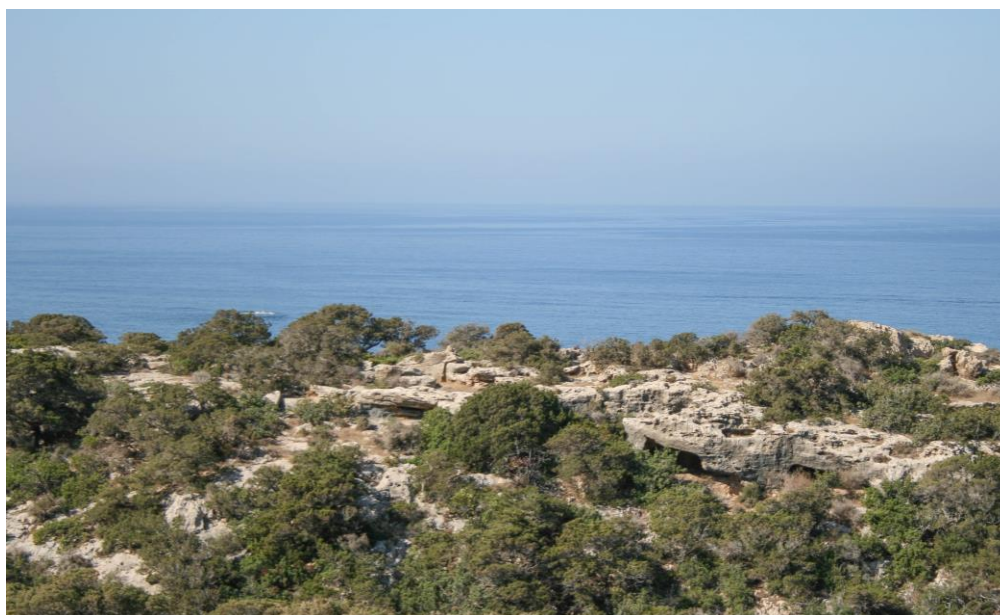




Natura 2000 Seminar for the Mediterranean Biogeographical Region



17 – 19 April 2024

Larnaca, Cyprus

Background Document 4th Mediterranean Biogeographical
Seminar

Background document for the Second Mediterranean Seminar

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| Prepared by | WENR, Terra Ecogest |
| Authors | Carlos Sunyer (Terra Ecogest), Lola Manteiga (Terra Ecogest), Theo van der Sluis (WENR), Irene Bouwma (WENR) |
| Version | V6 |
| Date | V6, 22 March 2024 |
| Reviewed by | Frank Vassen, Iva Obretenova |

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our great appreciation to Frank Vassen from the European Commission for his advice on the scope and thematic clarifications in the document. We thank Mette Lund, EEA, for the help with the figures on protected area and conservation status for the Mediterranean region and NaturaConnect for additional information.

Citation: Sunyer, C., Manteiga, L., Van der Sluis, T., Bouwma, I.M. (2024). *Background Document 4th Mediterranean Biogeographical Seminar*.

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Event: For more information on this seminar or the updated programme, see the Natura 2000 Communication Wiki: [Mediterranean region \(biogeoprocess.net\)](https://www.biogeoprocess.net)

Or scan the QR code:



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1

1. Introduction to the Natura 2000 biogeographical process and the Natura 2000 seminars

The Natura 2000 biogeographical process was launched in 2011 by the European Commission. The objective of the process is to promote knowledge exchange, networking, and cooperation on Natura 2000-related issues at biogeographical region level. At the heart of the process is the Natura 2000 seminars, coupled with a networking programme consisting of workshops, events, or meetings relevant to the objective of the process and other related actions.

Member States in each biogeographical region are often facing similar challenges in the management of Natura 2000 sites, habitats and species. For that reason, the Natura 2000 seminars are intended to stimulate transnational exchanges and promote coherent management of Natura 2000 at the biogeographical region level.

As Member States are responsible for implementing Natura 2000, the seminars create an opportunity for the competent authorities to exchange information and coordinate conservation actions as well as discuss and involve other key stakeholders and expert networks, including NGOs.

1.1. Biodiversity Strategy 2030

The strategic orientation of the process has been evolving over time. On 20 May 2020 the European Commission adopted the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 “Bringing nature back into our lives”². It is a comprehensive, ambitious and long-term plan for protecting nature and reversing the degradation of the ecosystems services it provides. Among the high number of the Strategy targets to be achieved by 2030, the two most relevant for the biogeographical process are:

¹ SPA & SAC Larnaca Salt Lake (Cyprus). Author: Marina Xenophontos

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1590574123338&uri=CELEX:52020DC0380>

- **Protected areas target:** protecting 30% of EU land and 30% of EU marine areas, designating part of them as ‘strictly protected’, and having clear conservation objectives and measures in place for all Protected Areas.
- **Conservation status improvement target:** taking measures for halting any further deterioration of protected species and habitats, and for improving the status of at least 30% of all species and habitats not currently in favourable condition.

These targets are not legally binding and do not replace the legal obligations of Member States under the Birds and Habitats Directives. Rather, they represent a political agreement for action.

1.2. Pledge and review

As part of the initiative to meet the objectives set out within the Biodiversity Strategy 2030, the European Commission has requested that Member States make pledges to show how they will meet the protected area and conservation status targets. These should follow the format and contents agreed^{3,4}, with the Commission and the European Environment Agency (EEA), using the Excel file template developed by the EEA and the European Topic Centre for Biodiversity and Ecosystems (ETC-BE) for pledge submission to the EEA’s Reportnet platform^{5,6}. Commission Guidance documents have been produced to provide further clarifications for each of the targets^{7,8}. Pledges will be peer reviewed by the Commission, the EEA, and the other Member States. A short summary of the pledges received so far is included in chapter 2. The Natura 2000 seminar programme forms a central element of the review process for the pledges (see below).

1.3. Biogeographical Process and Natura 2000 seminars

The scope of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process has been expanded to provide additional support to Member States for the pledge and review process. In addition to helping Member States implement their legal obligations under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, the process will help them to implement the targets under the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. Natura 2000 seminars will therefore support key players in:

- Achieving a common understanding on processes and objectives of the targets under the Biodiversity Strategy;

³ [Format for the protected areas target](#) [Format for the status improvement target](#)

⁴ [The reference page on the Central Data Repository which includes all supporting documents and guidelines](#)

⁵ <https://reportnet.europa.eu/public/dataflow/705>

⁶ <https://reportnet.europa.eu/public/dataflow/703>

⁷ [Commission guidance on the protected areas targets](#)

⁸ [Commission guidance on the status improvement targets](#)

- Presenting and discussing national pledges related to these targets for a peer review by the Commission, the EEA and the other Member States;
- Achieving a common understanding on relevant topics, particularly in relation to Natura 2000, to improve and standardise what is done at national level in terms of implementation and management, financing, monitoring and reporting, to ensure coherence and effectiveness of implementation at supranational levels;
- Sharing good practices in regulation, supervision, conservation, and restoration with a view to promoting and upscaling them, and;
- Facilitating setting up joined projects to support delivery of these objectives, including on management/restoration.

1.4. Biogeographical process in the marine regions

The EU Biodiversity Strategy applies equally to the terrestrial and marine environments. The Commission has implemented a separate process to provide a focused support to Member States working in marine regions⁹. The two biogeographical processes are complementary and coordinate with each other, which is essential as the 30% conservation status improvement target does not distinguish between habitats and species in marine and terrestrial regions. There is a strong level of liaison between the two processes, including a joint communications platform and shared wiki¹⁰.

⁹ Support for the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process in the Marine Regions ENV/2022/OP/0006

¹⁰ <https://biogeoprocess.net/>



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2. The Mediterranean biogeographical region

The Mediterranean biogeographical region stretches along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It is the second largest EU biogeographical region, accounting for 20.6% of the EU land area. It concerns eight Member States, from west to east: Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Croatia, Malta, Greece and Cyprus (Figure 1, ¹²).

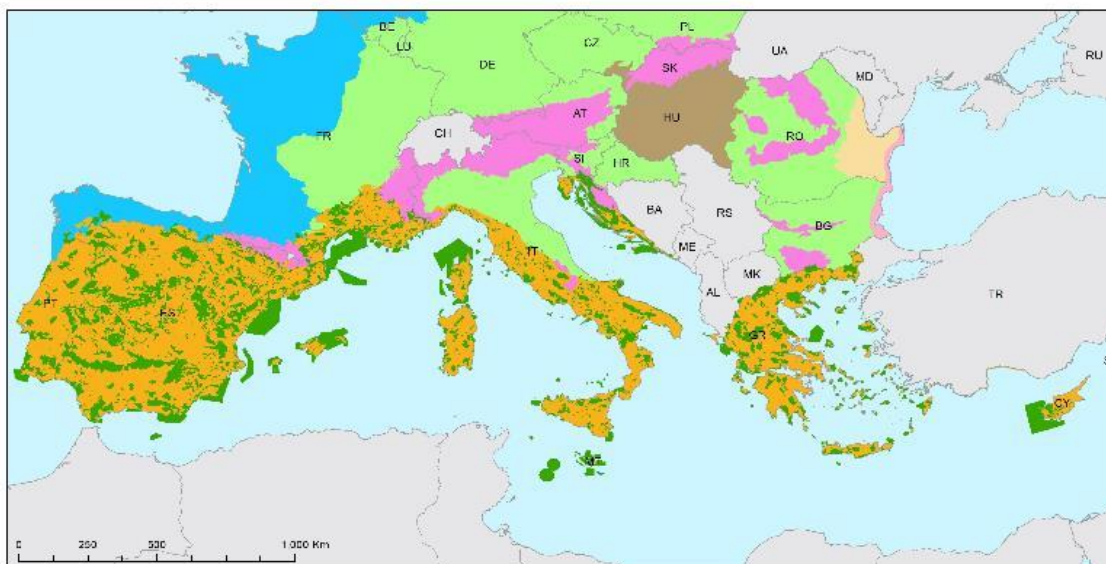
The regional climate is broadly characterised by mild wet winters and warm to hot, dry summers. The Iberian, Italian and Balkan peninsulas have a complex orography and the mountain belts close to the coast strongly influence the regional and local climates. The coastline enjoys a more temperate, thermo-Mediterranean climate, with mean minimum temperatures ranging between 3 and 7 degrees. In these areas, the vegetation is dominated by evergreen scrub and pines. At higher altitudes, the climate becomes more extreme and the vegetation is dominated by evergreen sclerophyllous forest. In more humid areas and on north facing slopes there are semi-deciduous forests, which in some areas are a transition to the Atlantic vegetation.

