

Denmark's biodiversity at risk

A call for action



NOT EVALUATED	DATA DEFICIENT	LEAST CONCERN	NEAR THREATENED	< VULNERABLE >	ENDANGERED	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	REGIONALLY EXTINCT	EXTINCT IN THE WILD	EXTINCT
NE	DD	LC	NT	VU	EN	CR	RE	EW	EX

Denmark hosts a large proportion of the species that are threatened at the European level, and has the important responsibility for protecting these species within its territory. Species in Denmark require greater action to improve their status. While many species already receive some conservation attention, others do not. Species can be saved from extinction but this requires a combination of sound research and carefully coordinated efforts. Denmark as an EU Member State has committed to halting biodiversity loss by 2020 but urgent action is needed to meet this target and better monitoring capacity is required to measure if the target is met.

Considerable conservation investment is needed from Denmark to ensure that the status of European species improves in the long term. This document provides an overview of the conservation status of species in Denmark based on the results of all European Red Lists completed to date. It does not provide the status of the species in the country, therefore we invite the reader to cross check national and sub-national Red Lists. Together, they can be used to help guide policies and local conservation strategies.

The European Red List

The European Red List of Species is a review of the conservation status of more than 6,000 species in Europe according to the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria and the regional Red Listing guidelines. It identifies species that are threatened with extinction at the European level so that appropriate conservation actions can be taken to improve their status. The geographical scope is continent-wide, including European parts of the Russian Federation and Turkey as well as the Macaronesian Islands. The Caucasus region is not included.

To date, European regional assessments have been completed for all mammals, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies, dragonflies, freshwater fishes and freshwater molluscs and a selection of saproxylic beetles, terrestrial molluscs, and vascular plants. Assessments of pollinators, medicinal plants, birds and marine fishes are currently under development.

The European Red List is compiled by IUCN Global Species Programme, with funding from the European Commission.

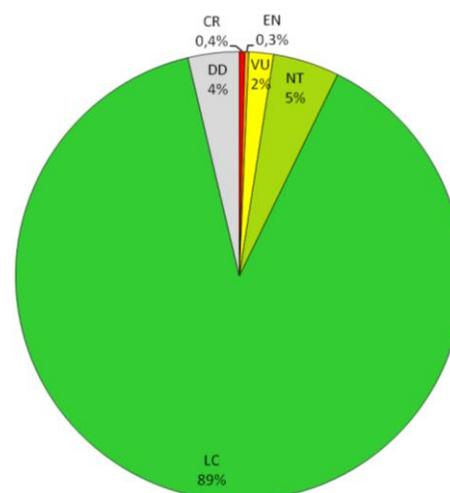
Conservation status

Denmark is host to an estimated 30,000 species of animals and plants. This number represents 19% of the total species described for Europe and could represent approximately 2% of the species in the world. According to the table below, approximately 12% of the species assessed by the European Red List of Species are present in Denmark. For some of the taxonomic groups, the percentages of European species that occur in Denmark are particularly high; such as dragonflies, mammals and saproxylic beetles.

Of the 731 species assessed that occur in Denmark, the groups comprising the highest number of species are vascular plants, saproxylic beetles and butterflies. Of the total number of species assessed in the country 3%* are considered threatened and approximately 5% are Near Threatened at the European level. Many of these species are endemic to Europe and are found nowhere else in the world.

Species that are considered threatened at the European level and occur in Denmark are found mostly in wetlands, forests and grasslands. These ecosystems require particular attention in order to ensure the habitats of these sensitive species remain.

