

Natura 2000



Europe's nature for you



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Natura 2000

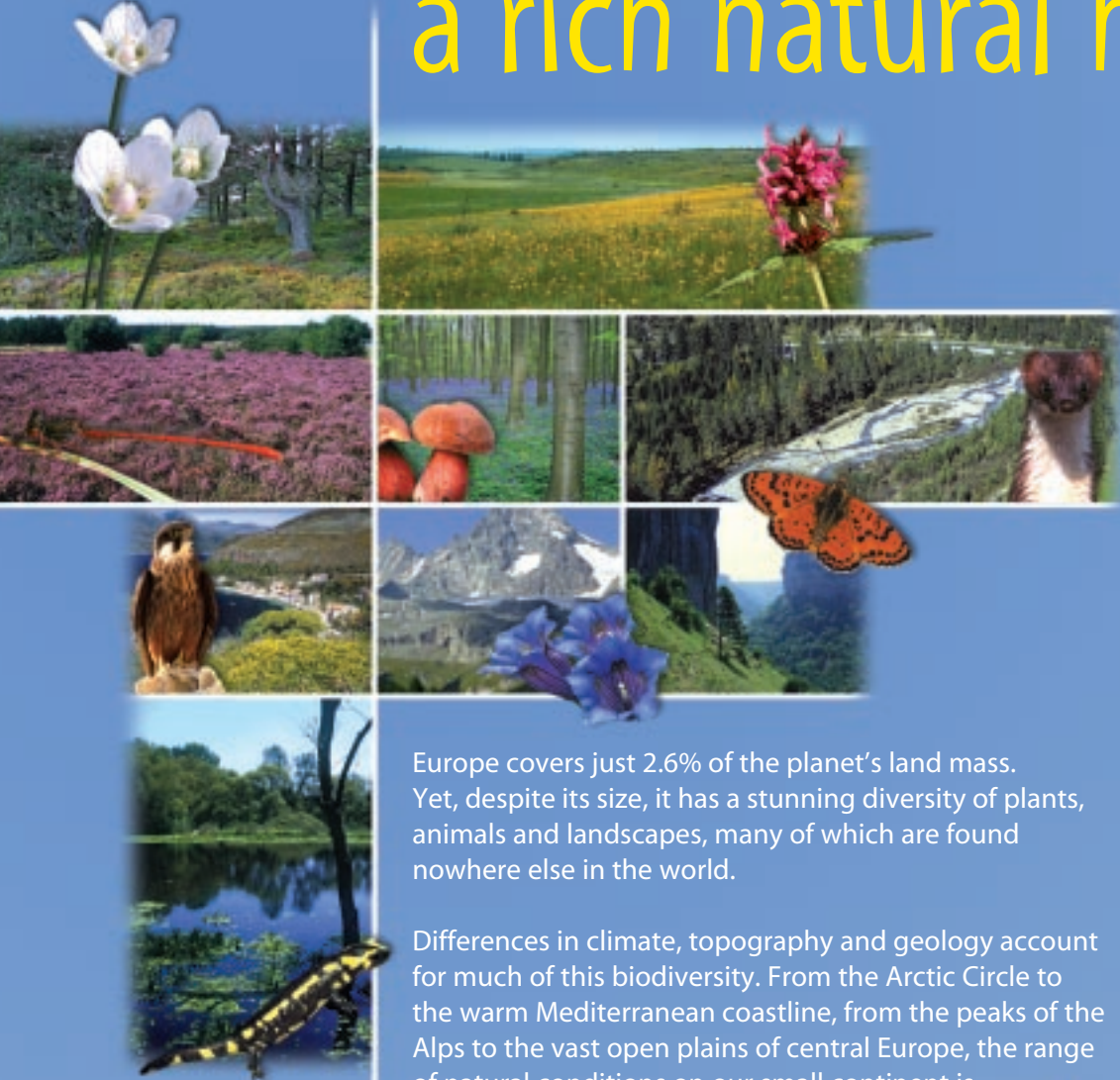


Europe's nature for you

page	CONTENTS
2	Europe's nature – a rich natural heritage
4	Nature – a valuable resource
6	Nature ... under threat
8	What are we doing about it? – Europe's response
10	The 'Habitats' and 'Birds' Directives
12	The Natura 2000 Network – a European network of sites
14	Natura 2000 – part of a living landscape
16	Putting people at the heart of Natura 2000
18	How will Natura 2000 work in practice?
20	How do we know if we have succeeded?
22	Natura 2000 – what can you do to help?
24	Photographer's credits



Europe's nature – a rich natural heritage



Europe covers just 2.6% of the planet's land mass. Yet, despite its size, it has a stunning diversity of plants, animals and landscapes, many of which are found nowhere else in the world.

