



A MINISTRY  
COMMITTED  
FOR BIODIVERSITY

Layman's report



## The LIFE NaturArmy

Project location : France

Project duration : 01/09/2019 - 30/06/2024

Total budget : 2 683 507 €

### The project financiers

European Union - LIFE  
French Ministry of the Armed Forces  
French Ministry of Ecology  
French Biodiversity Agency

### The project pilots

French Ministry of the Armed Forces- coordinator  
Federation of Conservancies of Natural Areas  
(in French : « *Fédération des Conservatoires d'espaces naturels (FCEN)* ») - co-pilot

### The project partners

CEN Champagne-Ardenne  
CEN Nouvelle-Aquitaine  
CEN Pays de la Loire  
CEN Loir-et-Cher  
CEN Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur  
CEN Lorraine  
CEN Alsace  
CEN Franche-Comté  
National Museum of Natural History  
University of Western Brittany (UBO)



The Ministry of the Armed Forces is the leading user of the French government's public land estate, with **275,000 hectares of military land for the training of the armed forces**. This land, to which access is restricted, has been preserved from the main threats to the landscape (urbanization, industrialization, intensive agriculture, etc.) and boasts exceptional biodiversity. This wealth of flora and fauna is recognized at both national and European level: 200,000 ha are included in a biodiversity protection zone, of **which over 44,000 ha have been integrated into the European Natura 2000 network**.

To reconcile operational activities and the preservation of biodiversity, the Ministry of the Armed Forces relies on its chain of command to mobilize its network of internal skills as well as external ecological partnerships.

The partnerships deployed between the Ministry of the Armed Forces and the network of Conservatoires d'espaces naturels have enabled the implementation of 3 ambitious LIFE projects since 2012:

- ➔ **LIFE Défense Nature 2mil (2012-2017)** at regional level and **LIFE La Valbonne (2019-2026)** at local level;
- ➔ **LIFE NaturArmy (2019-2024)**: this Governance and Information LIFE project supports the Ministry of the Armed Forces growing commitment to biodiversity at national level.



THE MAIN TEST SITES ARE SPREAD TROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE FRENCH MAINLAND TERRITORY.



# The LIFE NaturArmy objectives

Based local experiments, the ambition of the LIFE NaturArmy project is :

- ➔ **To reach an exemplary management of the Natura 2000 sites on military fields** by developing a ministerial strategy to preserve biodiversity
- ➔ **To demonstrate the French Ministry of the Armed Forces role** among biodiversity stakeholders in France and Europe

The **successes of the LIFE NaturArmy** project are based on work carried out at different scales:

- ➔ Local or regional experiments carried out in partnership with the Armed Forces, ecological partners (CENs) and scientists (UBO) involved in the project
- ➔ Procedures, tools and governance deployed nationwide

