December 2016

WORKING TOGETHER IN NATURA 2000

This bimonthly newsletter provides an overview of progress in the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process. It contains relevant Natura 2000 developments within each of the biogeographical regions, funding information, the latest news, forthcoming networking events and links to other useful resources.

On behalf of the EC, ECNC leads the consortium of partners appointed to support the development and implementation of the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process. (See last page for contact details.)

ABOUT THE NATURA 2000 BIOGEOGRAPHICAL PROCESS

The Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process assists Member States and key stakeholders to manage Natura 2000 as a coherent ecological network. Read more about it »

BIOGEOGRAPHICAL REGION UPDATES

Items marked with an asterisk (*) are part of the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process. All other items are included for information, but they are coordinated by external parties.

ATLANTIC

*Embracing Estuaries – Management of Natura 2000 sites in Estuaries and Sea Ports
15-16 September 2016, Hamburg, Germany
Eighty-three experts from seven different European countries shared their knowledge, experience and ideas in the ‘Embracing Estuaries – Management of Natura 2000 sites in Estuaries and Sea Ports’ workshop hosted by the Elbe Habitat Foundation in Hamburg.

The workshop included a variety of presentations: different approaches to integrated management or habitat restoration, discussions about legal issues and various communication projects – to name just a few. After each session, the participants took the opportunity to exchange their views and experiences in small working groups. The
presentations and working group results are available here. The workshop was organised by Stiftung Lebensraum Elbe in cooperation with the EU Commission and the Hamburg Ministry of Environment and Energy. It was supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and funded by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety.

*Second Atlantic Natura 2000 Seminar*  
25-27 October 2016, Ireland  
Ninety participants from governmental and stakeholder organisations in eight Member States attended the Seminar, organised by Eurosite and hosted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), part of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Ireland. Specific attention was given to drafting a possible roadmap of actions for further cooperation on the improvement of the conservation status of Natura 2000 habitats at the biogeographical level. Four field visits allowed participants to see the threats and issues, management practices and management planning approaches being applied in different Natura 2000 sites. Thematic Working Groups identified common issues and potential practical solutions to: integrated management approaches to Natura 2000; adaptive approaches to agriculture and nature conservation; communication and stakeholder engagement; and setting conservation objectives. The seminar outcomes will be made available on the Natura 2000 Communication Platform.

*Winterage festival related event*  
27-30 October 2016, Burren, Ireland  
The Burren Winterage Weekend celebrates the region’s unique pastoral farming. It is a community-led initiative that was born out of the Burren Community Charter Process. It is coordinated by the local landscape charity, the Burrenbeo Trust, and is supported by local businesses and the community. The event included high nature value farming demos, walks, talks, a conference, open farm, evening storytelling, culminating with the annual cattle drive. This video gives a short overview of this year's event. For more information visit the Burren Winterage Weekend website.

BORREAL

*Second Boreal Restoration Tour*  
15-19 August 2016, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania  
The Boreal Restoration Tour took forest and wetland restoration experts across Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The focus was on exchanging experience and best practices in restoration. By focusing on forests and wetlands at the same time, new synergies in forest and wetland restoration were explored. A report on the tour is available on the Natura 2000 Communication Platform.

*Second Boreal Natura 2000 Seminar*  
5-7 October 2016, Vilnius, Lithuania  
Organised by ECNC and hosted by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, this second Boreal Seminar was attended by 86 participants from a range of
stakeholder organisations across the five Boreal Member States – Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Sweden and Latvia.

Over three days, the Boreal Seminar generated significant concrete outputs, a ‘Roadmap’ of agreed future (existing or planned) collaborative actions identified by participants for further development in future.

The Seminar also provided an opportunity to consider new methods which can help to lead to new opportunities for reaching favourable conservation status. Specific attention was given to the 'low hanging fruit' approach – which involves identifying those species and/or habitats for which measurable improvements of conservation status could be reached by means of some measures which are straightforward to implement and achievable in a short term.

