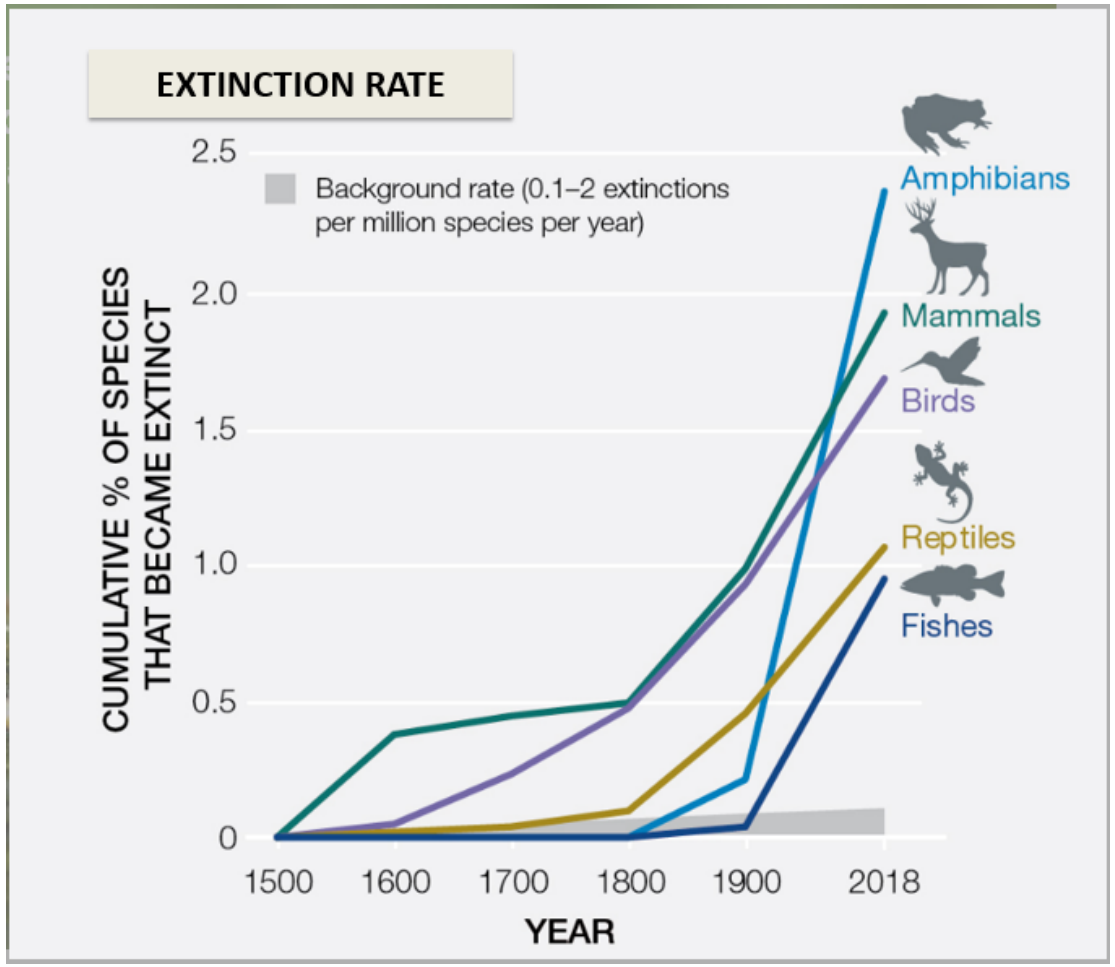
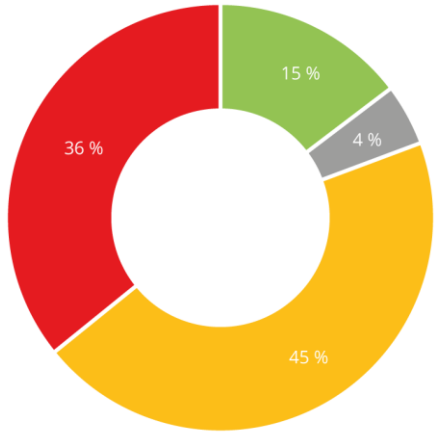
The EU Nature Restoration Law

Restoring ecosystems for people, nature and the climate

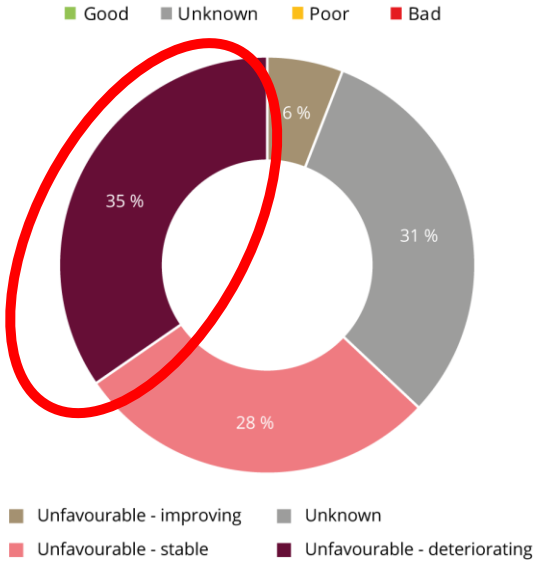
European Union

The global and EU biodiversity crisis





Status of EU protected habitat types



Trends of EU protected habitat types

Source: IPBES Global assessment 2019

Time is running out

IPCC (2022):

- the world and Europe have a brief, rapidly closing window to secure a liveable future, as the rise in weather and climate extremes has led to some irreversible impacts as natural and human systems are pushed beyond their ability to adapt

- restoring ecosystems will be fundamental in helping to combat climate change and also reduce risks to food security

2022 the World Economic Forum's annual Global Risks Report:

- biodiversity loss as the third most pressing global risk by severity, right after climate action failure and extreme weather.