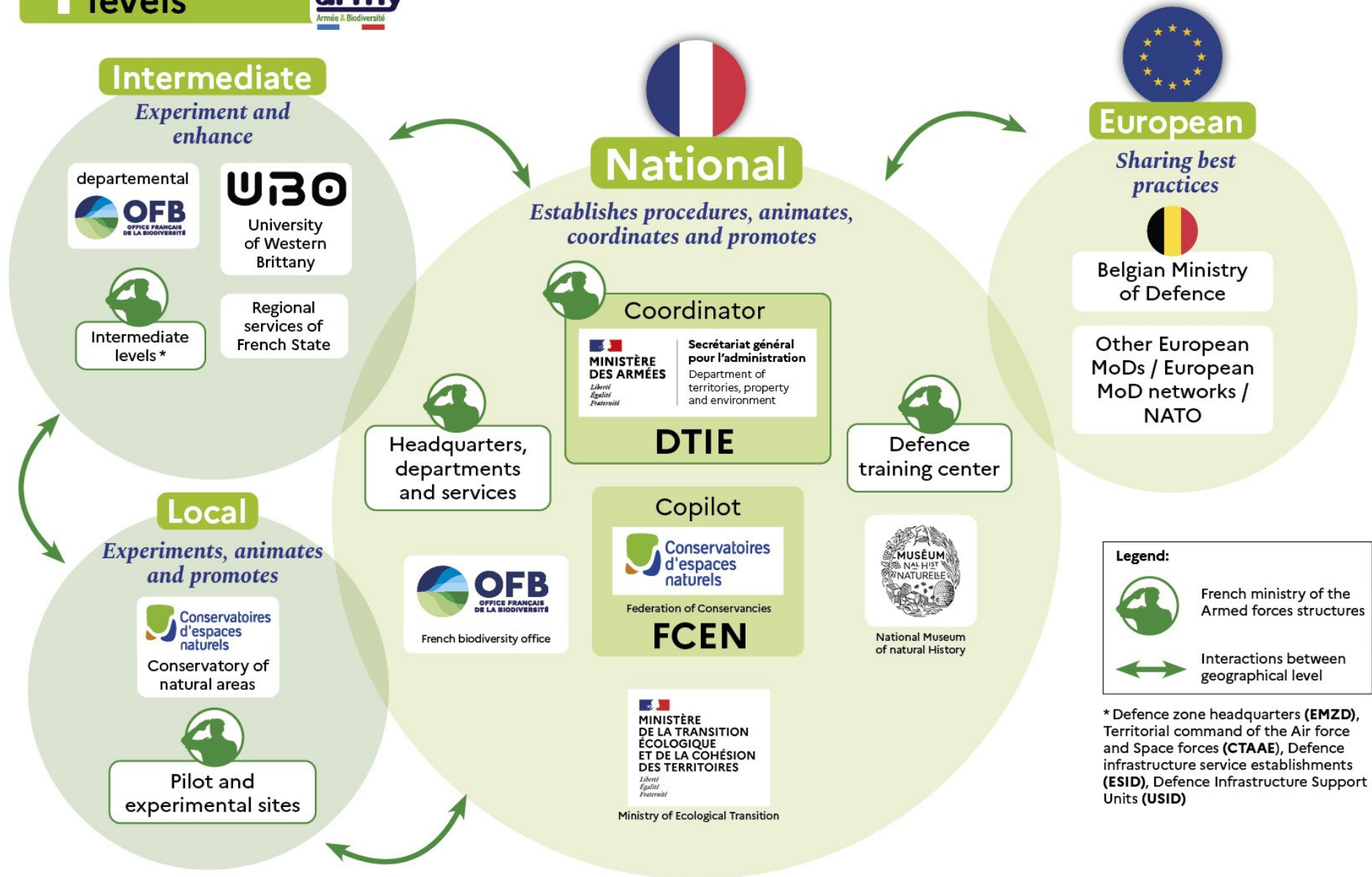


Integrated in 2021 into the ministerial strategy for preserving biodiversity by 2030



Field visit of the Bussac-Bedenac camp during the LIFE final seminar - May 2024 @FCEN

**4** geographical levels

## Objective 1 - Reaching an exemplary management of the Natura 2000 sites on military fields

### A partnership with the research community

In order to characterize the ecological specificities of Natura 2000 military sites, the Université de Bretagne Occidentale (UBO) has written a 4-year thesis based on 3 lines of research: the study of landscapes, communities and the conservation status of habitats.

- ➔ **The results show that the conservation status of the habitats studied is generally better on military fields**, with variations depending on ecological context, use (military or civilian) and natural habitats.
- ➔ **The study confirmed the hypothesis of the role of military land in biodiversity conservation.** The levels of disturbance enable a diversity of natural habitats and is beneficial to the species and habitats present.

The publication of the thesis “Spécificités écologiques des emprises militaires dans le réseau Natura 2000 : Paysages, Habitats et Conservation” (Caudal, P. 2023) or « Ecological specificities of military sites in the Natura 2000 network: Landscapes, Habitats and Conservation », was accompanied by the publication of 3 scientific articles.



Front cover,  
Pascaline Caudal  
thesis, 2024



# Objective 1 - Reaching an exemplary management of the Natura 2000 sites on military fields

## Tools and processes to reconcile biodiversity and military activities

### Acquiring and structuring biodiversity data for better operational planning



LIFE NaturArmy enabled the deployment of a vast naturalist survey campaign led by the Conservancies of natural areas and the University of Western Brittany : **over 35,300 naturalist data** collected on pilot and testing sites & **more than 10,212 ha** surveyed.

Naturalist inventory@Y.Chapelain

In order to make standardized data available, and with the aim of remobilizing and valorizing them, the Ministry of the Armed Forces and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN) have drawn up a **guide to acquiring biodiversity data**. This guide was produced as part of a partnership initiated in 2019 with MNHN's PatriNat Unit and tested on data collected by Conservancies on 19 sites of the LIFE project. These initial tests have enabled the guide to be improved. The data integrated into the dedicated platforms contribute to enriching knowledge at regional, national and global levels.

Some of these data have also been used to feed 11 National or Regional Action Plans (PNA/PRA).



These data contributed to the development of the cartographic model created as part of the project.

This cartographic tool integrating biodiversity challenges was developed by the French Ministry of Defence in collaboration with several conservatories. It compiles information on site activities, protected area perimeters and inventory data.

Species data have been enhanced using a number of MNHN resources, making it possible to associate a challenge linked notably to a protection status. This tool also makes it easier for military operators to understand the biodiversity challenges.

Ecological management plans, financed as part of the ministerial biodiversity preservation strategy, will consolidate this model, in particular with information on sites management.

### Naturalist data acquisition guide

Code	Description	Commentaire
AC	Publique acquise	La documentation a été produite par un organisme privé (associations, bureaux)
NSP	Ne sait pas	L'information indiquant la Date de Source est présente ou présente n'est pas en
PR	Privée	La Date de Source a été produite par un organisme privé ou un individu à titre
PA	Publique	La Date de Source est publique sur site ou produite en « règle » ou « acquise »
PR	Publique Régie	La Date de Source est publique et a été produite directement par un organisme
IN	Inventaire	Le terrain de service est présent sur une liste dans l'objet géo-graphique
NSP	Ne sait pas	L'information est inconnue
SI	Système	Le terrain observé est présent sur l'ensemble de l'objet géo-graphique
NON	Non	Indique qu'un feuillage n'a pu être
OS	Obs	Indique qu'un feuillage a été
NSP	Ne sait pas	L'information n'est pas connue
PR	Privée	Une ou plusieurs feuilles de terrain ont été effectivement observées et/ou dans
Co	Collection	L'observateur concerne une base de données de collection
LI	Littéraire	L'observateur a été en lien avec un ouvrage scientifique
NSP	Ne sait pas	La source est inconnue
TS	Terrain	L'observateur provient d'un terrain d'essai ou de données de terrain
SI	Système	L'observateur provient d'un terrain d'essai ou de données de terrain
SI	Système	L'observateur provient d'un terrain d'essai ou de données de terrain

- JDD1-Habitats-PSC
- JDD2-Especies-floristiques
- JDD3-Especies-Orchis
- JDD4-Especies-faunistiques
- 0\_Exemple3\_Lisez-moi.pptx
- CA-Effet-paturage-sur-PSC.docx

### Tools and processes to reconcile biodiversity and military activities

#### The Natura 2000 objectives documents and management plans

The Natura 2000 objectives documents (DOCOB) for the Suippes and Avon camps have been enriched to better coordinate military activities and Natura 2000 objectives, and to ensure that they are taken on board by the military authorities.

