



Save Biodiversity 01/06

Update from Countdown 2010

Editorial: About Countdown 2010 and its latest developments

Dear Countdown 2010 Partners, dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of "Save Biodiversity", the new bi-monthly newsletter of Countdown 2010! We would like to invite you to have a fresh look at what is happening around the 2010 biodiversity target - and believe me, there is a lot going on. We have thus tried to include many links to stories on the Countdown 2010 website and other sites on the web. Feel free to pass this newsletter on to friends and colleagues - and send us feedback about what you like or not.

One of the things that regularly strikes me - after more than ten years working with the conservation community - is that we tend to be a movement that has been like an orchestra but with its instruments playing from different sheets of music. We have many

different scientific approaches; we have many institutionally-based approaches to biodiversity and conservation; we classify the world in so many ways today that for many in the public domain it is either confusing, disheartening or simply incapacitating. I believe we need to rethink how we can unify the purpose of all our different conservation activities in a way that allows society to see the common objective under which there are different ways of working.

So, here is a major [challenge](#) to our community: how do we rationalize the many voices, the many different [research entry points](#) that we have in biodiversity, and create not an orchestra of hundreds of different voices, but as chorus of people and institutions - different and diverse - with messages and answers that the rest of society can understand and therefore relate to.

Based on my six months experience in rolling out Countdown 2010 in Europe, I strongly believe that 2010 biodiversity target provides this visionary idea and a frame for concerted and collective action by taking a global commitment and implementing it at the local level. We can make a quantum leap to influence the policies that will ultimately make society chose a path more aligned to our common vision of a world that values and conserves biodiversity for the sake of nature and people - not only by critiquing societies' slow response but also by rethinking our own premises and strategies of engagement. The next five years will be critical and we invite you to [join this growing alliance](#) around the 2010 biodiversity target.

- [Sebastian Winkler, Head of Countdown 2010](#)

Measuring progress: The Countdown 2010 Assessment Toolkit

To save biodiversity, we need to know where we stand and where we are going", said Sebastian Winkler in his introduction to the first Countdown 2010 Assessment Workshop in November in Copenhagen. Since then, the Countdown 2010 secretariat in collaboration with WCMC and IEEP has been busy preparing

a methodology for assessing national and regional progress on the 2010 biodiversity target. The aim of this project is to assess the actions taken by regional and national governments and make sure that inactivity towards the 2010 biodiversity target does not go unnoticed and successes are highlighted and shared.

Assessments will be carried out in an open and transparent manner by experts or small teams of experts working at the regional level. Their results would be widely consulted to ensure that the findings are justifiable and represent the views of the Countdown partners in each region. The final reports and the data

used for them will be available on the Countdown 2010 website. A first pilot

test of the Assessment Toolkit is scheduled to start in spring 2006.

- [Countdown 2010 Assessment Website](#)

Become a Partner now: Sign the Declaration to save biodiversity by 2010!

Do you think that biodiversity is a good idea? Do you worry about overfishing, the extinction crisis or invasive species? Do you sometimes wonder whether there is anything you can do?

European governments have promised to save biodiversity by 2010. Together we can help them achieve this target. Take the first step with your organisation and sign the Countdown 2010 Declaration!

Approved by the Executive Meeting in December 2005, the declaration expresses

- Support of the commitments to halt or significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010;
- Encouragement to European decision makers at all levels, in both the public and the private sector, to contribute to these commitments and
- Commitment of the undersigning organisation to encourage and assist decision makers and European societies in achieving these commitments.

Additionally, every organisation is asked to define their specific contribution towards the 2010 biodiversity target. The list of signatories will be continuously updated on countdown2010.net.

You can find the full declaration attached to this newsletter. Signing is easy. Why don't you do it now?

- [The Countdown 2010 Declaration](#)

Have your say: Contribute to the Consultation on the European Commission's Biodiversity Communication

The internet consultation for the forthcoming EU Communication on Biodiversity will close on February 6. With this measure, DG Environment is seeking views on what needs to be done for the EU to deliver on its commitments to a) halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010, and, b) contribute towards significantly reducing

the rate of biodiversity loss worldwide by 2010. The consultation takes the form of a fairly simple questionnaire, and we would encourage all partners to use the last days of the consultation to contribute their views. Our partner Planta Europa has published its views on the Biodiversity Communication on its

website and remarks that the current draft of the biodiversity communication lacks financing safeguards, reporting mechanisms and measurable, attainable targets.

- [Internet Consultation](#)
- [Planta Europa](#)

Act globally: The 2010 biodiversity target and the rest of the world

Last September at the UN World Summit 154 Heads of State called for support for the implementation of the [Johannesburg commitment](#) for a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. The 2010 biodiversity target is well

alive. Some miles away from New York, but as well in September, the [IUCN Council](#) recommended to the IUCN Commissions and the Director General that Countdown 2010 is an "excellent way to promote greater commitments to realizing the global 2010

biodiversity target". So far, Countdown 2010 has been a Pan-European initiative, working with civil society and European governments to take the necessary actions to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. In the decision, the IUCN Council also requested the Director General to

include this issue on the agenda of the meeting of the Regional and National Committees to be hosted by the The Netherlands, 13-15 February 2006.

