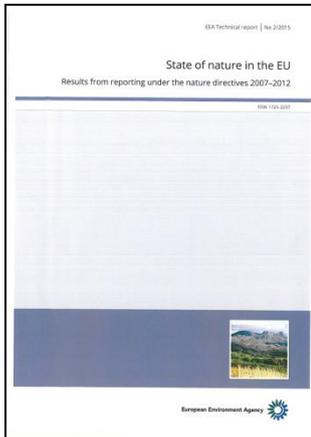


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NEWS

• STATE OF NATURE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION



On May 20, the EEA published '[State of Nature in the EU: Results from reporting under the nature directives 2007-2012](#)', a report based on the latest reporting under the Birds and Habitats Directive. This report reflects the major effort by Member States in assessing the status of European birds and the conservation status of species and habitats of European concern until 2012. It also reflects the huge involvement from ETC/BD and EEA in compiling, assessing and synthesizing the data from Member States to provide a European picture. At the same time the European Commission adopted its [report to the European Council and Parliament](#) and published a [brochure](#) aimed at the wider public based on the EEA report.



These publications received much attention in the press across many countries. There was also an editorial from EEA director Hans Bruyninckx published in the Parliament Magazine which summarises the report

"Nature policy works when implemented well. The health of our natural environment is a key component of our health and wealth, but our recent assessments show that the majority of habitats and species in Europe have an unfavourable conservation status

despite significant improvements for many species in recent years.

The results are mixed, but clear. When implemented well, conservation measures work and improve the status of habitats and species on the ground.

Nevertheless, improvements remain limited and patchy, and, unfortunately, Europe's biodiversity is still eroding and the pressures continue." (from [Parliament Magazine](#))

Further information, including National Summaries, scoreboards on timeliness and completeness of deliveries and access to assessments of conservation status can be found on the [Article 12](#) and [Article 17](#) websites.

• ARTICLE 12 & 17 REPORTING

Discussions have begun, involving the Commission, the Member States, the EEA and the ETC/BD on how to improve reporting under the two directives for the next reporting round and to help develop revised guidelines. A meeting of the Expert group on reporting was held in Brussels on the 16 March while two *ad hoc* working groups have been established; one on 'Structure and Functions', 'Future prospects' and 'Trends' which held its first meeting on 24 January and the second on Favourable Reference Values which met on 2 June.

It is planned that revised guidelines and reporting formats for both directives will be available for the end of 2016.

• NATURA 2000

A biogeographical seminar was held in Vienna, Austria, on the 17 & 18 March to assess progress towards completing the network in Austria. All seven of the Austrian Lander participated. The conclusions reached during the seminar provide a road map for further completion, by Austria, of its share of the Natura 2000 network. A similar meeting is planned for Italy on 7-8 October.

The [Natura 2000 biogeographical process](#) aimed at improving implementation continues and the Continental, Pannonian, Black Sea and Steppic Biogeographical Kick-off Seminar was held in Luxembourg on the 28 June to 1 July 2015. Zelmira Gaudillat represented the ETC/BD at that meeting and made a presentation based on results from Article 17 reports relevant to these regions and introduced the [fact sheets prepared by ETC/BD for selected habitats](#) of these regions. Further details from the [Natura 2000 Platform](#).

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The kick off meeting for marine regions was held in Saint Malo (France) on 5-7 May 2015 and gathered more than 150 people from 20 different EU countries. Three main topics were discussed: 1) Conservation objectives: definition, assessment and use for adaptive management, 2) Reconciling Natura 2000 objectives and marine activities/ Conservation management planning, 3) Regional integration of Natura 2000 issues. In support to this seminar, the ETC/BD had prepared [a pre-scoping document for marine regions, including fact-sheets for selected habitats and species](#). Further information on the seminar can be found on the [Natura 2000 platform](#).



A screenshot from a [video](#) about the St Malo workshop

For the latest news on Natura 2000 see http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/index_en.htm

• INSPIRE

A workshop held in Ispra (IT) on 27-28 January 2015 gathered representatives of the [INSPIRE Maintenance and Implementation Group](#) and Member States representatives involved in reporting under EU environmental acquis, with the aim to discuss the coordination between INSPIRE implementation and reporting. The ETC/BD was represented by Sabine Roscher (MNH) and Manuel Loehner (GeoVille). The focus was mainly on the implementation of pilot projects for air, water (Water Framework Directive) and marine (Marine Strategy Framework Directive). No pilot project on Nature Directives reporting is foreseen at this stage.

However, the link between INSPIRE and biodiversity is addressed through a pilot on nationally designated areas (CDDA dataflow), which is already running with voluntary countries. In addition, a 'virtual' working group has been set up upon EEA-ETC/BD's initiative under the Expert Group on Reporting for the Nature Directives to support the preparation for the next reporting round under Article 12 of the Birds Directive and Article 17 of the Habitats Directive.