In addition, management documents compatible with military activities have been drawn up for certain sites. These tools make it possible to efficiently plan the ecological management of military sites, including those partially included in the Natura 2000 network:

- ➔ 6 management plans (BA 273 de Romorantin, Auvours, Fontevraud, Hauts de Terrefort, BA 115 Orange et Plan de Dieu, Aglanet)
- ➔ 1 management notice (Breil)

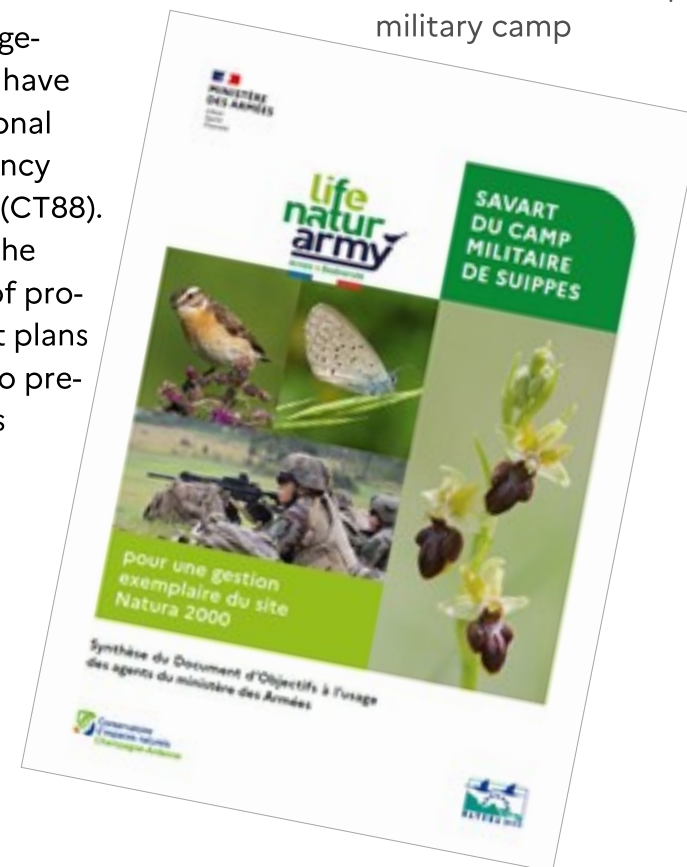
#### Contribution on a national scale:

The new Natura 2000 documents and management plans drawn up by the Conservatories have been produced in accordance with the national methodology of the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB in French), called Cahier Technique 88 (CT88). The associated feedback will contribute to the OFB's work on improving the management of protected areas. Future ecological management plans financed as part of the ministerial strategy to preserve biodiversity will be deployed using this methodology as their preferred method.



Savart de Suippes ©CEN NA/A.BERTONI

Natura 2000 objectives document of the Suippes military camp



# Objective 1 - Reaching an exemplary management of the Natura 2000 sites on military fields

## Tools and processes to reconcile biodiversity and military activities

### Improved application of environmental regulations

**94 projects and activities** on training areas have been supported by the Conservancies to improve the application of regulations, representing more than 1,500 ha surveyed.

The general recommendations resulting from this feedback are appended to the "Military Land & Biodiversity" guide. The guide now includes 40 sheets, 14 of which are dedicated to Natura 2000, and has been updated in line with the latest regulatory developments. The specifics of applying regulations on military land are described in summary form and in flowcharts.

As part of its development projects, the French Ministry of the Armed Forces must avoid, reduce and sometimes compensate for the impact of its developments on military land, also known as the mitigation hierarchy. An assessment of the application of this hierarchy on these sites was carried out during the LIFE NaturArmy project.

A specific sheet was added to the guide, and a note of recommendations on the implementation of this hierarchy was drafted.



### Example of achievement:

*On the Montmorillon camp:*

The Conservancy of Nouvelle-Aquitaine has drawn up recommendations for avoiding and reducing impacts on biodiversity during construction projects.

**Guide Terrains militaires & Biodiversité**  
Fiche 1.6 : Les activités soumises à évaluation des incidences Natura 2000

**Mon projet au MINARM est-il soumis à EIN ?**

- Conseil n°1 : se référer aux cas de dispenses
- Conseil n°2 : se référer aux listes nationales et locales
- Conseil n°3 : se référer au préfet (DTE pour le cas des IC, préfecture de département pour les autres) pour savoir si le projet est à traiter au cas par cas
- Conseil n°4 : se référer aux guides des installations classées du MINARM
- Conseil n°5 : demander de l'aide ou une formation aux procédures d'évaluation environnementales
- Conseil n°6 : dans tous les cas, la démarche d'évaluation des incidences doit être prise en compte dans le calendrier de réalisation d'un projet.

