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**mouvement  
écologique**

**World Wildlife Day (Journée mondiale de la vie sauvage):**

## **The important challenges of our time - We raise our voices for endangered species!**

The current crises (Ukraine, Gaza, Iran, etc.) and geopolitical tensions are dominating public discourse at the moment, as are – in Luxembourg's case – the housing crisis and growing inequalities, among other things. This is for perfectly understandable reasons.

Parallel to these important issues, other challenges that threaten our livelihoods and those of future generations are in danger of being neglected by the political agenda. For example, Luxembourg was the second country in the world to reach Overshoot Day in mid-February, and the goal of limiting global warming to 2 degrees Celsius is becoming increasingly unattainable. A recent study by the Nature Administration even found that Luxembourg's forests can no longer fulfil their natural CO<sub>2</sub> storage function.

**The Earth's foundations are under threat more than ever before.**

**The UN has declared 3 March of each year to be World Biodiversity Day. And with good reason:** global species extinction has reached enormous proportions. According to the World Biodiversity Council (IPBES) – comparable to the World Climate Council – 2 million species out of an estimated 8 million existing species are currently threatened with extinction worldwide.

Luxembourg is no exception – on the contrary. The decline is also dramatic in Luxembourg: three-quarters of European protected species are endangered here, and half of the protected habitats are in poor condition.

The reasons for this are well known: intensively farmed land with heavy use of pesticides and fertilisers, resulting in "uniform" and cleared landscapes that offer little habitat for species. In contrast to intensification, however, the complete abandonment of agricultural use on land that is difficult to cultivate (wet, sloping, etc.) is also a problem – if mowing or grazing is discontinued on land with a high diversity of plants, biodiversity declines dramatically because the land becomes completely overgrown with shrubs. It has been scientifically proven that half of the endangered and/or extinct species in Luxembourg are associated with agricultural land <sup>1</sup>. Their survival depends on nature-friendly, extensive use.

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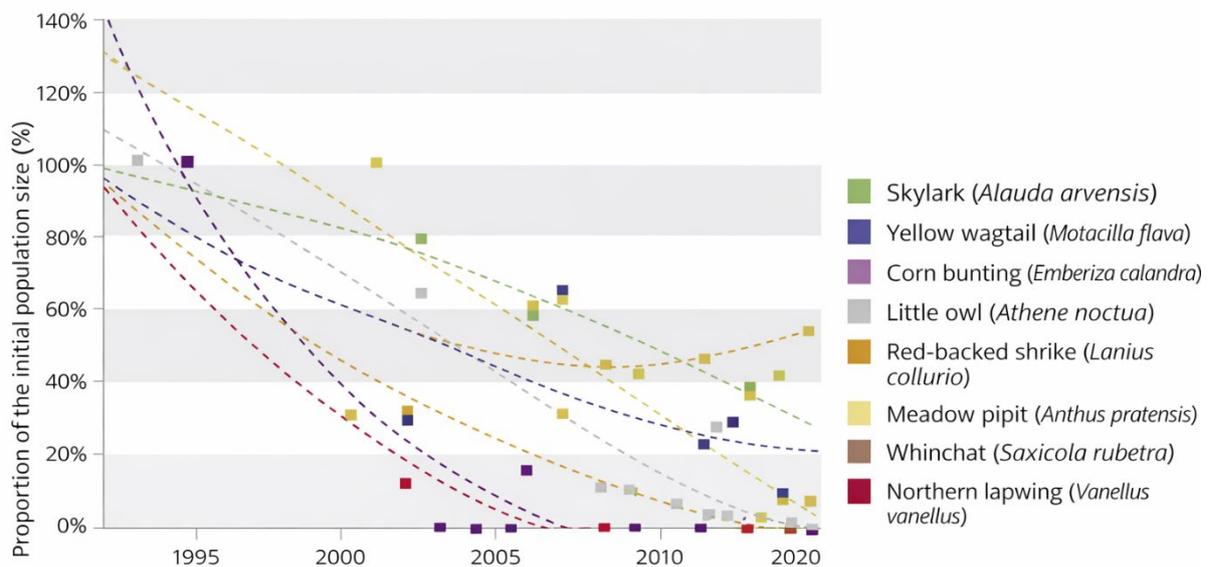
<sup>1</sup> Dale, P., A. Hochkirch, M. Pauly, C. Penny & G. Thakur, 2025. *Impact of agriculture on the environment and biodiversity in Luxembourg – A multidisciplinary approach to sustainability*. Scientific research note PS-002, Chamber of Deputies of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

