



natura

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Winter flock of avocets, *Recurvirostra avocetta* on Exe Estuary, UK. Photo: Chris Gomersall/RSPB Images.

20 YEARS!

20 years – a whole generation – has passed already since the European Ministers in charge of nature conservation adopted the celebrated Birds Directive. This was done unanimously at the time under the French presidency. Yet, if we look at the latest update of the Naturabarometer (see pages 6–7) we should perhaps be rather modest in our celebrations.

The vast majority of the Member States have failed to respect their collective commitment, given in 1979, to create a coherent network of Special Protection Areas for birds. Several important sites known to be of European interest are still not protected under Community legislation. That being said however, there are at least signs of a positive trend developing. The drastic decline in a number of severely threatened

species has been abated thanks to the fact that their sites have been classified and that management actions have been co-financed under LIFE-Nature and the Agri-environment regulation. (See pages 3–4)

Where straightforward management was insufficient to save a site, restoration projects were launched, as was the case in Denmark where several projects, co-financed by LIFE-Nature, set out to re-establish degraded SPAs (see page 8–10).

In parallel, Member States continue to propose new sites under the Habitats Directive. The selection process for sites on a Community level is now underway in 5 of the 6 biogeographical regions (see page 11) and will start in the Continental region in February 2000.

Slowly but surely, the European Natura 2000 Network is taking shape ...

PS: to better reflect the diversity of actions surrounding Natura 2000, this newsletter is expanding to 12 pages. Don't hesitate to pass the good news on to others!

CONTENTS

IN FOCUS

Towards a European network of Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

pages 2–4

SPECIES

The Corncrake, *Crex crex*

page 5

NATURA BAROMETER

Latest update of the barometer as of 14 September 1999

pages 6–7

ON SITE

Restoration of SPAs in Denmark: LIFE helps pave the way

pages 8–10

NEWS ROUND UP

Latest events and publications summarised

pages 11–12



The NATURA 2000 Newsletter is produced by the Nature Conservation Unit of the Environment Directorate General (DG XI.D.2) of the European Commission.

Lapwing eggs, *Vanellus vanellus*. Photo: Kriessmann.

Building up a European network of Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Twenty years have passed since the adoption of the Birds Directive. In this time over 2,400 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) covering 162,000 km² have been classified across Europe. A substantial achievement one might think, or is it? Have we really a good reason to break open the champagne or should we be hanging our heads in shame instead? In this article, we review the progress made towards creating a coherent network of SPAs and look at whether this has been adequate for the conservation of three very different bird species.

Article 4 of the Birds Directive lays down the provisions regarding the classification of SPAs. It requires Member States to:

- Classify the most suitable territories, in number and surface area, for endangered and vulnerable bird species listed in Annex I of the Directive (altogether 181 species);
- Take similar measures for the habitats of migratory bird species not listed in Annex I, particularly regarding wetlands of international importance;
- Send the Commission all relevant

information on the SPAs thus classified in order to provide it with the means to co-ordinate the whole exercise and ensure that the SPAs form a coherent ecological network.

What is meant by the 'most suitable territories' ?

Member States have a margin of discretion in choosing the most suitable sites for classification but this must result from the application of valid ornithological criteria. In the 1980s experts from the Member States, the European Commission and the non-governmental organisation – BirdLife International – worked out a set of criteria for identifying sites of great importance for the conservation of birds in the European Union – known as Important Birds Areas (IBAs). These criteria were used to prepare the 1989 IBA inventory, which together with other similar national reviews, are used by the Commission to assess if Member States have classified their most suitable territories as SPAs. The validity of this approach has recently been recognised by the Court of Justice (Case C-3/96, Commission v Netherlands – see issue 7 of this newsletter).

What information needs to be supplied for the SPAs ?

As part of the classification process, Member States must also supply the European Commission with a completed Natura 2000 data form and map for each SPA, in both paper and computerised formats. This information serves a number of important functions. It indicates the species of particular conservation importance for which the site has been classified as an SPA. It provides an essential basis for determining priorities for management as well as for assessing any threats to the site's integrity. It presents a baseline against which future changes can be assessed. And finally, it also allows an evaluation to be made of the contribution of that particular site to the conservation of populations of different bird species.

That is why the Commission places so much importance on receiving complete and up-to-date forms, as, without this, it is almost impossible to build up a European perspective of the network. To assist this process the computerised version is integrated into a Community database for SPAs, which is managed by the European

How complete is the information submitted for the SPAs?

