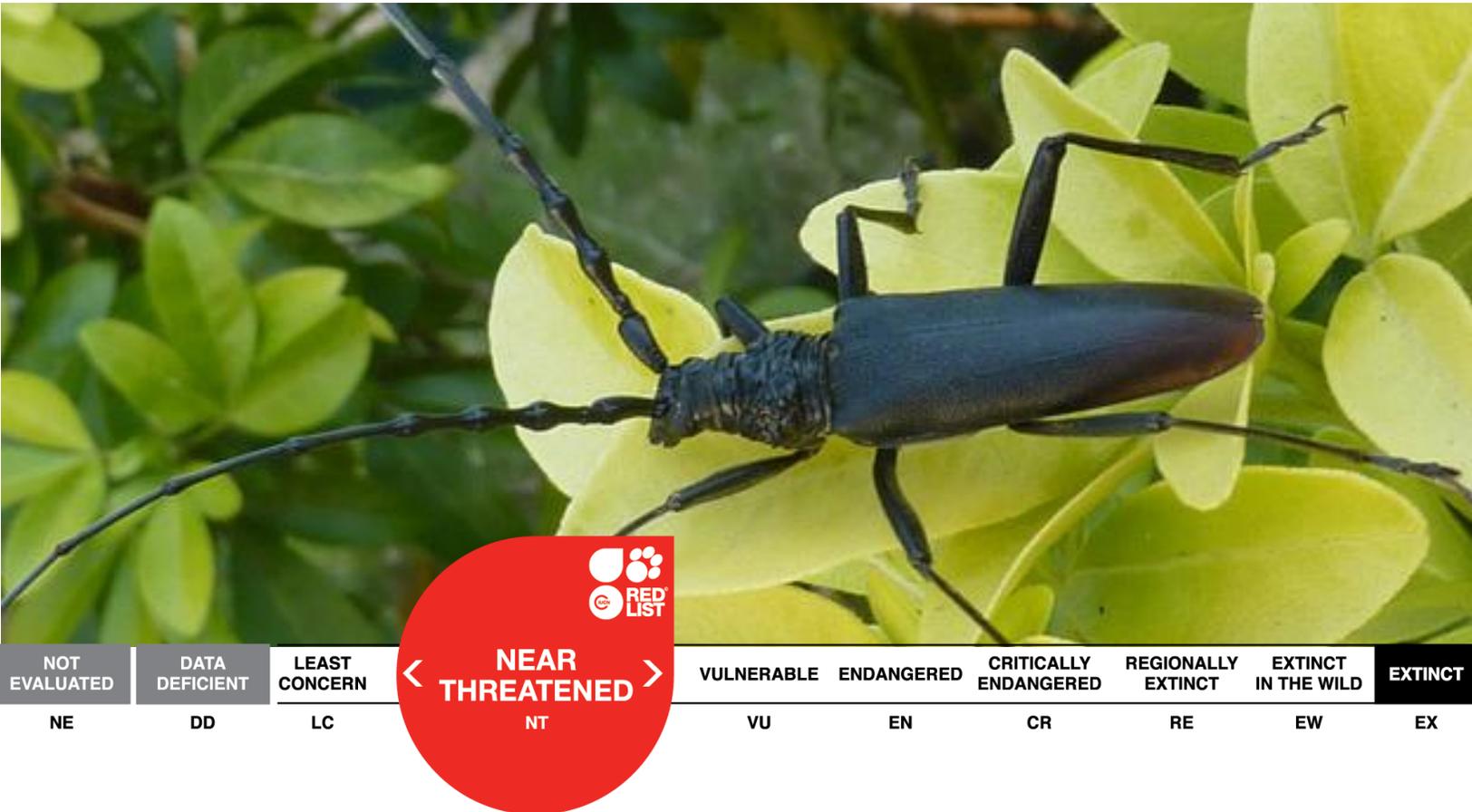


United Kingdom's biodiversity at risk

A call for action



The United Kingdom 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 the United Kingdom 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. The United Kingdom 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 the United Kingdom 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 the United Kingdom 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.

