



# 5<sup>TH</sup> REPORT | THE FACE BIODIVERSITY MANIFESTO





FACE - European Federation for Hunting and Conservation

Established in 1977, FACE represents the interests of Europe's 7 million hunters as an international non-profit-making nongovernmental organisation. FACE is made up of national hunters' associations from 37 European countries including the EU-27. FACE is supported by 7 associate members and is based in Brussels. FACE upholds the principle of sustainable use and has been a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) since 1987.

[www.face.eu](http://www.face.eu)

[www.biodiversitymanifesto.com](http://www.biodiversitymanifesto.com)

# HUNTING AND CONSERVATION

## 5<sup>th</sup> REPORT OF THE FACE BIODIVERSITY MANIFESTO

**With a focus on the EU Biodiversity Strategy:  
Several targets accomplished, the 2020 headline target missed and an  
ambitious post-2020 vision required**

Published in 2020



Acknowledgments  
The FACE Biodiversity Manifesto Working Group







“430 initiatives undertaken by European hunters that contribute to biodiversity conservation”.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 5<sup>th</sup> report of the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto (BDM) is based on 430 initiatives undertaken by European hunters that contribute to biodiversity conservation. The report demonstrates how hunters actively conserve biodiversity via species and habitat management, research and monitoring as well as communication and awareness raising. While multiple actions are implemented, this report shows that hunters invest considerable resources into species conservation and the restoration of wetlands, farmland and forest habitats.

More specifically, this report focuses on how hunters’ actions contribute to achieving the targets set in the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. The FACE Biodiversity Manifesto<sup>1</sup> offers a relevant framework for such an assessment as it is directly related to 4 of the 6 targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

The findings of this report are relevant because the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 is currently under review and discussions are underway for a new EU strategy to 2030. This is why FACE decided to highlight the contribution of Europe’s hunters to the achievement of the EU Biodiversity Strategy goals.

The evidence presented in this report shows that over 135 projects (31 %) are undertaken on Natura 2000 sites, 41 % of the projects focus on protected species and 50 % have an important sustainable use dimension. This demonstrates the contribution of hunters to achieving target 1 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

Furthermore, 49 % of projects are focused on the conservation and restoration of habitats, 23 % on green infrastructure, with 25 % on ecosystem services. These actions are relevant, in particular, to targets 2 and partly 3 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. Many projects are also focused implementing target 5 (Invasive Alien Species) of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

The projects captured in the BDM report demonstrate hunters’ commitment to conservation and their contribution to current EU nature policy goals, which ambitiously aim to prevent biodiversity loss by 2020 (Target 6).

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.biodiversitymanifesto.com/what-is-bdm>



# INTRODUCTION

After its failure to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010, the EU adopted in 2011 the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which aims to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU and help stop global biodiversity loss by 2020.

This ambitious strategy set the 6 following targets:

- *Target 1: Fully implement the birds and habitats directives*
- *Target 2: Maintain and restore ecosystems and their services*
- *Target 3: Increase the contribution of agriculture and forestry to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity*
- *Target 4: Ensure the sustainable use of fisheries resources*
- *Target 5: Combat Invasive Alien Species (IAS)*
- *Target 6: Help avert global biodiversity loss*

Therefore, in 2010, FACE and its Members adopted the Biodiversity Manifesto (BDM), which reflects the active commitment made by European hunters to biodiversity conservation, to ensure the sustainability of hunting for future generations.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 provides a framework on how to reverse biodiversity loss as well as to halt the degradation of ecosystems. Unfortunately, the implementation of the strategy was mostly a failure. There was some progress in four targets, but the state of biodiversity in agriculture and forest ecosystems has worsened since 2010. Substantial progress was made only with target number 5 *Combat invasive alien species*. It is obvious that the EU will miss its 2020 targets and that the post-2020 Biodiversity Strategy will need to be stronger with concrete, legally binding targets.

This report shows how rural actors, and more specifically hunters, contribute to the implementation of the various targets and actions set in the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. The FACE Biodiversity Manifesto offers a relevant framework for such assessment as it is directly related to 4 of the 6 targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

In order to provide an overview of hunters' contribution to the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020, 430 examples (also called case studies, projects or initiatives) of conservation work undertaken by hunters have been assessed. By mapping these case studies against the actions of the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto and other indicators (such as the collaborations that occurred or the type of funds used), trends have been identified and are highlighted in this report.

“The FACE Biodiversity Manifesto offers a relevant framework for such assessment as it is directly related to 4 of the 6 targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020”.



## CONTEXT: FACE BDM REPORTS

In 2013, FACE developed an online questionnaire aiming to gather evidence to evaluate the work undertaken by European hunters for nature conservation. The present report draws on over 430 initiatives undertaken by European hunters throughout Europe.

In 2015, FACE published its first BDM report, which presented how 181 conservation projects involving hunters are linked to the targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. The report demonstrated how the BDM, through its actions, directly contributes to the EU's Biodiversity Strategy to 2020.

Because 2016 was dominated with discussions about the Fitness Check of EU nature legislation, the 2016 BDM report was focused on hunters' contribution to the implementation of the EU Nature Directives.

In 2017, the BDM report focused on the contribution of hunting to the conservation of farmland biodiversity. The reason was due to the European Commission's announcement to reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post 2020.

For 2018, the BDM report focused on the contribution of hunters to the monitoring biodiversity. This choice of focus was made due to the fact that EU Member States were required to submit their reports under both Nature Directives on the status of species and habitats of EU interest. More specifically, Member States were obliged to report on the status of all wild occurring birds

as well as other species and habitats, under the Birds and Habitats Directives.

For 2019, this BDM report highlights the contribution of hunters to achieve the targets set out in EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. This will be discussed further in the context of the specific targets, and the case studies conducted by hunters. Data will be presented as well as the evaluation of the targets and how they were achieved by the EU. The fit is exceedingly good with 23 of the 34 actions in the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto directly contributing to the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

It is important to point out that the 430 case studies used for presenting this overview cannot be considered as an exhaustive list of what is actually happening on the ground. In the coming years, more examples will be gathered thereby improving our understanding of the conservation actions conducted by European hunters.

After presenting the relationships between the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto and the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020, an overview of the trends based on the case studies is presented together with some relevant highlights. Furthermore, a detailed assessment of how the case studies relate to each of the 8 sections of the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto is made. Finally, best-practice case studies illustrate in greater detail how hunting contributes to nature conservation. The report concludes with recommendations for the EU's Biodiversity Strategy post-2020.