Whilst there has been significant progress made by most Member States in recent years, the information base is still not complete. As the Natura barometer (page 6–7) shows, Germany, in particular, has submitted very little information on its SPAs¹, Ireland has only supplied partial computerised data whereas for Spain and Belgium the data originally submitted has not yet been fully updated.

Have sufficient sites been classified?

This lack of information makes the task of assessing the coherence of the network rather difficult. Nevertheless, if one compares the SPAs with the scientific reference lists, it is already clear that so far only two Member States, Belgium and Denmark, have largely completed the process whereas the majority of the other Member States are still behind.

The outlook is a little brighter though if one looks at individual performances, for instance several Member States, including Ireland, Italy and Luxembourg, have made significant progress in recent years. The UK provided the Commission with a timetable for completing its SPA classification process and should accomplish this by the year 2000. The Netherlands, in response to a recent court hearing against it, has launched a consultation procedure for several IBAs which, when formally classified, will complete its network. Lastly, the three latest Member States have made substantial efforts considering that they only joined the EU in 1995.

The remaining Member States, including France and Germany², however are still lagging far behind.

So, the overall conclusion has to be that virtually all Member States need to take additional measures – in some cases considerable ones – to complete their national networks

before the SPA network can be considered well and truly established – a rather sober picture after 20 years of legislation.

And what of the bird populations, are they sufficiently protected by SPAs?

The good news is that the network seems to be largely complete for those bird species which are endemic or very restricted in their EU distribution. This applies, for instance, to the main breeding areas of the globally threatened species of the Macaronesian region: Fea's petrel *Pterodroma feae*, Zino's petrel *Pterodroma madeira* and the Madeira laurel pigeon *Columba trocaz* in Portugal (Madeira). Over 90% of the breeding populations of the Dalmatian pelican *Pelecanus crispus* and the pygmy cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmaeus* are also protected; these species are restricted to a small number of Greek wetlands, most of which are now SPAs.

It is, however, much more difficult to determine the level of protection in SPAs of more widely occurring species. A preliminary evaluation undertaken by ETC-NC focused on Annex I bird species identified as priority for financial assistance under LIFE-Nature. These species are of high conservation priority and one would therefore expect them to be a particular focus for protection in the SPA network.

The initial results of this assessment is given on page 4 for three very different species.

The final verdict?

It's a question of whether one considers the glass half empty or half full. A large number of sites have been put forward in the last 20 years, which is not an insignificant feat if one considers that altogether they cover almost 5% of the EU territory. But it is also clear that there is a long way to go, especially for some Member States, before the SPA network can really start to fulfil its role of safeguarding Europe's most endangered and vulnerable birds. The Commission will continue to put pressure on Member States to respect their obligations under the Birds Directive. In the meantime, it is hoped that the flurry of activity surrounding the designation of Sites of Community Importance under the Habitats Directive will give the much needed political impetus for revitalising the SPA classification process, since both will ultimately make up the Natura 2000 Network.

... continued on page 4

¹ This forms part of a legal action against Germany for a failure to correctly implement Article 4 of the Birds Directive.

² The figures in the Natura barometer for Germany are somewhat misleading as there are 271 SPAs in Baden-Württemberg which appear to have been classified for nature conservation interests other than birds.

Seabird colony on the Farne Islands, UK. Photo: Paul Goriup/Pisces Nature Photos.

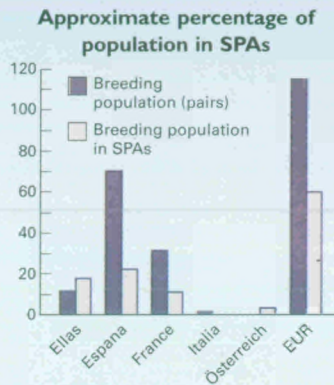




Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*

This species is recorded in 47 SPAs, although quantitative information is available for only 30 sites. With an estimated 50–60 pairs in SPAs out of the total EU population of 80–90 pairs it appears to have received a reasonable level of protection, especially

