

# Six questions about biodiversity in France

## ONB Report 2020



**B**iodiversity is the living fabric of the planet and generates interactions between the diversity of ecosystems, the diversity of species and that of individuals. Humans are part of it. All over the planet, researchers and observers unanimously share the same assessment: **Life is disappearing at an unprecedented rate.** With nearly **one species in five threatened with extinction**, all ecosystems everywhere are endangered, and consequently those of our human societies which depend on them.

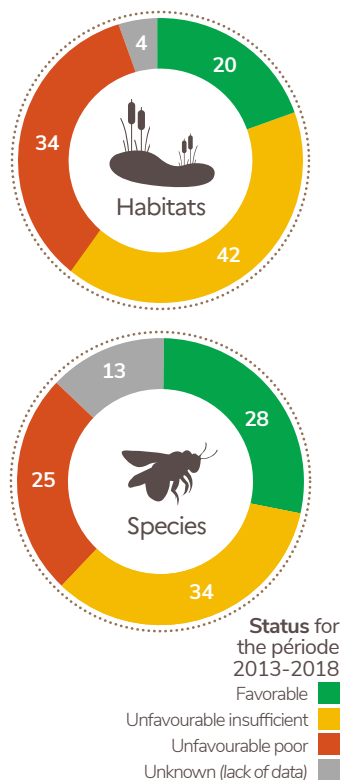
## What are the trends for biodiversity in France?

In France, as elsewhere in the world, the **assessment is worrying**. To give just a few figures, **only a fifth of habitats and a quarter of species of community interest** currently have a favourable conservation status. Despite the efforts made to protect them in recent years, the situation has changed little since the first assessment of the 2007 Habitats Directive.

The decline in animal and plant populations is so rapid that it is perceptible at the scale of a human lifetime: **24% of common specialised birds** have disappeared from Metropolitan France since 1989 and **19% of species** in France are extinct or threatened with extinction, including **16% of flowering plants**.

While the overall trend is declining, **certain species are increasing**, such as large wading birds (herons, cranes, storks ...), whose French wintering populations have **tripled** since 1978, showing that it is possible to act.

Conservation status of habitats and species of community interest in France by % of assessments



The expressions "habitat of community interest" and "species of community interest" respectively refer to a **rare habitat** or **taxon**, considered by the UE as being of heritage value and **requiring specific protection and special monitoring**, under the responsibility of the Member States.

Source: UMS PatriNat (OFB-CNRS-MNHN), 2020

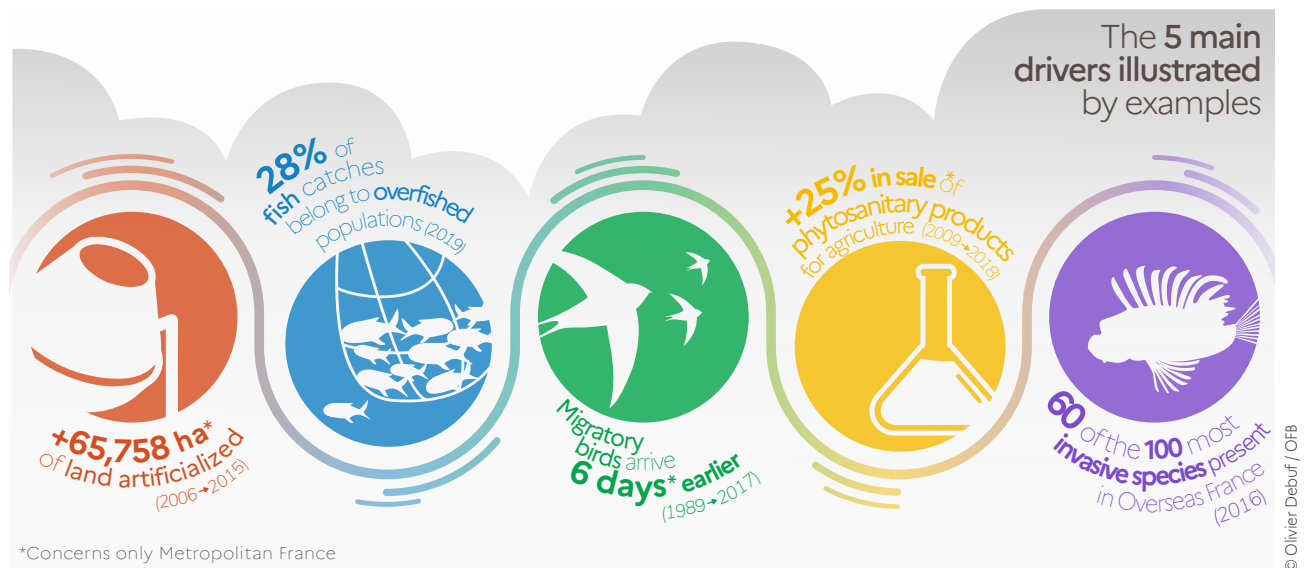
## Indicators by habitat-type

Within the National Biodiversity Observatory (ONB) experts from various backgrounds are organised in **thematic workgroups** to monitor trends in biodiversity by major habitat-types.



