

# 2010 Annual report

*BirdLife Europe*



*Partners in action for people and nature*

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credits: Edgar Verhasselt

### **Back cover picture:**

Red Kite - credits: Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)  
The Red Kite, a truly European bird species which was nearly extinct in several European countries, is now recovering thanks to conservation measures.

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# INSPIRED BY NATURE, INSPIRING FOR NATURE

*Dear reader,*

**N**ature provides us with an incredible diversity of forms, materials and solutions perfectly adapted to different and complex environments and challenges. Today we witness the development of a fantastic array of products and solutions inspired by nature. This research line, called "biomimicry", gets its primary source of inspiration directly from biodiversity. Today we can produce highly resistant ceramics at only 4 degrees Celsius, as mussels do. Strings that are at the same time thin and more resistant than steel, as spiders do. We can produce self-cleaning surfaces which only use rain water to clean themselves, as the lotus leaf does. The potential for new discoveries and new solutions is as infinite as biodiversity itself. But if we continue destroying it through irresponsible behaviours, business models and policies, this potential will vanish.

Nature-inspired design is not something new. Birds have been a major source of inspiration for centuries, from Leonardo's prototypes of flying machines to the modern Japanese high-speed trains whose front reproduces the shape of a Kingfisher's beak. But nature and birds are not only inspiring technological solutions. Since the dawn of humanity they have inspired generations of artists, poets, philosophers, singers and painters; nurturing and stimulating our spiritual and cultural dimensions. Did you know that over 700 images of birds – representing 136 distinct species – are portrayed in the 7,600 paintings hosted in the Madrid-based Prado Museum? This census was completed in 2010 by our Spanish partner, SEO/BirdLife.

2010 was also the International Year of Biodiversity. Inspired by nature, the BirdLife Partnership (45 Partners in Europe and Central Asia, 116 Partners all over the world, six regional offices and a global secretariat) continued to inspire citizens, decision-makers, companies, researchers and donors to act and decide for nature.

The icing on the cake was the 10th Conference of Parties on the Convention of Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan. Over 90 BirdLife representatives from 34 BirdLife Partners in six continents attended, and together made a substantial contribution to the final agreement which, if implemented, can help to turn the tide of biodiversity loss.

Through these pages we invite you to discover more about this and many of BirdLife's other achievements, particularly in Europe. We invite you to join us, our BirdLife Partners and our growing number of individual and institutional supporters in this fascinating journey to conserve biodiversity and birds. With your help we can preserve these irreplaceable sources of inspiration that nurture our technological and spiritual development. Together we can build a better future.

**Angelo Caserta,**  
Regional Director, Stichting BirdLife Europe

**Werner Müller,**  
Chair, BirdLife European and Central Asian Committee

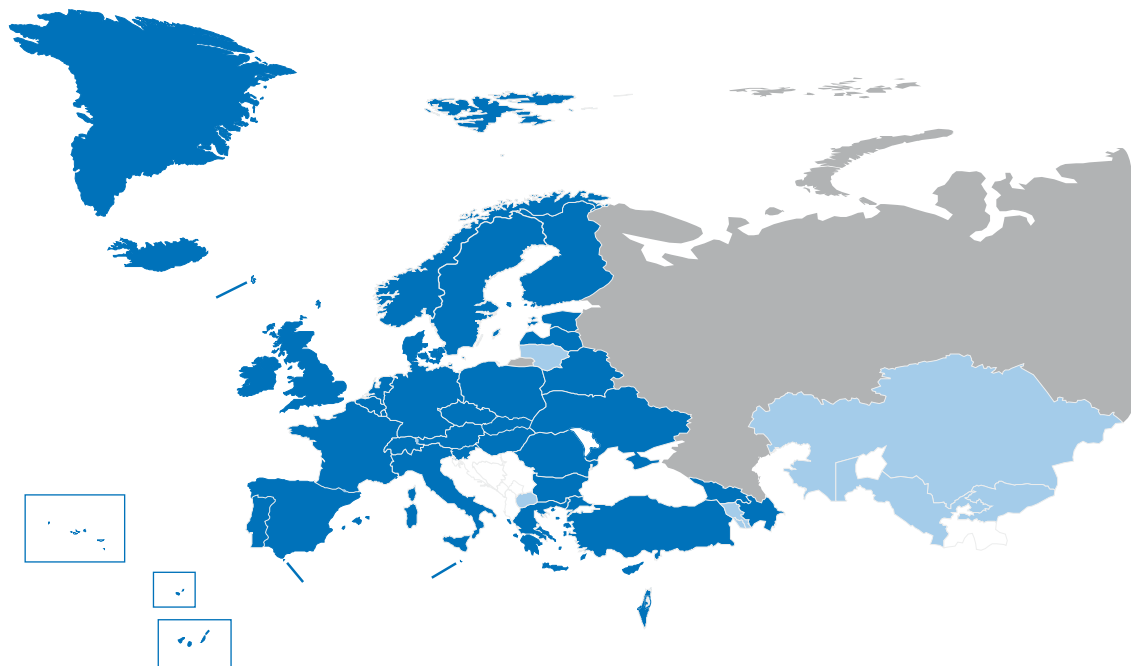
# THE BIRDLIFE EUROPEAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN PARTNERSHIP - FOR NATURE AND PEOPLE

