

Progress towards halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010

EEA Report No 5/2006

Prof Jacqueline McGlade
Executive Director
European Environment Agency



Is there progress towards the 2010 target of halting biodiversity loss?

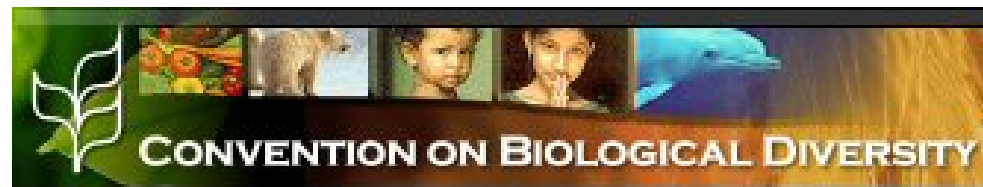
The EEA assessment focuses on :

- ☀ The present biodiversity crisis
- ☀ State of major ecosystems in Europe
- ☀ Key management issues
- ☀ Policy responses : Are they fast enough?
- ☀ Europe ´s impact on the wider world
- ☀ What is shaping Europe ´s future biodiversity



Biodiversity

'Biological diversity' means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.



Article 2



The widespread collapse of traditional agro-ecosystems in Europe

- ☀ Landscapes in Europe were relatively stable until the agricultural and industrial revolutions of the past two centuries.
- ☀ The collapse of the formerly diverse systems of land use, has shaped our reality on land and on the coastal and marine environment.



Entry point: Biodiversity in Ecosystems

The EEA assessment focuses on six major ecosystems and the policies affecting them:

- ☀ Farmlands
- ☀ Forests
- ☀ Fresh water
- ☀ Marine and coastal ecosystems
- ☀ Wetlands
- ☀ Mountains



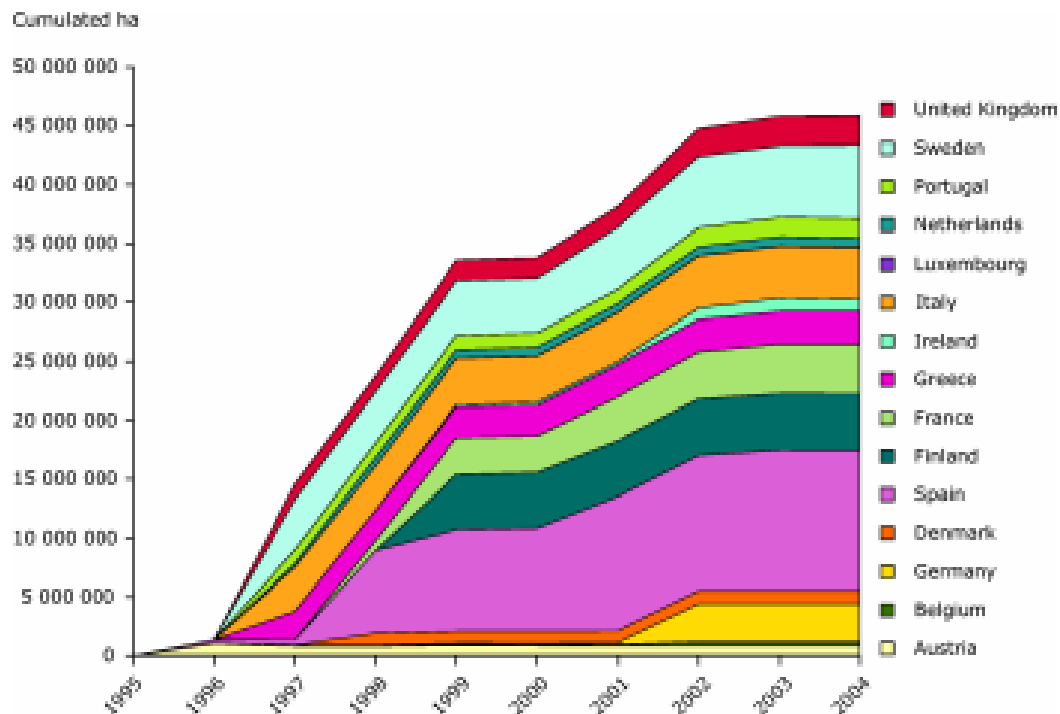
Progress: European nature conservation

Responses in European nature conservation are positive:

- ☀️ Nationally-designated area has increased during recent years.
- ☀️ The increase in sites within the EU Natura 2000 network is a good sign.



