



European Regional Office



A SNAPSHOT OF IUCN EUROPE'S SUCCESSES

About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,400 Member organisations and some 18,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development.

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Four years ago, no one could have ever imagined the situation we would find ourselves in since the outbreak of COVID-19. Over the past two years, economies and societies have been turned upside down and millions of people's lives have been impacted. Despite the unprecedented circumstances, I am proud to say that the IUCN European Region has persevered with its influential work. Whether by informing EU policies, pushing Nature-based solutions (NbS) up the European agenda or improving the evaluation of European species with our flagship Red List projects, we remain at the centre of European action for Nature.

This summary showcases the work of the Union, Secretariat, Members, Experts and National Committees as a movement for raising the bar and accelerating implementation for nature conservation.

We continue to see our members grow and still represent the largest IUCN Membership globally with 371 members, including some of IUCN's main Framework Partners and State Members. In the future, we aim to continue expanding with a particular focus on the Eastern parts of Europe. IUCN Members, Commissions and the Secretariat have been working hard, supporting an enhanced IUCN European (One) Program and implementing a number of projects to improve biodiversity conservation and sustainable development across the continent.

One of our most prominent and successful results from the Secretariat was facilitating dialogues between environmental and farming communities on sustainable agriculture. In 2018 and 2019, we organised round tables on the environmental measures of the Common Agricultural Policy

(CAP) together with the EU Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, with the support of the former Commissioner for Agriculture Phil Hogan. The dialogues were met with enthusiasm not only for the ideas themselves but for the process which generated them.

IUCN Europe was also instrumental in the considerable uptake of NbS into key EU policies such as in the Climate Adaptation Strategy and the Nature Restoration Action plan. They have also been integrated in the Horizon 2020 programme for Research and Innovation. IUCN's expert knowledge has been pivotal in this uptake and we will continue our work to ensure NbS projects follow our Global Standards to optimise their impact.

The European Red List (ERL), one of IUCN's flagship initiatives, has only grown with time, with a number of additions published during 2017-2020. Through the ongoing support of the European Union, IUCN is currently assessing all European hoverfly and macro moth species for the ERL, and reassessing 11 previously assessed taxa as part of the IUCN European Red List Pulse project.

Despite the challenges over the last year and half, I am pleased to see progress in Europe on nature conservation, but much more still needs to be done. The European Green Deal is a huge opportunity and offers a path to nature's recovery on the continent. IUCN Europe will continue to support the goals with its members and assist and convene open dialogues with all stakeholders.

Luc Bas,
Director IUCN Europe,
30 June 2021

HIGHLIGHTS OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS

Bringing together agricultural and environmental stakeholders

In 2018 and 2019 the IUCN European Regional Office worked with the European Commission to bring together stakeholders from the farming and environmental communities in Europe. Through a participatory approach, joint proposals and solutions for sustainable agriculture were proposed, working within the current and proposed Common Agricultural Policy legislation.



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Expansion of EU overseas projects¹

BEST, or “Voluntary Scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European overseas”, is a European initiative that supports the conservation of the unique biodiversity of the European Overseas and the sustainable use of valuable ecosystem services. BEST has proved to be an effective mechanism to mobilise capacities and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources. Since 2019, it has supported 63 projects worth € 3,404,802.



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¹ The EU overseas' biodiversity is of international importance hosting unique ecosystems, endemic species and hotspots of biodiversity. The BEST programme is managed on behalf of the European Commission by the IUCN Global Protected and Conserved Areas Programme.

Improving the IUCN Green List

Over the course of three years (2017 – 2019), the IUCN European Regional office carried out a feasibility study on the application of the IUCN Green List Sustainability Standard to Natura 2000 sites, to help to increase the overall performance of the network, through an international, credible, robust and reputable system.



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Approaches to sustainable agriculture

Our report “Approaches to sustainable agriculture” shed light on the abundance of understandings and terminology in the field. The many different approaches, practices, and concepts can distract from the focus of building a common path forward for sustainable agriculture in the future. The report showed that different approaches exist, that they have a number of important commonalities, but also that their diversity is a strength in itself.



