

Protection of Habitats and Species: the EU Biodiversity Strategy

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EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030

The focus of this presentation would be on highlighting the difference between the first pillar, the national system of protected areas and the second pillar, the so-called 'Natura 2000'.

At the end, it will be briefly explained how the European Commission is trying to achieve the biodiversity targets by the year 2030.

03

Nationally protected areas & Natura 2000

Specific to the EU: Two systems of area-based conservation systems

The paradox of strictly protected and less strictly protected areas

Strictly protected areas are usually 'no-take' areas, and sometimes even 'no-go' areas.

Less strictly protected areas are often based on securing nature conservation objectives through 'sustainable management practices'.

-Modern farming practices, are often destructive, especially for ecological specialists...

-Human aspirations for space mean that there cannot be many such

Strict protection and less strict protection. What does this mean?

Strictly protected areas:

"No-take" or even no-go areas

These are mainly areas based on natural succession

3% of strictly protected areas in the EU. The European Commission believes that this percentage should be tripled, a view that the speaker shares.

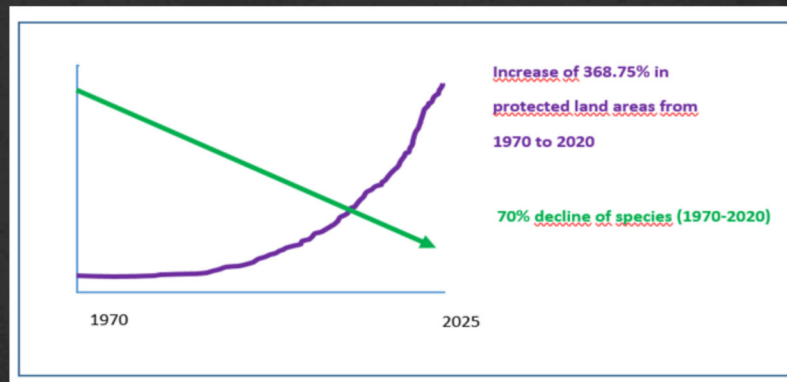
Less strictly protected areas:

Nature conservation is achieved through: '*sustainable management practices*'

Only problem: definition of sustainable. What is sustainable? For humans we know something but for animals and plants we don't want to hear their requirements. Modern farming practices although they are still doing use of natural resources and it is not destroyed by big factories, motorways are still very harmful to nature.

The European Commission and the EU in general have a very clear how to achieve it and what is needed.

Are protected areas the only and sufficient tool for nature conservation on the planet?



No.

Sustainably managed countryside also helps preserve biodiversity. But protected areas are surely the most effective tool for biodiversity protection.

Are protected areas a sufficient tool to protect biodiversity on the planet?

The green line: in the year 1970 they counted how many individuals there, and they are monitoring how many are lost to date → 70% decline of species

The purple curve: showing amazing increase of 368% of protected areas. We increased almost 400%

But how biodiversity is so dramatically declining, and the number of protected areas is increasing?

2 problems:

1. Not all biodiversity is in protected areas.

The great woodpecker is in every town, every forest not only protected areas. This shows that there is a need for managing landscapes outside protected areas in a very careful and sustainable way.

2. Need for better management and enforcement:

If we face such a dramatic increase of protected areas, we do something wrong: the *management*, which is also connected to *enforcement* (importance of the role of lawyers: to monitor that the management will be appropriate).

Protected territories

	At the national level (national parks, reserves...)	At the EU level (Natura 2000)
	Nationally protected areas, based on the IUCN protected area categories	Natura 2000 sites, based on the EU Nature Directives
Legal basis for creation	National legislation	EU legislation (binding), transposed into the national legislation
Criteria for establishment	Scientific data, but complemented with other criteria (i.e. 'natural beauty', socio-economic, cultural values ...)	Only based on scientifically justified data
Focused on	'Nature' (incl. species, habitats, ecosystems) but also 'natural features' and landscapes	Target species and habitats only

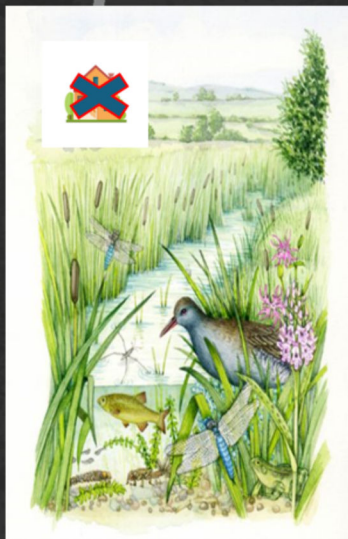
Differences between national protected areas and the EU: 2 systems
Natura 2000 = network of protected sites

There are more criteria but here three are deliberately mentioned:

1. Legal basis
2. Criteria for establishment
3. Focus

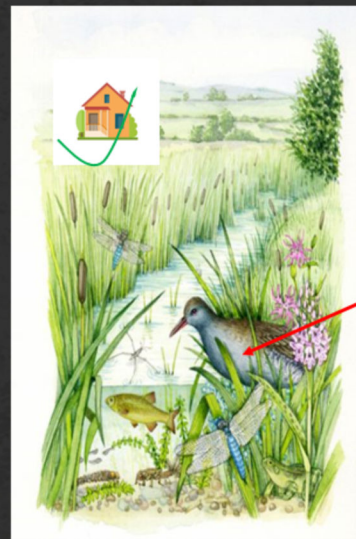
If there is a population of a certain species or extent of a habitat that the European Commission considers especially important or threatened and there is a certain percentage of that species or habitat in that area, the respective member state is **obliged** to designate a natura 2000 site, based on one of the EU Natura Directives. Common European design and requirement. It gives you power to act, the EU is backing you up, based on scientifically justified data.

