



Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process Newsletter

Photo: Short-eared owl, *Asio flammeus*. Source: Connor Macleod

March 2024

Welcome to the latest edition of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process newsletter! In this first newsletter of 2024, 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 <mailto:natura2000platform@wur.nl>

In this edition:

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

Share your Natura 2000 news here!

As of February 2024, the biogeographical process newsletter has over 1,500 subscribers. As readers will know, these newsletters are used to promote upcoming events, report on relevant meetings, and to share updates on news and achievements related to Natura 2000 across Europe.

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

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: Mute swan, *Cygnus olor*. Source: Stein Arne Jensen

Fourth Mediterranean Biogeographical Seminar, 17 – 19 April 2024, Larnaca, Cyprus,

This seminar covering the terrestrial part of the Mediterranean biogeographical region will be held in Larnaca, Cyprus, on 17-19 April 2024. It is hosted by the Department of the Environment of Cyprus and will be held at the Radisson Blu hotel in the centre of the town. Representatives of the eight Mediterranean Member States are expected to attend. Nominees have already received an invitation to register.

The themes discussed at the seminar will be:

1. Pledges and strict protection;
2. Site-specific conservation objectives and measures;
3. Favourable reference values, and;
4. Effective management of protected areas.

More information about these themes can be found [on our wiki](#), where soon the draft programme and background document will also be available.



Photo: Faia Brava Nature Reserve, Portugal. Source: Frank Vassen

The Continental Seminar, June 2024, Prague, Czech Republic

We have now received final confirmation that the Continental seminar, the biggest seminar with 14 Member States participating, will be held in Prague/Czech Republic.

The preparations for the seminar are starting now, and more information will be shared on our [wiki](#) soon.

Keep updated with live seminar information by following the [Terrestrial Twitter](#) and [Marine Twitter](#) accounts.



Photo: Andrea Vettori addresses the Atlantic Seminar participants, Source: NatureBureau

Migratory Seabird-Friendly Management of Marine and/or Coastal Protected Areas in the Baltic Sea Region, 15 May 2023, Poland (and online!)

Hosted by OTOP (BirdLife Poland), this online networking event brought together biodiversity management experts from eight EU Baltic Sea littoral countries (i.e., Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden) with the aim of devising appropriate management practices focusing on migratory seabird populations that use the Baltic Sea.

The report from this event is now available [here](#).

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

The previous newsletters contained information from the 2023 Boreal seminar. The summary report has now been finalised and is available [here](#), alongside presentations from the event.

The seminar has sparked several initiatives for networking events, planned for this summer and autumn, which are described further down in this newsletter.



Photo: Taiga vegetation, Nuukio, Source: Theo van der Sluis

Effective Management of Marine Protected Areas, 7 March 2024, Brussels

On 7 March 2024, EU Blue Parks Community hosted their second community workshop: Effective management of marine protected areas.

The EU Blue Parks Community is made up from national and regional marine and environmental agencies, researchers in marine conservation, sea basin organisations, NGOs, international bodies, donors and sustainable investors. The Community aims to identify and address challenges, share tools, solutions and good practices, as well as promote innovative approaches across the EU sea-basins.

The March workshop brought together experts to share insights on the challenges and opportunities in marine and freshwater biodiversity protection. Through a blend of presentations, case studies, and interactive discussions, the workshop highlighted key EU funded projects and research innovations in effective marine and coastal protection, delved into policy development needs, and explored participatory approaches from EU Member States, regional, and local stakeholders.

Presentations from the event can be found [here](#).



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

The marine Mediterranean and Black Sea seminar was held in Marseille, France, on 12-14 March 2024. Around 55 participants gathered at the Palais du Pharo for this event, hosted jointly by the European Commission's DG Environment, French Ministry of Ecological Transition and the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB).

Day 1 was opened via a virtual address from Marie-Lauren Métayer of the French Ministry of Ecological Transition, before speakers from the European Commission's DG ENV introduced the EU policy context and the biogeographical process.

The first part of the day consisted of presentations on Protected Areas targets, whilst the afternoon session focused on Conservation Status targets – with several Member States presenting their progress towards targets and challenges faced along the way. Each of these sessions was followed by group discussions, where participants identified the main challenges of making pledges and suggested solutions for those challenges.



Photo: A seminar working group discusses pledges. Source: NatureBureau

In the evening, a Gala diner was held at a local restaurant, and the seminar attendees were joined by the Deputy Mayor of Marseille Hervé Menchon, and the president of the Calanques National Park Didier Réault. Amongst other comments, Mr. Menchon expressed the importance of educating local youth about marine conservation actions, whilst Mr. Réault stressed how the National Park works closely with the local municipality – emphasising the strong relationship between park tourism and its benefits to Marseille.