• EUNIS HABITATS CLASSIFICATION

A meeting of EIONET National Reference Centres to discuss the classification was held at the EEA on the 5 February with representatives of some 15 countries plus a number of invited experts. The meeting included presentations of recent work towards improving the classification (see below), experience by users and discussion of the future of the classification.

An EIONET based consultation on a proposed revision of the marine component of the EUNIS habitat classification (levels 2-4) was held 19 May to 9 July. Over 100 comments were received from a range of countries and organisations.

There has also been work to revise the forest and heath sections of the classification and it is expected that there will be a consultation via EIONET in 2015. At the same, a contract with the [European Vegetation Survey](#) has been using information from vegetation databases to improve habitat descriptions and to produce distribution maps.

• NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS (NFPs) MEETINGS

A two-hour interactive session between NFPs and the different ETC managers and EEA heads of groups held during the first annual EIONET-NFP meeting, held on 18-19 February, provided the opportunity for fruitful exchanges and views on the main highlights of ETC work and prospects for the future. Among others, the question on how/when to launch the new network of NRCs Biodiversity and ecosystem indicators and assessments was raised by NFPs and will have to be followed up by EEA and ETC/BD and possibly ETC/Urban-Land and Soils (ETC/ULS).

The second annual EIONET-NFP meeting held on 20-21 May was the opportunity for a lively discussion on new challenges for EEA and EIONET in the production of knowledge in support to objective 5 of the [7th Environmental Action programme](#). The discussion was introduced by Hans Brunyninckx with a presentation on 'Moving from a problem-focused knowledge base towards a solution-oriented knowledge base'.

• ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENTS AND THEIR SERVICES

Several activities are underway as part of the MAES initiative, including meetings, workshops and publications. From the EEA, a first technical report on ecosystem assessment, concept, data and implementation was published (see 'publications' below). Another report on the

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progress and challenges to map and assess conditions of Europe's ecosystem will be published by EEA later this year. Several products such as the map of European Ecosystem types, typologies, crosswalks, glossary, indicators and case-studies are available through BISE (<http://biodiversity.europa.eu/maes>).

In support to the assessment of progress to Target 2 of the Biodiversity Strategy, a hands-on workshop in Ispra (Italy) in mid-July brought together participants from EEA, JRC, DG ENV, ETCs ULS and BD. The goal was to brainstorm and test how to bring together spatial data on ecosystems, ecosystem condition and services gathered at the European scale in a single assessment framework.

In December, the first deliveries of the work undertaken at EU and national/sub-national level will be presented during a 2015 MAES delivery workshop, which will take place on 15th-16th December in Brussels.

• MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The ETC/BD management Committee met in Copenhagen on the 18 & 19 May to discuss progress with this year's work programme and to plan for future work. This was also an opportunity to celebrate the ETC's 20th anniversary.



THE ETC/BD celebrates its 20th anniversary

• IPBES

The ECNC as an ETC/BD partner in collaboration with the EEA has prepared an information note to the [IPBES](#) secretariat on information held by the EEA and EU including a database. The aim of the document is to facilitate access to the comprehensive and relevant information hosted by the EEA to support future work on the IPBES Regional Assessment for Europe and Central

Asia. The note has been delivered to the IPBES secretariat by the EEA and can be found on the [ETC/BD's website](#).

• OTHER MEETINGS

EU habitats Red list

The DG Environment funded project to produce a Red List of European habitats continues and Doug Evans attended a workshop held at Alterra (an ETC/BD partner who are co-leaders of the project) on 29-28 January and a meeting between the contractors and DG Environment in June.

Alpine grasslands (Feltre) 20-22 May

A workshop was held in Feltre on 20 – 22 May, organised by the Veneto region (Italy) to discuss monitoring and reporting of alpine grasslands as a contribution to the Natura 2000 biogeographical process (see above).



Visiting an alpine grassland

The workshop was attended by some 40 participants from 9 countries, plus staff from DG Environment, the EEA and the ETC/BD. Doug Evans gave a presentation on 'Conservation status & trends of the selected grassland habitats' and chaired one of the discussion groups.

Further details including a report and presentations are available on the [Natura 2000 platform](#).

'N2000 from Designation to Implementation'

As part of its series of seminars at Siggen (Germany), Europarc, held this meeting on 14-17 April aimed at staff from protected areas. Doug Evans gave a presentation on 'N2000 monitoring and reporting requirements under the nature directives', further information can be found on [the Siggen Seminars website](#).



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European Vegetation Survey

The 24th annual workshop was held at Rennes (France) on the 4-7 May. Doug Evans gave a presentation on 'Status & trends of European Union habitats' based on Art 17 results. Further information including abstracts of all presentation can be found on the [EVS website](#).