All relevant documents can be found here.

Workshop: Best practices and challenges in restoration burning
25-27 April 2017, Lammi, Finland

The workshop will explore best practices and tackle the practical and political challenges of restoration burning in Natura 2000 areas. It will concentrate on practical issues, and will consist of presentations on the current state of restoration burning in participating countries as well as a workshop on best practices and the greatest challenges when using fire in restoration.

A detailed programme is under preparation and invitations will be sent out later. For information contact Tuomas.haapalehto@metsa.fi or niclas.bergius@lansstyrelsen.se.

The workshop is being organised by Light & Fire LIFE and LIFE Taiga.

14th Eurasian Grassland Conference 'Semi-natural grasslands across borders'
4-11 July 2017, Riga, Latvia

The 14th Eurasian Grassland Conference ‘Semi-natural grasslands across borders’ will take place from 4 to 11 July 2017 at the University of Latvia. This is the annual conference of the EDGG, the working group of the International Association for Vegetation Science (past EDGG conferences can be found here).

Online registration will open in January 2017. The first conference call can be found here.

CROSS-CUTTING

*Conference: Conciliate operational training with preservation of biodiversity on military camps
28 June-1 July 2016, Nîmes, France

The French Ministry of Defence and the Conservatoire d'espaces naturels Rhônes-Alpes (an NGO specialised in biodiversity management) organised this international nature conference. The first day was a plenary session devoted to national and international issues, and closed with a tour of the city of Nîmes. On the second day a field visit on military activities and biodiversity restoration actions was made to Garrigues Camp. Day 3 focused on exchanges based on the lessons learned by the military and NGOs. More details and reports can be found on the event page on the Natura 2000 Communication Platform.
12-14 October 2016, Lommel, Belgium
Bosland, the largest forest and nature project in Flanders, was launched 10 years ago. To celebrate this anniversary, the Flemish Agency for Nature and Forests, together with ECNC and BOS+, co-organised the European Conference ‘Passion for Nature’. The conference showcased the achievements of the Bosland partnership and saw experts from across Europe address forest development, regional partnerships and nature conservation. The event welcomed 120 participants. Interactive workshops, a knowledge market and a Bosland excursion provided opportunities for sharing experiences and passion.
In addition, local children and local, Flemish and European dignitaries shared their experiences with Bosland and stressed its importance on both a local and European level. They also expressed their support for the future development of Bosland in the coming years. The strong involvement of local people, and especially children, greatly inspired everyone present. It became clear why Bosland is considered to be the most child-friendly forest in Flanders.
All presentations and documents will be made available on the Natura 2000 Communication Platform.

*Eurosite Twinning Workshop
30 November–1 December 2016, Ackerdijkse Plassen and Tiengemeten, the Netherlands
Eurosite’s Twinning Workshop was organised as part of the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process and was hosted by Eurosite member Natuurmonumenten. The workshop focused on twinning as a tool for exchange of best practice in management of Natura 2000 sites.
For more information visit the Natura 2000 Communication Platform.

NETWORKING EVENTS

News of all networking events can be found on the Natura 2000 Platform’s Events Calendar - check regularly for details.

NATURA 2000 FUNDING NEWS

A page on funding opportunities for the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process has been included on the Natura 2000 Platform. Each issue of this newsletter highlights some recent funding news.