However, the fragmentation of the landscape by infrastructure projects (roads, settlements, activity zones) as well as significant development (additional sealing of 0.3-0.5 ha/day) and a lack of green structures within towns are also contributing to this general decline in species. Luxembourg is by far the most fragmented country in Europe! It is also known that the climate crisis is further weakening biodiversity.



Conservation status of species

Conservation status of habitats



Sharp decline of birds linked to open/agricultural landscape

The consequences are significant: without a functioning ecosystem, humans will not be able to survive either. Like every other species, humans are part of a complex ecological structure; if one part is lost, the entire system is weakened. We need insects, for example, as pollinators and for the production of our food. But the economic damage caused by further biodiversity loss is also enormous. According to the World Economic Forum, more than half of global gross domestic product is directly or indirectly dependent on nature<sup>2</sup>. Agriculture, pharmaceuticals and tourism are the hardest hit, but other industries are also affected (stable supply chains require functioning ecosystems). The UN Biodiversity Council even sees a *"critical and systemic risk to the economy, financial stability and human well-being"*. Last but not least, ecosystems are losing their capacity as natural carbon sinks, which is devastating for climate protection.

### **Nature conservation is human conservation.**

In addition, species have just as much right to exist on this planet as we humans do. We are only part of our "shared world" and, as the well-known quote says, we have only borrowed the world from our children.

**The current government policy does nothing to change this devastating development; on the contrary, it continues the trend of recent years and thus exacerbates the situation in some respects:**

- At EU level, Luxembourg has not yet **taken a sufficiently consistent stance against the so-called "omnibus laws", which would lead to further deregulation and a weakening of the protection of nature and people**. Keywords: weakening of regulations on pesticides, lowering of environmental standards under the Common Agricultural Policy, etc.
- The **reform of agricultural policy** towards, among other things, more organic farming, rewarding farmers for services in the public interest (e.g. water protection, promotion of pollinators, soil protection) and greater promotion of the reduction of pesticide use is being approached too timidly or not at all.
- With the current texts on **the reform of nature conservation legislation**, our towns and cities risk becoming even "poorer" in terms of valuable green structures – at the same time, initiatives to promote them "voluntarily" are too timid;
- The numerous well-known concrete **instruments for promoting nature conservation** – implementation of the National Plan for Nature Conservation (PNPN3), improvement of existing structures in the field of nature conservation, etc. – are also progressing far too timidly.

It is certainly not this government alone that is responsible for species extinction. It is the result of misguided policies over the past years and decades.

**However, although science is calling for a change in thinking with increasing clarity, although consistent action is becoming ever more urgent and the solutions are definitely known, the**

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<sup>2</sup> WEF 2020

current government is not doing enough to counteract this and is even making decisions that further accelerate species extinction.

**That is why Mouvement Ecologique wants to use this symbolic action to consistently advocate for a reorientation of Luxembourg's government policy in general and with regard to the preservation of our nature and species in particular. Species protection is representative of the government's overall policy.**

**We are doing this by giving a face and a voice to species that cannot represent themselves in public!**

Each person who takes part in the symbolic action represents an endangered species. However, the real list is much longer!