Differences in climate, topography and geology account for much of this biodiversity. From the Arctic Circle to the warm Mediterranean coastline, from the peaks of the Alps to the vast open plains of central Europe, the range of natural conditions on our small continent is unparalleled.

Our long association with the land has been equally important in shaping our countryside. For centuries people have been developing different ways of working the land, which has given rise to many so called 'semi-natural' habitats, rich in wildlife (hay meadows, wooded pastures, open heaths) yet entirely dependent upon continued human use for their survival.

Europe's rich mixture of nationalities, cultures, languages and identities is also strongly reflected everywhere in our landscape. Few places in the world have such a varied, contrasting and localised patchwork of habitats, wildlife and cultural landscapes so tightly interwoven in so small an area – it is this that makes Europe's nature so unique.

This is our natural heritage.



Nature – a valuable resource



By protecting our natural heritage we can ensure that the rich diversity of plants, animals and habitats in Europe is maintained for generations to come. Yet it is not just its intrinsic value that counts, nature also plays a vital role in our economy and helps improve the quality of our lives.

Whether we live in cities or in the countryside, most of us go in search of nature at one time or another to admire its beautiful scenery, to walk, swim, fish, relax, explore or simply enjoy the fresh air and listen to the bird song. This has significant benefits for our health and wellbeing.

We also profit from nature's important environmental functions. Wetlands, for instance, provide a natural defense against floods, acting like sponges soaking up the excess water. Reedbeds help purify polluted waters by absorbing toxic substances, and peatlands act as natural sinks for carbon dioxide, the number one cause of global warming.

Above all, nature provides a vital source of income for countless people across Europe who harvest its natural resources in a sustainable manner. Low intensity farming, for instance, is practiced over large areas of Europe, providing a livelihood for millions of people.

Nature: a part of
our identity



In Scotland, walking holidays have become increasingly popular. In 1998 1.1 million trips were taken bringing in €600 million for local businesses. Scottish wildlife tourism supports 2,000 jobs and brings in an annual income of €70 million.

DO WE VALUE OUR NATURE ENOUGH?

Monet's painting of poppy fields is estimated at €5-50 million, the real thing costs €5,000/ha



Nature

... under threat



Europe's nature is under increasing threat. Populations of species are declining at an alarming rate and many valuable natural and semi-natural habitats are rapidly disappearing. Today, almost half of Europe's mammals and a third of our reptile, fish and bird species are endangered.

This dramatic decline is primarily due to the loss and fragmentation of the habitats upon which the species depend. Many of these habitats are shrinking in the wake of more intensive land uses, major infrastructures, such as roads, and the steady spread of urban areas.

In only a few decades half of Europe's valuable wetlands have been drained for land reclamation and agriculture. Heathlands, steppes and peat bogs have shrunk by as much 60–90% and almost three-quarters of the dunes in France, Italy and Spain have disappeared under the relentless pressure of mass tourism.

Other threats to nature include pollution, climate change, disturbance, recreational pressure, unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, introduction of invasive non-native species and land abandonment.



THE PRESTIGE DISASTER

When the Prestige tanker sank off the coast of northern Spain in November 2002, it released 64,000 tonnes of oil killing some 300,000 sea birds (mainly common guillemots, Atlantic puffins and razorbills). Damage to fishing, tourism and the natural heritage along 3,000 km of coastline polluted by the spill has cost approximately €5 billion. Around 30,000 people in the fishery and shellfish sectors have been directly affected. Several local fishermen's organisations have reported an 80% drop of their normal catch.

It is not just the rare species, such as bears, butterflies and endemic plants, that are threatened. Populations of the common house sparrow have fallen dramatically in the last 20 years due to the loss of their habitats. Most of Europe's heaths have also disappeared. Consequently, many of the species that depend on these habitats for their survival, such as the sand lizard and the Dartford warbler, are also on the decline.



Decline of the common house sparrow in the EU (source BirdLife 2005)



What are we doing about it?

– Europe's response



In the face of this alarming decline, people all over Europe have expressed increasing concern over the loss of their natural heritage and are calling for action to address this problem.

Governments of the EU Member States have responded accordingly and, in 2001, committed themselves, at the European Summit in Gothenburg, to stop the loss of biodiversity in Europe by the year 2010.

