

The Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR), EU 2024/1991



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The Nature Restoration Regulation - summary

- ▶ The European Commission Directorate General for Environment (DG-ENV) is responsible for the NRR
- ▶ The NRR entered into force on 18 August 2024. It aims to restore degraded ecosystems, habitats, and species across the EU's land and seas with the goal of restoring at least 20% of EU land and sea areas by 2030 and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050
 - ▶ It requires Member States to carry out pollinator monitoring, support citizen science butterfly monitoring and use the Grassland Butterfly Index (optional)
 - ▶ It is available in all 24 EU official languages
- ▶ It is additional to the 2 Nature Directives: the Birds Directive 1979 and the Habitats Directive 1992 which protects rare habitats and species, including 14 species of lepidoptera



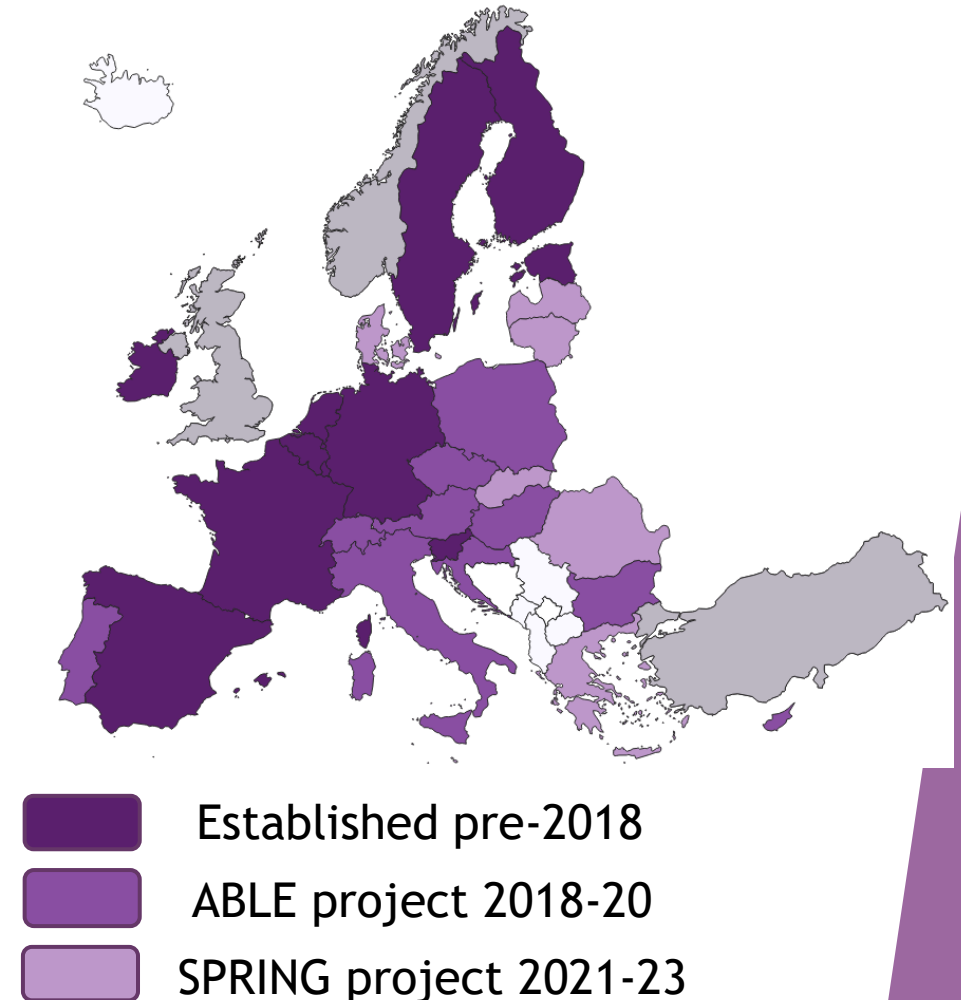
Euplagia quadripunctaria or Jersey Tiger moth, a species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive

DG-ENV has been working on a twin-track approach

- ▶ Improvements without new legislation e.g.:
 - ▶ Developing policies such as the Biodiversity Strategy and the Pollinators Initiative
 - ▶ Funding IUCN Red Lists for pollinators (bees, hoverflies, butterflies and moths)
 - ▶ Funding the ABLE project which established the Butterfly Monitoring Schemes (BMS) in 10 EU countries and the SPRING project which established BMS in 6 EU countries and developed an EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (EUPoMS)

- ▶ Developing new legislation:
 - ▶ The Pesticides Regulation which was rejected by the European Parliament in February 2024
 - ▶ The NRR which was approved by the Parliament and Council in June 2024 (but the vote was very close)

eBMS Status 2024



Why is the NRR needed?

- ▶ The Habitats Directive has been successful, establishing the Natura 2000 sites and protecting many rare and threatened habitats and species, but....
 - ▶ It has a limited scope, only covering terrestrial habitats
 - ▶ It does not contain binding targets or timescales for restoration and many Natura 2000 sites are in an unfavourable condition
 - ▶ Monitoring is poor. In many cases only the plant species are monitored, not the animals that create a functioning ecosystem
 - ▶ It does not include measures to address climate change and has not prevented the biodiversity crisis especially outside protected areas e.g. in urban and agricultural areas

Points to note:

- ▶ BCE is a partner in the EU funded PollHab project, producing a list of the typical pollinator species of Habitats Directive Annex 1 habitats in 2025-26

What is in the NRR?