With a flora totalling more than 25,000 species, more than half of that being unique to the region, the Mediterranean region is recognised as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. Although it only represents 2% of the world's surface, it holds 20% of the world's floristic richness (Médail and Quézel, 1999). This richness originates in the region's functioning as a refuge for biodiversity during the Quaternary glaciations, in combination with its complex orography and its geographic position, at a crossroads between three continents and two seas. The region has also been shaped by human activity for thousands of years. This has led to the development of large areas with semi-natural habitats, some of which with an outstanding biodiversity.

¹¹ SPA Cape Greco National Park (Cyprus). Author: Marina Xenophontos

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/biogeog_regions/mediterranean/index_en.htm

The Mediterranean biogeographic region has around 18,000 km² under strict protection. Relative to the total area covered by the Mediterranean region, strictly protected areas only represent 1.77%. The Mediterranean region has a large area of Natura 2000 sites at around 234,000 km²; representing 22.8% of the total Mediterranean area (information: NaturaConnect).



NATURA 2000: Mediterranean biogeographical region

- NATURA 2000
- Alpine biogeographic region
- Atlantic biogeographic region
- Black Sea biogeographic region
- Boreal biogeographic region
- Continental biogeographic region
- Macronesia biogeographic region
- Mediterranean biogeographic region
- Pannonian biogeographic region
- Steppic biogeographic region

Figure 1: The Mediterranean biogeographical region (orange) with Natura 2000 sites superimposed (dark green) (source: EEA, April 2021).

According to Member States' latest reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, agriculture is both the pressure and threat affecting the highest proportion of habitats and species in the Mediterranean region (approximately 60%)¹³. In many areas, advantageous climatic conditions have favoured the development of intensive agriculture with a higher water demand, despite water being a scarce resource. There are also large areas threatened by the abandonment of farmland and related agricultural activities. In the region there are still large areas of semi-natural habitats under High Natural Value (HNV) farming systems, but these are threatened due to either land abandonment or intensification, with an important loss of biodiversity (Keenleyside *et al.*, 2014).

¹³ [National summary dashboards – Habitats directive Art. 17 for 2013-2018 – Main pressures and threats.](#) (Downloaded April 2021)

The pressure and threat ranking second is the development, construction and use of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational infrastructure which are reported to have affected approximately 55% of habitats and 45% of species in the region¹⁴. From 2000 to 2018 they have had an important impact in most coastal regions, largely driven by tourism-related developments (EEA, 2019). Land use changes and agricultural intensification not only destroy habitats but also increase habitat fragmentation, jeopardising the stability and resilience of habitats and species. Invasive alien species and natural processes also rank among pressures and threats, as does forestry, which is listed as a pressure for one third of the habitats in the region.

2.1. The biogeographical process in the Mediterranean region

Some of these pressures and threats have been addressed in previous Mediterranean Natura 2000 seminars and will be addressed again with a renewed focus in the fourth Mediterranean seminar, hosted by Cyprus.

The first Mediterranean seminar was held in Thessaloniki, Greece, in 2014. A milestone in a continuing process to develop practical solutions for habitat management priorities, it was organised around four priority habitat groups: coastal, freshwater & wetlands, grasslands and forests¹⁵.

In the second seminar, held in Limassol, Cyprus, in 2017, participants contributed to four working groups on issues relevant to the EC's Nature Action Plan¹⁶ :

- To find a common understanding in relation to the interpretation of habitat types; favourable reference values; standardised procedures for assessing conservation status and criteria to upgrade from national to biogeographical level.
- Conservation objectives & monitoring and evaluation, to improve the effectiveness of monitoring conservation measures and discuss approaches to setting restoration priorities.
- Integrated approaches to implement Natura 2000, integrate Natura 2000 into wider society, including stakeholder engagement and the economic value of ecosystem services.
- Addressing threats and pressures on habitats and species, identify management practices to mitigate the main regional threats: rural depopulation, invasive alien species and climate change.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/documents/med_2nd_pre-scoping_document_20131015_eng.pdf

¹⁶ Nature Action Plan: An Action Plan for nature, people and the economy (COM(2017) 198 final).

The third seminar, hosted in 2021 by the Calabrian region and the Sila National Park (Italy), was held online (Sunyer *et al.* 2021), and the following themes were addressed:

- Defining and coordination of a Natura 20000 restoration agenda in the Mediterranean region.
- Defining conservation objectives at site level and monitoring the impact of measures.
- Addressing land abandonment in the Mediterranean region.
- Building capacity in the Mediterranean region.

2.2. Moving towards harmonisation

One of the conclusions identified during the second Mediterranean seminar (2017) was the need to harmonise certain procedures¹⁷ and the Spanish Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO) committed itself to work on harmonising procedures for the monitoring, evaluation and conservation of habitat types of Community Interest.

To this end, MITECO organised five workshops between 2019 and 2021, the last one conceived as a compilation of concepts and methodologies set out in the other four workshops, concluding with an agreement on the minimum contents for an action plan for a habitat type (Figure 2).

This work has been continued during 2023, when MITECO set up a Mediterranean expert group to advance in the development of a common pilot action plan for a habitat type of Community Interest: embryonic shifting dunes (hab. 2110), a habitat present in all Mediterranean Member States. This action plan, to be completed in 2024, should identify the necessary measures to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of the habitat type at the biogeographical scale, and would be a model to be extended to other habitats.

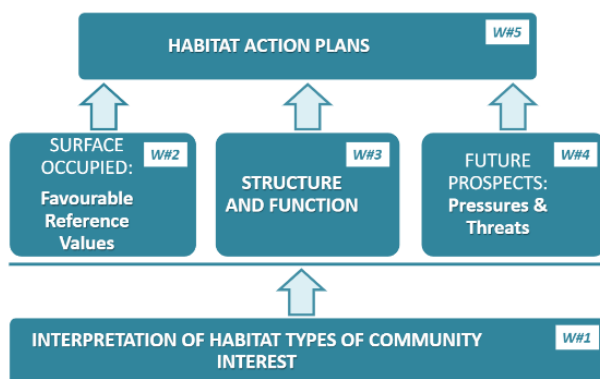


Figure 2: General framework of the five workshops organised by Spain on the harmonisation of procedures, promoted by the Spanish Ministry of Ecological Transition (MITECO).

¹⁷https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/documents/second_mediterranean_seminar/2nd_Mediterranean_Seminar_Report.pdf

2.3. Current conservation status

An overview of the conservation status of habitats and species in the Mediterranean region is based on the Member States reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, for the period 2013-18.

It is important to keep in mind the distinction between the national biogeographical conservation status and trend assessments as reported by the Member States according to Art. 17 of the Habitats Directive (which provide the baseline against which progress towards the conservation status targets can be assessed) and the biogeographical region-level assessments presented here, which are based on a merge of all national-level assessments in a given EU biogeographical region.

2.3.1. Habitats

The last biogeographical region-level assessment of conservation status of habitats and species of Community Interest (2013-18) shows that 71% of the Natura 2000 habitat types in the Mediterranean region are currently assessed as being unfavourable, with 30% even considered to be in unfavourable-bad status (Figure 3). Biogeographical region-level improvement in conservation status have only been recorded for 22 Natura 2000 habitat types (out of 148) in the region.

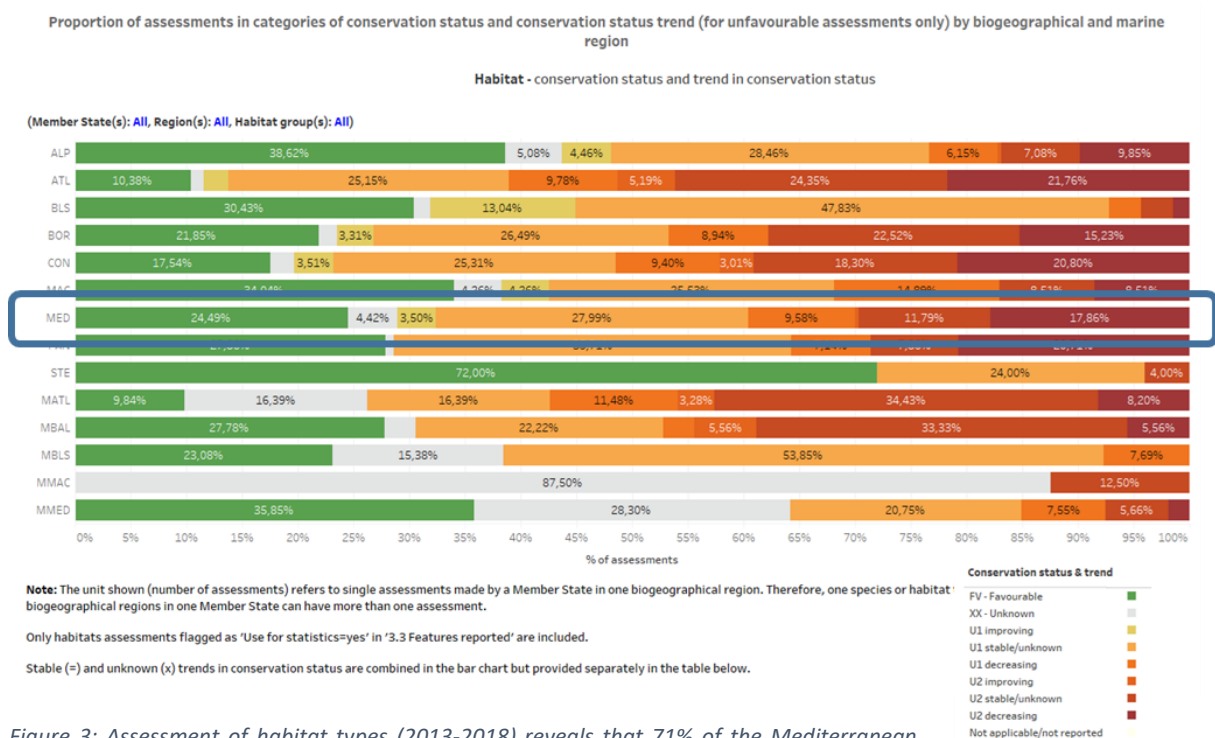


Figure 3: Assessment of habitat types (2013-2018) reveals that 71% of the Mediterranean habitats are assessed as in unfavourable status (EEA 2020).