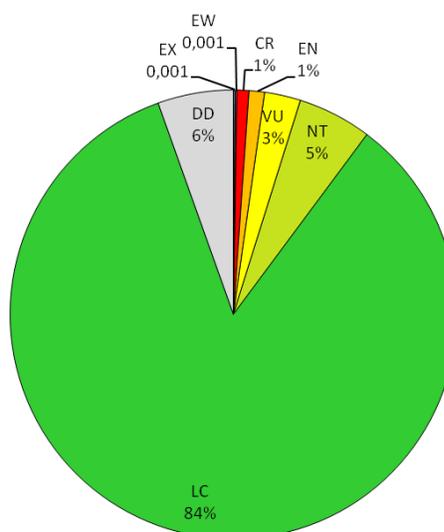
Conservation status

The United Kingdom is host to an estimated 74,271 species of animals and plants. This number represents 47% of the total species described for Europe and could represent more than 4% of the species in the world. According to the table below, approximately 14% of the species assessed by the European Red List of Species are present in the United Kingdom. For some of the taxonomic groups, the percentages of European species that occur in the UK are particularly high; such as dragonflies, mammals and vascular plants.

Of the 805 species assessed that occur in the United Kingdom, the groups comprising the highest number of species are vascular plants, saproxylic beetles, freshwater molluscs and mammals. Of the total number of species assessed in the country 5%* are considered threatened and at least 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 the United Kingdom are found mostly in wetlands, forests and marine neritic and oceanic. These ecosystems require particular attention in order to ensure the habitats of these sensitive species remain.

European status of species in the United Kingdom



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 the United Kingdom	% of European sp. occurring in the United Kingdom	No. of threatened sp. in the United Kingdom (status at European level)		
				CR	EN	VU
Mammals	233	74	32%	1	2	4
Reptiles	140	8	6%	0	0	0
Amphibians	83	8	10%	0	0	0
Freshwater fishes	522	58	11%	4	4	10
Butterflies	435	55	13%	0	1	1
Dragonflies	137	44	32%	0	0	0
Saproxylic beetles**	431	78	18%	0	2	1
Terrestrial molluscs**	1,233	57	5%	0	0	2
Freshwater molluscs	854	76	9%	2	0	1
Vascular plants**	1,826	347	19%	0	0	2
TOTAL	5,894	805	14%	7	9	21

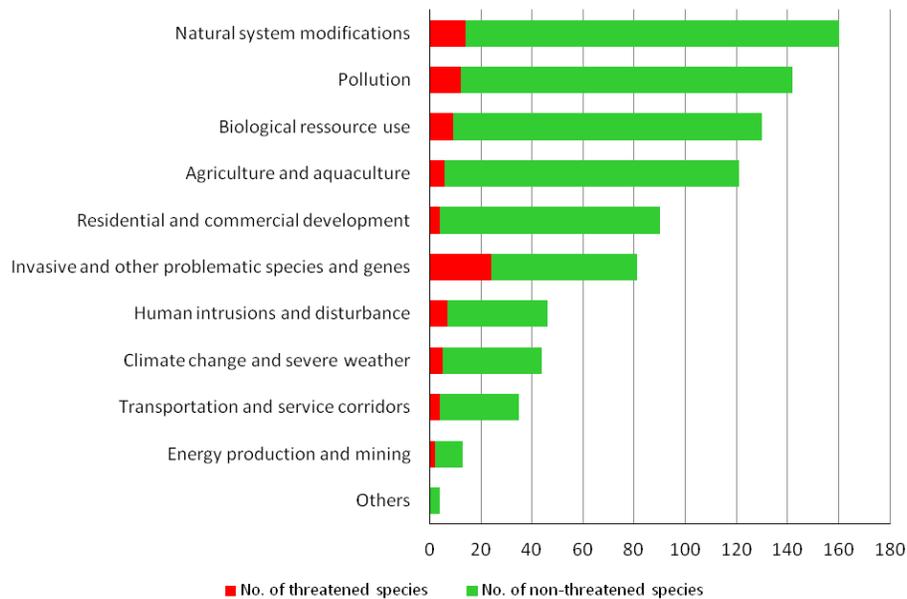
**Not comprehensively assessed, selected species only.

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 the United Kingdom. For freshwater species, major threats include the water quality deterioration as a result of agricultural and forestry effluents and dam construction, and inappropriate ecosystem management. Other major threats come from logging and wood harvesting, urbanization and tourism.

