

## CONSERVATION STATUS OF SPECIES OF COMMUNITY INTEREST

European Directive 92/43/EEC, referred to as the "Habitats-Fauna-Flora" Directive, requires Member States to assess, every six years, the conservation status of habitats and species of fauna and flora recognised as being of Community interest, and to ensure that they are maintained or restored to a favourable conservation status.

### A common framework for assessment and conservation

A species of Community interest is a species that is endangered, vulnerable, rare or endemic<sup>1</sup>. The conservation status of a species must be assessed for each biogeographical region in which it occurs. Wallonia is covered by the Continental biogeographical region (CBR) (70% of the territory) and the Atlantic biogeographical region (ABR) (30%). A total of 69 species of Community interest<sup>2</sup> are listed. Conservation status is assessed according to four criteria: range, population, habitat, and future prospects. It is favourable if the range, populations and habitats of the species are stable or expanding and considered sufficient for the long-term maintenance of the species' populations, and if the future prospects for these elements appear good, taking into account the identified risk factors.

### Unfavourable status overall

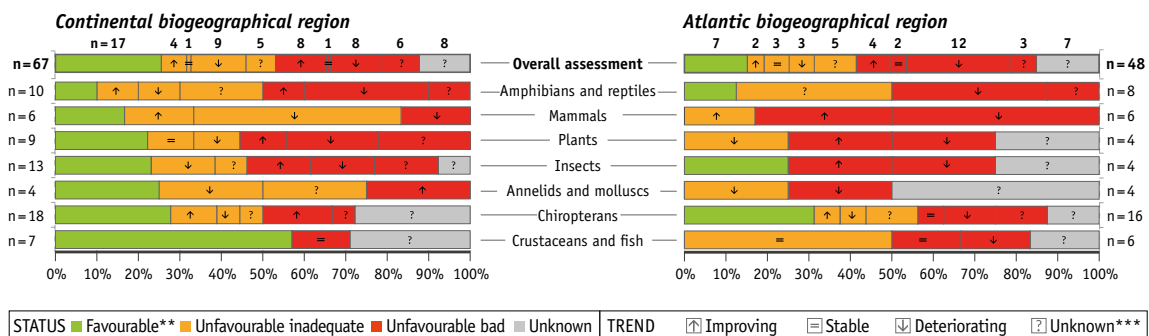
For the period 2007 - 2012, the conservation status of species was considered unfavourable for 63% of the number of species concerned in CBR and 71% in ABR<sup>3</sup>. Among the pressures exerted on species, the most frequently identified are agricultural intensification (affecting more than ¾ of species), the fragmentation of favourable habitats and the resulting loss of connectivity<sup>4</sup>, the incidence of pollution (especially eutrophication<sup>5</sup>), land take<sup>6</sup> (especially in the Atlantic area) and intensification of forestry (especially in continental areas).

### Progress towards good status

Various species (of butterflies, reptiles, bats<sup>7</sup>, etc.) have benefited and are still benefiting from restoration work undertaken as part of LIFE projects<sup>8</sup> or from the implementation of conservation management measures in nature reserves<sup>9</sup>. But for some<sup>10</sup>, however, the status of conservation is still worrying. For most species, recovery times are long. For the period 2007 - 2012, in CBR, 40% of the species with unfavourable status showed a deteriorating trend; for 26%, the trend was unknown. In ABR, 44% of the species with unfavourable status showed a deteriorating trend, and for 24%, the trend was unknown. As such, additional efforts still need to be made. The Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 envisages halting the deterioration of habitats and species of Community interest and improving their status in a significant and measurable way. The new Belgian nature integrated projet<sup>11</sup> aims to support the framework of priority actions established at regional level to meet this objective. In particular, it will enable restoration and management measures to be drawn up and implemented and monitoring programmes to be developed.

[1] List of species: annexes II, IV or V of Directive 92/43/EEC. It should be noted that birds are included in Directive 79/409/EEC (conservation of wild birds) | [2] Present either in the two biogeographical regions, or in just one of them | [3] Detailed data: <http://bd.eionet.europa.eu> | [4] → TERRIT 3 | [5] → WATER 5 | [6] → TERRIT 1 & 2 | [7] → FFH 9 | [8] → FFH 19 | [9] → FFH 16 | [10] River mussel, marsh fritillary, smooth snake, etc. | [11] <http://life-bnip.be>

Fig. FFH 6-1 Conservation status and trend of species of Community interest in and outside Natura 2000 sites in Wallonia (Continental and Atlantic biogeographical regions) (2007 - 2012)\*



\* Due to methodological changes, these data are not comparable with 2001 - 2006 data.  
 \*\* No trend reported; the status can only be favourable if the trend is stable.  
 \*\*\* Trend could not be established due to lack of information