

## NEWS

### • NATURA 2000 & THE TWO NATURE DIRECTIVES

The Working Group on Reporting has been meeting regularly since 2009 and has recently published 3 important pieces of work, a revision of the Standard Data Form and reporting formats (and explanatory notes) for reporting under Articles 12 and 17 of the Birds and Habitats Directives.

The Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (SDF) and explanatory notes was adopted on the 11<sup>th</sup> July and will be published in the Official Journal in all official languages in the autumn. Meanwhile it is available on [CIRCA](#) but only in English. The revision takes account of technological changes since the first edition was published in 1997 and of experience of both compiling and using the SDF.

The revised Natura 2000 software is expected to be available before the end of 2011.

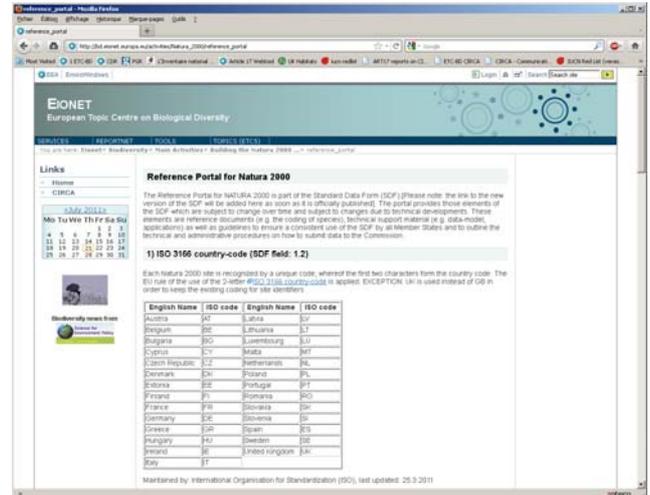
A Reference Portal for Natura 2000 with information required to complete the SDF is now available at [http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Natura\\_2000/reference\\_portal](http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Natura_2000/reference_portal).

Discussions on improving reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive started while analysis of the 2001-2006 reports was still under way and has led to a modified reporting format and a revision of the explanatory notes and guidelines for the reporting period 2007-2012 which has now been published on [CIRCA](#). The changes aim to have information presented in a more standardised way to allow better analysis.

Although there has been regular reporting under Article 12 of the Birds Directive for many years, until now the reports have given very little information on the birds themselves. A new reporting format and guidelines is now available on [CIRCA](#) with the first reports covering the period 2008 - 2012 due in December 2013.

Reference portals have been set up to assist with reporting for [birds](#) and for the [species and habitat types of the Habitats Directive](#).

No biogeographical or marine seminars are planned for 2011 but bilateral meetings have been held with the Czech Republic and Lithuania while a meeting with Hungary is planned for the autumn. These meetings give an opportunity to review progress in proposing Sites of Community Importance.



*The Natura 2000 Reference Portal*

The Commission is planning a new series of Natura 2000 biogeographical seminars but focused on management rather than on evaluation of site proposals. The seminars will aim to facilitate discussion between Member States, experts, stakeholders and the Commission on the measures needed to adequately react to the findings of the conservation status reporting (Article 17), focusing on the contribution of the Natura 2000 network. The process aims to help MS develop and implement measures necessary to reach or maintain favorable conservation status of species and habitat of Community interest and to improve at the same time status of bird species.

Starting in January 2011, there have been meetings in Paris, Helsinki and Copenhagen involving the Boreal countries, DG Environment, the EEA and the ETC/BD which have concentrated on planning for a 2 day pilot seminar which will cover the Boreal region and should take place in spring 2012 in Finland. There is agreement that the meeting should focus on a small number of habitat groups (e.g. forests, grasslands, etc) and associated Annex II species. The choice of habitat groups has been based on work done by the ETC/BD using the conservation assessments from the 2001-2006 Article 17 reports.

A commission consultant has started to identify key management issues for the selected habitat types and species to be discussed in the preparatory seminar and a questionnaire was sent to the Boreal Member States in July.

The Commission has an ambitious target to hold a seminar in each biogeographical region by 2013 although it is possible for some regions to be combined.

Further information about Natura 2000, including regularly updated statistics, are available on the [ETC/BD website](#).

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- **FOLLOW-UP OF THE AICHI TARGETS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SEBI PROCESS**

After a very active year of preparation for the CBD COP 10 session, now time is dedicated on how to translate the results obtained in Nagoya into concrete actions. In May, the Commission has adopted a [new strategy to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020](#). In line with the global commitments, this strategy was endorsed by the Environment Council at the beginning of June but more time was considered needed to further discuss the actions; further information at [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/envir/122950.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/envir/122950.pdf).

The SEBI Coordination Team met in March to discuss the continuation of its activities within this new context. A document "Taking SEBI forward – indicators for 2020" was presented at the April meeting of the Coordination Group on Biodiversity and Nature (CGBN). In addition, another document summarising the "lessons learned from a regional process" was distributed to the participants of the International Expert Workshop of [the AHTEG on Indicators held in June 2011 at High Wycombe, UK](#).

