

What has the EU ever done for us?

Ecotricity

What has the EU done for the environment? Clearly, the question is far too broad to cover in detail here, but what we can do is focus a critical lens on a small part of EU environmental directives: the planning system.

Ecotricity, the UK's first 'green' electricity company, has been involved in pioneering wind energy projects across the UK since its inception in 1996. We have our own in-house ecologists and whenever we select a site for a new wind farm, we take the potential risk to wildlife from wind turbines very seriously. In terms of the environmental assessments we undertake, three EU directives directly steer what we do and how we do it on a daily basis.

These EU directives provide a robust mechanism to assess the potential impacts of developments at a very early stage, which allow us to distinguish between real and perceived ecological impacts. The three directives are the EIA Directive, the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive.

THE EIA DIRECTIVE

These are not fluffy guidelines. The EIA directive provides an overall framework that stipulates the factors that need to be taken into account when a new infrastructure project is being planned. It sets out the statutory stages and responsibilities of the developer and the planning authorities during the planning process.

An important aspect of the EIA Directive is that it also considers environmental quality and the impact on communities. This means that our team of landscape architects, planners and a technical team play a key role in these assessments. It also means that we can reassure those communities about every aspect that might initially be a concern with such large projects.

That is also an important aspect of these directives: they form a central part of our public engagement, too. At our public engagement sessions, people always want

to know what work we have conducted to ensure that important local wildlife, for instance, is protected.

THE BIRD AND HABITATS DIRECTIVES

These are also invaluable to our daily work. At base, they are there to protect and improve Europe's most important habitats and species. They do this through the designation and protection of a network of land and marine habitats (called Natura 2000), and the protection of animals and plants of European importance, classified as European Protected Species.

During the site selection process, the presence or close proximity of these Natura 2000 sites means that we immediately know the need for an early assessment of any potential impact on the conservation status of the designated site.

In summary, for ecologists working in the industry, EU directives provide a robust, understandable framework with clear objectives for our work to assess potential impacts. They enable us to do our own job better, while at the same time ensuring that our projects can be judged according to very strict environmental standards and giving the general public the peace of mind that comes from knowing that we have done our job properly.

Dr Simon Pickering is a senior Ecologist at Ecotricity for over 30 years, including stints at the British Antarctic Survey and the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust.

Friends of the Earth

When I joined Friends of the Earth in the late 1980s the UK's environment was pretty grim. Our drinking water was contaminated with a cocktail of chemicals, beaches were polluted by sewage, power plants belched out acid rain gases and most of our rubbish ended up in landfills instead of being recycled.

Fast forward 25 years and there has been a remarkable environmental transformation, largely due to EU rules aimed at tackling these issues.

But with UK membership of the EU rising to the top of the political agenda, it is timely to consider the impact that our departure could have on our environment.

UK AND EU APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENT POLICY

In a paper¹ for Friends of the Earth, published earlier this year, Dr Charlotte Burns from the University of York warns that a UK exit from the EU could severely damage the UK's environment.

Highlighting the frequently strong resistance by successive UK governments to European environmental regulations, Dr Burns says Britain has for the most part only unilaterally taken action when incontrovertible damage had been proved. Generally speaking, the UK prefers to deal with environmental problems in a fragmented, *ad hoc* and inadequate way.

This contrasts markedly with the EU's precautionary approach to environmental problems, championed by more progressive countries such as Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden which has now been enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty.

This analysis concurs with my experience at Friends of the Earth. Time after time we have had to campaign to neutralise British opposition to environmental standard-setting by the EU. Frequently we have had to fire off complaints to the European Union about UK infringements of EU law. And only this year the UK Government fought doggedly – and thankfully, unsuccessfully – against EU restrictions on neonicotinoid pesticides linked to bee decline.

NOT PERFECT

Despite the EU push for environment improvement, things have not been plain sailing. The damage caused by the Common Agricultural Policy and Common Fisheries Policy is clear for all to see. The inability of the EU to agree greenhouse gas reduction targets that are anywhere near necessary is shameful – although luckily this is an area where the UK, with its ground-breaking Climate Change Act, is leading the way.

The evidence that EU policy has driven and continues to drive environment policy in the UK is strong. If we leave the EU we may find that the land we live in is not quite so green and pleasant.

Mike Childs is Head of Policy, Research and Science at Friends of the Earth. For over 20 years he has campaigned on issues ranging from factory pollution to recycling to climate change.