Day 2 of the seminar focussed on three main topics:

1. The role of Natura 2000 sites and other MPAs in marine restoration
2. Strict protection in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions
3. Renewable energy and marine conservation

Following presentations on these topics, there were Q&A sessions and moderated discussion, with the results being presented back to the group by nominated rapporteurs. Closing remarks were made by Andrea Vettori and Vedran Nikolić of DG Environment who reflected on the productivity of the seminar and identified the next steps for the pledge process – highlighting the importance of connecting authorities and stakeholders at events like these.

In the evening a knowledge market took place where organisations presented posters on projects and initiatives not formally presented at the seminar. This included [LIFE ARTINA](#), CACEM's Marine Environment Enforcement Support Centre and [onewater.blue](#), amongst others.

The third and final day of the seminar involved an excursion to [Calanques National Park](#) – a Natura 2000 site which hosts the largest no-take zone in the Mediterranean. Seminar participants enjoyed the clear views of Posidonia seabeds, and a small number of the group observed a dolphin.

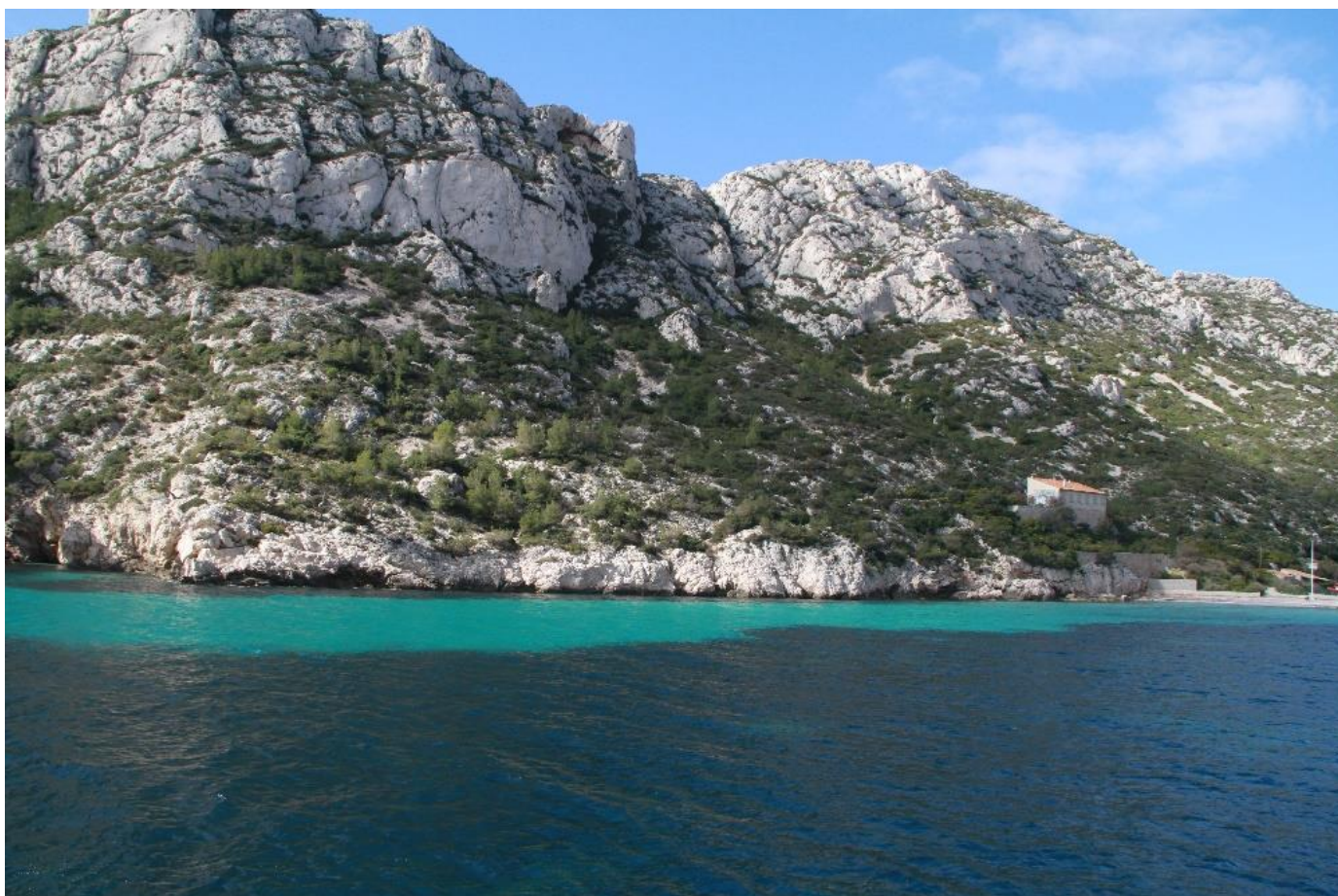


Photo: Calanques National Park. Source: NatureBureau

Presentations from the event can be found [here](#), where the report will also be made available.

Keep updated with seminar information by following the [Terrestrial Twitter](#) and [Marine Twitter](#) accounts.