European status of species in Denmark



Number of species assessed within each IUCN Red List category at the European level

Species group	No. of sp. in Europe	No. of sp. in Denmark	% of European sp. occurring in Denmark	No. of threatened sp. in Denmark (status at European level)		
				CR	EN	VU
Mammals	233	61	26%	0	0	4
Reptiles	140	6	4%	0	0	0
Amphibians	83	14	17%	0	0	0
Freshwater fishes	522	47	9%	1	0	1
Butterflies	435	70	16%	0	1	2
Dragonflies	137	52	38%	0	0	0
Saproxylic beetles**	431	89	21%	0	1	2
Terrestrial molluscs**	1,233	38	3%	0	0	2
Freshwater molluscs	854	64	7%	2	0	1
Vascular plants**	1,826	290	16%	0	0	1
TOTAL	5,894	731	12%	3	2	13

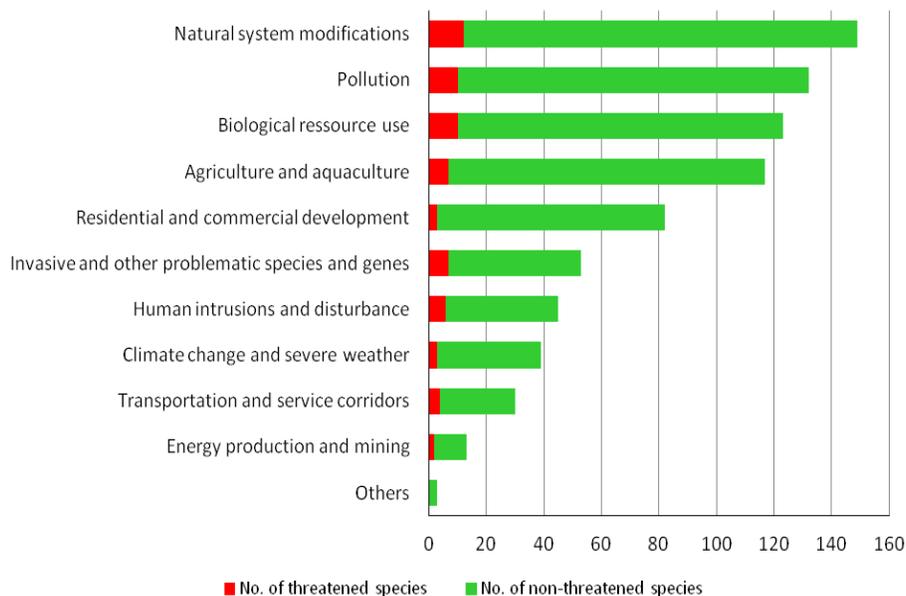
**Not comprehensively assessed, selected species only.

This table does not include the Not Applicable (NA) species in Europe (species introduced after AD 1500 or species of marginal occurrence). The data are based on the results of the European Red List (European region wide assessment).

Major threats

Habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation are the most significant threats at the European level to species that occur in Denmark. For freshwater species, major threats include the decrease in water quality due to agricultural and forestry effluents, and the abstraction of water from underground or from the streams themselves. Other major threats come from logging and wood harvesting, destruction of suitable habitats as a result of agricultural expansion and intensification, urbanization and tourism.

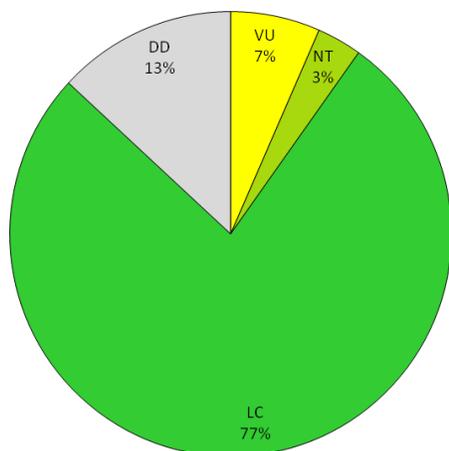
Major threats at the European level to species occurring in Denmark



