

Biodiversity - 2010



This rich diversity of plants is valuable to humankind, as around 40% of our global economy is based on biological products and processes.

Video:
Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010: Are we on target?
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UotgGud9HKQ>

In Europe we have a vast range of plants and animals.

Although much of this biodiversity is natural, there is also a large variety of domestic animals and cultivated plants, which are developed by european farmers interacting with nature throughout the history.



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It is now recognised that safeguarding biodiversity is essential to human well-being, to a livelihood, cultural integrity and to the survival of the species.

Yet this wealth of biodiversity is under threat as a result of human activity.

Globally, some 16,000 species of fauna and flora are threatened with extinction and Europe is not an exception.



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But now action is being taken to reverse this trend. The EU supports efforts to protect Europe's very own big cat, the iberian linx, just an example of european commitment to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

We are part of an ecosystem, we need nature and we have to protect nature and different species and habitats. It is important economically because people are also dependent on what nature gives (food, medicines...) but also for emotional and ethical reasons.



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Europe already has responsibility for the conservation of threatened species as a signatory to the UN Convention on Biodiversity and other conventions.

But biodiversity is important not only for its own sake but for the goods and services derived from it, on which we all depend.

Protecting biodiversity is essential if we are to safeguard our future.



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It is not just to protect ourselves in the future- it's right now. We are finding that species are disappearing at an alarming rate.

When a species is lost what you don't see is all the interactions it has with other species which are lost with it.

The speed of extinction is so rapid now that we fear two things:

- that life can't adapt fast enough to cope
- the lost interactions are so important that what is left behind goes under too.



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We depend on these interactions at all levels.

Humans are not outside biodiversity; we are part of it.

So protecting biodiversity is protecting ourselves.

Two regions in Europe, the Caucasus and the Mediterranean basin are particularly rich in species diversity and some remaining wilderness in the northern hemisphere is found in Europe.



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Wetlands have been particularly affected, as they have been drained from agriculture and urbanization. But now many countries have successfully implemented policies and action plans to preserve and protect wetland areas.

Each member state has the duty of care, to put in place action plans to preserve and protect its wetland areas. These sites, together with those protected under the birds directive are one of the most powerful legislative instruments and a cornerstone of the european conservation policy.



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For every tree cut down, 2-3 trees were planted. So the timber yield remained the same throughout the centuries. Now the sustainability has a broader meaning, balancing commercial, environmental and social concerns.

In essence a person may regard a tree species as home ("living room") that support different types of biodiversity.

So it is vital to match the right tree species in the right place (with the site and with the site's requirements).



When you have a stream, you have a two habitats meeting in essence: you have the aquatic habitat and the land habitat and you have the habitat in between