# HIGHLIGHTS

The following graph (Figure 1) provides an overview of the initiatives undertaken by European hunters for biodiversity conservation. It shows the quantity and diversity of BDM-related actions that hunters implement. Most hunters' initiatives focus on species conservation, ensuring sustainable use and habitat restoration. This demonstrates hunters' commitment to conservation and their contribution to current EU nature policy goals, which ambitiously aimed to prevent biodiversity loss by 2020. These initiatives include managing priority habitats and species, both within and outside Natura 2000 sites, combatting Invasive Alien Species (IAS), promoting farmers' uptake in suitable agri-environmental schemes under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and tackling illegal killing.

The majority (79%) of hunters' actions focus on species conservation, of which most deal with birds and interestingly, over 41% deal with protected species. In general, the category 'protected species' covers the species which are protected at the national level and are typically non-huntable. Out of the 430 case studies, 212 (49%) deal with habitat conservation with wetland and farmland habitats being the most common engaged with. The following graph gives a summary of the main actions undertaken by hunters in the BDM projects.

In general, management (e.g. conservation and restoration) of habitats/species and research/monitoring are the most common actions. These actions help to halt the deterioration of species' protection status and habitats covered by EU nature legislation.

Over 76 % of the habitat types involved in hunters' projects are farmlands and forests. These actions have a positive contribution towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of above-mentioned habitats in line with Strategy Target 3.

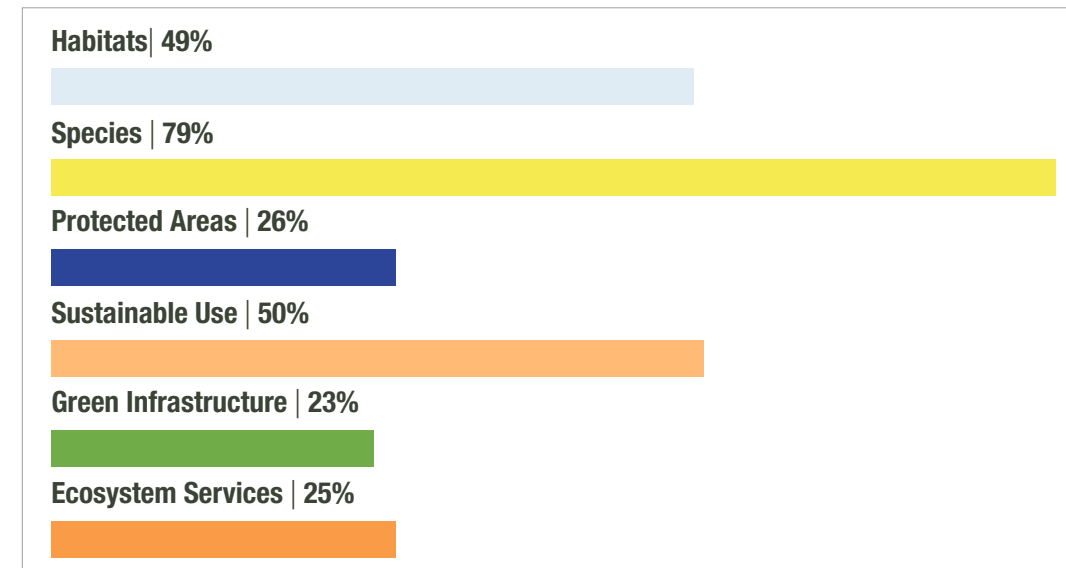


Figure 1. Summary of the 430 initiatives undertaken by hunters for nature conservation.

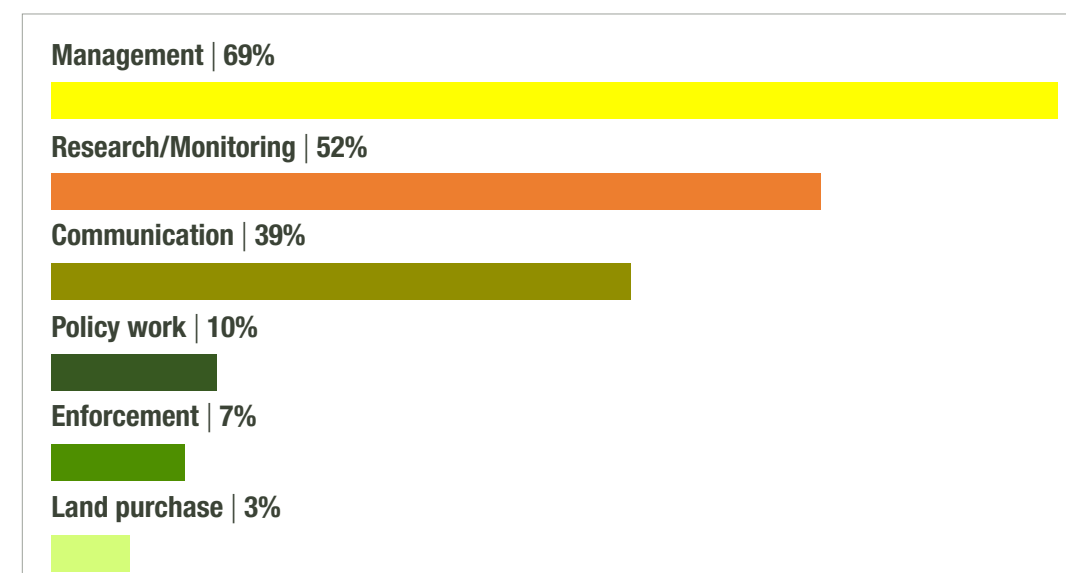


Figure 2. Summary of the main actions undertaken by hunters





#### Top 5 countries with the most projects

1. France | 165 projects
2. Italy | 44 projects
3. United Kingdom | 42 projects
4. The Netherlands | 31 projects
5. Ireland | 25 projects