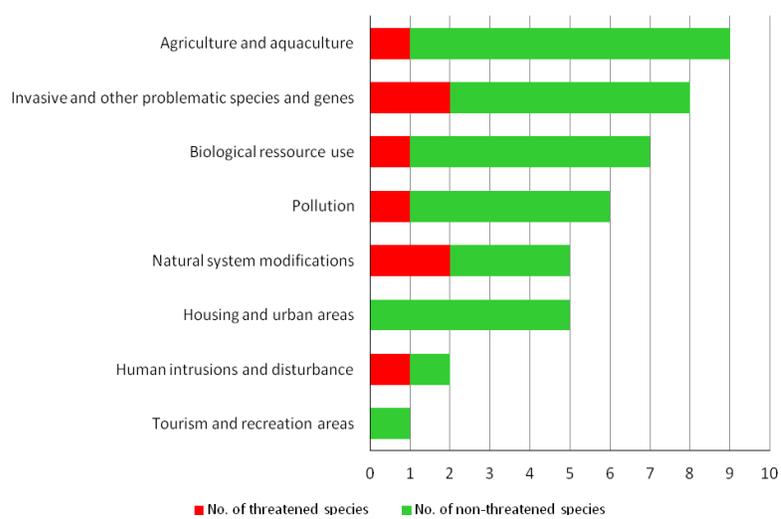
Mammals

Denmark hosts 26% of all the mammals that occur in Europe. Of these 61 species of mammals, 8%* are threatened at the European level and an additional 3% are considered Near Threatened. The major threats at the European level that can possibly (or potentially) affect mammals in Denmark are the loss and degradation of suitable habitat and invasive and other problematic species, both native and non-native. Mammal populations are also highly threatened mainly by hunting, trapping, logging and wood harvesting.

Status at European level



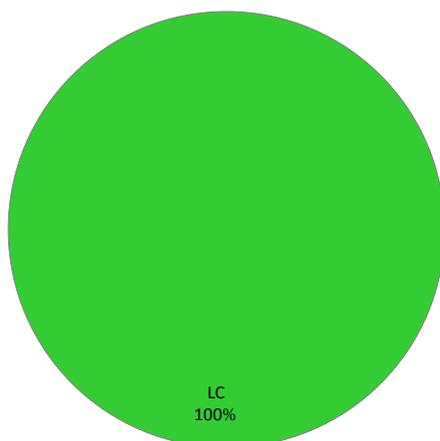
Threats at European level



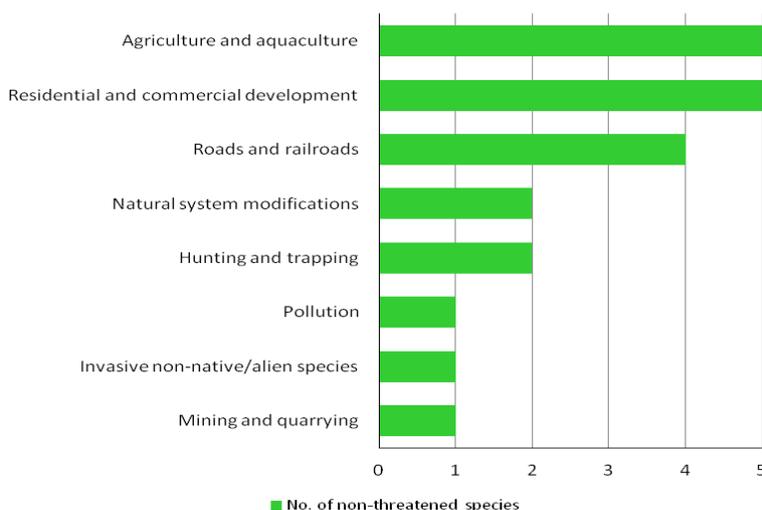
Reptiles

Reptile species in Denmark represent 4% of all the reptiles in Europe. The conservation status of reptiles in Denmark based on the European Red List data is relatively good since all species are classified as Least Concern. Habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation especially due to agricultural intensification and urbanization are the main threats to this group at the European level. It is also interesting to note that at least 33% of the reptile species in Denmark may be threatened by human persecution and control, especially snakes and lizards.

