

# Biodiversity

**Extract from France's 2021 Environmental Performance Review**



# Biodiversity

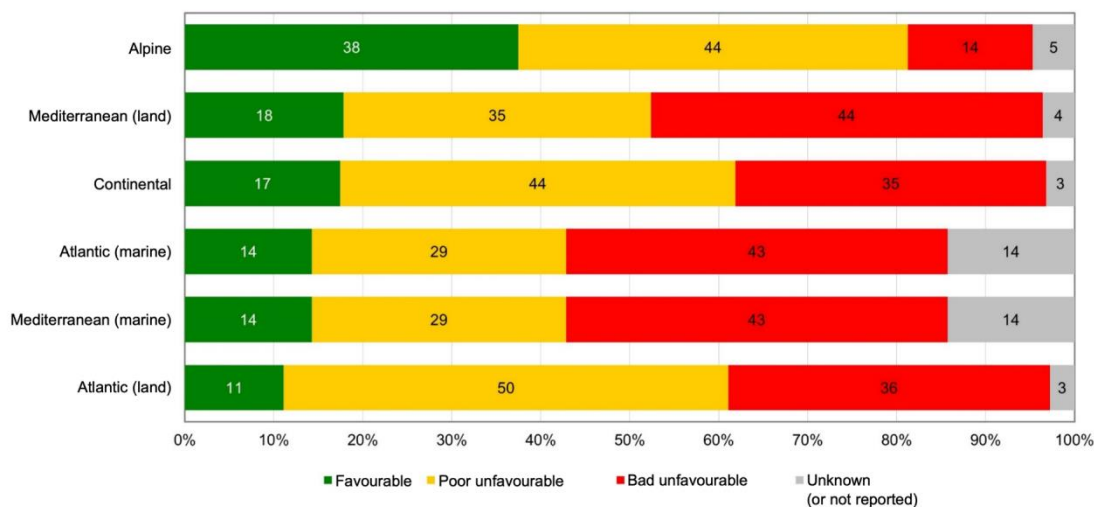
Biodiversity describes the entire living world at three levels: genetics, species and ecosystems. Through its overseas departments and territories, France has rights over waters in four major oceans. France's natural heritage includes 21,234 species which are found nowhere else. These endemic species represent 11% of the French inventory of 192,219 species and represent an important international responsibility.

## INCREASING HUMAN PRESSURE ON BIODIVERSITY

Humans use natural resources to survive. Our survival is highly dependent on natural ecosystems that provide food, materials and energy, regulate water supplies and the climate, and are a source of well-being and tourism. Pressure on ecosystems is causing the decline of many natural habitats and species. Between 2013 and 2018, only 20% of habitats of community interest in metropolitan France were in a favourable state, with relatively large disparities between areas. This third assessment of natural habitats consolidates the findings of the last assessment covering 2007 to 2012 when 22% of habitats of community interest were in a favourable state (Figure 1). The latest national assessment of iconic wetlands completes these results. Between 2010 and 2020, 41% of the wetlands analysed deteriorated.

**Figure 1: Conservation status of habitats of community interest by biogeographical region between 2013 and 2018**

In %

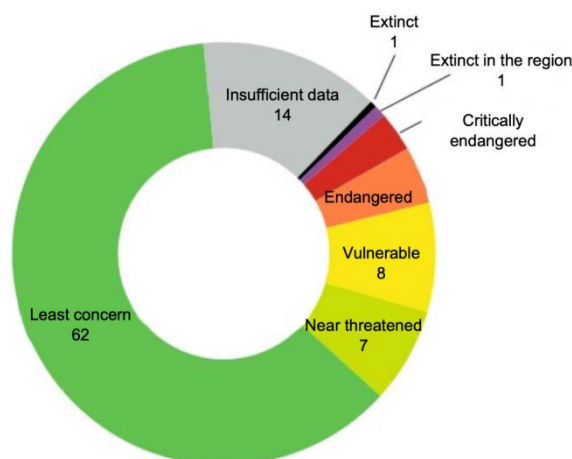


Note: results for all habitats combined (297 assessments).  
Scope: Metropolitan France.

Sources: DHFF report; UMS PatriNat (OFB-CNRS-MNHN), January 2020. Treatment: UMS PatriNat; SDES, 2020

In 2020, 19% of species assessed on the national Red List were extinct or threatened (Figure 2). Between 1989 and 2019, in metropolitan France, specialist common bird populations in agricultural environments decreased by 39% and by 29% in built environments, while populations in forest environments remained stable. Between 2006 and 2019, the population of the most common bats decreased by 54%.