Graphics by Jerker Lokrantz/Azote

The European Green Deal

CLIMATE
PACT AND CLIMATE
Regulation

INVESTING IN
SMARTER, MORE
SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORT

STRIVING
FOR GREENER
INDUSTRY

ELIMINATING
POLLUTION

ENSURING
A JUST TRANSITION
FOR ALL

FINANCING
GREEN
PROJECTS

MAKING
HOMES ENERGY
EFFICIENT

LEADING THE
GREEN CHANGE
GLOBALLY

FROM FARM
TO FORK

PROTECTING
AND RESTORING
NATURE

PROMOTING
CLEAN
ENERGY

EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

Protect Nature

Enable Transformative Change

Restore Nature

EU For An Ambitious Global Agenda

Considerations behind the legal proposal

- Use the legal form of a **regulation**
- **Complement & build on existing policy framework**
- Build on the **synergies between climate change & nature**
- Need for **large scale restoration** effort
- Proposed targets that are **area-based or indicator based**

Nature Restoration Regulation: structure

Overarching objective

Restoration targets

Implementation framework

National Restoration Plans

Monitoring and Reporting

So, what is nature restoration?

'restoration' means… the process of actively or passively assisting the recovery of an ecosystem towards or to good condition… as a means of conserving or enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience;

This can include….

- …active or passive restoration
- …improve, re-establish, re-connect ecosystems / habitat types / habitats of species

Overarching objective

- By 2030 → restoration measures will cover **20%** of EU's land and sea
- By 2050 → measures in place for **ALL ecosystems in need** of restoration

Restoration targets

Protected Habitat Types (Annex I HD)

Habitats of protected species (BHD)

Marine Habitats (beyond HD)

Urban ecosystems

River connectivity

Pollinators

Agro-ecosystems

Forest ecosystems

Targets based on existing legislation (Art.4 & 5) *(1)*

For terrestrial & marine **protected habitat types and species**:

Based on data available from nature directives reporting & other sources for marine, targets are set up that require to **put in place restoration measures** …

- ✓ …for habitat types: to **improve** degraded areas & to **re-establish** areas that were lost;
- ✓ …for species: to **improve, re-establish, re-connect** the **habitats of species -** in addition to what is done for habitat types

- Areas under restoration have to show an **improvement in condition**
- No deterioration clause (inside and outside the Natura 2000 network) with certain exceptions.

Groups of habitat types (Annex I & II)

1. Wetlands (inland & coastal)
2. Forests
3. Grasslands and other pastoral habitats
4. River, lakes, alluvial and riparian habitats
5. Heath & scrub
6. Rocky and (Coastal) & dunes

1. Seagrass beds
2. Macroalgal forests
3. Shellfish beds
4. Maerl beds
5. Sponge, coral and coralligenous beds
6. Vents and seeps
7. Soft sediments (above 1000 meters of depth)

Urban ecosystem - targets

- No net loss of urban green space by 2030
- 3% increase in the total national area of urban green space by 2040 & 5% increase by 2050
- Minimum of 10 % urban tree canopy cover by 2050

River connectivity - target

- Identify and remove barriers that prevent the connectivity of surface waters in order to contribute to…

  → ..the targets for riverine habitats & ecosystems (e.g. floodplains)

  → …the objective of restoring at least 25 000 km of free-flowing rivers in the EU by 2030

Pollinator populations - target

- Reverse the decline of pollinator populations by 2030
- Achieve thereafter an increasing trend for pollinator populations (until satisfactory levels), with a methodology for annual monitoring

Agricultural ecosystems - targets

Achieve an **increasing trend in indicators** (until satisfactory levels are achieved):

- Grassland butterfly index;
- Stock of organic carbon in cropland mineral soils;
- Share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features;
- Farmland bird index at national level (with specified index improvements)

Restore & partly rewet certain shares of **drained peatlands** under agricultural use.

- Flexibility clauses are giving the option to work also on peat extraction sites and other types of drained peatlands.

Forest ecosystems - targets

Achieve an **increasing trend in indicators** (until satisfactory levels are achieved):

- Standing deadwood;
- Lying deadwood;
- Share of forest with uneven age structure;
- Forest connectivity;
- Common forest birds index;
- Stock of organic carbon.

Implementation framework

National Restoration Plans

Timing (Art. 13) Submission of NRP to COM 2 years after entry into force

COM Assessment (Art. 14) MS review (Art. 15)

Preparation (Art. 11):

- Monitoring and research to identify measures for all targets
- Quantify & map restoration areas; Identify satisfactory levels for indicators
- Identify synergies with climate change & other plans and strategies

Content (Art. 12)

- Quantification & description of the restoration measures, non-deterioration measures & timing for implementation: 2030, 2040, 2050
- Details on how to finance the implementation of the restoration measures → EU, national, public/private
- Public/stakeholder participation in preparing the plans

Implementation framework

Monitoring and Reporting

Make use of electronic databases, geographic information systems, maximise use of i.a. remote sensing technologies, earth observation services…

- Member States to monitor condition, trends, areas, indicators, populations **(Art. 17)**
- Member States to report on implementation of NRP, putting in place restoration measures and results achieved **(Art. 18)**
- Commission and European Environment Agency

  → assess progress in implementation and achievement of targets and obligations

  → report to EP/Council every three years

Co-decision process

- Discussions started in Council WP in July already – CZ presidency very active
- EP nominated a rapporteur
- Ideally, the proposal will be adopted by end of March 2024 (before EP elections)

Thank you for your attention!

More info:

https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-law_en