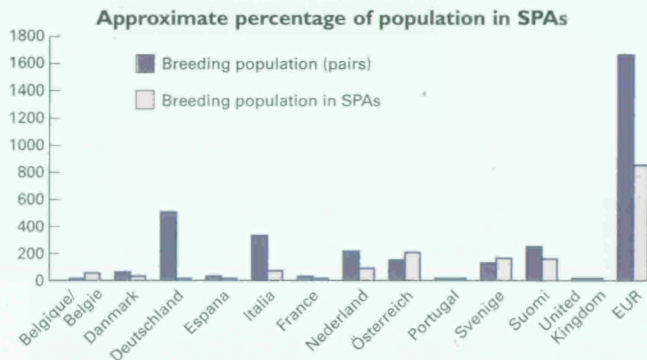
in Greece. However, site protection is still notably insufficient in France (Pyrenées). There are nevertheless conservation action programmes in each of the key areas for bearded vulture in France, Spain and Greece. The Community is supporting this under LIFE Nature and encouraging networking between the different projects. This should provide the basis for strengthening the coherence of the network for this species.



Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Site protection is a key element for the conservation of this species, which is restricted to wetlands with reedbed habitat. The bittern occurs in 292 SPAs, although quantitative data is only available for 214 sites. It is estimated that 50% of the EU population is in SPAs. However, the two key countries in the EU, Germany and France, seem to have a low level of protection of the species in SPAs. Significant progress in SPA classification needs to take place in these two Member States to ensure the coherence of the network. Again, several LIFE-Nature projects have targeted the conservation of this species, particularly in the Northern Europe, but often these are small sites hosting less

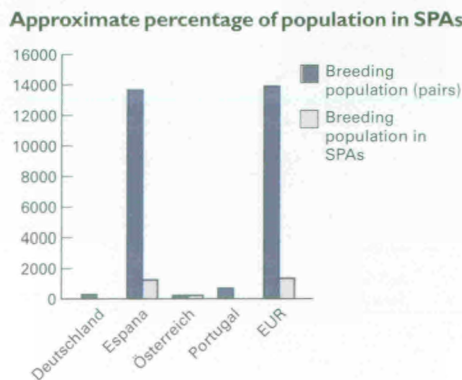
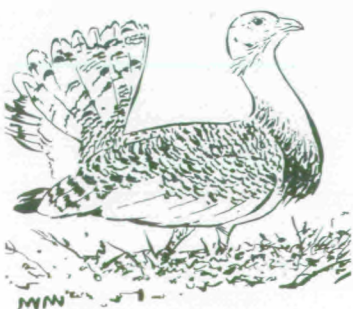
than 5 couples. So, most actions are rather more piecemeal and small scale compared to those for the bearded vulture.



Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

Essentially a steppic bird, the great bustard is an inhabitant of extensive open areas of natural grassland and non-intensive farmland. An estimated 8% of the EU population of great bustards has been recorded in 16 SPAs, although quantitative data exists for only 6 of these sites. The information shows that the small Austrian population is largely protected in contrast to that of Germany where few birds are recorded in SPAs. However, the true situation is probably obscured by a lack of data. The Portuguese authorities have only recently decided to protect their important bustard sites. In contrast, there is still a low level of protection in SPAs in Spain, the last real stronghold for the species in the EU. Without substantial progress here it will not be possible to achieve a coherent EU network for the species. There have been several LIFE-Nature projects for this species, notably in

Spain and Germany, but because its long-term survival is dependent upon the maintenance of large areas of extensive farming systems, the agri-environment regulation is the most appropriate source of financial support.





The Corncrake *Crex crex*

With its distinctive rasping song, the corncrake was once a familiar sound of the countryside. To many rural people it heralded the arrival of summer, bringing with it gentler climates and longer days. Though still found in most Member States its decline across Europe has been steady and sometimes even dramatic – some countries have lost almost half their populations in only a few decades. As a result, it has joined the unfortunate ranks of the Globally Threatened Species.

Much of the problem stems from a loss in suitable habitats and a large-scale changeover to mechanised hay and silage making. Using machines to cut hay and shifting to earlier harvests means that nests are destroyed before the birds have had a chance to mature. Adults, too, often perish if the field is cut from the outside in.

To try to reverse these negative trends, the Community supported the development of a Pan-European action plan for the corncrake. It has also co-financed a number of LIFE-Nature projects in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria and Finland. These involved a wide variety of actions, including detailed ecological investigations, land acquisition, habitat management demonstration plots and information campaigns.

But for the long-term conservation of the species there needs to be a concerted effort to encourage low-intensity farming and promote appropriate hay-cutting techniques e.g. through the agri-environment regulation. Only then will we be able to hear the once familiar sound of this bird in our countryside again.

Corncrake in an iris bed. Tiree, Scotland.

Photo: Chris Gomersall/RSPB Images.