As nature does not recognise national boundaries, such an ambitious target is best achieved by coordinating efforts and pooling resources.

Rivers, such as the Danube, flow through ten countries – if one of them damages part of the river, all may be affected. Migratory birds travel the length and breadth of Europe in search of resting, feeding and breeding grounds. If their habitats are only protected in one part of Europe and not in another, the species' chances of survival are inevitably poor.

European legislation sets the standard for nature conservation across the European Union and enables all 25 Member States to work together within the same strong legislative framework in order to protect our most vulnerable species and habitat types.

The common crane migrates across Europe from its winter feeding grounds in the south to its summer breeding grounds in the north. Thanks to European legislation, sites have been protected all along its migration route and populations in the EU are increasing as a result.



NB: information on Natura 2000 sites for the ten new Member States is not yet finalised.



The 'Habitats' and 'Birds' Directives



The cornerstones of Europe's legislation on nature conservation are the Birds and Habitats Directives.

- The **Birds Directive** was adopted in 1979 and aims to protect all wild birds and their most important habitats across the EU. The Directive puts an end to certain practices such as the keeping and sale of native wild birds, or indiscriminate methods of killing and introduces a legal mechanism for regulating other activities, such as hunting, to ensure that they are sustainable.

The Directive also requires all 25 Member States to protect the most important sites for all migratory birds and 194 particularly threatened species, paying particular attention to wetlands of international importance.

- In 1992, the EU adopted the **Habitats Directive**. This introduces similar measures to the Birds Directive to protect Europe's wildlife but extends its coverage to a much wider range of rare, threatened or endemic species, including around 450 animals and 500 plants. Some 200 rare and characteristic habitat types are also, for the first time, targeted for conservation in their own right.

These Directives represent the most ambitious and large-scale initiative ever undertaken to conserve our natural heritage across the European Union.

The range of habitat types to be conserved under the Habitats Directive is very diverse – it varies from natural forests in Scandinavia, to limestone pavements along the Atlantic sea board and species-rich meadows high up in the Alps. Threatened species such as the eagle owl, the large copper butterfly and the Eastern pasqueflower are also now protected.



IBERIAN LYNX (*Lynx pardinus*)
With a population of less than 200–400 individuals, the Iberian lynx is now the most endangered wild cat species in the world. It lives in Mediterranean woodland and maquis thicket, favouring dense scrub for shelter and open pasture for hunting rabbits. Agricultural intensification and infrastructure developments (such as new roads) have fragmented its habitat to such an extent that it is now confined to isolated pockets in the south west of Spain and Portugal. Illegal hunting, trapping and road kills add to its troubles as does the lack of its main food source, the rabbit, which was almost wiped out by the disease, Myxomatosis. If the Iberian lynx does not recover it could be the first cat species to go extinct since the sabre-toothed tiger 2,000 years ago.



The Natura 2000 Network – a European network of sites

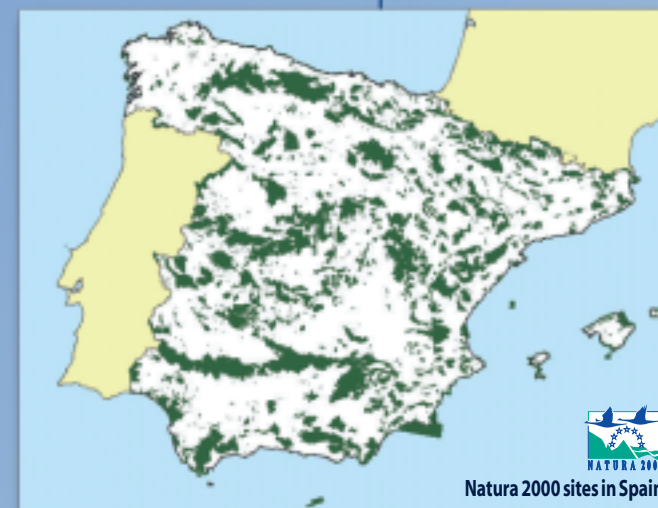
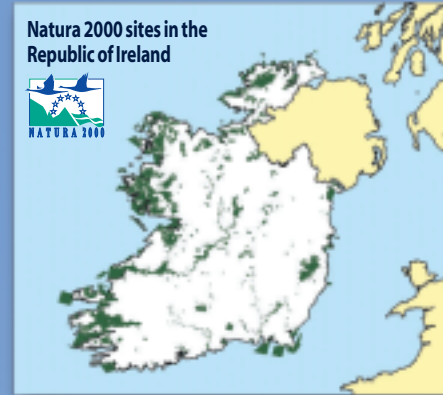


At the heart of both Nature Directives lies the creation of a Europe-wide ecological network of protected sites – called the Natura 2000 Network.