**Figure 2: Breakdown of extinct and threatened species in the national Red List**  
In %



Notes: taxonomic groups considered = mammals, nesting birds (excluding strict migratory species or probable nesting species), reptiles, amphibians, freshwater fish, sharks, rays and chimeras (selacians), land and freshwater shellfish, butterflies, phasms, mantles, beetles, vascular flora. Lists of groups assessed depends on the area.

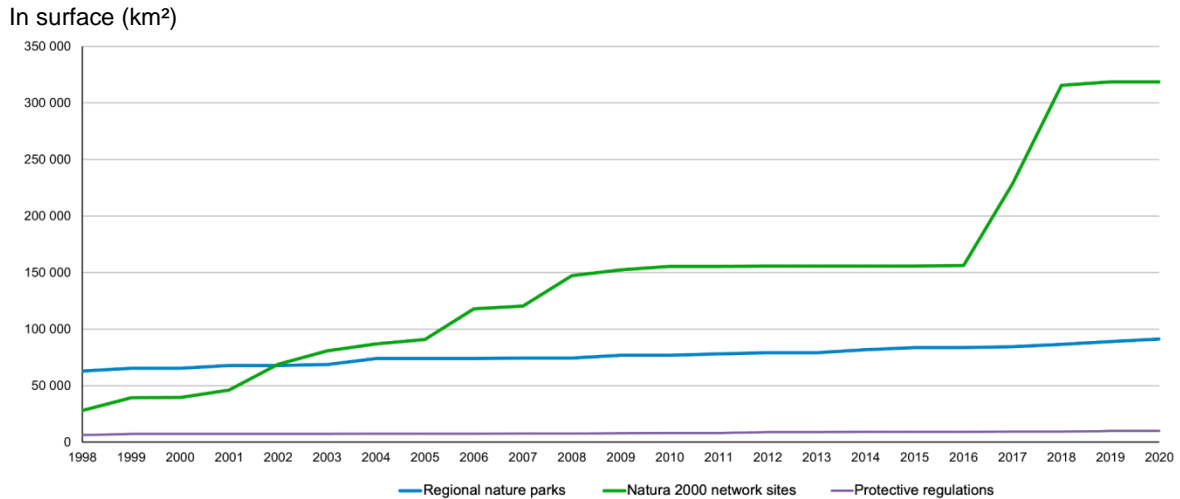
Sources: Red Lists for Metropolitan and Overseas France, PatriNat (OFB-CNRS-MNHN); IUCN French Committee, April 2020. Treatment: SDES, June 2020

One of the main causes of these changes is deterioration of natural environments. Nearly 60,000 hectares of grassland, lawns and natural pastures were lost due to artificial land development between 1990 and 2018 in Metropolitan France. Intensive agricultural practices, agricultural abandonment, and the loss of open spaces threaten biodiversity. Climate change is also affecting biodiversity. For example, resulting ocean acidification threatens coral reefs: 70% of the reefs analysed were in good condition in the Pacific Territories and the Indian Ocean Scattered Islands, 62% of the reefs of Reunion and Mayotte and 53% of the West Indies are considered deteriorated or very deteriorated. In addition, 60 of the 100 species globally considered the most invasive are already present in the overseas departments and territories.

### ACTIONS FOR BIODIVERSITY

Many initiatives are being undertaken at all levels against pressures on and threats to ecosystems. Protective measures have been put in place as part of strategies to create protected areas (Figure 3). At the beginning of 2021, France had 5,805 protected areas covered by 17 national protection measures. These include protective regulations (or strong protections) such as national parks, nature reserves (national, regional and Corsican), protection orders (biotope, geotope or natural habitats), and biological reserves. Other categories of conservation measures include contractual protection such as regional natural parks, land control measures, and the European Natura 2000 network.

**Figure 3: Trends in land and sea areas covered by different types of protected areas in Metropolitan France**



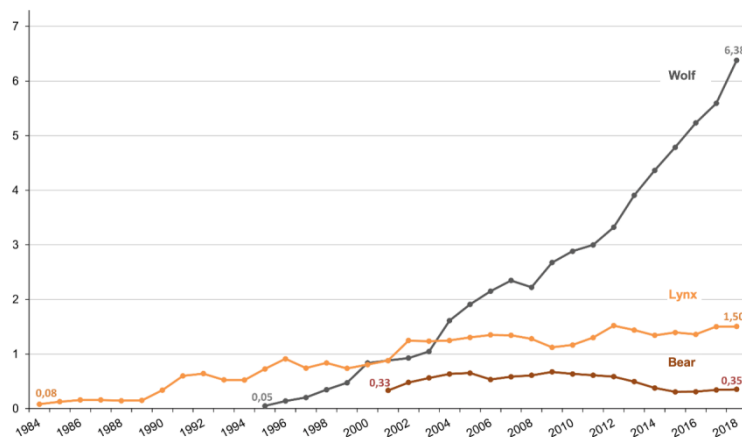
Note: protective regulations include national parks, nature reserves (national, regional and Corsican), biological reserves (integral and directed) and protection orders (biotope, geotope and natural habitats). The large increase in the area covered by the Natura 2000 network between 2016 and 2020 is explained by the creation of 12 marine areas.