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Veolia

Since 2001, European Union countries have had to implement the Landfill Directive. For the UK, this means that it must reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste landfilled to 35 per cent of 1995 levels by 2020.

First introduced in 1996 by Environment Secretary, John Gummer, the Landfill Tax has been the main way that the UK has sought to reduce use of landfill and make alternative treatment sources more financially attractive. This has been the catalyst for a much-needed increase in UK waste infrastructure capacity with 33 waste PFI projects awarded as of January 2013.

A case in point is our proposed new recycling and energy recovery facility in Leeds which has recently received planning permission, and which Leeds City Council have calculated will save them £200 million over 25 years compared to the costs of continuing to landfill household waste.

However, in many areas, fully integrated waste management remains to be adopted. In Hertfordshire we are in the process of gaining planning permission for a fully integrated recycling and recovery facility which is part of the strategy of ensuring the UK has sufficient treatment capacity in every region.

When first introduced, the Landfill Tax was £8 per tonne and each year it has increased in value so that it now stands at £72 per tonne and will rise to £80 in 2014–2015. It is not yet clear whether it will continue to rise or stay the same beyond that date.

DECREASE IN LANDFILL

The Landfill Tax has certainly bitten over the last few years. Landfill volumes are now in decline, and companies are pushing much more into recycling and treatment, including anaerobic digestion and energy from waste. The tipping point probably came in 2011–2012 when the Landfill Tax reached £56 per tonne, as that meant energy from waste gate fees were on a par.

As a result of Landfill Tax, the Landfill Directive, the Waste Framework Directive and others, we have seen

recycling increase from almost zero in 2001 to over 40 per cent now. There will be a review of targets as part of the European Commission's work on the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe. Following this we could see bans for certain materials to landfill, more measures to increase recycling and use of the material in new products, and more measures for resource security.

Ray Parmenter is the Legislation Manager for Veolia Environmental Services (UK) Plc.

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Air Quality Consultants

2013 was designated as the Year of Air, as the EC reviewed the EU Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution and its related policies. It is thus an opportune moment to reflect on what the EU has done to improve air quality conditions in the UK.

As a first response, it is tempting to be dismissive. EU controls on vehicle emissions, the so-called Euro standards, had promised to deliver steady reductions in emissions and hence much lower concentrations of nitrogen dioxide – a key traffic-related pollutant. But as is now widely accepted, these controls have abjectly failed to deliver the forecast improvements. This is because the on-road performance of vehicles is very different from that defined within the test cycles used to determine compliance with the Euro standards. The outcome is that there are still widespread exceedences of the nitrogen dioxide limit value across the UK (three years after it was to have been achieved), and the Government now accepts that these exceedences are likely to continue into the next decade.

EU DRIVING AIR QUALITY

Despite these failings, European legislation has been the driving force behind air quality legislation in the UK, without which, the position would almost certainly be far worse.

Two principal directives (and their subsequent revisions) have proved pivotal to the development of air quality policy in the UK:

- The 1985 Environmental Assessment Directive¹ prescribed a list of development projects for

which an environmental assessment would be required and introduced. Importantly, the outcomes of these assessments were reported in the public domain.

- The 1996 Ambient Air Quality Assessment and Management Directive set a framework for air quality limit values for a number of pollutants. These limit values are legally binding, which helps focus the mind on meeting them.

Both directives have led to air quality assessments being required for a wide range of new developments. These frequently cover traffic and industrial/energy-generation emissions. This has encouraged the introduction of measures to reduce emissions associated with new developments. It is unlikely this would have happened to the extent it has without EU legislation.

Steve Moorcroft has over 35 years' experience in the field of environmental sciences. He is the Director of Air Quality Consultants. He has contributed to the development of air quality management in the UK, and has been closely involved with the LAQM process since its inception.

RSPB

Since the EU's first serious foray into environmental policymaking in 1973 with the first EU Environmental Action Programme, the body of EU environmental legislation and policy has grown to around 300 directives and regulations concerning the environment with significant achievements including:

- Emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) reduced by 70 per cent²;
- Global wildlife trade controls promoted through stricter European controls, such as the EU ban on the trade in wild-caught birds³; and
- Creation of the first and still the biggest international market for controlling greenhouse gas emissions covering 45 per cent of EU emissions⁴.

