



Building the marine Natura 2000 network

from designation to
effective management



Photo: Yiannis Issaris

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Nature protection unit

LIFE BaĦAR for N2K conference

11-14 September 2017

Malta

- State of nature in the EU: marine dimension
- Marine Natura 2000 network: state of play
- Designation: science-based process
- Nature Action Plan: improving the management



EU biodiversity strategy to 2020

"Our life insurance, our natural capital"

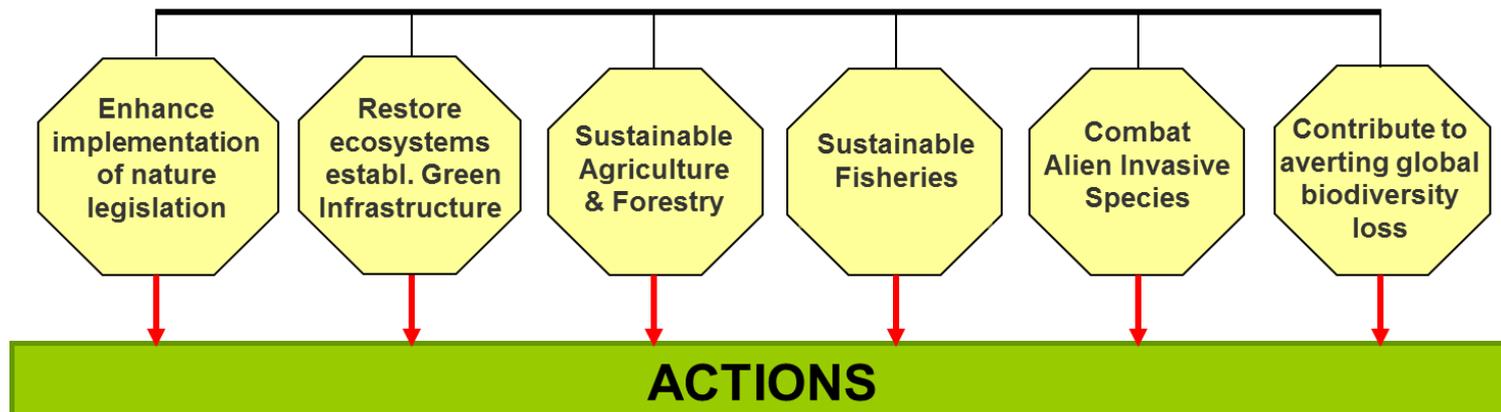
A 2050 VISION

European Union biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides – its natural capital – are protected, valued and appropriately restored.

A 2020 HEADLINE TARGET

Halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU and restore them insofar as feasible, and step up the EU's contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.

6 TARGETS



EU Biodiversity Strategy

Target 1 - Nature conservation

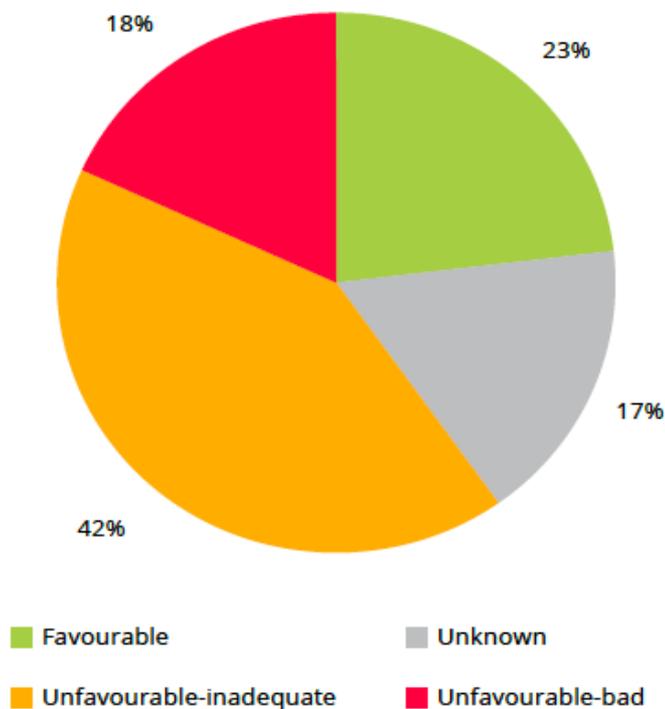
➤ To halt the deterioration in the status of all species and habitats covered by EU nature legislation and achieve a significant and measurable improvement in their status by 2020

- Complete the establishment of the Natura 2000 network, incl. in the marine part, and ensure good management
- Ensure adequate financing of Natura 2000 sites
- Increase stakeholder awareness and involvement and improve enforcement
- Improve and streamline monitoring and reporting