Status at European level



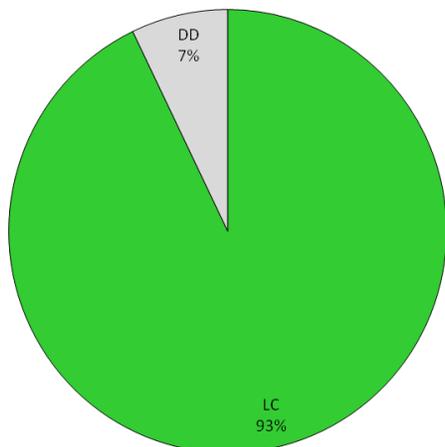
Threats at European level



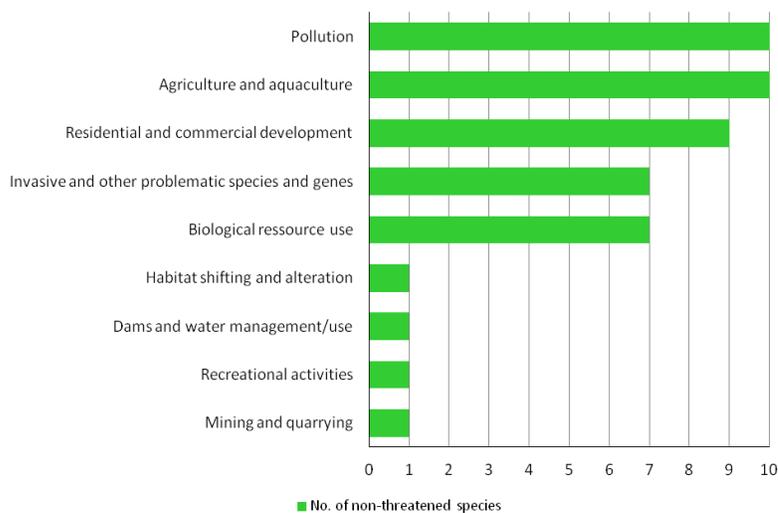
Amphibians

Amphibians in Denmark represent 17% of all amphibians occurring in Europe. The conservation status of amphibians in Denmark based on the European Red List data is relatively good since none of them are considered threatened at the European level and 93% are considered as Least Concern. The main threats to this group at the European level is the loss and degradation of suitable breeding habitat mainly due to agricultural activities and declining water quality caused by agricultural and forestry effluents. Increased overflow of settlement into countryside also pose threat to this group.

