

Mid-term review of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020

EU assessment of progress towards the targets and actions

EU Biodiversity Targets (2020)

Progress at mid-term (2015)

2020 Headline Target

Halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restore them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.

No significant progress towards the target

Overall, biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU have continued since the EU 2010 biodiversity baseline, as confirmed by the 2015 *European environment - state and outlook report*. This is consistent with global trends and has serious implications for the capacity of biodiversity to meet human needs in the future. While many local successes demonstrate that action on the ground delivers positive outcomes, these examples need to be scaled up to have a measurable impact on the overall negative trends.

Target 1

Fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives.

Progress but at insufficient rate

The latest report on the state of nature in the EU shows that the number of species and habitats in secure/favourable or improved conservation status has increased slightly since the 2010 baseline. However, many habitats and species that were already in unfavourable status remain so, and some are deteriorating further. While much has been achieved since 2011 in carrying out the actions under this target, the most important challenges remain the completion of the Natura 2000 marine network, ensuring the effective management of Natura 2000 sites, and securing the necessary finance to support the Natura 2000 network.

Target 2

Maintain and restore ecosystems and their services.

Progress but at insufficient rate

Progress has been made on policy and knowledge improvement actions under this target, and some restoration activities have taken place in Member States. However, this has not yet halted the trend of degradation of ecosystems and services. National and regional frameworks to promote restoration and green infrastructure need to be developed and implemented. A lot remains to be done to halt the loss of ordinary biodiversity outside the Natura 2000 network.

Target 3a

Increase the contribution of agriculture to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity.

No significant progress towards the target

The continuing decline in the status of species and habitats of EU interest associated with agriculture indicates that greater efforts need to be made to conserve and enhance biodiversity in these areas. The common agricultural policy (CAP) has an essential role to play in this process in interaction with relevant environmental policies.

The CAP reform for 2014-20 provides a range of instruments that can contribute to supporting biodiversity. If the target is to be achieved, these opportunities need now to be taken up by Member States on a sufficient scale. Local examples demonstrate successful sustainable agricultural practices. If implemented more broadly, they could put the EU back on track to achieve the target by 2020.

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Target 3b

Increase the contribution of forestry to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity.

No significant progress towards the target

EU forest area has increased as compared with the EU 2010 biodiversity baseline. However, the conservation status of forest habitats and species covered by EU nature legislation shows no signs of improvement. EU level data on the status of forest habitats outside Natura 2000 is limited.

Forest management plans or equivalent instruments can play an important positive role in achieving the target, but their potential, remains largely unused.

Target 4

Ensure the sustainable use of fisheries resources and achieve good environmental status.

Progress but at insufficient rate

Significant progress has been made in setting the policy framework for sustainable fisheries under the reformed EU common fisheries policy, and of good environmental status under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The Commission is promoting improvements in oceans governance for more sustainable management of marine resources. However, policy implementation has been uneven across the EU and major challenges remain to ensure that the objectives are achieved according to schedule. Just over 50% of Maximum Sustainable Yield-assessed stocks were fished sustainably in 2013.

As a result of multiple pressures, marine species and ecosystems continue declining across Europe's seas.

Target 5

Help combat invasive alien species.

Currently on track with implementation

Invasive alien species are a fast-growing threat to biodiversity. The invasive alien species Regulation entered into force in 2015. Work is underway to propose the first list of invasive alien species of Union concern. If this list is adopted by the end of 2015, the EU can be considered to be on track with the actions envisaged under Target 5.

The next critical step for achieving the target will be implementation by the Member States. Ratification of the Ballast Water Convention, crucial for addressing marine invasive alien species, is slow-going with only 7 Member States ratifications to date.

Target 6

Help avert global biodiversity loss.

Progress but at insufficient rate

The EU remains by far the largest financial donor and has made progress in increasing resources for global biodiversity. The EU has taken initial steps to reduce indirect drivers of global biodiversity loss, including wildlife trade, and to integrate biodiversity into its trade agreements. However, progress is insufficient in reducing the impacts of EU consumption patterns on global biodiversity. On the current trajectory, existing efforts may not be sufficient to meet the Aichi Biodiversity Targets by the deadlines.

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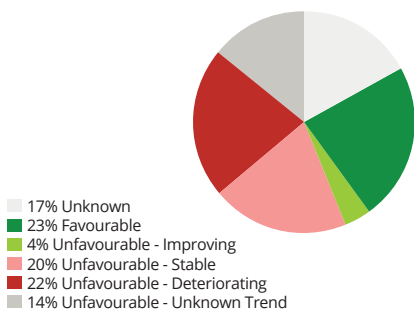
Key trends in status since the EU 2010 biodiversity baseline

Poor conservation status

Species

Overall, 23% of the EU-level species assessments are favourable and 4% are unfavourable but improving; 20% are stable, 22% are deteriorating and 17% are unknown.