State of nature in the EU

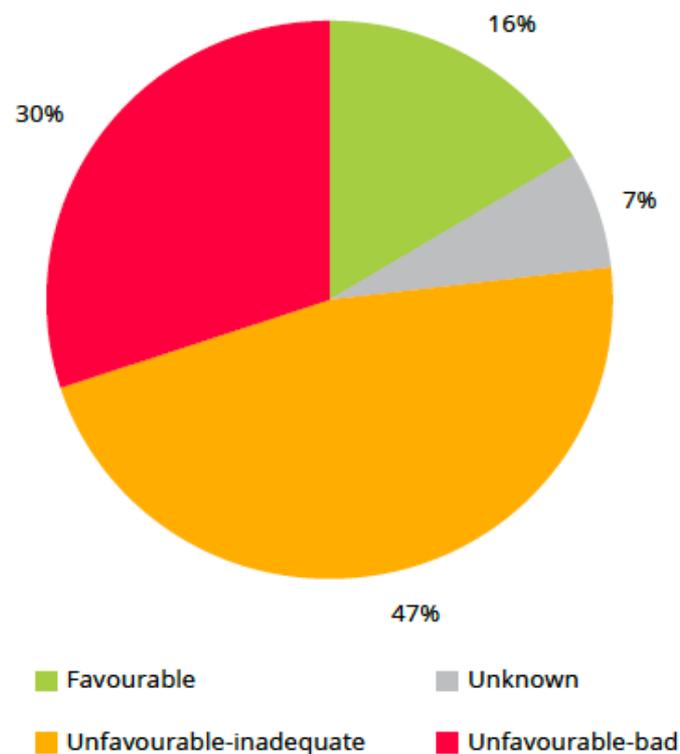
Results from reporting under Birds and Habitats directives 2007–2012

Only one quarter of protected EU (non-bird) species has **favourable conservation status**, while **60%** **has unfavourable status**



Conservation status of **non-bird species**, EU level

Status of protected habitats in the EU: **77% unfavourable!**

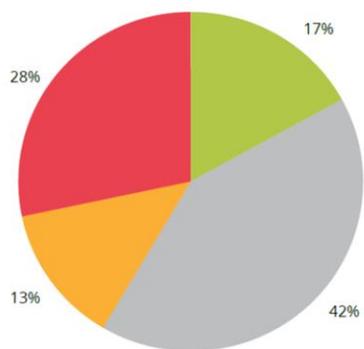


Conservation status of **habitats**, EU level

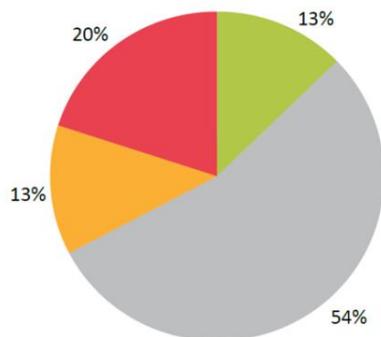
State of nature in the EU

Results from reporting under Birds and Habitats directives 2007–2012

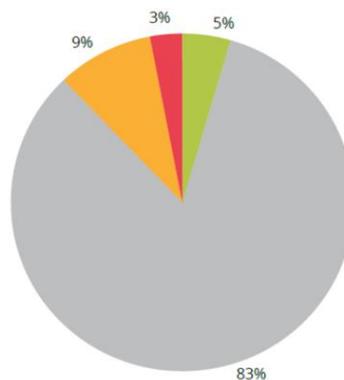
Conservation status of (non-bird) protected species associated with marine ecosystems



Coastal



Shelf

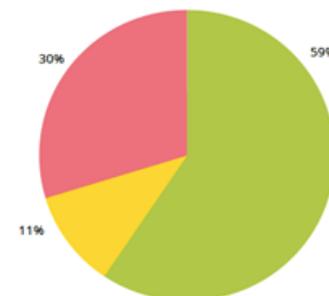


Open ocean

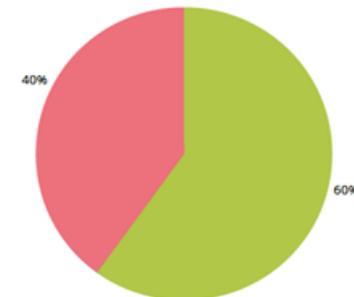
- Favourable
- Unknown
- Unfavourable-inadequate
- Unfavourable-bad

Population status and short-term trends of bird species associated with different marine ecosystems

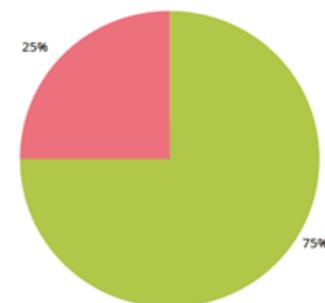
- Secure
- Unknown
- Near threatened, declining or depleted
- Threatened