As one of the UK's leading wildlife conservation charities, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) dedicates significant resources to influencing and promoting the implementation and development of EU environmental policy. We recognise that EU environmental legislation has a significant impact on the achievement of our objectives in the UK, but has this impact been positive?

NATURA 2000

In relation to biodiversity conservation in the EU, the key legislative instruments are the Birds Directive⁵ and Habitats Directive⁶. These two directives serve as the backbone of EU nature conservation action and between them establish a policy framework for the conservation of terrestrial and marine species, and the establishment of a network of protected sites, the Natura 2000 network, designed to conserve habitats that are essential to those species or worthy of conservation in their own right. What this means in practice is that many of the UK's most beautiful and diverse areas – from moorlands to bays – are protected by international law. The terrestrial Natura 2000 network now covers 17 per cent of the EU's territory, and the protection it provides is effective. A study conducted by the RSPB showed that the Birds Directive⁷ had brought demonstrable benefits to bird populations in the EU, and also showed that international policy intervention can be effective in addressing conservation issues over large trans-border geographical areas.

BALANCING NATURE AND THE ECONOMY

The Birds Directive and Habitats Directive seek to find a balance between the needs of nature conservation and the needs of economic development, and have been successful in doing this. In the midst of the current drive for economic growth at all costs, it is worth considering the impact on business of EU nature conservation legislation. The results are positive: a Defra review of the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives found that "in the large majority of cases the implementation of the directives is working well, allowing both development of key infrastructure and ensuring that a high level of environmental protection is maintained."⁸ Furthermore, the fact that the directives are well established helps businesses by providing a stable and predictable regulatory landscape: evidence submitted by Wildlife and Countryside Link to the Defra review showed that, of the thousands of land use consultations received by Natural England each year, fewer than 0.5 per cent result in an objection under the Habitats Regulations.⁹

Recent studies have also shown that the economic benefits generated as a result of this effective approach to site conservation are considerable. Figures published by the European Commission suggest that the terrestrial Natura 2000 network of protected sites generates benefits worth €200–€300 billion per year, or 2–3 per cent of EU GDP¹⁰. Natura 2000 is also key for climate change mitigation and adaptation, and in pure economic terms the carbon stored in Natura 2000 sits across the EU is valued at €600–€1100 billion.

SOME DAMAGING POLICIES

The EU's achievements in these areas should not, however, obscure the fact that some EU policies have

been extremely damaging in environmental terms. The EU Common Fisheries Policy has for many decades promoted and supported the unsustainable exploitation of the EU's fisheries, while evidence gathered by the RSPB and others within the framework of the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme¹¹ confirms that the Common Agricultural Policy has been instrumental in driving the decline of common farmland birds throughout Europe.

The principles behind environment policy-making at EU level are sound, and RSPB has found strong evidence that in some areas these policies are delivering excellent results for Europe's environment. At the same time, there is an urgent need to reform those EU policy instruments that are still driving environmental degradation. The recent successful reform of the Common Fisheries Policy is an example of where UK leadership can be critical in improving EU legislation.

But laws are only as good as their implementation, and much remains to be done. The RSPB's *State of Nature* report leaves us in no doubt that nature in the UK remains in crisis. The EU has helped put in place the legal framework to protect it, but results on the ground will only be delivered if the necessary measures are implemented and properly resourced, and if EU legislation is enforced.

Alistair Taylor is the EU biodiversity policy officer at the RSPB. Previously he worked for the JNCC and the Natural History Museum.

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Dr Mark Everard

EU membership and EU environmental legislation divides opinion. 'Faceless Eurocrats' constraining the UK's competitiveness, or a key avenue for higher-level concerns to shape policy?

MONEY DOES NOT DEFY GRAVITY

The EU started life as a trading block to compete on a post-war stage, for which rules were set to establish a level playing field across multiple policy areas. In addition to redistributive regional structural funds and instruments such as the Common Agricultural Policy, numerous directives entered the statute books. Significant amongst these were the directives with environmental focus.

The historic economic context is important in understanding how the EU's rulebook works. Compliance with environmental directives provides common trading standards, ensuring that competition is not at the expense of the environment and the benefits it provides to people.

Arguments by UK politicians that we would be better off outside Europe have merit, but only if we regard redistribution, the rights of all in society, harmonised health and safety, the environment and the many benefits it confers upon us all as irksome obligations there purely to satisfy Eurocrats and bunny-huggers.

