

This newsletter is the first of a new series from the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity. It aims at providing information on activities led by the Consortium in the framework of the multi-annual European Environment Agency's Strategy 2004-2008.

The newsletter will be produced 4 times per year at regular intervals.

NEWS

• STREAMLINING EUROPEAN 2010 BIODIVERSITY INDICATORS (SEBI 2010)

The first year for implementing the project on Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators (SEBI2010) has been completed. Aimed at better coordinating the production of biodiversity indicators between global, pan-European, EU and national level, this process focuses on the 15 EU headline indicators agreed upon at the EU Council meeting (June 2004).

These indicators address the state and trends of European biodiversity against the 2010 target around different aspects: wild and domestic species, ecosystems, protected areas, invasive species, sustainable use of biodiversity and pressures on biodiversity as nitrogen deposition.

This project was welcomed in different fora: EU Nature Directors meeting in UK (October 2005), 4th Biodiversity in Europe Conference in Croatia (February 2006) and DG Environment side-event during the [Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Curitiba](#), Brazil (March 2006).

Next important step will be the delivery of the full set of indicators to DG Environment by the end of 2006.

Four among the list of 15 EU Headline indicators are available and can be commented on the European Community - Clearing House Mechanism website (<http://biodiversity-chm.eea.eu.int/stories/story722585>).

• NATURA 2000 & THE TWO NATURE DIRECTIVES

The Mediterranean list of Sites of Community Importance for the EU15 was delivered to [DG Environment](#) in January. There will now be a period of inter service consultation before the list is adopted. This is the final list for the EU15 although most countries have some gaps to fill in the different Biogeographical regions.

The last biogeographical seminar for the EU10 (Continental Region: Czech Republic, Poland & Slovenia) is scheduled for 26-28 April 2006.

A revised draft of the explanatory notes for the Article 12 Reporting format was produced by the ETC/BD in January and discussed during the February meeting of the Habitats Scientific Working Group. A further revision will be prepared for the April meeting of the Habitats Committee.

The web page of the ETC/BD dedicated to these topics has been re-organised. [Take a look...](#) and find the useful [documentation](#) now available.

• EIONET-NRC SEMINAR FOR NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY

The annual EIONET seminar for National Reference Centres (NRCs) on nature and biodiversity was held at the European Environment Agency, Copenhagen on 1-2 March 2006, under the heading 'Tools for biodiversity assessment'. The overall objectives of the workshop were to bring NRCs up to date with progress on existing activities related to indicator development, including Core Set of Indicators (CSI), EU Headline indicators, Streamlining European Biodiversity Indicators for the 2010 target (SEBI 2010) while also beginning discussion on the long-term (5-year) process the EEA has in mind to produce an ecosystem assessment in line with the UN Millennium Assessment for Europe.

After a first session dedicated to setting the scene both in terms of organisational context (presenting the EEA Biodiversity group and the ETC/BD), policy framework and tools available for reporting, two working sessions were organised respectively on indicators on protected areas and on species. As main outcomes, NRCs were invited to discuss how to improve existing Core set of indicators, taking into consideration on-going work under the SEBI 2010 process.

The final session was dedicated to a presentation by the EEA of various approaches towards an assessment of European ecosystems within a five years perspective, in particular through the implementation of a programme on Ecosystem accounting. NRCs are invited to consider how to interact with the EEA in this challenging context.

NRCs generally welcomed such an integrated vision of the work on biodiversity, although expressing concern on possible difficulties in running two important projects in parallel within the same time frame, i.e. SEBI 2010 and Ecosystem accounts.

Documents, presentations and minutes of the workshop are available on [CIRCA](#) for partners and EIONET members.

- **ALTERNET**

The MNHN hosted the second meeting of the Advisory Committee of the ALTER-Net network of excellence in Paris on 24 January 2006. The meeting discussed progress in ALTER-net's activities and gave specific advice on three selected topics: ALTER-Net's role in the CBD process, integration of social sciences, and interaction of science and policy (see <http://www.alter-net.info> for further information).

- **MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION BETWEEN EEA AND RAMSAR.**

Following a pilot study by ETC/BD and its partner Wetlands International, data manager of the Ramsar sites Information Service, on February 27th the EEA and Ramsar Secretariat signed a Memorandum of cooperation (MoC).