Coastal



Shelf



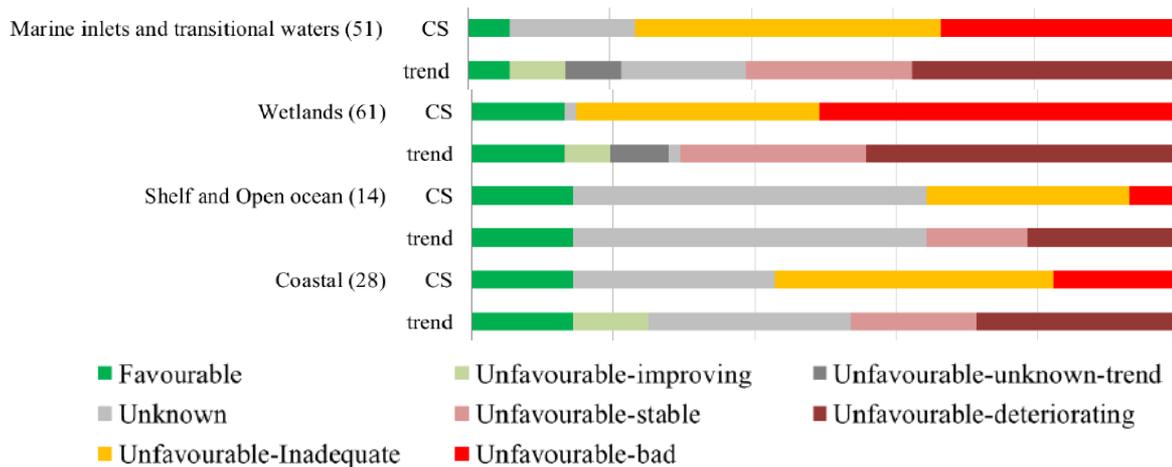
Open ocean

State of nature in the EU

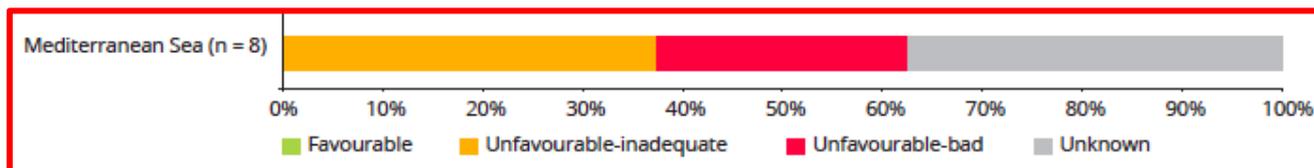
Results from reporting under Birds and Habitats directives 2007–2012

Conservation status (CS) of marine habitats and trends

The share of **favourable assessments** of marine habitats is **very low** and for some the status is still **unknown**.



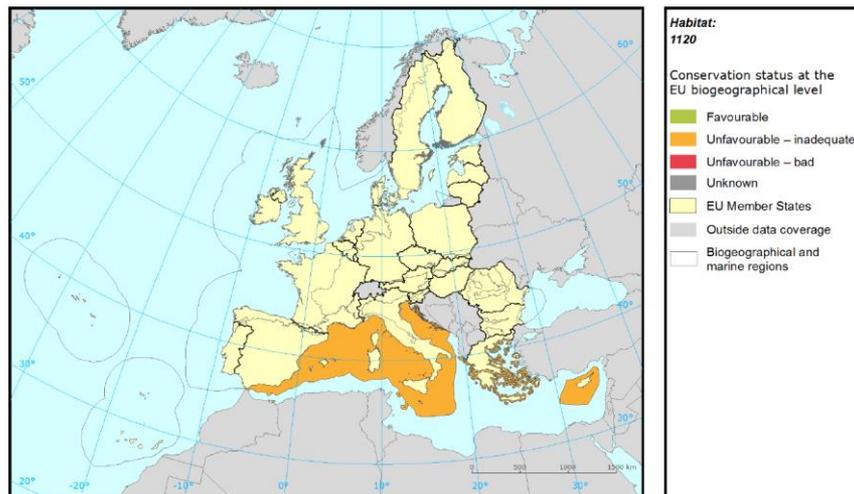
The Mediterranean Sea:



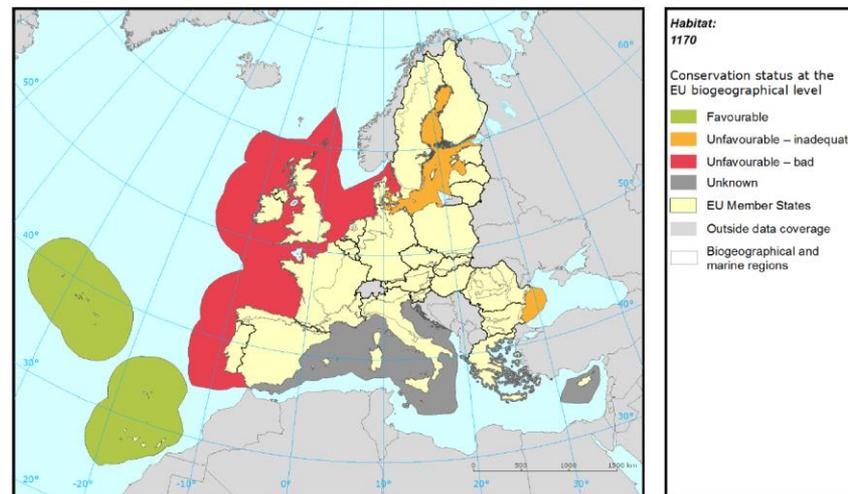
State of nature in the EU

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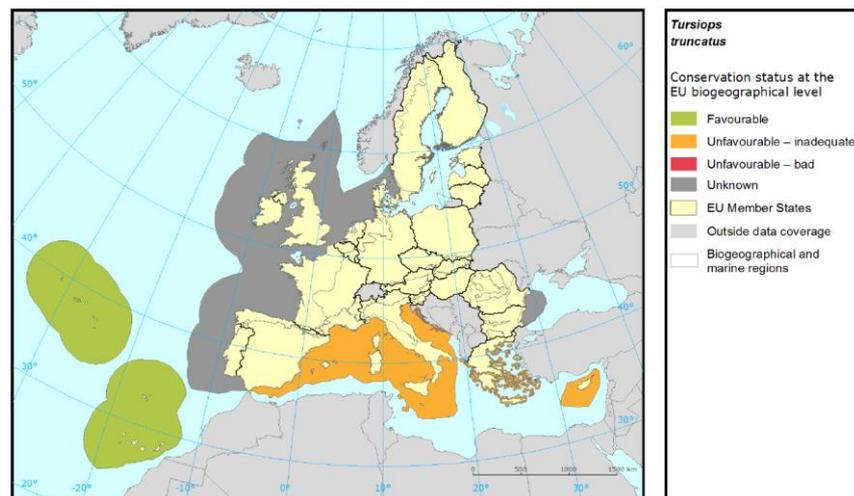
Posidonia oceanica meadows