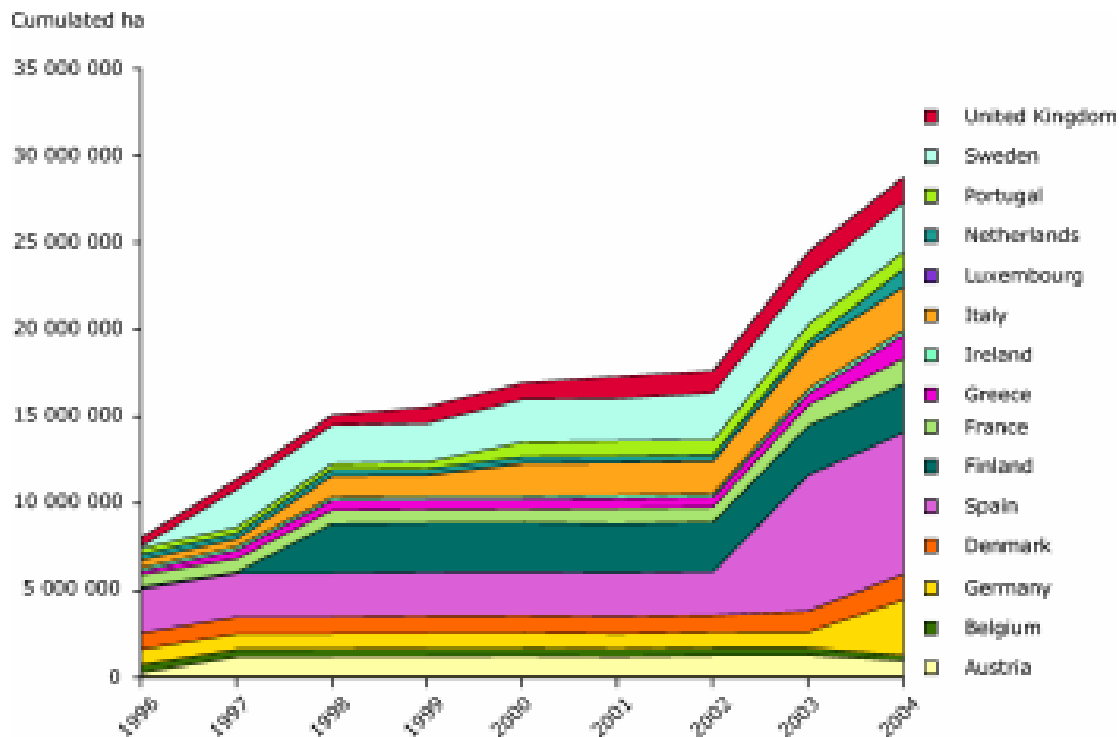
Progress: More sites designated in the Natura 2000 network



Cumulative surface area of sites designated for the habitats directive over time (sites of Community importance - SCIs)



Progress: More sites designated in the Natura 2000 network



Cumulative surface area of sites designated for the birds directive over time (special protection areas - SPAs)