INTERREG

The Platform provides a gateway to all the following INTERREG funding websites.
• **INTERREG Baltic Sea Region**: Second call for applications: ongoing
  The projects are selected for funding in a two-step application procedure:
  Step 1: Concept notes
   Call open, step 1: 1 March–1 June 2016
   Selection of concept notes: 14 September 2016
  Step 2: Application
   Call open, step 2: 14 September 2016–17 January 2017
   Selection of projects for funding: 23-24 May 2017
• **North Sea Region**: Third call: November 2016-February 2017; Call 3 is open for full applications between 14 November 2016 and 1 February 2017.
• **INTERREG North-West Europe**: Call 4 deadline 18/11/2016; decision March 2017.
• **INTERREG Central Europe**: The next call is currently expected to open in the second half of 2017.
• The Steering Committee of the [Interreg MED Programme](http://interreg-med.eu) approved 12 Modular Projects in December 2016 and 49 in September 2016. In addition, eight Horizontal Projects were approved in September 2016.

**LIFE**

The Commission invites legal persons (entities) registered in the European Union (EU) to present proposals for the 2016 Call for proposals for LIFE Action Grants.

For the sub-programme for Environment, this call will cover action grants for ‘Traditional’ projects, Preparatory projects, Integrated projects, Technical Assistance projects.

For the sub-programme for Climate Action, this call will cover action grants for ‘Traditional projects’, Integrated projects, Technical Assistance projects.

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**OTHER NATURA 2000 NEWS**

**Statement by Commissioner Vella on the Birds and Habitats Directives fitness check**

On 7 December 2016, Commissioner Vella issued the following statement:

'Our European Commission "fitness check" has recognised that the European Birds and Habitats Directives remain relevant and fit for purpose. They will not be "opened". The Juncker Commission continues to look to connect in meaningful ways with European citizens. Protecting and investing more in nature is essential as so many depend on it also economically - it is literally a grassroots approach.

Our focus will now be on making sure that they are implemented in the most effective and efficient way to realise their full potential for nature, people and the economy.

I am delighted that we have delivered on an essential part of the mandate given to me by President Juncker.'

Read the press release [here](http).

**LIFE project publishes Natura 2000 Network Handbook for journalists**

The handbook contains useful information on the Natura 2000 network, and an assessment of the weaknesses and strengths that hinder or foster communications concerning the network of European protected areas.

**The ‘umbrella effect’ of Natura 2000**

Driven by a general inquiry into the effectiveness of the Nature Directives and the EU strategic target within the Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, the European Commission initiated a research project (in 2015) to assess the wider contribution of Natura 2000 to the conservation of species that are not in the annexes to the Nature Directives - the so-called ‘umbrella effect’ of Natura 2000.

The study concluded that the Natura 2000 network is of crucial importance for the protection of biodiversity, not only for the species covered in the Birds and Habitats Directives for which the areas were designated, but also for many other threatened and non-threatened European species of flora and fauna.

The complete report and the executive summary can be downloaded [here](#).

**European Commission adopts first EU list of invasive species**

The European Commission has taken a first step to fight invasive alien species and published a list of 37 such exotic animal and plant species. Invasive species can trigger economic problems, but most of all they contribute to biodiversity loss: they compete for food with local species, drive them out or cause genetic change in them, spread diseases or disrupt the ecosystems in other ways. The EU Member States have now been called upon to fight the spread of these species in the next three years.

[Read more](#).

**RESOURCES**

Relevant publications and links to tools in support of habitat management continue to be added to the [Natura 2000 Platform](#).

**Natura 2000 in the marine environment**

A page has been created on the Natura 2000 Communication Platform containing information on [Natura 2000 in the marine environment](#). It contains links to relevant projects and publications, and information on regional cooperation and funding.

**Get involved!**

We really value your news, feedback and inputs! Please share news with us about your Natura 2000 activities, past, present and future. For example, you can tell us about your LIFE, INTERREG or other funded projects, recent Natura 2000 publications and other news by emailing [natura2000platform@ecnc.org](mailto:natura2000platform@ecnc.org)

Do not hesitate to distribute this newsletter among your colleagues and networks.
ECNC leads the consortium of partners that support the EC in the development and implementation of the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process. We work together with CEEweb for Biodiversity, Eurosite, the EUROPARC Federation, the European Landowners’ Organization, ILE-SAS, and Arcadis.

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