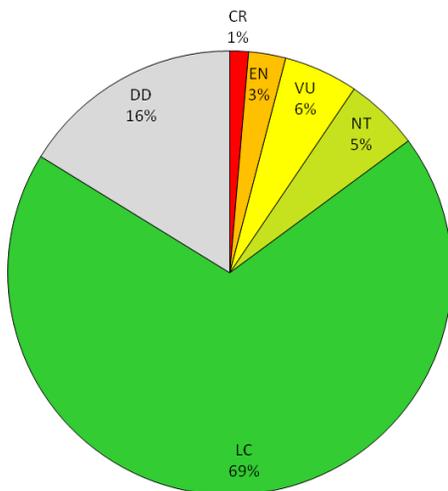
Major threats at the European level to species occurring in the United Kingdom



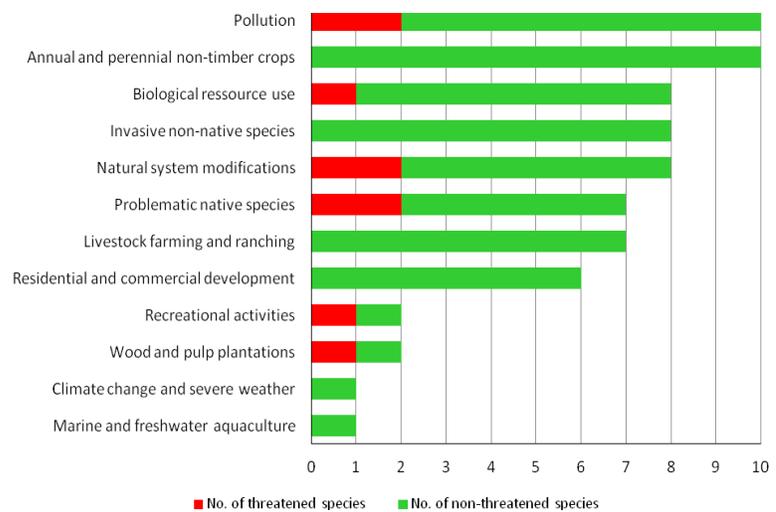
Mammals

The United Kingdom hosts 32% of all the mammals that occur in Europe. Of these 74 species of mammals, 11%* are threatened at the European level and at least an additional 5% are considered Near Threatened. The major threats at the European level that can possibly (or potentially) affect mammals in the United Kingdom are noise pollution and invasive native species. Mammal populations are also highly threatened mainly by agricultural and forestry effluents. Invasive non native species, livestock farming and ranching also pose serious threats to mammals in the country.

Status at European level



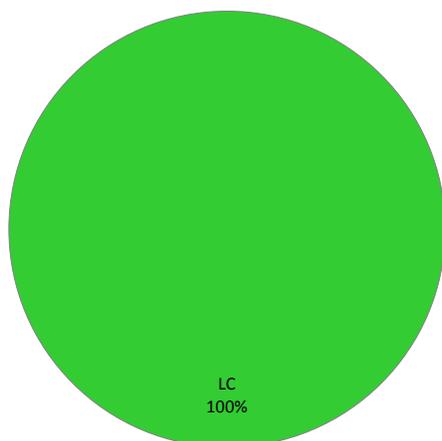
Threats at European level



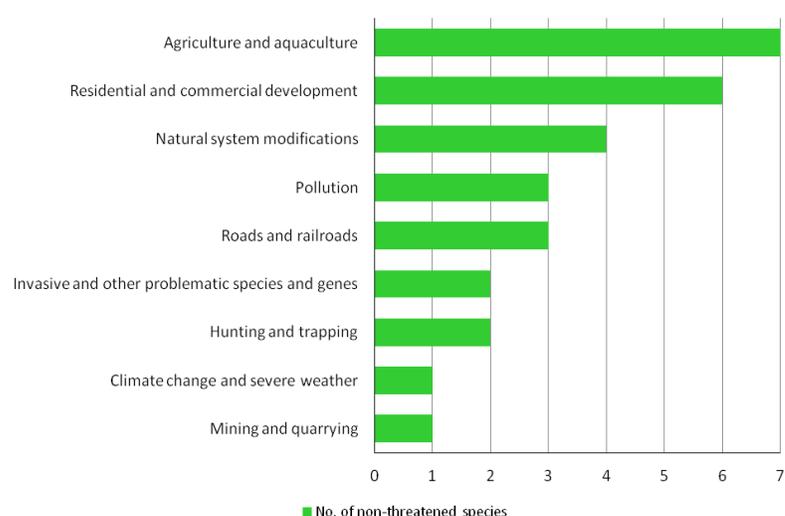
Reptiles

Reptile species in the United Kingdom represent 6% of all the reptiles in Europe. The conservation status of reptiles in the United Kingdom based on the European Red List data is relatively good since none of them are considered threatened and all 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 85% of the reptile species in the United Kingdom may be threatened by human persecution and control, especially snakes.

