

EEA Core Set of Indicators - CSI 008

Designated areas

May 2005 assessment

working draft

About this document

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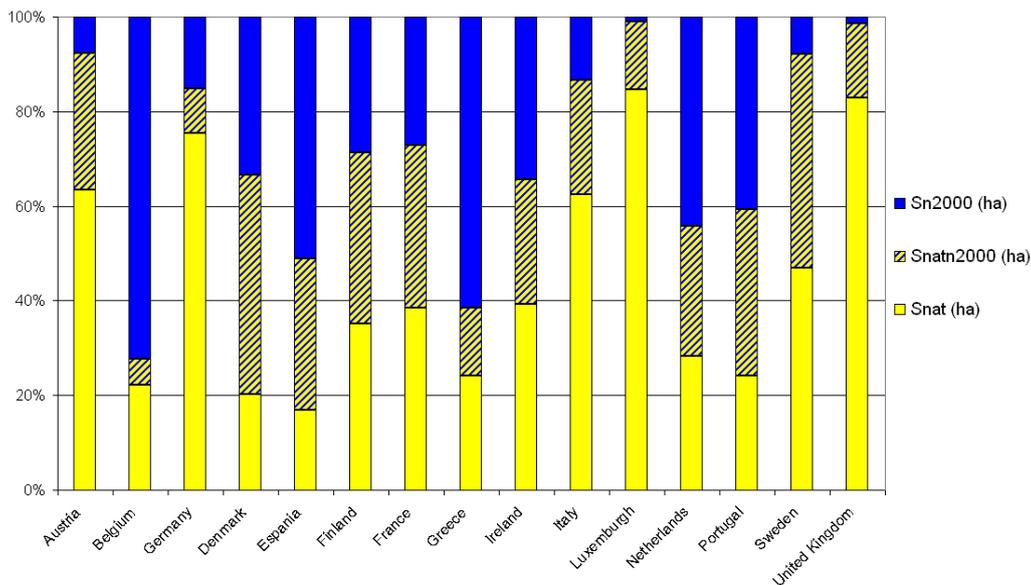
Key policy question: What measures are being taken to conserve or restore biodiversity?

Key message: European Directives for species and habitats of European interest have allowed to increase the designated areas in most of the EU countries adding an European perspective in their national network.

For many years, countries have been using protected areas as a mechanism to protect nature and maintain biodiversity. The goal and the criteria of nationally protected areas can be different from one country to another one according to the national specificities.

Since 1979 and 1992, Birds and Habitats directives have defined European objective and criteria to ensure conservation of biodiversity of European interest. Therefore, EU Member States have to propose or to designate sites according to these European criteria in order to build the Natura 2000 network. European criteria can be different of national criteria as for example a species of European interest is not necessarily of national interest for a given Member State. But this figure shows that some national sites can fit with European Directives criteria and in the other hand, the directives have allowed to increase the designated areas in most of the countries adding an European perspective in their national network.

Fig. 1: Total surface areas only designated for Habitats Directive, only protected by national instruments and covered by both (SCI)

