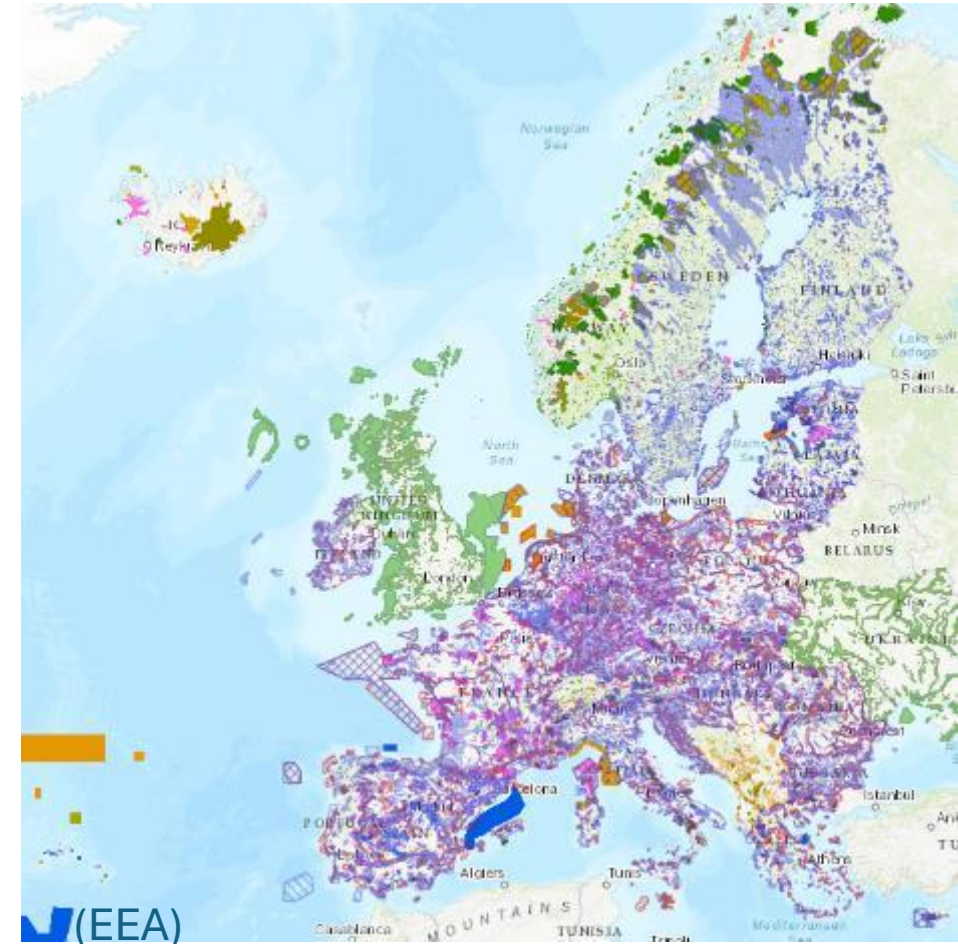


Strictly Protected areas in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – Committee of the Regions

November 2024

Cy Griffin,

FACE - European Federation for Hunting and Conservation



Which activities are acceptable in strictly protected areas?



Parliamentary question - E-006893/2020(ASW)
European Parliament

Download 

Answer given by Mr Sinkevičius on behalf of the European Commission

8.2.2021

[> Written question](#)

Question: concerned hunting in 10% strictly protected areas and the principle of subsidiarity?

Answer: **The conditions under which hunting is allowed** within protected areas depend on the ecological requirements of the habitats and species that those areas aim to protect. **For strictly protected areas**, where the ecological requirements of protected habitats and species need that ecological processes are left undisturbed, human activities are to be restricted or excluded if they are not compatible with those requirements. **This is to be decided by the national authorities on a case by case basis in line with the principle of subsidiarity.**

Criteria and Guidance for protected areas designations

- First draft NADEG October 2020.
- ‘The [guidance document](#) was developed in cooperation with the European Environment Agency and is the result of year-long discussions with representatives of the Member States and of stakeholder organisations.’ (Jan. 2022)

Final version – **many strictly protected areas will be non-intervention areas**, where only limited and well-controlled activities that either do not interfere with natural processes or enhance them will be allowed. Such activities may, in many cases, include scientific research, natural disaster prevention (e.g. wildfires), invasive alien species control, non-intrusive activities and installations, non-intrusive and strictly controlled recreational activities, when such activities are compatible with the conservation objectives of the areas on the basis of a case-by-case assessment.

