

welcome to

SAFEGUARD'S SPRING NEWSLETTER



Safeguard's consortium met for the project's **4th Annual General Meeting** in Mons, Belgium

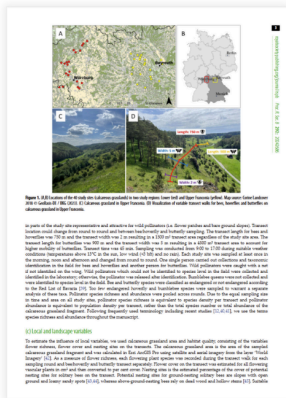
Between 17 and 19 March 2025, more than 50 Safeguard experts gathered in Mons, Belgium to showcase results, discuss impact and exploitation, and synchronise efforts and future actions towards sustainable pollination and reversing the losses of wild pollinators across Europe and beyond.



The three-day event included not only informative [work package updates](#) but also a workshop on the synthesis of existing data, policy brief discussions and [presentations of relevant EU pollinator projects](#).

[Learn more](#)

Landscape management and improved habitat quality can contribute to pollinator conservation, Safeguard study finds



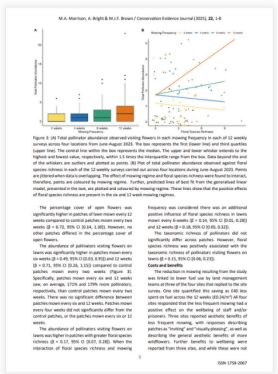
In a recent Safeguard study, published in Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, researchers investigate how local habitat quality as well as agri-environmental schemes (AES) and configuration of the surrounding landscape can contribute to the preservation of pollinator diversity.

Results show that larger calcareous grasslands support more bee and butterfly species, especially endangered ones. Pollinator richness also increases with more flower resources and organic fields, nesting sites, smaller fields, and better connections between grasslands, with varying effects on the three studied species. However, in contrast to expectations, AES flowering fields did not benefit pollinator communities in grasslands.

Learn more

New Safeguard study finds that reduced mowing boosts pollinator abundance in the UK urban lawns

A recent Safeguard study published in the Conservation Evidence Journal investigates how the different mowing frequency of urban lawn spaces in the United Kingdom is interlinked with pollinator abundance, suggesting better lawn management practices.



Researchers found that reducing mowing frequency from the typical two-week regime being used at sites before the study, to mowing either every six or 12 weeks, can increase the number of pollinators visiting flowers on lawns by over 170%. Floral species richness was also doubled on patches mown every 12 weeks compared to patches mown every two weeks, and, in turn,

pollinator abundance and taxonomic richness were higher on patches with higher floral species richness.

Learn more

New Safeguard policy brief

Towards pollinator-friendly policy and practices: Worldviews, opportunities and barriers



Safeguard has just released its second policy brief providing an overview of how the EU pollinator agenda came to be, while also summarising the indirect drivers of such decline, linked to the diverse and diverging perspectives on pollinators in both policy and practice. The brief highlights the important role of current policies and increased knowledge, and conveys a message of urgency, calling for necessary action in governance, policy and practice to support a positive change for pollinators.

Learn more

Safeguard's Buzzing Table workshop report

Gaming policies for a pollinator-friendly landscape: A science-policy workshop

On 10 December 2024, the H2020 Safeguard project and the Horizon Europe BioAgora project held a science-policy workshop "Gaming policies for a pollinator-friendly landscape" bringing together scientists, policymakers and NGOs passionate about protecting pollinators and their vital role in our ecosystem.

The event focuses on exploring a gamified approach to developing effective and acceptable policy changes for creating pollinator-friendly landscapes. The Buzzing Table workshop fostered a collaborative environment for exploring and discussing policy options and their potential impact on shaping a sustainable future for pollinators and the vital services they provide.



[Learn more](#)

Upcoming



Farming for pollinators: Unlocking economic and ecological gains



2 April 2025



Brussels (Residence Palace) and online



09:00 – 14:00 CET

The Institute for Environmental Policy ([IEEP](#)), in collaboration with the European Landowners Organisation ([ELO](#)) and Safeguard, is organising a science-policy conference to explore the crucial yet often overlooked role of pollinators in agriculture.

While pollinators are essential for crop production, their contributions extend far beyond pollination itself. This conference will highlight the economic, environmental, and social benefits of pollinators in agricultural landscapes, offering insights into how farming practices can support both pollinators and stakeholders across the agri-food value chain.

[Learn more](#)

Update on implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation

The uniform format for the national restoration plans has been agreed and the implementing act will be available April 2025. To assist Member States with the development and implementation of the National Restoration Plans the Commission has developed the Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR) Reference Portal which includes a comprehensive set of guidelines, explanatory notes, reference data and other materials.