Every country has designated Natura 2000 sites to help conserve the rare habitats and species present in their territory. Over 18,000 sites are included in the Network so far. In total they cover a substantial area: almost a fifth of Europe's land and water – equivalent to the size of Germany and Italy put together.

The individual Natura 2000 sites range in size from less than 1 ha to over 5,000 km² depending on the species or habitats they aim to conserve, the majority are around 100–1,000 ha. Some are located in remote areas but most form an integral part of our countryside and contain a range of different habitats, buffer zones and other elements of the landscape.

As a result, Natura 2000, is not only safeguarding some of Europe's rarest species and habitats, but it also provides a safe haven for countless other animals, plants and wildlife features which, although more common, are an equally important part of our natural heritage.



BIOGEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS
The EU has seven biogeographical regions, each with its own characteristic blend of vegetation, climate, topography and geology. Working at this level makes it easier to check species and habitat conservation trends under similar natural conditions, irrespective of political and administrative boundaries.



Boreal
Atlantic
Continental
Alpine
Pannonian
Mediterranean
Macaronesian

HOW ARE NATURA 2000 SITES CHOSEN?

- **STAGE 1:** The first step is taken by the Member States. Each country identifies sites that are important for the conservation of species and habitats listed in the Habitats Directive occurring naturally in their territory. The choice must be made on purely ecological grounds at this stage.
- **STAGE 2:** The Member States send their national Natura 2000 lists to the European Commission. The latter examines the information provided across the whole biogeographical region and, in cooperation with the organisations concerned, independent scientists and non-government organisations, selects sites of Community importance. If the list is deemed insufficient, Member States are requested to propose more sites in order to complete the network.
- **STAGE 3:** The final stage is for Member States to formally protect these areas and introduce measures to maintain or restore them to a good conservation state.

Natura 2000 – part of a living landscape



People often associate nature conservation with strict nature reserves where human activities are systematically excluded. Natura 2000 adopts a different approach. It fully recognises that man is an integral part of nature and the two work best in partnership with one another.

Indeed, many sites in Natura 2000 are valuable precisely because of the way they have been managed up to now. In such cases, it will be important to ensure that these sorts of activities (e.g. extensive farming) can continue into the future.

So, whilst there will certainly be some strict nature reserves in the Network where human uses are limited for the sake of the rare wildlife and habitats present, the majority of Natura 2000 sites will continue to be managed, taking into account the vulnerable habitats and species present.

In this way Natura 2000 supports the principle of sustainable development. Its aim is not to stop economic activities altogether, but rather to set the parameters by which these can take place whilst safeguarding Europe's biodiversity.

WHAT ARE THE OBLIGATIONS ON NATURA 2000 SITES?

Within Natura 2000 areas, Member States must ensure that:

- activities are avoided that could significantly disturb the species or deteriorate the habitats for which the site is designated.

- positive measures are taken, where necessary, to maintain and restore the habitats and species to a 'favourable conservation state'

In addition, Natura 2000 sites should be protected from any new development projects or major changes in land-use that could seriously damage their nature values, unless these developments are of over-riding public interest. How these conditions are respected is for each Member State to decide. Nevertheless, all conservation measures must take into account the economic, social and cultural as well as regional and local characteristics of the sites in question.



Putting people at the heart of Natura 2000



All over Europe, examples already exist of how Natura 2000 works in practice.

In most cases, only minor adjustments will be needed to make sure existing land uses are compatible with the conservation of the species and habitats present, for instance mowing fields a few weeks later to allow the ground nesting birds to fledge, avoiding disturbance in areas where animals breed, feed or rest at certain times of the year....

There will be times however where the changes may need to be more substantial in order to prevent a site from deteriorating further or to help restore it to a favourable condition.

In all cases, it is essential that those who live and work in Natura 2000 sites are closely involved in decisions over their long term management. From private landowners and users, government authorities, industries, to recreational groups, conservationists, local communities and concerned citizens – everyone has an important role to play in making Natura 2000 a success.

DEALING WITH LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENTS

Development projects that involve significant changes to the way the land is used within a Natura 2000 site (e.g. construction of a new road, turning a meadow into a commercial forest plantation) must be first assessed to determine whether the project is likely to have a significant effect on the site's nature values. If the impact is not considered significant the project can go ahead.