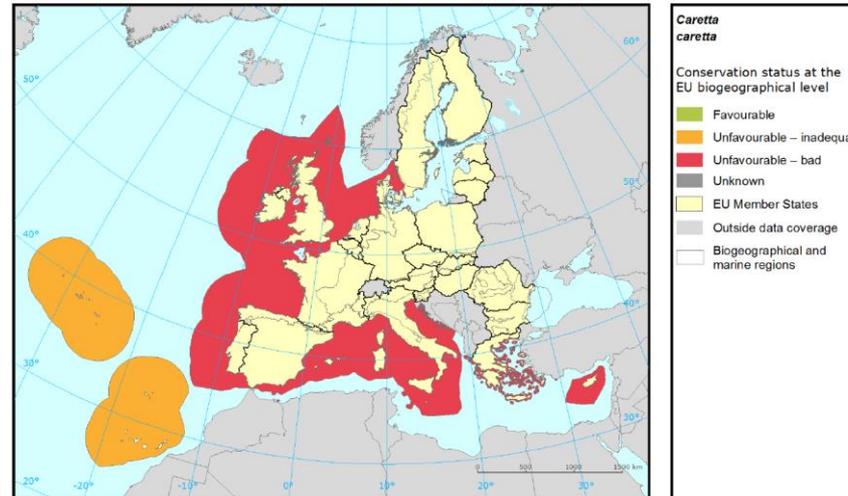
Reefs



Tursiops truncatus



Caretta caretta



European Red List of Habitats



European red list of marine habitats

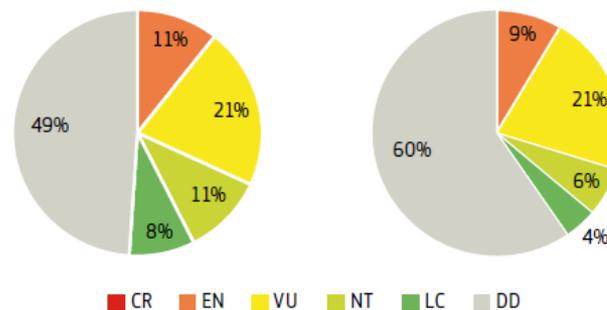
Table 3.4.1 Number of Mediterranean Sea habitats in each Red List category for both the EU28 and EU28+.

Red List category	EU28	EU28+
CR	0	0
EN	5	4
VU	10	10
NT	5	3
LC	4	2
DD	23	28
TOTAL	47	47

Box 3.4.1 Threatened Mediterranean Sea marine habitats (for more information refer to the full assessments).

- Endangered**
 - A2.31 Communities of Mediterranean mediolittoral mud estuarine
 - A3.13 Photophilic communities with canopy-forming algae in Mediterranean infralittoral and upper circalittoral rock
 - A5.52B Algal dominated communities in the Mediterranean infralittoral sediment
 - A5.6v Mediterranean infralittoral mussel beds
 - A5.6y Mediterranean infralittoral oyster beds
- Vulnerable**
 - A2.25 Communities of Mediterranean mediolittoral sands
 - A2.33 Communities of Mediterranean mediolittoral mud
 - A2.7x Biogenic habitats of Mediterranean mediolittoral rock
 - A3.23 Photophilic communities dominated by calcareous, habitat-forming algae
 - A3.36 Communities of Mediterranean infralittoral estuarine rock
 - A4.23 Communities of Mediterranean soft circalittoral rock
 - A5.27 Communities of Mediterranean lower circalittoral sand
 - A5.32 Communities of Mediterranean infralittoral mud estuarine
 - A5.38 Communities of Mediterranean infralittoral muddy detritic bottoms
 - A5.535 Posidonia beds in the Mediterranean infralittoral zone

Figure 3.4.2 Proportion of Mediterranean Sea habitats assigned to each Red List category in the EU28 and EU28+: (a) all habitats EU28 (n=47), (b) all habitats EU28+ (n=47). (n=number of habitats)



Part 1. Marine habitats

Pollution of marine waters and fishing and harvesting aquatic resources are top two pressures/threats for habitats and species associated with marine ecosystems

