

12 Where does the money come from?

Member States are expected to pay for the management of the sites in their country, but to help countries to pay for urgent or innovative conservation work, the European Union has set aside money under a fund called LIFE-Nature, which is managed by the Environment Directorate of the European Commission. There are also a number of other Community funds which can be used for Natura 2000 sites, such as structural funds and agri-environment measures.

13 Does a Natura 2000 designation mean that we will have to stop all on-site activities for the sake of preserving nature?

Sometimes certain activities have to be restricted or stopped where they are a significant threat to the species or habitat types for which the site is being designated as a Natura 2000 site. These are always addressed on a case by case basis. Keeping species and habitats in good condition is not necessarily incompatible with human activities, in fact many areas are dependant upon certain human activities for their management and survival; agriculture is one such activity.

14 What is Eurosite?

Eurosite is a Europe wide organisation that aims to bring together site managing authorities who work on Natura 2000 sites through newsletters, workshops and other events to share ideas and best practice. There are more than 70 organisations exchanging expertise and knowledge through training programmes and workshops.

15 Where can I find out more?

You can find out more by exploring the nature conservation web page of the European Commission, which also has links to Member State homepages:

www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/nature/home.htm

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GREEN DAYS



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Frequently Asked Questions

Natura 2000...
Nature for you!

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01 What is Natura 2000?

In May 1992 European Union governments adopted legislation designed to protect the most seriously threatened habitats and species across Europe. This legislation is called the Habitats Directive and complements the Birds Directive adopted in 1979. At the heart of both these Directives is the creation of a network of sites called Natura 2000.

The Birds Directive requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds. The Habitats Directive similarly requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for habitats. Together, SPAs and SACs make up the Natura 2000 series. All EU Member States contribute to the network of sites in a Europe-wide partnership from the Canaries to Crete and from Sicily to Finnish Lapland.

02 What is a Green Day?

Green Days are dedicated to Natura 2000, the European network of protected sites.

The objective of these Green Days is to improve the understanding and acceptance of Natura 2000 at local and regional level. Green Days should therefore happen on as many Natura 2000 sites all over Europe as possible during the Green Days period. They will cover a wide range of subjects and activities, from identification workshops to guided walks all aimed at getting as many people as possible more aware of the Natura 2000 network. Green Days shall underline why a European approach to nature conservation is needed and what this really means.

03 I want to take part in one of the events publicised for Green Days; what do I have to do?

If you wish to know more on the exact timing and location of an event or wish to register your own, contact the organiser.

04 What are Special Protection Areas?

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are classified under the Birds Directive to help protect and manage areas which are important for rare and vulnerable birds because they use them for breeding, feeding, wintering or migration.

05 What are Special Areas of Conservation?

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are classified under the Habitats Directive and provide rare and vulnerable animals, plants and habitats with increased protection and management.

06 What makes these sites special?

These sites protect vulnerable habitats such as wetlands, which in turn helps to safeguard the animals and plants which need these places to survive. Across the EU a diverse range of habitats are protected, from flower-rich meadows to vast expanses of estuaries, even cave systems, and a huge variety of animals throughout the EU benefit from this, such as golden eagles, flamingos, otters and lynx. It is not only natural habitat types which are covered, but also semi-natural ones, which depend on management of humans (e.g. certain types of grasslands).

07 How are they designated?

Each Member State must compile a list of the best wildlife areas containing the habitats and species listed in the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive. The lists are then submitted to the European Commission. In the case of sites according to the Habitats Directive, an evaluation and selection process is taking place at European level, under the Birds Directive no such process is foreseen. For both types of sites it is the task of the Member State to put the necessary protection provisions/designations in place.

08 Where are they?

The network of Natura 2000 sites is spread over 15 countries throughout Europe, from Finland in the north to the Canary Islands in the south. Today, over 14,000 sites, covering about 15 % of the European territory form part of the network today, so most European citizens will not live far from a Natura 2000 site!

09 How much land is covered?

Special Protection Areas cover over 212,000 km² throughout Europe, and candidate Special Areas of Conservation cover 418,000 km². Spain has the largest area classified as SPA and SAC. The Habitats Directive lists 230 animal and 483 plant species and a total of 198 types of natural habitats which are to be protected by the designation of Special Areas of Conservation. SPAs have to be designated for 181 bird species as well as migratory birds.

10 Are there any marine sites?

Natura 2000 sites can be designated on both land and water. Marine Special Areas of Conservation might include reefs or lagoons, intertidal areas, areas which are always covered by the sea or perhaps land near the sea which is used by marine wildlife. Marine Natura 2000 areas are protected by innovative conservation measures to ensure they are not over-fished, or affected by pollutants from sewage or shipping traffic.

11 Who looks after the sites?

Member States are responsible for ensuring that all Natura 2000 sites are appropriately managed by conservation authorities in each country. These organisations often work in partnership with other authorities, voluntary bodies, local or national charities and private landowners.