If the effect is expected to be significant then alternative less damaging options must be fully explored and selected – e.g. changing the route of the new road, choosing another site outside Natura 2000.

In exceptional cases damaging projects within Natura 2000 can still go ahead if they are considered to be of overriding public interest and no viable alternatives exist. In such cases, compensation measures will be need to be taken in order to ensure that the Natura 2000 Network is not compromised.

MANAGING FORESTS SUSTAINABLY IN EASTERN GERMANY
Covering 200 km², the Hainich beech forest is one of the largest of its kind in Europe. After German reunification, the regional government declared significant parts a national park and Natura 2000 site in order to prevent over-exploitation. The Association of private landowners who own much of the communing land was initially strongly opposed to this designation, fearing that it would prevent them using the forest for economic purposes. But the conservation authorities soon allayed their fears: the association practices a form of selective forestry, involving the removal of mature trees through a rotation system, which is compatible with the conservation of the forests' biodiversity. A management agreement was drawn up between the two parties to agree on how to exploit the forest's resources whilst safeguarding the valuable habitats and species present. Thanks to this agreement, the foresters continue to earn a living from their forest without the competition of large-scale clear cutting operations.



FARMING THE STEPPES OF CASTRO VERDE, PORTUGAL
On the vast steppic plains of Castro Verde in southern Portugal the traditional farming system is based on non irrigated extensive cereal production, laid fallow every 2-3 years. The resulting semi-natural steppic habitats are of immense nature conservation value, particularly for birds. However, increasing competition from intensive cereal production has forced many farmers to abandon their land in search of jobs elsewhere, with serious consequences for both the local economy and the bird populations. With the inclusion of Castro Verde in Natura 2000, conservation groups and farmers decided to join forces and lobby the government for an agri-environmental support scheme that would enable farmers to continue to manage their land as before. The scheme has proven to be very popular, over 350 km² of steppic farmland is now being managed extensively again and the birds are returning in large numbers.



How will Natura 2000 work in practice?



KEEPING THE WATER CLEAN AND HEALTHY IN FRANCE

The Auvergne region in Central France is famous for its abundance of freshwater. Much of this comes from the Loire which starts life high up in the Massif Central. One of the tributaries of the Loire, the Allier, provides 70% of the drinking water for inhabitants living in and around the city of Clermont Ferrand. In order to ensure that the water quality remains of a high

enough standard for human consumption, the town council created special protection zones around the abstraction sites. This requires a good deal of control and management, so when most of the site was also included in Natura 2000 because of its remarkable alluvial forests, the local authorities turned to the local conservation group for help. A management agreement was signed between the two parties identifying what should be done in the area in order to guarantee the water quality and maintain the area's rich natural values. As a result the local inhabitants of Clermont Ferrand not only have a constant source of clean water but also an attractive nature reserve on their doorstep.

RESTORING WETLANDS IN WESTERN GREECE

The Amvrakikos delta is a massive wetland complex extending for hundreds of kilometers in every direction. This brackish environment provides an ideal habitat for waterbirds, including the rare Dalmatian pelican. In the 1980s, parts of the delta were drained for agriculture but this was not a success, the water table became too salty. The regional Development Agency decided instead to concentrate on making best use of the area's natural assets. With an international reputation as a biodiversity hotspot, the Delta was ideally placed to capitalise on the emerging eco-tourism market. Having restored significant parts of the delta back to their original state, an integrated management plan was developed with local stakeholders to promote land-uses and eco-tourism initiatives compatible with the principles of Natura 2000. Judging by the strong local support and the steady influx of nature tourists this new vision for Amvrakikos is beginning to pay off.



WATCHING THE WHALES IN THE AZORES

Situated way out in the Atlantic, the deep waters around the Azores teem with abundant marine life. The archipelago is one of the best places in Europe to see whales and dolphins. Such a valuable natural asset has great potential for eco-tourism but could harm the animals if not handled properly. To ensure that local whale watching operations are run professionally, the Azores government introduced a mandatory code of conduct for operating in Natura 2000 marine areas. In exchange for respecting the regulations, local businesses are given valuable training in business management as well as marine conservation. Thanks to this cooperation, the Azores is rapidly gaining an international reputation for whale watching and local businesses are growing as a result.