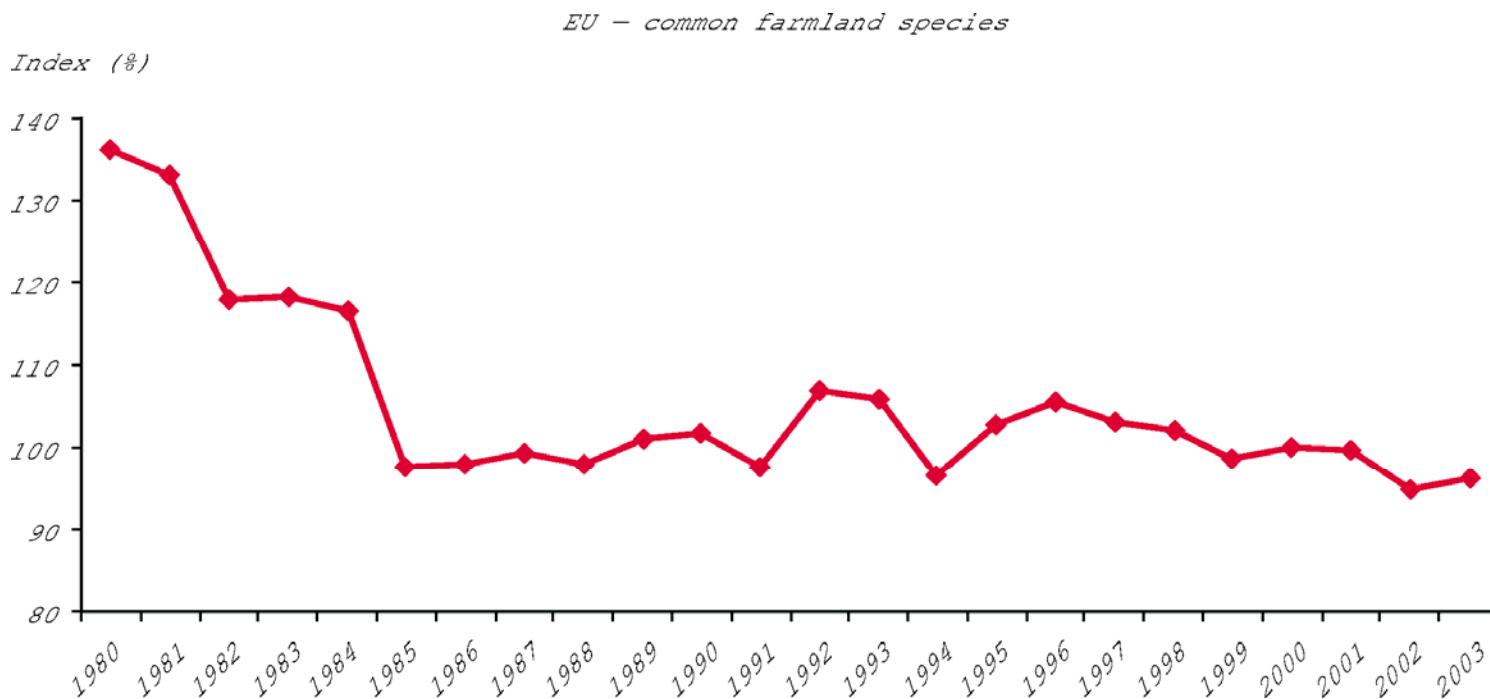
Progress in halting biodiversity loss in major ecosystems

Farmland/Agricultural ecosystems:

- ☀ The sharp decline in farmland species of animals and plants in the past decades has not fully recovered.
- ☀ We will not reach targets towards biodiversity loss by 2010.