[Learn more](#)

State of debate on forest monitoring: Proposal for a Regulation on a Forest Monitoring Framework

The proposal to harmonise forest data collection across the EU continues to raise a lot of disagreement amongst MEPs. Supporters, including left-wing and Green MEPs, argue that the legislation is necessary to standardise data collection, needed to make decisions to improve the monitoring of forest health, enhance biodiversity conservation, and track trends related to climate change and carbon sequestration. However, critics, including some from the European People's Party (EPP) and right-wing groups, question the necessity of the regulation, arguing it adds administrative burdens and contradicts efforts to reduce red tape. Forest owners also express concerns about unclear benefits, particularly for private landowners, while the European Commission counters that the proposal will incur no costs for private owners and could open new revenue streams by certifying sustainable practices.

[Learn more](#)

A new study led by the JRC: Revisiting the soil carbon saturation concept to inform a risk index in European agricultural soils

A recent study led by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and published in *Nature Communications* reveals that the topsoil organic carbon pool in 43 to 83 million hectares of agricultural land in the EU and UK is highly

vulnerable, particularly in cooler, more humid regions. This accounts for 23% to 44% of all agricultural land in the EU and UK.

The study emphasises that most agricultural soils in the EU require additional protective strategies, including the use of cover crops, improved crop rotations, reduced tillage, deep-rooting plants, more organic amendments, and agroforestry.

The authors argue for better prioritizing of areas for preserving and accruing soil organic carbon, and more targeted and effective carbon management strategies in agricultural soils, to enhance the carbon storage potential in a stable form.

[Learn more](#)

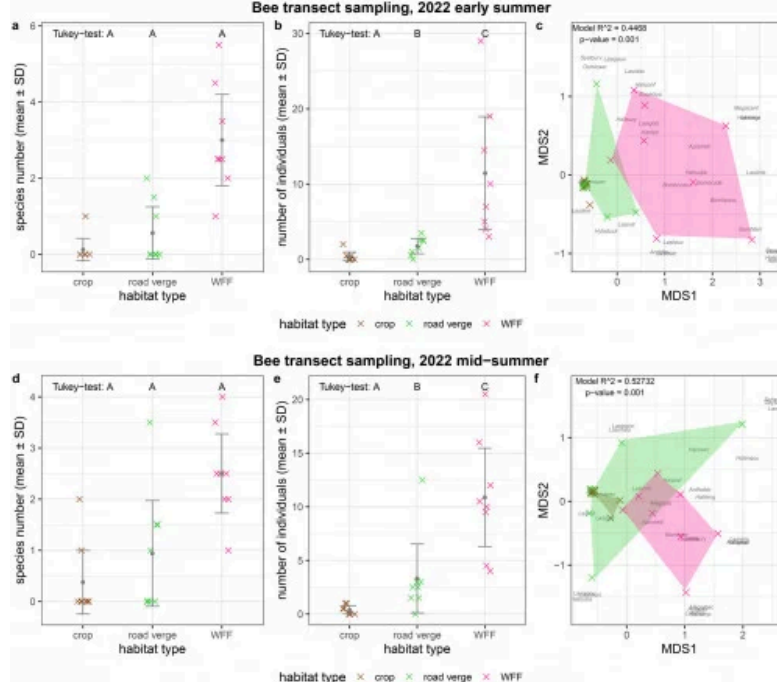
State of debate on soil monitoring: EU’s soil monitoring directive (SMD)

The EU's Soil Monitoring Directive (SMD) is facing significant opposition, particularly from Germany's Christian Democratic Union (CDU/CSU), which is pushing to scrap the law, backed by the German Farmers' Union. Supporters, like Slovakian MEP Martin Hojsík, argue for the urgency of the law, noting that 60% of EU soils are degraded, and that the directive could help address soil health and carbon storage. However, there are disagreements on key issues like defining "land take" (land converted for infrastructure) and the scope of land management requirements. The European People's Party (EPP) and far-right groups are advocating for a more limited directive, which has led to slow negotiations.

[Learn more](#)

Relevant research

New SHOWCASE paper explores the ecological diversity across habitats in a Central European agricultural landscape



A recent SHOWCASE project's study assessed how different farmland habitats - crop fields, road verges and wildflower fields (WFFs) - support functional groups such as pollinators and predators. Data was collected over one year, with vegetation surveyed during peak flowering time and arthropods sampled twice to account for seasonal variations. While the short duration of the study poses some limitations, the clear differences observed among the habitats provide valuable insights into their ecological roles.

[Learn more](#)

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In an effort to ensure the uptake of project results by a broad and diverse audience, the Safeguard project is expanding its online presence by launching official accounts on LinkedIn and Bluesky. These platforms will serve as key channels for sharing the latest results, developments, and insights from the project, engaging with stakeholders, and fostering discussions on pollinator conservation.

Stay tuned for project updates and research findings!

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