- **STAFF CHANGES AT THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION & THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

The ETC/BD works in partnership with the EEA and in support of DG Environment and there have been important staff changes recently in both organisations. At the EEA, Ivone Pereira Martins, who has been head of the EEA group in charge of biodiversity stepped down from this position on 1st July 2015; Rania Spyropoulou, EEA project manager for BISE and EUNIS leaves for early retirement at the end of July, Katarzyna Biala, EEA project manager on biodiversity indicators and agriculture issues left on 15 April while Sylwia Gawronska was appointed as national expert to deal with the interface between agriculture and biodiversity in March. At the European Commission, François Wakenhut, former Head of Biodiversity Unit left in June for the Strategy Directorate of the European Commission to act as Head of the Resource Efficiency & Economic Unit. EEA-ETC/BD collaboration with Stefan Leiner, currently Head of the Natura 2000 Unit, will continue as he will replace François Wakenhut in his former position as Head of the Biodiversity Unit from September onwards.

All our thanks and best wishes to each of them in their new life cycle!

NEWS FROM THE PARTNERS

- **MUSEUM NATIONAL D'HISTOIRE NATURELLE**

It has just been announced that Bruno David will become President of the MNHN on 1st September 2015. He is a marine biologist and a specialist on sea urchins, particularly in the Antarctic and the Caribbean. He was previously chairman of the museum's Conseil Scientifique and director of the CNRS Biogéosciences laboratory. His most recent book is '*La biodiversité de crise en crise*' published earlier this year.



The museum hosted the 7th European Botanic Gardens Congress ([EuroGard VII](#)) with some 200 delegates from across Europe and beyond on the 6 to 9 July. Dominique Richard was invited to give a keynote address on 'Biodiversity in Europe: between risks and opportunities' while Doug Evans gave a presentation on 'Progress in plant and habitats conservation across the European Union'.

- **SPACE4ENVIRONMENT**



ETC/BD partner Geoville Environmental Services has recently separated from GeoVille information Systems as the business orientation of the two companies entered into a phase where interests became conflicting and the two companies were blocking each other in their further development. The new name – space4environment – reflects the orientation of the company "using space data to provide space for the environment". For further details see the [Space4environment website](#).

- **EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION**

The PBL (Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency) has been developing 'Nature Outlook', which explores perspectives on the future of nature in the EU. To ensure that Nature Outlook will reflect the variety of ideas and perspectives on nature throughout Europe and across various sectors PBL, together with ECNC, has organized three stakeholder dialogue sessions, the last held in Brussels on the 17 and 18th June.

The results will be presented at various events, including a dedicated conference organized by PBL in early 2016, and a high-level conference of the Member States in April 2016, and to DG Environment, the European Parliament and

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other institutes and networks. Further information can be found on the [ECNC website](#).

- **THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT — STATE AND OUTLOOK 2015—**

PUBLICATIONS

- **STATE OF EUROPE'S SEAS**



This EEA report assesses whether Europe's seas can be considered healthy, clean and undisturbed, and productive. These are three core aspects of the EU's main marine policy instrument - the Marine Strategy Framework Directive - and relate to the condition of marine ecosystems and the human drivers of ecosystem change. ETC/BD partners Ecologic, ISPRA and JNCC contributed to the report as part of ETC/ICM.

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/state-of-europes-seas>

- **EUROPEAN ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT — CONCEPT, DATA, AND IMPLEMENTATION**



This EEA Technical Report summarises the EEA contribution to the [Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services](#) (MAES), an activity under the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy. It includes contributions from Alterra, Austrian Environmental Protection Agency, Geoville and the Institute of Landscape Ecology, Slovak Academy of Sciences, all ETC/BD partners. The report can be downloaded from the [EEA website](#).



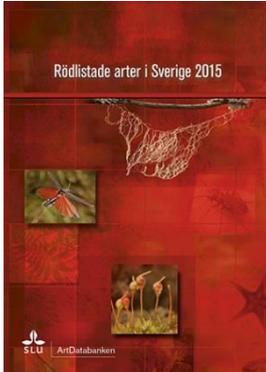
The European environment - state and outlook 2015 (SOER 2015) provides a comprehensive assessment of the European environment's state, trends and prospects, and places it in a global context. It will inform European environmental policy implementation between 2015 and 2020, and analyses the opportunities to modify existing policies (and the knowledge used to inform those policies) in order to achieve the European Union's 2050 vision of living well within the limits of the planet.

SOER 2015 has several components 1) A synthesis report, 2) A report on global megatrends, 3) A set of 25 thematic briefings including one on biodiversity, 4) A series of nine briefings on cross-country comparisons including one on protected areas, 5) A set of 39 briefings which summarise the state of the environment in each country which is an EEA member or collaborating partner, as well as three briefings on environmental challenges in the Arctic, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean regions. For further information see the [SOER 2015 webpages](#).

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- **SWEDISH UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES**

species, see <http://www.artdatabanken.se/en/the-red-list/> for further details.



Artdatabanken (the Swedish Species Information Centre) have published a new edition of the Red List of Swedish

- **ETC/BD TECHNICAL PAPERS AND WORKING PAPERS**

The ETC/BD and its predecessors have produced many reports over the past 20 years. A selection of these reports is now being made available on our website, see <http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/Reports/#etcbdtp>

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 2014-2018.

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/>