Status at European level



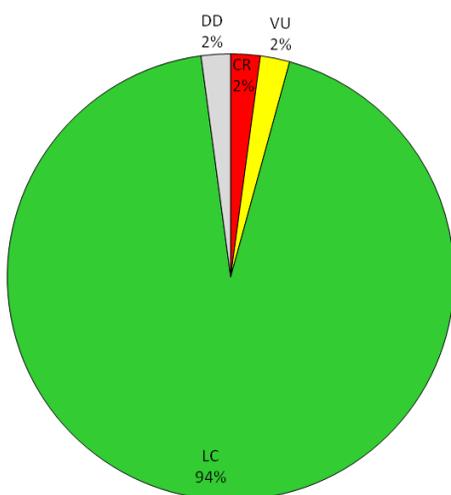
Threats at European level



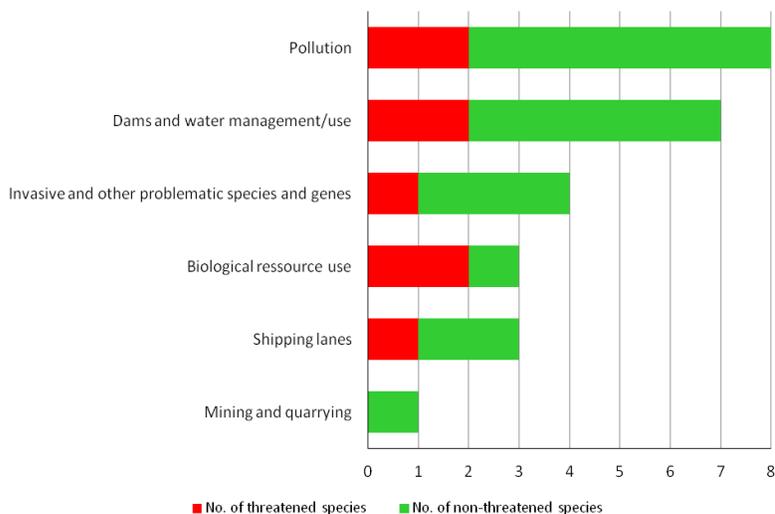
Freshwater fishes

Freshwater fishes are one of the most threatened groups at the European level. Four percent* of the species that occur in Denmark are threatened and 94% are classified as Least Concern at the European level. Declining in water quality due to agricultural and forestry effluents is the main threat to this group at the European level. The modification of the physical and chemical characteristics of freshwater rivers and lakes due to dam construction and invasive non native species are also major threats to this group.

Status at European level



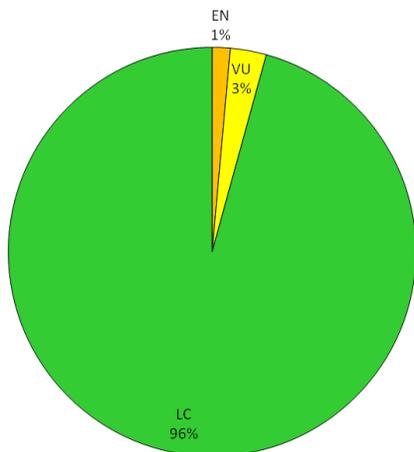
Threats at European level



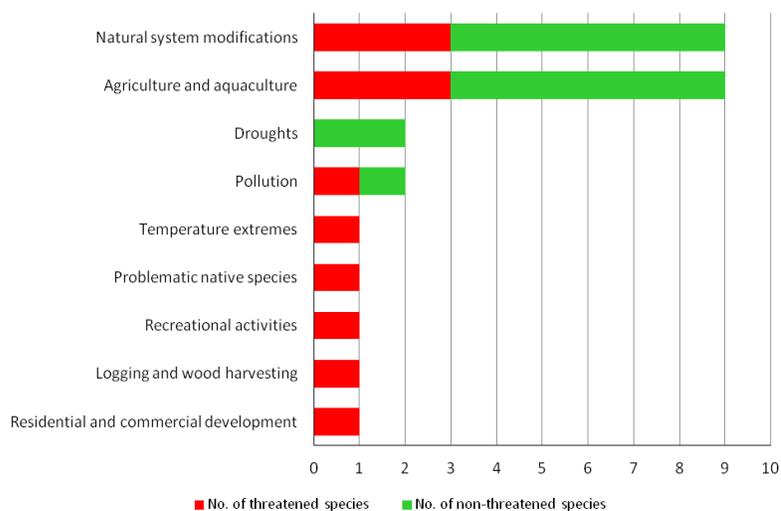
Butterflies

Denmark hosts 16% of all butterfly species in Europe and 4%* of them are considered threatened at the European level. The conservation status of in Denmark butterflies based on the European Red List data is relatively good since approximately 96% of the species are classified as Least Concern. However, butterflies have very specific food and habitat requirements at different stages of their life cycle so they are very sensitive to changes in their environment, especially to habitat management such as overgrazing, undergrazing or changes in forestry practices. Livestock farming and ranching also pose threat to this group.