Status at European level



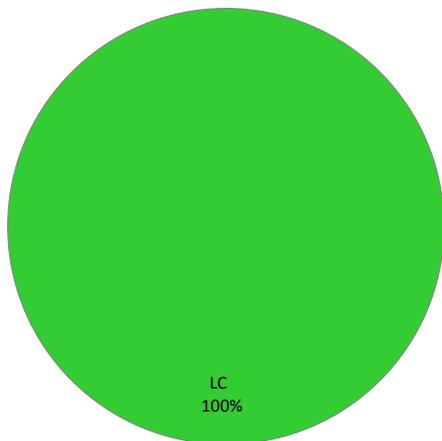
Threats at European level



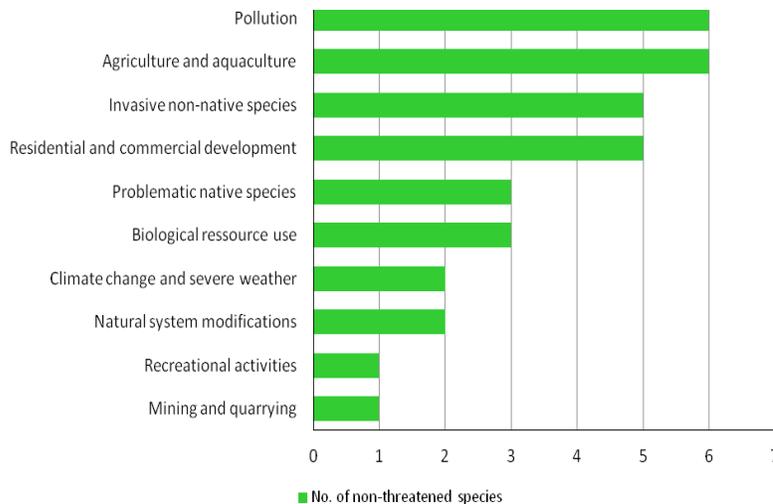
Amphibians

Amphibians in the United Kingdom represent 10% of all amphibians occurring in Europe. The conservation status of amphibians in the United Kingdom based on the European Red List data is relatively good since none of them are considered threatened and all are classified as Least Concern. The main threat to this group at the European level is the loss and degradation of suitable breeding habitat mainly due to agricultural expansion and intensification. Invasive non native species and pollution caused by agricultural and forestry effluents also pose threat to this group.