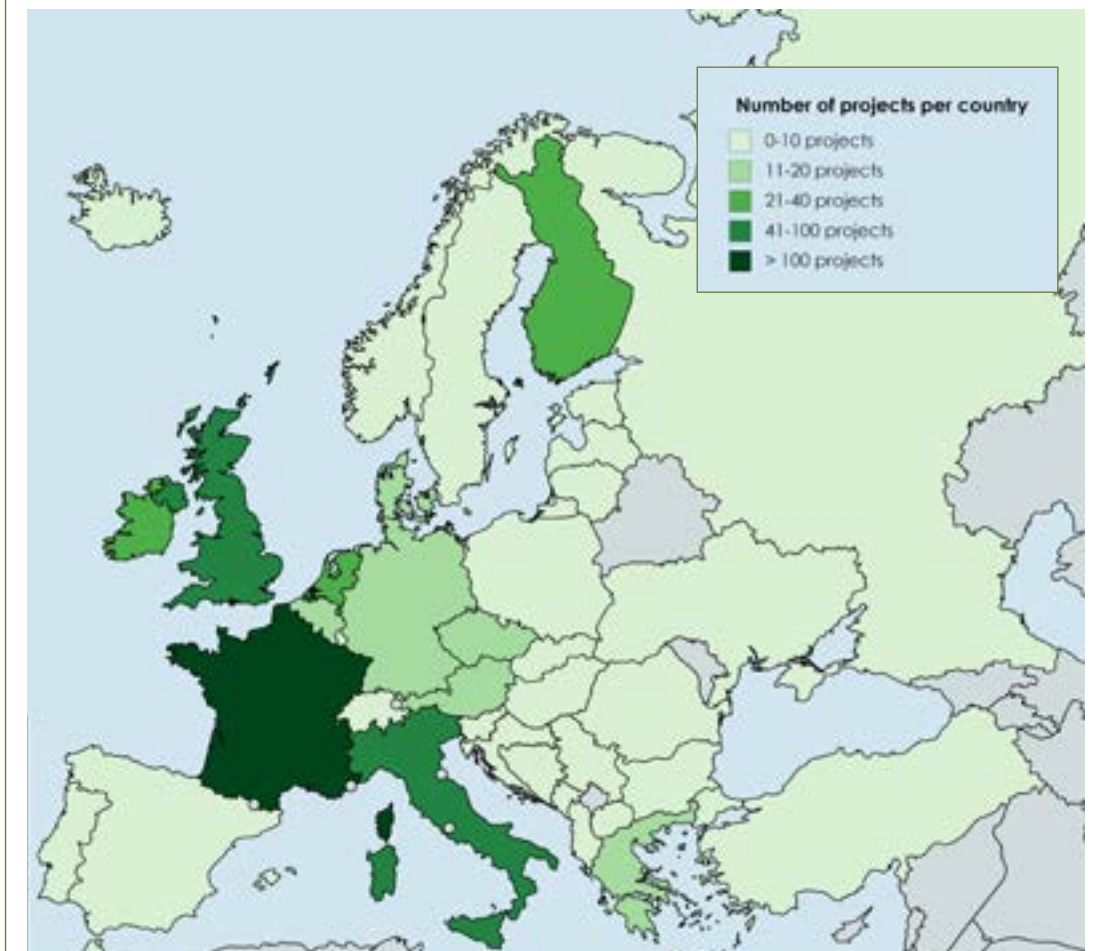
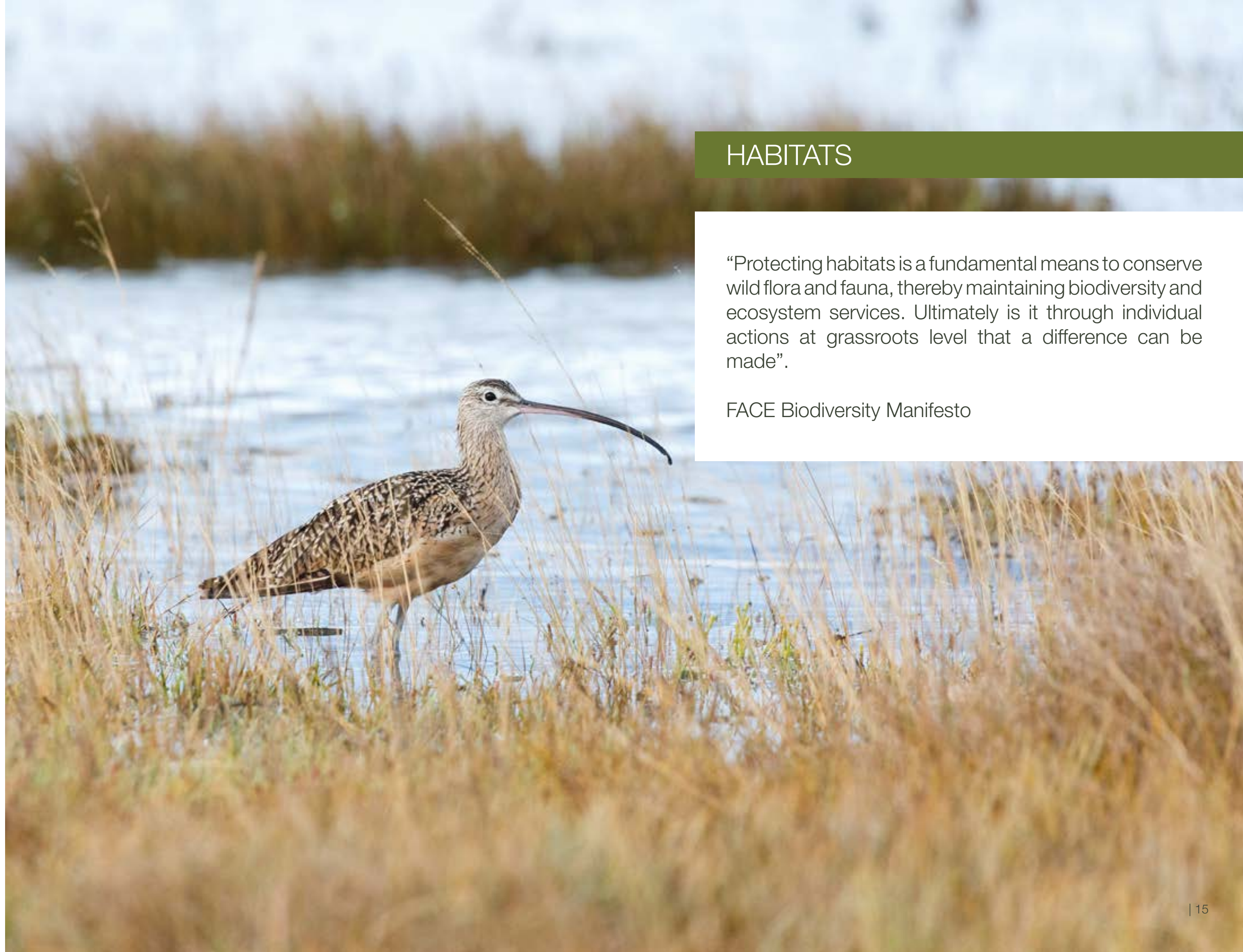