The workshop considered the [selection and development of indicators to track the Aichi Targets](#) at both local/national and regional/global scales, and guidance for national implementation and strengthen linkages. The Coordination Team will reconvene latter this year in order to prepare its roadmap based on the results of the AHTEG Indicators workshop.

In parallel, the EEA with support from ETC/BD has launched a questionnaire to EIONET countries asking for their feedback on the interest of the SEBI process for national activities on indicators. First results show a good feedback with nearly 60% of answers with detailed comments and at first glance, a positive support for the SEBI process.

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- **EUROPEAN ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT**

The ETC/BD assists the European Environment Agency (EEA) in activities related to European ecosystem assessments which will support the [EU Biodiversity Strategy](#) to 2020 especially 'Action 5: Improve knowledge of ecosystems and their services in the EU'. Activities include: participation in various relevant workshops and in steering committees of projects such as [SPIRAL](#), [ESAWADI](#); providing input to the [KNEU](#) and the [JRC project on a "European assessment of the provision of ecosystem services - Towards an atlas of ecosystem services"](#); maintaining an access database, soon accessible through [BISE](#), which allows queries on research projects of the EU Framework Programmes FP5 to FP7 related to biodiversity and major ecosystem types.

Through its Czech partner [AOPK](#) and in collaboration with Charles University of Prague, the ETC/BD has started to work on grassland ecosystem services. A small workshop organised by AOPK in Prague took place on 31 May- 1<sup>st</sup> June, providing the opportunity for exchanges of experiences with participants from Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Slovakia, with perspectives for further collaboration on this topic. A presentation of the work achieved so far will be made at the conference on ["Ecosystem Services: integrating Science and Practice"](#) to be held in Wageningen on 4-7 October 2011.

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- **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

DG Environment has launched a [Green Infrastructure initiative](#), with the aim to develop a strategy on green infrastructure by 2012 in support to the implementation of 'Target 2 of the [EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020](#), i.e: 'Maintain and restore ecosystems and their services'.

The Green Infrastructure (GI) approach extends the concept of connected ecological networks of protected areas to integrated management of the landscape using sectoral biodiversity related policies (e.g. forestry, agriculture, and urban development). Green Infrastructure aims to deliver multiple benefits including environmental (especially biodiversity), economic, and social, and to reduce the vulnerability to natural and human induced disasters (e.g. climate change impacts).

In support to this GI initiative, the European Commission has set up a working group to discuss "The scope and objectives of GI in the EU", "How to put in place GI on the ground", "What should be the role of the EU" and "Financing GI". The ETC/BD participates in this working group as well as in the Steering Committee of a project launched by DGEnvironment, on Green Infrastructure Efficiency and Implementation.

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- **INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES IN THE EU**

The EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 proposes an action 'to establish a dedicated instrument by 2012' to help tackle problems posed by Invasive Alien Species. The ETC/BD participates in European Commission Working Groups on prevention, early warning and rapid response to Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in the EU along with the European Environment Agency. The ETC/BD has also cooperated with the Joint Research Centre in producing a database concept for selecting IAS from the approximately 14 000 non-native species known to be present in the EU27 and Norway.

In addition, as part of the NaturWatch project, the ETC/BD provides support to the EEA on the possible development of a web application targeted to citizen's observations on selected Invasive Alien Species.

- **THE EMERALD NETWORK**

A first [Emerald](#) biogeographical seminar for 6 West Balkan countries was held at the MNHN, Paris on 26-27 January 2011. This meeting, with participants from the national authorities and NGOs of each country, together with the Council of Europe and the ETC/BD, with DG Environment as observers, discussed the methods to be used to evaluate the Emerald network using examples from the 6 countries.

A second seminar will be held in Montenegro in November which will assess the proposals for Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCI) for each [Resolution 4 habitat type](#) and each [Resolution 6 species](#).

Meetings with Norway and Switzerland to discuss assessment of their Emerald proposals are scheduled for September and it is expected that a first list of ASCI will be presented for adoption to the Standing Committee at its meeting in Strasbourg 29 November - 02 December 2011.

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- **REMOTE SENSING ACTIVITIES AT THE ETC/BD**

The ETC/BD and its partners have been involved in the past in several projects using remote sensing for biodiversity purposes including [Biopress](#) and [Habitstat](#). The ETC/BD is now providing assistance to the EEA and the European Commission in framing the further development of an operational service using very high resolution images in support to biodiversity monitoring, as part of the so-called 'local component for biodiversity' of the [Global Monitoring for Environment and Security \(GMES\) Initial Operations on Land Services](#).



*Participants at the ENCA meeting in the dunes at Doñana*

The ETC/BD also participated in a workshop organised by [ENCA](#) on 'Integrating image training data and ground-truth data with field survey on Natura 2000 sites' held at the Doñana Biological Station, Spain on May 10th – 11th.

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- **NATURE DIRECTORS MEETING**

The Nature Directors meeting under the Hungarian Presidency took place on 7-10 June in the charming setting of Balatonfüred. The main framework for discussions was the recently adopted EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and its six targets. The European Commission announced the production, by the end of 2011, of a detailed implementation framework, to support further concrete developments in cooperation with Member States. Three workshops were run in parallel on "Financing Natura 2000 and biodiversity", "Towards the knowledge network on ecosystem services" and "Green infrastructure enhancing connectivity".