Scope: land and sea areas.

Sources: MNHN (SPN), INPN (protected areas and Natura 2000). Treatment: SDES, 2021

The situation for certain species is improving due to the establishment of national action plans, among other actions. This is particularly the case for semi-aquatic species, such as otters and beavers and wintering water birds with population increases of 124% between 1980 and 2021. Symbolic of interactions between humans and nature, the wolf, lynx and brown bear, three protected species on the national Red List of threatened species (respectively vulnerable, endangered and critically endangered) have once again colonised certain mountain ranges after having completely disappeared from the metropolitan France. The brown bear is still the most vulnerable species, with 64 individuals including 16 cubs in the Pyrénées mountains in 2020 – (Figure 4). The return of the species is in conflict with pastoral farming, resulting in the creation of a compensation system for herd attacks (€3.5 million in 2018) and authorisation through dispensation of the slaughter of a quota of wolves: 118 wolves in 2021, or 19% of the total estimated population during winter 2020-2021.

**Figure 4: Trends in the proportion of metropolitan France where each species of large predators is regularly observed**



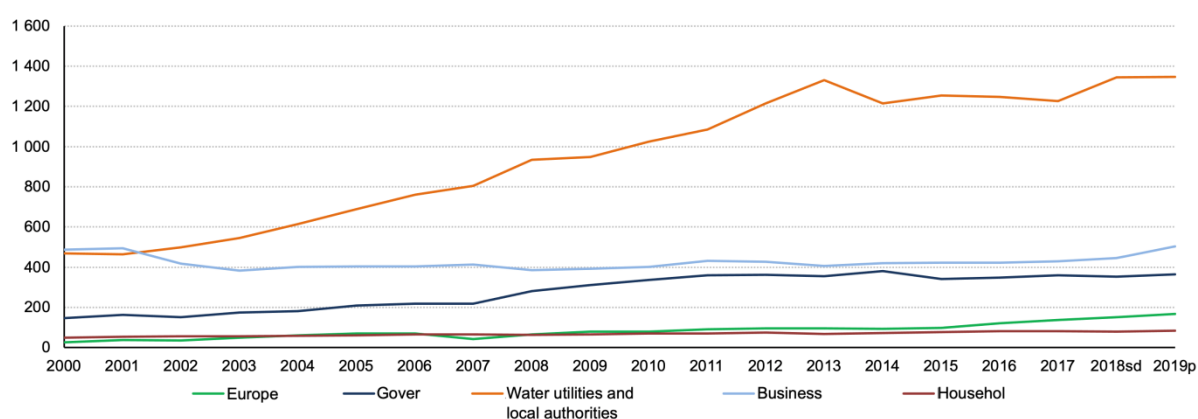
Source: OFB, wolf-lynx and brown bear networks. Treatment: OFB, April 2020

## Fact Sheet: Biodiversity

In 2019, €54.3 billion was spent on protecting biodiversity. This spending is used for rehabilitating natural areas, programmes for the reintroduction of endangered species, and management of protected areas. Public authorities are steadily increasing financial contributions. Over half of the funding comes from local authorities and water utilities which provided €1.3 billion in 2019 for biodiversity protection compared to €468 million in 2000 (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Breakdown of actors funding actions to protect biodiversity and landscape**

In millions of current euros



sd = semi-definitive; p = provisional data.

Scope: France.

Source: SDES, satellite environment account, 2021

## CITIZEN ACTION

Community awareness and actions are also gaining ground. The number of citizens engaging in participatory biodiversity science programmes continues to grow: from 20,000 active participants in 2011 to nearly 135,000 in 2020. The aim of these programmes is to obtain data on nature and biodiversity, produce awareness-raising and nature education tools, and form a community to engage citizens in actions for biodiversity issues.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- *Biodiversité, les chiffres clés - Édition 2018*, SDES, Datalab, December 2018, 92pp.
- *Les Parcs nationales de France – Chiffres clés – Edition 2021*, SDES, OFB, Parcs nationales de France, Datalab, June 2021, 140pp.
- *Les protections des espaces naturels terrestres et marins en France en 2021*, SDES, Datalab Essentiel, September 2021, 4 pp.
- *Quelles réponses économiques face au déclin de la biodiversité ? La dépense nationale de protection de la biodiversité et des paysages*, SDES, Datalab Essentiel, September 2021, 4pp.
- Observatoire national de la biodiversité