

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS, RESEARCH & ANALYSIS (ENRA)

NIEL's monthly roundup of the latest international research information and policy analysis relevant to Northern Ireland.



Agriculture



Biodiversity



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***Sustainable
Development***



Woodland/Forestry

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**Agriculture**[Nature Restoration – what it means for farmers and other land managers](#)

The European Commission's proposal for a Nature Restoration Regulation, known as the Nature Restoration Law (NRL), aims to accelerate the restoration of ecosystems and habitats in Europe. Much of the debate has focused on the expected impacts of the law on land managers (foresters and in particular farmers), along with what it means for food production. However, in many cases the claims have been very general and not based on solid evidence. To inform the debate this briefing provides an evidence-based overview of the possible impacts of the law on the farming sector, on climate adaptation and on food security, taking into account the proposed changes by the Council.

[New research supports the need for streamlining best practice in anaerobic digestion](#)

A robust assessment of GHG emissions from anaerobic digestion for biogas in France finds that its potential carbon savings depend on many variables, as reflected in the EU legislation. This study suggests that, in France, the potential of anaerobic digestion (AD) to mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions depends on two factors: 1) it must be accompanied by post-fermentation gastight digestate storage; and 2) the efficiency of soil carbon storage at baseline (lower baseline soil carbon storage leads to greater GHG mitigation).

[Birds as environmental indicators: raptor species a good proxy for agricultural bird diversity](#)

The lesser kestrel is an ideal flagship species for tracking the avian diversity of intensively farmed land in Italy, according to a new study. Modern intensive husbandry (livestock production for meat and milk) is threatening biodiversity in agricultural ecosystems, and has become a leading cause of critical environmental issues and biodiversity loss worldwide.

**Biodiversity**[Notice nature to improve your mental health and encourage conservation](#)

The health of humans and ecosystems is interconnected, and the claim that our well-being benefits from connectedness to nature is well-documented. This study clarifies the impact of citizen science projects and 'noticing good things in nature' on people's connectedness to nature and pro-conservation behaviour.

[Power pylons offer pockets of habitat for mammals in intensively farmed landscapes](#)

Hares, deer and foxes regularly visit and forage in unfarmed patches of land under power pylons. A new study offers guidance for conservation managers to enhance the nature value of these habitats further. Around 10 million kilometres of power lines are spread across the EU, and research has shown that the lines and their pylons can both benefit and harm wildlife.

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Circular Economy

[Event summary | Circular economy, climate and biodiversity in the next Green Deal](#)

In June, IEEP hosted an online event 'Climate and biodiversity crises: a new role for the Circular Economy in the next European Green Deal' which gathered representatives of civil society, academia, think tanks and other stakeholders. The event was an opportunity to discuss the importance of circular economy as well as the role it plays in addressing the climate and biodiversity crises.

[Long live our electronics](#)

Massive burden: Electronic waste is growing 3 times as fast as the human population, and yet the EU is only pushing out ecodesign laws for products case-by-case. The EEB explains why lawmakers must consider an umbrella law to reduce the environmental impacts of electronic gadgets in our home and surroundings.

[Discussion Paper on EU Wellbeing Economy](#)

Building on the contents of the EU Wellbeing Economy Coalition Vision Statement, this discussion paper sets out to explore the key components of an envisioned wellbeing economy for Europe, showcasing the knowledge and ideas within the coalition. The discussion paper puts forward proposals within the following policy areas: institutions, civil society, employment, trade, taxation and finance, policy design, business models, emissions and resources, nature and biodiversity, health as well as public services. Each of the ten sections offers an accessible overview of the state of play in Europe, as well as solutions and ideas for the way forward.

[Circular economy for textiles: taking responsibility to reduce, reuse and recycle textile waste and boosting markets for used textiles](#)

The European Commission is proposing rules to make producers responsible for the full lifecycle of textile products and to support the sustainable management of textile waste across the EU. This initiative will accelerate the development of the separate collection, sorting, reuse and recycling sector for textiles in the EU, in line with the [EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles](#). Increasing the availability of used textiles is expected to create local jobs and save money for consumers in the EU and beyond, while alleviating the impacts of textile production on natural resources.



Climate Action

[Eurobarometer: Majority of Europeans consider that the green transition should go faster](#)

A huge majority of Europeans believe climate change is a serious problem facing the world (93%), according to a [new Eurobarometer survey](#).

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[3 things you should know about offsetting](#)

Greenwashing: Business is booming for the carbon offsetting industry! But alongside this growth, controversial claims have multiplied. The European Environmental Bureau outline 3 things you should know about offsetting, to help you peer through the 'climate neutral' facade.