Status at European level



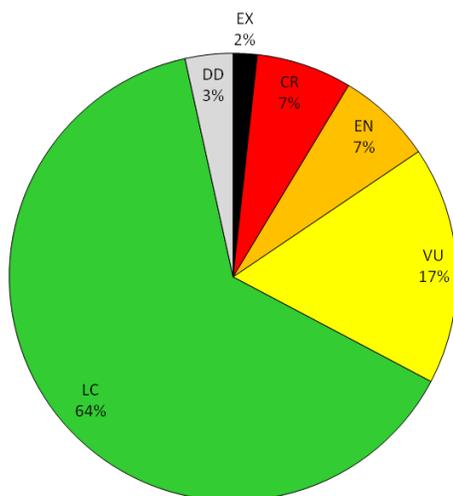
Threats at European level



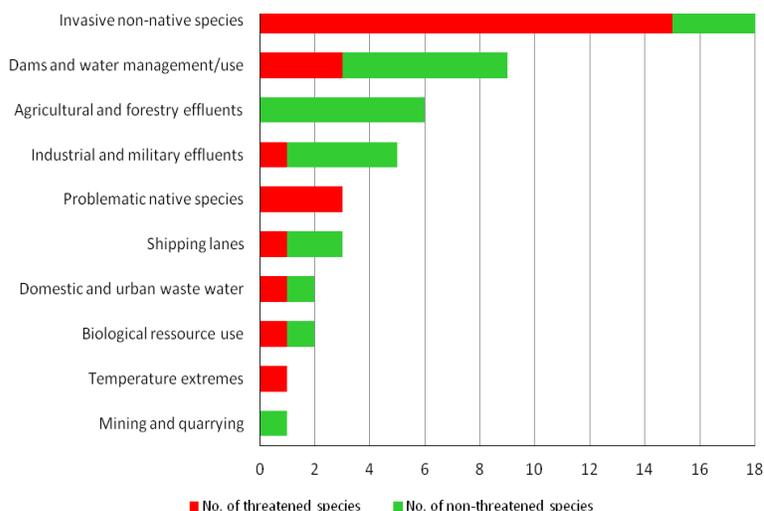
Freshwater fishes

Freshwater fishes are one of the most threatened groups at the European level. Thirty-three percent* of the species that occur in the United Kingdom are threatened at the European level, while the percentage of total threatened species that is observed in the European region is 40%*. Additionally, freshwater fishes have a high percentage of endemism in the European region: up to 80%. The most important threats to this group at the European level are alien invasive species and habitat degradation as a result of inappropriate ecosystem management.

Status at European level



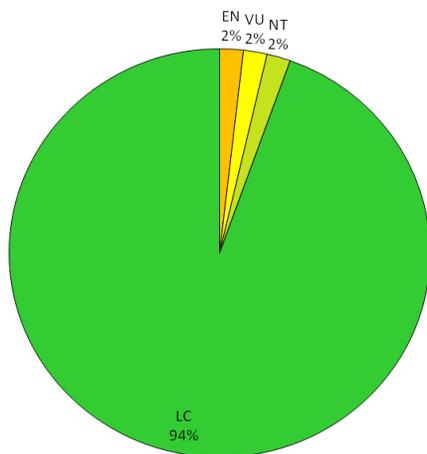
Threats at European level



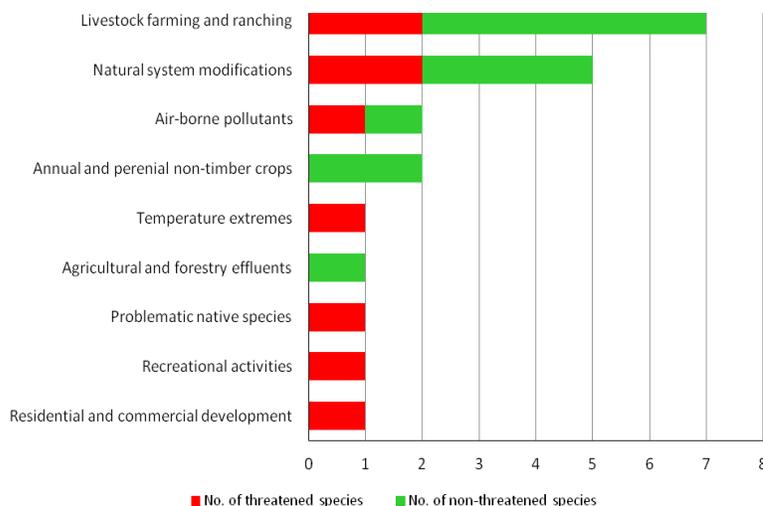
Butterflies

The United Kingdom hosts 13% of all butterfly species in Europe and 4%* of them are considered threatened at the European level. The conservation status of butterflies in the United Kingdom based on the European Red List data is relatively good since approximately 94% 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.