Amongst the Mediterranean habitat types, approx. 60% of areas covered by sclerophyllous scrubs and rocky habitats are in a good condition (Figure 4). Likewise, some 50% of forests and grassland areas are in good condition. At the other end of the spectrum, most areas of bogs, mires and fens (32%) as well as more areas of freshwater habitats (22.5%) are in poor condition (Figure 4).

Pressures and threats identified help understand the drivers resulting in a poor conservation status of Mediterranean habitats and species (see Section 1 above and Figure 5 below). Main pressures are agriculture and urbanisation. Agriculture in particular has impact on wetlands, grasslands, heath and scrubs. Amongst the species groups, invertebrates are the most impacted. Urbanisation is the strongest pressure to coastal, dune and rocky habitats.

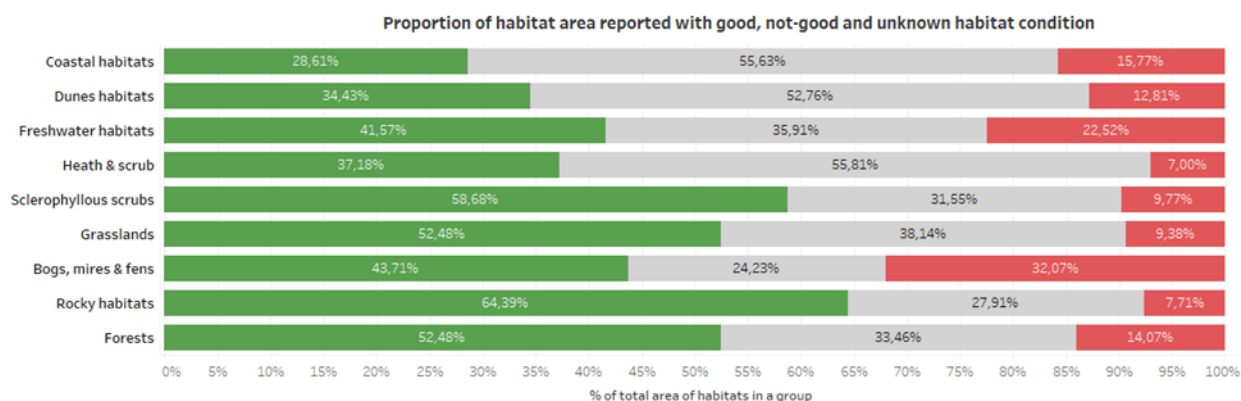


Figure 4: Proportion of habitat area in the Mediterranean region reported with good, not good and unknown habitat condition (EEA 2020).

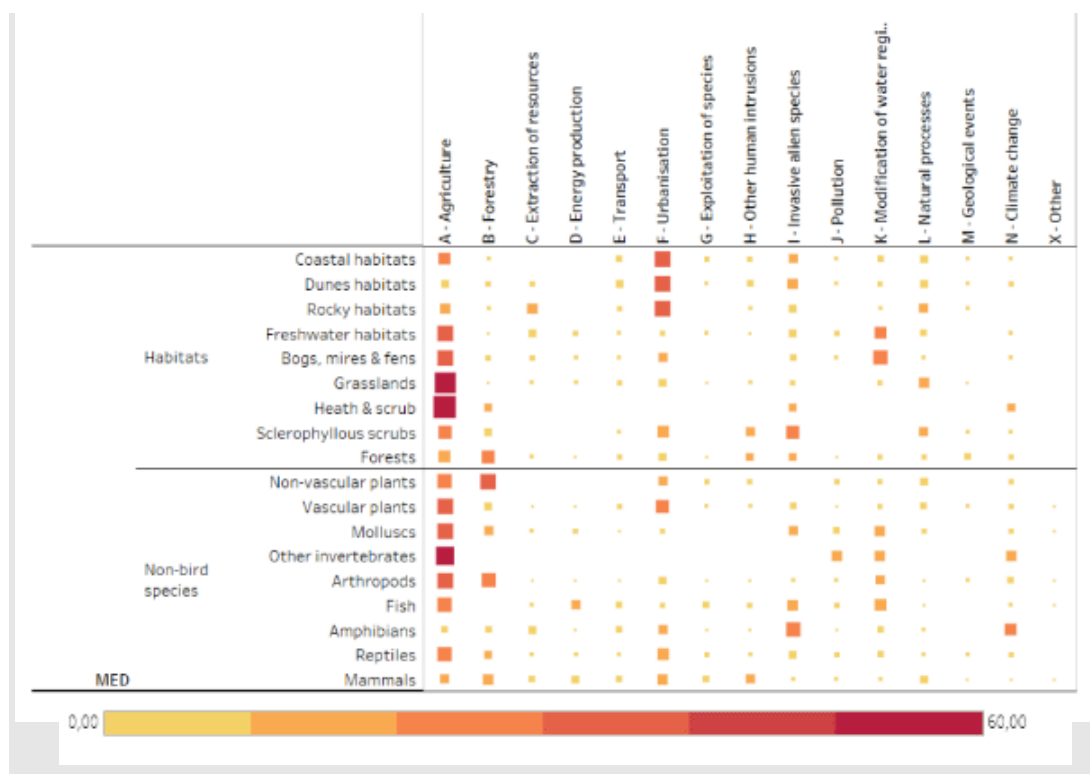


Figure 5: Main pressures and threats for Mediterranean species and habitat types (EEA 2020).

2.3.2. Species

The most recent assessment of conservation status of species of Community Interest (2013-18) shows that 60% of the Natura 2000 Habitat Directive species in the Mediterranean region are currently assessed as being unfavourable, with 18% even considered to be in unfavourable-bad status ^{18, 19}. (Figure 6, Figure 7)

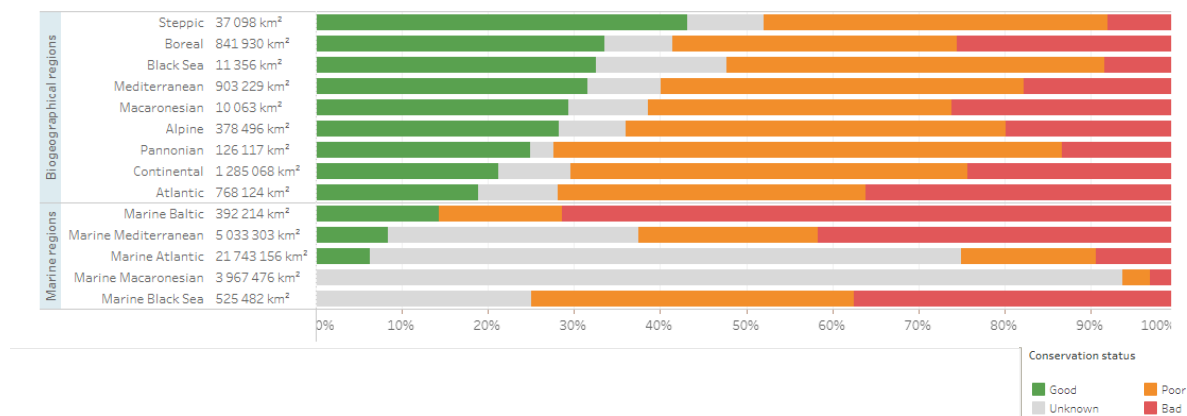


Figure 6: Assessment of species types (2013-2018) reveals that 60% of the Mediterranean species for the terrestrial region are unfavourable (EEA 2020).

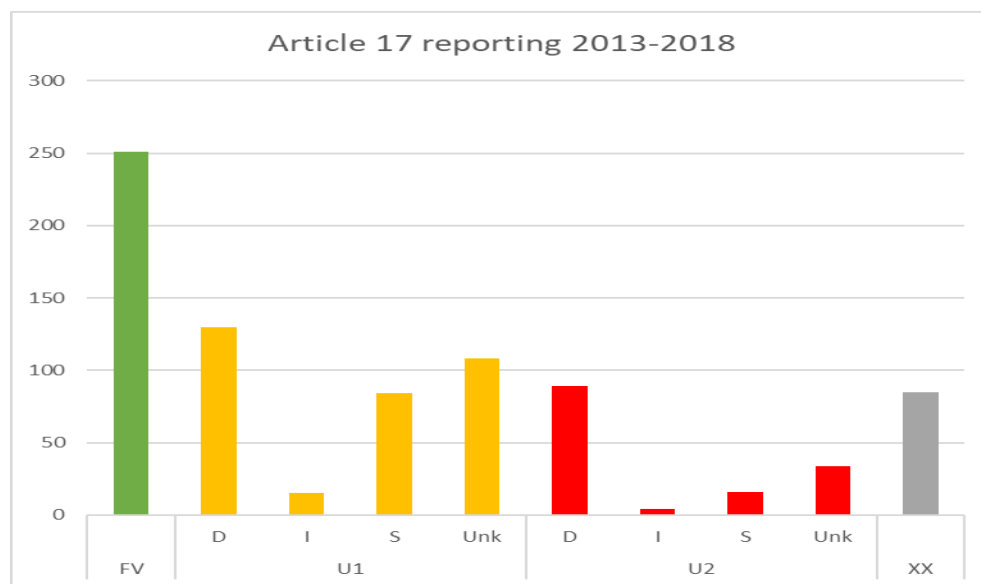


Figure 7: The combined results of species assessments for Member State reporting in the Mediterranean for the period 2013-2018. Each species is assessed as favourable (FV), inadequate (U1), bad (U2) or unknown (XX). In addition, a trend value is reported for each assessment, declining (D), increasing (I), stable (S), or unknown (Unk).

