

# NATURE PROTECTION

## EU

Natural ecosystems and their vital services are under pressure from urban sprawl, intensive agriculture, pollution, invasive species and climate change.

The European Union has been committed to protecting nature since the adoption of the Birds Directive in April 1979. It provides a legal framework, binding for all EU countries, which ensures protection to all bird species naturally occurring in Europe. The Habitats Directive was adopted in 1992 to help maintain biodiversity – it protects over 1000 animals and plant species and over 200 types of habitats. It

also established the EU-wide Natura 2000 network of protected areas.

Natura 2000 is the crucial instrument of the EU's nature and biodiversity policy that works to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitat types.

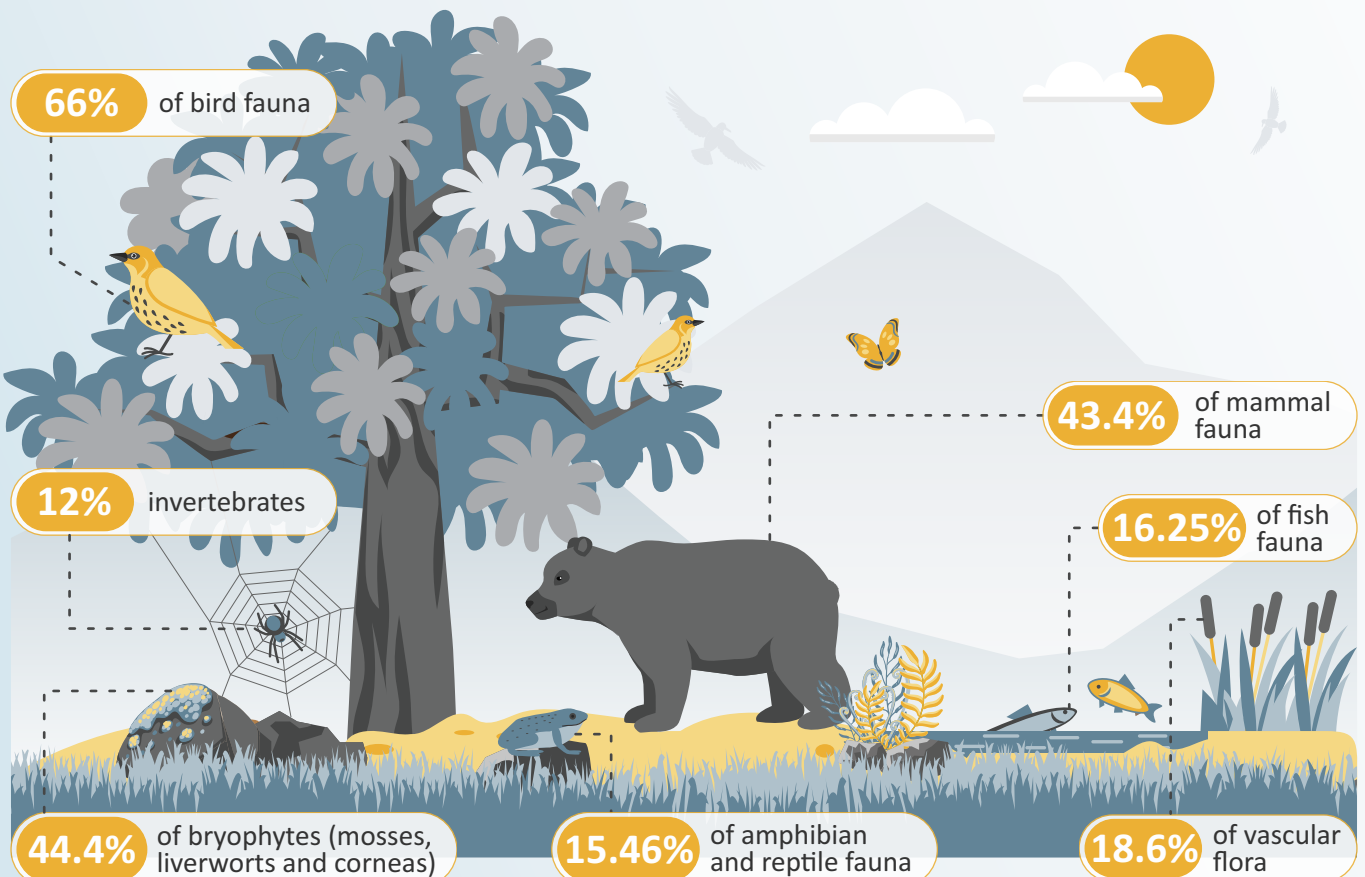
Other nature-related parts of the acquis include requirements for zoos, measures against invasive alien species, regulation of the wildlife trade, wood and timber trade, etc., set out in ten legal acts.

