



MAKE SPACE
FOR NATURE



BIO + DIVERSITY = BIODIVERSITY

Different species (plants and animals) and the places in which they live.

What is biodiversity?

The planet works as a vast biological and physical system, providing us with the basic conditions without which humanity could not survive. Biodiversity is a fundamental part of this natural system. It includes the variety of living organisms, the genetic differences among them and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur. If biodiversity decreases, it impacts this complex web of life of which humans are part of – whatever happens to it has a direct or indirect impact on us.

What are ecosystem services?

Natural systems based on healthy biodiversity provide all kinds of services and benefits to us called ecosystem services, such as cooling and filtering the air; providing food, fibres, fuel, clean water, medicines and healthy soil; protection from floods and soil erosion; storing carbon (important in the fight against climate change) and many more.

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European citizens are using more than twice the earth's available resources per person.
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What are the threats to biodiversity?

Today biodiversity is in serious decline and our ecosystems are being continuously degraded. Why? Due to pressures coming from ever increasing human population, habitat destruction,

fragmentation and degradation caused by land-use change, over exploitation, unsustainable practices (e.g. overfishing), invasive alien species, ocean acidification, pollution and increasingly climate change. Around 60% of ecosystem services have been degraded in just 50 years, more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period of time in human history.

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The first assessment of European biodiversity by the European Commission in 2009 has shown that 65% of habitats and 52% of species of European importance are under serious threat.
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Why is biodiversity loss a concern to us?

Biodiversity loss has negative effects on several aspects of human wellbeing, such as health, food security, vulnerability to natural disasters, energy security and access to clean water and raw materials. This is apart from the artistic, aesthetic and spiritual benefits of nature which are without a price. Good functioning ecosystems are therefore a personal, environmental and an economic gain. In Europe, land-based nature destruction alone is predicted to cost around €1.1 trillion per year in 2050, or nearly 4% of the EU's GDP if no action is taken to reverse current trends and drivers. These costs ultimately have to be born by society well before 2050.

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Half of all commercial medicines derive from natural substances, mostly sourced in rainforests and 16% of European patent activity relates to biodiversity.
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Halting biodiversity loss in Europe

In 2001, EU Heads of State and Government set themselves the target to halt biodiversity loss in the EU by 2010. The following year at the Johannesburg Summit, the EU signed up to a global target of significantly reducing biodiversity loss worldwide by 2010. It is now 2010 and neither the EU nor global biodiversity target have been achieved.

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2010 will be decisive for the EU to set itself on a path towards a safe and sustainable low-carbon resource efficient economy by 2020. Halting biodiversity loss and ensuring ecosystems restoration must be at the heart of the EU political reforms for this new decade. Setting biodiversity targets and continuing to miss them for something as important as life on earth is not an option.
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HOW CAN THE EU MAKE SPACE FOR NATURE?

By showing:

1. REAL AMBITION

Making space for nature by adopting and committing to a more sustainable European economy within the EU 2020 replacement Lisbon Strategy. The existing EU 2020 draft is too narrow in focus. Conserving energy, natural resources and raw materials are expressed almost entirely in the context of the future competitiveness of our industry and our economies. No mention is made of preserving biodiversity or of fully implementing an ambitious EU Biodiversity Strategy with targets, sub targets and indicators, which allows for EU institutions, national administrations and stakeholders to effectively measure progress on the different policy areas on an annual basis. The forthcoming EU Biodiversity Strategy must have a stronger legal and political status compared to the 2006 EU Biodiversity Action Plan – it must be a core objective of the overall EU 2020 Strategy.

2. REAL INTEGRATION

Making space for nature across all EU policies by further integrating and promoting synergies between biodiversity and other policy areas are needed to ensure that nature is properly protected at both EU and International level. The full implementation of the EU's nature legislation such as the Birds and Habitats Directives, including the Natura 2000 network comprising 17% of the EU territory, and other instruments like the Water Framework and Marine Strategy Framework Directives, are key to halting the decline of species and habitats in Europe. But biodiversity and ecosystems in the remaining 83% of unprotected EU territory must also be integrated in all relevant policy sectors. Many Marine Protected Areas are still to be designated. The EU Cohesion Policy, the Common Agricultural Policy, the Common Fisheries Policy and the development and external policies, must be able to respond urgently to the biodiversity challenge with clear indicators to measure progress.

EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy – WWF calls for the adoption of the following target:

Halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem functionality and resilience in the EU by 2020, make significant progress in their restoration and substantially increase the EU's contribution to averting global biodiversity loss. The European species and habitats of special conservation interests should reach a favourable conservation status by 2020.

3. REAL FINANCING

Making space for nature in the EU budget by providing enough funding and ensuring that investments do not harm nature. Today only 0.1% of the EU budget is directly allocated to biodiversity protection and conservation. Appropriate management of the current Natura 2000 network would require, for example, an annual investment of approximately €6 billion (5% of the current EU budget). However, only 20% of this funding is currently being covered.

88% of EU citizens feel that biodiversity loss is a serious problem. It is now up to Europe's decision makers to make space for nature.

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Page 5 (from left to right): Kids: © WWF/Troy Fleece,
Forest: Michel Gunther/WWF-Canon



MAKE SPACE FOR NATURE

1. Fully implement existing environmental legislation.
2. Integrate biodiversity protection into all sectoral policies.
3. Stop harmful subsidies and invest in biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.



* Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical

“Nature’s destruction reduces the quality of our lives, and stands in the way of sustainable, long-term economic development.”

*José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission,
Athens, 27 April 2009*

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WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption

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