The key point of this Memorandum is to "develop a collaborative programme for sustainable wetland and water resource conservation and management by increasing current consultation and cooperation". It encompasses enhancement of communication within each other's party strategy and particularly joint activities in the framework of the operational objectives of the strategic plan of the Convention Secretariat.

The immediate implications of this MoC are that the EEA will promote its member and collaborating countries to deliver regularly Ramsar site boundaries within Reportnet features although this delivery will not become a Priority Data Flow, Ramsar Secretariat will make available the latest quality checked data sets as collected by the Ramsar Sites Information Services to EEA with permission to use them for analyses and publish the results with due reference to the Ramsar Convention.

The full text of this MoC is available [on-line](#) .

- **ASSESSMENTS FOR THE BELGRADE PAN-EUROPEAN CONFERENCE**

The fourth pan-European Ministerial conference under the '[Environment for Europe](#)' process will be held in Belgrade in 2007. As for previous conferences, the EEA has been entrusted with the task to produce an assessment report on the state of the environment in Pan-Europe, with a major focus on the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) as well as Balkans countries. The ETC/BD will provide support to the EEA for collection of information and drafting the biodiversity chapter.

The Belgrade Conference will also be the opportunity for the Council of Europe to present an assessment report on the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN), together with an indicative map of the PEEN, in response to the [Kiev Resolution on Biodiversity](#) . The ETC/BD and the EEA are involved with organisations such as ECNC and IUCN in the drafting of the report as well as on the map.

NEWS FROM THE PARTNERS

- The [JNCC](#) have started to compile information collected in the course of the UK's monitoring of protected sites using their Common Standards for Monitoring.

- [ECNC](#) has received a grant under the EU Commission's Sixth Framework Programme for its [BioScore project](#) (Biodiversity impact assessment using species sensitivity scores) which over 3 years starting in February 2006 will develop a tool to support biodiversity monitoring and to quantify the impacts of selected European Community policy measures.

- On Wednesday 22 March Dominique Richard, deputy-manager of the ETC/BD ([MNHN](#)) was awarded the '[Ordre National du Mérite](#)' in a short ceremony at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle for her contributions to nature conservation in France and elsewhere. Congratulations Dominique!

REPORTS & PAPERS

- ETC/BD, 2005. [Streamlining European biodiversity reporting](#). Draft report, prepared by James Williams – Joint Nature Conservation Committee – for the European Environment Agency.

- 'Linking national indicators to international reporting obligations' by Ben Delbaere, Ana Nieto Serradilla (ECNC) & James Williams (JNCC) is available on [CIRCA](#) for EIONET members.

- ETC/BD, 2005. [EU headline biodiversity indicators in biodiversity monitoring programmes in Europe](#). Final draft report, prepared by Ana Nieto Serradilla & Ben Delbaere – European Centre for Nature Conservation – for the European Environment Agency.

- ETC/BD, 2005. [A data overview of the network of Special Protection Areas in EU25](#). A working paper prepared by the [AOPK-CR](#) and the MNHN for DG Environment and the ORNIS Committee.

- Dominique Richard and Doug Evans contributed a chapter ('The need for plant taxonomy in setting priorities for designated areas and conservation management plants: a European perspective') to the recently published festschrift for Prof. Vernon Heywood ('Taxonomy and Plant Conservation', edited by Etelka Leadlay & Stephen Jury) see <http://www.cambridge.org/uk/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=0521845068>

- Grégoire Lois – ECNC, ETC/BD Core Team – was joint-author of [Biotope Use and Trends of European Butterflies](#) (Swaay, C., Warren, M. & Lois, G. (2006). *Journal of Insect Conservation*, 10 (2), pp. 189-209) This paper was the subject of articles in the British weekly '[New Scientist](#)' and in the [Guardian newspaper](#) – the later mentioning the ETC/BD.

The article presents an overview of trends for butterflies within different biotopes across Europe, based on data from the Red Data Book of European Butterflies. The results show that butterfly populations are declining substantially across Europe and compare the results to those of birds. It concludes that sensitivity of butterflies to

environmental changes and availability of data across Europe suggest that they are very good candidates to build biodiversity indicators and, along with other major groups such as birds, suitable to monitor progress towards the EU target of halting biodiversity loss by 2010.

If you have any contributions for the next issue of this newsletter please forward them to Doug Evans (evans@mnhn.fr).