Natura 2000 network

Natura 2000 is a European network of nature protection areas established under the 1992 *Habitats Directive*. It applies to the marine environment, to Birds Sites and to Habitats Sites of the EU.

The stages

Under the *Habitat Directive* there are three stages in the selection of Special Areas of Conservation SACs for the Natura 2000 network.

1. Each Member State chooses the sites, carrying out comprehensive assessments of each habitat type and species present on their territory.
2. On the basis of the proposed national lists, the Commission, in agreement with the Member States, must adopt the lists of "Sites of Community Importance" (SCIs). These are locations which contribute significantly to the maintenance or restoration of natural habitats or species and the biological diversity within the biogeographic regions concerned.
3. Once the lists of "Sites of Community Importance" have been adopted, it is for the Member States to designate all of these sites as "Special Areas of Conservation", as required by the Habitats Directive, as soon as possible and within six years at the most. During this period, Member States must take the necessary management or restoration measures to ensure the favourable conservation status of those sites.

The importance of farmers

The preservation of terrestrial biodiversity depends on the active participation of farmers, as 50% of EU territory is agricultural land, and 40% of the Natura 2000 network is made up of agro-ecosystems.

In Italy the EU ecological network covers over 6 million hectares, 21% of the Italian national territory, over a third of which is occupied by farming or grazing. A more sustainable management of agricultural areas within the network would allow for the reduction of 2.2 million tonnes carbon dioxide emissions, corresponding to 7% of the commitment taken by Italy under the Kyoto Protocol.

It is therefore crucial that farmers become aware of the importance of their role and be actively involved in the conservation of biodiversity, habitats and species of Community importance which depend on farm management.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of information, the Natura 2000 sites are often perceived by farmers as obstacles to their normal activities and economic interests, rather than as an opportunity for the conservation of resources and ecosystem services which agriculture depends on, as well as an opportunity of access to financial facilities and incentives, service creation and induced economic benefits.



The Green Planet - Copyright © EDISCO Editrice - Vietata la vendita e la diffusione

1 Read the text and find words matching the following definitions.

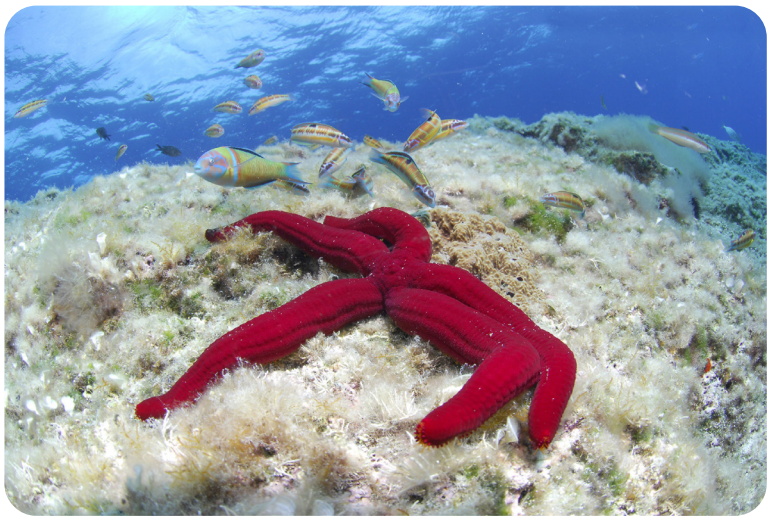
1. They are chosen and proposed by Member States of Natura 2000. .....
2. It is intended to help maintain biodiversity in the Member States by defining a common framework for the conservation of wild plants and/or animals and habitats of Community interest.

   .....
3. It is the centrepiece of EU nature & biodiversity policy. .....
4. What the *Habitats Directive* is about.....
5. Locations receiving protection because of their recognised natural, ecological and/or cultural values.

   .....
6. Denomination of SCIs after approval by the European Commission. .....
7. It occupies about a fifth of the Italian national territory. .....
8. Sometimes they are considered as a hindrance to farming activities. .....

2 Match each term with its Italian equivalent.

1. Assessments	☐	**a.** Valutazioni
2. Restoration	☐	**b.** Sentito, avvertito
3. Commitment	☐	**c.** Agevolazioni
4. Crucial	☐	**d.** Fondamentale
5. Perceived	☐	**e.** Impegno
6. Facilities	☐	**f.** Ripristino
7. Induced	☐	**g.** Derivati



The Green Planet - Copyright © EDISCO Editrice - Vietata la vendita e la diffusione