Figure 3. Geographic distribution of hunters' 430 initiatives

The 430 hunters' initiatives distributed across Europe are in many cases contributing to the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. There is a need to stress that most of the actions conducted by hunters are undertaken on a voluntary basis and that hunters are investing a huge amount of time into nature conservation. Some national studies have attempted to quantify this investment in monetary terms. For example, in the UK, nearly £250 million (*circa* €295 million) is spent on conservation activities by shooting providers each year.





## HABITATS

“Protecting habitats is a fundamental means to conserve wild flora and fauna, thereby maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services. Ultimately it is through individual actions at grassroots level that a difference can be made”.

FACE Biodiversity Manifesto



“Hunters have undertaken actions aiming to maintain, restore or improve habitats in 296 case studies”.

This BDM section covers actions contributing to Target 2 and Target 3 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy through the maintenance and improvement of habitats as well as the inclusion of sustainable agriculture and forestry principle.

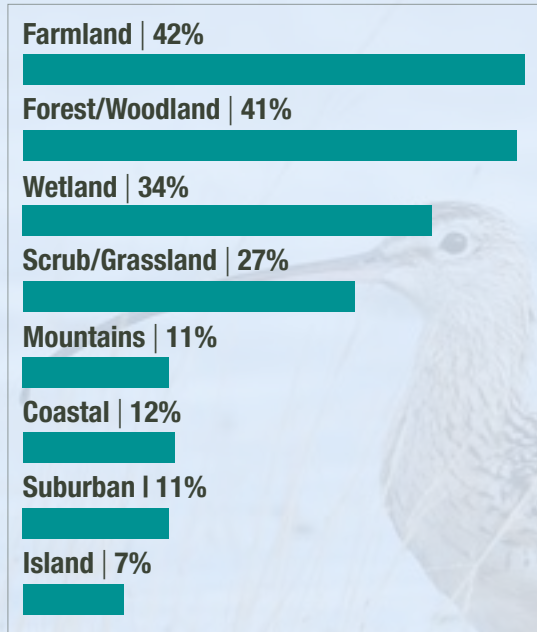


Figure 4. Types of habitats conserved/managed in BDM projects

In total, 49% of the case studies are dedicated to habitat conservation’ with farmland and wetland habitats being the main habitat type engaged with. 42 % of projects are related to farmland habitats, and the reason is that hunters were often the very first group to notice the decrease of small game populations on Europe’s farmland, mostly due to intensification of agriculture. Hunters are also the ones to initiate actions against it.

41 % of projects were focused on wetlands, which typically relate to waterbird conservation projects such as the maintenance of open water sites and the creation of new wetlands for ducks,

geese and waders. Despite that the EU failed to restore degraded ecosystems, hunters all around Europe have been helping in the restoration of habitats. The following case study is a good example of hunters’ involvement in habitat restoration.

The actions undertaken by hunters on farmlands mainly target three species; the Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*), the European Hare (*Lepus europaeus*) and the Red Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus scotica*). To combat the decrease of partridges and hares, numerous actions are undertaken such as convincing farmers to leave space for wild plants and flowers, creating and managing ‘biodiversity’ areas, providing food and water in difficult periods and managing generalist predators.

Many projects also engaged with more than one habitat type. For example, it is typical for BDM projects that focus on the conservation of small game to work on both farmland habitats and woodland edges.

The majority of the BDM projects in the ‘mountain’ habitat type category related to the conservation of grouse species, typically Red Grouse in the UK and Ireland. For example, many Red Grouse projects in Ireland carry out habitat management (e.g. diversifying Ling heather), population monitoring, predator control as well as engaging with all interested stakeholders to ensure the long-term success of these projects.

CASE STUDY

Barton on Humber Wildfowling Club

Across Europe, agricultural exploitation and the development of human settlements has resulted in the loss of wetlands and wetland species. The Barton on Humber Wildfowling Club (BHC) in the UK is giving farmland back to nature by creating a new wetland area from arable land. BHC members wanted to improve their land to benefit all wildlife. They acquired 16 acres of land in 2017 with a €100,000 loan from the Wildlife Habitat Charitable Trust (WHCT) and re-created the land they own. Vast arrays of birds are expected to take advantage of this area such as Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) and more.

The plan was to create two areas of wetland. It started with equipment to dig out the ponds and create moats using €18 000 of WHCT funding. There is a large pond with an island in the middle, smaller ponds and little islands. This will meet the needs of a wide variety of waterbirds. Around 30 duck tubes will be placed for ducks to nest in. For skylarks, decimated by pesticides and insecticides, it can be real heaven. Future plans are to involve education and spreading awareness.

This work was supported by WHCT, which creates a unique opportunity for hunters to participate in purchasing land to create wetlands. The WHCT was set up in 1986 by Members of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC). It is dedicated to raising and distributing funds to help with the acquisition of land for hunting and conservation.

This work led by hunters to support declining wetlands has restored degraded habitats and assisted the recovery of declining species and biodiversity that had been affected in the region.

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## SPECIES

“As hunters, we will continue to work with positive incentives to conserve not only huntable species but all species”.

FACE Biodiversity Manifesto



“Hunters have undertaken actions aiming to improve knowledge and manage species of interest in 341 case studies”.

CASE STUDY

This BDM section covers actions contributing to *Target 1* and *Target 5* of the EU Biodiversity Strategy through the maintenance and improvement of habitats as well as the inclusion of sustainable agriculture and forestry principle.

