Red List of European Habitats & ‘Restorability’

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Introduction & aims

Funded by DG (Env), budget €1.5M

December 2013 - June 2016 (with a launch October 2016)

To assess the Red List status of all terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats in Europe (EU28 & EU28+)

To help inform and underpin the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy
Scope, organisation & typology for terrestrial habitats

Management Team

Habitat Working Groups (including Grasslands)

Territorial experts
33 countries with 152 experts (EU including Macaronesia & EU28+ with Iceland, Switzerland & the Balkans)
Scope, organisation & typology for terrestrial habitats

Typology

uses an expert modification of EUNIS-3

233 habitats grouped into 7 major types including 53 European grassland types

every habitat has a standardised description, species list, images, indicators of quality, distribution map
Assessment procedure

Criteria and categories

follows the proposals of the Red List Feasibility Study (Rodwell, Janssen & Gubbay 2014) using a modified version of the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems (Keith et al. 2013)

and based mainly on range, extent & changes in extent & quality over the past 50 years

with information on threats (Article 17 categories) & restorability
Results for Grassland Habitats

Embargoed until October launch!
Results for Grassland habitats

Major threats (particularly for pastures and meadows):

Agricultural ‘improvement’ aimed at higher productivity: fertilisers, intensive stock management & forage harvesting

Abandonment of traditional pastoral agriculture with reversion to scrub & forest
Results for Grassland Habitats

Other threats:

Particularly for wet grasslands - modifications of hydrographic functions, by catchment management, flood control, water abstraction

Particularly for high mountain grasslands - climate change, particularly milder winters, reduced snow-lie, longer growing season
Deliverables

Screen shot of full assessment pdf

Temperate acidophilous alpine grasslands

Synopsis

The habitat Is widespread throughout all temperate mountain regions of Europe with large occurrences in Austria, France, Italy and Switzerland. Both for EU28 countries and for EU28+ countries an average decrease in quantity of approximately 10% has taken place over the last 56 years. For most of the EU28 countries a slight to moderate decrease in quality has been reported; outside the EU28, Switzerland has reported a severe decrease in quality over the last 56 years. Major pressures are related to changes of abiotic conditions due to climate change, abandonment of traditional land-use practices in the subalpine zone and corresponding succession processes as well as outdoor sports and leisure activities, e.g. mountaineering/mount climbing and construction of skiing complexes. Two of the key factors concerning the maintenance of this habitat type are both resumption of traditional pastoral systems in the subalpine zone and the establishment of protected areas. Once destroyed or severely damaged the recovery of this habitat type by natural processes will take a very long time.

Synthesis

As far as EU28+ countries are concerned, data for some countries of the Balkan peninsula are missing. Nevertheless, the overall analysis of territorial data leads according to criteria A1, B1, B2 and C01 to the category Level Concern both for EU28 and EU28+. The geographic distribution is not restricted (EOO ≥ 50,000 km², AOO ≥ 500).

Sub-habitat types that may require further examination

In general, subalpine communities are in need of further examination, as they are heavily affected by abandonment of land-use practices.

Habitat Type

Code and name

E4.3b Temperate acidophilous alpine grasslands

Distribution maps

Alpine siliceous grassland dominated by

Communities dominated by Juncus trifidus are
Deliverables

Screen shot of assessment pdf

Territorial data in Excel

Temperate acidophilous alpine grasslands

Synopsis

The habitat is widespread throughout all temperate mountain regions of Europe, Austria, France, Italy and Switzerland. Both for EU28 countries and for EU28+, a decrease in quantity of approximately 10% has taken place over the last 50 years: countries a slight to moderate decrease in quality has been reported. Outside the reported a severe decrease in quality over the last 50 years. Major pressures are abiotic conditions due to climate change, abandonment of traditional land-use zone and corresponding succession processes as well as outdoor sports and leisure, mountaineering, rock climbing and construction of skiing complexes. Two of the maintenance of this habitat type are both widespread. A pastoral system and the establishment of protected areas. Once destroyed or severely damaged, habitat type by natural processes will take a very long time.

Synthesis

As far as EU28+ countries are concerned, data for some countries of the Balkans. Nevertheless, the overall analysis of territorial data leads according to criteria of the category of the regional plants for both EU28 and EU28+. The geographic distribution (50,000 km²: 10% ≥ 50%).

Sub-habitat types that may require further examination

In general, sub-alpine communities are in need of further examination, as they abandonment of land-use practices.

Habitat Type

Code and name

EA.3b Temperate acidophilous alpine grasslands

Alpine siliceous grassland dominated by Communities dominated by Juncus triflora are
Applications

Mapping ecosystems & their services

Mountain hay meadow = Annex 1
Restorability?

with or without intervention?

and over what time-scale: 10, 20, 50 years

but not factored into the assessment
Restorability?
Restorability?
with what targets?
Restorability?

with what targets?

and how to measure attainment of goals?
Restorability?

with what targets?

and how to measure attainment of goals?

about more than biodiversity?
Restorability?

with what targets?

and how to measure attainment of goals?

about more than biodiversity?

also about cultural resonances?
Restorability?

with what targets?

and how to measure attainment of goals?

about more than biodiversity?

also about cultural resonances?

and why just restore?