Progress in halting biodiversity loss in major ecosystems : Farmland



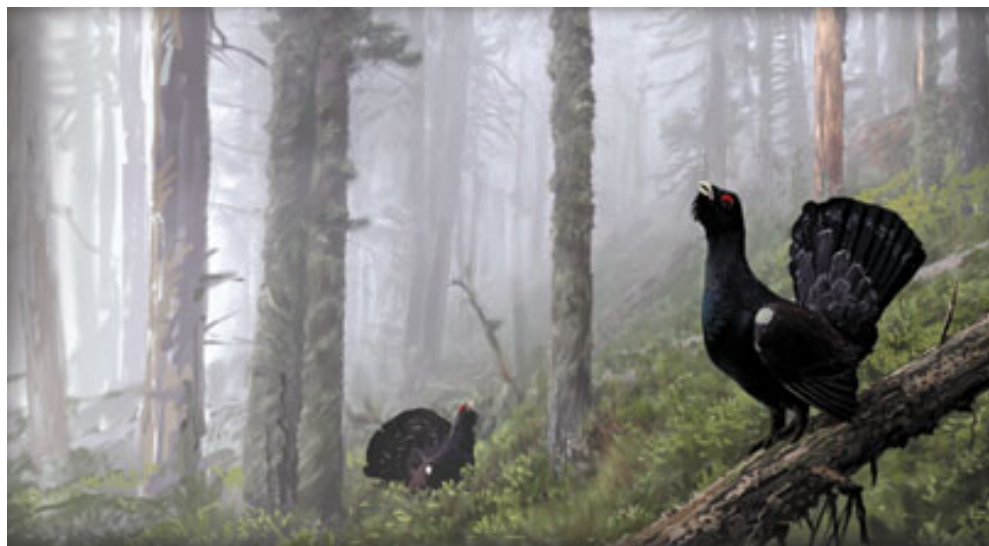
Trends in farmland bird populations between 1980 and 2002, based on 24 characteristic bird species (data from BirdLife International)



Progress in halting biodiversity loss in major ecosystems

Forests:

- ☀ There are clear signs of progress in reducing threats to and enhancing biological diversity in forests.



Progress in halting biodiversity loss in major ecosystems : Forests

On the side of progress :

- ☀ Forest area in Europe is not decreasing.
- ☀ Forests are growing older and thus more valuable for biodiversity conservation.
- ☀ Decreased effects of air pollution are observed.

Issues where urgent action is needed :

- ☀ Still many forest species are threatened.
- ☀ More efficient control of forest fires.



Progress in halting biodiversity loss in major ecosystems

Freshwater:

- ☀ There is progress with regard to water quality, but reaching the 2010 target will not be possible.



Progress in halting biodiversity loss in major ecosystems : Fresh water

- ☀ Water quality in big freshwater bodies has improved.
- ☀ Some species that were lost, such as the freshwater salmon in England, are returning.
- ☀ However, the target will not be met unless riverine habitats and biological communities are restored.
- ☀ The serious effects of river fragmentation from dams must be counteracted.



Progress in halting biodiversity loss in major ecosystems

Marine and coastal ecosystems:

- ☀ Biodiversity loss in all European seas and coasts is considerable and shows few signs of being reduced.



Progress in halting biodiversity loss in major ecosystems

Marine and coastal ecosystems:

- ☀ Biodiversity loss in all European seas and coasts is considerable and shows few signs of being reduced.
- ☀ Action is urgently needed to restore fish stocks; reduce pollution from land-based sources and oil spills; and counteract fragmentation of natural habitat on coasts.



Progress in halting biodiversity loss in major ecosystems

Wetlands:

- ☀ Still shrinking with 3,4% loss across 23 European countries 1900-2000.



Progress in halting biodiversity loss in major ecosystems

Wetlands of international importance:

- ☀ Marginally positive outlook, with stable water bird populations and increase of the area designated as Ramsar sites.
- ☀ Negative changes in the ecological state of some Ramsar sites.
- ☀ Urbanisation and transport have contributed to significant habitat fragmentation.



Progress in halting biodiversity loss in major ecosystems

Mountains:

- ☀ Mountain regions are under pressure and there are not many signs of progress.
- ☀ However, local conservation measures for endangered species are successful.



Progress in halting biodiversity loss in major ecosystems : Mountains

- ❁ Tourism and transport infrastructure are increasing pressures, combined with abandonment of traditional land use.
- ❁ Climate change effects are already visible and there is high risk of local loss of species.
- ❁ European mountain areas are not sufficiently considered in EU policies



Shaping Europe's future biodiversity

Climate change is already a major factor on top of ongoing:

- ☀ Fragmentation and destruction of habitats.
- ☀ Overexploitation of resources.



Final slide...

Thank you for your attention!



Drawings: Toni Llobert, Catalonia