NATURA BAROMETER

(as of 14/9/99)

Nota Bene:

- The Natura Barometer is based on the information officially transmitted by the Member States.
- Several sites may have been proposed under both Directives, either in part or in total. It is therefore not possible to add up the figures.
- The % in surface area is indicative. It refers to the total surface area proposed, terrestrial AND marine, compared to the terrestrial surface area of the Member State. Various Member States (DK, NL, ...) have designated substantial portions of their coastal waters.
- Certain Member States have proposed large areas including "buffer zones". Others have limited their proposals to "core areas". Nevertheless the area effectively encompasses the peripheral zones as well since Article 6 of the Habitats Directive also applies to new activities foreseen outside a Natura 2000 site but likely to have consequences within that site.
- The global assessment of national lists may be revised upwards or downwards, following more complete scientific analysis of the data, particularly at the relevant biogeographic seminars.

Little tern, *Sterna albifrons*, Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer
Photo: NPA-Archiv/Todt.



Member State	Birds Directive						Habitats Directive						Member State
	Number of sites designated	Total area (km ²)	% of territory	Site Maps	Scientific Data	Progress	Number of sites proposed	Total area (km ²)	% of territory	Site maps	Scientific Data	Assessment of national list	
België/Belgique	36	4,313	14.1%				102	913	3%				België/Belgique
Danmark	111	9,601	22.3%				194	10,259	23.8%				Danmark
Deutschland	553	14,658	4.1%				1120	10,941	2.9%				Deutschland
Ellas	52	4,965	3.8%				230	25,745	19.5%				Ellas
España	174	33,582	6.7%				684	74,907	14.8%				España
France	114	8,015	1.5%				1029	26,720	4.9%				France
Ireland	109	2,226	3.2%				138	2060	2.9%				Ireland
Italia	243	10,561	3.5%				2,506	49,355	16.4%				Italia
Luxembourg	13	160	6.2%				38	352	13.6%				Luxembourg
Nederland	30	3,552	8.5%				76	7,078	17%				Nederland
Österreich	73	11,931	14.2%				113	9,450	11.3%				Österreich
Portugal	47	8,082	8.7%				65	12,150	13.2%				Portugal
Suomi	440	27,500	8.1%				1,381	47,154	13.9%				Suomi
Sverige	301	22,820	5.1%				1,919	46,300	11.3%				Sverige
United Kingdom	196	7,887	3.2%				340	17,628	7.3%				United Kingdom
EUR 15	2,492	169,823					9,935	341,012					EUR 15

For further information contact: Micheal O'Briain, DG XI.D.2 for SPA classification.



classification notably insufficient
classification incomplete
classification complete



data for transmitted sites incomplete and/or not computerised
complete and computerised for transmitted sites
complete, computerised and validated for all transmitted sites
↑ recent significant progress



national list notably insufficient
substantial national list but information still incomplete
complete national list according to Member State, information transmitted is coherent

For further information contact: Fotios Papoulias, DG XI.D.2 for proposed SCIs.

Blanket bog, Flow Country, Scotland.
Photo: R. Lindsay.



The Natura Barometer: commentary on progress

- With the new submissions since the last issue of the Natura Newsletter, the number of proposed SCIs totals now nearly 10,000 sites. Notably, Germany, France and Ireland kept adding new sites to their - still insufficient- national lists of proposed SCIs, which have now been increased by 339 sites (+1157 km²), 215 sites (+5890 km²) and 35 sites (+1090 km²) respectively.
- Little progress is to be reported with new SPAs, except for Italy which has classified a further 41 sites covering 1089 km² and Portugal which by classifying 11 new SPAs has more than doubled the total surface area covered.
- The quality of data for both SPAs and pSCIs transmitted by the Member States is improving, but forms and maps, especially computerised, are still missing for many sites.



Barnacle geese, *Branta leucopsis*, Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer. Photo: NPA-Archiv/Wernicke.

Restoration of SPAs in Denmark: LIFE helps pave the way

Exhausted after their epic long-haul flight across Northern Scandinavia, a flock of barnacle geese searches the horizon for nature's equivalent of a VIP transit lounge. Somewhere to rest up for a while and tuck into a hearty meal. But this is Denmark – nothing but intensively cultivated fields as far as the eye can see and not a hospitable mud flat in sight. Luckily for the birds things are about to change. After decades of disappearing under the plough, nature is once again gaining a foothold along the West Coast and, little by little, natural sanctuaries are appearing along

the Western Palearctic Flyway to help our travellers on their way.