Concrètement, en complément des consignes précédentes, voici quelques exemples de projets soumis à EIN :

**Les projets suivants sont soumis à évaluation des incidences Natura 2000 :**

- Les projets d'installations classées pour la Protection de l'Environnement (ICPE) soumises à autorisation (dépot de munition, dépôt d'hydrocarbures, dépôt de vieux métaux, banc d'essai moteur, traitement de surface etc.), que le territoire qu'ils couvrent ou que leur localisation géographique soient situés ou non dans la périmètre Natura 2000, doivent faire l'objet d'une évaluation des incidences Natura 2000. L'évaluation des incidences Natura 2000 doit être portée par le pétitionnaire à l'étude d'impact et au dossier d'autorisation.
- Les ICPE soumises à enregistrement dès lors qu'elles sont localisées en site Natura 2000.
- Les ICPE soumises à déclaration (exploitation de carrières, stations de transit de produits minéraux, déchets non dangereux) situées sur un site Natura 2000.
- Les installations, ouvrages, travaux et activités (IOTA), qu'ils soient soumis à autorisation ou déclaration, que le territoire qu'ils couvrent ou que leur localisation géographique soient situés ou non dans la périmètre d'un site Natura 2000, doivent également faire l'objet d'une évaluation d'incidences Natura 2000.

Par conséquent, sont concernés par exemple :

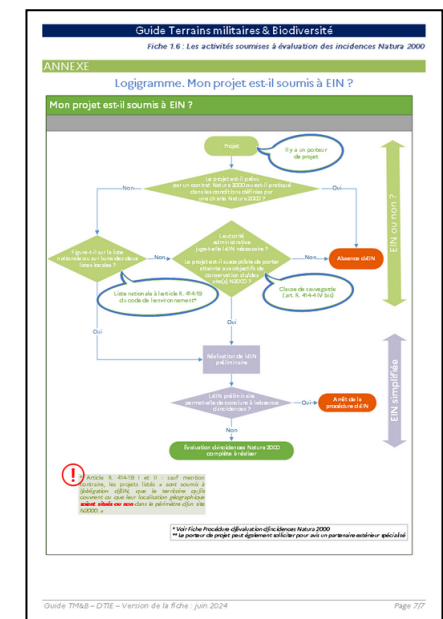
- Construction de station d'épuration ; aménagement de regards d'eau pluviale ; création de forages ; prélèvement d'eau ; réalisation d'espandages ; curage des cours d'eau et plan d'eau ; comblement des mares ; curage et entretien des canaux d'irrigation ; l'occupation par un tiers d'une dépendance du domaine public, etc.

Dans le cadre d'une Autorisation d'Occupation Temporaire (AOT) ou Convention d'Occupation Temporaire (COT), lorsque la dépendance occupée est localisée, en tout ou partie, en site Natura 2000, dans le cas présent, cette évaluation des incidences Natura 2000 est à la charge du demandeur de l'AOT et doit être transmise par celui-ci au service chargé de délivrer l'acte domanial. Avant de délivrer l'AOT, ce dernier transmettra pour avis cette évaluation des incidences Natura 2000 au service en charge de maniere formelle (DREAL) tout particulièrement dans le cas de projets d'activités devant se dérouler à l'intérieur ou à proximité immédiate d'un site et en cas de grande envergure.

Autre cas :

Le ministre des Armées demandera systématiquement dans le cadre de demande réquisition préfectorale (gens du voyage, évènements, festivals etc.) sur un terrain Natura 2000 la réalisation par le demandeur d'une évaluation des incidences Natura 2000.

Guide TH58 - DTE - version de la fiche - Juin 2024 Page 47



Example of a sheet included in the "Military Land & Biodiversity" guide



# Objective 1 - Reaching an exemplary management of the Natura 2000 sites on military fields

## Tools and processes to reconcile biodiversity and military activities

The Conservancies of natural areas have carried out experiments to better reconcile environmental issues with military and civilian uses (hunting, fishing, agriculture...) on several LIFE project sites.

Since 2019, more than 50 experiments have been carried out, covering a range of activities such as firebreak management, ponds and ditches, bird hazard prevention, invasive alien species management, etc.

### Example of achievement:

*On Cazaux Air Base 120 :*

Bring local experiments to the national level in terms of improving the potential for hosting forest bats, ditch management and taking account of aquatic environments.

**RETOUR D'EXPERIENCE**  
**Conversion des surfaces de pare-feux en prairie sur le site militaire de Montmorillon :**  
Optimiser la sécurité incendie tout en améliorant l'intérêt écologique des espaces naturels

**Une volonté de prendre en compte la gestion du risque incendie sur le site :**  
A la suite des grands incendies de 1991, où près de 375 ha de végétation ont été brûlés, des mesures préventives telles qu'un réseau de pare-feux d'environ 80 ha ont été mises en place. Aujourd'hui, ces pare-feux sont des sols labourés, ayant peu d'intérêt écologique.  
D'autre part, la prédominance de sols sableux et de landes sèches sur le site, favorise grandement la propagation des incendies.  
Dans les années 2000, le camp militaire de Montmorillon a été conforté comme site de préparation opérationnelle des troupes, entraînant une augmentation de son taux d'occupation.  
Pour concilier l'augmentation de la préparation opérationnelle, la gestion du risque incendie tout en gérant de manière durable le site, une réflexion conjointe entre le RICM et le CEN Nouvelle Aquitaine s'est engagée. Une possibilité d'action consistant à transformer une partie des pare-feux secondaires en prairies permanentes a été envisagée.  
Une prairie constitue en effet, une structure végétale qui répond à plusieurs objectifs : elle agit comme une barrière efficace contre la propagation des incendies, elle facilite la circulation des véhicules lourds équipés de réserves d'eau de lutte contre les incendies de forêt et elle offre également un habitat propice à de nombreuses espèces.