Nationally protected areas vs. Natura 2000: different approach



PROTECTED AREA:

Set of prohibited activities, valid across the entire protected area (or its internal zone), such as: -prohibition of construction



NATURA 2000:

Securing favorable conservation status for the **target species (or habitats)** (only) – but not prescribed how!

Drawing: Lizzie Harper

Drawing 1:

Example of a nationally protected area and bird: target species

The bird lives along the river, not in the woods

In nationally protected areas, **the national legislation sets prohibited activities in the entire protected area** (or its internal zone)

Drawing 2:

Natura 2000 is focusing on the species, not on the entire area.

If the bird lives along the river, there is no prohibition of construction in the nearby woods, if you prove that the house won't have any negative impact on the target species which lives by the river.

Securing favorable conservation status for the target species (or habitats) = the number of this species **should not decrease**.

04

Reaching the EU conservation targets

How is the EU is trying to bring natura back into our lives?



At least 30% of the EU's land area and 30% of the EU's marine area should be protected;

At least one third of protected areas - that is 10% of the EU's land area and 10% of the EU's marine area - should be strictly protected;

Provisions on effective management & restoration

EU Biodiversity strategy:

The EU requires at least 30% of the EU's land area and 30% of the EU's marine area should be protected.

Currently, at the global level we have 17% percent of land and 8% of marine areas protected.

EU is very ambitious and should be applauded for this.

- And at least one third of protected areas - that is 10% of the EU's land area and 10% of the EU's marine area - should be strictly protected; → eg the virgin forests or grasslands to be managed only for nature conservation
- + Provisions on effective management (also enforcement) & restoration

Protection versus Strict protection

	PROTECTION (30%)	STRICT PROTECTION (10%)
Conservation Objectives	Often less ambitious than maximum ecological site potential	Based on maximum ecological site potential
Management activities	May reflect a compromise with objectives other than biodiversity-related ones	Limited to those necessary for the restoration/conservation of habitats & species for which the site is designated
Extractive objectives	May occur	Only if needed to achieve conservation objectives
Legal status	Not necessary protected status	Legal protection status obligatory

Protection:

Protection has often less ambitious conservation objectives than strict protection
 Management activities in protected areas can be also compromised with sustainable uses etc

Some extractive activities may occur in protected areas

Legal status of protected areas: Not necessary protected status

Strict Protection:

Based on maximum ecological site potential

- Limited only to those activities that support natural succession
- Extraction: only for nature conservation objectives (eg grassland mowing but only once per year, late in the summer)
- Legal protection status obligatory

European Commission will also require Member States to:

Raise the level of implementation of existing legislation
(=enforcement, management effectiveness...) on
protected areas, within clear deadlines

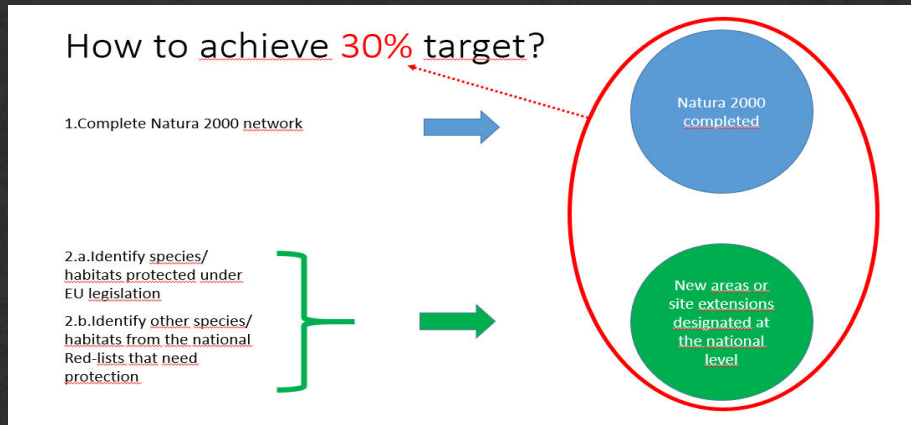
Ensure no deterioration in conservation trends and status
of all protected habitats and species

Ensure that at least 30% of species and habitats not
currently in favourable conservation status reach that
status or show a strong positive trend

There are also some supportive activities:

1. Raise the level of implementation of existing legislation
2. No further deterioration
3. Ensure that at least 30% of species and habitats not currently in favourable conservation status reach that status or show a strong positive trend

How the EU aims to reach the 30% / 10 % targets?



For the first time, the European Commission is trying to coordinate national and european efforts:

1. complete the Natura 2000 network, especially on marine areas
2. member states should identify more species/habitats that should be protected under the EU legislation and those that are on the national level

30%+ 10% target of european nature to be protected and 1/3 of this to be fully protected, where nature succession has the leading force.

Thanks!

Do you have any questions?

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