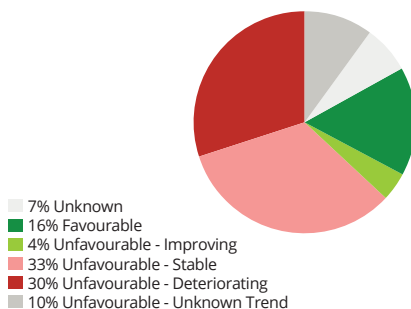
Conservation status and trends of species



Habitats

Overall, 16% of the EU-level habitat assessments are favourable and 4% are improving; 33% are unfavourable but stable. A further 30% are still deteriorating, which is a serious cause for concern. Only 7% of the assessments are unknown.

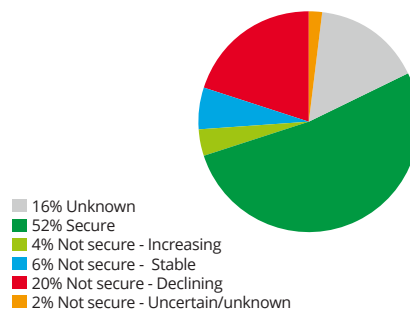
Conservation status and trends of habitats



EU bird population status and trends

Over half (52%) of the bird species assessments have a secure population status. Short-term trends indicate that some 4% of all bird species are non-secure but increasing, and 6% are stable, even if a further 20% are declining.

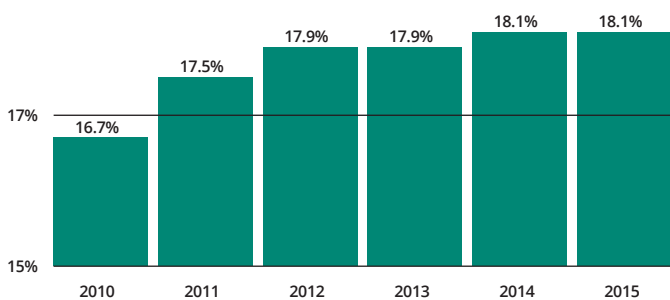
Birds' population status and short-term population trends



Natura 2000 network extended

Since 2010, the network of Natura 2000 sites has progressed and is largely completed for terrestrial and inland water habitats covering about 18% of the land surface. The coverage of the marine network has increased to more than 300 000 km² in 2014.

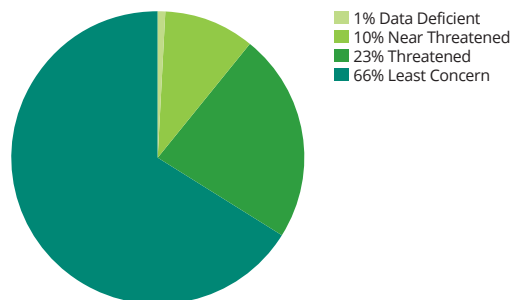
Share of EU land area covered by Natura 2000 sites.



Many species threatened with extinction

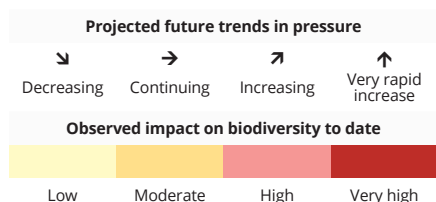
Overall, at least 23% species are threatened in EU. Freshwater species - mollusc (55%) and freshwater fish (43%) - are the groups with the highest proportion of threatened species, together with marine mammals (43%), followed by amphibians (22%), reptiles (21%) and birds (18%).

Species facing the risk of extinction which have had a complete assessment at EU level between 2007 and 2015.



Ecosystems under pressure

Some major pressures on ecosystems are decreasing (e.g. atmospheric deposition of sulphur). However, other threats to ecosystems and their services persist and many pressures are increasing.



Trends in pressures on ecosystems

Ecosystem type	Habitat change	Climate change	Over-exploitation	Invasive species	Pollution and nutrient enrichment
Urban	↗	↑	↗	↗	↑
Cropland	↗	↑	↗	↗	↑
Grassland	↗	↑	↗	↗	↑
Woodland and forest	↘	↑	→	→	↗
Heathland, shrub and sparsely vegetated land	→	↑	→	↗	↗
Wetlands	→	↑	→	↗	↘
Freshwater (rivers and lakes)	→	↑	→	↗	↘
Marine (transitional and marine waters, combined)*	↗	↑	→	↗	→