Before the large scale reclamation schemes of the post war era, Denmark's Western coastline was one large patchwork of wetlands. Extensive areas of reedbeds, wet meadows and small, cultivated fields, dotted the coastline, occasionally interspersed by lakes and fjords. This provided a vital ecological corridor for migratory waterbirds along one of Europe's principal flyways. But over time, most of these wetlands were drained in order to prepare the land for agriculture. By the mid 1970s over 2000km² had been converted to arable land, with the

consequent but inevitable drop in migratory bird numbers.

Vest Stadil fjord is just one such example. Situated midway along the West Coast near Ringkøbing Fjord, this area was formerly a shallow, tidal bay area with a correspondingly high biological diversity. By 1955, however, it had been artificially drained and pumped, and the water level lowered by 1.4 meters. The lake's ecological structure and functions were completely destroyed as a result and the area lost much of its value as an outstanding waterfowl habitat. Now, Vest Stadil Fjord is predominantly farmland with an artificially low groundwater level.

Aerial view of Vest Stadil Fjord before restoration. Photo: The National Forest and Nature Agency, Denmark.



In addition, the heavy use of fertilisers has led to iron oxide pollution and eutrophication.

A national strategy

In a concerted effort to reverse the effects of some of these schemes, the Danish government adopted a nation-wide strategy in 1987 to restore 20,000 ha of wetlands on marginal land within a period of 20 years. Several of these involved degraded SPAs and have consequently received co-financing under LIFE. (see box)

The restoration of Vest Stadil fjord is the second largest initiative to be undertaken in recent years. Covering a total of 2,215 ha of land, the objective was to raise water levels over a significant proportion of the site and to reduce water pollution over the remainder. In due course, this should lead to a substantial increase in suitable habitats for the migrating flocks of birds: adding 200 ha of dry meadows, 110 ha of reeds and wet meadows, and 115 ha of lake area to the already existing 225 ha of wetlands.

Heavy duty engineering had to be used to make all of this possible. Electricity cables were re-laid, a pumping station and ochre sedimentation basin built, and 2 kms of new channels and ditches excavated. But not before the site had been carefully assessed for its ability to respond well to such ambitious schemes. After all, restoration on this scale is still rather experimental, and it can be an expensive business if it goes wrong.

Local cooperation

The other vital ingredient for making a success of such a project is the co-operation and support of the local community. In the early days, the policy was more one of 'act now, talk later'. This got the conservationists and the Ministry of

Environment into some very deep water. At the nearby site of the Skjern River, for instance, debates over land rights dragged on for years because the local farming community had not been sufficiently involved in the restoration project at the outset. It

DANISH LIFE RESTORATION PROJECTS

Over the years several conservation projects have been co-financed under LIFE along the Danish stretch of the Western Palearctic Flyway. These include:

- The restoration of **Lake Filsø**, initiated in 1993 with the financial assistance of LIFE's precursor – the ACE programme. Formerly one of the largest lakes in Denmark, lake Filsø was reduced from 30 km² to just under 60 ha through a series of massive drainage and reclamation programmes. Efforts to restore the lake to its former glory were modest, the surface was extended by 40ha, water depth increased to an average of 1 meter and the shoreline prolonged by approximately 2 km. But these largely experimental actions gave the conservationists the know-how and impetus to try similar initiatives elsewhere;
- Also in 1993 LIFE – Environment contributed to initial restoration efforts on the **Skjern river**. This has, in the meantime, not only turned out to be Denmark's most ambitious restoration project so far but also one of its most controversial and expensive. Discussions with local farmers and interest groups have been tough and even acrimonious at times but the stage looks finally set for work to start in earnest. The Danish Minister of Environment himself formally launched the construction works earlier this year;
- **Vest Stadil Fjord** is the second largest initiative so far and was approved for co-financing under LIFE- Nature in 1998 after much preparation and dialogue with the local communities;
- Finally, this year a further restoration project was agreed under LIFE-Nature for the **Varde River**. Situated on the northern edge of the Waddensea, Varde is the only large unregulated river left in Denmark. But here too, drainage and ditches were installed for intensive agriculture and took their toll on the ecological values of the site. Efforts will be made to redress the hydrological balance of the river and surrounding meadows with the ultimate aim of converting the whole area to extensive agriculture under the Agri-Environment Regulation.