The main questions about biodiversity are thus sorted in function of the major habitats found in France, whether marine and coastal, agricultural, forest, urban and freshwater habitats, or wetlands.

# What are the threats to biodiversity?



The IPBES\*\* international panel of experts has identified **five main drivers** that affect the natural world:

- changes in land and sea use
- direct exploitation of some organisms
- climate change
- pollution
- invasive alien species

These drivers are all caused by **human activities**.

The **degradation of habitats and disappearance of species** are the consequences of these drivers, which accumulate in time and space, thus threatening the **health** of ecosystems and by extension that of human societies.

The way our **societies** organise themselves, in particular at **economic and political** level, alters the intensity of these drivers and how they locally affect biodiversity. Our **lifestyles**,

and also factors such as population density, therefore determine the magnitude of our impact on the living world.

\*\*Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

## How are the economy and biodiversity linked?

Worldwide, **fourteen** of the eighteen services that nature provides us with and on which we are dependant, including from an economic point of view, have been **globally declining** for fifty years: examples include the

pollination of flowers and the formation of soils.

**Awareness-raising among economic stakeholders** (national and local public authorities, companies and households) is on the increase, as testified by trends in the financial contribution made by these stakeholders in favour of biodiversity. Their mobilisation for biodiversity reached slightly above **two billion euros** in 2016, which accounts for **0.1% of GDP**. Public stakeholders remain the main financial

contributors to the conservation of nature, ahead of companies.

**The national financial contribution** remains low compared to the benefits that we obtain from ecosystems. While it is difficult to attribute an economic value to the services provided by nature, and to the risk of their disappearance, increasing numbers of studies are attempting to evaluate this contribution. For example, the pollination service alone could account for between **2.3 and 5.2 billion euros** in France per year.

# What are the policies in favour of biodiversity?

The current **ecological crisis** is of such magnitude that a set of individual actions is necessary but not sufficient to produce the transformative changes which are indispensable for alleviating it.

In the framework of the **Convention on Biological Diversity** adopted by the international community in 1992, the UN Member-States are committed to achieving **twenty targets**, called the "Aichi 2020 targets", to **conserve Life on Earth**.

Implemented at European level, in France they take the form of a **National Strategy for Biodiversity**, which was supplemented in July 2018 by the **Biodiversity Plan**. Its aim is to strengthen France's actions to conserve biodiversity and to activate the means for restoring it when it has been degraded. This overall target is then implemented by means of the whole set of sectoral policies and at local level. New national and international targets will be fixed in 2021.



To view the dynamic map of protected areas, visit:

<https://naturefrance.fr/indicateurs/principal-milieu-naturel-metropolitain-detruit-par-artificialisation>



# How does the collapse of biodiversity affect our society?



In 2019, **32% of the French population** considered that the disappearance of certain plant or animal species was one of the **two most worrying problems** linked to the degradation of the environment, which shows a **considerable increase in public awareness** about these subjects (up **8 points** in two years).

The worldwide health crisis, with its exceptional consequences, for which 2020 will always be remembered, reminds us that the **fate of humanity** is more than ever **indissociable from the global changes** underway.

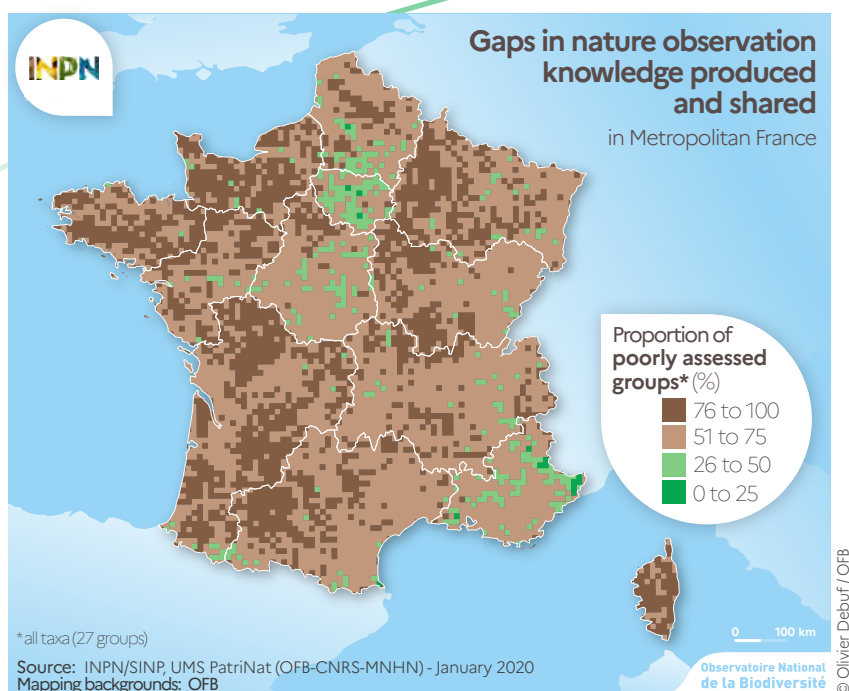
The **transformations that are affecting the biosphere** (collapse of living beings, uniformization of landscapes, climate changes and acidification of the oceans) have **social consequences**: displacement of populations, geopolitical tensions, increase in inequalities, aggravation of food and health crises, growing pressures on water and energy resources. For that matter, **8 French people out of 10** feel concerned about the status of biodiversity.