Status at European level



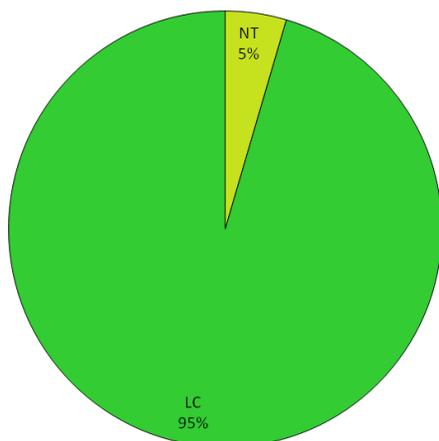
Threats at European level



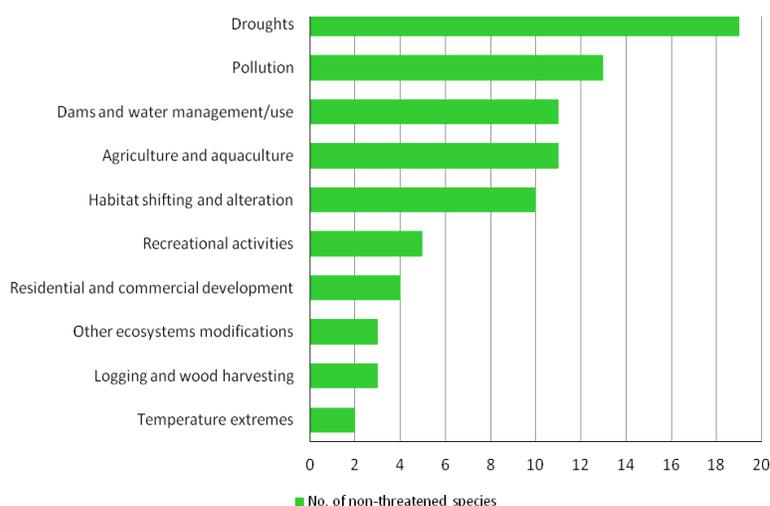
Dragonflies

Thirty-two percent of all the dragonflies in Europe are present in the United Kingdom. The conservation status of dragonflies in the United Kingdom based on the European Red List data is relatively good since none of them are considered threatened, 5% are classified as Near Threatened and 95% are Least Concern. This group is adversely affected by desiccation caused by dry weather, fires and increased water extraction for irrigation and human consumption. River species are also affected by ecosystem modifications such as the construction of dams and reservoirs and water quality deterioration.

Status at European level



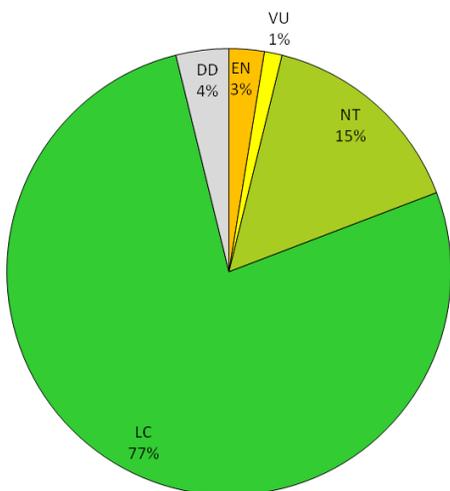
Threats at European level



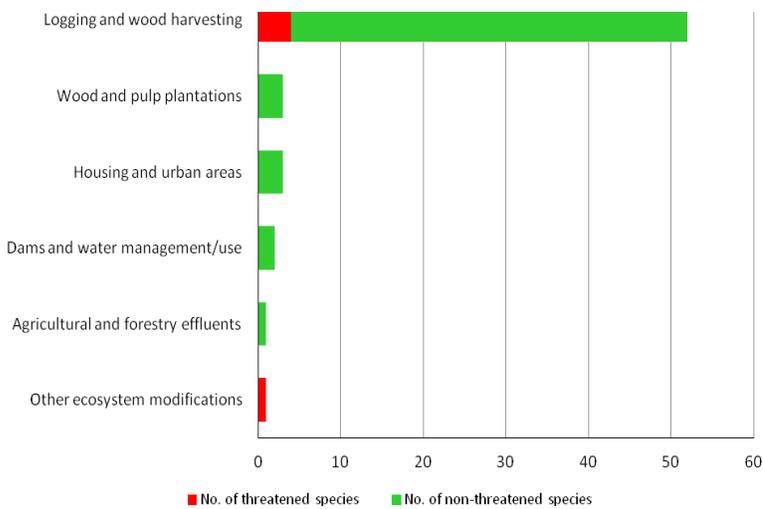
Saproxylic beetles

Eighteen percent of the beetle species assessed by the European Red List are present in the United Kingdom. Approximately 4%* of the species in this group are considered threatened at the European level, which is less than half of the percentage of threatened saproxylic beetle species in Europe. Fifteen percent of them are considered as Near Threatened. Saproxylic beetles 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