Criteria and Guidance for protected areas designations

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In addition, **strictly protected areas may also be areas in which active management sustains or enhances natural processes...** For example, mowing/grazing of grasslands would be considered compatible with strict protection.... Similarly, **population control of wild ungulates** to ensure a good status for the habitats and species targeted by the protected areas when natural predation is insufficient would be considered compatible with strict protection. Instead, **activities that interfere with natural processes by not sustaining or enhancing them should not be allowed.**



Example: Harz National Park, Germany

- Was naturally a deciduous forest
- Spruce trees were planted for forestry
- Now, 90% of the spruce forests are dead due to bark beetle
- **70% of the area are currently non-intervention zones**
- Natural forest regeneration is very slow and still prone to bark beetle infestations and climate change

In this case small scale interventions benefit and accelerate natural forest regeneration?

active management can enhance natural processes

Section 4: Specific Guidance on Strict Protection (10% Target)

4.1.1 Ecological criteria

4.1.2 Primary and old-growth forests

4.1.3 Other carbon-rich ecosystems

4.1.4 Other ecosystems

4.2 Management effectiveness

4.3 Formal designation criteria

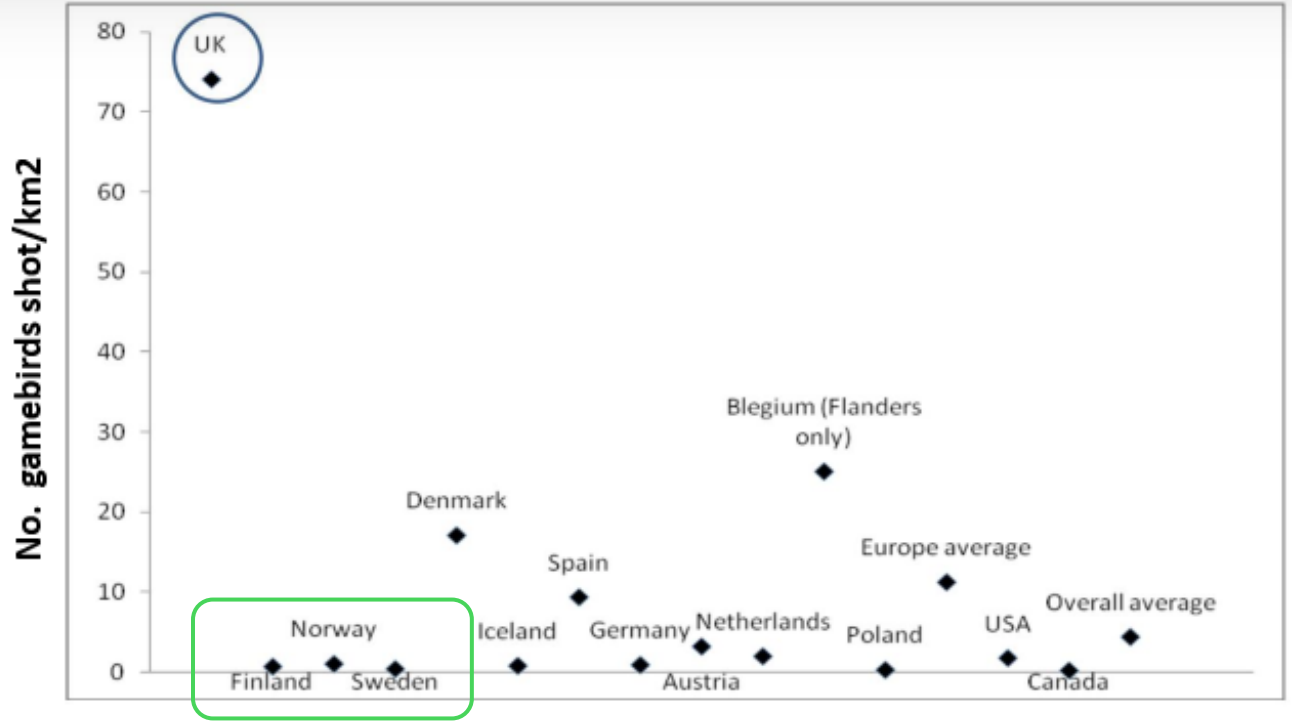
4.4 The EU coordination process

4.5 Monitoring and reporting

Several Member States lack established management plans for all Natura 2000 sites in their territory.