**Over the last 25 years EU has built the largest network of protected areas in the world – Natura 2000, which includes over 27,500 sites and covers over 18% of the EU's land area and more than 6% of its seas territories.**

## SERBIA

Serbia is a country with rich ecosystems and species diversity. So far, 44,220 species and subspecies have been discovered and classified in Serbia. However, estimates suggest that the figure could be even bigger – around 60,000.

Covering less than 1% of the whole European territory, Serbia is home to many European species:



As per the current Serbian legislation, there are 1,783 strictly protected and 860 protected species of wild species of plants, animals and fungi.

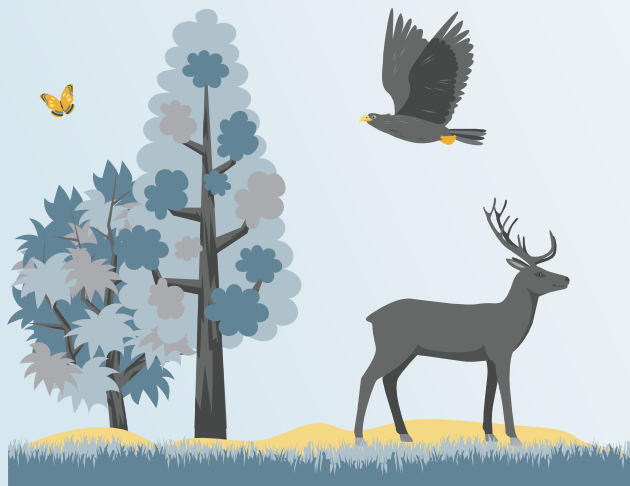
The area currently under protection covers about 678.196 ha or 7.66% of the territory of Serbia and includes 471 protected areas, of which 87 are of national interest.

The Ecological Network defined by the Law on Nature Protection, comprising 101 ecologically important areas and ecological corridors, including the Important Bird Areas, was established to conserve, restore, and improve habitat types of particular importance and certain wild species of flora and fauna. This network, together with the Emerald Network (designated following the Bern Convention) and the new 79 Important Birds Areas adopted by BirdLife International, provide the baseline for the designation and the establishment of the Natura 2000 network in Serbia.

The implementation of the provisions of EU requirements is in progress.

In addition to the national projects implemented to enable the establishment of Natura 2000, it is foreseen that Serbia, with the support of EU, will finalise the identification and designation of Natura 2000 territories in two stages:

- During 2019–2021, designation is planned for at least 80% of the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and at least 50% of the proposed Sites of Community Importance (pSCIs), the development of an information system, a database and GIS for Natura 2000 development and the completion of alignment of national legislation with EU directives;
- From 2022 and to be completed before the accession to EU – continuation of the designation of SPAs and a completion of the list of potential pSCIs and the finalisation of the Natura 2000 network.



In order to protect the country's nature and enrich biodiversity of the EU, Serbia proposes to the EU to include new priority species and habitat types that are crucial in Serbia and whose conservation requires the designation of special areas of conservation.

Additionally, similar to other Member States, EU is requesting exceptions to the hunting regulations, both in regard to the prohibition of hunting specific species and the regulated management of other species.

The proposal for these geographical adaptations was extensively discussed with the scientific and NGO communities.

**We all depend on nature for our food, air, water, energy and raw materials. Nature and biodiversity, along with the ecosystem services that they provide, make life possible, provide health and social benefits and drive our economy. Healthy ecosystems can also help us cope with the impacts of climate change. By strengthening its institutional and technical capacities to fulfil the requirements of the EU nature protection acquis, Serbia is committed to protecting and enriching the biodiversity of the EU.**