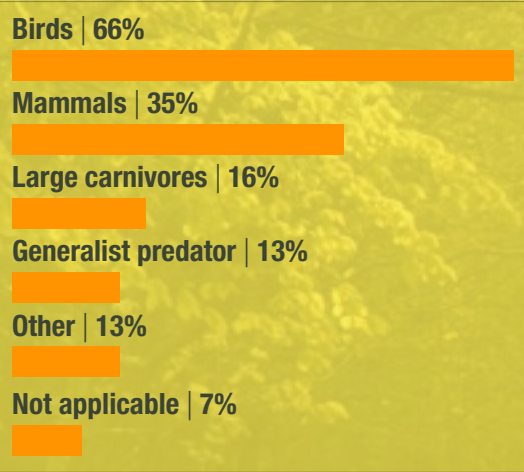


Figure 5. Types of species engaged within BDM projects

Of the 430 BDM projects, 79% focus on species conservation. This high percentage is understandable as hunters are actively involved in conserving and managing a variety of species – typically referred to as ‘wildlife management’. These can involve re-establishing or managing Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*), controlling generalist predators like the North American Mink (*Neovision vision*), or engaging in the management of large carnivores, such as the conservation of Lynx (*Lynx lynx*) through LIFE projects.

Many BDM projects that are focused on the conservation of ground-nesting birds also involve predator management. Similarly, most species conservation/management projects involve some form of monitoring, whether it involves

documenting the number of breeding pairs during spring (before breeding) or monitoring in autumn to assess the levels of productivity to ensure a sustainable harvest over the hunting season.

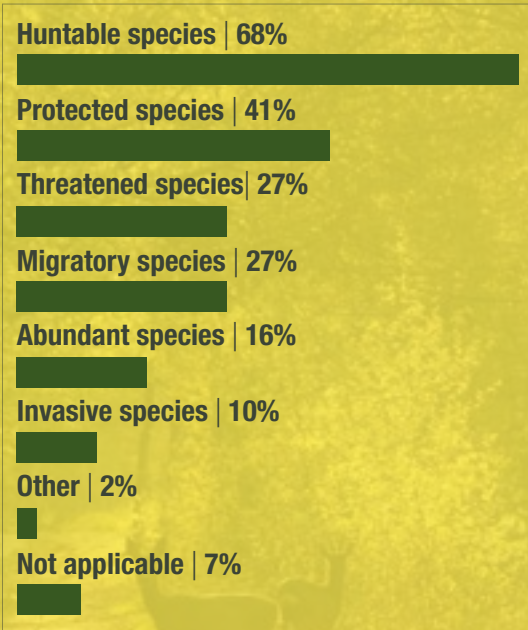


Figure 6. Categories of species engaged with in BDM projects

41 % of the species concerned by hunters are protected species, both on national and international level under the Nature Directives. In this context, hunters are helping to achieve Target 1. 10% of the species concerned by hunters were specifically focused on Invasive Alien Species (IAS), via monitoring and eradication. Regarding Target 5, the EU made substantial progress, through the adoption of the Regulation on Invasive Alien Species in 2014. European hunters are playing a key role in the eradication of IAS as shown in the following Swedish case study.

Raccoon dog eradication in Sweden

The raccoon dog (*Nyctereutes procynoides*) is threatening biodiversity in Europe, mainly through predation on amphibians and ground-nesting birds. Around the millennium shift, the raccoon dog started to reproduce and settling in northern Sweden. A project was started in Sweden in 2008 to stop the populations from establishing and spreading to southern Sweden and Norway. It was soon realised that, in order to succeed, it was necessary to involve neighbouring countries to minimize immigration. A successful life project (LIFE09 NAT/SE/000344), involving Sweden, Denmark and Finland was run between 2010-2013 where after the national authorities took over the funding of the national projects. The partnership has continued after the LIFE-project in a co-operative Nordic project which Norway has also joined.

At the beginning of the LIFE+ project, 2010-2011, the population size was estimated to around 130 adult animals in Sweden with capture-mark-recapture (CMR) techniques (marked versus unmarked animals captured on game cameras). Since then, the population has decreased rapidly and only few animals remain in Sweden today. The percentage of cameras that took pictures of raccoon dog has decreased from 15% in 2011 to 0% in 2018 in the objective camera system, and from 21% to 0% in the subjective system (2014-2018).

The detection of raccoon dogs is mainly done with the help of (1) camera traps, (2) a citizen science observation system in which the public can report possible raccoon dogs sightings and (3) *Judas* animals. The raccoon dog is a social species with the goal to find a partner and will start searching for a new partner as soon as they become alone. By sterilising captured animals (to avoid reproduction if lost), and releasing them with GPS-collars, these *Judas* animals locate and thus, disclose the position of other wild animals that would otherwise have been difficult to find.

Since the beginning of the eradication project, many raccoon dogs have been culled in Sweden. Today, the population is very small, with probably less than 50 adult animals left. The project’s population models show that without the management there would likely have been 7000 - 10 000 raccoon dogs in Sweden by now.

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## PROTECTED AREAS

“The importance of Protected Areas for nature and biodiversity cannot be overstated; in particular the Natura 2000 network provides an excellent basis for nature conservation in the EU”.

FACE Biodiversity Manifesto



“Hunters undertake actions related to management and awareness raising about protected areas in 250 case studies”.

This BDM section covers actions contributing to Target 1 (actions 1 and 3) from the EU Biodiversity Strategy through the implementation and management of protected areas and more specifically the Natura 2000 network.

**Natura 2000 | 32%**

**No protection status | 50%**

**National protected area | 20%**

**Regional protected area | 20%**

**Ramsar | 14%**

**Emerald network | 10%**

**Not applicable | 6%**

The EU's Natura 2000 Network, which conserves Europe's most endangered species and habitats, is one of the most evident achievements of the Nature Directives. This Network benefits from the fact that it is based on the principles of conservation and sustainable use, ensuring lasting coexistence with human activities and biodiversity conservation, as such it is not in contradiction with hunting.

The evidence also shows that many Annex I listed birds (under the Birds Directive) and species protected by the Habitats Directive benefit from the actions of hunters.

Figure 7. Status of areas where BDM projects are undertaken

This evidence presented in this report shows that 32 % of the projects are undertaken on Natura 2000 sites, which support previous recommendations to enhance the mutual benefits between hunting and Natura 2000.

CASE STUDY

Moyglass Red Grouse project, Ireland



It is hoped that this management, which is supported by a number of stakeholders, will allow the local hunting club (Woodford Gun Club) to secure a healthy Red Grouse population in a region where Red Grouse have suffered considerable decline due to afforestation, uncontrolled burning and limited habitat management.