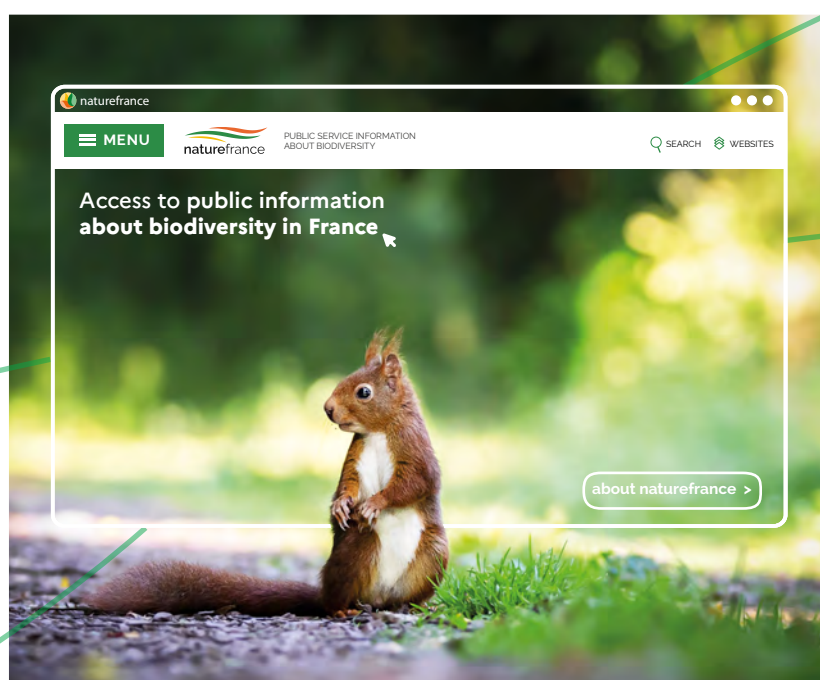
# What knowledge do we have about biodiversity?

In order to anticipate the future and orient the choices made by Society, it is indispensable to establish an **assessment of biodiversity**, **measure its trends** and **conceive of solutions** to halt its degradation.

Concerning the **186 883** known terrestrial and marine species in France, more than **60 million observation data** are now available in the National Inventory of Natural Heritage (INPN), and this volume is increasing by 19 % per year. **Two new species** are described every day in France. However, despite these efforts, **two thirds of the main species-groups** are still considered as poorly assessed in France. There is still insufficient knowledge about Overseas France species, which make up **80 %** of our diversity.



## naturefrance.fr: the new public reference portal for information about biodiversity



The naturefrance public information service about biodiversity is now accessible by means of a new portal <https://naturefrance.fr>.

The aim of naturefrance is to **make biodiversity data talk**. And thus to enable as many people as possible to understand the major issues linked to biodiversity, its trends and the drivers that threaten it, together with the actions and responses of Society.

That is why naturefrance.fr is now the **showcase of the National Biodiversity Observatory**, giving **access to everything it produces**: publications, indicators, summary maps.

The naturefrance.fr portal presents this information in the form of articles that tackle the **six major questions mentioned in this report**.

# ONB

Observatoire National  
de la Biodiversité

The **National Biodiversity Observatory (ONB)** is a network of contributors co-managed by the French Biodiversity Agency (**OFB**) and the Data and Statistical Studies Unit (**SDES**) of the Ministry for Ecological Transition.

From the data collected, the ONB **designs and disseminates indicators** revealing information about the major questions with regard to biodiversity in France. Produced by means of a **rigorous and transparent scientific methodology, and validated by an editorial committee** combining the State sphere, the world of research, non-governmental organisations and biodiversity professionals, the ONB's publications are made available to citizens, journalists, elected officials, scientists and natural area managers.



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