

# EUROPEAN SPECIES UNDER THREAT

## Overview of European Red Lists results

November 2011

### A closer look at European species

The European Red List is a review of the conservation status of 5,872 European species:

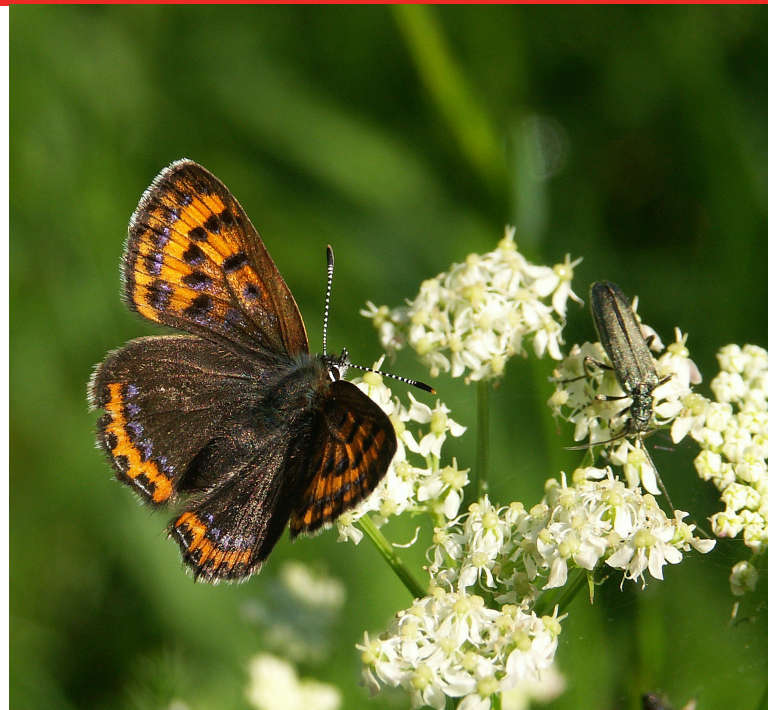
- Vertebrates: mammals, reptiles, amphibians and freshwater fishes
- Invertebrates: butterflies, dragonflies, freshwater molluscs and selected species of saproxylic beetles and terrestrial molluscs
- Selected species of plants: aquatic plants, priority crop wild relatives, and plants listed under policy instruments.

Of all the species assessed, 63% (3,697 species) are endemic to Europe and do not occur anywhere else in the world.

The status review was carried out using the IUCN Regional Red List Categories and Criteria. It identifies those species that are threatened with extinction at the European and EU 27 level – so that appropriate conservation action can be taken to improve their status.

The European Red List project started in 2006 and is funded by the European Commission. It was compiled by IUCN's Global Species Programme and Regional Office for Europe with the help of hundreds of experts from the IUCN Species Survival Commission and partners.

Although the assessment is complete for some groups, there are thousands of invertebrate and plant species that have not been assessed for their risk of extinction yet.



The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ - Regional Assessment

**Freshwater molluscs**  
59% threatened\*



**Freshwater fishes**  
40% threatened\*



**Amphibians**  
23% threatened



**Terrestrial molluscs**  
22% threatened\*



**Reptiles**  
20% threatened\*



**Mammals**  
17% threatened\*



**Dragonflies**  
16% threatened\*



**Crop Wild Relatives**  
16% threatened\*



**Saproxylic Beetles**  
15% threatened\*



**Butterflies**  
9% threatened



**Aquatic Plants**  
8% threatened\*



## How many European species are threatened?

At least 1,465 of the species assessed are threatened with extinction – and freshwater animals are particularly affected. A total of 30 species has gone extinct in Europe, three of those still exist outside our continent. Among the extinct species are many freshwater fishes such as the Bezoule (*Coregonus bezola*) and several other *Coregonus* species, the freshwater mollusc *Graecoanatolica macedonica* and the plant Pensée de Cry (*Viola cryana*). For 920 species, the lack of information made it impossible to determine the extinction risk and more research is needed. This is particularly the case for marine mammals, saproxylic beetles, crop wild relatives and other plant species, and freshwater molluscs.

## What causes species in Europe to disappear?

Loss and degradation of habitat is causing Europe's species to disappear. The threats are numerous: changes in agricultural practices such as intensification as well as abandonment impact the species composition, pollution deteriorates freshwater quality, the expansion of urban and tourism areas destroys natural habitats, dams hinder the migration of fishes, invasive alien species compete for space, climate change forces species to migrate, and many species are collected from the wild.

## What can we do?

The information collected throughout this project helps to find the right conservation measures for threatened species. This is often a combination of legislation, research, monitoring, population management and land acquisition. The EU Habitats Directive and the Natura 2000 network of protected sites are already in place to conserve and restore biodiversity. We need to fully implement the existing European legislation and expand the network of protected areas. Moreover, we as Europeans need to be aware of nature's creatures, respect their needs and act accordingly by using natural resources in a responsible manner. Let us preserve Europe's natural heritage in all its diversity and beauty.

## For more information

[www.iucnredlist.org/europe](http://www.iucnredlist.org/europe)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist/index_en.htm)

\* A change in IUCN policy on calculating the percentages of threat means that the figures shown here differ from the current European Red List publications. The new figures show a more realistic estimate as they exclude Data Deficient species from the calculation, assuming that these species have the same proportion of threat as the set of species with enough information for a risk assessment. Compared to that, the previously published figures present the minimum estimate.