**Contexte historique :**  
Depuis 1997, le CEN Nouvelle-Aquitaine et le RICM (Régiment d'Infanterie Chars de Montmorillon) ont établi un partenariat écologique visant à gérer de manière durable le site militaire de Montmorillon, qui s'étend sur 1637 hectares.

**Une première expérimentation :**  
Dès 2009, le RICM, la Société militaire de pêche et de chasse et le Conservatoire d'espaces naturels ont collaboré pour convertir 15,50 ha de pare-feux « secondaires », auparavant entretenus annuellement par un labour superficiel, en prairies permanentes.  
Durant cette première expérimentation, les secteurs convertis n'ont pas fait l'objet de diagnostic floristique préalable, le principal critère a été la faisabilité technique de mise en place de la gestion. De plus, le choix des espèces implantées n'est porté sur des espèces considérées comme rustiques, non pérennes et adaptées aux conditions pédo-géologiques du camp. Les semences ont été achetées en coopérative agricole.

- Le CEN a ainsi financé les semences et les plantations
- La Société Militaire de Pêche et de Chasse a réalisé les travaux préalables de labour et de semis
- Le RICM est chargé de l'entretien des surfaces converties.

Logos: CEN Nouvelle-Aquitaine, Conservatoire d'espaces naturels, RICM, Société Militaire de Pêche et de Chasse, OFB, etc.

At the end of these experiments, 12 best practice sheets were drawn up to provide guidance to those responsible for managing natural areas on military land. This feedback will also be appended to the "Military Lands & Biodiversity" guide.

Example of a best practice feedback sheet



Cazaux Air Base ©CEN Nouvelle-Aquitaine

### Tools and processes to reconcile biodiversity and military activities

#### Improved management of environmental offences

To limit the threats to biodiversity, it is also necessary to curb environmental offences, including on military fields. An initial assessment of environmental offences has been carried out to determine their scale, during the LIFE project.

To facilitate the intervention of the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB) agents, who have environmental policing skills, new partnerships have been set up at local level, to reinforce surveillance of Natura 2000 sites. In a complementary move, agents from the French Ministry of the Armed Forces have been made aware of environmental regulations.

Drawing on local feedback from partnerships and collaborations with the OFB (Champagne, Garrigues and Canjuers camps), the Ministry of the Armed Forces has developed a national procedure for managing environmental infractions.



Up left: Savart of the camp of Mourmelon  
©CEN CA/A.BERTONI  
Down left : Observer at the camp of Mailly  
@CENTIAC  
Right: Military training at camp of Suippes©  
A. Karaghezian - ECPAD

#### Example of achievement:

##### *On Champagne military camps :*

A local partnership agreement was signed between the Ministry of Defence (COM ZT Nord-Est) and the OFB on 26/04/2022 for a period of 5 years. After coordination with the camp, a schedule of patrols was drawn up with the departmental team and the OFB's mobile intervention brigade, with the first patrol scheduled for late 2022.

### Tools and processes to reconcile biodiversity and military activities

#### Sustaining actions on sites no longer required by the Armed forces

Since 2008, the Ministry of the Armed Forces has sold nearly 55,000 hectares of its real estate holdings. The ecological value of these sites is not always taken into account at the time of sale. The Ministry of the Armed Forces has experimented with a number of measures to improve biodiversity protection during sales.

#### A necessary ecological characterization of sites

One of the challenges for the Ministry is to determine the biodiversity challenges of these unused sites as early as possible.

Biodiversity issues were identified on unused sites in the Grand Est region. The diagnosis carried out for five of these sites by the Conservatoires d'espaces naturels Lorraine and Alsace identified various possibilities for their future, such as integration into protected area networks or the use of land tenure tools.

#### Innovative land tools mobilized

Several land tools have been tested on sites that are not intended to be sold.

Their application requires the support of the relevant departments of the Ministry of the Armed Forces and the Direction Régionale des Finances Publiques (DRFIP) representing the State as owner:

- ➔ **A management agreement dedicated to the state-domain for La Torpille camp (44)** has been signed between the military authorities and the Conservancy of Pays de la Loire. A standard agreement has been drawn up based on this experiment.
- ➔ **A real environmental obligation/French conservation easement (ORE)**, a French estate legislation tool to preserve biodiversity on a site, will be tested on a military site in Brax (31), with the Agen conurbation for the implementation of compensatory measures.

These tools could be duplicated on other military sites.



Wooded bog on the Auvours camp @O. Vanucci/CEN PDL

#### Example of achievement:

Camp de la Torpille and Pointe de l'Eve (Pays de la Loire):

Two inventories were carried out by the Pays-de-la-Loire Conservancies to identify the ecological challenges at stake on these sites assessed as surplus to armies' requirements. The high ecological stakes identified at Camp de la Torpille led to the signing of a management agreement for the State domain.

## Objective 1 - Reaching an exemplary management of the Natura 2000 sites on military fields

### An efficient network of stakeholders

#### Structuring the partnership network in France

The project has enabled the Ministry of the Armed Forces to assert its role in the preservation of biodiversity among French and European institutional stakeholders. Cooperation with these stakeholders is now an integral part of the **Ministry's biodiversity preservation strategy**. The partnership with the National Museum of Natural History, one of the pillars of this strategy, was renewed in 2024 with the signature of a framework agreement that will run for the duration of the strategy, i.e. until 2030.