## Stichting BirdLife Europe

The BirdLife European and Central Asian Partnership consists of 45 Civil Society Organisations in Europe and Central Asia, of which all EU Member States. The Partnership is supported by the European Division which is based in Brussels and is called Stichting BirdLife Europe. Together with five other regional divisions and many Partners in other continents, these entities form BirdLife International.

With more than 4 100 staff in Europe, 2 million members and tens of thousands of skilled volunteers, BirdLife Europe, together with its 45 national Partners owns or manages more than 5 800 sites totalling 320 000 hectare.

## The BirdLife European and Central Asian Partnership

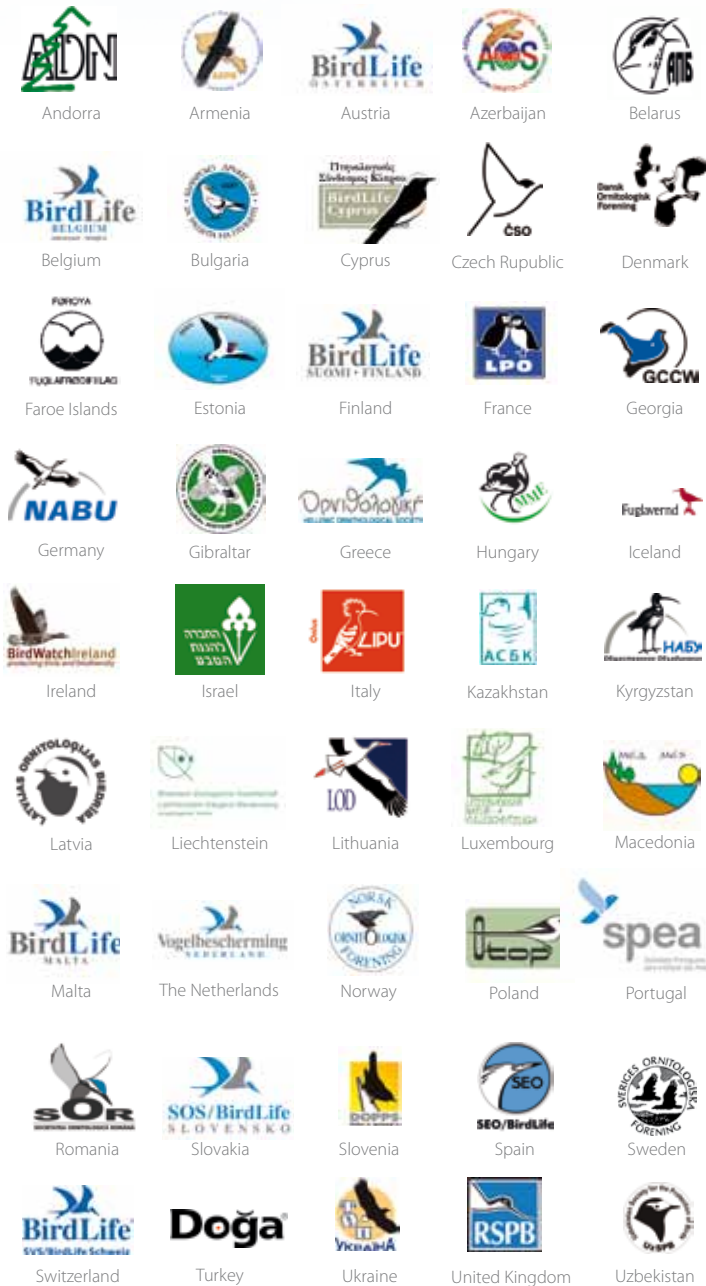


December 2010

■ Partner    ■ Affiliate    ■ Country Programme



## The BirdLife European and Central Asian Partnership



### BirdLife International

BirdLife International is a unique global Partnership of national conservation organisations and the world leader in bird conservation. The BirdLife Partnership works locally to deliver long-term conservation for the benefit of nature and people.

The BirdLife Global Partnership has:

- More than 6 400 staff working for conservation
- Over 2 250 000 members worldwide
- 10 000 000 worldwide supporters
- Over 2 million children involved annually
- Over 1 000 000 hectares owned or managed
- 2 000 Local Conservation Groups affiliated to the BirdLife Partnership

# NETWORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The BirdLife European and Central Asian Partnership, coordinated by Stichting BirdLife Europe, was active on many fronts to protect and safeguard biodiversity throughout the year. On these pages you'll find a snapshot of our achievements and work in 2010.

## BirdLife Partners awarded the prize for best EU LIFE Nature Projects

In 2010, three BirdLife Partners from the European and Central Asian Partnership were awarded prizes for the best EU LIFE Nature Project in 2008-2009. SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal) won the prize for its 'LIFE Priolo' project, EOS (BirdLife in Estonia) won the prize for its EAGLELIFE project and SPEA and SEO/BirdLife (BirdLife in Spain) together won the third LIFE prize for their work on the identification of marine IBAs in Spain and Portugal. The LIFE programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment. The general objective of LIFE is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental policy and legislation by co-financing pilot or demonstration projects with European