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EU Pollinator Initiative

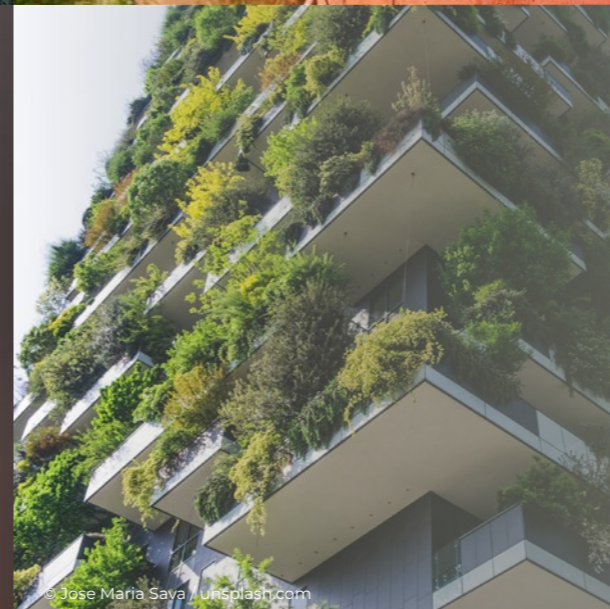
Our European Biodiversity Conservation Team lead a project, with the Institute for European Environmental Policy, to help the European Commission to implement the EU Pollinator Initiative. This important work has led to the production of guidance that can help European society to contribute to the protection and restoration of pollinator populations.



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Build back better with Nature-based Solutions

In 2020, IUCN launched the Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions. The Standard guides users through Nature-based Solutions (NbS) applications and sets benchmarks for their progress. The IUCN European Regional Office in cooperation with IUCN Members, experts, partners and the EU institutions has strengthened the awareness of the benefits of NbS, and the establishment of partnerships for action, through the EU platform for NbS: NetworkNature.



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WHAT'S NEXT FOR IUCN EUROPE?

Looking to the future, the IUCN European Regional Office will continue our pivotal work in Brussels as before. We intend to further explore the relationship between circular economy and biodiversity, enhance the dialogue between the forest and environmental stakeholders and improve the management and effectiveness of protected areas in Europe through tools such as the Green List of Protected Areas. We will continue to promote IUCN knowledge products in Europe, such as the Red List and Green List, and promote the safeguarding of pollinators.

OUR MEMBERSHIP CONTINUES TO GROW

The IUCN European Regional Office has successfully expanded its network to include 372 Members, of which 38 Government Agency Members and 238 Non-Governmental Organisations, 24 affiliates, 51 International Non-Governmental Organisations and 1 Indigenous People Organisation.

LIFE ASAP Project

IUCN Member:
Federparchi; Italian IUCN Committee;
World Commission on Protected Areas

The Life ASAP project is a project co-financed by the European Union that has the objective to reduce the introduction rate of invasive alien species (IAS) in the Italian territory and the mitigation of its impacts. In particular, Life ASAP aims to increase the awareness and the active participation of citizens regarding the problem of IAS. It also aims to promote the correct and efficient management of IAS by public entities in charge thanks to the full implementation of the European regulations in the field of invasive alien species.

The Finnish Red List of Habitats

IUCN Member:
Finnish Ministry of Environment

The results of the extensive assessment of the Red List of all of Finland's terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems were published in December 2018. The threat status of ecosystem or habitat types in Finland was evaluated for the second time, this time using the new assessment methodology called IUCN Red List of Ecosystems Categories and Criteria. The work was coordinated by the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE).

European Partnership for Biodiversity Protection in Viticulture

IUCN Member:
Quercus – National Association for Nature Conservation, Portugal

The project "European partnership for the Protection of Biodiversity in Viticulture", supported by the European Union's Erasmus+ program, focused on training for good practices that promote biodiversity in vine growing ecosystems. The aim was to encourage producers to promote and protect biodiversity in their vines and through the several levels of the production cycle.

Protection of Białowieża Forest as a World Heritage Site

IUCN Member:
WWF Poland

Białowieża Forest is the best preserved forest ecosystem and the last low-land deciduous and mixed old-growth forest in Europe. It is home to Europe's largest bison population. WWF Poland is working to protect the vast biodiversity from the intensification of unsustainable logging.

TRANSGREEN: Integrated Transport and Green Infrastructure Planning in the Danube - Carpathian Region

IUCN Member:
State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic

Over two years and a half, an interdisciplinary partnership comprised of planners, economists, engineers, and ecologists integrated and applied their specific knowledge across the region and cooperated on developing Guidelines on integrated transport infrastructure planning, construction, management and monitoring, taking into account aspects of road safety and biodiversity conservation. The project was successfully completed in June 2019.

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