

**NEWSLETTER – July 2012**

**NEWS**

• **NATURA 2000 & THE TWO NATURE DIRECTIVES**

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Habitats Directive, of Natura 2000 and of the LIFE regulation. Celebrations are being held many countries throughout the year, [including Denmark](#), in association with the Nature Directors meeting held in May (see below).

A training workshop on the reporting tool for reporting under Article 12 of the Birds Directive and Article 17 of the Habitats Directive was held at the EEA in March and was attended by participants from 22 countries. The reporting tool is for transmission of national reports under Article 12 of the Birds Directive and Article 17 of the Habitats Directive. A Range tool has been available since April which gives a standard methodology for the estimate of ranges for both species and habitats. Further information on reporting under both directives including software and guidance can be found at the [Article 12](#) and [Article 17](#) reference portals.

No Natura 2000 biogeographical or marine seminars will be held in 2011 but bilateral meetings were held with Slovakia in March and with Cyprus in June with meetings planned with Bulgaria and Romania in October. Such meetings give an opportunity to review progress in proposing Sites of Community Importance by Member States.



*European Commission & ETC/BD at the bilateral meeting with Cyprus*

The preparatory workshop and seminar for the Boreal region under the new biogeographical process focused on site management (see December 2011 newsletter) were held in Finland in January and May. Both the workshop and seminar included four parallel sessions on selected habitat groups: forests, grasslands, wetlands and freshwater. The preparatory workshop identified the most important issues for each habitat group plus cross-cutting issues and the seminar concentrated on the 3-4 most important topics.

Each working group proposed concrete actions, for example Sweden will organise a seminar about CAP issues later this year, grasslands group wrote a note to the EC on the outcomes of the CAP discussion during the workshop and the seminar, Finland plans to organise a 'grand tour' for the Boreal countries to exchange experience in forest management and restoration in 2013. Finland will also expand its national restoration group to participants from other countries. Further information, including seminar documents, is available on [CIRCA](#).

The preparatory workshop for the Atlantic region was held in the Hague (the Netherlands) in June and was attended by some 80 participants from 7 countries, the Atlantic seminar will be held towards the end of the year, again hosted by the Dutch authorities. The 4 habitat groups discussed were coastal and dunes (including Estuaries), grasslands, heaths & bogs and rivers and lakes. Further information can be found on [CIRCA](#).

The Atlantic and Boreal seminars are considered to be pilot meetings and discussions on the way forward for the remaining regions, based on experience from the first two regions, will be held at the next meeting of the Habitats Committee on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

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

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• **THE EMERALD NETWORK**

A seminar to assess the Swiss proposals for the Emerald network was held in Basel on the 5<sup>th</sup> July. As with Natura 2000 biogeographical seminars, the participants included the national authorities responsible for nature conservation and NGOs as well as staff from the Council of Europe and with technical support from the ETC/BD.

The meeting assessed the coverage of each Bern Convention Resolution 4 habitat type and each [Resolution 6 species](#) but also agreed the list of species and habitats for which Switzerland should propose sites. It is expected that the 37 Candidate Emerald sites proposed so far by Switzerland will be endorsed as formal Emerald sites by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention by the end of this year.

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**NATURE DIRECTORS MEETING**

The Nature Directors meeting under the Danish EU Presidency was held on 22-23 May in Horsens, DK, preceded by an excursion to [Lille Wildmose](#), a peat bog in Northern Jutland, a Natura 2000 site and currently being restored as part of a [LIFE](#) project.

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*Commissioner Potocnik and the Danish Minister of the Environment help restore a peatbog at Lille Wildmose*

The Nature Directors meeting itself had a different format from previous meetings with a first day open to stakeholders, including NGOs and the second, co-chaired by the Danish Presidency and the Commission, limited to MS delegations, European Commission, EEA and ETC/BD. The discussions on day 1 were focused on: 1) Implementation issues introduced by a presentation by Liam Cashman, DG Environment Legal Unit on status, trends and perspectives in infringement procedures and legal cases; 2) Financing Natura 2000 and biodiversity with an update by Micheal O'Brian, DG Environment, on the current status of the negotiations related to EU funding instruments and the relation to the Prioritised Action Framework; 3) Implementation in the marine environment introduced by a presentation by Stefan Leiner, DG Environment, on the interface between the nature directives and "aquatic environment directives"; 4) Implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy, with messages from the European Habitats Forum and the Habitats user Forum. During the second day, the governance to be set up for the implementation of the [EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020](#) was discussed and a Common Implementation Framework agreed. Two workshops on [Target 1](#) and [Target 2](#) of the EU Biodiversity Strategy respectively provided the opportunity to get a closer view from the Nature directors' perspective.