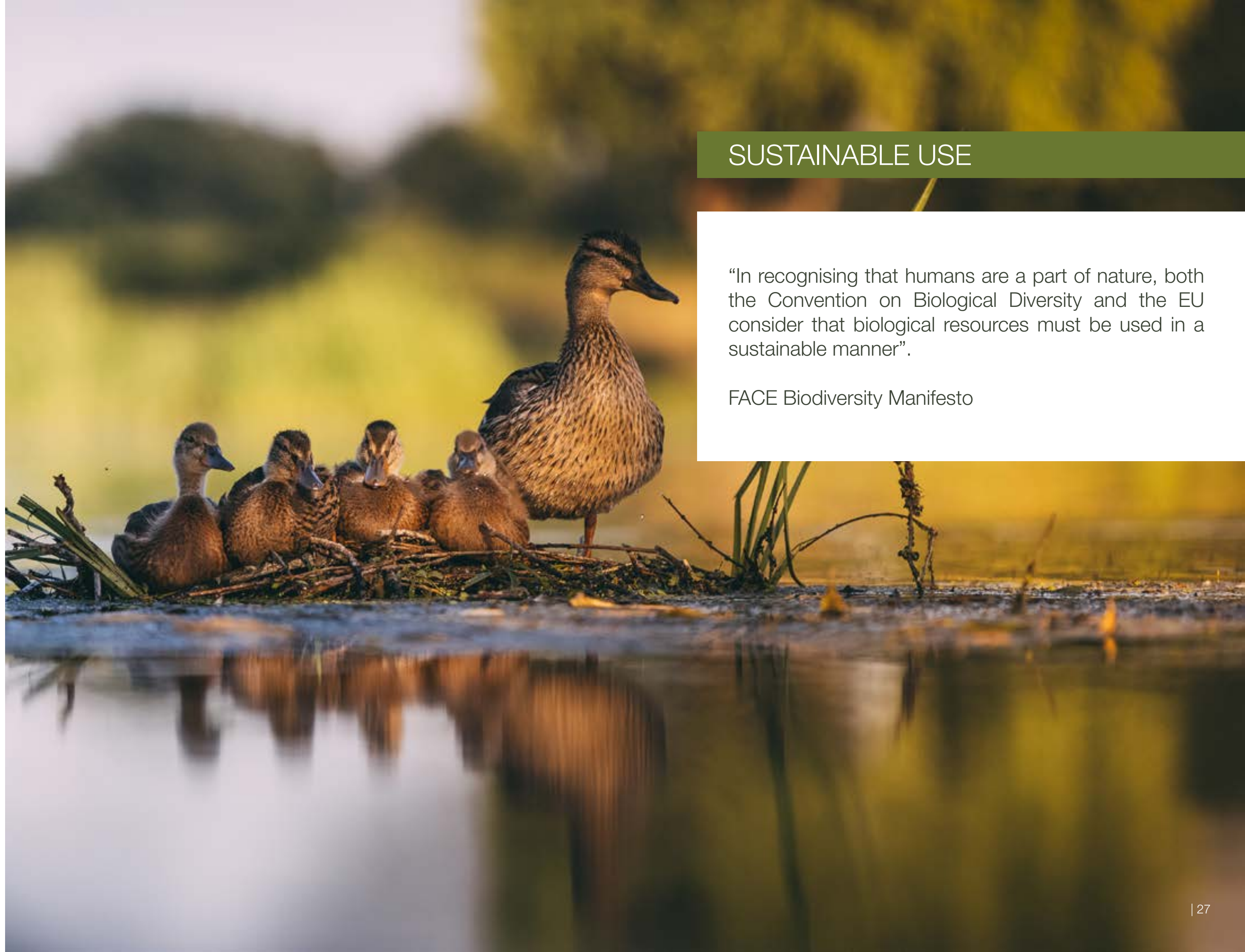
Woodford Gun Club is following a Conservation Plan (2015-2020) and an Appropriate Assessment report, which actively recommends consulting with stakeholders and encouraging the participation and involvement of the local community in the management programme.

The Red Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus scotica*) is currently red-listed due to a 70% decline in range over the past 40 years in Ireland. The Moyglass Red Grouse project, County Galway aims to conserve the numbers of Red Grouse and other Annex I birds of conservation concern (e.g. Hen harrier, Merlin) in the Moyglass Bog (Special Protection Area) through a range of management strategies. The site is also a nationally designated Natural Heritage Area (NHA).

The main management strategies include preserving the distribution, diversity and quality of heather, predator control, grit provision, monitoring, improving public awareness, and the reviewing of management practices.

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More info:  
[https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/2013\\_RedGrouse SAP.pdf](https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/2013_RedGrouse_SAP.pdf)





## SUSTAINABLE USE

“In recognising that humans are a part of nature, both the Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU consider that biological resources must be used in a sustainable manner”.

FACE Biodiversity Manifesto



“Hunters undertake actions related to population monitoring and sustainable use in half of the case studies (see Figure 1)”.

2 out of the 5 actions from this BDM section contribute to Target 1 (actions 3 and 4) of the EU Biodiversity Strategy by: improving knowledge and scientific research on wildlife as well as encouraging local actors to get involved in promoting good management

Approximately 50% of the BDM projects promote the sustainable use of natural resources. Of the projects within the sustainable use category:

Research (7%) and management activities (50%) are the most represented.

Almost half of the case studies involve conservation work in wetland (64), forest (62) and/or farmland (62) habitats.

Three quarters of the examples gathered concern huntable species (104 case studies), while birds are represented in more than half of case studies (84).

## CASE STUDY

### Nesting baskets for ducks in the Netherlands



The FACE Biodiversity Manifesto (BDM) includes multiple projects in the Netherlands (Nuenen and Delfland) where hunters create and place the nesting baskets. The baskets are ideal for duck species like the mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), but also for other types of birds like the Common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) and even Little owls (*Athene noctua*) are reported to use the nesting spots.

There are multiple reasons why hunters make/use nesting baskets. First, they are very useful for creating nesting possibilities, especially in the late winter/early spring when nature does not offer much cover for ducks to nest in. Secondly, the baskets are usually placed over water, which reduces the effect of predation of land-based predators. Birds, like crows, are also less likely to enter the nest and predate the eggs. Lastly, the baskets can also be a nice addition to the landscape.