¹⁸ Data used for the figure: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-17-national-summary-dashboards/conservation-status-and-trends>

¹⁹ [Article17_2020_speciesEUassessment](#) (accessed 25-08-2023)

2.4. Current protected area coverage

The most recent analysis of terrestrial protected area coverage at biogeographical regions level was conducted by the European Environment Agency based on the data reported by the end of 2020 for Natura 2000 sites and in 2021 for nationally designated areas (Figure 8, Figure 11)²⁰. It combines data for Natura 2000 sites with those for nationally designated areas reported by Member States and therefore provides an overview of the total area that is designated as protected, removing overlaps between different designations. Figure 8 shows both the absolute area in square kilometres and the percentage of the total area of each biogeographical region covered by protected areas, which can be compared against the 30% protected areas target of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. However, it should be noted that statistics in this section were prepared before the submission of protected area pledges by Member States.

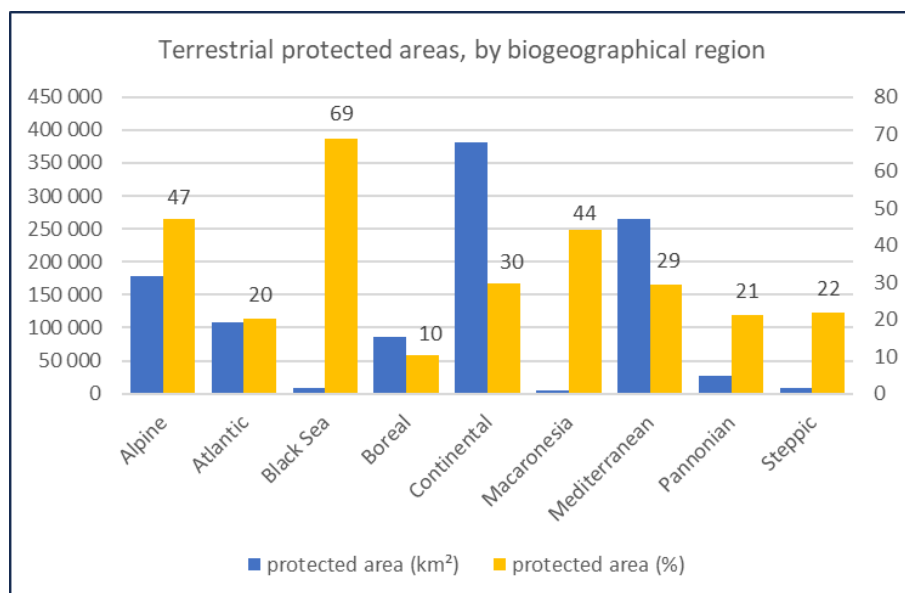


Figure 8: Terrestrial protected areas summarised by biogeographical region.

It is also possible to see the contribution of each Member State towards the protected areas network in the Mediterranean region (Figure 9).

²⁰ https://tableau-public.discomap.eea.europa.eu/views/PAPERbiogeographicalregion/Story1?%3Adisplay_count=n&%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aorigin=viz_share_link&%3AshowAppBanner=false&%3AshowVizHome=n (accessed 11-07-2023)

4) Protected area and share of total protected area in the biogeographical region per country

Mediterranean region

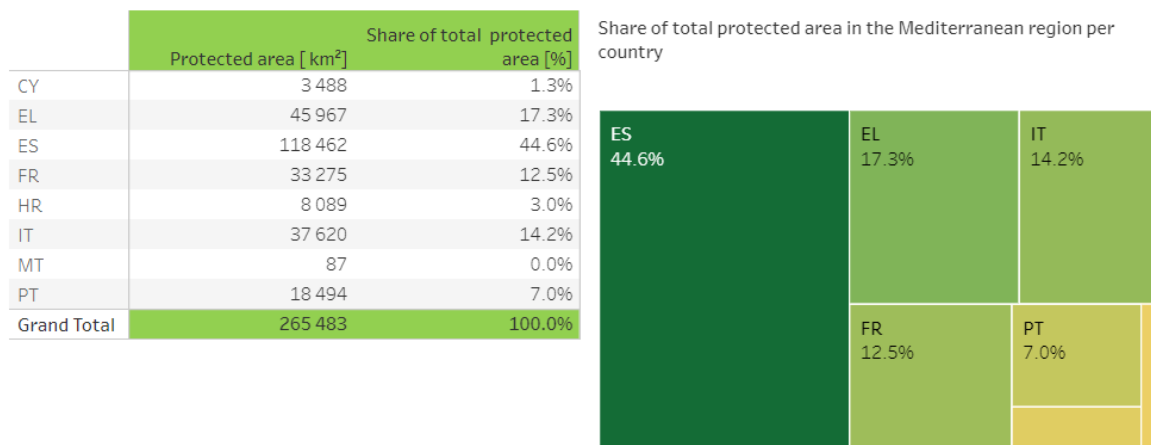


Figure 9: Protected area and share of total protected area in the biogeographical region per Member State

The statistics by biogeographical region also show the total area under Natura 2000 or national designation protection regime in each Member State, resolving the overlaps between different designations, and compared to the total land territory of each Member State (Figure 11).

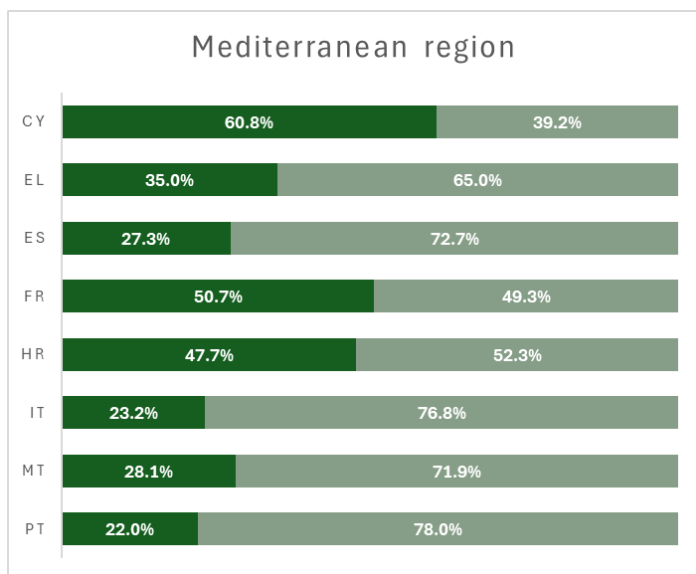


Figure 10: Share of terrestrial protected areas coverage (in green) in the Mediterranean region by Member State.

In the below Figure 11), one can see the contribution of each designation type to the total protected area in the Mediterranean region in each of the Member States.



Figure 11: The share of each protected area designation type to the total protected area per Member State

2.5. Status of pledges in the Mediterranean region

For the Mediterranean region, only Cyprus, Spain and (more recently) France have submitted pledges so far. Spain submitted both protected area and status improvement pledges, although only the latter

type of pledge is publicly available²¹. Cyprus only submitted pledges for the status improvement target. France has recently submitted its protected area pledges.

2.5.1. Preliminary analysis of the protected area pledge

In terms of protected area pledges, a preliminary analysis was undertaken to look at the question of the current baseline. This was done by reviewing the responses of the countries regarding nationally designated areas which should be counted towards the 30% target. This will be further discussed during the seminar, and it is hoped that this will help with understanding the approaches taken by the countries in this regard.

Furthermore, a preliminary analysis of the responses regarding future protected areas was undertaken. While it was possible to see some trends, a comprehensive analysis was not possible as this can only be done for a given biogeographical region once the pledges from all countries in that region have been received. Preliminary results will be presented at the seminar.

2.5.2. Preliminary analysis of the conservation status improvements pledge

The following reviews were undertaken. More detailed information will be presented during the seminar.

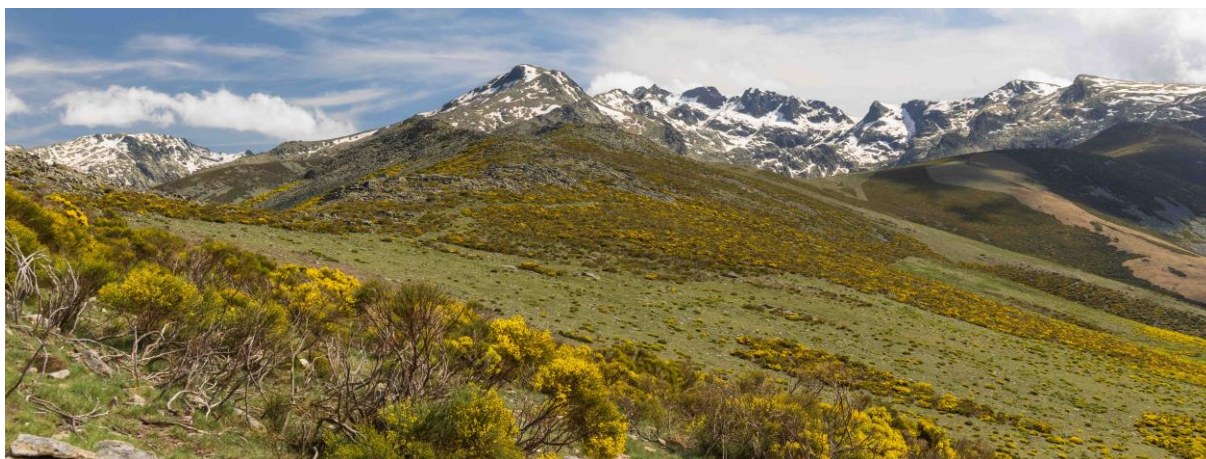
For the Member State level:

- For each Member State the overall pledge is analysed on its completeness e.g. whether all Habitats Directive species and habitats in unfavourable status or birds species in non-secure status are included in one of the categories of the pledge (non-deterioration or improvement).
- Whether the 30% target for improvement has been reached at the Member State level.

Mediterranean region part of the Member State:

- Which species and habitats groups have been pledged?
- What is the division between habitats and species in the improvement pledge?
- What is the conservation status of species and habitats under the Habitats Directive pledged, based on the latest Article 17 reporting?