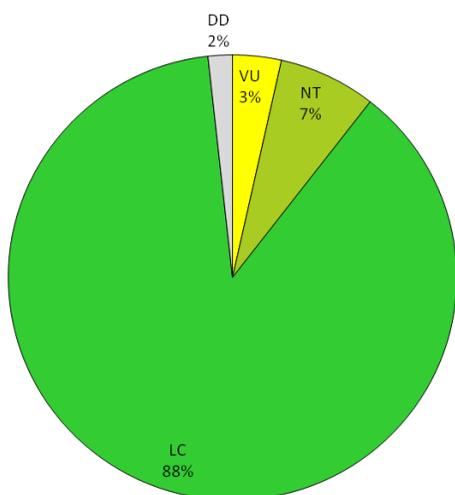
Threats at European level



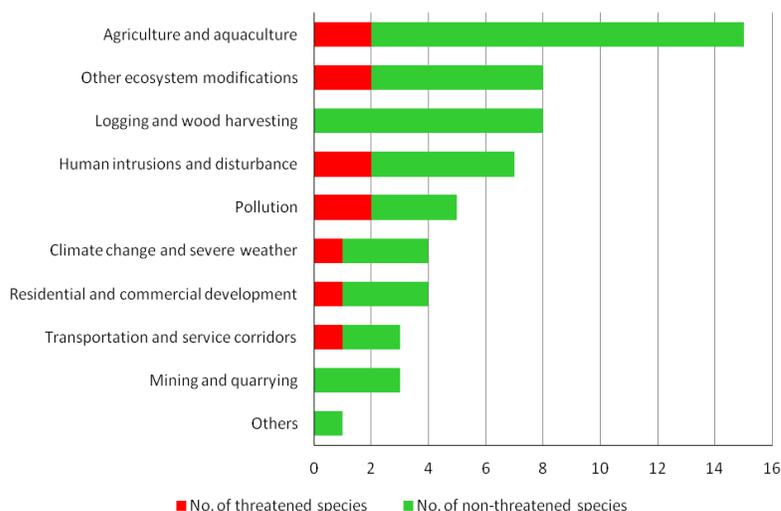
Terrestrial molluscs

Four percent* of the terrestrial molluscs assessed that are present in the United Kingdom are threatened and 7% are classified as Near Threatened at the European level. The major threat to this group at the European level is continuous destruction of suitable habitat from agricultural expansion and intensification. Logging and wood harvesting and natural or semi natural ecosystem management are also main threats to this group.

Status at European level



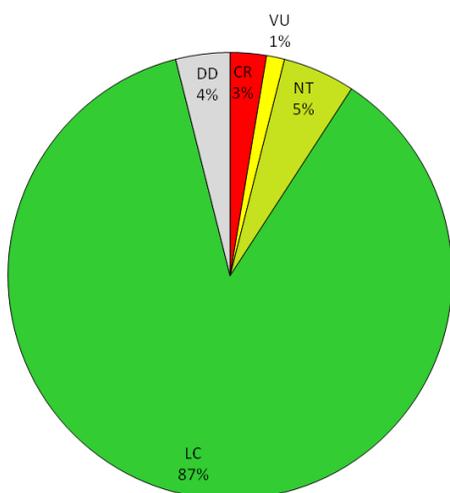
Threats at European level



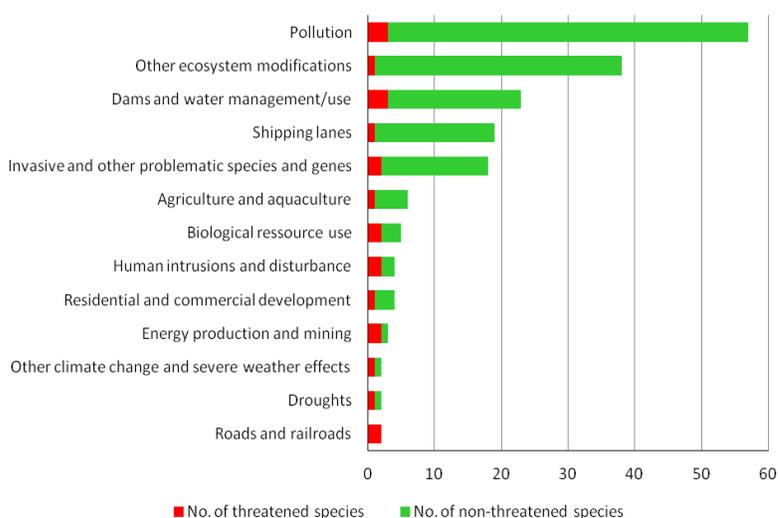
Freshwater molluscs

Four percent* of the freshwater molluscs that are present in the United Kingdom are threatened and 5% are classified as Near Threatened at the European level. Declining water quality in freshwater rivers and lakes caused by agricultural activities, domestic urban waste and industrial effluents is the major threats for this group at the European level. Natural systems modifications and shipping lanes are also threats to this group.