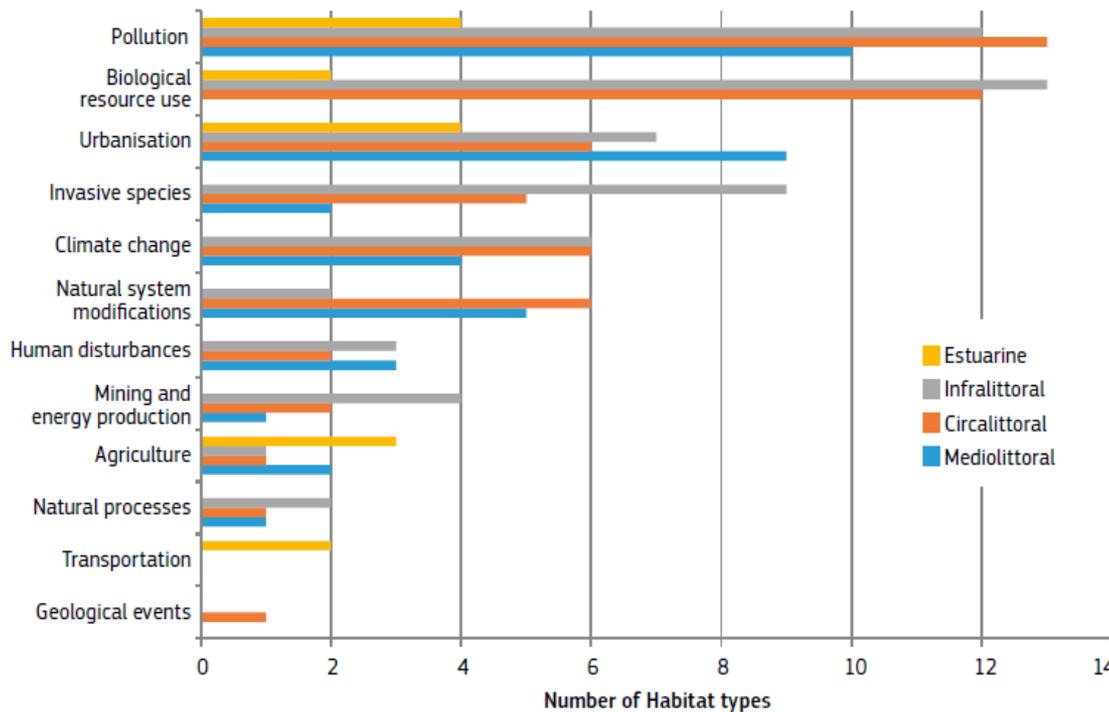
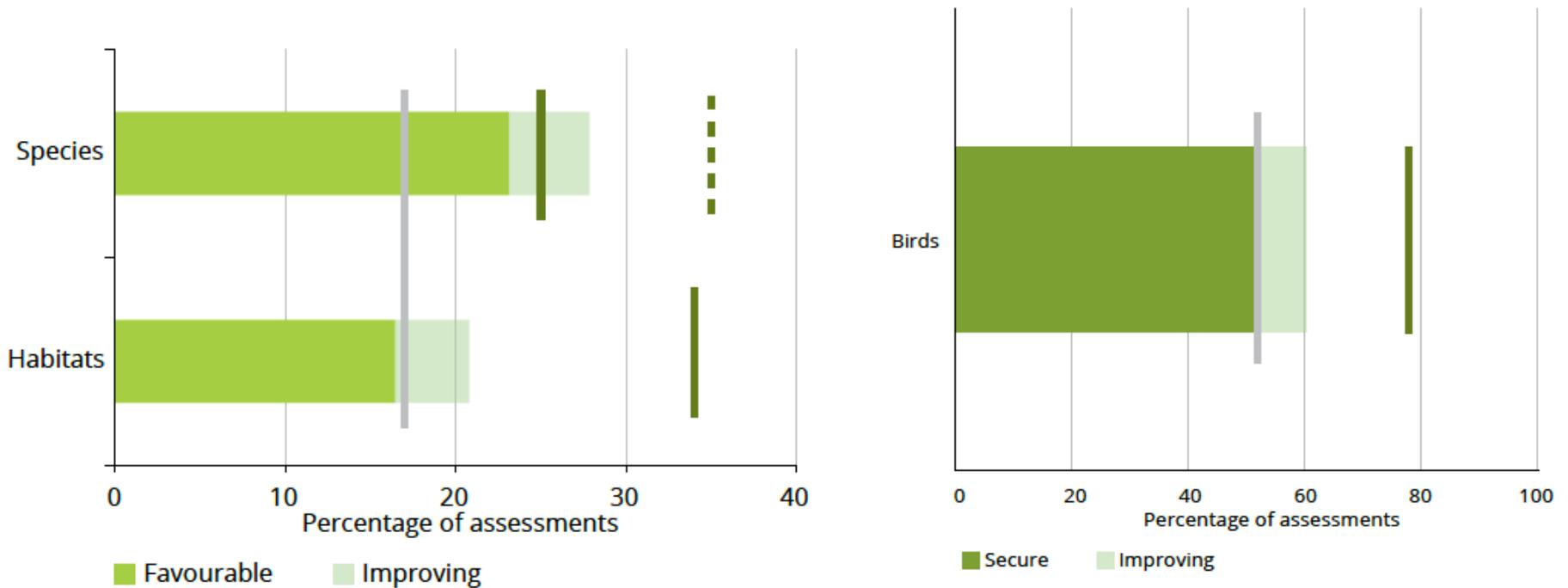


Figure 3.4.5 Most frequently cited pressures across different Mediterranean Sea habitat types in the EU28. Full titles, taken from Habitats Directive Article 17 reporting are: Pollution; Biological resource use other than agriculture and forestry; Urbanisation, residential and commercial development; Invasive, other problematic species and genes; Climate change; Natural system modification; Human intrusions and disturbances; Mining, extraction of minerals and energy production; Agriculture; Natural biotic and abiotic processes (without catastrophes); Transportation and service corridors; Geological events, natural catastrophes.

The two most common types of reported conservation actions for species are 'legal protection of habitats and species' and 'establish protected areas/sites'.