²¹ <https://reportnet.europa.eu/public/dataflow/703> and <https://reportnet.europa.eu/public/dataflow/705>



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3. Themes selected for the fourth Natura 2000 seminar for the Mediterranean region

Four themes are proposed for discussion during the second and third day of the seminar:

- Theme 1: Strictly protected areas in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
- Theme 2: Site-specific conservation objectives
- Theme 3: Favourable Conservation Status/Favourable Reference Values
- Theme 4: Effective management of Natura 2000 sites

3.1. Theme 1: Strictly protected areas in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

3.1.1. Context

According to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, at least 30% of the EU land and EU sea areas should be protected in the EU by 2030, one third of which – representing 10% of EU land and 10% of EU sea area – should become strictly protected. As a first step towards achieving the EU-level targets for protected areas, Member States have been asked to make pledges showing how and to what extent they intend to meet these targets until 2030.

However, out of the 27 EU Member States, only 6 have provided pledges for protected areas so far, including 3 from the Mediterranean biogeographical region: Cyprus, Spain and France. As no pledges have been received so far from the five remaining Mediterranean Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Malta and Portugal), it is currently not possible to assess whether the 30% and 10% protected area targets are likely to be achieved by 2030 for the Mediterranean biogeographical region.

During three recent biogeographical seminars in other biogeographical regions (Atlantic, Boreal and Macaronesian seminars), national authority participants provided several reasons for not submitting

²² Natura 2000 site Sierra de Gredos (Spain). Author: Carlos Sunyer

pledges for protected areas. One reason frequently cited was the potential negative impact on stakeholder endorsement of a prior announcement of protected area designations through a pledging system. Importantly, they also indicated that there are still uncertainties in terms of defining what should be counted as a “strictly protected area”.

According to a Commission Staff Working document²³ strictly protected areas are defined as “*fully and legally protected areas designated to conserve and/or restore the integrity of biodiversity-rich natural areas with their underlying ecological structure and supporting natural environmental processes. Natural processes are therefore left essentially undisturbed from human pressures and threats to the area’s overall ecological structure and functioning, independently of whether those pressures and threats are located inside or outside the strictly protected area*”. In line with that approach, the document provides a list of “limited and well controlled activities” that either do not interfere with natural process, and that could therefore be allowed in strictly protected areas. Examples include:

1. Scientific research.
2. Natural disaster prevention.
3. Non-intrusive activities and installations.
4. Non-intrusive and strictly controlled recreational activities.
5. Small-scale subsistence resource use for indigenous peoples, provided it does not interfere with the conservation objectives of the area.

This raises the question as to what extent and under which circumstances activities such as those listed above may still be defined as “limited and well controlled activities”.

The same document also mentions that “*strict protection is not an end in itself*” and that “*strictly protected areas may also be areas in which active management sustains or enhances natural processes, such as semi-natural grasslands or some peatlands.*” It is therefore clear that strict protection should not only be restricted to areas hosting features such as primary and old-growth forests, raised bogs or seagrass beds, which can thrive through natural processes and non-intervention approaches, but also encompasses areas with ecosystems, habitats or species that require active management.

Accordingly, the list of activities which could be allowed in strictly protected areas also refers to certain active management measures. The latter should however be limited to what is necessary for the restoration and/or conservation of the habitats and species for whose protection the area has been designated. Examples cited include:

1. Grazing of grasslands.
2. Population control of wild ungulates.
3. Invasive alien species control.

²³ Criteria and guidance for protected areas designations. Commission Staff Working Document. SWD(2022) 23 final

4. Active restoration of the natural values of the areas.

The high biodiversity value of management-dependent open habitats such as grasslands, heathlands, mires, etc. is well established, which justifies the counting of certain active managed ecosystems as strictly protected areas. However, active management of such areas (in particular agricultural management through grazing or mowing) is not necessarily fully focussed on the biodiversity objective or limited to what is necessary for maintaining or restoring habitats and species. This raises questions as to the conditions under which actively managed areas may still count as strictly protected.

3.1.2. Objectives of the thematic session

Discussions under theme 1 will focus on the conditions under which areas that are subject to “limited and well controlled activities” or to “active management” can count as strictly protected areas. The specific objective of this thematic session is therefore to discuss and reach a common understanding on:

- What are the requirements for an activity to be counted as a “limited and well controlled” in line with the definition of strict protection in the Commission staff working document?
- How is the concept of “undisturbed natural processes” to be understood in the case of species, habitats or sites that require an active management?
- What are the conditions under which active management can be considered compatible with the definition of strict protection in the Commission staff working document?

3.1.3. Common issues, approaches, and challenges

Different national or regional perceptions

Differences of a cultural or political nature, as well as differences in the intensity of resources’ use and pressures mean that a certain activity might be perceived as being compatible with the definition of strict protection in one country or region, but not in another one.

Property rights

Property rights are a limiting factor for any protection regime, and even more so for a strict protection regime. For this reason, strict government-mandated protection regimes are usually applied on government-owned land. This is an important factor in the choice of sites, because in many regions public land is scarce, and it is not always the most suitable for achieving biodiversity conservation objectives.



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3.2. Theme 2: Site-specific conservation objectives

3.2.1. Context

The EU Habitats Directive requires the Member States to establish of site-specific conservation objectives (SSCOs) for the Natura 2000 sites, as a basis for identifying “the statutory, administrative, or contractual measures which correspond to the ecological requirements of the natural habitat types in Annex I and the species in Annex II present on the sites” (Art. 6). The Directive furthermore provides that the Natura 2000 network shall enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range (Art. 3).

The role of conservation objectives is therefore to specify the conditions that species and habitat types in a site shall achieve so that the site can contribute to the overall goal of favourable conservation status of these species and habitat types at national, biogeographical or European level (Art 2(2)). To fulfil this function, conservation objectives must be:

- Site-specific: set at site-level (but may need to be supplemented by a broader set of conservation targets at higher, e.g. national, regional or biogeographical, levels);
- Comprehensive: covering all species and habitat types of Community Interest of the Habitats Directive that are significantly present on a Natura 2000 site (e.g. as identified in the relevant Natura 2000 standard data form);
- Specific as to the feature: clearly identifying individual habitat types or species in the site;
- Specific as to the envisaged condition: clearly identify the condition the habitat type and species in the site shall achieve; the desired condition must be:

²⁴ *Cedrus brevifolia* forests in Troodos mountains Natura 2000 site (Cyprus). Author: Marina Xenophontos

- quantified and measurable (quantitative targets possibly to be supplemented by qualitative ones, such as description of a good condition of a habitat or a population structure) as well as reportable (enabling monitoring), where appropriate. The feasibility and usefulness of quantification needs to be substantiated on a case-by-case basis;
- realistic (reasonable timeframe and application of resources), consistent in approach (use similar structure and attributes for same features across sites);
- Comprehensive (attributes and targets should cover the properties of the interest feature necessary to describe its condition as either favourable or unfavourable);
- Corresponding to the ecological requirements of the natural habitat types in Annex I and the species in Annex II present on those sites;
- Reflective of the importance of the site for the maintenance or restoration, at a favourable conservation status of the habitat types and species present on the site and for the coherence of Natura 2000.

3.2.2. Objectives of the thematic session

The objective of this thematic session is to discuss and reach a common understanding on:

- What kind of information and what level of detail is required for site-specific conservation objectives to ensure that they can usefully contribute to the setting of conservation measures at site level?
- What level of ambition is needed for site-specific conservation objectives to ensure that they enable the natural habitats and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or restored at a favourable conservation status?

3.2.3. Common issues, approaches, and challenges

Quantification aspects

Some Member States and regions have argued that, for certain Annex I habitats or habitats of Annex II species, quantifying the habitat area to be achieved at site level might not always be feasible. This might include, for example, species' populations or habitats dependent on highly dynamic natural processes, such as erosion and sedimentation processes on riverbanks.

Bottom-up or top-down

Member States and regions may be using very different approaches towards setting conservation objectives. While some might prefer setting site-specific conservation objectives on the basis of the specific potential of individual sites for maintaining or restoring the good condition of habitats and habitats of species present in the site, others have adopted a top-down approach, starting with the setting of national or regional level conservation objectives each of which is then broken down to the individual sites where the habitat (or the habitat of a species) is either present already or could be restored.



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3.3. Theme 3: Defining Favourable Conservation Status/Favourable reference values

3.3.1. Context

The definition of “favourable conservation status” of species and habitats requires the determination of quantified Favourable Reference Values (FRV) at national biogeographical region level for the following parameters: “range” (species and habitats), “population size” (species) and “area” (habitats). FRVs are not only important in terms of indicating the “distance to target” in the conservation status of habitats and species, but also as a basis for setting conservation objectives for habitats and species, including in terms of setting site-specific conservation objectives at the level of individual Natura 2000 sites.

A study of how Member States set FRVs in relation to the reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive²⁶ showed that the application of FRVs across Member States remains inconsistent, which could lead to different interpretations as to the overall goal to be achieved under the Nature Directives. Another more recent study on the assessment of conservation status under Article 17, reviewed 225 papers on the assessment of conservation status of coastal habitats, most of them in the Mediterranean biogeographic region²⁷. It concluded that the assessment of the state of conservation at the biogeographic scale is a synthesis of partial assessments, disparate between biogeographic

²⁵ Restored sand dunes in the Natura 2000 site Alykes Larnakas (Cyprus). Author: Marina Xenophontos

²⁶ [Bijlsma, R.; Agrillo, E.; Attorre, F.; Boitani, L.; Brunner, A.; Evans, P.; Foppen, R.; Gubbay, S.; Janssen, J.; Kleunen, A.; Langhout, W.; Noordhuis, R.; Pacifici, M.; Ramírez, I.; Rondinini, C.; Roomen, M.; Siepel, H.; Winter, H.V. 2019. Defining and applying the concept of Favourable Reference Values for species and habitats under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. Wageningen Environmental Research Technical Report. Service Contract No 07.0202/2015/715105/SER/ENV.B.3 financed by the European Commission.](#)

²⁷ [Delbosca, P.; Lagrange, I.; Rozo C.; Bensettiti, F.; Bouzillé, J.B.; Evanse, D.; Lalannea, A.; Rapinel, S.; Bioreta, F. 2021. Assessing the conservation status of coastal habitats under Article 17 of the EU Habitats directive. Biological Conservation 254, pp. 108935](#)

region, Member States and habitat types. These divergences are both linked to the absence of clear definitions of key concepts, and to the lack of data.

