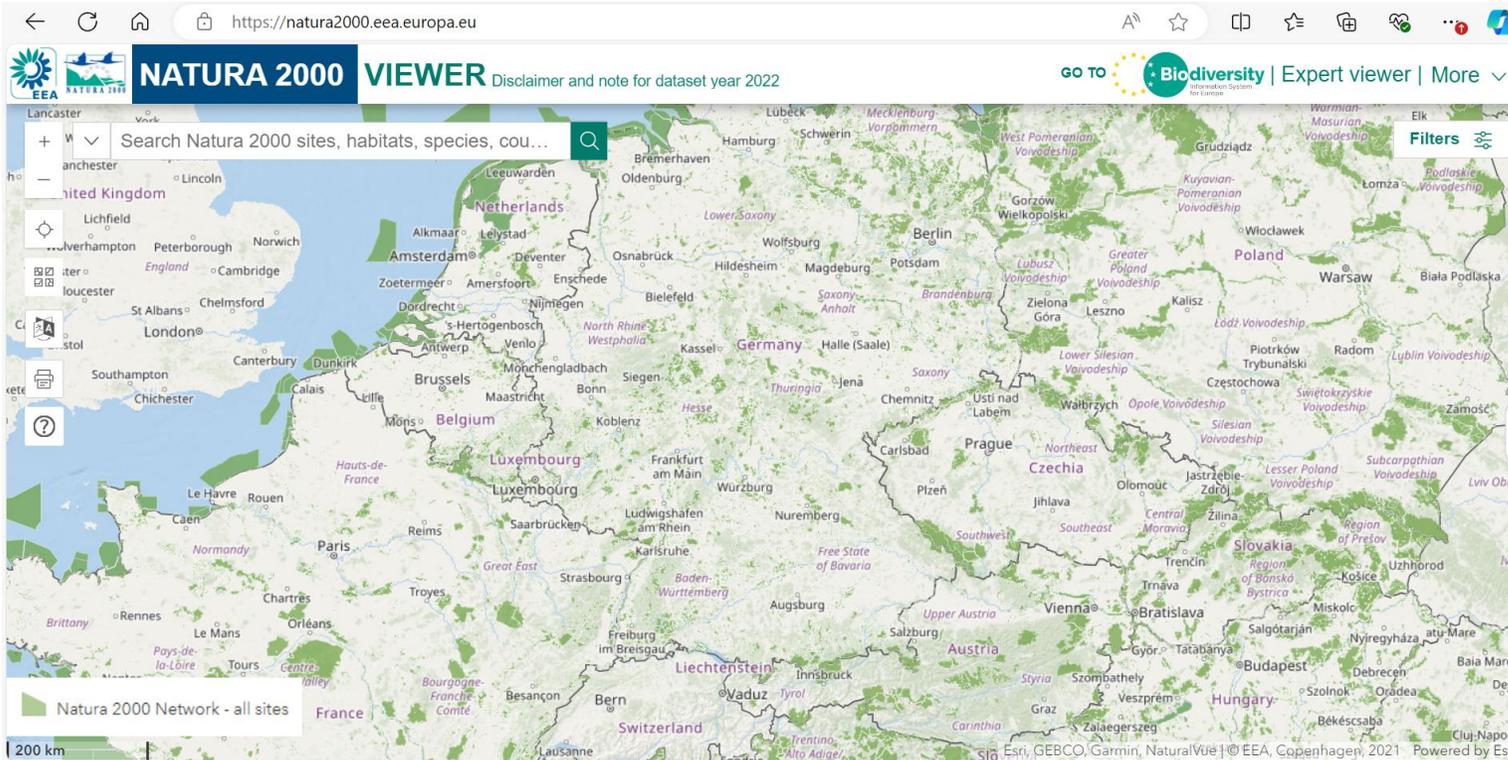


Strict Protected areas and the role of the European Environment Agency



EU 27 coverage

26.4% Land

12.3% of Ocean

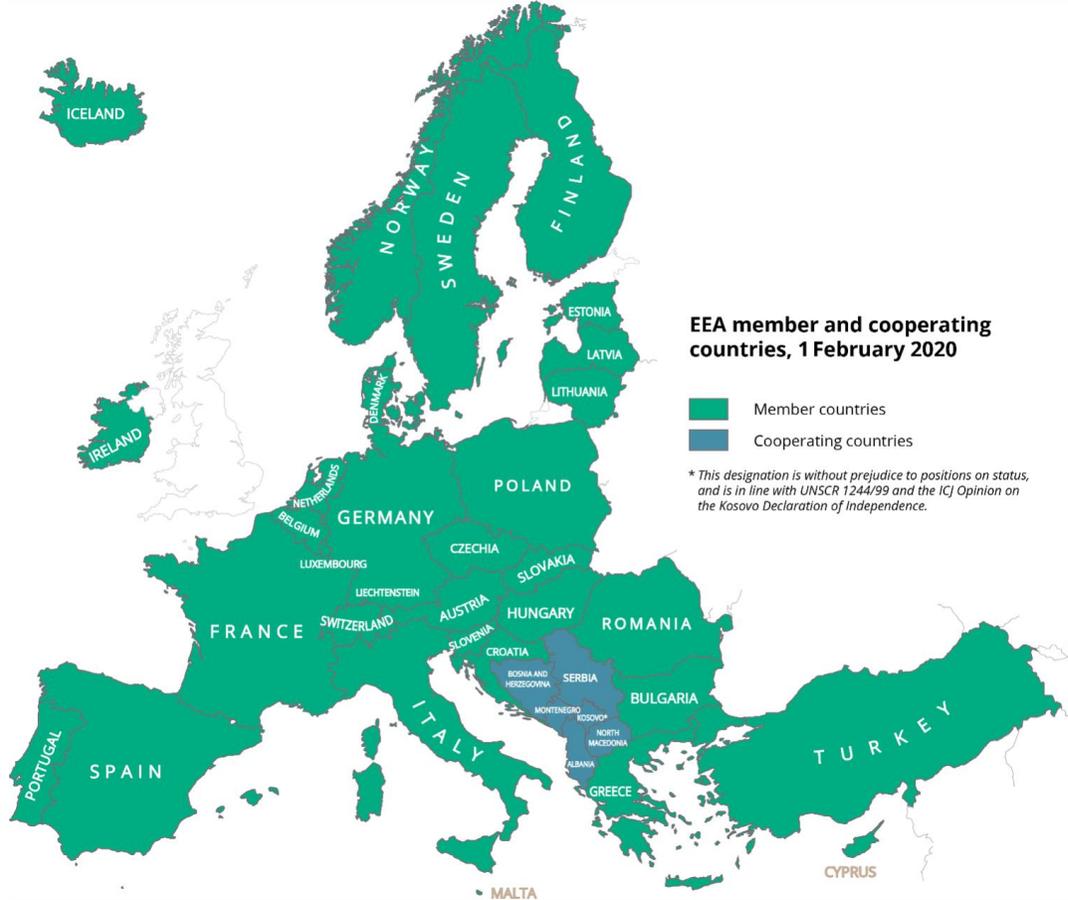
European Environment Agency

An EU body established under legislation that operates at the **interface of science and policy**.

Founded in 1993, with c. 300 staff, with a **network**, 'Eionet' which comprises more than 1 000 experts and 350 institutions in 38 European countries.

Gathering data and information from across Europe and translating this into **knowledge** to inform EU policy and **decision-making**.

EIONET: Environment Information and Observation Network



Protected Areas, coverage

Current coverage of protected areas..

EU 27

26.4% Land

12.3% of ocean

Source: EEA 2024

Protected area coverage across the world

	Land	Ocean
North America	12.93%	15.08%
Latin America	24.56%	25.32%
Africa	14.51%	15.89%
Asia-Pacific	15.99%	19.65%
West Asia	13.15%	7.56%
Global	16.42%	8.33%

Source: UNEP-WCMC, Nov. 2024

What is the coverage for strict protected areas?

“Today only **3% of land** and less than **1% of marine areas** are strictly protected”

EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

In reality, we do not know the exact figure as we have no data flow to collect this information.

What is the coverage for strict protected areas?

These figures were calculated using the proxy of strict equals IUCN management category Ia, Ib and II.

However, these are not designed to assess the level of strict protection because they primarily describe the management objectives of protected areas. This approach leaves (some) flexibility in how these areas are managed, meaning that two areas under the same category might still vary in terms of the level of protection they offer.

Note: no information on IUCN management categories collected for Natura 2000 sites.