Aerial view of Vest Stadil Fjord after restoration. Photo: The National Forest and Nature Agency, Denmark.



ON SITE continued

took a lot of persuasion – and money – to finally break the deadlock there.

By contrast, at Vest Stadil fjord, efforts were made well in advance of the LIFE project to bring the local community on board. Various ideas were discussed at a series of local meetings and investigations were launched into the local history and customs before reclamation began. Landowners were asked if they were willing to sell their fields and the Ministry of Agriculture was drafted in to help with land re-consolidation and swaps. Finally, an action plan was drawn up so that the conservation objectives would be transparent to all concerned.



A thatcher's tale

Thatched roofs are a familiar sight in this part of Denmark. Whether on the family home, local school or town hall, most of the ancient houses have been thatched to keep out the driving North Sea winds. Before the reclamation schemes got underway, there was no shortage of raw material to work with, reedbeds were plentiful and thatching represented a small but important part of the local skilled labour force. Inevitably, though, as the reed beds disappeared so did this occupation. But now, thanks to the LIFE project, there is every chance of this age-old custom making a comeback. Already agreements have been signed for annual reed harvests, which should provide secure income for 2–3 people.



Svend Auken, Danish Minister of Environment and Energy, riding bicycle around the site.

Photo: The National Forest and Nature Agency, Denmark.

The long term prospects

Since then everything has been going very smoothly, the construction work was put out to tender and, much to everyone's delight, this turned out to be substantially cheaper than expected. It is thought that this was because the different companies wanted to make a good impression of their abilities before bidding for the much more substantial contracts on offer down the road at Skjern river.

Agreements have also been signed with local farmers to graze the fields with cattle and there are plans underway to develop organic farming in the region. The local thatching business is making a bit of a recovery too, providing a potential income for 2–3 people (see box). Finally, the thorny issue of hunting has been largely resolved thanks to voluntary agreements with local hunters. This, above all, was an essential part of gaining local acceptance for the project.

Now, the bulk of the remaining actions will focus on visitor awareness and management. Vest Stadil is situated in the vicinity of some of the most beautiful beaches in Denmark, and as such attracts a lot of visitors – foreign as well as national – in search of healthy outdoor pursuits. Plans are underway to construct a bicycle track along the eastern border of the project area, which will eventually join up with the network of bicycle routes along the West coast of Jutland. Along the way, visitors can climb one of the observation towers to get a bird's eye view of the area. Or they can stop off at an old fisherman's cabin, which now

contains exhibitions about the wildlife and local history of the site before reclamation.

And what of the birds? Well, restoration doesn't happen overnight. Although Vest Stadil was flooded as planned in October last year, it will take another 30–40 years before the present agricultural system is replaced by successions of more natural wet meadows and reed beds. But already numbers of staging and foraging waders have increased substantially – it is as if they were just waiting for this to happen.

Restoration is by no means an easy undertaking, nor is it without its critics, but in Denmark such strategic efforts are starting to bring welcome relief to thousands of birds along the Western Palearctic flyway. And as Vest Stadil fjord illustrates, provided the local community is brought on board at an early stage, it need not be an excessively expensive or difficult endeavour. The fact that this year's LIFE–Nature project involving the restoration of one of Denmark's largest unregulated rivers was actually initiated by the local farmer's union is evidence in itself that attitudes are changing all round.

For further information on the project

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LIFE III: the latest

In December last year, the European Commission came forward with a proposal to extend the LIFE programme into its third phase (2000–2004). The proposal has since made swift progress through the various Community institutions and a common position was reached at the last Council of Environment Ministers meeting in June 1999. However, the Regulation will not be adopted formally before the end of the year. As a result there will be two application rounds next year. The first deadline for submission of projects will be 31 March 2000 for projects to be funded that year whilst the second deadline will be 31 October 2000 for projects to be funded in 2001. A new information pack and application form will be available shortly. *Look out for details on DGXI's home page.*

Projects funded under LIFE-Nature in 1999

Altogether, 94 projects were agreed for co-financing this year with a total EU contribution of 64.5 million euro. This is up significantly compared to previous years both in terms of the number of projects approved and the money committed. A consolidated report briefly describing each project in its original language, and in English and French is now available. *Copies from I Venti DGXI.D.2. and via DGXI's home page.*