Only 7.6% of the recorded Protected Areas in the EU have been assessed for management effectiveness (PAME report, EEA 2020)

Hunting is highly variable activity in Europe and worldwide

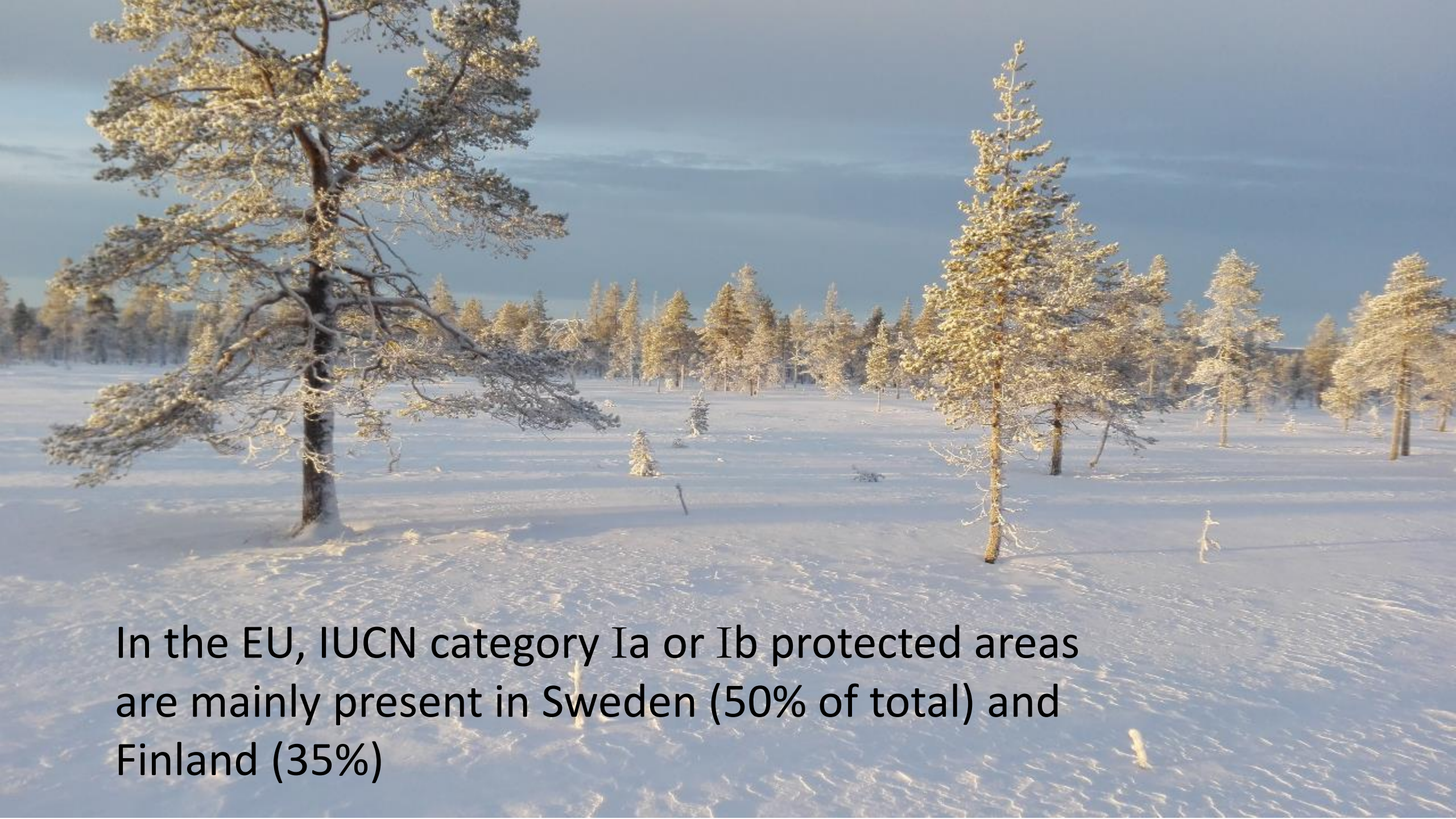


Densities of numbers of gamebirds shot in European countries, USA and Canada (gamebirds/km²)

(Source GWCT)

.. As is
recreational
fishing





In the EU, IUCN category Ia or Ib protected areas are mainly present in Sweden (50% of total) and Finland (35%)





Conclusions:

- The Criteria and Guidance for protected areas designations was subject consultation over 12 months, but communication on final content lacked clear messaging.
- Examples are needed on management effectiveness and how to make case-by-case assessments of permitted activities.
- Carbon rich ecosystems may need intervention management to remain in an optimal stage of succession, or to achieve optimal conditions.
- Some activities such as hunting and fishing are highly variable, as are the landscapes in which they take place.
- Regulatory frameworks for Natura 2000 sites, National Parks, and existing strictly protected areas reflect national conditions.
- Conservation works when people support it at community level.