No doubt the next milestone for the 2010 biodiversity target at the global level, will be the 8th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in Curitiba, Brazil on

20-31 March 2006. It takes place at an important juncture in the life of the Convention on Biological Diversity - against the backdrop of the findings of the [Millennium Ecosystem Assessment](#) it provides a unique opportunity to catalyze efforts and set the stage for achieving the 2010 biodiversity target. To do this requires universal

commitment and concerted efforts not only by governments. To this end we are organising with our partners the 2010 Biodiversity Forum on 24-25 March 2006 in Curitiba which conclusions will be fed into the Conference of the Parties.

- [Global Biodiversity Forum](#)

Act locally: Local governments joining the Countdown 2010 alliance - the example of Tilburg

Sustainability on the planet cannot be achieved without ensuring the sustainability of local communities. Countdown 2010 recognizes the importance of working with regional and local governments in the process of changing lifestyles, production, consumption and spatial patterns to save biodiversity.

[Tilburg](#) in the Netherlands is a successful example among the Countdown 2010 cities. Tilburg joined the alliance in May 2005 and since then it has been implementing an Environment Policy Plan, which includes a substantive

part related to conservation of nature.

Tilburg is currently mapping the different species living in its territory, as a baseline to achieve the halt of biodiversity by 2010. In addition, together with other municipalities in the Noord Brabant province, it started a project called "Green Template". The Green Template aims at ensuring a cohesive ecological structure around the city of Tilburg and the adjacent rural centres. The main risk for biodiversity arises during the physical planning process, one of the main responsibilities of any local governments. By being part of the Green Template

project, Tilburg commits itself to compensate any loss of nature as a result of the construction of new housing or industrial estate by the acquisition of land to restore natural habitats.

This is a specific and effective way to preserve and restore biodiversity at local level, without compromising social and economic development.

Are you working with your municipality in nature conservation? Just contact us and you learn more on how to make your municipality another Countdown 2010 success story. Together we can save biodiversity!

Countdown 2010: Four Challenges for Four Years

Looking out of the Countdown 2010 Secretariat window, the skies are grey, the streets far too loud and not a single tree dares to show its leaves against the patches of concrete. For this very spot, one could say the loss of biodiversity has come to halt – but unfortunately there's hardly any left. Luckily, perspectives are not everywhere as gloomy as in

Brussels winters, and it's fairly easy to find far more biodiverse places in Europe. To make sure it stays this way and to meet the 2010 biodiversity target, the Countdown 2010 Secretariat would like to propose four challenges for the remaining four years to all organisations dedicated to saving biodiversity:

1. **Get out of your box.** Saving our natural wealth of biodiversity is not something environmentalists can do on their own. Challenge #1 is about convincing the ones with the money to invest in biodiversity.
2. **Be committed.** Often, biodiversity is traded off against more intense

- agriculture, an industrial site or just another motorway. Challenge #2 is about making sure that we do not waste our livelihoods through unsustainable economic practices.
3. **Show off.** Biodiversity remains complex and abstract for most people. We

need to show what it means to us and to humanity by developing indicators, telling stories and, yes, providing numbers. Challenge #3 is about making biodiversity tangible, visible and thus valuable.

4. **Do it.** Halting the loss of biodiversity by

2010 is a task that requires thousands of small steps by thousands of actors – everywhere in Europe. Challenge #4 is about cherishing the diversity of these activities and to remember that many small steps make a giant leap.

Partners

- [Agenzia Regionale per la Protezione Ambientale della Sicilia](#)
- [An Taisce](#)
- [ARKive](#)
- [BirdLife International](#)
- [Bristol Zoo Gardens](#)
- [CEEWEB](#)
- [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(DEFRA\)](#)
- [Deutsche Wildtier Stiftung \(German Wildlife Foundation\)](#)
- [Earthwatch Institute \(Europe\)](#)
- [EBCD](#)
- [ECNC](#)
- [English Nature](#)
- [Estonian Environmental Protection Institute](#)
- [Europarc Federation](#)
- [European Commission](#)
- [European Environmental Bureau](#)
- [Fieldfare - International Ecological Development](#)
- [Fundación Naturaleza y Hombre](#)
- [ICLEI European Secretariat](#)
- [IFOAM](#)
- [Institute for European Environmental Policy](#)
- [International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation \(CIC\)](#)
- [IUCN - The World Conservation Union](#)
- [Legambiente](#)
- [Lega Navale Italiana](#)
- [Ministero dell' Ambiente y della Tutela del Territorio, Italy](#)
- [National Park Gran Paradiso](#)
- [National Park Hoge Kempen](#)
- [National Park Thayatal](#)
- [Norwegian Ministry of Environment](#)
- [Plantlife International](#)
- [Provincie Noord-Brabant](#)
- [Royal Society for the Protection of Birds](#)
- [Syzygy](#)
- [City of Tilburg](#)
- [WAZA - The World Association of Zoos and Aquaria](#)
- [Wildscreen](#)
- [WWF International](#)
- [Zoo Basel](#)
- [Zoo Zürich AG](#)
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Impressum

This newsletter is issued bi-monthly by Countdown 2010. To subscribe/unsubscribe, please send an email to [Wiebke Herding](mailto:Wiebke.Herding@countdown2010.net). We also welcome comments and feedback to the same address.

For more information on Countdown 2010, visit the website at <http://www.countdown2010.net>