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### • FOLLOW-UP OF THE 2020 TARGETS AND INDICATOR ACTIVITIES

Since end of 2011, the European Commission and the Member States are working on the definition of the governance for the implementation of a Common Implementation framework (CIF) which will underpin the effective delivery of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. Progress in discussions will have implication on the

activities on indicators. In parallel ETC/BD (MNHN and ECNC) has supported the production of an EEA Technical Report on SEBI presenting lessons from the past periods and for the future. The draft was circulated for consultation within EIONET consultation in April and the report will be published by EEA later this year.

In June, ETC/BD (ECNC) delivered a report to the EEA on existing or proposed indicators on Ecosystem Services. This report, based on recent studies prepared at Global level, has extracted indicators which can be relevant at a European scale and will be a background document for further discussions.

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### • EUROPEAN ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENTS

In support to [Target 2, action 5](#) of the European Strategy, the EEA and ETC/BD are part of the Steering group and of the Working group of MAES (Mapping and Assessing European Ecosystems and their Services) set up by the European Commission and involving experts nominated by MS. The mandate of this group is "to support Member State in undertaking the work necessary for providing meaningful knowledge support to the implementation of target 2, with the assistance of the European Commission and expert contribution. The common framework will be based on the best available information, knowledge and practices in the EU and Member States, and propose a pragmatic approach focusing on priority areas of work driven by policy questions to be delivered in phases". Two meetings of the MAES working group have been held so far this year on 13 March and 18 June.

The identification of needs for expertise, guidance, coordination at European level etc identified within this group will steer the activities of the EEA and its ETCs in the coming years.

In this context, ETC/BD partner AOPK has prepared two working documents: "A concept of a degraded ecosystem in theory and practice – a review" which will support the discussion on what is a degraded ecosystem. The second report is on current knowledge on ecosystem restoration at European and regional scales and presents a brief overview of definitions, types of action, types of restored of ecosystems, assessments. It is expected that both reports will be published later this year.

The ETC/BD support to activities related to Green infrastructure has included comments to the draft report "[The multifunctionality of Green Infrastructure](#)", guidance on availability of relevant data

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at European level to characterise Green Infrastructure and follow up of related initiatives at European level.

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### • EUNIS HABITATS CLASSIFICATION

As noted in the [last newsletter](#), work has started towards a governance structure and the identification of possible revisions of the classification. The [MESH Atlantic project](#) held a meeting in San Sebastian (Spain) in April to discuss the use of the [EUNIS habitats classification](#) for marine mapping; extended abstracts of all presentations, including two from the ETC/BD, have been published as a special issue of [Revista de Investigación Marina](#). The meeting clearly showed that the classification is being used, that improvements are required and that there are many researchers willing to become involved.

Plans for the future development of the classification were also presented at the 2012 meeting of the European Vegetation Survey held in Vienna. The EVS has a short contract from the EEA to update the existing crosswalk between EUNIS and the EVS list of syntaxa and to explore the potential uses of vegetation databases to improve EUNIS.

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### • ETC/BD MANAGEMENT MEETING

The ETC/BD management meeting was held in Nitra, Slovakia, hosted by the [Institute of Landscape Ecology](#). Apart from discussions on progress in the Implementation Plan 2012 and budgetary issues, more strategic issues were addressed in relation to: the preparation of the new EEA multiannual strategy 2014-2019, the on-going process for an EEA evaluation; plans for ETC review and appointment of the future EEA executive director and deputy director. An excursion to the arboretum in Mlynany was then kindly offered to participants by our hosts.

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### • OTHER MEETINGS

Doug Evans (ETC/BD core team) was invited to teach at two summer schools for postgraduate students. The first was organised jointly by the [European Forest Institute](#) and the [Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique - Nancy](#) and held in Nancy. This was aimed at students in various branches of forestry and Doug gave a presentation on forest biodiversity in Europe.

The second summer school was organised by the [European Topic Centre on Spatial Information and Analysis](#) in Malaga, Spain, in conjunction with the FP7 project [MS.Monina](#). This summer school focused on the use of

Earth Observation for biodiversity monitoring and Doug led sessions on the biodiversity data required by EU policy and on habitat classification with a focus on the EUNIS habitats classification. This was also an opportunity to meet staff from another ETC.

Brian MacSharry attended a meeting with [MedPAN](#) to discuss the production of a database on marine protected areas in the Mediterranean and the analysis of a survey of MPA managers. This is part of a collaboration between MedPan and the ETC/BD.

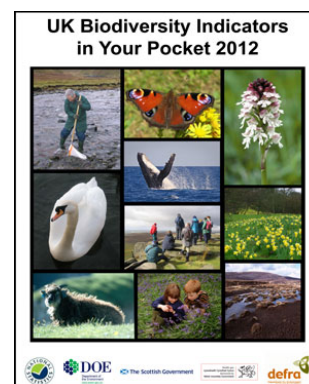
As part of the Spiral FP7 project "[Towards an EU Mechanism interfacing science and policy on biodiversity and ecosystem services](#)" funded by DG ENV, Dominique Richard was interviewed by the project coordinator to express views on possible characteristics of a science policy interface for ecosystem assessments

Sophie Condé participated in the first Biodiversity Knowledge Conference organised by the FP 7 project [KNEU](#) held in Brussels last May. The aim of the conference was to introduce and discuss broadly the approach of designing a Network of Knowledge in the area of biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe. The focus of the conference was on identifying solutions and options for this network and identifying steps to create a broad community of interest with it. Several stakeholders were also present expressing their needs for better knowledge supporting their activities and decisions.