During previous biogeographical seminars, Member State authorities have stressed the need for streamlining the concept, highlighting that it is a priority for transnational cooperation. On that basis, considerable effort has been undertaken under the lead of Spain to further clarify and harmonise the methodologies and concepts of the FRVs through organisation of targeted workshops in the frame of the Mediterranean biogeographical process.

An ad-hoc group under the Commission's Expert Group on Reporting under the Nature Directives was formed with the aim to improve the guidance related to the setting and reporting of FRVs for nature reporting, and contribute to further harmonise approaches between Member States. A recent Commission study on "Defining and applying the concept of FRVs for species and habitats under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives" presents a common stepwise methodology for setting FRVs, in line with the reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive for the period 2013–2018²⁸.

Setting of Favourable Reference Values

A stepwise approach for setting FRVs is recommended and starts by selecting an appropriate spatial scale and historical perspective for the species or habitat type (see Figure 12). This requires an understanding how historical processes have shaped current ranges, habitat areas and population numbers. Feasibility considerations should include irreversibility of certain large-scale developments (e.g. major infrastructure and urban development). Financial considerations, such as availability of funding, should be left out, but are relevant when planning for operational conservation targets and milestones.

Two main methods (or combinations of them) can be applied to set FRVs:

The **reference-based approach** considers the historical distribution or area of a habitat type or the historical distribution or population size of a species in a period when the habitat type or species was supposed to be in a (stable) favourable condition. Empirical numbers, areas or densities corresponding to a particular historical baseline are used to set FRVs²⁹.

The selection of a reference period generally depends on occurrences of major impacts on distribution and population size or area of the particular species or habitat (see above). Since such impacts might often be irreversible from a technical or ecological point of view, conditions before these impacts will not be ecologically feasible as reference values. In the absence of clear breaking points in the

²⁸ http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/help/habitats_art17

²⁹ Applying the reference-based approach to setting FRV for non-reproductive 'populations' such as passage or wintering bird populations and migratory fish needs special care.

occurrence and function of populations or habitat types, it is proposed to examine the recent past, i.e. up to about 50 years before the relevant Directive came into force.

Using the reference-based approach, the Favourable Reference Area (for habitats only, FRA), Favourable Reference Population (for species only, FRP) or Favourable Reference Range (for habitats and species, FRR) is derived from a historical baseline, and it is suggested that FRA for all habitat types should be set at the national level only. The issue then is to determine how much of the baseline needs to be restored to represent a favourable area or population size. Setting the FRR is inherently reference-based because it demands consideration of all significant ecological variations within the range.

The **model-based approaches** use species specific information on required viable population size or species-specific or habitat type-specific features, such as habitat suitability or required area for proper functioning.

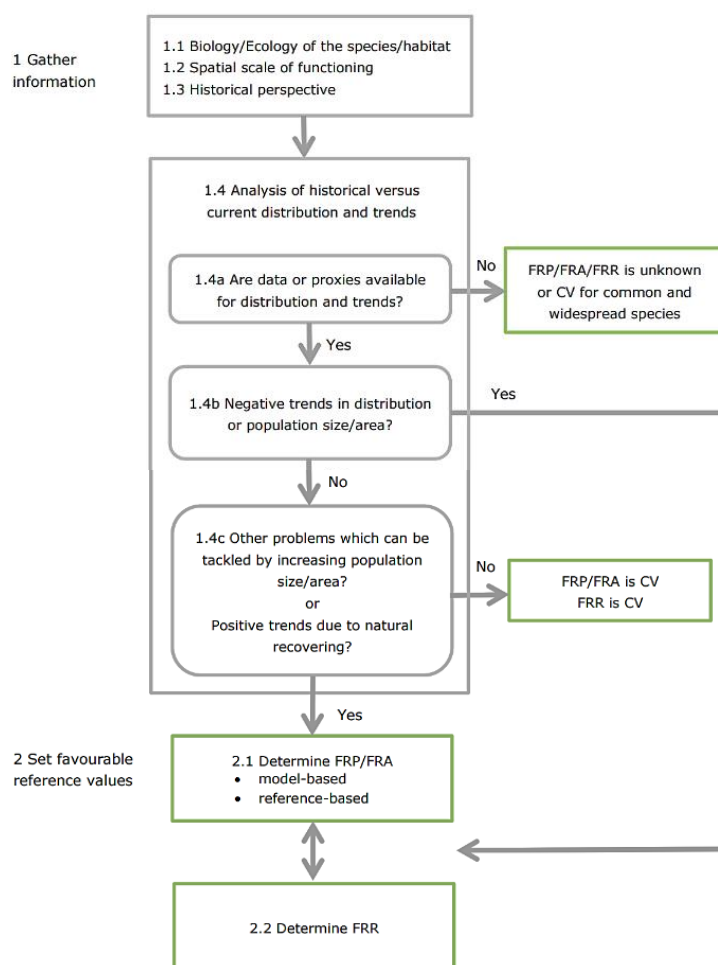


Figure 12: Flowchart for the stepwise process of setting FRVs for species and habitat types (Bijlsma, et al. 2019. Defining and applying the concept of Favourable Reference Values).

3.3.2. Objectives of the thematic session

This thematic session will discuss existing approaches and best practises for setting FRVs for habitats and species in Mediterranean Member States.

This session specifically aims at allowing an in-depth discussion on the following questions:

1. What aspects (data availability, guidance, resource limitations, legal obligation, operational, etc.) should be considered when setting FRVs?
2. What are the main obstacles to setting FRVs and what solutions have been found to overcome these obstacles?
3. How is the setting of FRVs embedded in other related processes at country level, such as the reporting work under Art 17 Habitats Directive/Article 12 Birds Directive, the setting of site-specific conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites, site-level management planning, etc?

The Commission recently launched a survey amongst members of the Nature Directives Expert Group (NADEG) on their current practices of setting FRVs, on the main challenges they face and on suggestions for improving the current EU guidelines. The results of that survey will also be presented during this break-out session.

3.3.3. Examples and best practices

An EU funded study provides numerous examples for defining FRVs for both marine and terrestrial species and habitats, for various regions in Europe (Bijlsma *et al.*, 2019).

Since 2021, the Spanish Ministry for the Environment (MITECO) gathers experts from Portugal, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Malta and Cyprus to work on standardisation of criteria (See 2.2)³⁰ and strengthening of cooperation with a view to:

- Create a permanent working group and a platform for the exchange of information and experiences;
- Create a common database with knowledge and procedures in Member States;
- Develop a new interpretation manual for Mediterranean habitats;
- Harmonise concepts and methodologies on FRVs;
- Develop guidelines on FRVs specific to the Mediterranean region;
- Create a standard protocol for assessing the structure and function of habitat types, and;
- Create a common protocol for assessing pressures and threats.

³⁰ For more information med@tragsa.es



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3.4. Theme 4: Effective management of Natura 2000 sites

3.4.1. Context

As the legal designation of Natura 2000 sites is almost completed in most Member States, and while the setting of site-specific conservation objectives and measures is also making good progress, a major remaining challenge is to achieve effective management of all sites. For that reason, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 includes a specific target for having all protected areas, both existing areas and those still to be designated, under effective management by 2030 at the latest. While effective management of Natura 2000 sites is a legal obligation under the Birds and Habitats Directives, it is reminded here that the Biodiversity Strategy target for effective site management also applies to other protected areas under national jurisdiction.

DG Environment recently funded a project for developing a methodology to assess management effectiveness of marine Natura 2000 sites and other EU marine protected areas, as a starting point for building a comprehensive EU system to regularly assess and report on the management effectiveness. The project, which ended in 2022, proposed a methodology focussed on self-assessment of management effectiveness by the site manager(s).

In 2023, the Commission published a study on the management effectiveness of measures implemented in 100 SPAs across 10 Member States³². The study concluded that only half of the SPAs considered had sufficient data to support the conclusion that bird species populations for which the

³¹ Dehesas and montados with evergreen *Quercus* spp. (6310) in the Natura 2000 site Corredores de Siruela (Spain). Author: Carlos Sunyer

³² <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b81bea2f-8fd0-11ed-b508-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

SPA was initially designated classified have increased (or at least not declined) since the date of SPA classification.

3.4.2. Objectives of the thematic session

Considering a comprehensive EU system to regularly assess and report on the management effectiveness of Natura 2000 sites is under development, this session will focus on how to improve management effectiveness on the ground. The specific objective of this session is therefore to discuss the following questions and draw up recommendations on how to ensure a wider application of management practices with proven effectiveness:

- What are the key ingredients for an effective site management?
- What is the experience so far in the Member States in terms of measuring the effectiveness of the Natura 2000 site management?
- Who should bear the responsibility for measuring the management effectiveness of the sites? At what interval and for what purpose?

3.4.3. Examples of best practices

Recognising the needs of Natura 2000 and other nature managers, the **LIFE ENABLE** project coordinated by EUROPARC has created a **European Nature Academy**, a new and innovative tailor-made training hub designed to help managers achieve their goals and priorities for nature. The Academy provides widely accessible learning experiences and training activities, which participants will be able to apply 'on the ground' for maximum impacts for nature, people and local communities. The training hub will offer learning programmes focusing on core competencies for all nature management practitioners, including purpose-built modules for Forest and Marine Natura 2000 managers across Europe.

EUROSITE as a network organisation has set up a working group, promoting protected area management effectiveness ([PAME](#)). It also developed a [Management Planning Toolkit](#), with information on management planning, monitoring and management guidance. The group organised several networking events focused on monitoring, making use of remote sensing-based materials, satellite imagery, drones etc. Reports from these events can be found on the website of the biogeographical process.

The LIFE project **GoProFor** created an online tool for disseminating good practices in Natura 2000 forest management, based on the LIFE programme experience. The database collects and describes methodologies, techniques and solutions tested through LIFE projects, mostly in Natura 2000 sites.