There are roughly two types of nesting baskets. Traditionally the baskets are woven with willows in a specific form, to create an ideal nesting spot for the birds. You can either buy them, or with some practice, make them yourselves. In America, the UK and in Canada there is also a modern (and easier to produce) version which is made with mesh wire and hay, creating a cylinder shape in which the bird can nest. With a breeding success of 80%, they rightly deserve the name ‘Mallard factories’.



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More info:  
<https://www.jagersvereniging.nl/jagen/ecologie/eendenkorven/#hoe-werkt-het>

Pictures: Arjen Boerman





## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

“More should be done to identify and promote the role of hunters in the cooperative management of Green Infrastructure. This should be supported by incentive measures for hunters and their local organisations to ensure that these areas are managed as part of wider landscape management objectives”.

FACE Biodiversity Manifesto



“The data show that hunters undertake actions contributing to Green Infrastructure principles in 101 case studies”.

This BDM section covers Target 2 and more specifically action 6b of the EU Biodiversity Strategy by encouraging the implementation, management and policy working under the development of Green Infrastructure.

23% of BDM projects contribute to the principles of Green Infrastructure (see Figure 1). The data show that hunters undertake actions contributing to Green Infrastructure principles in 101 case studies.

## CASE STUDY

### Creating corridors in farmlands

Between 2009 and 2013, the Czech Hunting Association jointly with the Mendel University in Brno and Dr. Petr Marada conducted a couple of corridors projects in farmland in Hodonín District (South Moravian Region of the Czech Republic).

Those projects have numerous of purposes:

- increase the local biodiversity;
- facilitate animal migration;
- create an anti-erosion function and improve water retention;
- and enhancing the aesthetic value of the landscape.

The first project, called “The Holy Trinity habitat corridor” was deployed in the Šardice municipality. It consists of a 15-meter wide corridor on the side of an agricultural lane on former arable land. This corridor is made up of trees, bushes and grassland. Trees are planted in the middle of the corridor in two rows escorted on both sides by two rows of bushes. The grassland, based on a Meadow mix seed, extends in the whole area of the corridor. The management consists of sowing and trimming with some weed protection three times a year.

The second project, “Nenkovice thalweg – grassing and greening” is located less than 10 km away from the first one. This

initiative consists of a 25-meter wide corridor (a grass strip planted together with native tree species) and in a grassy agricultural lane with an avenue of trees. Several steps have been respected to succeed in this second part of the project: First of all, the area has been cleaned and the weeds removed. Next, several species of herbs have been planted on each side of the area according to the sun exposure. Later, bare-root seedlings were planted in several lines together with 3 rows of bushes and trees. Grass strips have been placed around to prevent mowing machines to get too close in the first years after planting.



Contact and sources:

<https://honitba-roku.webnode.cz/files/200000018-d86d6d966d/Biokoridor-Sardice-sv-trojice.pdf>





## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

“It is often hunters as both users of ecosystem services and in part managers of ecosystems that actively conserve this wider landscape, contributing to ecosystem resilience and restoration”.

FACE Biodiversity Manifesto



“Hunters undertake actions contributing the understanding and management of ecosystem services in 109 case studies”.

2 of the 3 actions from this BDM section contribute to Target 2 (actions 5, 6a and 6b) from the EU Biodiversity Strategy by improving both the knowledge on biodiversity features (including ecosystem services) and awareness on the importance of those features.

25% of the projects contribute to the delivery of ecosystem services (see Figure 1). Hunters undertake actions contributing the understanding and management of ecosystem services in 109 case studies.

CASE STUDY

Restoration of quarry area

From 1974, two hunters decided to take over management of the (disused) Nuova Demi quarry in Italy, in particular, to manage the water areas on the site. With verbal agreement of the owner, they undertook to restore the wetland on the site. The site is well-located between the Brembo and Adda rivers, on a migration axis.

After years of work, the site now hosts 65 ha of wetland of outstanding beauty and biodiversity and welcomes a huge amount of birds as Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*), Tufted duck (*Aythya fuligula*) and Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*). Currently, the only species that

are hunted are the widespread species like the Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and 150 to 200 birds are harvested each year, which is less than a tenth of the amount that could be easily hunted.

The site has proved very welcoming for diving ducks that spend the winter there. For about 35 years, data were collected on precise and relational sightings.

The work was carried out without any public funding and the substantial costs were covered by the Nuova Demi quarry company owner. The rest of the expenses were covered by the hunters themselves.



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# CONCLUSION

The 5<sup>th</sup> Report of the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto shows the diversity of work undertaken by hunters to benefit nature conservation. The initiatives differ in terms of their size, target, location, type of action and duration but each of them shows that hunters are actively engaged in biodiversity conservation in Europe.

This report shows that hunters, in conjunction with a large group of stakeholders (public authorities, environmental NGOs, research bodies, landowners, farmers, foresters, institutions), are active in the conservation of a wide range of habitats and species in Europe. Most of the 430 case studies include actions engaging wetland habitats and farmland habitats. These results are unsurprising given the decline of species due to the intensification of agriculture linked to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

## Natura 2000:

Of interest is a large quantity of projects that are undertaken on Natura 2000 sites. The fact that 32% of the projects occur in Natura 2000 sites demonstrates hunters' commitment to supporting this important network of protected areas in terms of monitoring, conservation and restoration. It is clear that Natura 2000 needs the support of European hunters. In this context, it is widely known that some of the most important wildlife sites in Europe have survived the pressures of development and destruction due to the interests of game management. Hence, this commitment to nature conservation for sensitive habitats and species existed long before the Nature Directives were born. Their ancient and voluntary passion to preserve nature areas has, in cases, also contributed to the development of the Natura 2000 network.

## CAP reform:

Importantly, the next CAP must ensure greater support for farmers within the Natura 2000 Network. It must also include support for areas of HNV (High Nature Value) farming by making it mandatory for Member States to incentivise sustainable agriculture (and to prevent land abandonment) in these areas. The European Commission should ensure that Member States' CAP Strategic Plans include results-based agri-environmental schemes that are locally-designed targeting clear ecological outcomes. Such agri-environmental schemes would be supported by Europe's hunting community to the benefit of a wide range of species and habitats.

