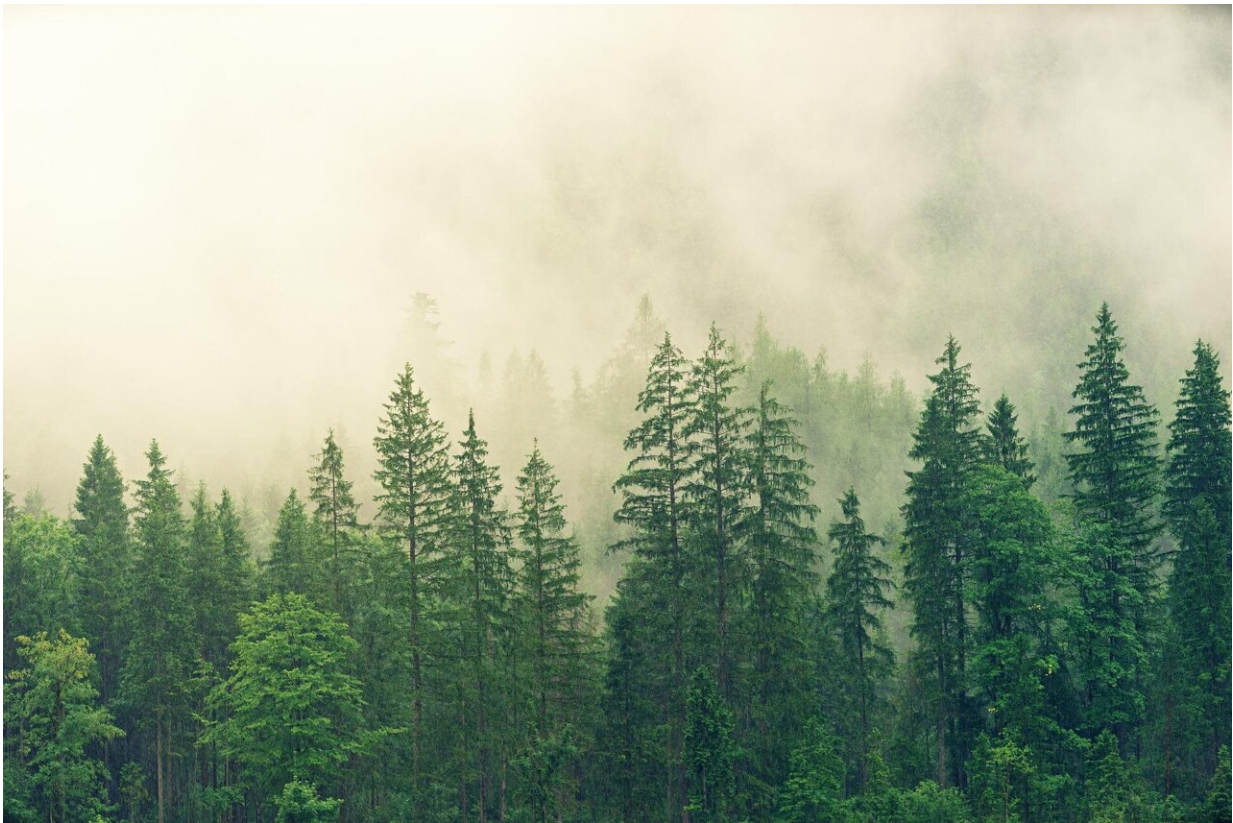


Report: Maintaining and enhancing forest biodiversity in Europe

May 30 2022



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Biodiversity loss has been globally recognized as a major threat to ecological and socio-economic stability. The forest ecosystems of Europe, which include both natural and planted forests, provide habitats

for numerous species and are havens for much of Europe's biodiversity.

In a comprehensive new *European Forest Institute* study, a multidisciplinary team of 13 authors from 10 countries have analyzed how to effectively maintain and enhance forest biodiversity in Europe:

- Forest biodiversity monitoring is key. Increased conservation and management of European forest biodiversity starts with effective monitoring.
- Hands-on nature-positive management is possible in every forest managed for wood production, including plantation forests. Doing so begins with increasing tree [genetic diversity](#) and [tree species](#) diversity.
- More stringent conservation measures are urgently required for primary, old-growth and ancient forests, as their biodiversity is unique.
- Other versions of ecosystem management, including variants of close-to-nature forest management, need to be developed further to embrace varied disturbances and support biodiversity.
- On a landscape scale, Triad management combines segregative and integrative approaches to biodiversity conservation.
- Conserving and increasing biodiversity is a shared task that needs to be undertaken ambitiously by European forest managers and owners, public and private institutions, as well as the [general public](#).

In addition, the study explores thoroughly how forest biodiversity is more than just a mixture of species. It concerns gene pools, structural and functional diversity as well as scale aspects that range from a single tree to entire regions. Threats to forest biodiversity come from both inside and outside: forest management practices, atmospheric pollution, invasive species of plants, pests and diseases, as well as increasing temperatures, drought and fires. Forest managers and policymakers can

both take action to maintain but also enhance forest biodiversity in many forms.

Policymakers should note that a considerable time lag between biodiversity responses to new policies has to be taken into account, given the slow pace of forest development and related management interventions. Long-term commitment and societal support for biodiversity policy is therefore a must. The mix of tailor-made financial and other instruments needs to be expanded to successfully secure Europe's exceptional biodiversity heritage. Market-driven instruments such as reverse auctions and biodiversity offsets are still underdeveloped and require further exploration and discussion.

EFI's Assistant Director and editor of the series, Helga Pülzl said, "This comprehensive and [interdisciplinary study](#) based on latest available knowledge on [forest biodiversity](#), sets a new and important milestone, which we were looking for."

Lead author and professor of forest ecology and management at KU Leuven, Bart Muys added, "There are simple methods to boost biodiversity in any forest in Europe, also those intensively managed for wood production. It will contribute to stability, productivity and above all more manager's satisfaction while serving the beauty of nature."

More information: Bart Muys et al, Forest Biodiversity in Europe: From Science to Policy 13, *European Forest Institute* (2022). [DOI: 10.36333/fs13. efi.int/publications-bank/fore ... -biodiversity-europe](#)

Provided by KU Leuven

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