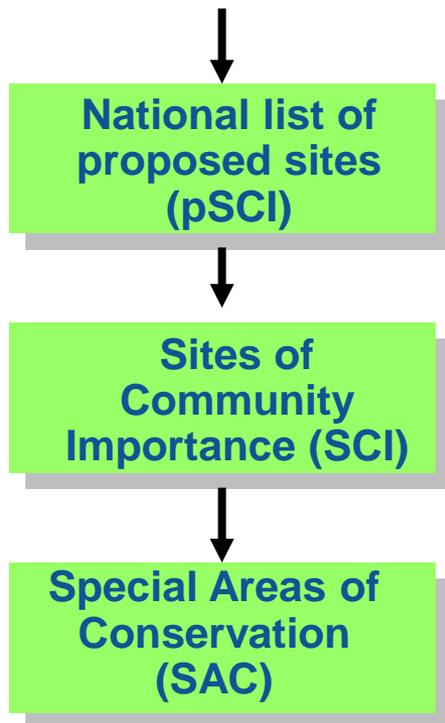
Progress to 2020 targets



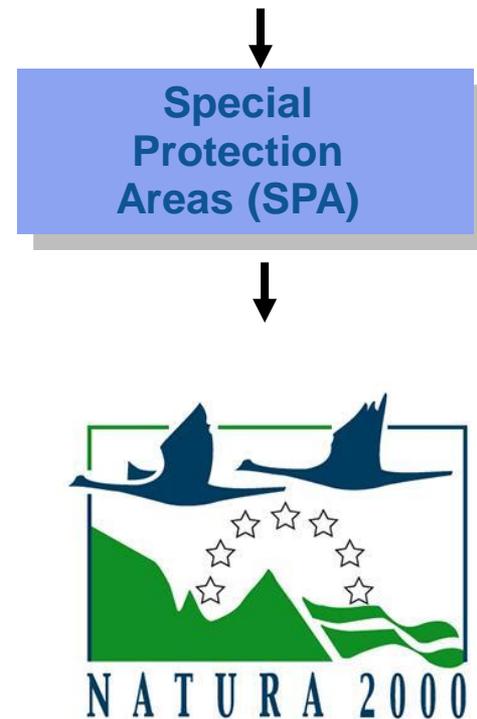
Concrete actions required!

Natura 2000: pan-European network of protected areas based on two EU Directives

HABITATS DIRECTIVE



BIRDS DIRECTIVE





EU Habitats Directive:

two pillars of protection

- **Natura 2000 sites**

For marine habitat types listed in Annex I (*e.g.* *Posidonia* meadows, Reefs), marine species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive (*e.g.* *Tursiops truncatus*, *Caretta caretta*), and birds listed in Annex I (+ migratory birds) of the Birds Directive, marine **Natura 2000 sites need to be designated, protected and managed** to ensure that these features can be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a **favourable conservation status**.

- **Strict protection of species**

A strict protection regime (*e.g.* for all cetaceans) must be applied **across their entire natural range** within the EU, both within and outside Natura 2000 sites.

Designation process in a nutshell (HD)

- Member State proposes a draft list of **Sites of Community Importance (pSCIs)**, using the criteria from Annex III of the Habitats Directive and the relevant scientific information. Future management challenges should not be a determining element. **This process is science-driven!** The sites are selected using the same objective scientific criteria.
- **The list of proposed SCIs is adopted by the Commission** which gives formal legal effect to the protective safeguards defined in Article 6 (2) (3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive.
- The Commission, in a transparent process, together with MS and other stakeholders, evaluates **the sufficiency of proposals** in 'seminars' within the framework of each biogeographical region, ensuring coherent approach throughout the EU.
- Member State designates a **Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** within 6 years after its SCI designation (allowing for sufficient time to prepare the necessary conservation measures).



Designation process - criteria

A. Site assessment criteria for a given natural habitat type in Annex I

- (a) Degree of representativity of the natural habitat type on the site.
- (b) Area of the site covered by the natural habitat type in relation to the total area covered by that natural habitat type within national territory.
- (c) Degree of conservation of the structure and functions of the natural habitat type concerned and restoration possibilities.
- (d) Global assessment of the value of the site for conservation of the natural habitat type concerned.

B. Site assessment criteria for a given species in Annex II

- (a) Size and density of the population of the species present on the site in relation to the populations present within national territory.
- (b) Degree of conservation of the features of the habitat which are important for the species concerned and restoration possibilities.
- (c) Degree of isolation of the population present on the site in relation to the natural range of the species.
- (d) Global assessment of the value of the site for conservation of the species concerned.

Commission guidelines for the establishment of the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment

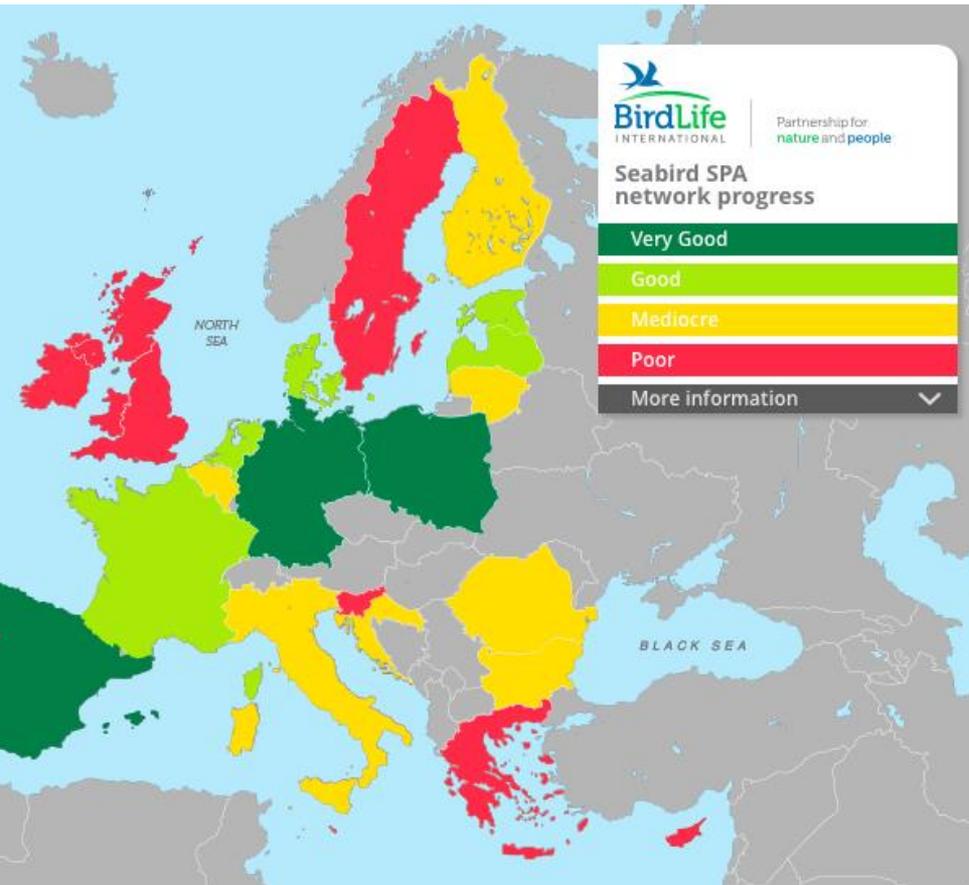
Natura 2000 coverage in the Mediterranean