What is the coverage for strict protected areas?

There is a clear gap in knowledge, which makes it impossible for us to set a baseline and to track progress.

What is the coverage for strict protected areas?

We will be **setting up a reporting flow**, in conjunction to the national designated areas data flow, to collect spatial information on strict protection.

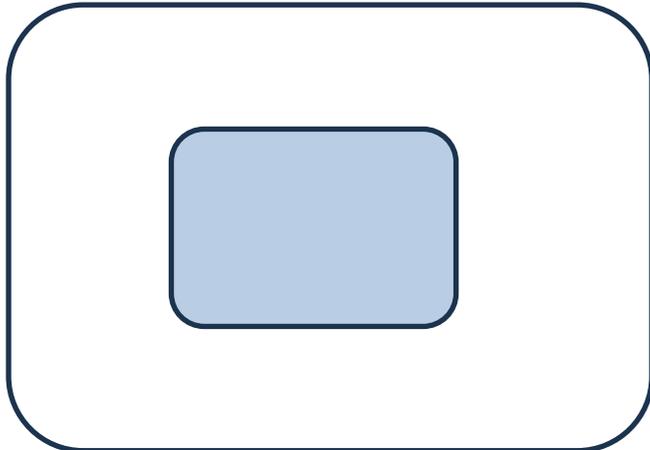
This will allow us assess, visualise and share this information, via indicators, map viewers, downloads, assessments, etc.

What is the coverage for strict protected areas?

We will design a new, or modify the existing data flow to collect **all** sites and zones that are strictly protected areas (including Natura 2000 and national sites). We will develop guidance documents if required.



An entire site



A zone within a site

Information on strict protected areas?

We will create an **indicator** on strict protected areas to generate the figure and to track the progress towards the 10% target.

Terrestrial protected areas in Europe

Published 12 Nov 2024

Home > Analysis and data > Indicators > Terrestrial protected areas in Europe

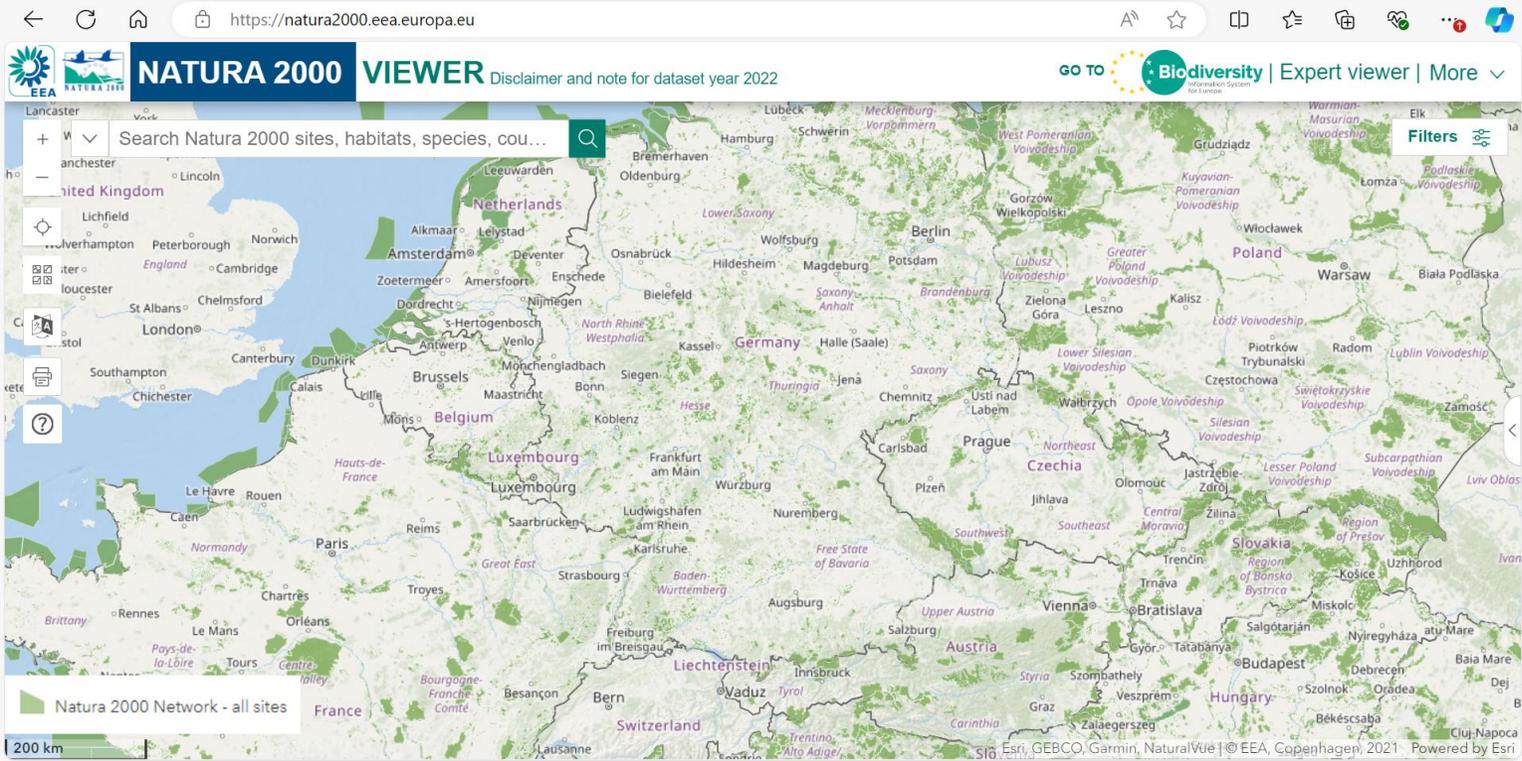
By the end of 2022, protected areas covered 26.1% of European Union land, with 18.6% of EU land designated as Natura 2000 sites and 7.5% under other complementary national designations. The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 sets out a target of protecting at least 30% of EU land by 2030, while ensuring that all protected areas are managed effectively. The area reported as protected has steadily increased since 2011, by 1.8 percentage points, yet there are no signs of growth in the last years. It is currently uncertain whether the EU will meet the 30% target, unless rate of designation of protected areas more than doubles by 2030.