Status at European level



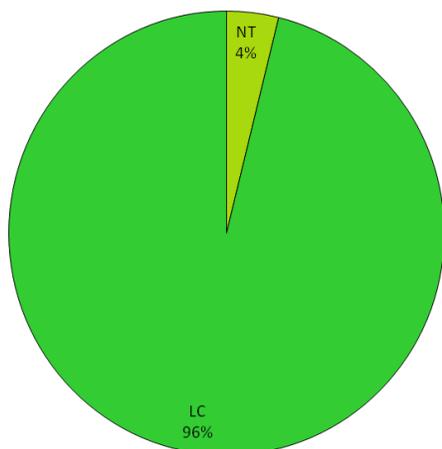
Threats at European level



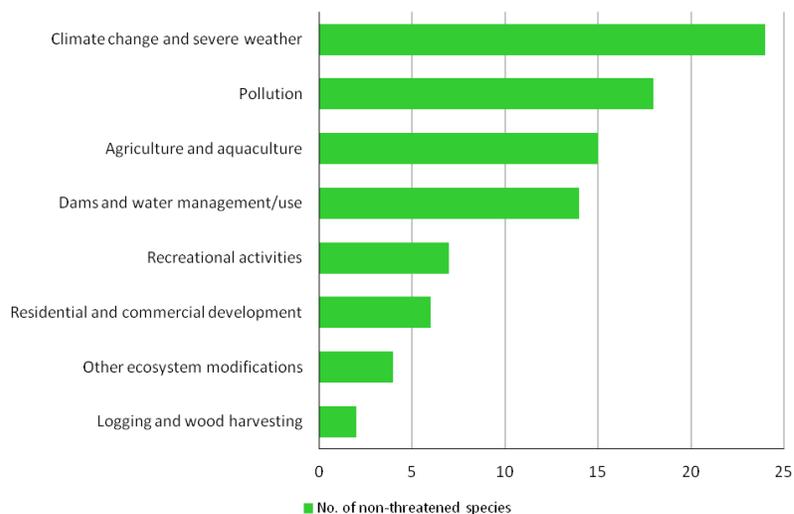
Dragonflies

Thirty-eight percent of all the dragonflies in Europe are present in Denmark. The conservation status of dragonflies in Denmark based on the European Red List data is relatively good since approximately 4% of the species are classified as Near Threatened and 96% as Least Concern. This group is adversely affected by desiccation caused by dry weather and increased water extraction. River species are also affected by pollution caused by agricultural and forestry effluents.

Status at European level



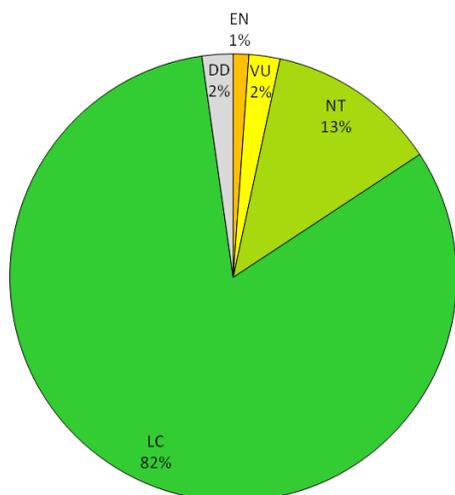
Threats at European level



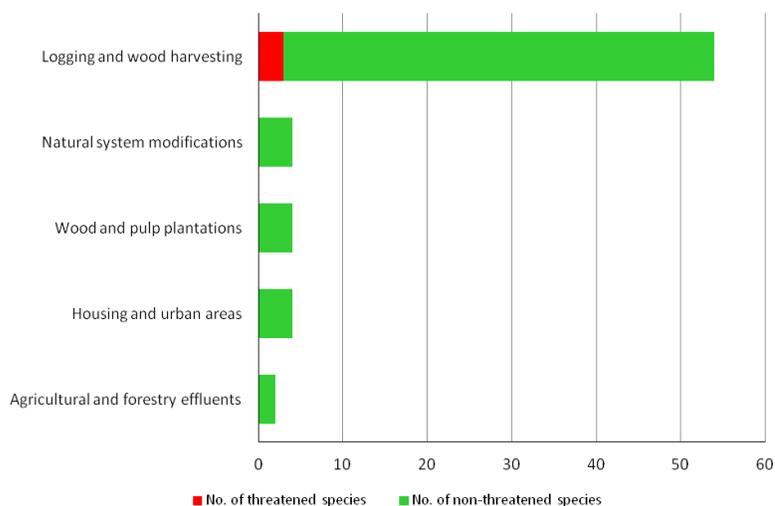
Saproxylic beetles

Twenty-one percent of the beetle species assessed by the European Red List are present in Denmark. Approximately 3%* of the species in this group are considered threatened at the European level and none of them are Critically Endangered. Thirteen percent of them are considered as Near Threatened. The species in this group are very dependent on the dynamics of tree aging and wood decay processes. The major threat to this group is logging and wood harvesting; therefore these beetles require sensitive conservation management of tree populations irrespective of their situation.