The reality, of course, is that 'the environment' is what we are breathing right now, the water and the food we drink, the energy flows running my computer and the waste assimilation services that will clean up afterwards. We either mine 'the environment' – surely undermining our future wellbeing including potential competitiveness – or we recognise the protection of the environment as a wise investment to secure public health, economic resources, quality of life and the resilience of society to climatic and other stresses.

It is naive to think of the economy whilst omitting its primary resources: what nature provides and what people do with it. These surely are worth protection, and the body of EU environmental legislation goes a long way towards that.

HOME GROWN

Of course, we have home-grown environmental safeguards, government departments and regulatory bodies across the devolved administration of the UK. Indeed, HM Government's June 2011 Natural Environment White Paper, *The Natural Choice*, sets

a strong ecosystem-centred 'direction of travel'. But how loud would the voice of the environment be if not significantly backed up by international consensus and commitments, including those promulgated by Europe?

Furthermore, the political appetite for pro-environmental leadership is also significantly dulled in an age of austerity, 'green tape' amongst the first perceived 'constraints' to be scrutinised and slashed to ensure that city bonuses are protected. Domestic political instinct also tends to retract to protect established businesses, rather than recognising the inevitability of greater environmental challenges and thus encouraging the kind of 'sunrise' industries that address sustainable development challenges head on, and that we therefore need to incubate now to position ourselves competitively for the future. For example, the knife is being wielded to prune the Feed-in Tariff, cutting costs in the near term but also slashing investment in growth sectors that are not only needed but which could give the UK a competitive lead.

FLAWED BUT NECESSARY

In practice, the EU is no less accountable than domestic politics, themselves hardly an exemplar of the power of the common person upheld in corridors trodden by a perversely high proportion of millionaires. Both represent an executive form of democracy rather than true multi-stakeholder participation in decision-making. However, Europe has a track record of generally taking more far-sighted steps to safeguard the environment and its many services to humanity than have emerged at national level.

“the political appetite for pro-environmental leadership is also significantly dulled in an age of austerity”

For all the naivety of some early directives, they at least recognised environmental quality as a prerequisite of human wellbeing. Although measures to implement it may be unpopular, particularly with farmers, the Nitrates Directive demonstrates political courage in terms of prioritising the long-term protection of drinking water. The Water Framework Directive has changed the regulatory paradigm by focusing on ecological status and its benefits, rather than perpetuating a fragmented pressure-by-pressure approach. It is hard to see that such far-sighted approaches would emerge unilaterally from domestic politics, dictated by short-term electoral cycles.

BABIES AND BATHWATER

So, although rowing back from European commitments might harvest short-term financial rewards, it would represent a lurch back to the worst facets of Industrial Revolution protectionism that underplay the long-term and socially uneven consequences of pollution, resource over-use and future security. There are probably things all of us do not like about the EU, but the imperfect yet substantial baseline of environmental protection developed since the 1960s is too important to reject in favour of short-term gain.

Systems science tells us that we are all part of a finite, internally interdependent socio-ecological system, inescapably benefitting from or suffering the consequences of all our actions and inactions. Our baseline of environmental regulation and subsidy is very far from perfect, but it does at least enshrine decades of hard-won progress, safeguarding to some degree the most fundamental of resources across broader spatial

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Greenpeace

The European Union should be the model for a greener, more sustainable world. Or at least, a better spot than most to start trying to build it. There have been some real achievements and success stories, but the lack of transparency and accountability in European institutions is as much of a problem in environmental policy as it is elsewhere.

Where the EU works best is in raising regulatory standards. The size of the European market allows us to slam the brakes on the global 'race to the bottom' which drives down environmental protections along with employment rights, and throw that race into reverse. Higher standards can be imposed right across the richest, biggest market in the world, and everyone who wants to sell to us has to meet them. We have the EU to thank for cleaner water in our taps, our rivers and our beaches; cleaner air (although the UK government is fighting the Air Quality Directive tooth and nail), cleaner cars, more efficient electrical appliances and better nature protection. The Habitats Directive, co-authored by Boris Johnson's father, preserves the best of our landscape and the wildlife that depends upon it. And this legislation is economically beneficial to the UK, according to the Government's own assessment.