Economic Growth

No new stories this month



Energy

No new stories this month



Environmental Justice

[How to convince a village to destroy their future in 8 steps](#)

Environmental justice: In this satiric piece, Truike Geerts from CATAPA provides a handy guide for multinational mining corporations to divide communities, spark conflict, and create the chaos necessary for their projects to proceed.

[Safeguarding community rights and the issue of "facilitating public acceptance"](#)

There is no "green mining": Policymakers and the mining sector are embracing the notion of "green extractivism" and employing it as a rationale for mining activities within Europe. Their assertion is that such mining is not only vital for the energy transition but also imperative from a geopolitical standpoint to strengthen Europe's resilience and diminish dependence on other nations for crucial raw materials. Given that certain metals and minerals are indispensable for green technologies, both companies and governments are enthusiastically embracing this trend by ramping up investments in new mining ventures. But at what cost?



Food

[Frequently Asked Questions: Reducing Food Waste in the EU – Why is it important?](#)

Food waste has a huge economic, social and environmental impact. [Nearly 59 million tonnes of food waste](#) (131 kg/inhabitant) are generated in the EU each year. This represents an estimated loss of €132 billion. Around 10% of all food supplied to retail, restaurants, food services (e.g., school and corporate canteens, hospitals, etc.) and households is wasted. At the same time, some 32.6 million

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people cannot afford a quality meal (including meat, chicken, fish or vegetarian equivalent) every second day.



Freshwater

[Invasive fish in Catalonia show need for updated management protocol for biological invasion prevention](#)

Invasive species are a growing threat for freshwater ecosystems and can have widespread ecological impacts. New research suggests that current strategies to prevent invasions need updating.

[Cancer drugs in freshwater impact survival of water fleas — an important fish food](#)

Two human cancer medicines found in freshwater ecosystems at low concentrations can cause mutations in aquatic organisms. Researchers exposed water fleas to chemotherapeutic drugs, observing serious impact on DNA and life history over time. In 2019 the European Commission adopted a 'strategic approach to pharmaceuticals in the environment', citing a need for further monitoring and research of environmental impacts. Pharmaceuticals are frequently found in freshwater rivers and streams.



Marine

[EU Mission 'Restore our Ocean and Waters': €106 million for new projects for protection, conservation, depollution and innovation](#)

The European Commission announced new projects which will receive over €106 million to contribute to the [EU Mission 'Restore our Ocean and Waters'](#). The projects gather over 370 beneficiaries from 36 countries, including SMEs, research institutions, local authorities, schools and businesses. They will play a key role in achieving climate neutrality and restoring nature by protecting and restoring biodiversity in waters, cutting pollution, supporting a sustainable blue economy and developing the [European Digital Twin of the Ocean](#).

[So far, there are favourable winds and calm seas in terms of protecting biodiversity on the high seas, but there is still a long way to go to reach a safe port.](#)

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, welcomes the consensus adoption of the High Seas Biodiversity Treaty* on 19 June in New York by all UN Member States and discusses what needs to happen next to keep the momentum going.



Planning

No new stories this month

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Sustainable Development

[Taking stock of the progress towards the SDGs at the UN High Level Political Forum 2023](#)

The global community is at the midway point of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). This briefing looks at how the multiple crises have impacted the path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and what are the challenges and opportunities for a systemic approach towards these common objectives?



Woodland/Forestry

[The potential role of a forest monitoring framework for EU climate objectives](#)

Increasing carbon removals from forests is a necessity in achieving the EU's overall climate objective of carbon neutrality by 2050. This is embodied in the EU's own carbon sink objective for 2030 under the Land Use and Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUF) Regulation. However, increased demand for woody biomass exacerbated by its inclusion towards increasing renewable energy targets for 2030 under the Renewable Energy Directive (aka RED III) could potentially undermine this goal. The upcoming Forest Monitoring Framework will play a fundamental role in providing greater transparency for monitoring the progress towards meeting the sink objective.

[Effectiveness of urban tree planting for city cooling varies between European regions](#)

The effectiveness of tree planting in cities to reduce urban temperatures varies regionally. This study reports differences in cooling efficiency trends between European regions, and highlights issues that affect cooling benefits.

[Major rise in forest disturbances over the past 70 years](#)

A comprehensive study of European forests has revealed a sharp rise in forest disturbance across 34 countries between 1950 and 2019. Damage caused by bark beetles, fire, and other causes of disturbance are undermining climate and biodiversity policy targets, warn the authors of a recent study.