

**COUNTRY- NETHERLANDS**



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# BIODIVERSITY

**Biological diversity** refers to the wide variety of ecosystems and living organisms on Earth: animals, plants, their habitats and their genes.

Biodiversity is the foundation of life on Earth.

It is crucial for the functioning of ecosystems which provide us with products and services without which we couldn't live.

# The Convention on Biological Diversity's Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) programme

- Helps governments, educators and others create the tools and networks of experts needed to answer biodiversity and sustainability questions.
- Raise public awareness and integrate biodiversity into education systems worldwide.
- Supports collaboration among countries, international organizations and the media for developing public awareness programmes about conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity.

# Biodiversity in the Netherlands has been steadily decreasing over the past century

- About 8 % of the Dutch breeding birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and butterflies have become extinct.
- About 40 % of current species are listed on the Dutch Red Lists as vulnerable endangered or critically endangered.
- Alien species enter the Netherlands via new water connections and international transport routes. Nowadays, alien species outnumber original species in the large Dutch rivers.

# Causes of loss of biodiversity in Netherlands

- Intensive large scale agriculture
- Agricultural land optimised by lowering water tables and by the use of fertilisers and pesticides
- Extension of productive agricultural land led to loss of natural habitat and ecosystems
- Intensive livestock farming, especially of pigs and cattle, led to high emissions of ammonia and phosphorus
- Atmospheric nitrogen deposition on terrestrial ecosystems and the input of nitrogen and phosphorus in water made habitats
- Building activities, such as roads and urban expansions led to habitat loss and fragmentation of nature areas
- In aquatic ecosystems, migrating fish need access to the entire water system, but are hindered by dams that are used to regulate these water systems.

# Promotion of biodiversity in Netherlands

- The Intra-ministerial Programme “Learning for Sustainability” includes biodiversity as one of its main themes. The Programme is supported by 5 national ministries and funds a broad range of CEPA projects on national, provincial and local level.
- The Ministry of Environment has launched the website “Biodiversity works” which provides advice, information and examples to interested organisations and authorities.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, in cooperation with IUCN and ECNC, has set up a communication project to promote involvement with local authorities.
- Netherlands is promoting biodiversity-related issues through the press, the various media and public relations and communications networks at national level.

- At the European level, cooperation and exchange programmes for biodiversity education and awareness is supported through international NGO's such as ECNC, IUCN, EUROSITE, Wetlands International.
- Many CEPA projects in Eastern Europe are supported through the MATRA subsidy scheme.
- Netherlands has undertaken many CEPA activities for implementation of cross-cutting issues and thematic programmes of work adopted under the Convention.
- The Decade on Education for Sustainable Development has been established as a major objective for the Netherlands, and is fully supported by the Inter ministerial Programme "Learning for Sustainability" and other activities.

# Steps to be taken to conserve biodiversity

- The Netherlands supports 162 Natura2000 sites (a network of European protected sites) and 4 marine protected areas. If no immediate action is taken, nature values may be irretrievably lost here.
- The water in these areas must comply with quality standards by 2016.
- By 2013, measures against groundwater depletion must be in place in these sites where groundwater depletion is severe.
- Steps should be taken to reduce levels of nitrogen deposits on land and water which may make room for new agricultural developments in the area.
- Promote the use of organic substances in agricultural areas and consumers should be encouraged to spend on organic food products.
- Agreements at international level should be made to ensure the economic developments are in balance with the marine ecosystem in place.
- The Netherlands government should protect marine diversity by providing funds to make the fishery sector more environmental friendly.



# Suggestions for promoting public education and awareness

- National and potentially global exposure through TV broadcastings, newspaper articles, brochures and Internet campaigns are important to promote public awareness and public participation.
- Holding Awareness Days, which could include activities like public seminars, presentation, film projections, music events, beach cleans, creative competitions for students, etc .would encourage direct participation in conservation activities.

THANK YOU