Status at European level



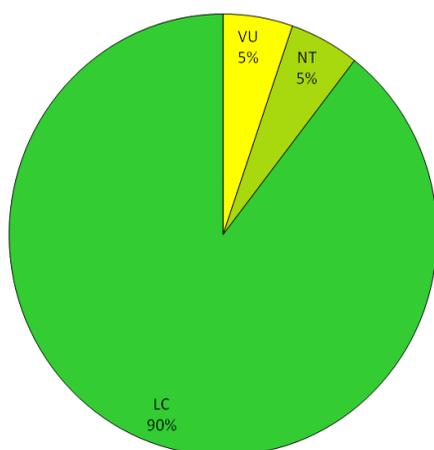
Threats at European level



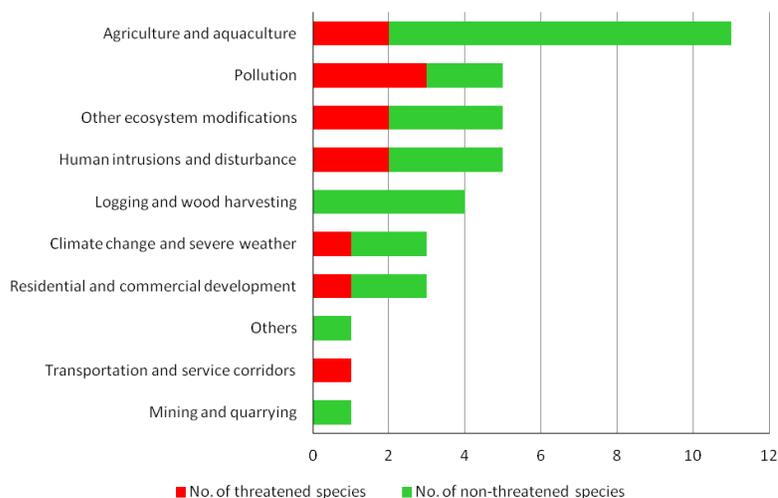
Terrestrial molluscs

Five percent* of the terrestrial molluscs assessed that are present in Denmark are threatened and 5% are Near Threatened at the European level. The major threat to this group at the European level is the conversion of land to agricultural use, especially livestock farming and ranching. Pollution due to herbicides and pesticides and continuous degradation and fragmentation of suitable habitat are also main threats to this group.