4. References and Links

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- Bijlsma et al., 2019. [Defining and applying the concept of Favourable Reference Values for species and habitats under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives](#)
- Bijlsma et al, 2019. [Examples of setting favourable reference values](#)
- Delbosc et al. 2021. [Assessing the conservation status of coastal habitats under Article 17 of the EU habitats directive](#)
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- Van Beeck Calkoen, et al. 2020. [Ungulate management in European national parks: Why a more integrated European policy is needed. *Journal of Environmental Management*, Vol. 260](#)

ANNEXES

Annex 1 - List of LIFE projects

LIFE projects funded between 2016 and 2023 dealing with conservation and restoration of habitats and species within the Natura 2000 network and adjacent buffer areas in the Mediterranean region.

| <i>MS</i> | <i>LIFE Ref.</i> | <i>Acronym</i> | <i>Dates</i> | <i>Total Budget</i> | <i>Project Title</i> |
|-----------|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---|
| CY | LIFE18 IPE/CY/000006 | LIFE IP PHYSIS | 10/07/2019 -31/10/2029 | 16.996.979 € | Managing the NATURA 2000 network in Cyprus and Shaping a sustainable future |
| CY | LIFE18 NAT/CY/001018 | LIFE WITH VULTURES | 15/07/2019 -14/07/2024 | 1.375.861 € | Saving Griffon Vultures in Cyprus through concrete conservation action |
| ES | LIFE18 NAT/ES/000930 | LIFE CAÑADAS | 15/10/2019 -30/06/2024 | 1.848.211 € | Conservation and restoration of drove roads to enhance biodiversity and connectivity of Natura 2000 sites in Spain |
| ES | LIFE16 IPE/ES/000019 | RBMP-DUERO | 01/01/2018 -31/12/2026 | 11.166.700 € | Implementation of the river Duero basin management plan in the Central-South part of the river Duero basin |
| ES | LIFE20 NGO4GD/ES/000021 | LIFE GREEN PEDRERA | 01/01/2022 -31/12/2023 | 735.426 € | Empowering citizenship to act and to understand EU GREEN DEAL through Fundació CATALUNYA LA PEDRERA's Natura Sites Network |
| ES | LIFE21-NAT-PT-Power-Lines4Birds/101074478 | PowerLines4Birds | 01/01/2023 - 30/04/2027 | 5.390.670 € | Reduce power line impact to improve the conservation of endangered birds in Iberia |
| ES | LIFE15 CCA/ES/000125 | LIFE The Green Link | 01/07/2016 -31/03/2020 | 2.876.202 € | Restore desertified areas with an innovative tree growing method across the Mediterranean border to increase resilience. |
| ES | LIFE18 CCA/ES/001160 | LIFE ADAPTA BLUES | 01/07/2019-31/07/2024 | 2.006.391 € | Adaptation to climate change through management and restoration of European estuarine ecosystems |
| ES | LIFE22-PLP-ES-EBP-reinforcement/101104367 | LIFE22-PLP-ES-EBP reinforcement | 01/07/2023 -31/12/2026 | 1.110.605 € | Improving the capabilities of the EuroBirdPortal project in order to boost its contribution towards EU policy objectives under the Birds Directive and the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy |
| ES | LIFE16 ENV/ES/000276 | LIFE Regenerate | 01/09/2017 -30/06/2022 | 2.176.863 € | Revitalizing multifunctional Mediterranean agrosilvopastoral systems using dynamic and profitable operational practices |
| ES | LIFE17 NAT/ES/000184 | LIFE-SALINAS | 01/09/2018 -30/09/2022 | 1.336.825 € | Conservación de los hábitats y aves acuáticas en el LIC y ZEPa ES0000175 "Salinas y Arenales de San Pedro del Pinatar" |
| ES | LIFE19 NAT/ES/001055 | LIFE LYNXCONNECT | 01/09/2020 -01/09/2025 | 18.754.029 € | Creating a genetically and demographically functional Iberian Lynx (<i>Lynx pardinus</i>) metapopulation |

| MS | LIFE Ref. | Acronym | Dates | Total Budget | Project Title |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--|
| ES | LIFE20 CCM/ES/001778 | LIFE +REB | 01/09/2021 - 31/08/2025 | 2.030.344 € | Quercus pyrenaica forest management to obtain cascading use of timber products as a tool for mitigation in Castilla-Leon |
| ES | LIFE20 CCA/ES/001624 | LIFE RedBosques_Clima | 01/09/2021 -31/08/2005 | 1.569.661 € | Nature-based solutions to improve adaptation of forests to climate change |
| ES | LIFE20 NAT/ES/001477 | LIFE Iberian Agrosteppes | 01/09/2021 -31/08/2026 | 3.315.951 € | Sustainable agrarian approaches for agro-steppe species and habitats conservation in Nature 2000 |
| ES | LIFE20 CCA/ES/001809 | LIFE ADAPT-ALEPPO | 01/09/2021-30/08/2025 | 2.606.279 € | Adaptive management of Mediterranean Pinus halepensis forests in the face of climate change |
| ES | LIFE20 CCM/ES/001656 | LIFE Wood For Future | 01/09/2021-30/09/2025 | 2.985.886 € | Recovery of Granada-Vega poplar groves to boost biodiversity and long-term carbon capture through structural bioproducts |
| ES | LIFE20 NAT/ES/001487 | LIFE Olivares Vivos + | 01/09/2021-30/09/2026 | 7.031.291 € | LIFE Olivares Vivos + Increasing the impact of Olivares Vivos in the EU |
| ES | LIFE15 CCA/ES/000060 | LIFE MixForChange | 01/10/2016-30/06/2022 | 1.302.051 € | Innovative management strategies for climate change adaptation of mixed subhumid Mediterranean forests |
| ES | LIFE15 NAT/ES/000757 | LIFE Tritó Montseny | 01/10/2016-31/12/2022 | 2.971.276 € | Conservacion del Triton del Montseny (Calotriton arnoldi): gestion del habitat, de su poblacion y educacion ambiental. |
| ES | LIFE16 NAT/PT/000754 | LIFE RELICT | 01/10/2017 -30/04/2023 | 1.654.899 € | LIFE RELICT - Preserving Continental Laurissilva Relics |
| ES | LIFE19 CCM/ES/001235 | LIFE WETLANDS4CLIMATE | 01/10/2020 -30/06/2024 | 2.124.053 € | Mediterranean Wetlands Management and Restoration as Carbon Sinks |
| ES | LIFE19 ENV/ES/000197 | LIFE RENATURWAT | 01/10/2020 -30/09/2024 | 1.893.955 € | Integrating circular economy and biodiversity in sustainable wastewater treatments based on constructed wetlands |
| ES | LIFE20 NAT/ES/001172 | LIFE FARMINGBARDENAS | 01/10/2021-30/09/2025 | 2.171.205 € | Conservation strategy for steppe birds in Bardenas Reales (Navarra, Spain) |
| ES | LIFE20 NAT/ES/001223 | LIFE medCLIFFS | 01/10/2021-30/09/2026 | 1.408.273 € | Towards an integrative management of Invasive Alien Plant Species in Mediterranean sea cliffs of European interest |
| ES | LIFE20 NAT/ES/000035 | LIFE EL HITO | 01/10/2021-31/12/2024 | 3.108.400 € | RESTORATION AND EXPANSION OF "EL HITO", A PRIORITY SALT FLAT AND WETLAND (SPAIN) |
| ES | LIFE20 GIE/ES/000731 | LIFE Iberconejo | 01/10/2021-31/12/2024 | 2.103.880 € | Drawing the baselines for the good management of a Mediterranean key species, the wild rabbit |
| ES | LIFE20 NAT/ES/000978 | LIFE ScrubsNet | 01/12/2021-31/08/2026 | 2.329.866 € | Revitalizing semi-arid extensive farming habitats through the sustainable management of their associated scrubs area |
| ES | LIFE16 NAT/ES/000768 | LIFE ALNUS | 03/07/2017-31/12/2022 | 2.509.684 € | Restoration, conservation and governance of the Alnus aluvial forests in the Mediterranean Region |

Background document for the fourth Mediterranean Seminar

| MS | LIFE Ref. | Acronym | Dates | Total Budget | Project Title |
|-----------|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---|
| ES | LIFE20 NAT/ES/001363 | LIFE Pro BV | 10/01/2022 -09/01/2027 | 2.678.434 € | Iberian Corridors Pro Bearded Vulture |
| ES | LIFE20 NAT/ES/000133 | LIFE CONNECT RICOTI | 15/09/2021-31/12/2026 | 5.480.579 € | Structural and assisted connectivity improvement of Dupont's lark (<i>Chersophilus duponti</i>) Iberian metapopulation |
| ES | LIFE22-CCM-ES-LIFE-CO2RK/101114049 | LIFE22-CCM-ES-LIFE CO2RK | 15/09/2023 -14/09/2028 | 2.365.559 € | Slow growing forests management for Climate Change Mitigation |
| ES | LIFE20 NAT/ES/001128 | LIFE Teixeres | 30/09/2021 -31/12/2026 | 2.406.410 € | Conservation and restoration of relict <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods |
| FR | LIFE21-NAT-FR-LIFE SAFELINES4BIRDS/101073826 | LIFE SAFELINES4BIRDS | 01/01/2023 -31/12/2028 | 14.141.546 € | Reducing bird mortality caused by power lines |
| FR | LIFE 18 GIE/FR/001029 | LIFE NATURARMY | 01/09/2019 -30/06/2024 | 2.683.507 € | To promote and strengthen the Army as a Natura 2000 site manager, in France and in Europe |
| FR | LIFE20 NAT/FR/000080 | LIFE SOS CRAU GRASSHOPPER | 01/09/2021 -30/09/2025 | 1.919.745 € | LIFE SOS Crau Plain Grasshopper: adaptive habitat management, breeding and reintroduction programme |
| FR | LIFE20 NAT/FR/001515 | LIFE TERRA MUSIVA | 01/09/2021-01/09/2026 | 6.106.375 € | Conservation of threatened habitats and species which form the Garrigues Gardoises' mediterranean ecological mosaic |
| FR | LIFE 17 NAT/FR/000542 | LIFE OXYURA | 01/10/2018 -30/12/2023 | 1.674.361 € | Oxyura against Oxyura. Eradicate the Ruddy duck to save the endangered White-headed duck from extinction. |
| FR | LIFE 20 NAT/FR/000758 | LIFE BIODIV' PAYSANNE | 01/10/2021 - 31/12/2027 | 9.097.686 € | Management of ecosystems in Occitanie as an experimental tool towards agroecological transition |
| FR | LIFE20 NAT/FR/001553 | LIFE GYPRESCUE | 01/10/2021 -30/06/2025 | 3.152.116 € | Rescue of the Bearded vulture in Corsica |
| FR | LIFE21 NAT FR LIFE GYPACT/101074131 | LIFE-GYPACT | 01/12/2022 -30/11/2028 | 13.465.098 € | Strengthening the reintroduction program to restore the <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> metapopulation between the Alps and the Pyrenees |
| FR | LIFE 17 CCA FR 000089 | NATUR ADAPT | 02/07/2018 -30/09/2023 | 4.210.764 € | Adapting nature protection to the challenges of climate change in Europe : basis of dynamic collective learning |
| GR | LIFE17 NAT/GR/000522 | GRECABAT | 01/09/2018 - 31/8/2024 | 1.270.000 € | Greek Caves and Bats: Management Actions and Change of At |
| GR | LIFE16 NAT/GR/000606 | LIFE Andros Park | 01/09/2017 -30/09/2022 | 2.343.329 € | Conservation of priority species and habitats of Andros Island protected area integrating socioeconomic considerations |
| GR | LIFE 17 NAT GR 000514 | LIFE Bonelli eastMed | 01/09/2018 -28/02/2025 | 4.232.584 € | Conservation & Management of the Bonelli's eagle population in east Mediterranean |
| GR | LIFE14 GIE/GR/000026 | LIFE Natura Themis | 01/10/2015 -30/06/2021 | 1.559.637 € | Promoting awareness of wildlife crime prosecution and liability for biodiversity damage in NATURA 2000 areas in Crete. |

