

Natura 2000 Day: the EU not protecting its richest nature sites properly

Brussels, 21 May 2014 - Today is Natura 2000 Day, which celebrates Europe's largest network of nature areas protected by EU law. This is a good opportunity to recall that these sites, home to rich and unique wildlife are still threatened by habitat deterioration and destruction as a consequence of the lack of EU law enforcement [1].

The [Natura 2000 network](#) [2] is composed of more than 26,000 remarkable sites, representing a total area of almost one million square kilometres, including renowned stunning sites such as the [Danube delta](#) and the [Bialowieza forest](#). The network provides a wide range of important benefits to society and the economy, valued at €200-300 billion/year.

Yet, many Natura 2000 sites are threatened by pollution, the spread of invasive alien species or lack of management measures. Certain sites are also being entirely destroyed by harmful developments such as the urban sprawl or transport and energy infrastructures constructed without taking the environment into account.

“The threats to Natura 2000 sites could be addressed by a proper implementation of the EU Nature legislation, which requires the EU Member States to put sufficient resources in the protection, restoration and management of these sites” commented Wouter Langhout, EU Nature Policy Officer at BirdLife Europe.

On the occasion of the Natura 2000 Day, the BirdLife Partnership has invited all EU citizens to demonstrate their support to their favourite Natura 2000 sites and to nature conservation in general by uploading a photo of themselves on the Natura 2000 Day [website](#) [3]. The campaign was launched at the end of April and is still ongoing.

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BirdLife Europe is a Partnership of nature conservation organizations in 49 countries, including all EU Member States, and a leader in bird conservation. Through its unique local to global approach BirdLife Europe delivers high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of nature and people.

Note to the editor

[1] The Natura 2000 network is protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/index_en.htm

[2] The Natura 2000 network (European Commission website):
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm

[3] Link to the Natura 2000 website: www.natura2000day.eu. Photos can also be uploaded via Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, by using the tag **#Natura2000Day**

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