**The species selected are those that are threatened by current agricultural practices and the urban sprawl and fragmentation of the landscape.** Emblematic of the list of 75 species are the **skylark (*Léierchen*)**, which is finding fewer and fewer breeding and feeding grounds due to pesticide use, monocultures and cleared fields; the **saw-wort (*Färber-Scharte*)**, which depends on extensively used, flower-rich hay meadows and is highly endangered by fertilisation, early mowing and loss of habitat. The **lapwing (*Piwitsch*)**, whose wetland habitat was destroyed by around 80% in the second half of the last century, and the **garden dormouse (*Gardeschléifer*)**, which is losing its habitat due to the loss of orchard meadows and structuring landscape elements such as hedges, "Bongerten" and dry stone walls. These four species are representative of the profound loss of biodiversity in our cultural landscape.

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Unfortunately, current biodiversity policy is not an isolated issue. Our country is also failing to meet its targets in other areas of sustainable development.

**Political leaders consistently pursue a rather one-sided discourse, claiming that the holy grail of positive future development lies in constant growth and simplification of procedures (which, however, is largely equivalent to deregulation).**

**Ecological issues are subject to the principle of supposed "pragmatism" and the rather populist-sounding slogan "*We want to take the people with us*"!**

**But the government does not say where it wants to take people!**

**The focus is on purely voluntary rather than structural measures, which effectively shifts responsibility to the individual and amounts to a policy of "*business as usual*". It is up to politicians to set the right framework for sustainable development; it is their responsibility! This is precisely what is meant by shaping politics and the future.**

**The thinking of some members of the government is shaped by the belief that economics is "realpolitik" and must determine other sectoral policies. The opposite is true: giving priority to ecological concerns is realpolitik that takes the laws of nature into account and thus ensures that the future of the next generations still has a basis.** The World Biodiversity Council warns that protecting nature is "*an essential part of sustainable, successful economic activity*".

Every day that our social and economic model is not gradually transformed in line with sustainable development and respect for planetary boundaries is a day lost. It only increases the pressure to act,

to make the transition in the future even faster and with greater disruption – because it is inevitable that our economy will have to take greater account of the laws of nature in the future. The only question is: when will the transition be initiated, and will it be a "smooth" process, or will drastic disruptions be necessary in 10 to 20 years at the latest? An effective transition policy requires a mix of instruments: regulatory decisions, market-based instruments, advice and financial incentives, as well as a broad information policy.

**The Mouvement Ecologique calls on the government to address the positive consequences of the necessary transformations, to set targets based on scientific findings and to create the necessary framework conditions for their implementation in a socially acceptable manner.**

**There are plenty of positive messages to convey about where we need to go and why the socio-ecological transition is desirable:**

- From a scientific point of view, this is essential if we **do not want to destroy our own livelihoods** in view of **Luxembourg's economic and demographic development**; this includes the natural environment.
- Green towns and villages within the framework of coherent **municipal green concepts (!)** make them more liveable, promote cohesion and are also important from the point of view of climate adaptation, resilience and health protection.
- Focusing on **organic farming and improved processing structures** now gives farmers a secure future, makes them less dependent on the global market and better protects our environment and their means of production.
- Farmers who **preserve and promote biodiversity on their land** provide an important service to society as a whole – this must **be adequately rewarded** in the interests **of the common good through redesigned subsidies**.
- If we now succeed in the **energy transition** at all levels, including in the area of **heating planning**, we will become less dependent on gas and electricity imports, the prices of which we cannot influence, and which will also make us less vulnerable to geopolitical tensions – this is in the interest of everyone, including the economy.
- However, **less consumption, more distributive justice, conservation of resources**, etc. also increase well-being, and a **better social distribution of wealth** reduces social tensions. The list could be extended indefinitely.
- A **PIBien-être instead of gross national product** would finally be an appropriate measure of well-being in Luxembourg and a basis for political decisions.

**Clear messages are needed on what a positive vision of the future/a positive future that respects the limits of ecosystems and a "*resilient Luxembourg*" might look like, and why this is necessary.**

**Luxembourg, 3 March 2026**