CORPORATE LOBBYISTS

But the distance between the European electorate and the EU institutions, both geographical and bureaucratic, is a gift to the corporate lobbyists camped in Brussels. Corporate capture of the EU legislative process frequently dilutes radical, transformative bills into toothless aspirational documents with no deadlines or sanctions to push forward change. Targets are weakened, as has been the case with the vehicle fuel efficiency regulations to satisfy the German makers of large cars; or implementation grinds to a halt, as happened recently with the Fuel Quality Directive, which would have restricted the use of highly polluting tar sands in the EU market - here big oil companies like Shell and Canadian Government officials have been to blame. Despite the overwhelming evidence that land use changes caused by EU biofuels mandates drive hunger and habitat loss globally, the biofuels lobby in Brussels is fighting a rear-guard action against any meaningful standards to address these problems, and they may well be successful.

VESTED INTERESTS

The over-weening influence of vested interests becomes even starker when subsidies are involved. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) seems impossible to reform at any meaningful speed, and may merrily continue handing tens of billions to Europe's richest landowners for no reason other than that this is what they have always done – and because the balance of power in Brussels means that our political leaders have no incentive to derail the farming gravy train. The recent scandal over false labelling of horse meat in the EU showed how perverse the system is – with factory-farmed products being shipped around Europe in an absurdly over-extended supply chain, whilst consumers are ripped off and local, sustainable suppliers are priced out of the market. Was any of this ever anyone's policy goal? Or did lobbyists move the goalposts so often that our legislators are no longer sure of which team they are on?

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has had the EU sticking the ball into the back of their own nets repeatedly. With subsidies showered on the most destructive large-scale industrial operators, and quota denied to the low-impact, small-scale sector, the policy seemed designed to destroy both our fisheries and the industry that relies on them, starting with the sustainable bit. But this is beginning to change – as the people of Europe expressed their disgust at a system that encourages nearly half the fish caught being thrown back dead, the CFP started to receive a bit more scrutiny than it was used to. Thanks to that public pressure, amplified by NGOs and the media, and channelled by politicians who realised that even the fishing community (as opposed to the fishing lobby) were demanding change, we now have a CFP that, whilst still deeply flawed, is far better than it was a year ago in several important ways.

But this rare success is also a stark reminder of the general failure of EU institutions to reform even the policies that the vast majority of Europeans know to be absurd, because the contempt of their electorates means less than the attentions of lobbyists. In a transparent, responsive, accountable EU, the CAP as currently formulated would not last a week. Europe would have to institute a rational agricultural policy regardless of the interests of the major landowners, and we could enhance both biodiversity and food security, and the EU's popularity.

The EU could go further in creating globally influential standards in transport, electrical equipment and construction that would create a greener economy and save its citizens cash. Furthermore, real transparency and accountability would benefit the EU in and of itself – the democratic deficit is one of the biggest sticks used to beat Europe by the Eurosceptic press. Take it away – and the absurdities it allows – and they would be left limply waving a fictional straight banana.

Dr Douglas Parr is Chief Scientist and Policy Director at Greenpeace UK. Currently working on climate change policy in the power, heat and transport sectors, he has previously worked on a number of issues including GM crops, chemicals policy, green refrigeration, marine conservation and bioenergy. He holds a D.Phil in Atmospheric Chemistry from Oxford University.

Dr Heather Barrett-Mold

It's always difficult to second guess what might have happened had something else not existed. Without the EU other pressures on the UK Government to improve legislation may have been brought to bear. However from my early days of teaching environmental science it was apparent that the EU was making an impact on the way agriculture performed, ranging from the need for food security to food markets and environmental protection. Before the UK joined the EU the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was in place although it initially took little account of environmental protection. 1985 saw mainstream agri-environment schemes in the UK; with the Broads Grazing Marsh Conservation Scheme. In 1992 the McSharry Reform paid attention to reducing surpluses and providing some environmental consideration which was followed by a plethora of schemes such as set-aside, stewardship,

and environmental sensitive areas. At this time I was researching chalk grassland and saw the huge benefits of set aside on biodiversity.