**The partnership between the Armed Forces and the Conservancies of natural areas has expanded significantly, and now covers more than 108,000 ha. A new agreement model has been designed to adapt to each territorial situation and to deploy increasingly ambitious actions.**



Patricia Mirallès, Secretary of State for Veterans and Memory, Sylviane Bourguet, Director of Territories, Real Estate and Environment, and Gilles Bloch, President of the National Museum of Natural History, at the signing of the framework agreement between the National Museum of Natural History and the Ministry of Defence for the knowledge and assessment of biodiversity.

Lieutenant-Colonel David, second-in-command of the 2nd RIMA, and Alain Laplace, President of CEN Pays de la Loire, sign the renewal of the agreement of the military camp of Auvours.



#### Examples of achievement:

➔ *On military field of Avon :*

Strengthen the local partnership between the École Nationale des Sous-Officiers d'Active and the Conservatoire d'espaces naturels Nouvelle-Aquitaine by renewing the agreement for a 10-year period.

➔ *On camps of Auvours, Fontevraud, and on maneuvering fields of Hauts de Terrefort and of Breil :*

Strengthen the partnership between the Ministry of Defence and the Conservatoire Pays de la Loire on a regional scale at 4 military sites.

## Objective 2 — Promoting the major role of the armed forces in the Natura 2000 network and in the preservation of biodiversity

### Communication and awareness-raising at the Ministry of the Armed Forces

The LIFE NaturArmy project has promoted the measures taken to protect biodiversity implemented on French military sites, both in France and in Europe.

Communication and awareness-raising have also facilitated the sharing of best practices between biodiversity stakeholders and the Ministry of the Armed Forces staff.

Ministry of the Armed Forces personnel, both civilian and military, have become more aware of their role in environmental matters, and the Ministry of the Armed Forces's efforts on behalf of biodiversity are now widely promoted among biodiversity institutions.

#### Example of achievement:

*On maneuvers fields of Hauts de Terrefort :*

Implementation of a participatory construction site as part of World Wetlands Day in 2023 to promote the partnership and biodiversity of military sites to the public.



This presentation in Balard site (Paris—2024) @N.Guilleux



Geneviève Darrieussecq, Minister Delegate to the Minister of the Armed Forces, accompanied by Justine Vidal from the Conservancy of natural areas of Nouvelle Aquitaine, launching the Fréquence grenouille operation in 2021. @ENSOA



Nature workcamp for World Wetlands Day on the Hauts de Terrefort manoeuvring fields in 2023 @CEN PDL

# Objective 2 — Promoting the major role of the armed forces in the Natura 2000 network and in the preservation of biodiversity

## Communication tools and supports

To promote the actions conducted during the project, several communication tools and media have been produced:

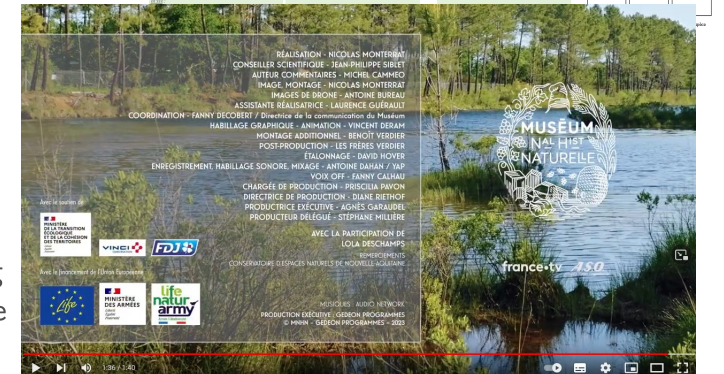
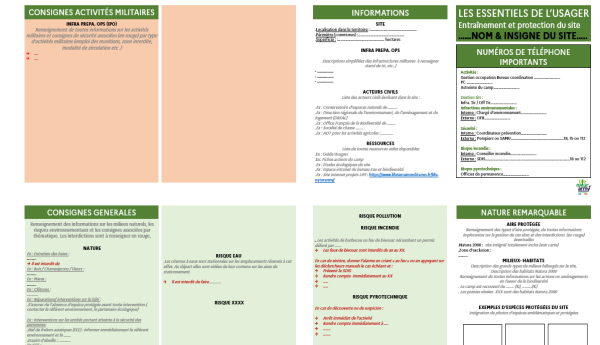
- ➔ A joint website for the LIFE NaturArmy and LIFE la Valbonne projects: [www.lifeterrainsmilitaires.fr](http://www.lifeterrainsmilitaires.fr)
- ➔ Regular news updates on LIFE partners' websites and social network accounts (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.), and news updates on the Ministry of the Armed Forces's internal websites.
- ➔ A communication kit (reports, videos, flyers, infographics) to facilitate the appropriation of biodiversity issues within the Ministry of the Armed Forces and the actions implemented.
- ➔ A template for a tool dedicated to local biodiversity awareness for users of military sites (called "The user's essentials")



En France, de grandes étendues de nature sont occupées par le ministère des Armées. Avec l'aide de partenaires écologiques, notamment celle des Conservatoires d'espaces naturels, le ministère préserve cette biodiversité exceptionnelle.



