



## Climate change and biodiversity

ECNC believes that maintaining resilient ecosystems that can function as a resource for biodiversity, for mitigating climate change and as a source of enjoyment, recreation and economic benefit, is the key to addressing the challenge of climate change for the future of plant, animal and habitat diversity. In our opinion, ecosystem resilience can be best achieved through: creating bigger nature areas and ensuring that they are under appropriate management, and increasing their connectivity through the establishment of ecological networks. ECNC is resolved to tackle this challenge, and we will utilize our expertise and our networks to provide pan-European guidance on the impacts and actions for biodiversity and sustainable development to practitioners and policymakers.

### Background

There is now widespread awareness and acceptance at political and policymaking level that the significant problems we are facing due to the changing climate and its associated impacts are largely a direct result of human activity. A history of poor management, uninformed decision-making in relation to our environment and a lack of effective coordination between sectoral interests has led to unsustainable development. 'Climate change' is now specifically used to describe human influence on the climate.

Increased temperatures and pressure on water resources, a rise in the frequency of extreme weather events, flooding and bushfires, increased sea level rise and associated coastal erosion will all impact enormously on biodiversity. Species migrations, extinctions and changes in populations, range and seasonal and reproductive behaviour are among the responses that have been recorded, and these are likely to continue and even accelerate as climate continues to change in decades to come. Climate change affects natural systems as well as societal and economic systems, such as human health, agriculture and business competitiveness.

### ECNC's position

ECNC:

- gives active recognition to the major global challenge presented by climate change;
- acknowledges that climate change has direct impacts on biological diversity, ecosystem services, and social and economic issues and policy;
- is resolved to tackle this challenge, and we will therefore utilize our expertise to provide pan-European guidance on the impacts and actions for biodiversity and sustainable development to practitioners and policymakers;
- will actively seek partnerships to propose and to deliver programmes and projects that address the issues raised by climate change for biodiversity and sustainable development and which are linked to our core business;
- believes that maintaining resilient ecosystems that can function as a resource for biodiversity, for mitigating climate change and as a source of enjoyment, recreation and economic benefit, is the key to addressing the challenge of climate change for the future of plant, animal and habitat diversity;
- believes that ecosystem resilience can be best achieved through: creating bigger nature areas and ensuring that they are under appropriate management, and increasing their connectivity through the establishment of ecological networks;
- in particular will address the opportunities for biodiversity through the recognition of the role played by ecosystem services as a source of mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change and to link this to the future policy agenda across Europe.

### Key actions and recommendations

Key actions that ECNC will support and promote, include:

- influencing international and national policymakers to create flexibility in relation to policy delivery that will be essential in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change;
- creating strategic policy frameworks and spatial plans to guide decision making;
- facilitating and coordinating joint action by stakeholders within a European perspective;
- engaging stakeholders through the communication media and participative processes, so that they can gain ownership for the delivery of projects and plans at ground level;
- producing indicators that inform stakeholders of the consequences of climate change on biodiversity and the possible action that can be taken;
- producing action plans that set targets and identify biodiversity indicators;
- introducing incentive schemes and measures to drive forward behavioural change.

### More about ECNC

ECNC-The European Centre for Nature Conservation, is an independent organization working for the conservation and sustainable use of Europe's nature, biodiversity and landscapes. ECNC stimulates cooperation between science, policy and economy for the sake of biodiversity and people in Europe. It does so by providing sound scientific expertise in support of governmental policies and by promoting the integration of biodiversity considerations into other sectors of society. In its approach, ECNC combines vision with practical approaches and applicable expertise.

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