MARRYING TOURISM AND NATURE ON THE EMERALD ISLE

Cuilcagh mountain is a remote but stunning expanse of blanket bog extending over the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The area is actually better known for its network of caves under the mountain. For a long time, the Marble Arch caves were a popular tourist attraction but the increasing number of flash floods eventually

forced them to close. Investigations revealed that the floods were caused by large-scale peat extraction and overgrazing on top of the mountain. The local authorities began a long and difficult process of repairing the peat layer and persuading farmers to enter into management agreements to reduce overgrazing. Their efforts are now being rewarded: not only is the bog recovering, but the whole area is seeing something of a tourism revival. People are coming back to visit the caves and the unique scenery on the mountain top.



BRINGING THE STEPPES BACK TO LIFE IN HUNGARY

The flat Hungarian puszta steppes have been grazed for thousands of years, making them one of the oldest cultural landscapes in Europe. During the communist period, vast areas were turned into rice fields and high yield grassland but these experiments eventually failed, both technically and economically. With the inclusion of

the Hortobagy steppes in Natura 2000, a restoration programme has been launched to remove the artificial dykes and irrigation channels so that the puszta could once again be flooded during springtime. These few centimetres of water make all the difference, providing rich pickings for thousands of migrating birds and ideal grazing land for livestock. Local farming enterprises have begun reintroducing traditional Hungarian breeds to the newly restored steppes, spurred on by the area's high eco-tourism potential and the emerging market for healthy local products.



ELECTRICITY COMPANIES HELP SAVE RARE BIRDS IN SPAIN

The Aragon region produces much of Spain's electricity. Unfortunately, the extensive network of power lines and cables are a major cause of mortality for highly threatened birds such as the bearded vulture. Many end up electrocuted after colliding with the high voltage lines. To address this problem, the regional government is working closely with electricity companies to adjust over 350 km of powerlines in Natura 2000 sites so that they are rendered safe for birds. Since the start of this cooperation, there has been a dramatic decline in the death toll of birds. Some have even taken to nesting on the high electricity towers. The electricity companies have agreed to run all new cables underground from now on.



CONSERVATION SUPPORTS LOCAL FARMING IN DENMARK

The Varde river valley was once a complex patchwork of salt meadows of high biodiversity value. Over time these were systematically drained to make way for intensive agriculture but when the market for intensively produced grass pellets collapsed the local Farmer's Union had to look for alternative sources of income. They

found that the area would be ideally suited to extensive grazing and mowing, which could receive financial support under agri-environmental schemes, if only the meadows could be re-wetted. Enter the conservation authorities who took on the work of restoring the meadows to their original natural state. Over 250 farmers signed up for agri-environment schemes worth €1 million a year. Their future is now more secure and the wet meadows are once again managed with nature in mind.



FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION IN FINLAND

Central Finland is at the heart of the country's timber industry. Here most of the forest is in private hands and any restriction on its use due to Natura 2000 designation is unlikely to be well received. The Regional Environment Board decided that the best way to persuade private foresters to accept Natura 2000 was to offer them the option of having a management plan drawn up for their forest. This would assess the forest's economic potential over the next 10-20 years and clarify what could be done from a conservation perspective. Such a practical tool not only helped the owner manage his resource more efficiently and profitably but also helped to dissipate the myth that Natura 2000 meant taking all the forest out of production. Here was proof to the contrary.



RIVER AUTHORITIES PUT THE BENDS BACK INTO AUSTRIAN RIVERS

Like many alpine rivers in Austria, the Obere Drau was straightened and canalized to regulate its flow and allow farming activities right up to the water's edge. Yet, with time it became evident that these hard engineering solutions were causing more damage than good, and not just to the wildlife. Without its natural meanders and riverine habitats, the river flowed at a much faster rate leading to a rapid erosion of the river bed. Groundwater levels dropped as a result and farmers began to complain that their fields were drying out. With the Obere Drau's inclusion in Natura 2000 the river authorities decided to adopt a softer approach to managing the river. Meanders were replaced along a 40 km stretch, side streams opened up and riverine wetlands restored. This had such a positive impact on both groundwater levels and wildlife, that there are now plans to carry out similar work on other parts of the river.



How do we know if we have succeeded?



Once the Natura 2000 network is up and running, it will be important to monitor the habitats and species listed in the two EU nature Directives regularly to assess their status.

Every six years, Member States will report to the Commission on the how the species and habitats are responding in their country and on the measures they have taken conserve them. The Commission can then examine this information on a biogeographical level to determine the overall trends for each species or habitat across Europe.

This will help determine the overall success of the Natura 2000 network and identify problem areas where conservation efforts need to be stepped up.



A NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR A RARE ENDEMIC FISH

On the island of Rhodes, there lives a rare freshwater fish, called the gizani, which exists nowhere else in the world. This little animal is a master of survival – it spends its entire life in the island's freshwater streams, springs and small reservoirs, braving the winter floods in below freezing conditions and the heatwaves and droughts at the height of summer. Most of its habitats are now protected under Natura 2000 and regulations have been introduced to control water abstraction and any other damaging operations. Recent monitoring surveys indicate that the gizani is recovering well as a result of these activities. Indeed, its fight for survival has captured the hearts and minds of inhabitants and tourists alike. There is now even a visitor centre in its honour.



PROTECTING THE BAT CAVES OF NORTHERN EUROPE

One of the last strongholds for northern bat species in Europe is located along the border regions of Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany. Unfortunately, many of the traditional hibernation spots here, such as caves, have already been damaged by recreational activities but thanks to history alternatives are available. The region is riddled with subterranean tunnels and bunkers from wartime Europe, as well as disused mines and ancient fortifications. Over 150 of these hibernation roosts are now protected under Natura 2000 and closed to the public. The bats are responding well: populations in Natura 2000 sites are stable for the first time in 50 years.



THE BROWN BEARS ARE BACK IN THE CENTRAL ALPS

Bears were exterminated from the Austrian Alps 150 years ago. Then, in the 1970s, an adventurous Slovenian bear decided to cross the border into Austria. It made headline news and set in motion an ambitious plan to repopulate the Central Alps with brown bears. Over the next 15 years, 13 animals were captured from Slovenia and released in the Austrian and Italian Alps. Once settled in their new homes they started to breed. Now the resident population is around 40 animals and their chances for survival are better than ever. Thanks to a strong awareness raising campaign and effective compensation system, people have become more tolerant of their presence.



REINTRODUCING THE CHAMOIS TO THE APENNINES

The Abruzzo chamois once roamed freely across the high mountains of the Apennine region in central Italy. However, excessive hunting and habitat loss pushed this endemic subspecies literally to the edge of extinction. By the mid 1950s the population had dwindled to 20 individuals. Conservation authorities decided therefore to set up a captive breeding station in the area and start reintroducing small nuclei of chamois back into carefully selected areas within the Apennines. This was accompanied by a major information campaign and stricter controls over hunting and tourism. Since the programme started, the population has increased to over 1,000 individuals – its highest in over a century.



BITTERNS ARE BOOMING AGAIN IN BRITAIN

The bittern is a secretive bird found mostly in marshes and extensive reedbeds. The evocative booming sound of the male is often the only sign of its presence. Over the last century the species has been in steady decline all across Europe, principally due to the loss of suitable habitats. The UK is no exception. By 1997 the population had dropped to only 11 booming males and was sure to disappear if nothing was done. Action was immediately taken to restore the species' existing habitats and to recreate new reedbeds at strategic locations across the country so that it could eventually expand its range. The bittern population has increased fivefold in the last seven years as a result, making it one of Britain's greatest wildlife success stories.



A HELPING HAND FOR PLANTS

The Canary Islands have one of the highest levels of plant diversity in the world – over 500 endemic species, more than in the Galapagos. However, the plants' restricted distribution makes them very vulnerable to any changes in their environment. Some species like the *Sambucus palmensis* are now so rare that simply protecting their habitats is not, in itself, enough. The Canaries government has therefore started a recovery programme for these species, taking seeds from wild plants and growing them in special nurseries in order to replant them at suitable locations on the islands. Already the wild population of *Sambucus palmensis* has quadrupled in size. And there is no shortage of places to reintroduce it either: over 30% of the land in the Canaries is designated as Natura 2000 in recognition of the islands remarkable biodiversity.



Natura 2000 – what can you do to help?



There are many things you can do to support the aims of the Natura 2000 Network, wherever you are in Europe:

- ▶ You could visit a Natura 2000 site near you; many offer walks, events and other activities for all the family throughout the year.
- ▶ Alternatively you could volunteer to help out at a local nature reserve. Wardens are always looking for volunteers to help them manage their sites.
- ▶ You could join a Green Day event to learn more about Natura 2000. The European Commission sponsors site managers to host these open days across different parts of Europe during the summer months so that people can find out more about this important pan-European network.
- ▶ Natura 2000 sites also make wonderful outdoor classrooms, why not take the children on a trip to discover their local wildlife and its value for our health and wellbeing?
- ▶ You can also help support the local economy within and around Natura 2000 sites by buying local products that maintain the habitats and species present in the area.