Differents communication tools and supports used during the LIFE project (website interface, poster, videos, and the tool « the user's essentials »)



# Objective 2 — Promoting the major role of the armed forces in the Natura 2000 network and in the preservation of biodiversity

## The LIFE NaturArmy highlights

- The announcement and presentation of the ministerial strategy for the preservation of biodiversity at the World Conservation Congress in 2021 brought awareness of the "Armies and Biodiversity" theme to over **500** visitors .
- 3 LIFE NaturArmy seminars, attended by over 400 participants (Paris, Sèvres, Bordeaux):
- 6 national steering committees combining the Armies and the Conservancies
- 1 study trip to the Elsenborn camp (Belgium) organized as part of the partnership between the French Ministry of the Armed Forces and the Belgian Ministry of Defence
- 4 international scientific symposia to present the thesis produced as part of the LIFE project

### LIFE NaturArmy project teams were present at 70 events

11	24
Organized by the LIFE team	Invitations to present the LIFE project
25	30
Local meetings	Training and awareness sessions

The mid-LIFE NaturArmy seminar in Sèvres (2022)



The LIFE NaturArmy final seminar in Bordeaux (2024)



Field visit during the LIFE NaturArmy final seminar in Bordeaux (2024)



## Objective 2 — Promoting the major role of the armed forces in the Natura 2000 network and in the preservation of biodiversity

### Staff training and awareness-raising

Within the Ministry of the Armed Forces, various training programs exist, as each Army, Directorate and Service has specific needs for its personnel in this matter. The LIFE project has made it possible to develop biodiversity training and awareness-raising initiatives.

Biodiversity training for environmental officers in the French Ministry of the Armed Forces has been gradually rolled out, with the creation of dedicated materials.

Several awareness-raising and training experiments have also been carried out by the network of Conservancies of natural areas. In this way, **548** students from military schools were made aware of the challenges of biodiversity and Natura 2000.

Finally, the Ministry of the Armed Forces has adapted the E-learning module on biodiversity shared by the French Biodiversity Agency to the military context. This module is designed for Ministry of the Armed Forces employees, and is now available on the Ministry's intranet, making it accessible to as many people as possible.

Module	Titre	Durée
1	La biodiversité et moi	5 min
2	Qu'est-ce que la biodiversité ?	15 min
3	Les différentes échelles des écosystèmes : du biome à la niche écologique	15 min
4	Avez-vous retenu l'essentiel ?	5 min

E-learning module on biodiversity, available on the general learning platform of the French Ministry of the Armed Forces



Training experiment on the Orange Air base 115 in 2024 by the CEN Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur @P.Merkel



Map of the awareness-raising and training experiments carried out during the LIFE NaturArmy project

#### Example of achievement:

*On Air base 115 - Orange :*

88 Air Force and Space Force students learnt about biodiversity from the CEN Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (South East of France).



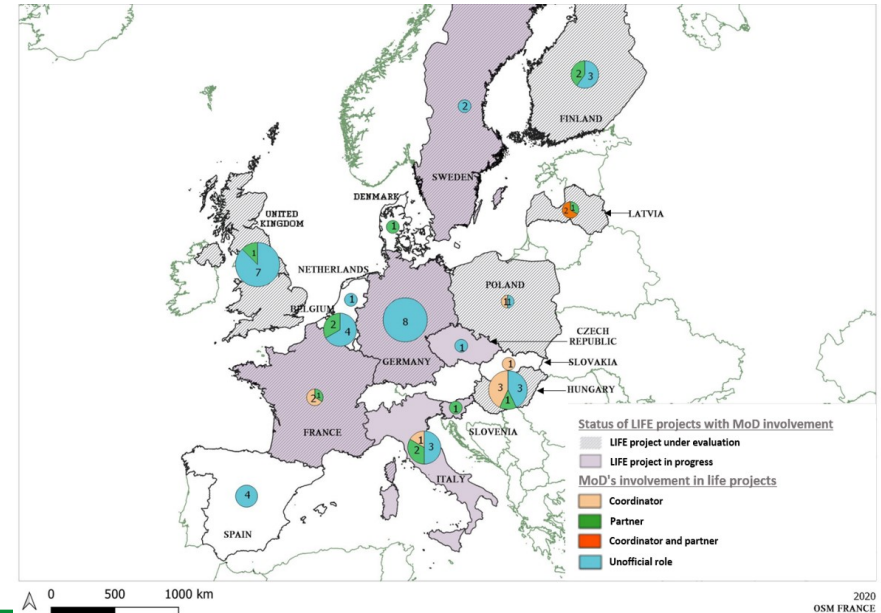
# Objective 2 — Promoting the major role of the armed forces in the Natura 2000 network and in the preservation of biodiversity

## Europe-wide cooperation

A review of partnerships between the European armed forces and biodiversity stakeholders at European level revealed the existence of different organizations and policies in the field of biodiversity within the European MoDs/NATO. A European intervention strategy has been drawn up, with two components, one for the French Ministry of the Armed Forces and the other for the FCEN, in order to develop cooperation on these subjects on a European scale.

The Ministry of the Armed Forces benefited from a partnership with the Belgian Ministry of Defense, which shared its experience in managing LIFE projects.

An informal biodiversity club has been set up, bringing together MoDs and NATO members in Europe. The aim of this technical group is to facilitate the sharing of LIFE NaturArmy results to other European armies, and to exchange best practices in the ecological management of military fields.



### Example of achievement:

#### *The MoDs Biodiversity Club :*

An initial meeting in May 2024 brought together 17 representatives from 11 European MoDs/NATOs to discuss the shape of the future Biodiversity Club. At the LIFE NaturArmy closing seminar, the representatives of the MoDs taking part in the event formalized the creation of the MoD Biodiversity Club. Until the club is structured, the French and Belgian MoDs are designated co-pilots, continuing the collaboration between these two ministries.



