
Education, knowledge and biodiversity behaviour in the European Union

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Abstract

There is an increasing amount of research on biodiversity issues in the European Union, some of which has explored citizens’ behaviour and its potential determinants. Many of these studies have analysed the impact of education, knowledge and access to information on biodiversity attitudes and behaviour and found strong relationships in these countries, just as other researchers have determined them as significant factors in other parts of the world. As the public is and should be a key participant in biodiversity conservation decision-making, it should also benefit from an increased access to relevant information on biodiversity issues. The paper analyses the impact that education and knowledge (amongst other a priori determinants) have on the stated biodiversity behaviour of rural citizens from the European Union. We employ structural equation models (SEM) with observed and latent variables. We use a Flash Eurobarometer dataset (2010) about biodiversity attitudes and run SEM models for the 27 countries of the European Union. The average sample size is 367 observations. The variables included are socio-demographics, biodiversity knowledge, perceptions of the importance of biodiversity and impact of biodiversity loss, and stated biodiversity behaviour. Results show that, alongside other determinants, education and knowledge will significantly impact biodiversity behaviour of rural citizens in all of the countries, emphasising once again the importance of information to enhance the biodiversity knowledge of the public. Keywords: biodiversity, rural European Union, education, knowledge, behaviour, structural equation models

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