

EBMS AND EU POLICY



THE EU POLLINATORS INITIATIVE

On 25 January 2023, the Commission published a revised [EU Pollinators Initiative](#). It includes a reinforced **Action Framework with 42 Actions, to be implemented by 2030**. The revised pollinator initiative aims to:

- ❖ Improve knowledge of pollinator decline, its causes and consequences
- ❖ Improve pollinator conservation and tackle the causes of pollinator decline and
- ❖ Mobilise society and promote strategic planning and cooperation at all levels.

Work is ongoing to fully implement the short-term actions and longer-term objectives by 2030.

Recent progress includes the **publication of a European Red List for hoverflies**, which complements the existing European Red Lists for bees and butterflies, and the preparation of a European Red List for moths. The Commission also published a [European Red List of insect taxonomists](#) highlighting existing coverage and gaps of expertise on insect species across the EU. Progress has been made in **extending butterfly monitoring to a greater number of EU Member States** and in developing and **field testing a future EU-wide Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (EUPoMS)**, which is to be based on a harmonised and scientifically robust methodology. Drivers for pollinator decline are being studied, amongst others with **the Insignia project**, which monitors pesticide presence in samples collected by honeybees, and the **EMBAL project**, which monitors the ecological quality of agricultural habitats. In June 2023, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) completed the review of the **Guidance Document on the Risk Assessment of Plant Protection Products on Bees**.



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THE EU COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP)



Many butterfly populations are highly dependent on sustainable agricultural management. Many grassland butterflies, including those of European importance, listed under the EU Habitats Directive are in Unfavourable Conservation Status, being rated as poor or bad. **Protection of their remaining habitats and reduction of pressures**, such as nitrogen enrichment, toxic pesticides, fertilisers or ploughing are urgently needed, together with **investment to increase suitable habitat**, to halt grassland abandonment and maintain extensive mowing or grazing of semi-natural grasslands.

Despite the biodiversity targets set up in the CAP, **species populations keep suffering declines due to intense agricultural activities**. Organisations representing 2500+ scientists called on the European Parliament for a **total reform of the CAP**.

[You can read the Open Letter Reform the CAP here](#), signed by Butterfly Conservation Europe, European Ornithologists Union, European Mammal Foundation, Societas Europaea Herpetologica

On 2 December 2021, the [agreement on the reform of the CAP](#) was formally adopted. The new legislation, entered into force on 1 January 2023, potentially paves the way for a fairer, greener and more performance-based policy. The new CAP was planned to be a key tool in reaching the ambitions of the Farm to Fork and [Biodiversity strategies](#). Although these strategies set high ambitions for the CAP's contribution to the recovery of biodiversity and ecosystem health, it is clear from the plans for implementing the new CAP - through Member States' strategic plans - **that funding for effective biodiversity action is unlikely to be sufficient to support biodiversity recovery targets**. Within the BCE, the work is underway on elaborating considerations for the CAP to make it a more efficient tool for biodiversity protection.

NATIONAL CAP STRATEGIC PLANS

In 2022, the Commission approved Member States' **CAP Strategic Plans**, and the Plans have been running since January 2023.

In Spring 2022, leading environmental [NGOs expressed significant concerns about the failure of these draft plans to include sufficient action for biodiversity and](#)



ecosystem recovery. By the end of May 2022, the Commission had sent observation letters relating to all 28 draft CAP strategic plans that were submitted by EU countries. The letters identify elements of the proposed plans that require further explanation, completion or adjustments before the Commission can approve them. Each EU country has been given the opportunity to comment on their observation letter. **It is clear from the Commission's comments that many plans will not deliver the required improvements in biodiversity across the agricultural landscape unless they are significantly improved.** The BCE is currently working on developing suggestions to improve Member States' pledges.

- ❖ [Information on the reformed CAP 2023.](#)
- ❖ [CAP specific objectives by country.](#)

THE EU BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR 2030

As the EU and its Member States committed to implement more than 100 actions within the EU Biodiversity Strategy by 2030, the progress keeps being tracked and reported on a [website](#). According to its dashboard, by 2023, 49 actions have been completed, 47 are in progress and 8 have been delayed (Fig.1).