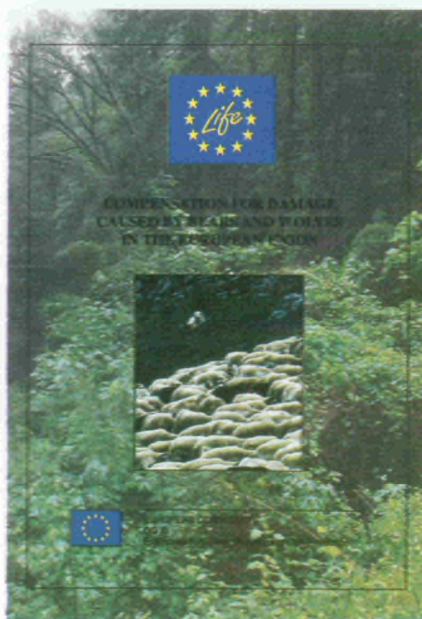
Biogeographical seminars for establishing a Community list of SCIs

Further progress has been made in the last six months in establishing a Community list of Sites of Community Importance for three of the six biogeographical regions. A first meeting of the Boreal region was held in Vargön, Sweden from 22–23 April to discuss the extent to which 83 habitat types and 99 species listed in the Habitats Directive are represented in the Swedish and Finnish national lists. A second meeting of the Alpine region was held in Gap-Charance, France from 5–6 July. And finally, a first meeting of the Atlantic region took

place in Shannon, Ireland from 5–7 September. Following a scientific analysis prepared by the European Topic Centre for Nature Conservation for these meetings, the Commission will now take up those cases of insufficient representation with each of the Member States concerned in anticipation of holding a second round of talks already in the year 2000. *An overview of this selection process can be found in Issue 6 (June 1998) of this Newsletter.*

Compensation for damage caused by bears and wolves in the EU

Because of their predatory behaviour, large carnivores have been in conflict with humans for centuries. Despite being protected by law, they are, still today, under constant threat. In a new study published by DGXI, the different systems used to compensate for loss or damage caused by wolves and bears are analysed in the context of LIFE-Nature. Both species have received significant community support over the years and LIFE-Nature projects have been launched for their conservation in 6 different Member States (Austria, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain). The report also compares the different systems used and identifies those elements, which have proven to be particularly successful under certain conditions. *Copies from I Venti DGXI.D.2.*



Conserving mires in the EU – Actions co-financed by LIFE-Nature

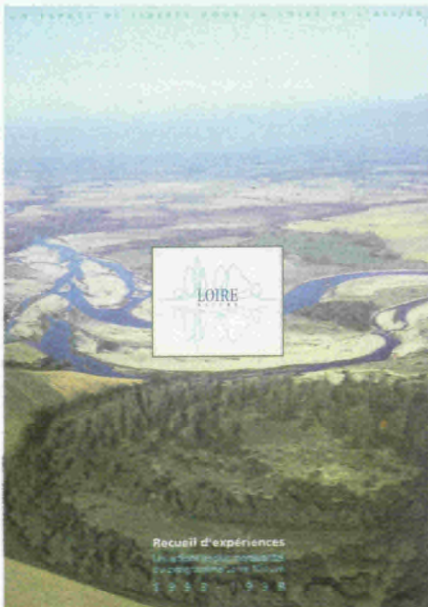
Europe has an incredible wealth of mires considering its size. Bogs and fens are found in all biogeographical regions stretching as far south as Corsica. However, their decline is now a matter of grave concern – 70% of their former range has already been lost. It is not surprising therefore that mire conservation has figured significantly in LIFE-Nature projects. Altogether, 66 mire projects have been funded over the last 7 years – with an EC contribution of around 30 million euro. These are presented in a new study published by DGXI. As well as describing the 13 mire habitat types listed in the Habitats Directive and the principal threats encountered in the projects, the report also analyses the main actions funded for promoting mire conservation and illustrates these widely with real-LIFE examples. *Copies from I Venti DGXI.D.2*

Using earth observation techniques for Natura 2000

EON 2000 is a new project designed to facilitate the use of earth observation images and techniques to monitor habitats, and so assist in the establishment of Natura 2000. Run by a consortium of four European partners, with funding from the DGXII research programme, the project is currently looking at forest habitats over test sites in Scotland, Austria and Finland with a view to establishing a common methodology for habitat monitoring. Ultimately, the objective is to develop a user-friendly system that can be used by any Member State organisation without the need for technical expertise in satellite imagery, interpretation and enhancement. *For more information visit the <http://geospace.co.at/EON2000.html> or write to Melanie Jones, EON 2000 project, National Remote Sensing Centre Ltd, Delta House, Southwood Crescent, Southwood, Farnborough GU14 0NL, UK fax: +44 1252 375016*