Which ever option you choose do share your experiences with others and encourage them to take an interest in Natura 2000 – afterall, **this is Europe's nature for you!**

TO FIND OUT MORE ON NATURA 2000:

- log onto the Commission website: <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/nature.htm>. Here you will find more information on how Natura 2000 is put into practice as well as regular on-line newsletters, leaflets, reports and posters on Nature 2000.

- contact your local authorities responsible for nature conservation. Many of them have on-line databases and interactive maps of Natura 2000 sites in the region, together with detailed descriptions of the species and habitats they contain.



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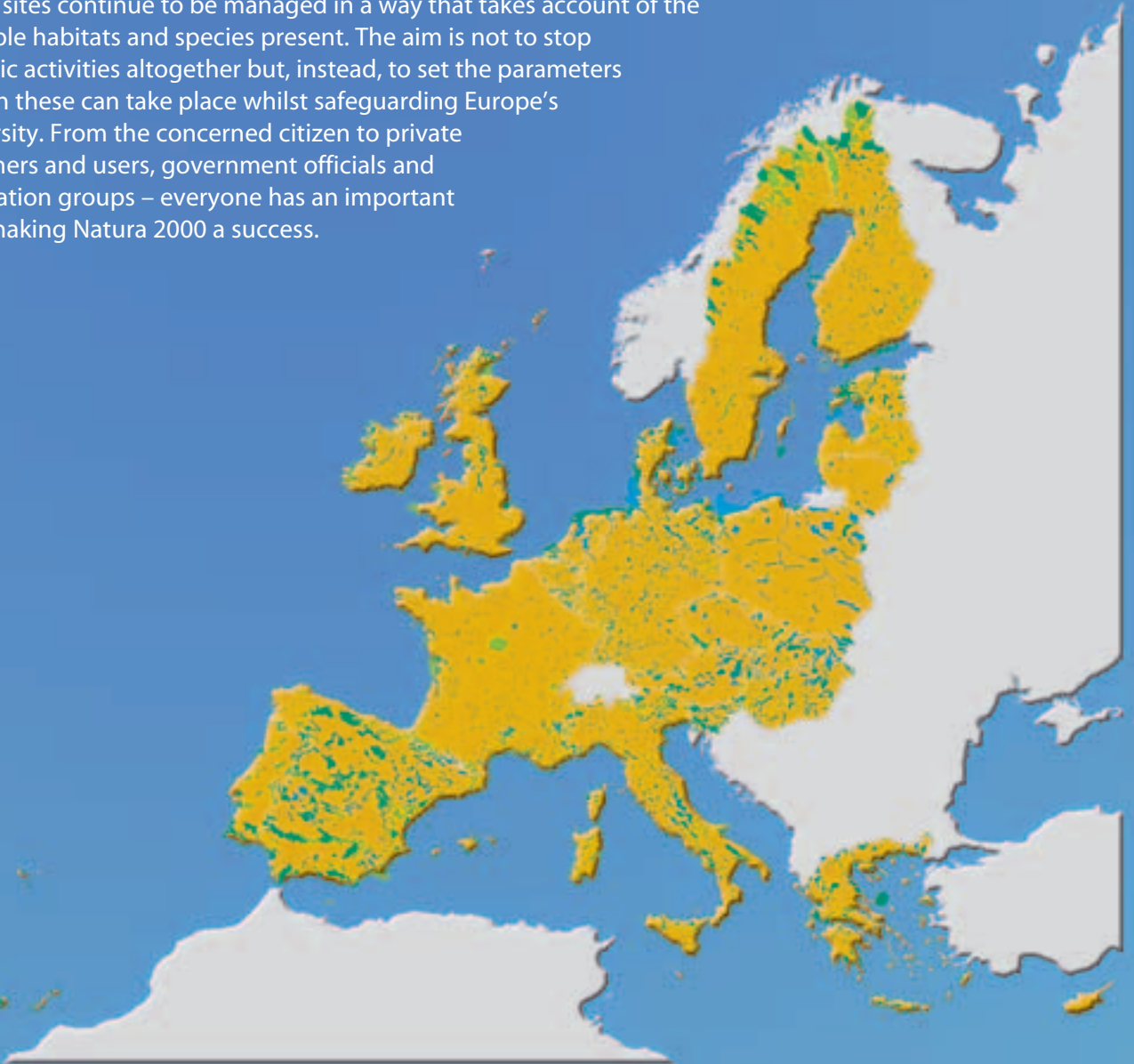


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