Later, when working in land-based colleges my greater involvement in the running of farmland and closely working with farmers made the impact of the CAP and stewardship schemes even more apparent. The stewardship schemes were difficult to get to grips with, but there was help available from various agencies and the effects on the countryside were generally positive. I moved to a college for which I had responsibility for a 275 ha organic farm. It operated the organic entry level scheme. This college had been successful in placing sustainable development at the heart of its operation; the business, curriculum, estates and it was a natural move for the farm to enter this scheme. The field margins increased and hedges were protected. Permissive footpaths were opened running across the land with walk leaflets generated to explain to the public what they would see. They offered the chance to witness first-hand the conservation measures being undertaken to maintain and enhance the rich and varied landscape of the countryside. Holders of the higher level scheme had in addition a responsibility for educating the public.

So once again we are in a period of CAP reform. Difficult as that might be, CAP has over the years moved agriculture from the post-war concerns of high productivity and intensive production to one which recognises the need for environmental protection and the role of ecosystem services. However this round is not without controversy. Subsidies for land owners remain and the 30% target for grants linked to environmental activities that promote wildlife is now "flexible" with exemptions that may allow payments for little activity.

Would it all have happened without the EU? I suspect not; well not as much. Has it made a positive difference? Yes. Is it flawed? Yes and will always need strong voices to advise and lobby for stronger environmental benefits.

ES

Dr Heather Barrett-Mold was Principal and Chief Executive of Pershore Group of College; and now is a consultant. An ecologist, specialising in the management of chalk grassland, Heather is Chair of the Institution of Environmental Sciences and a Past President of the Institute of Horticulture.

IES: New members and re-grades



Members	Occupation	M
Neil Shawcross	SHE Officer	
Leanne Liles	Graduate	
Alice Doyle	Freelance Sustainability Consultant	
Arshad Bhat	Scientific Officer	
Simon Cahill	Land and Habitat Management- Self-employed	
Diarmuid O'Sullivan	Senior Contaminated Land Consultant	
Nichola Dixon	Senior Environmental Consultant	
Alfredo Cardo Perez	EHS Manager	
Stephen McAfee	Senior Environmental Consultant	
Emily Byers	Environment Specialist	
Katherine Wear	Senior Consultant	
Artemis Doutsis		
Geoffrey Dowker	Environmental Protection Officer	
Richard Gillard	Waste Water Scientist	
Fiona Convertino-	Senior Consultant (Air Quality)	
Irene Bopp	Senior Consultant	
Neil Burke	Associate Consultant	
Anthony Iles	Associate Director	
Jonathan Bridge	Lecturer in Environmental Engineering	
Deborah Henderson	Senior Consultant	
Marc Blanché	Principle Consultant	
Andrew Edgar	Director	
Ceri Riley	Pollution Prevention and Control Regulatory	
Claire Brenton-Taylor	Researcher	
Katherine Franklin	Senior Geo-environmental Engineer	
Robin Edwards	Senior Geochemist	
Bruno Agochukwu	Scientific Officer	
Jonathan Perks	Sustainability Consultant	
Daniel Yupet	Project Officer	
Rachael Graham	Associate	
Charissa Poynton	Policy Analyst	
Fiona Scott	Senior Consultant	
Anita Venn	Geo-Environmental Engineer	
Ruth Tunwell	Environmental Consultant	
Lik Ki Mui	Consultant	
Mark Lyons	Managing Director	
Neil MacDonald	Contaminated Land Officer	
Phillip Berry	Environmental Services Consultant	

Tristan Coleman	Partner, WKC
Amanda Zillig	Environmental Scientist
Sebastian Crolla	Geo-Environmental Engineer
Robert Lewis	Project Manager
Titus Idris	HSE Risk Assessment Officer
Man Chiu	Assistant Consultant
Nancy Oakes	Course tutor and lecturer
Claire Lucas	Assistant Air Quality Consultant

Associates	Occupation	A
Carl Lacey	Graduate	
Abdikarim Hussein Abdulle	Environmental Scientist	
Amelia Chilcott	Assistant Environmental Consultant	
Matthew Brennen	Geo-Environmental engineer	
Adrian Dale	Sales Assistant	
Christine Park	Environmental Consultant	
Nasreem Abdul Razack	Environmental Specialist	
Stephanie Beggs	Eco-housing & Retrofit Officer	
Emily Cooper	Graduate	
Nduka Akaogu	PhD Student	
Catherine Close	Alcohol work and Relief Hostel Worker	
Harriet Knowles	Environment Manager	
Henrietta Patrick	Junior Consultant	
Louise Ratiffe	Assistant Consultant	
Oscar Montoya Jonsson	Principal consultant - Associate	
Christopher Steer	CEO	
Rosemary Willatt	Sustainability Consultant	
David Kerr	Liability Claims Adviser	
Kirsty Payne	Graduate/Bar Staff	

Affiliates	Occupation	AF
Katarzyna Skowronska	Support Worker	
Noa Tu	Self-employed	
Nishchal Karki	Supply Chain Assistant (Oral health program)	
Jim Camp	Administrator/Student	
Darrell Tovey	Consultant	
Mauricia Martínez-Sánchez	Customer Care Assistant	
Dmitry Kormann	Student	



Answering a new call

Andreas Baumüller explains how WWF changed to support the Habitats Directive.

