



NEWSLETTER

December 2016



Nature Directives

The 'Fitness check'

Following a long review of the directives and their implementation, the European Commission announced on the 7th December *“that the European Birds and Habitats Directives remain relevant and fit for purpose. They will not be 'opened'”*. Nicola Notaro, head of the Nature unit within DG Environment has thanked the EEA and the ETC/BD for our contribution, noting *“The data and analysis prepared by EEA & ETC has underpinned our fitness check evaluation and this proved essential for a successful completion of the fitness check”*. Further information on the statement by Commissioner Vella can be found on the [Commission's website](#).

Natura 2000

The second regional seminars for each of the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Macaronesian marine regions to assess sufficiency of Natura 2000 designations under the Habitats Directive, were held in Malta on the 27th to 29th September. The seminars showed that considerable progress has been made in identifying and proposing marine sites but that the network is still incomplete for these marine regions, especially offshore.

Reporting under the Nature Directives

Work continues in preparation for the next reports under Article 12 of the Birds Directive and Article 17 of the Habitats Directive. The reporting formats were presented to the

November meeting of the NADEG where they were informally endorsed. It is expected that the Article 17 format will be formally approved at the spring meeting of Habitats Committee. The Article 12 format does not require formal approval.

The guidelines for both directives are being revised following discussions and comments at meetings of the Expert Group on Reporting in October. It is planned that the guidelines for both Article 12 and 17 reporting will be published in April 2017.

The 'New' biogeographical process

The first **Natura 2000 Review Seminars** were held in October. The review seminars focused on site management and are intended to monitor and evaluate the results of the actions agreed at the earlier Kick-off Seminars. They also help to identify and recommend further priorities. First was the [Boreal seminar](#) held in Vilnius (Lithuania) on the 5th-7th followed a few weeks later by the [Atlantic seminar](#) in Ennistymon (Ireland) on the 25th to 27th. At both meetings there was discussion of the 'Low Hanging Fruit' approach to identifying habitats where rapid progress could be expected through a collaborative approach among countries sharing a same biogeographic region. Further review seminars for the other regions will be held next year.



The Atlantic seminar included a visit to a [Life project on the Aran Islands](#)

See the [Natura Communication platform](#) for further information.

Emerald and Bern Convention



The European Environment Agency and the Council of Europe have agreed on a revision and an update of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed in 2001, with the objective to better frame and enhance the collaboration between the two organisations in the implementation of the Emerald network.

The ETC/BD participated in an ad hoc restricted group of experts on reporting on the Emerald network on 19 September in Strasbourg. The Council of Europe secretariat presented figures related to the consolidated Emerald database which, by the end of 2015, included 2019 “Emerald sites” (37 formally designated Emerald sites for Switzerland, candidate Emerald sites and sites identified as eligible to Emerald criteria but not yet proposed as candidate). The meeting also discussed a procedure for a regular update, by countries, of their national Emerald databases, as well as the possibility to engage

in a future reporting on conservation status for a selected number of habitats under Resolution 4 and species under Resolution 6 of the Bern Convention.

At the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention, held on 15-18th November, 155 sites in Belarus and 271 sites in Ukraine were officially adopted as Emerald sites, in addition to the existing sites in Switzerland. Further information about Emerald can be found on the [network’s website](#).

EEA and EIONET

The 3rd annual meeting of the National Focal Points (NFPs), held on 13-14th October, was largely dedicated to the preparation for the EEA Management Board to be held on 5th December.

The EEA Management Board seminar, held in the Odd Fellows Palace, Copenhagen, under the title “EEA and EIONET, shaping our future together”, gathered representatives from the Management Board, the EEA Scientific Committee, NFPs, ETC Managers, representatives from the European Commission and their consultants (as observers) as well as EEA staff.

The aim of the seminar was “to co-create a common understanding of the future EEA and EIONET in the face of changing contexts, including policy and transition needs, and to explore ways to evolve and adapt to upcoming demands on the network for information and knowledge sharing”. The seminar was organised around four sessions: 1) Setting the scene for the seminar, 2) Set-up and functioning of EIONET, a session during which the [ETC/ICM](#) and the [ETC/WMGE](#) managers reported on ETC perspectives, 3) Benefits and added value of EEA and EIONET, a session during which different EIONET members were invited to address “testimonials”, including Dominique Richard, based on her 21-years’ experience in an ETC, and 4) Development perspectives of the EEA and EIONET in a changing world.



The outcomes of the seminar will be presented to the EEA Management Board in March 2017 and will then feed into the ongoing evaluation of the EEA by the Commission as part of the Fitness check of environment monitoring and reporting.

SEBI

The SEBI indicators SEBI003 and 005 “Species and Habitats of European interest”, SEBI 026 “Public awareness” and SEBI 001 “Abundance & Distribution of selected species” have been updated. Information on SEBI indicators is available through the [EEA web site](#) and through [BISE](#). In addition, two cross-linked tables “[EU biodiversity indicators & related global Aichi targets](#)” and “[EU biodiversity indicators and related EU targets](#)” provide access to these indicators in the context of EU Biodiversity Strategy.