Status at European level



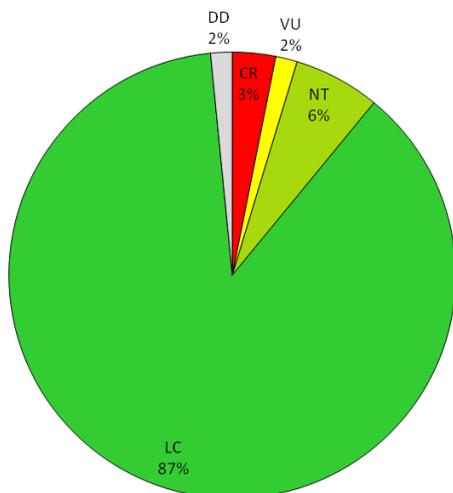
Threats at European level



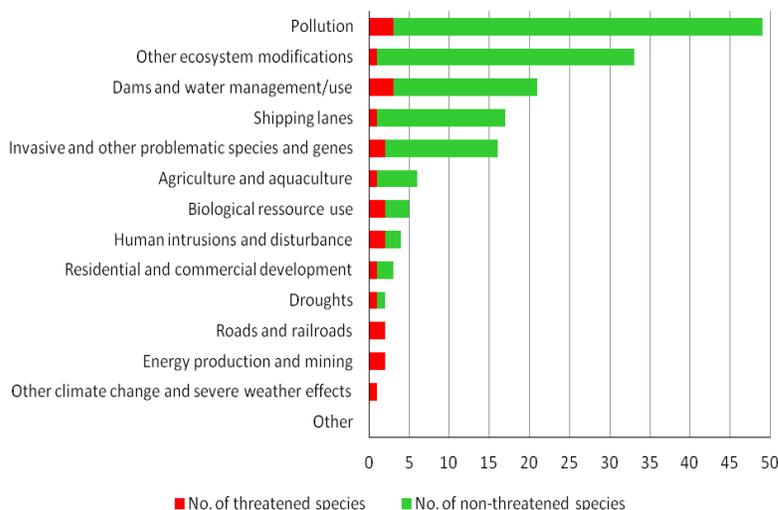
Freshwater molluscs

Seven percent of the freshwater molluscs species assessed by the European Red List are present in Denmark. Approximately 5%* of the species in this group are considered threatened and 6% are Near Threatened at the European level. Waterborne pollutants from agricultural and forestry effluents is the main threat to this group at the European level. Habitat degradation due to natural or semi natural ecosystems “management” and transport in freshwater waterways are also major threats to this group.

Status at European level



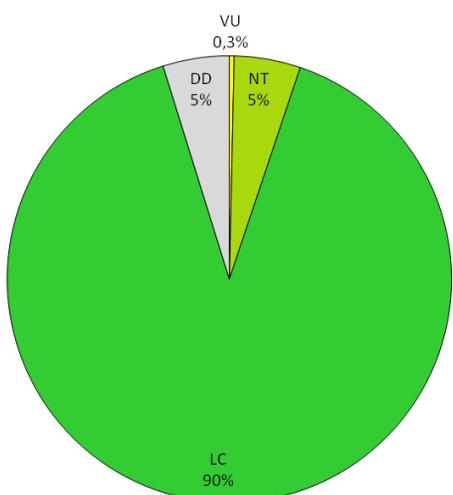
Threats at European level



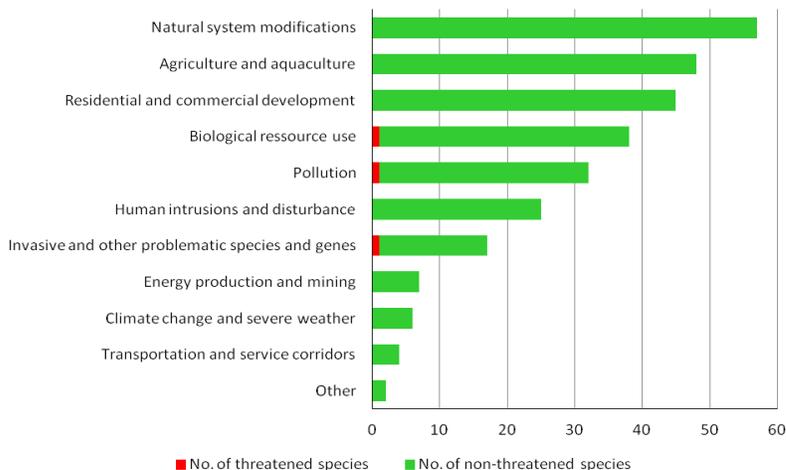
Vascular plants

At European level, priority crop wild relatives, aquatic plants and all species included in the annexes of the Habitats Directive, Bern Convention and CITES have been assessed. A total of 290 species are found in Denmark, which represent 16% of the total of species assessed in Europe. Denmark is also one of the countries that have a high number of endemics. Less than 1%* of the 290 vascular plant species assessed in Europe are considered threatened at the European level. For terrestrial plants, natural system modifications have the worst impacts. For aquatic species, direct habitat loss caused by draining for development, agriculture and pasture is the main threat.

Status at European level



Threats at European level





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<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist> and
<http://www.iucnredlist.org/europe>

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Cover photo by Miloš Anděra (*Barbastella barbastellus*)

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*The proportion of threatened species in this document is calculated as follows: (EW + CR + EN + VU) / (total number of species assessed - EX - RE - DD). Since the number of threatened species is often uncertain because it is not known whether DD species are actually threatened or not, this formula considers that DD species are equally threatened as data sufficient species.