Status at European level



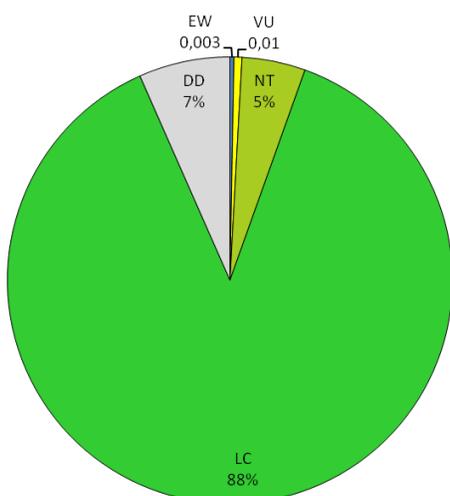
Threats at European level



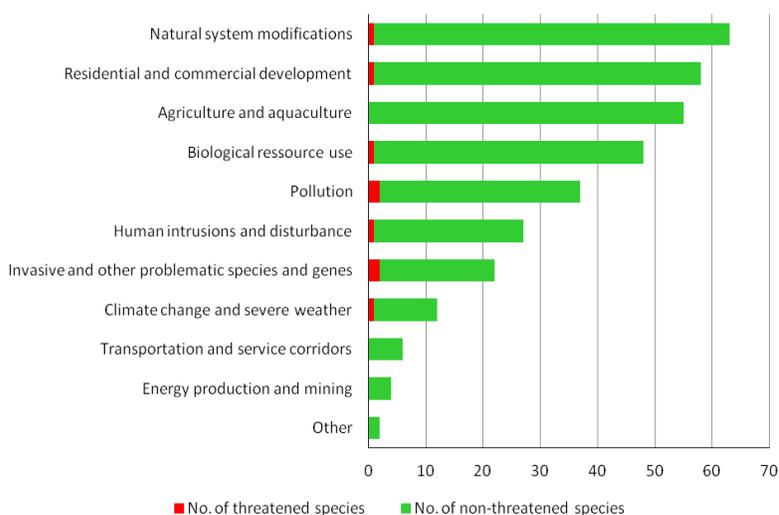
Vascular plants

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 347 species are found in the United Kingdom, which represent 19% of the total of species assessed in Europe. The United Kingdom is also one of the countries that have a high number of endemic aquatic plants. One percent* of the 347 vascular plant species assessed in the United Kingdom are considered threatened at the European level. For terrestrial plants, urban and touristic development has the worst impacts. For aquatic species, habitat degradation due to agricultural expansion and other ecosystem modifications are the main threats.

Status at European level



Threats at European level





INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE © May 2013

Document prepared by Andrea Pino del Carpio, Silvia Sánchez, Ana Nieto and Melanie Bilz
European Union Representative Office
Boulevard Louis Schmidt 64
1040 Brussels, Belgium
+32 2 739 03 13

For more information please contact: ana.nieto@iucn.org

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

The European Red List is a project funded by the European Commission.
Cover photo by Tracy Vibert (*Cerambyx cerdo*)

REFERENCES

- Bilz, M., Kell, S. P., Maxted, N. and Lansdown, R.V. 2011. *European Red List of Vascular Plants*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- Cox, N.A. and Temple, H.J. 2009. *European Red List of Reptiles*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.
- Cuttelod, A., Sheddon, M and E. Neubert. 2011. *European Red List of Non-marine Molluscs*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- Freyhof, J. and Brooks, E. 2011. *European Red List of Freshwater Fishes*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- Kalkman, V.J., Boudot, J-P., Bernard, R., Conze, K-J., De Knijf, G., Dyatlova, E., Ferreira, S., Jović, M., Ott, J., Riservato, E. and Sahlén, G. 2010. *European Red List of Dragonflies*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.
- Nieto, A and Alexander, K.N.A. 2009 *European Red List of Saproxyllic Beetles*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.
- van Swaay, C., Cuttelod, A., Collins, S., Maes, D., López Manguira, M., Šašić, M., Settele, J., Verovnik, R., Verstrael, T., Warren, M., Wiemers, M. and Wynhoff, I. 2010. *European Red List of Butterflies*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.
- Temple, H.J. and Terry, A. 2009. *The status and distribution of European mammals*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.
- Temple, H.J. and Cox, N.A. 2009. *European Red List of Amphibians*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

*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.