European regional seas and sub regions (<i>sensu</i> MSFD)	EU part of sea (km ²)	Area covered by N2K (km ²)	Total no of N2K sites	% of EU waters covered by N2K	% of 0-1 NM zone covered by N2K	% of 1-12 NM zone covered by N2K	% of 12 NM to END zone covered by N2K
Mediterranean	1274892	62941	1169	4.9	31	11	1
Western Mediterranean Sea	659989	44926	524	6.8	53	20	1
Ionian Sea and the Central Mediterranean Sea	240068	6667	155	2.8	29	6	1
Adriatic Sea	120069	6531	361	5.4	37	5	0
Aegean-Levantine Sea	190382	4818	137	2.5	14	2	0

Seminar to assess the sufficiency of marine Natura 2000 (Malta, Sept 2016)

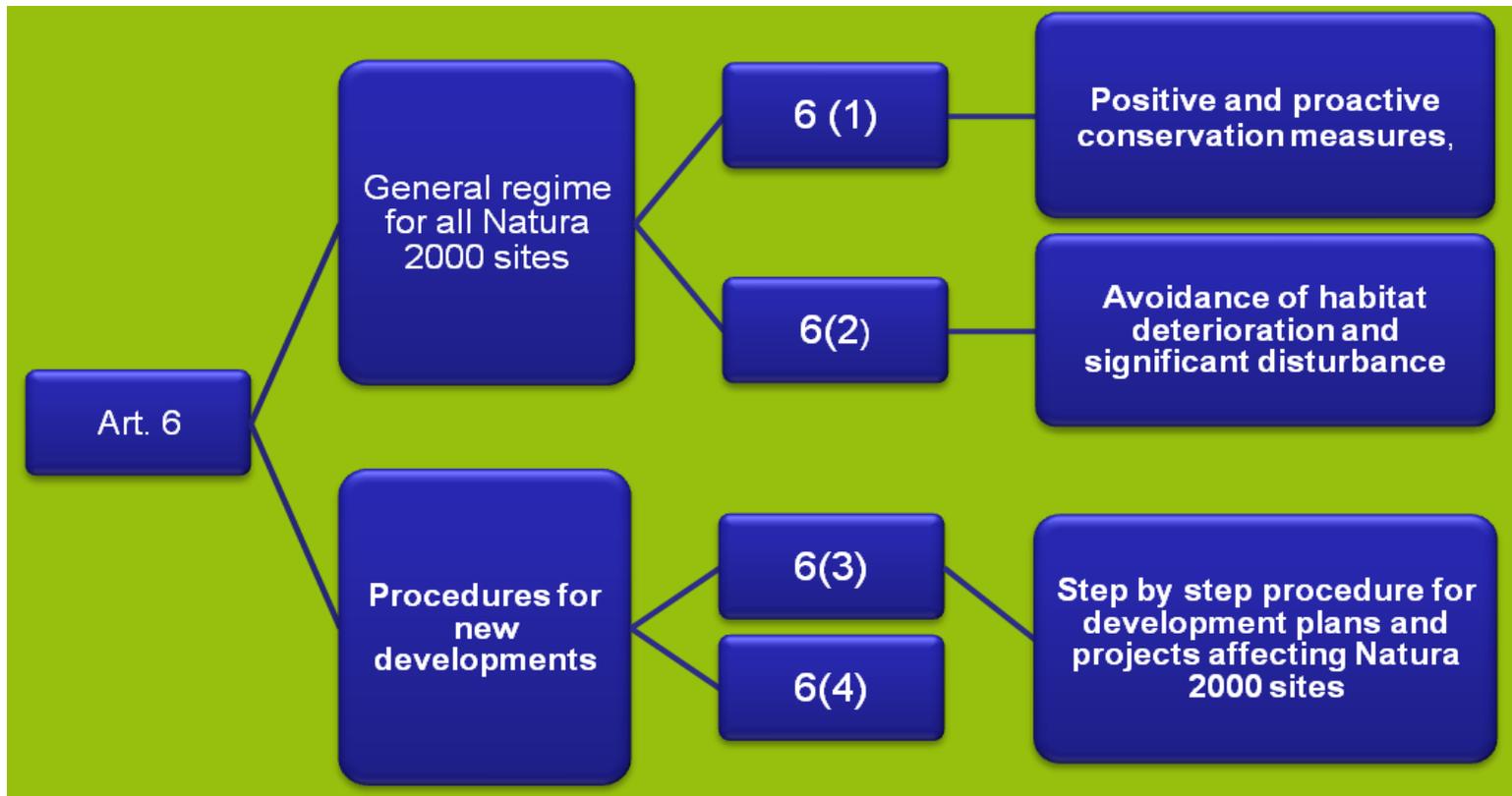
Large gaps still remain in the Mediterranean!