Figure 1. Coverage of protected areas in the EU-27 land area in 2011-2022



Information on strict protected areas?

We will allow for them to be visualised and downloaded so the data is accessible to all *



Other effective area-based conservation (OECMs)

A geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values.

OECMs

“how other effective area-based conservation measures and greening of cities could contribute to the targets.” EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

OECM are part of the GBF target,
.....“systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures”...



THE BIODIVERSITY PLAN
For Life on Earth

GBF HOME // TARGET 3

Target 3

**Conserve 30% of Land,
Waters and Seas**



Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed

European Environment Agency



OECMs

As with strict protection, we have no baseline as we have no sites submitted as OECMs, though no doubt there are many that exist.

OECMs

How to collect these sites? INSPIRE says

"IR Requirement Annex IV, Section 11.4.3 Cross-theme requirements 1. If an area has been established exclusively to manage, regulate and restrict activities to conserve nature, biodiversity and cultural heritage, it shall be made available as a ProtectedSite spatial object. If a zone has been established to deliver multiple objectives, including the conservation of nature, biodiversity and cultural heritage, it shall be made available as a ManagementRestrictionOrRegulationZone spatial object."

Or in short use the **Area management schema**.

OECMs

We will see how to map the INSPIRE requirement to the national designated areas data flow so we can collect these sites and recognize them as in the system as OECMs.

Information on OECMs?

We will calculate the overage figures of OECMs to understand their contributions to the 30% target