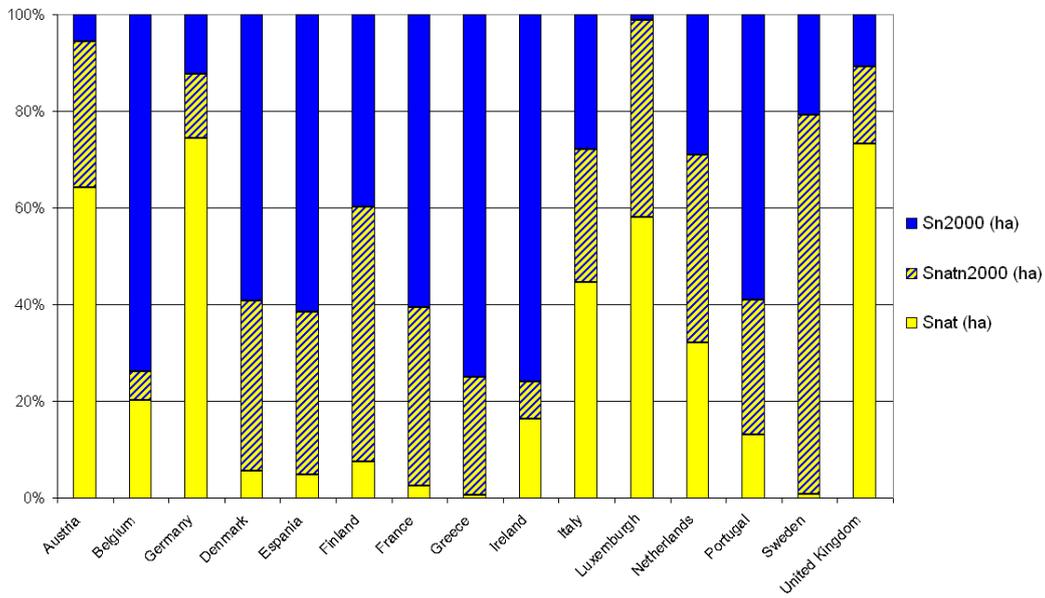


Data source: CDDA oct 2004, pSCIs database, dec 2004

working draft



Fig. 2: Total surface areas only designated for EC Birds Directive, only protected by national instruments and covered by both (SPA)



Data source: CDDA oct 2004, SPAs database, dec 2004



Specific policy question: What measures are being taken to conserve or restore biodiversity at the EU level and are they effective ?

Special Protection Areas classification for the Birds Directive is in progress for the last five years as proposals for Sites of Community Importance for the Habitats Directive. But the European Commission considers the network is clearly insufficient for several countries. Comparison between countries is complicated by the heterogeneous distribution and abundance of species and habitats. Some countries have a heavier burden than others in implementing the Directives.

The sufficiency index shows the progress in proposing sites towards a level that is considered sufficient to achieve favourable conservation status for habitats and species of the Habitats Directive. By September 2004 two Member States, Belgium and The Netherlands have proposed sufficient sites. This means that they have accomplished proposing sufficient sites for all the species and habitats of the Directive occurring in their country.

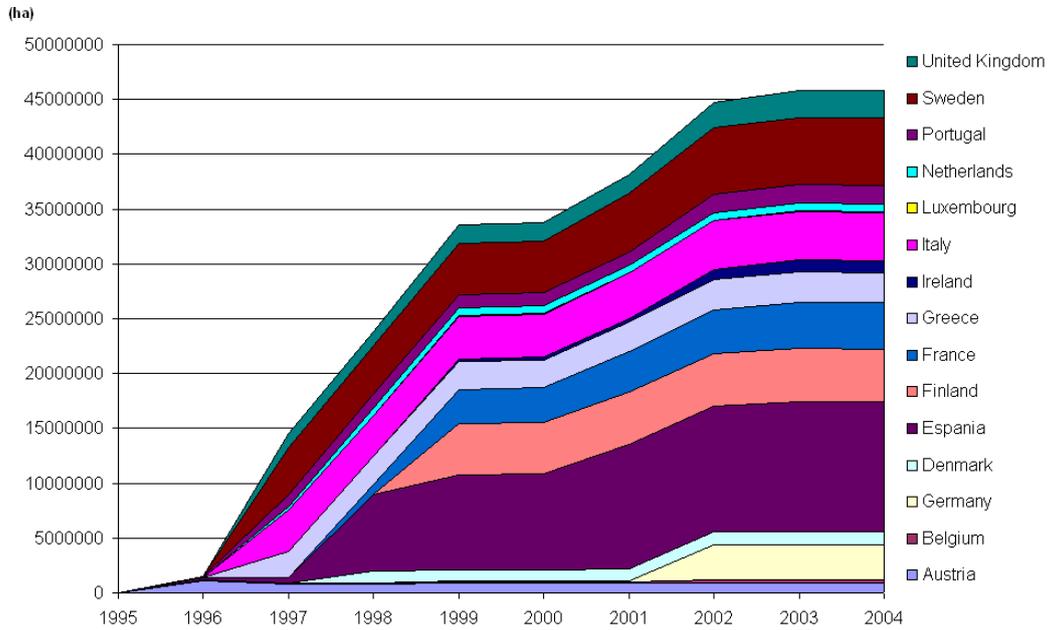
The progress for the rest of the Member States is slow but good and now seven additional Member States (DK, GR, IT, LU, ES, UK, SE) have more than 90% sufficiency in proposing sites. Three Member States (FI, IE, DE) have decreased in sufficiency since November 2003. Finland, Ireland and Germany deleted sites from their previous proposals and this led to a higher number of species and habitats insufficiently covered than previously. In Germany the reference list was also altered a bit by the addition of one habitat and one species in the Atlantic region. Several Member States have carried out changes to the reference list either by adding or deleting species or habitats. This means that for these Member States the target has been moved to either a higher or a lower level. Only Austria, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden and UK remain with the same reference lists.