| MS | LIFE Ref. | Acronym | Dates | Total Budget | Project Title |
|-----------|--|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--|
| GR | LIFE15 NAT/GR/000936 | LIFE Prespa Waterbirds | 01/10/2016-30/09/2021 | 1.768.906 € | Bird conservation in Lesser Prespa Lake: benefiting local communities and building a climate change resilient ecosystem |
| GR | LIFE18 NAT/GR/000768 | LIFE ARCPROM | 01/10/2019 -30/09/2024 | 2.786.497 € | Improving human-bear coexistence in 4 National Parks of South Europe |
| GR | LIFE16 IPE/GR/000002 | LIFE IP 4Natura | 01/12/2017 -30/11/2025 | 17.000.000 € | Integrated actions for the conservation and management of Natura 2000 sites, species, habitats and ecosystems in Greece |
| GR | LIFE17 NAT/GR/000511 | LIFE PRIMED | 02/07/2018-31/12/2024 | 2.136.775 € | Restoration, management and valorisation of PRiority habitats of MEDiterranean coastal areas |
| HR | LIFE17 NAT HR 000594 | LIFE ARTINA | 01/09/2018 -31/12/2023 | 1.921.387 € | LIFE Artina - seabird conservation network in the Adriatic |
| HR | LIFE22-NAT-HR-Improve-River-LIFE/101114250 | Improve River LIFE | 01/09/2023 -31/08/2028 | 4.736.406 € | Improving degree of conservation of Natura 2000 target species and habitat types through improvement of river connectivity |
| HR | LIFE19 NAT HR 001070 | LIFE CONTROL AILANTHUS | 01/10/2020 -01/04/2025 | 2.591.937 € | Establishing control of invasive alien species Ailanthus altissima (tree of heaven) in Croatia |
| HR | LIFE18 NAT HR 000847 | DINARA BACK TO LIFE | 15/01/2020 - 15/11/2023 | 1.296.509 € | Management planning and restoration of Dinara dry grasslands to save biodiversity and support sustainable development |
| IT | LIFE14 IPE/IT/000018 | LIFE IP GESTIRE 2020 | 01/01/2016 -31/12/2023 | 17.345.496 € | Nature Integrated Management to 2020 |
| IT | LIFE14 IPE/IT/000018 | LIFE GESTIRE 2020 | 01/01/2016-31/12/2023 | 17.345.496 € | Nature Integrated Management to 2000 |
| IT | LIFE19 NAT/IT/000732 | LIFE SAFE for VULTURES | 01/01/2021 -31/12/2026 | 3.196.851 € | LIFE SAFE for VULTURES - First step to the restoration of the vulture guild in Sardinia |
| IT | LIFE22 NAT-IT-101114121 | LIFE EOLIZARD | 01/06/2023 -31/05/2028 | 2.507.223 € | Conservation of the Aeolian wall lizard, through translocation, reintroduction, and habitat restoration |
| IT | LIFE17 NAT/IT/000609 | LIFE SAMFIX | 01/07/2018 - 30/06/2022 | 2.844.675 € | SAving Mediterranean Forests from Invasions of Xylosandrus beetles and associated pathogenic fungi |
| IT | LIFE17 NAT/IT/000547 | LIFE Nat.Sal.Mo | 01/07/2018 -31/03/2023 | 2.563.752 € | Recovery of S. macrostigma: Application of innovative techniques and participatory governance tools in rivers of Molise |
| IT | LIFE17 NAT/IT/000586 | LIFE FALKON | 01/07/2018 -31/12/2023 | 1.724.304 € | LIFE FALKON - Fostering the breeding range expansion of central - eastern Mediterranean Lesser Kestrel populations |
| IT | LIFE17 NAT/IT/000464 | LIFE SAFE-CROSSING | 01/09/2018 - 31/08/2023 | 4.222.170 € | Preventing Animal-Vehicle Collisions – Demonstration of Best Practices targeting priority species in SE Europe |
| IT | LIFE 17 NAT IT 000596 | LIFEorchids | 01/09/2018 - 31/10/2023 | 1.631.357 € | Improving the conservation status of critically endangered orchid communities in selected habitats in Northwestern Italy |

Background document for the fourth Mediterranean Seminar

| MS | LIFE Ref. | Acronym | Dates | Total Budget | Project Title |
|-----------|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---|
| IT | LIFE17 GIE/IT/000561 | GOProFOR LIFE | 01/09/2018 - 31/03/2023 | 2.511.818 € | GOod PRactices implementation netwOrk for FOrEst biodiversity conservation |
| IT | LIFE 18 NAT IT 000920 | LIFE DIOMEDEE | 01/09/2019 - 30/06/2024 | 1.402.228 € | Protection of seabirds and habitats in Tremiti (Diomedee) Islands and other Apulian SCI's through actions against IAS |
| IT | LIFE18 NAT/IT/000931 | LIFE STREAMS | 01/09/2019 - 31/07/2025 | 4.411.119 € | Salmo Cettii recovery actions in Mediterranean streams |
| IT | LIFE 19 NAT IT 000977 | LIFE_GRACE | 01/09/2020 - 31/08/2024 | 1.378.727 € | GRAslands Conservation Efforts through usage |
| IT | LIFE20 NAT/IT/001076 | LIFE ShepForBio | 01/09/2021-31/12/2027 | 3.228.451 € | Shepherds for Biodiversity in Mountain Marginal Areas |
| IT | LIFE21-NAT-IT-PREDATOR/101074458 | LIFE21-NAT-IT-PREDATOR | 01/09/2022 - 31/08/2027 | 2.847.410 € | REvent, Detect and combAT the spread Of SiluRus glanis in south european lakes to protect biodiversity |
| IT | LIFE18 GIE/IT/000755 | LIFE 4 POLLINATORS | 01/10/2019 - 30/09/2024 | 2.484.015 € | Involving people to protect wild bees and other pollinators in the Mediterranean |
| IT | LIFE 18 NAT IT 000917 | LIFE MILVUS | 01/10/2019 - 30/09/2025 | 2.103.484 € | Measures for the conservation of the Red kite in Calabria Region (Italy) and Corsica Island (France) |
| IT | LIFE19 GIE/IT/000311 | LIFE FOLIAGE | 01/10/2020 -07/05/2024 | 1.224.205 € | Forest planning and earth observation for a well-grounded governance |
| IT | LIFE19 IPE/IT/000015 | IMAGINE UMBRIA | 01/10/2020 -30/09/2027 | 15.663.500 € | Integrated MAnagement and Grant Investments for the N2000 NEtwork in Umbria |
| IT | LIFE20 NAT/IT/001468 | LIFE SEEDFORCE | 01/10/2021 -31/12/2026 | 7.790.685 € | Using SEED banks to restore and reinFORCE the endangered native plants of Italy |
| IT | LIFE20 NGO4GD/IT/000011 | Choose LIFE | 06/09/2021 -05/09/2023 | 507.065 € | Choose LIFE - Filling our lives with Nature: knowing it and promoting it, protecting it and conserving it. Making it central in Italian and European policy |
| IT | LIFE 18 NAT IT 000828 | LIFE LETSGO GIGLIO | 31/07/2019 - 31/12/2024 | 1.593.035 € | Less alien species in the Tuscan Archipelago: new actions to protect Giglio island habitats |
| IT | LIFE18 NAT/IT/000720 | LIFE LANNER | 06/01/2020 - 30/06/2025 | 2.604.523 € | Urgent conservation actions for Lanner* falcon (Falco biarmicus feldeggii) |
| PT | LIFE17 NAT/PT/000554 | LIFE WoIFlux | 01/01/2019 - 30/11/2024 | 2.185.383 € | Decreasing socio-ecological barriers to connectivity for wolves south of the Douro river |
| PT | LIFE18 NAT/PT/000927 | LIFE Ilhas Barreira | 01/09/2019-31/12/2024 | 2.242.586 € | Conserving the Barrier Islands in Algarve to protect priority species and habitats |
| PT | LIFE19 NAT/PT/000414 | LIFE LxAquila | 01/09/2020 -01/09/2025 | 1.928.385 € | Stewardship network for the conservation of peri-urban Bonellis eagles |