added value. The 'LIFE Priolo' project was selected for the 'Best of the Best Projects', as it contributed to the recovery of Azores Bullfinch. The selection criteria for the awards include the improvement of conservation status of the targeted species or habitats, and the national and international project impact.

## BirdLife in Poland - Partner staff wins world's top environmental prize

Malgorzata Górska from OTOP (BirdLife in Poland) has been awarded in 2010 the world's top prize for grassroots activists having led a successful campaign, which stopped a road being built through Poland's precious Rospuda Valley.

The Goldman Environmental Prize - often called the Nobel Prize for the environment - is awarded to men and women around the world who take great personal risks to safeguard the environment. The Rospuda Valley is one of the last truly wild places in Europe, acknowledged for its beauty and environmental importance. Its designation as an EU Natura 2000 site should have offered it permanent protection, but it was threatened by a major road-building project - called Via Baltica - which aimed to link Helsinki and Warsaw.

Following their success in saving the Rospuda Valley, Górska and her colleagues in OTOP continued to campaign to halt construction of the Via Baltica Expressway through other protected sites. On 20 October 2009, the Polish government finally agreed to re-route the whole controversial section of the Via Baltica Expressway, saving these valuable EU-protected sites from destruction.

## BirdLife Partners call to save the Wadden Sea

The Wadden Sea is one of the last remaining true natural treasures in north-west Europe. Characterised by vast mudflats, it stretches over three countries: Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands and is a complex of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) which is threatened by human activities. In response, three BirdLife Partners - DOF, NABU and Vogelbescherming Nederland (BirdLife Partners in Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands respectively) - have joined forces to fight for the conservation of this area. They published an ambitious report entitled the: 'Wadden Sea Vision - A vision for the conservation of a Natural Heritage'. The BirdLife Wadden Sea vision calls for the implementation of seven conservation measures, to ensure a biologically rich Wadden Sea, where birds and people can prosper together.



