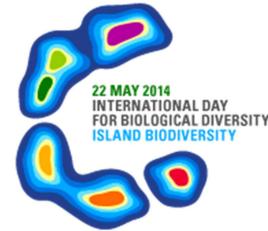


Convention de Berne
Bern Convention



22 May 2014: International Day for Biological Diversity – “Island Biodiversity”

Thirteen years ago, the United Nations proclaimed May 22 the International Day for Biological Diversity. Under this year’s main theme: “Island Biodiversity”, the [Bern Convention](#) - Europe’s regional biodiversity treaty - joins global efforts to increase the understanding of the extraordinary biological value of life on islands and the interrelation between the protection of the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Strasbourg, 21 May 2014 – Islands cover only 5% of the global land area but they host a third of the world’s terrestrial biodiversity hotspots, including threatened mammals, birds and amphibians; in addition, 70% of coral reefs and roughly 20% of the world’s vascular plant diversity is only found on islands.

Despite their outstanding ecological value, islands need to receive a special and prioritised conservation attention, as they are very fragile ecosystems, and most of today’s species extinctions occur in there.

Since more than 30 years the [Bern Convention](#) (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, Bern 1979), underlines humankind's role in the conservation of the European natural heritage. Human beings have the duty to preserve wild flora, fauna, and their natural habitats, including water, both for the benefit of future generations and for the numerous services that nature provides for all of us. The Bern Convention is much more than a regional agreement about environmental protection: it is a tool for achieving sustainability and as such, it is an important European contribution to the sustainable development of life on this planet. In 2011 The Bern Convention adopted a Charter on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Biological Diversity on European Islands and asked its 51 contracting parties to devote special attention to island biological diversity in the implementation of the 2020 targets adopted in the framework of the UN Convention of Biological Diversity.

“The biological diversity of European islands is an important part of Europe’s natural heritage and warrants protection for both its intrinsic value and because the services it provides are a fundamental pillar of local socio-economic development.

The conversion, modification and disturbance of natural habitats continues to be a significant threat to biodiversity on many European islands, wherefore spatial planning should give biodiversity full consideration.

The direct and indirect impacts of climate change on the especially vulnerable biodiversity and living natural resources on European islands require concerted preventive action, including measures enhancing their resilience and facilitating their adaptation.”

Charter on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity on European Islands