The ten new EU Member States are included in the Natura 2000 network and they have proposed sites under the Habitats Directive. The proposals by these Member States however, are not considered by this version of the indicator, because the data for the proposed sites have not yet been validated and submitted to the Natura 2000 database. When the data has been entered in the database it can be evaluated and later on included in a future version of the indicator.

Marine areas have been excluded in the indicator, since the European Commission and the Member States are still working on selection criteria for sites for the protection of marine habitats and species.

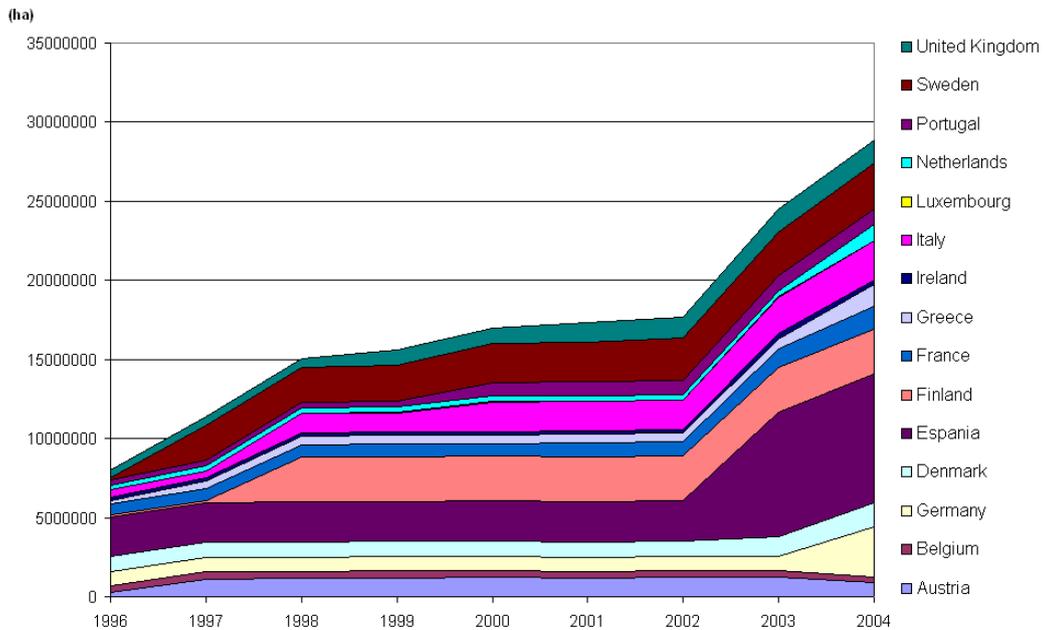


Fig. 3: Cumulative surface area of sites designated for EC Habitats Directive over time (SCIs)



Data source : pSCIs database, Dec 2004

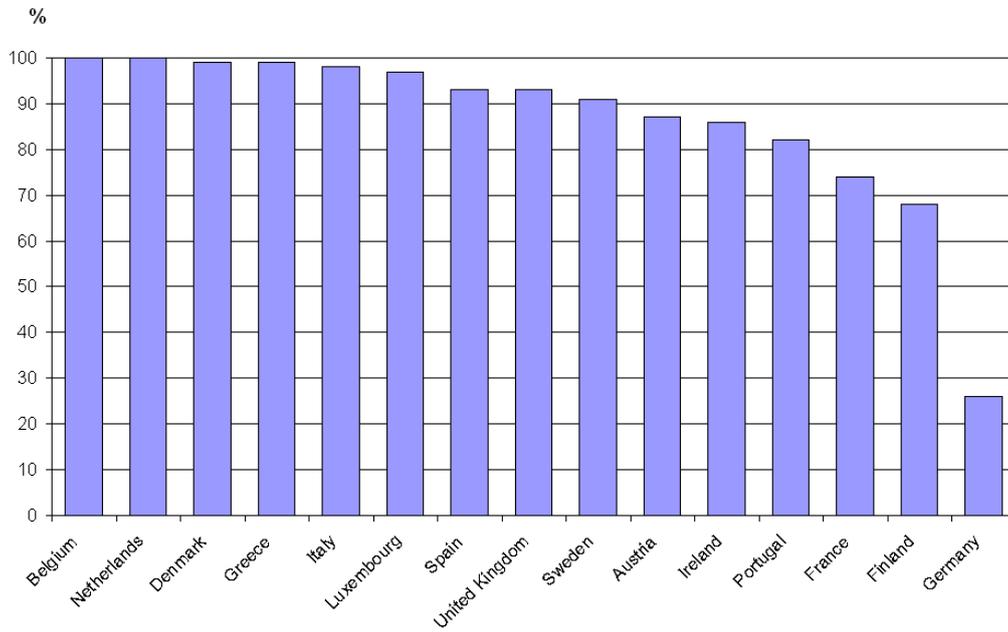
Fig. 4: Cumulative surface area of sites designated for EC Birds Directive over time (SPAs)