Visit of the Belgian Elsenborn camp in 2022 @MINARM

# A major breakthrough in the LIFE NaturArmy project

## The ministerial biodiversity preservation strategy

The Ministry of Defence has developed a policy dedicated to biodiversity through a Ministerial Strategy for the Preservation of Biodiversity to 2030 (SMB), based on 2 pillars: the partnership with the National Museum of Natural History and the LIFE NaturArmy project.

Drawn up by the Department of Territories, Real Estate and the Environment (DTIE), this strategy clarifies the ambitions of the Ministry of the Armed Forces, and enables exemplary biodiversity management to be extended to all military sites. It specifies the Ministry of the Armed Forces' drivers and players for each of the actions in its roadmap to 2030.

The Strategy was published in 2021, and presented at the IUCN World Congress.

The Ministry of Defence, a major player in national biodiversity, has also been involved in the National Biodiversity Strategy 2030 since its inception. It is piloting training initiatives that meet and complement the objectives defined in the LIFE NaturArmy project and set out in the Ministry's Biodiversity Preservation Strategy.



Front cover of the Ministerial Biodiversity Strategy

**BY 2030,  
THE STRATEGY OF THE MINISTRY  
OF THE ARMED FORCES AIMS TO  
ACHIEVE 4 OBJECTIVES:**

- 1**  
Improving knowledge  
of the natural heritage  
of military land
- 2**  
Implementing  
effective and appropriate ecological  
management of sites
- 3**  
Implement the  
the necessary resources
- 4**  
Strengthen cooperation with  
biodiversity stakeholders

# A major breakthrough in the LIFE NaturArmy project

## Sustainable funding for ecological planning

To achieve the ambitious objectives of the Strategy, the Ministry has earmarked at least 1 million euros a year to finance ecological management plans on its military sites. Research programs and local initiatives by environmental officers on sites are also funded.

Since 2023, the DTIE has launched an annual call for projects for the multi-year financing of ecological management plans on military sites. This call is aimed at ministry staff working in collaboration with a nature manager. The first call for projects selected **eleven winners**.

The funding of these projects meets several objectives:

- ➔ Formalizing partnerships between the military authorities and ecological partners through the signing of agreements
- ➔ Improving knowledge of the natural heritage present on the sites concerned
- ➔ Providing ministry staff with support from an ecological partner, to help them reconcile military activities with biodiversity challenges
- ➔ Setting up awareness-raising initiatives on military sites



Front cover of the synthesis of the ecological management plan of the Hauts de Terrefort military site—2023-2028

# The project perspectives

## What next ?

The procedures and tools developed as part of the LIFE NaturArmy are intended to be extended to all Natura 2000 sites that include a military site and, beyond that, to be adapted to all Ministry land involved in ecological partnerships. The Ministry of the Armed Forces is thus committed to continuing its efforts in favor of biodiversity beyond this project, through :



Continued cooperation with biodiversity stakeholders, in particular :

With the FCEN: the signing of an agreement to ensure the continuity of the LIFE NaturArmy actions. This partnership will also pave the way for initial discussions on a new LIFE project, in collaboration with the Conservancies of Natural Areas network.

With the MNHN: with a new agreement focusing on actions linked to biodiversity knowledge, and also integrating biodiversity assessment actions. Efforts to collect biodiversity data will be maintained and combined with those carried out on the cartographic model during the LIFE NaturArmy project.



Continued collaboration with the OFB to adapt online training resources and make them available to all agents



Continuing to standardize processes and resources so that they can be shared widely within the Ministry of Defence



Establishing long-term partnerships with Conservancies of Natural Areas



Coordination of the Biodiversity Club network at European level: exchange of best practices and field visits



Signing of the MINARM-FCEN agreement protocol at the closing seminar in Bordeaux in 2024 @photographer SGACOM

The ministerial strategy for preserving biodiversity up to 2030 will enable the Ministry to continue and strengthen biodiversity preservation beyond the end of the LIFE NaturArmy project.



# The key figures of the Life NaturArmy

Achieving exemplary management of Natura 2000 sites located on military land & Promoting the major role played by the Armed forces in the Natura 2000 network and the preservation of biodiversity

## Improving governance

1 ministerial strategy to preserve biodiversity by 2030

## Improving knowledge

1 thesis conducted on the specific features of Natura 2000 sites on military land by UBO  
+ more than 10,000 hectares surveyed to identify ecological challenges

## Improving the management of Natura 2000 sites

11 management plan projects selected in 2023 under the dedicated call for projects for 1,108,000 euros  
7 improved ecological management plans or notices and 2 DOCOBs  
1 cartographic model integrating biodiversity issues  
1 updated "Military Land & Biodiversity" guide for Ministry of the Armed Forces employees  
1 model national management agreement for State-owned land, enabling actions to be sustained on unused rights-of-way

## Improving cooperation with biodiversity stakeholders

13 new military sites contracted with the Conservancies of natural areas during the LIFE program  
52 military sites in active partnership with the Conservancies, i.e. over 108,000 ha  
3 seminars attended by more than 400 internal and external biodiversity stakeholders at all levels  
1 biodiversity club created for Ministries of Defense in Europe

## Improving awareness among ministry staff

548 students and 105 environmental officers trained in biodiversity conservation issues  
1 e-learning module on the essentials of biodiversity, adapted and accessible to ministry staff

## Enhancing the role of the Ministry of the Armed Forces

More than 900 communication actions  
1 website dedicated to LIFE projects supported by the Ministry  
15 videos with an audience of over 2.5 million people

Defending nature,  
A commitment for the Armed Forces



[www.lifeterrainsmilitaires.fr](http://www.lifeterrainsmilitaires.fr)



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