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## NEWS FROM THE PARTNERS

### • JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE



The JNCC have published an update to [the UK Biodiversity indicators](#) at the end of May. These indicators show UK progress towards the "the [Aichi Targets](#)" for biodiversity agreed in 2010 and set out in the Strategic Plan for



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Biodiversity 2011-2020; this is the first time the UK indicators have been published within this framework.

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• **MUSEUM NATIONAL D'HISTOIRE NATURELLE**

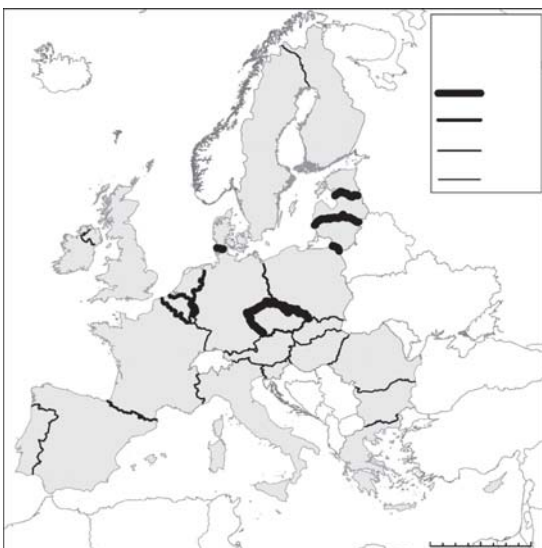


The museum's [Service du Patrimoine Naturel](#) has published several reports on assessing the conservation status of habitats. Recent publications cover Atlantic non-wooded dunes and 3 grassland habitat types ('6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates', '6510 Lowland hay meadows' & '6520 Mountain hay meadows'). All the reports can be found on the [SPN website](#).

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**PUBLICATIONS**

• **NATURA 2000**

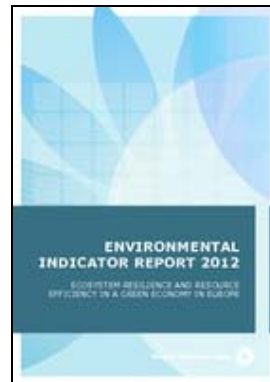


*Connectivity of Natura 2000 sites across national frontiers*

Members of the core team have recently published 2 papers on aspects of Natura 2000. '[Connectedness and connectivity of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas across country borders in the European Union](#)' by Otars Opermanis Brian MacSharry Zelmira Sipkova, together with Ainars Aunins from the University of Latvia, and published in [Biological Conservation](#) examines network connectedness and connectivity across national boundaries. [Building the European Union's Natura 2000 network](#) published in the first issue of the new journal [Nature Conservation](#) by Doug Evans is a review of how the Natura 2000 network has developed since the Habitats Directive was adopted in 1992, with a focus on the biogeographical seminars.

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• **ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATOR REPORT 2012**



The first edition of a revived annual indicator report series was published by the EEA in May. Many of the indicators discussed make use of information provided by the ETC/BD often derived from the reports for 2001-2006 under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive.

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• **EIONET EXPLAINED**



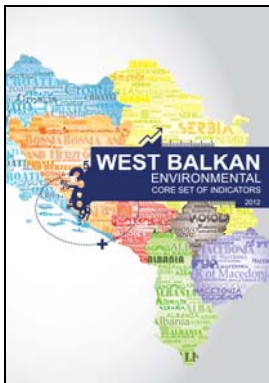
The EEA has recently published '[Eionet connects -Sharing environmental information in Europe](#)' - a short brochure

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explaining how the EIONET network works. This publication was presented at the [United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development](#) held in Brazil in June (the Rio+20 conference) and is available in 28 languages. The ETC/BD features as an example of an ETC.

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- WEST BALKAN ENVIRONMENTAL CORE SET OF INDICATORS, 2012



This joint publication from the EEA and the [ZOI Environment Network](#), includes information on 7 topics. The Biodiversity indicator is based on protected areas using data from the CDDA. The report can be downloaded from the [ZOI website](#).

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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/>

- CLIMATE-ADAPT



The European Climate Adaptation Platform ([CLIMATE-ADAPT](#)) aims to support Europe in adapting to climate change. It is an initiative of the European Commission and helps users to access and share information on:

- Expected climate change in Europe
- Current and future vulnerability of regions and sectors
- National and transnational adaptation strategies
- Adaptation case studies and potential adaptation options
- Tools that support adaptation planning

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