*Lake Balaton – SPA & SCI*

Field trips organised in the surroundings of the Lake Balaton, both a Natura 2000 and a Ramsar site, and in the Tihany peninsula, designated as Natura 2000 and partly as European Diploma, provided the opportunity for exchanges with site managers on concrete issues related to discussions held in plenary sessions, including on the maintenance and enhancement of the multiple environmental and cultural ecosystem services provided by these designated areas.

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- **SCALES**

[SCALES](#) (Securing the Conservation of biodiversity across Administrative Levels and spatial, temporal, and Ecological Scales) is a FP7 project bringing together 27 partners and led by Helmholtz Zentrum für Umweltforschung (UFZ) in Leipzig, Germany. The second annual meeting of the project was held 12-16 April in Sophia, Bulgaria attended by Doug Evans (ETC/BD) and Rania Spyropoulou (EEA). The project plans to launch a new journal, named '[Nature Conservation](#)' later this year.

The project team also visited the EEA in June to discuss the potential for future collaboration

- **PLANTA EUROPA CONFERENCE**

The ETC/BD participated at the [6<sup>th</sup> Planta Europa Conference](#) organised in Krakow on 23-27 May with a presentation made by Zelmira Sipkova (ETC/BD), in the introductory session, on "Improved knowledge on European plant species in relation to reporting obligations under policy instruments". Discussions during the conference were mainly focused on the progress to date in the implementation of the "[European Strategy for Plant Conservation \(EPCS\)](#)", and the future of plant conservation in Europe in the framework of global and European conservation policies.

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- **ETC/BD MANAGEMENT MEETING**

The first biannual meeting of the Management Committee of the ETC/BD, in May 2011, was hosted by ETC/BD partner, the [Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences](#) in the very inspiring setting of Odalgarden, Uppsala in Sweden. As usual, this spring meeting was mainly the opportunity to take stock of progress achieved by the consortium under the different tasks of the annual implementation plan within the overall context of the EEA work programme, and to a large part, in support to DG Environment needs. Ivone Pereira Martins represented the EEA and Anne Teller the European Commission.



*Restful moments at Odalgarden after intensive working sessions*

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## NEWS FROM THE PARTNERS

- **JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**



The JNCC website now has a new address:-

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/>

Email addresses for staff have not changed. They remain as:  
- @jncc.gov.uk

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- **EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION**

On 1 June 2011 the ECNC Group was established as a legal entity. The newly created legal structure is a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG), a legal entity based on EC law, to facilitate and encourage international and cross-border cooperation. It has two units: 'Biodiversity & Nature' (represented by [ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation](#)), located in Tilburg, the Netherlands, and 'Coastal & Marine' (represented by the [Coastal & Marine Union \(EUCC\)](#)), located in Leiden, also in the Netherlands. The members of the ECNC Group are ECNC, EUCC and [Centro Mediterráneo](#). In addition EuroNatur, the NatureBureau and EECNET Action Fund are observers of the ECNC Group.

More information about this and other activities of the ECNC can be found in [ECNC Update](#), the ECNC newsletter.

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- **MUSEUM NATIONAL D'HISTOIRE NATURELLE**

Thomas Grenon was appointed 'directeur général' of the [MNHN](#) at the end of last year. Previously he was 'administrateur général' of the Réunion des Musées nationaux, a public body under the trusteeship of the Ministry of Culture contributing to the enhancement and better understanding of cultural heritage through French national museums. Dominique Richard, ETC/BD manager and Sophie Condé, Deputy manager, have met the new directeur général who is now aware of the work of the ETC/BD.

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- **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY FOR SPECIAL AREAS**

The Koycegiz-Dalyan Special Environmental Protection Area is a coastal site important for birds and Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*). The site is threatened by pollution due to tour boats which are powered by diesel. To help reduce pollution [EPASA](#) has been involved in a project to replace diesel motors with electric motors powered by fuel cells charged using solar power. The project was presented at the [International Conference on Hydrogen Production](#) held at Thessaloniki, Greece in June 2011.



*The Koycegiz-Dalyan Special Environmental Protection Area (photo from EPASA).*

- **WHICH HABITATS OF EUROPEAN IMPORTANCE DEPEND ON AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES?**

In 1998 Ole Ostermann (at the time working for the ETC/Nature Conservation, a predecessor of the ETC/BD) published a list of Annex I habitats dependent on agricultural management which has been widely cited. However with changes to Annex I including the addition of 33 new habitats, the 1998 list has become dated. A revised list has been produced by Lubos Halada, Doug Evans (ETC/BD) Carlos Romão and Jan-Erik Petersen (EEA) and has been published by the journal [Biodiversity & Conservation](#).



*A Hay meadow – a habitat dependent on agriculture*

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## PUBLICATIONS

This newsletter produced twice a year is 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 2009-2013.

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

Visit our website at <http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/>