



Natura 2000

In a nutshell

Stretching over 18 % of the EU's land area and almost 6 % of its marine territory, it is the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world. It offers a haven to Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

In practice

Natura 2000 is a network of core breeding and resting sites for rare and threatened species, and some rare natural habitat types which are protected in their own right. It stretches across all 28 EU countries, both on land and at sea. The aim of the network is to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats, listed under both the [Birds Directive](#) and the [Habitats Directive](#).

[The Natura 2000 Viewer](#) is an on-line tool that presents all Natura 2000 sites, provides key information on species and habitats for which each site has been designated, data on their estimated population size, conservation status and allows for various searches.

Natura 2000 is not a system of strict nature reserves from which all human activities would be excluded. While it includes strictly protected nature reserves, most of the land remains privately owned. The approach to conservation and sustainable use of the Natura 2000 areas is much wider, largely centered on people working with nature rather than against it. However, Member States must ensure that the sites are managed in a sustainable manner, both ecologically and economically.

On our pages, you will find more information about how the network was established, where the Natura 2000 sites are located, how they are managed and how Member States can better protect nature by working together across Europe. The European Commission's biogeographical process provides a co-operation platform to stakeholders and managers of the Natura 2000 network. You can also read our guidance documents on the Natura 2000 network management, access its Communication Platform and find out about the Natura 2000 awards.

[FAQ on Natura 2000](#)

Site designation

Find out how the network was established and how Natura 2000 sites are selected.

Site management

Get guidance on issues ranging from the directives to financing, wilderness and

Biogeographical process

Discover the 9 biogeographical regions and how Member States work together. Access seminar documents or the lists of sites of Community importance.

Data and maps

Access our maps and statistics or find out if there's a Natura 2000 site by you.

marine areas or climate change. Learn best practices.

Natura 2000 awards

Discover which projects have been selected for this year's award or learn more about past award-winning projects.

EU Natura 2000 Day

To mark the 25th Anniversary of the Habitats Directive and of the LIFE Programme, the 21st May will be declared the "European Natura 2000 Day".

Communication platform

Get help and share advice to achieve a favourable conservation status of Europe's most precious habitats.

Natura 2000 (EN)



Natura 2000 - Protecting Europe's biodiversity (292 pgs)



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