- ▶ Article 4. Restoration targets to be achieved by 2030, 2040 and 2050, both inside and outside Natura 2000 sites
 - ▶ Arts. 5, 8, 9, 12. Restoration of marine ecosystems, urban ecosystems, river connectivity and forest ecosystems
 - ▶ Art. 10. Restoration of pollinator populations
 - ▶ Art. 11. Restoration of agricultural ecosystems
 - ▶ Arts. 14-17. National restoration plans
 - ▶ Arts. 20-21. Monitoring and reporting
- Points to note:**
- ▶ Butterflies and moths are an important part of the NRR, but it also covers many other issues and taxa
 - ▶ Member States (MSs) have a lot of work to do to implement the NRR



Art. 10. Restoration of pollinator populations (1 of 3)

Art. 10 (1). Member States shall, improve pollinator diversity and reverse the decline of pollinator populations at the latest by 2030 and thereafter achieve an increasing trend of pollinator populations, measured at least every six years from 2030, until satisfactory levels are achieved,

Points to note:

- ▶ The main pollinators are: wild bees, hoverflies, butterflies, moths
- ▶ EUPoMS monitoring should start in 2027, so there will be 4 years of data to assess compliance with the 2030 target (2027 - 30)
- ▶ BCE is a partner in the EU funded EPIC project, training para-taxonomists to identify pollinator species in 2025-26

Art. 10. Restoration of pollinator populations (2 of 3)

Art. 10 (2). The Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts to supplement this Regulation by establishing and updating a science-based method for monitoring pollinator diversity and pollinator populations by 19 August 2025.

Art. 10 (3). The method shall provide a standardised approach for collecting annual data on the abundance and diversity of pollinator species, assessing pollinator population trends and the effectiveness of restoration measures

Points to note:

- ▶ Developing EUPoMS methodology by August will be challenging
- ▶ We expect Member States will use paid professional staff
- ▶ DG-ENV sees EUPoMS and eBMS as separate schemes

Art. 10. Restoration of pollinator populations (3 of 3)

Art 10(4). Member States shall ensure that monitoring data comes from an adequate number of sites Member States shall promote citizen science in the collection of monitoring data where suitable and provide adequate resources for the performance of those tasks.

- ▶ **Points to note:**
- ▶ Methodology, frequency and number of sites is not yet clear
- ▶ BCE is a partner in the EU funded EMBRACE project supporting eBMS development in 2025-26.
- ▶ DG-ENV wants MSs to support their national eBMS using citizen science expert volunteers (in all MSs by 2027?)
- ▶ DG-ENV wants to support the development of a European Moth Monitoring Scheme (eMMS)

Art. 11. Restoration of Agricultural ecosystems (1 of 3)

Art. 11(1). Member States shall put in place the restoration measures necessary to enhance biodiversity in agricultural ecosystems....

Art. 11 (2) Member States shall put in place measures which shall aim to achieve an increasing trend at national level of at least two out of the three following indicators....

(a) grassland butterfly index [GBI];

(b) stock of organic carbon in cropland mineral soils;

(c) share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features.

Points to note:

- ▶ We don't know which 2 of the 3 indicators each MS will use
- ▶ BCE ran a webinar for MSs on eBMS and the GBI on 28 March 2025

Art. 11. Restoration of Agricultural ecosystems (2 of 3)

Art. 11 (3). Member States shall put in place restoration measures ... to ensure that the common farmland bird index reaches the following levels....

Art. 11 (4). Member States shall put in place measures which shall aim to restore organic soils in agricultural use constituting drained peatlands....

Points to note:

- ▶ The bird index is the only other biodiversity index included in the NRR. It is more developed than the GBI with species and targets specified for each MS
- ▶ Restoration of peatlands is both a climate change and biodiversity issue



Coenonympha tullia Large Heath should benefit from restoration of drained peatlands. © Iain Leach

Articles 14 - 17. National Restoration Plans (NRPs)

Art. 14. Member States shall each prepare a national restoration plan and carry out the preparatory monitoring and research needed to identify the restoration measures that are necessary to meet the restoration targets

Points to note:

- ▶ NRPs are new. The Nature Directives did not have NRPSs
- ▶ DG-ENV has already published the draft format for NRPs
- ▶ MS must consult the public and stakeholders on the draft plan then submit it to DG-ENV by 01/09/26
- ▶ DG-ENV must assess the draft within 6 months then MS must publish a final plan within 6 months - (so by 01/09/27)

Article 20 & 21. Monitoring & Reporting

Art. 20 (1). Member States shall monitor the abundance and diversity of pollinator species [and the grassland butterfly index (if it is a chosen indicator)] every year

Art. 20 (8). Member States shall make public the data generated by the monitoring

Art. 21 (2). By 30 June 2031, for the period up to 2030, and at least every six years thereafter, Member States shall report data to the Commission,



Annex IV. List of biodiversity indicators for agricultural ecosystems

Grassland butterfly Index species considered to be characteristic of European grasslands and which occur in a large part of Europe, covered by the majority of the Butterfly Monitoring Schemes

Methodology: as developed and used by Butterfly Conservation Europe, Van Swaay, C.A.M, Assessing Butterflies in Europe - Butterfly Indicators 1990-2018, Technical report, Butterfly Conservation Europe, 2020.

Points to note:

- ▶ This is a huge success for BCE



Nature Restoration Regulation - Conclusions

- ▶ The NRR is additional to the Nature Directives
- ▶ DG-ENV will publish EUPoMS method by 08/2025
- ▶ BCE is a partner in the EU funded EPIC and EMBRACE projects supporting NRR implementation in 2025-26
- ▶ MSs will produce a draft NRP by 09/2026
- ▶ EUPoMS for bees, hoverflies butterflies and moths should start in 2027
- ▶ MSs can use the Grassland Butterfly Index as a biodiversity indicator



Questions & discussion

