We can all be part of the solution

There is a lot you can do to protect nature and biodiversity:

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Be a responsible tourist: leave wild animals and plants in peace and take your waste with you

Volunteer to participate in projects and community initiatives to protect and restore nature

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What the EU does

The EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 aims to halt the loss of Europe’s biodiversity by addressing the main threats and restoring nature. The EU also works internationally to help prevent the loss of global biodiversity.

At the heart of EU conservation efforts are the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. They enable all 28 Member States to work together to protect our most vulnerable species and habitats. Their centrepiece is the creation of Natura 2000: the world’s largest coordinated network of protected areas, with more than 27,000 protected sites covering 1 million square kilometres: 18% of the EU’s land mass and close to 6% of its marine area!

The EU Birds and Habitats Directives protect all wild birds, around 1000 other animal and plant species and 230 natural habitat types.

Natura 2000 aims at protecting biodiversity while allowing for development of sustainable economic activities.

Green infrastructure can provide cost-effective natural solutions for flood protection, reduced air pollution, recreation and much more, with benefits for nature and people.

The EU has adopted legislation to prevent invasive alien species from disrupting vulnerable European nature.

Good agricultural practices can help reverse the decline of biodiversity in rural areas.

The EU has legislation and policies to ease pressures on marine ecosystems and fisheries and ensure their sustainable use.

The EU is also working to reduce threats and restore the vital services of natural habitats in the wider landscape, beyond Natura 2000.

Caring for nature, caring for ourselves

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Natural ecosystems such as forests, grasslands or wetlands work for us around the clock. They clean our water, purify our air, produce oxygen, maintain the fertility of soil, provide us with food and medicines, regulate the climate and recycle our waste. It’s that simple: we could not live without these “ecosystem services”.

The EU has legislation and policies to ease pressures on marine ecosystems and fisheries and ensure their sustainable use.

Natura 2000 provides benefits estimated to be worth €200-300 billion a year, while its management costs are around €6 billion a year.

Ocean plants produce more than half of the oxygen in our atmosphere.

Around €15 billion worth of Europe’s agricultural production depends on pollination by insects.

Around 4.4 million jobs in the EU depend directly on healthy ecosystems; some of the EU’s fastest growing sectors are in the green economy.

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The EU and its Member States together are the largest contributor to biodiversity-related development funding in the world.

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