The late 1980s and early 1990s was not only a period of political change for the European Union – it was a period of seismic change in environmental policy. European Member States started to realise that many of the common environmental challenges faced could only be solved if nations worked together and created a ‘European approach’: the tools of the past were insufficient in this era of collapsing borders and economic uncertainty.

From the point of view of WWF, one significant evolution of environmental policy was the adoption of the Habitats Directive in 1992, which created one of the biggest, most effective networks of protected natural reserves: Natura 2000. Two decades later, close to 26,000 sites covering one million square kilometres of Europe’s natural space have become Natura 2000 protected areas. This is a successful, modern and flexible system that ensures the conservation of Europe’s rich natural wildlife.

However, Natura 2000 protected areas differ significantly from the traditional concept of protected no-go areas for humans. Instead a balance is struck between human activity and nature, such as in the Karaboz Natura 2000 site in Bulgaria where sheep graze the floodplains of the Northern Danube and create the necessary conditions needed for flora and fauna.

When considering the wellbeing of an environmentally sensitive area, the law holds that nature’s requirements must be paramount if workable compromises cannot be found. The construction of the Polish ‘Via Baltica’ highway that was originally intended to pass through the Natura 2000 Network was rerouted as it would have caused considerable damage to the protected area.

ADAPTING TO A NEW ERA OF NATURE CONSERVATION
With these changes, WWF looked closely at our own structure and how best we could support the concept of

Natura 2000. We realised that our work was going to have to change. Our different offices were originally set up as distinct national offices where much of the work was done in the national capitals. In the 1980s, WWF opened a political office in Brussels to influence the European institutions where many of the regulations are made.

This European orientation made sense on several levels, the most important of which was that Brussels is the centre of influence for so much EU environmental policy. In fact it is often said that 80 per cent of environmental legislation in Member States starts its life in Brussels. The new WWF European Policy Office (EPO) was given an enhanced capability through a pooling of national investments that had not previously existed. In 1990, a WWF European and Middle East programme came into effect, with national offices promising to transfer 10 per cent of their national conservation expenditure into a common European pot.

Secondly, WWF started to look at problems on a transnational basis. New subregional programme offices like the WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme Office and the Mediterranean Programme Office opened. They address cross-cutting issues relating to the natural values their respective regions. The geographical landscapes and features, rather than the political borders, delineate the natural issues faced in a region.

WWF has also adopted a consultative approach to working on Natura 2000. We try to talk to as wide a group of people as possible so that we can propose solutions that are acceptable to all. This not only includes public administration but also professional specialists, the public, local academics and civil society groups (such as hunters, fishermen and local businesses). If a Natura 2000 site is to be truly sustainable it needs to have widespread support.

WWF IDENTIFIES THE VALUE OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
One of our most important roles is sharing best practice in the selection and management of Natura 2000 sites with national governments, Members of the European Parliament and the European Commission. Our advocacy work constantly reminds them of the benefits of natural green infrastructure and in many cases convinces them to consider natural infrastructure in instead of an artificial solution.

Not all policy makers are aware of the tremendous benefits Natura 2000 delivers. With an annual cost of €5.8 billion, Natura 2000 provides an estimated return of €200–300 billion. These include services like water provision and purification, natural hazards prevention, carbon sequestration and storage, tourism and recreation.

Conservation work in Europe has changed significantly in the last 20 years. As partners in the development of the Natura 2000 Network, we need to constantly look at evolving when policy changes so that we can continue to be influential advocates for real progress. Overall WWF is proud of the contribution it has made to the development of Natura 2000, and supports the ‘EU Approach’ in this dimension. **ES**

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▲ Restoration of Yellow Waterlily *Nuphar lutea* in Persina Nature Park. Image credit: Konstantin Ivanov.