Terrestrial protected areas in Europe

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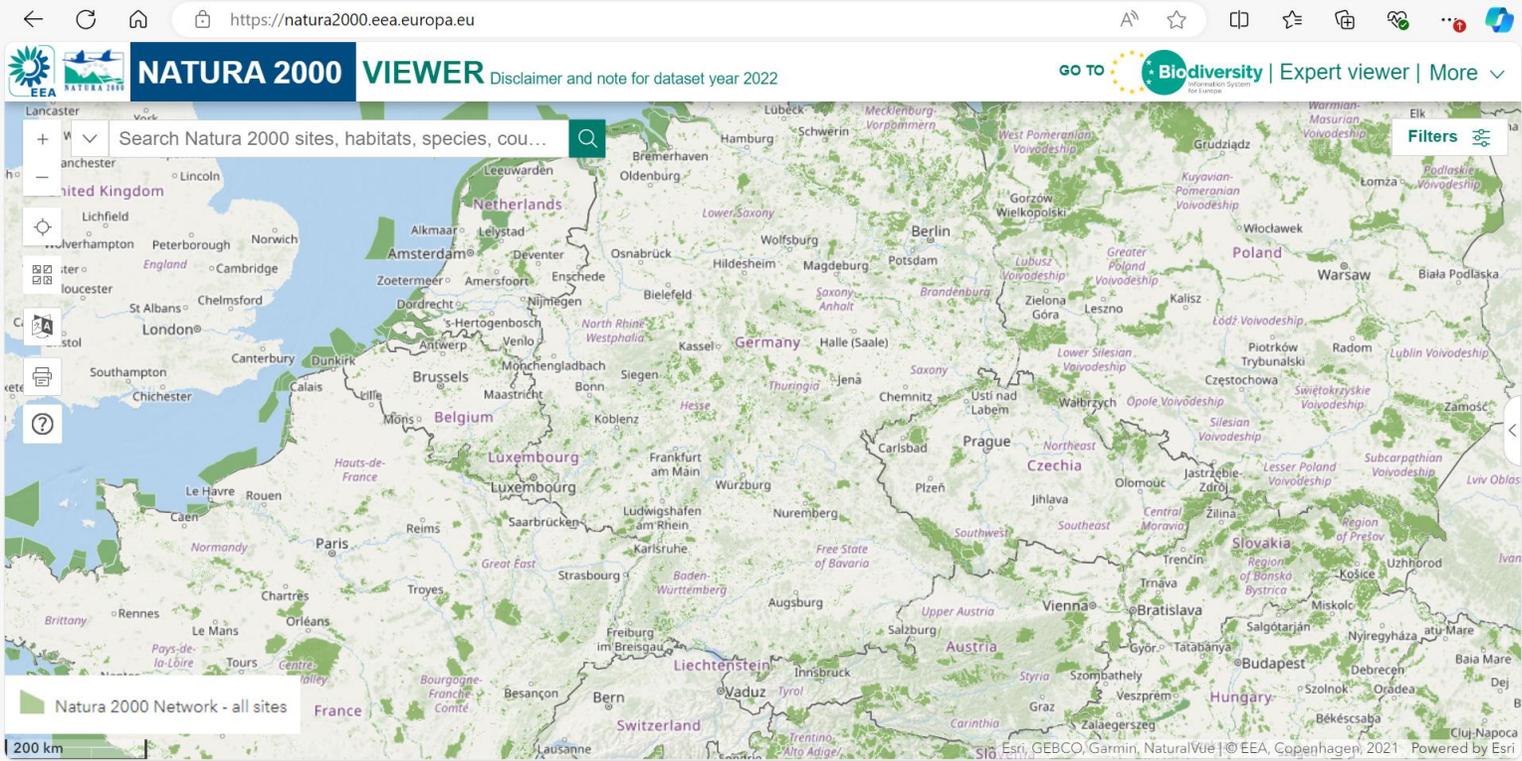
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Figure 1. Coverage of protected areas in the EU-27 land area in 2011-2022



Information on OECMs?

We will allow for them to be visualised and downloaded so the data is accessible to all *



What we will do

We will share this with the Joint Research Centre of the EU to supply the dashboard on the [Knowledge Centre on Biodiversity](#).

EU Biodiversity Strategy Actions Tracker

Dashboard Actions tracker

European Commission > Knowledge for policy > Biodiversity > EU Biodiversity Strategy Actions Tracker

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SUMMARY

COHERENT NETWORK OF PROTECTED AREAS

EU NATURE RESTORATION PLAN

ENABLING TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

EU EXTERNAL ACTION AND AN AMBITIOUS GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY AGENDA

In the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the EU and its Member States committed to implement more than 100 actions by 2030. This tool is designed to track that progress.