## Implementing the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020:

The evidence presented in this report shows that over 135 projects (31 %) are undertaken on Natura 2000 sites, 41 % of the projects focus on protected species and 50 % have an important sustainable use dimension. This demonstrates the contribution of hunters to achieving target 1 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. 49 % of studies are focused on the conservation and restoration of habitats, 23 % on green infrastructure, 25 % on ecosystem services and 100 % of them can be considered as investing in nature. These actions are relevant, in particular, to targets 2 and partly 3 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. Many projects also focused implementing target 5 (Invasive Alien Species) of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

The projects captured in the BDM demonstrate hunters' commitment to conservation and their contribution to current EU nature policy goals, which ambitiously aim to prevent biodiversity loss by 2020 (Target 6).

## **FACE's recommendations for the post-2020 Biodiversity Strategy in light of the evidence presented in this report:**

- The most relevant EU legislative instruments for biodiversity conservation are the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the EU Nature Directives and the Water Framework Directive. Better use and application of these instruments has the potential to turn the trend in biodiversity loss.
- Support is required from people living in rural areas in delivering biodiversity, by providing mechanisms for equitable benefit sharing, and promoting policies for sustainable use.
- A disproportional focus on species extinction, for example through an apex goal, will increase resistance and alienate many rural stakeholders. Motivation should be created bottom-up, not the other way around. FACE's network could be instrumental in this.
- The major conservation problem for most species is the degradation, destruction and/or lack of (good quality) habitat. Countering this problem should be given the highest priority in particular in the post-2020 reform of the CAP.
- To complement the Natura 2000 network, proper funding and effective habitat conservation measures are required, which allow pragmatic and locally-led approaches to conservation and sustainable use (incentive based, adaptive to changes in species composition or habitat type).
- Measurable targets require monitoring, which in return needs coordination and proper funding for long-term funding.



## General comments on the post-2020 Biodiversity Strategy:

The overall 2050 vision remains valid - *By 2050, European Union biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides – its natural capital – are protected, valued and appropriately restored...* However, as the 2020 headline target for halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020 was reached, it is essential that a different approach is taken in the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

This recognised by the IPBES Summary for policy makers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services<sup>2</sup>, which states that goals for 2030 and beyond may only be achieved through transformative changes. Possible actions and pathways to achieve transformative change have also been identified.

Following the adoption of the European Green Deal and Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, there must be no delay in the role out of an action plan for EU and Member State actions. The EU Action Plan for nature, people and the economy arrived too late in the previous policy cycle, partly due to the resources devoted to the fitness check of the Nature Directives (2015-2016).

### Support from rural people/bottom-up motivation:

Most of Europe's biodiversity can be found in rural areas. New approaches to biodiversity conservation should include mainstreaming nature protection outside protected areas, such as via other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM)<sup>3</sup>. This can include hunting areas that maintain natural habitats and other flora and fauna as well as viable populations of hunted and non-hunted native species.

Through legislation, we need to ensure that those living in the countryside can keep on living in the countryside, as active management can play important role in maintaining and improving the condition of certain habitats. It also means, as is evident from the Nature Directives, that we need to take account of economic, social and cultural requirements and regional and local needs.

The evidence presented in this report shows that hunters' interest in nature motivates them to conserve it. The solutions and the challenges for the future are to promote the sustainable use of nature so that hunters and other stakeholders have a direct interest in it. When such positive synergies are in place, the conservation of nature becomes effortless.

Furthermore, incentives can play an important role in biodiversity conservation. This could include properly rewarding farmers for engaging in biodiversity-friendly farming but could also include rewarding hunters for taking biodiversity actions with hunting opportunities.

The EU should also focus on the promotion of policies for sustainable use. Through the Eurobarometer 'Attitudes of European towards biodiversity'<sup>4</sup> we know that people increasingly want to make an effort for biodiversity and nature conservation.

### Habitat degradation or destruction:

FACE believes that there is great need to focus more on degradation, destruction and/or lack of (good quality) habitat for flora and fauna. Good quality habitat is the basis for thriving species. The EU will not achieve targets related to habitat through protected areas alone, so the earlier mentioned area-based conservation measures (OECM) should be integrated into the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy. Below are some further ideas:

### Mainstreaming of nature with rural stakeholders:

- To maintain and restore habitats/ecosystems by supporting sustainable use and other effective area-based conservation measures (further negotiation required for fixing a quantifiable target).

#### *Justification:*

- Any new apex target should prioritise targets for conservation of habitats rather than a species extinction rate target. The current Aichi Target 11 provides a basis: Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 % of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 % of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

### Minimum area for nature:

- An amendment is needed on the requirements and standards of GAEC (Good Environmental Agricultural Condition) in the next CAP to ensure that a "Minimum 10% share of agricultural area devoted to non-productive features".

#### *Justification:*

- This amendment will reduce pesticide dependency and boost pollination thereby helping to build resilient functional biodiversity on farmland.
- Scientific evidence identifies the need 10% for nature on farms and landscape connectivity to support farmland biodiversity.
- Boosting functional biodiversity like pollinators and predators of pests will help to ensure long-term fertility and productivity based on natural processes.

The above recommendations will contribute to the conservation of farmland biodiversity, enhance ecosystem services and preserve habitats and landscapes. See also FACE Policy Requests for the next Common Agricultural Policy<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ipbes.net/system/tdf/ipbes\\_7\\_10\\_add.1\\_en\\_1.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=35329](https://www.ipbes.net/system/tdf/ipbes_7_10_add.1_en_1.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=35329)

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-08-en.pdf> and [https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/recognising\\_and\\_reporting\\_oecms\\_-\\_iucn\\_technical\\_report\\_-\\_august\\_2019.pdf](https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/recognising_and_reporting_oecms_-_iucn_technical_report_-_august_2019.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/COMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/68148>

<sup>5</sup> [www.face.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/flyer\\_CAP\\_99x210\\_2.pdf](http://www.face.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/flyer_CAP_99x210_2.pdf)



# FACE “GOLD” PATRONS

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The 5<sup>th</sup> report of the Biodiversity Manifesto has received a wide distribution in the hunting community by the FACE “Gold” Patrons: BioAmmo, Blaser and Jagd&Hund.

In 2020, FACE launched its new "Patron Programme", with the aim of providing the hunting sector with a means to support a strong future for hunting and conservation in Europe. The FACE Patron Programme is the foundation for developing an essential and positive network.



**Blaser** **BIOAMMO**



For more information about the programme, visit:  
[www.face.eu/patrons](http://www.face.eu/patrons)

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