

**Answer to: [the Roadmap for an EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030](#)**

**Feedback**

The Baltic Sea Centre at Stockholm University welcomes the biodiversity strategy to 2030 and look forward to the EU being the global leader with its commitments at the CBD in October. Our comments below are categorised as per the bullet points under section B.

**Protect nature:** Increasing the coverage of protected areas is positive but solely if the level of protection is adequate and fulfils its purpose. Management requirements must be strongly incentivised and monitored as per full implementation of the Nature Directives and Marine Directive.

The quality of protection is key, relating for instance to what kind of human activities are allowed in the protected area. Today, activities like commercial fishing, dredging, construction and boat traffic occur in large proportions in Natura2000 areas.

The same goes for connectivity, ensuring that the network of protected areas is functional for the species and habitats it aims to preserve. Protection should not only be geographically defined but also have temporal dimensions, e.g. taking spawning areas and times for fish into consideration.

**Restore damaged ecosystems:** With the Commission's proposal for at least 30% of the EMFF contributing to climate action, it is advisable to expand the coverage under article 22 to include protection and restoration underwater vegetation. Not only does underwater vegetation function as nursery grounds for fish and as such are important for ocean productivity; meadows of eelgrass, for instance, can store large amounts of carbon dioxide and thus act like natural carbon sinks.

**Promote sustainable use:** Healthy underwater habitats are a precondition for long-term sustainability of fisheries. But fisheries and the marine environment are managed more or less separately and often with different goals. The strategy should therefore envisage and incentivise tools ensuring that by the end of 10 year period, decisions taken under the realm of CFP are actively fulfilling targets of ecosystem-based fisheries management and are beneficial to fulfilling commitments under the Nature Directives and the Marine Directive.

**Integrate biodiversity considerations:** The sea is the stage for a growing range of new ocean-related economic activities. It is therefore crucial to ensure that these Blue Economy activities are species and habitat friendly from the start. Biodiversity considerations should permeate EU policies to the same extent as with similar climate ambitions.

**Enable the implementation:** Compared to terrestrial areas in the EU, the sea is still vastly unknown. To be able to make informed decision, better mapping and knowledge of the marine ecosystem as well as the distribution of species, habitats and areas of biological significance is crucial.