Ecosystem assessments and their services

In 2016, the Working Group on Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) met twice in March and September. Information on progress made by Member States is available on the [BISE](#) website. At EU level, thoughts and discussion are still ongoing on methodological approaches to assess ecosystem condition including the key question on how the condition of ecosystems is affecting their capacity to deliver services. Preliminary results of the revised proposal for indicators on ecosystem condition developed by DG Environment, EEA with support from ETC/BD and JRC, will be presented at the next MAES Working Group meeting in March 2017 and discussed with Member States, experts and stakeholders at a dedicated workshop in later spring 2017.

The Knowledge innovation project (KIP) on Accounting for natural capital and ecosystem services (KIP – INCA) is an initiative involving Eurostat and the EEA which aims to design and implement an integrated accounting

system for ecosystems and their services in the EU by connecting relevant existing projects and data. In September 2016, a report reviewed the state of play and developed a proposal and resource plan for an EU wide ecosystem accounting system. A first review of indicators using the [Common International Classification for Ecosystem Services](#) (CICES) to identify and characterize the biophysical, social and monetary dimensions of ecosystem services assessments is also available through the [ESMERALDA website](#). In order to ensure consistency between activities on condition assessment and services, the ETC/BD participated to a workshop on “Developing ecosystem service classification(s) for ecosystem accounting – taking stock & moving forward” held in Wageningen.

BISE & the CHM

The EEA and ETC/BD have been working over the last years in developing the [Target Crosslinking Tool \(TCT\)](#) for the 2020 biodiversity targets. The TCT enables cross-linkages between biodiversity-related targets from the national to the EU and the global levels, in order to support national and regional assessment of progress towards biodiversity targets and facilitate related reporting obligations. The TCT tool was presented to the recent Convention of Parties meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity at a side event on ‘*Towards modular approach to reporting against the Aichi Biodiversity Targets*’.

EUNIS

Following Internet based consultations on proposed revisions for marine habitats (section A) in 2015 and for forests (section G) and heaths, scrub and tundra (section F) in summer 2016, the ETC/BD has revised these sections of the EUNIS habitats classification



and it is expected these will become available next year.

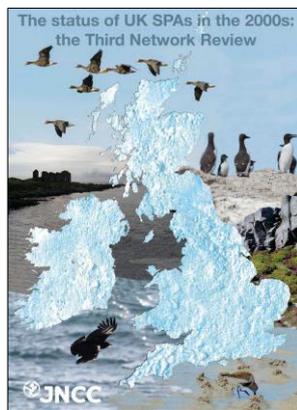
A report for the EEA from the EVS on grasslands was received in June and will be the base of a proposed revision of this section of the EUNIS classification. Work to revise the grassland and other remaining sections is planned for 2017.

News from our partners

MNHN

Bálint Czúcz (HU) joined the ETC BD core team as Ecosystem Assessment Officer in September. He previously worked at the [Centre for Ecological Research](#) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, where he participated in several regional and European level ecosystem service assessment projects (including OpenNESS and ESMEALDA). Bálint has an MSc in Meteorology and Horticulture, and a PhD on integrating natural ecosystems into climatic vulnerability assessments.

JNCC

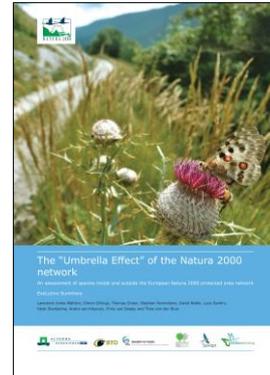


JNCC has just published the third review of the UK's network of Special Protection Areas; see the [JNCC website](#) for further details.

Publications

The following publications are from the ETC/BD, its partners or from the EEA.

The 'Umbrella effect' of Natura 2000



This report, funded by DG Environment, and produced by a group led by ETC/BD partner [Alterra](#) assesses the contribution of Natura 2000 to the conservation of species that are not in the annexes of the Nature Directives. It demonstrates that the Natura 2000 network is of crucial importance for the protection of the EU's biodiversity, not only for the species for which the areas were designated, but also for many other threatened and non-threatened European species of flora and fauna. A summary and the full report can be downloaded from the [Commission's website](#).

The science, policy and practice of nature-based solutions: An interdisciplinary perspective



The science, policy and practice of nature-based solutions: An interdisciplinary perspective

Nesshöver Carsten^{a,d,*}, Assmuth Timo^a, Irvine Katherine N.^c, Rusch Graciela M.^b, Waylen Kerry A.^c, Delbaere Ben^c, Haase Dagmar^{a,d}, Jones-Walters Lawrence^c, Keune Hans^b, Kovacs Eszter^{b,d}, Krauze Kinga^c, Külvik Mart^c, Rey Freddy^c, van Dijk Jiska^b, Vistad Odd Inge^c, Wilkinson Mark E.^c, Wittmer Heidi^b

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This paper published in Science of The Total Environment, with co-authors from ETC/BD partners Alterra and ECNC, is a review of the implications for science, policy and practice of the recently introduced concept of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS). The paper can be found on the [journal's website](#).



European Red List of Habitats



A project funded by DG Environment and jointly led by ETC/BD partner Alterra and IUCN

has produced the first Red List of habitats in Europe. The reports will be published soon and will be available from [DG Environment's website](#). Results will also be incorporated into the EUNIS website and will inform future revisions of the EUNIS habitats classification.

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 in the ETC/BD Technical papers and Working papers section.

The [European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity](#) is a consortium of 13 partners who share the responsibility for the work programme defined by the EEA, in collaboration with a Core Team based in Paris at the [Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle](#) (National Museum of Natural History), the coordinator of the consortium.