Download *The Wadden Sea - A vision for the conservation of a Natural Heritage* at <http://www.birdlife.org/eu/pdfs/Waddenvision.pdf>

## Aren't Birds Brilliant? Nature like you've never seen it before

Aren't Birds Brilliant (ABB) is a fantastic BirdLife initiative to keep the European public's interest in birds growing through a series of interactive events in public spaces.

In 2010, nine BirdLife Partners across Europe were organising events to promote and create awareness for the work they do with people who might otherwise never come in contact with them. In recent years, ABBs have also become an important way to recruit new members for the participating BirdLife Partners.

In all the participating countries, BirdLife Partners set up stands in green city spaces, urban areas or nature reserves where people pass by anyway. Nature is all around us; it is just a matter of opening our eyes and taking it in. By making use of the telescopes and binoculars at the stands, of which a large majority has been generously lent by Swarovski Optik, the BirdLife Partners help citizens and other future or existing nature lovers to re-connect with nature and discover the work of BirdLife.

2010 proved to be a major boost for the Aren't Birds Brilliant events across the participating countries, with e.g. DOF organising over 30 events attended by nearly 6000 people, many of whom became new members. Portugal called its ABB events 'De Olho nas aves' (Eyes on Birds) and reached out to the public in 9 different locations including prime wild habitats. In Spain, 99 people decided to become members of SEO/BirdLife after visiting one of the 'Aves en Vivo y en Directo' events.





# REACHING OUT TO YOU

BIRDLIFE EUROPE EVENTS IN 2010

## 2010 - BirdLife Europe celebrates the International Year of Biodiversity

BirdLife Europe and its Partners celebrated the 2010 Year of Biodiversity by raising awareness of the beauty and necessity of biodiversity among European citizens. However, it became painfully clear throughout 2010 that the European target to halt biodiversity loss had not been met by the EU Member States and other European countries. This encouraged BirdLife Europe to join forces with other key EU stakeholders to strengthen the case for a solid future protection package for biodiversity in Europe. In October, we played a key role at the

Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya and successfully advocated governments to step up their efforts to protect the world's biodiversity.

### January Celebrating the start of the International Year of Biodiversity at the European Parliament

In January 2010, BirdLife Europe celebrated the opening of the International Year of Biodiversity with an exhibition portraying Europe's beautiful biodiversity. The exhibition was visited by many **MEPs and EU officials**, increasing the knowledge and awareness of biodiversity and the need to conserve it.

### June Business for Biodiversity Event

Mid-2010 we reached out to the **European business community** in Brussels and invited them to reflect upon how they could make a contribution to the protection of biodiversity, not only by supporting conservation organisations but also by thinking about the real value of biodiversity and how to take this up in future core business planning. Electrabel/GDF Suez and Martin's Hotels generously supported the conference and dinner, which was attended by more than 70 interested guests.

### June EU Green Week

BirdLife Europe joined **EU stakeholders and NGOs** for a week-long conference on the future of biodiversity. Hundreds of people visited our stand around the theme: 'Rescue Biodiversity'. During the Green Week, BirdLife Europe launched its 2010 assessment report on biodiversity: '2010- Turning or Breaking Point for Europe's Wildlife?'

### October BirdLife European Partners urged EU Commissioner for the Environment to step up the efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity

On the eve of the world summit on the future of biodiversity, the CBD COP 10 in Nagoya, BirdLife Europe and its Partners appealed directly to the **EU Commissioner for the Environment, Mr. Janez Potočnik**, as one of the key-players in the debate to come. BirdLife Europe's three-minute video asked him to step up the EU's efforts to protect biodiversity at global level, but also to speed up its own implementation and enforcement of nature legislation on the ground in Europe.

### Advocating for change

#### June Time to act on seabird bycatch

EU Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Mrs. Maria Damanaki received representatives of BirdLife Europe to deliver the pledges of 23 000 citizens urging the Commission to act on the by-catch of seabirds. Fishing gear in EU waters is estimated by BirdLife Europe to have killed two million seabirds in the past ten years. BirdLife Europe presented the Commissioner with an image of one of the species affected, Cory's Shearwater, composed of 2 300 smaller photos – one for every ten **citizens** who signed.