Data source : SPAs database, Dec 2004



Fig. 5: Sufficiency Index (progress in the implementation of Habitats Directive)



Data source: DG ENV:Conclusions of the biogeographic seminars, Sept 2004

Note: Bars show the degree to which Member States have proposed sites that are considered sufficient to protect the habitats and species mentioned in Habitats Directive Annex I and II (situation September 2004) (marine species and habitats are not considered).

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Specific policy question: What measures are being taken to conserve or restore biodiversity at the national level?

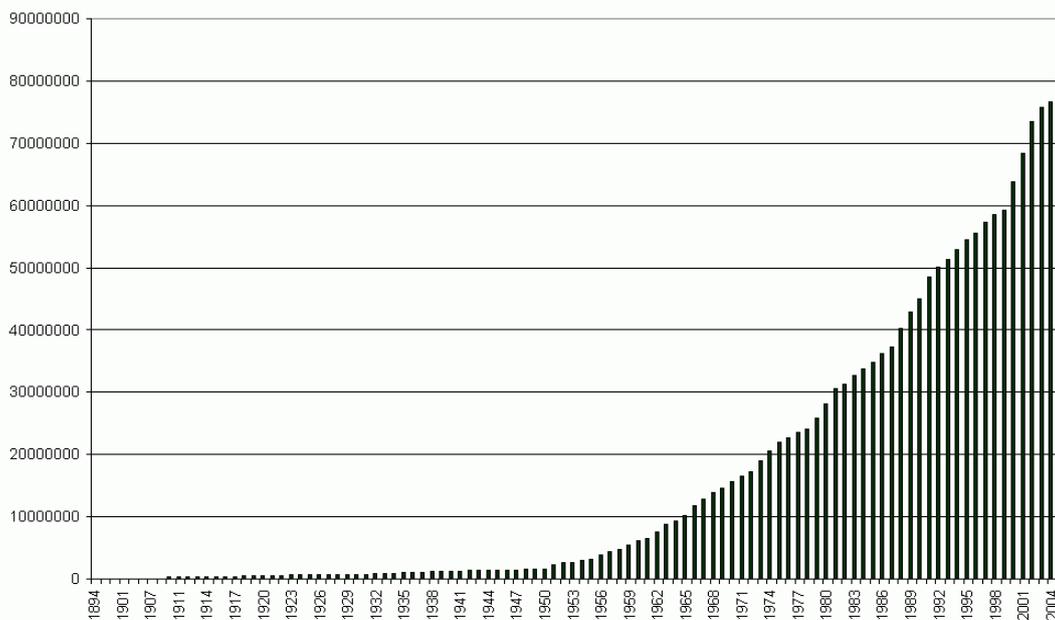
This indicator provides a good sign of the commitment of the countries to the protection of biodiversity as shown by the positive trend of the graph.

Knowing that some overlaps exist between different sites created within different types of designation, the cumulated area along time may be an overestimation of the total area of designated sites. For example, in Sweden, the area 'error' due to a double-reporting of areas with multiple designations is estimated to be ca 1,5%. Probably the overestimation varies greatly between countries.

There may also be an "underestimation" in the inventory as some national datasets are not complete mainly in the last few years. This will to some extent balance the above mentioned overestimation.

In the future, indicators should be developed to assess the effectiveness of the designated areas for the long-term conservation of species and habitats.

Fig. 6: Cumulated area of nationally designated areas over time in 30 European countries for the period 1900-2002



Data source: CDDA, dec 2004

Note: Overlap may exist due to multiple designation for a same site but the overestimation can be masked by an "underestimation" of the inventory (some national datasets are not complete).