Photo: The New Forest, Hampshire, England. Source: Connor Macleod

Surveillance and Enforcement for the Effectiveness of Marine Protected/Natura 2000 areas in the Adriatic Sea, 26 March 2024, Split, Croatia

A networking event on Surveillance and Enforcement for the Effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas in the Adriatic Sea, organised by Sunce, will take place on 26 March, in Split, Croatia.

The event is organised in the framework of both the biogeographical process and the Interreg Italy – Croatia [EFFICIENTN2K](#) project “Strengthening Institutional Collaboration on Surveillance and Enforcement in Coastal and Marine Natura 2000 Sites”.

The event will serve as an opportunity to present findings of the analysis of current capacities to control priority pressures arising from human activities in marine and coastal protected and Natura 2000 sites in Italy and Croatia. Special focus will be on illegal fishing, anchoring, discharge of wastewater from boats, pollution from agricultural practice and coastal fires. Participants will discuss solutions for improving surveillance and enforcement to ensure effective management of MPAs.

Strict Protection in the Marine Environment, 16 April 2024, online

Following the discussions on strict protection held over the last six months at the three marine biogeographical seminars, we are organising an online event focusing solely on the 10% strict protection target in the marine environment.

The event will serve as an opportunity for Member States to share their experiences across marine regions, discuss challenges faced and approaches in preparing the pledges, and to ask questions and seek clarification from the European Commission where needed.

The programme and a link to register will be shared shortly on our [wiki](#).

Flying Squirrel LIFE Project; A Boreal Forest Meeting, 11 – 13 June 2024, Espoo, Finland

[Flying Squirrel LIFE project](#) is organising an international meeting for the Boreal Biogeographical Process, focusing on challenges related to the use of Boreal Forests, with a special emphasis on network perspectives, using flying squirrel issues as an interesting example.

The face-to-face meeting will take place in Espoo, Finland, from 11 to 13 June 2024. The programme includes visits to flying squirrel habitats both in urban areas and in a National Park, alongside to managed forests where event participants will discuss the definitions of natural and old forests.

This event is a great chance for networking and knowledge exchange between countries and experts. There is a capacity of 40 participants to attend, with invitations being directed at Boreal member countries Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden, with hopes to achieve attendance from at least five persons from each Member State.

Find more details and register for the event [here](#). Registration closes on 27 May 2024.

Prescribed burning in forest management: containing risks while maintaining biodiversity, 10-11 September 2024, online, and 2025 in Sweden

A networking event on Prescribed burning is being prepared by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency SEPA, together with the LIFE in Taiga project. The event will be in September 2024, 2 half-days online, to be followed by a live event and excursion in Sweden in the second half of 2025.

The event covers all biogeographical regions, countries from South and Northern Europe that are facing increased fire risks, due to climate change.

Fire is and has been an essential element of many forest ecosystems, and has increasingly been adopted as a management tool by forest authorities in Northern Europe. Prescribed burning can be very effective in managing wildfire risks, preventing the risk of bigger losses due to damage to built-up infrastructure. Also, fire can be of particular importance for biodiversity conservation, some Natura 2000 species and habitats are exclusively dependant on fires for their survival.

This event will focus on the role of fire in the management of forest ecosystems. The LIFE in Taiga project is demonstrating how fire regimes are best reinstated as part of the forest management. The network event is planned for 10-11 September 2024. It will be an online event, with two half days of presentations and discussions. The first half day to introduce the role of fire and its' importance for forest management, and how it has been incorporated in forest management policies. The second day will focus on aspects of forest biodiversity and Natura 2000.

In 2025, a follow-up networking event is planned near Stockholm in Sweden (in person), for two days, followed by a 1-day field excursion. If you are interested to join the online event on 10-11 September, more information can be found on the [LIFE website](#) and you can register for the event [here](#).

Strictly Protected Areas, Brussels, October 2024

One of the outcomes of the terrestrial biogeographical seminars was the need expressed by Member States to discuss strict protection, in view of the protected areas pledge. Such a networking event will now be prepared, focussing on all biogeographical regions, discussing aspects of strict protection in various regions in Europe. The event is likely to be held in October 2024.

It will be an in-person event, to be held at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. Please follow updates in the forthcoming (May 2024) Newsletter for further information about registration for the event.

Keep updated with event information by following the [Terrestrial Twitter](#) and [Marine Twitter](#) accounts.



Photo: Gannetry, Eye Island, Ireland. Source: NatureBureau

Natura 2000 Awards – 2024 Finalists Announced!

The European Commission have announced the 27 finalists for the 2024 edition of the Natura 2000 Award. The selected finalists are from Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the Netherlands. All finalists for the Natura 2000 Award are entered automatically for the European Citizens' Award.

Discover more about the finalists and vote for your favourite [here](#).

Voting closes on 25 April 2024, and a high-level jury will decide on the winners for the five Award categories. The winners of the Natura 2000 Award will be announced at a public ceremony on 29 May in Brussels.

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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