* NB: results for marine ecosystem adjusted 09.07.2015

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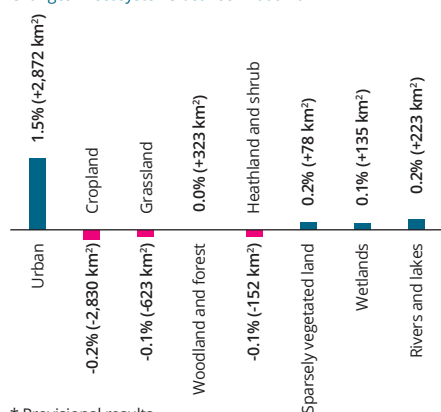
Key trends in threats since the EU 2010 Biodiversity baseline

The 5 key threats to biodiversity — habitat change, pollution, over-exploitation, invasive alien species, and climate change — continue to exert pressure on biodiversity.

Habitat loss still a major concern

In the period 2006-2012, the expansion of artificial surfaces has continued (e.g. urban sprawl, infrastructure) as compared to the period 2000-2006.

Changes in ecosystems between 2006-2012

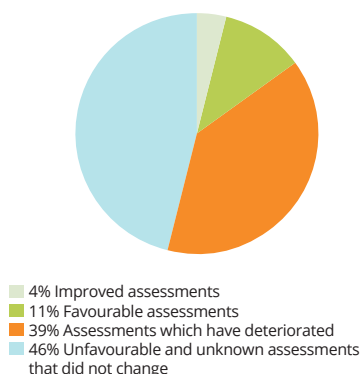


* Provisional results

Intensive agriculture is still a major pressure

There has been no measurable improvement in the status of agriculture-related habitats and species covered by the nature legislation.

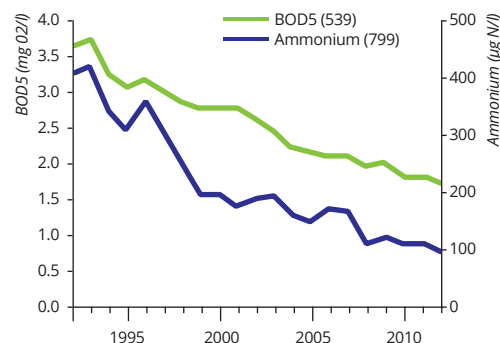
Change in conservation status of agriculture-related habitats



Pollution – improvements in some areas

Water quality in European rivers has improved for e.g. decrease of oxygen-consuming substances (BOD5), and ammonium.

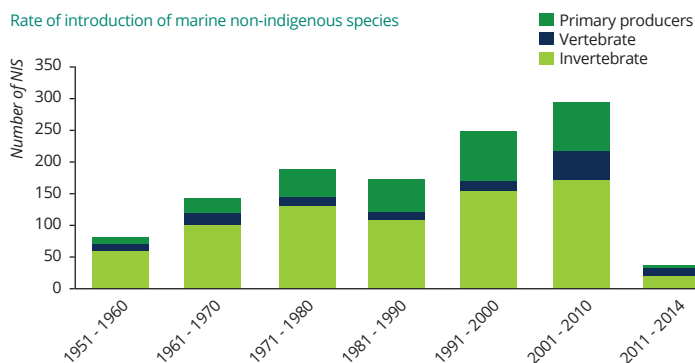
Changes in water quality variables during the last two decades



Invasive alien species – a growing threat to biodiversity and ecosystems

In the seas around Europe, more than 80% of non-indigenous species (NIS) have been introduced since 1950.

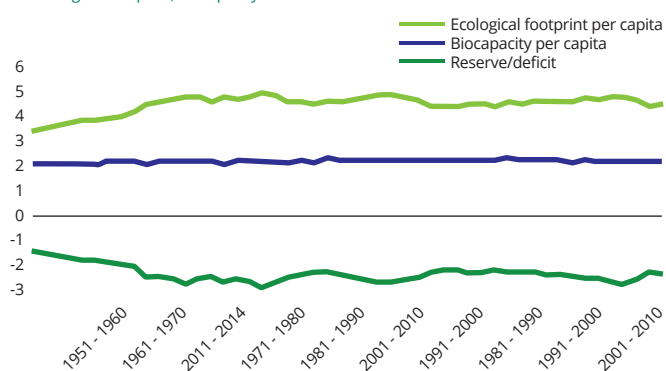
Rate of introduction of marine non-indigenous species



Global dimension

EU-28 ecological footprint is over twice the size of its biocapacity.

EU28 - Ecological footprint, biocapacity and reserve or deficit



Marine environment still overexploited

Currently most of the assessed commercial stocks in European waters (58%) are not in good environmental status (GES), with 19% of stocks exploited sustainably, 11% with their reproductive capacity intact, and only 12% considered in GES.

Proportion of assessed stocks that are in Good Environmental Status (GES)

