Understanding the Strengths and Weaknesses of European nature conservation and protected areas in the face of climate change

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Strengths

1. Nature is the basis for life on Earth
2. Represent healthy nature, and what other areas could be
3. Organised in existing pan-European networks
4. Depth of knowledge and know-how
5. Involve active and diverse communities
6. Support forward-looking, local development strategy
7. Strong legal framework

Nature is the basis for life on Earth

Nature gives us …

1. the air we breath
2. the water we drink
3. the food we eat
4. the shelters we inhabit and the clothes we wear
5. our transport and the places we go, and
6. regulates our climate and
7. recycles our waste

Represent healthy nature, and what other areas could be

- Illustrating the possible

- Challenging acceptance of ‘left-over nature’

Organised in pan-European networks

- Natura 2000, Emerald, Ramsar, Ospar
- National Parks
- National and local designations

- For biodiversity, geodiversity, landscape, recreation

- Recognising special values to society
- Facilitating management
- Protecting

Depth of knowledge and know-how

- Long-standing approach
- Networks of managers and organisations
- Engaging people and resolving conflicts
- Combining theoretical and practical skills
- Make projects happen
- They care!

Involve active & diverse communities

Support forward-looking, bottom-up, local development strategy

- Locally inspired

- National Parks
- Biosphere reserves
- Regional nature parks
- Local nature reserves

Strong legal frameworks

Direct

- EU Birds & Habitats Directives
- Bern Convention
- National / Regional legislations

Indirect

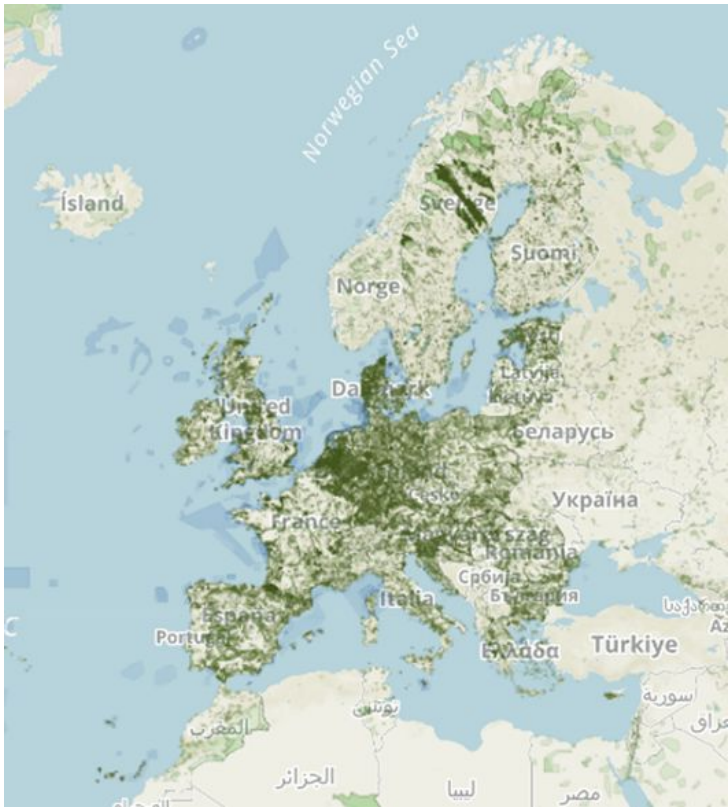
- Provide a geographic framework for other land-use policies – eg economic development, agri-environment, forestry

Weaknesses

1. Image problem
2. Dealing with complexity in the long-term
3. Collaboration is key, but is slow and difficult
4. Intrinsic value of nature is difficult to define and agree

Image problem

- Run by other people
- They feel imposed
- Protected = elite
- Stop things happening
- Too many, too complicated
- Costs



https://www.protectedplanet.net/

Dealing with complexity in the long-term

- Gap between complexity of nature (and natural solutions) and a simple narrative.
- Long-term ecological solutions vs short-term political and economic needs.
- Under-resourced to deliver complex and ambitious objectives.

Collaboration is key, but is slow and difficult

- Tackling global pressures and changes demands collaboration

 at multiple levels, and

 affecting many interests and practices

‘Intrinsic value’ of nature is difficult to define and agree

Does nature have value beyond what it provides humans?
https://theconversation.com/does-nature-have-value-beyond-what-it-provides-humans-47825

Conservation needs to recognize nature's intrinsic value
https://today.oregonstate.edu/archives/2015/feb/conservation-needs-recognize-nature%E2%80%99s-intrinsic-value-researchers-say

Why Intrinsic Value Is a Poor Basis for Conservation Decisions
https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/58/10/910/245722

Nature’s Intrinsic Value: A Forgotten Philosophy of the Environment
https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137536235_2

Costs

Natural Capital assessments indicate favourable returns on investment

RSPB (England) reserves	2:1	
Scottish Natural Heritage nature reserves	8:1	
Northamptonshire Council	6.5:1	
Edinburgh Council city parks	12:1	(social benefits)
London (Borough of Barnet)	10:1	

Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba
nature.scot