Designation process (BD)



- The marine Natura 2000 network also needs to include a coherent network of **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** classified pursuant to the Birds Directive.
- These are the most suitable territories in number and size for the conservation of marine birds listed in Annex I of Birds Directive and migratory marine birds.
- The selection of sites and the delimitation of boundaries should be carried out on the basis of **exclusively ornithological criteria**, such as the inventory of Important Bird Areas published by Birdlife International.

Management regime for Natura 2000 sites



Management regime for Natura 2000 sites

- Member States shall take appropriate steps to **avoid**, in the special areas of conservation, the **deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species** as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated, in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of this Directive.
- Any **plan or project** not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, **the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site** concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.



Management regime for Natura 2000 sites

*Member States shall establish the necessary conservation measures involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans, and appropriate statutory, administrative or contractual measures **which correspond to the ecological requirements** of the natural habitat types in Annex I and the species in Annex II present on the sites.*



- The ultimate objective is to ensure that the species and habitats reach "**favourable conservation status**"
- Natura 2000 sites are not strict nature reserves, activities can take place if they are **compatible with nature conservation objectives**
- Management is based on **cooperation and partnership** with land/sea users

Management of marine N2000 - priorities

- Setting conservation objectives
- Application of appropriate conservation measures
- Legal, statutory or contractual arrangements (SAC designation)
- Management plans as useful strategic management tools
- Full stakeholder engagement and better regional cooperation

EC guidance documents, major contribution of LIFE projects

EU co-financing opportunities: **LIFE, EMFF, INTERREG,...**

Seminars on Natura 2000 management – forum for discussions, networking and cross-border cooperation



Socio-economic benefits of marine Natura 2000

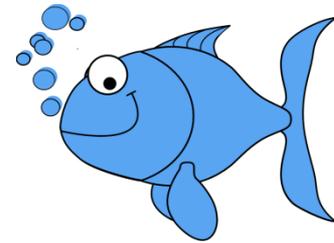
- There is the need to address the gaps in our understanding of **social and economic** impacts of MPA management and focus on **engagement and partnerships** with MPA users.
- Effective protection is possible only if everyone **understands** the objectives, **supports** the conservation measures and takes **ownership** of the marine protected area.

Socio-Economic Benefits of the EU Marine Protected Areas (study, EC 2016)

(Scoping study: **Measuring the benefits of marine protected areas in the context of EU's Natura 2000 network** - scoping the methodology)

Addressing pressures: links to other policy areas

- The Common Fisheries Policy
- Incidental catch of protected species
- Fisheries measures for Natura 2000 sites
- Data collection and technical measures



- The Marine Strategy Framework Directive
- Programme of measures,
including spatial protection measures



- The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive
- Maritime spatial plans





Nature Directives Fitness Check

- An extensive evidence - based **Fitness Check evaluation** of the Birds and Habitats Directives was completed in 2016.
- ***Directives are fit for purpose***, but fulfilling their objectives and realising their full potential depends upon greatly **improving implementation**.
- There is also the need to **increase coherence** between nature protection and socio-economic activities, and **foster engagement** with national authorities, stakeholders and citizens.



Biodiversity Strategy 2020 target ('halting the loss'**) is at risk!**

- Too many species/habitats continue to show negative trends
- Only 50% of sites managed
- Marine Natura 2000 network incomplete
- Funding shortage
- Cases of inflexible application and permitting delays by national and local authorities
- Insufficient knowledge, awareness, engagement and cooperation
- Nature Directives require action also outside Natura 2000
- Only 11% citizens know about Natura 2000



Action plan for nature, people and the economy

Adopted by the Commission on 27/4/2017

Objectives:

- *to realise the full potential of the Directives to achieve healthy ecosystems, whose services benefit people, nature and economy*
- *to boost their contribution towards reaching the EU's biodiversity targets for 2020*
- *to improve the Directives' coherence with broader socio-economic objectives*



Priorities of the Action plan

- Improving guidance and knowledge and ensuring better coherence with broader socio-economic objectives
- Building political ownership and strengthening compliance
- Strengthening investment in Natura 2000 and improving synergies with EU funding instruments
- Better communication and outreach, engaging citizens, stakeholders and communities

A total of 114 actions, to be accomplished by 2019

Marine-related actions

- Completion of marine Natura 2000
- Methodologies to assess coherence of MPA networks
- Increase synergies with MSFD
- Develop new guidance on Natura 2000 and fisheries under the CFP
- Facilitate the implementation of fisheries management measures under the CFP for marine Natura 2000
- Cooperation with RSCs and RFMOs
- Adaptation strategy to deal with IAS impact on Med fisheries
- Biogeographical process in marine regions
- Contribute to the adoption of a comprehensive regional management plan for red coral under GFCM
- Synergies with CFP and IMP
- Full use of financial resources under EMFF

Thank you!



More information on our marine page:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/marine/index_en.htm

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