SUMMARY



COHERENT NETWORK OF PROTECTED AREAS [↗](#)

Target 1 - Legally protect a minimum of 30% of the EU's land area and a minimum of 30% of the EU's sea area, and integrate ecological corridors, as part of a true Trans-European Nature Network. [↗](#)

Target 2 - Strictly protect at least a third of the EU's protected areas, including all remaining EU primary and old-growth forests. [↗](#)

Target 3 - Effectively manage all protected areas, defining clear conservation objectives and measures, and monitoring them appropriately. [↗](#)

+ 1 - Commission guidance for identifying and designating additional protected areas, and appropriate management planning	COMPLETED	2021
+ 2 - Complete the designation of Natura 2000 sites, including the necessary designations of marine sites	IN PROGRESS	2030
+ 3 - Coordinate with Member States nature protection actions in the framework of the biogeographical regions and regional sea conventions	IN PROGRESS	2030
+ 4 - Possible adjustment of the reporting format for nationally designated protected areas	DELAYED	2023

+ 5 - Progress significantly in legally designating new protected areas and integrating ecological corridors	DELAYED	2023
+ 6 - Commission assessment of progress to the 2030 targets on protected areas, and of whether additional action is needed	IN PROGRESS	2024
+ 7 - Commission guidance on defining, mapping and strictly protecting all primary and old-growth forests	COMPLETED	2022
+ 8 - Promote and support investments in green and blue infrastructure and cooperation among Member States to set up ecological corridors	IN PROGRESS	2030
+ 9 - Protect and restore ecosystems in the EU's Outermost Regions, and support biodiversity action in the Overseas Countries and Territories	IN PROGRESS	2030

European Environment Agency



What we are going to do

We are modifying the Natura 2000 Standard Data Form and the reporting for nationally designated site to ask for:

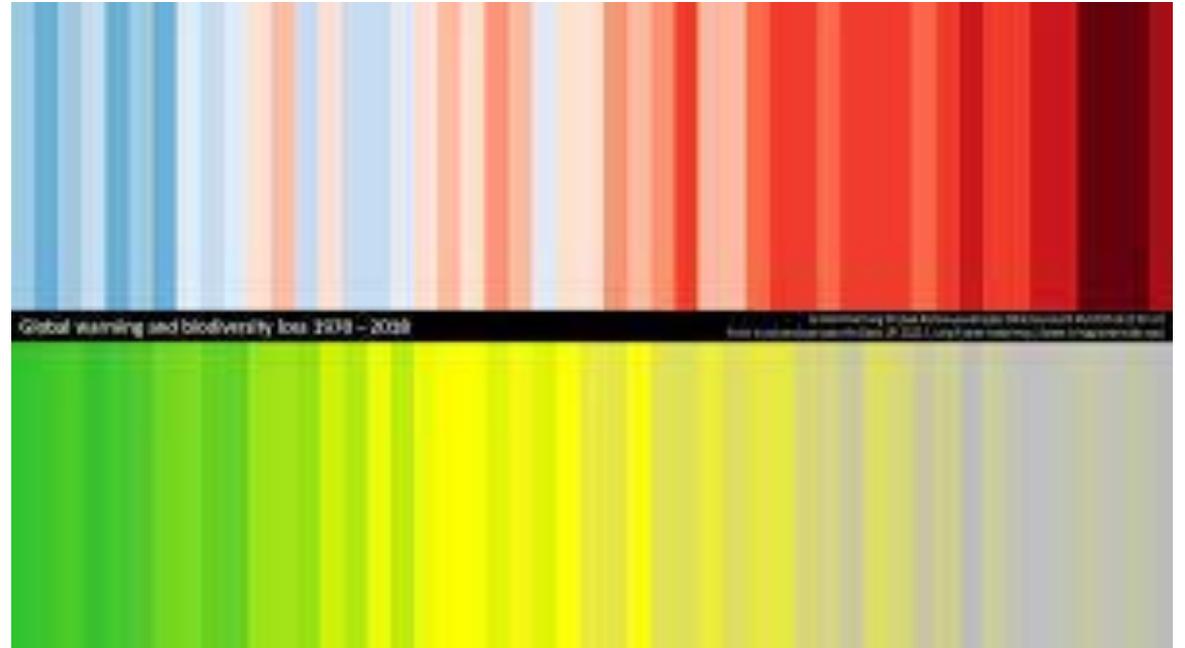
- Conservation objectives
- Conservation measures

And a renewed focus on management plan

Contact:

Dr Brian MacSharry,
Head of Group, Biodiversity and Nature
European Environment Agency
Brian.macsharry@eea.europa.eu

Increasing average temperatures



Decreasing biodiversity

Source:

[Ed Hawkins, University of Reading](#)

[Miles Richardson, University of Derby](#)