

9110 *Luzulo-Fagetum* beech forests

Management of Natura 2000 habitats. Summary



Luzulo-Fagetum beech forest, Söderåsens nationalpark, Sweden.
Photo: Oddvar Fiskesjö

Luzulo-Fagetum is one of the most widespread habitat types in Central and Northern Europe. It occurs mostly in continental areas, typically on acid and nutrient-poor soils. This type of forest is dominated by *Fagus sylvatica* (beech) with *Quercus petraea* (sessile oak) at collinear level and *Abies alba* (silver fir) and/or *Picea abies* (spruce) in mountainous areas.

It ranges from plains to hills on lowlands and from sub-mountainous to high-mountainous levels on uplands. Owing to the dense shadow cast by beech, the understory is sparse and the floral diversity rather poor. The presence of decaying and dead wood is an important indicator of habitat quality, providing shelter for numerous saproxylic beetles, birds, bats and mosses listed in Annex II or IV of the Habitats Directive.

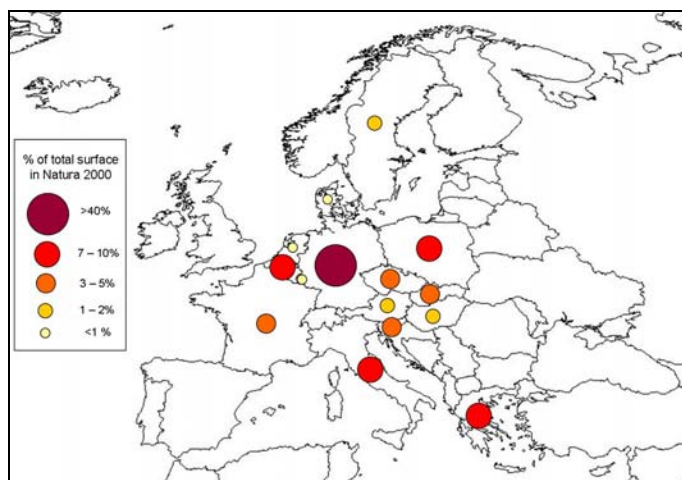
Within the general European context, management of *Luzulo-Fagetum* beech forest may be linked to several strategic issues, such as natural regeneration, recovery of typical species, diversification of both horizontal and vertical structures, encouraging species diversity, i.e. mixed stands, precautions regarding infrastructures, specific biodiversity measures, e.g. maintaining dead wood, etc.

Faced with threat of afforestation with non-native trees, the guidelines focus on favouring indigenous species, local ecotypes and rare tree species and mixed species stands. As regards structure, it is advisable to maintain heterogeneity (vertical and horizontal) and good connectivity for species with low dispersal capability.

On a landscape scale, it is advisable to have several regimes (reserves, coppices, even-aged stands, uneven-aged stands.) in a mosaic, which could be achieved by creating more small cutting and regeneration areas.

It is advisable to develop microhabitats, such as mega-trees and old trees, and decaying or dead wood to increase forest biodiversity and provide suitable habitat interesting European species. Depending on the Member State, recommended volume of decaying or dead wood on a forest stand and distribution within the forest may differ.

Other guidelines are also proposed regarding the management of ungulates, glades and ponds, roads and tracks, etc.



Percentage distribution of the total surface of *Luzulo-fagetum* beech forests in Natura 2000

The complete text of the document is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/best_practice_en.htm

Management of Natura 2000 habitats is a project launched by the European Commission in January 2007 aimed at defining best practices for management of habitat types included in Annex I of the Habitat Directive (92/43/EEC) that need active recurring management. Twenty six habitat types that are representative of different bio-geographical regions have been considered.