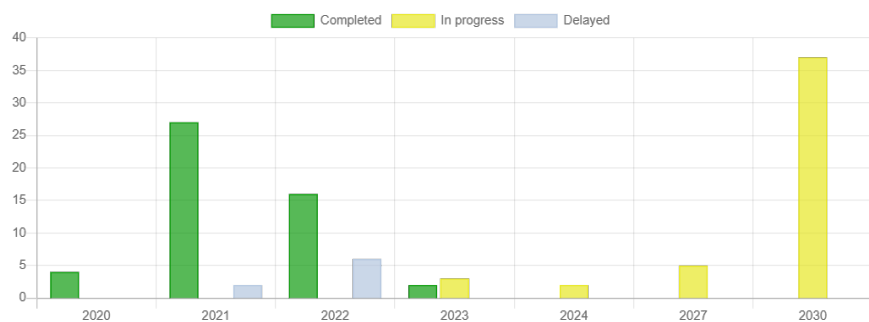


Figure 1. EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 actions, deadlines and status.

The importance of butterfly conservation is reflected in the **Target 5 of the BDS 2030**, which sets the goal “*The decline of pollinators is reversed*”. To measure the progress for this goal, the Grassland Butterfly Index is used, with 1990 taken as a reference year (Index 1990 = 100) (Fig. 2).

The eBMS keeps calculating values every year to further distribute the calculations by the [European Environmental Agency and Eurostat](#) (Fig. 2). According to the recent findings of the ABLE and SPRING projects, the Grassland Butterfly Indicator has especially declined in the last ten years by 36% since 1990 across Europe and by 32% across the EU Member States with schemes in the EU27.

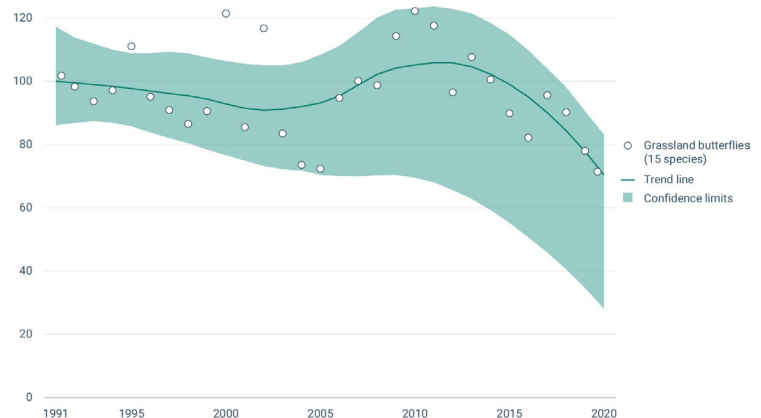


Figure 2. Grassland Butterfly Indicator (GBI) since 1990.

The main drivers of decline are:

- ❖ intensification of farming to grassland butterflies (for the north-western Europe);
- ❖ abandonment of grasslands (in many parts of the rest of Europe);
- ❖ the increase in the duration, frequency and intensity of heatwaves and droughts as a consequence of climate change.



One of the most important achievements of the BDS 2030 is the adoption of **the Nature Restoration Law (NRL)**. On 22 June 2022, the Commission proposed a new law, which aims to restore ecosystems, habitats and species across the EU's land and sea areas in order to:

1. enable the long-term and sustained recovery of biodiverse and resilient nature;
2. contribute to achieving the EU's climate mitigation and climate adaptation objectives;
3. meet international commitments.

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For pollinators, according to the Article 8 of the draft:

- ❖ Member States *shall reverse* the decline of pollinator populations *by 2030* and achieve thereafter an *increasing trend* of pollinator populations, measured every three years *after 2030*, until satisfactory levels are achieved, as set out in accordance with Article 11(3)
- ❖ The Commission shall adopt implementing acts to *establish a method for monitoring pollinator populations*. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 21(2)
- ❖ The method referred to in the second paragraph shall provide a *standardised* approach for collecting *annual data* on the abundance and diversity of pollinator species and for *assessing pollinator population trends*

The full text of the proposal can be found [here](#). The vote on the Law took place mid-summer, resulting into the adoption of the new document.