The LIFE-Loire project: managing a river in a sustainable manner

The Loire and its tributaries have one of the most natural hydrological alluvial river systems in Western Europe. However, over time they succumbed to a number of complex and destructive land use practices. This prompted the launch, in 1992, of an ambitious LIFE-Nature project to find ways to stem these trends. Apart from the classic actions of land purchase, habitat restoration and awareness raising, the project has, above all, demonstrated the value of managing river systems by preserving the area in which they flow, flood and generally 'express' themselves. Now that the project is finished, Espaces Naturels de France and WWF-France have pooled together their experiences gained with a view to sharing these with other river managers and



policy makers. A report is available summarising the most notable actions and their results. Recommendations are also made for overall management of alluvial river systems. *Information available on the 'European rivers network' website WWW.rivernet.org or by contacting Bruno Mounier, 16 rue du Boeuf Saint-Paterne F-45 000 Orléans. Tel: +33 2 38 77 02 83; email enf@infonie.fr*

The LIFE-Trebel Project: making an artificial river natural again

Taking an almost completely opposite track to the Loire project, this LIFE-Nature project in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany) set out to re-naturalise an already canalised river. The work was carried out by the river management authorities themselves who applied their engineering know-how to a canalised section of the Trebel River. Here, they dug open 12 km of former riverbed, diverted the river back into it and restored 1,000 ha of surrounding fen. The effects are already being felt: not only have the bird populations risen spectacularly but flooding is also better controlled, peat mineralisation stemmed and the river's capacity to cleanse itself boosted. For all those faced with watercourses, which could benefit from some "ecological engineering", this project's achievements and methods, presented in an 87 page German-language booklet with many

Schutzgemeinschaft Libellen in Baden-Württemberg (SGL)
Mitglied der Gesellschaft deutschsprachiger Odonatologen e.V. (GdO)

Die Schutzgemeinschaft Libellen ist ein Zusammenschluss von Personen, die sich mit Ökologie, Gefährdung, Schutzmöglichkeiten und Faunistik der Libellen Baden-Württembergs beschäftigen. Ihre Arbeit konzentriert sich dabei auf folgende Bereiche:

- Systematische Erfassung aller Libellenarten, die in Baden-Württemberg bodenständig sind oder als Wanderungsarten auftreten.
- Untersuchungen zur Biologie und Ökologie der einzelnen Arten.
- Untersuchung der Libellen-Lebensräume.
- Untersuchung des menschlichen Einflusses auf die Libellenbestände und deren Lebensräume, sowie der Gefährdung und Schutzmaßnahmen wichtiger Libellenhabitate.

Die Libellen-SGL, ein zentraler Grundlagenwerk "Die Libellen Baden-Württembergs" (Preis: 16,- €) erscheint 8 x im Jahr und ist ein wertvolles und einzigartiges Werk.

- Keine Angst vor Libellen! - Libellen können weder stechen, noch beißen, kratzen oder spucken - und giftig sind sie auch nicht!
- Identifizierungstabelle "Naturschutzinformation" im WWW!

Einige Libellen-LIFE:

- Libellenflotz (MUA - Institut für Naturschutz und Landschaftsanalyse)
- Überblick über laufende Kartierungsprojekte Fauna und Flora in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz (Fachzeitschrift "Freizeitliche Biologie" im Verband Deutscher Biologen)
- Libellen Europas
- Letzte Bearbeitung: 18.08.1999
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illustrations, could constitute inspiring reading. *Report can be ordered for 20DM from the Landesamt für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Geologie, fax: +49 8343 777 106 or via internet: <http://www.mvnet.de/inmv/blum/laun/>*

Internet sites on LIFE-Nature projects

- Management plans for *Caretta caretta* in Southern Kiparissia bay. <http://www.archelon.gr/stps-projects-index.html> (in English)
- Yteri Peninsula, Finland <http://www.pori.fi/ysto/rantaniityt> (In Finnish)
- Protection programme for endangered dragonflies in South West Germany <http://members.aol.com/SGLibellen/welcome.html> (in German)
- Conservation of pearl mussels in Finland <http://www.vyh.fi/ppo/palvelut/raakku.htm> (in Finnish)
- Stora Alvaret in Sweden http://www.h.lst.se/verk/nat/st_alv.htm (in Swedish)

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