Commissioner Potočnik meets BirdLife Partners



BirdLife Europe at the EU Green Week



Commissioner Potočnik receives the Partnership video for Nagoya



BirdLife Europe meets Commissioner Damanaki

credits: European Commission and BirdLife Europe





# BIODIVERSITY: OUR NATURE, OUR FUTURE

2010 was declared the “International Year of Biodiversity”, and European governments pledged to halt the decline of biodiversity by 2010. Unfortunately, this landmark went by with **the global biodiversity crisis still unchecked and gathering speed.**

A wide body of science, including BirdLife Europe’s own studies<sup>1</sup>, shows that the situation is dire. The pressures caused by an ever-growing human footprint are driving ever more species on to the Red List and closer to extinction, with some already lost forever. This is not just morally wrong and robbing humanity of essential beauty and wonder. **The collapse**

**of ecosystems and the erosion of the services that they provide is also becoming a clear danger for the future of human society.** While many headlines are justly grabbed by tropical deforestation or the collapse of global fisheries - phenomena where European consumption is among the main drivers - Europe’s own biodiversity is also in dire straits.

In 2010, BirdLife Europe released its own assessment<sup>1</sup> of how EU countries have performed against the biodiversity target they set for themselves. The verdict has not been kind. While the EU has some of the world’s best legislation on nature conservation,

1. Download this brochure at: <http://www.birdlife.org/eu/pdfs/BirdLife2010AssessmentreportFINAL.pdf>

which has been shown to work when implemented correctly, the level of actual implementation in many countries is poor. A detailed evaluation by country and topic has highlighted common and widespread issues: failure to reform key policies affecting biodiversity such as agriculture, fisheries and transport, lack of funding for and active management of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas; and lack of adequate safeguards regarding the development of infrastructure.

BirdLife Europe action was not limited however to denouncing current shortcomings. We have developed detailed proposals and a roadmap for the EU to follow in order to properly address the biodiversity crisis. These include ideas for better implementation of existing legislation through methods, such as better training for national officials, better engagement of industry sectors and smarter use of modern tools such as remote sensing. We remain the leading organisation in developing concrete proposals for a biodiversity-friendly reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, and have played a key role in NGO coalitions working to reform the Common Fisheries Policy, the Cohesion Policy, the EU budget and the EU environmental funding mechanism (LIFE+). In all these debates, **BirdLife Europe has been the voice for biodiversity and ecosystems, drawing on the deep and wide expertise of our Partners working on the ground throughout Europe.**

While our focus has mainly been on the elaboration and proposal of actual technical solutions, we have had to work hard also to maintain the level of ambition by decision-makers. The 2010 failure risked leading some people to despair and to accept the collapse of biodiversity as inevitable. By showcasing local and partial success stories, many of them

the work of BirdLife Partners, we have contributed to the renewal of a high-level commitment to conservation. We have been instrumental in the adoption of a new ambitious EU 2020 target that aims to reverse biodiversity decline and recognises for the first time the EU's responsibility for sharing the global conservation effort. We have worked hard with our Partners from outside Europe to ensure the success of the Nagoya summit of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Now that 2010 has ended, many will turn their attention away from biodiversity, but **BirdLife Europe will remain on the case** for as long as it takes.

Our work embraces the entire spectrum of the biodiversity policy. We work on the development of new legislation to cover existing gaps, such as preventing the spread of Invasive Alien Species. We encourage full implementation of existing legislation such as the Birds and Habitats Directives. We strive to reform other policies that affect biodiversity and ensure that all relevant aspects are addressed through a comprehensive EU Biodiversity Strategy that is adopted and actually followed up. We monitor the effectiveness of policies and actual impacts on the ground. Last but not least, our unique network structure allows us to **follow policies all the way from Brussels decision-making rooms to the fields, wetlands, seas and forests – both in and beyond Europe - where species are ultimately saved or doomed.**





# WORKING FOR SUSTAINABLE AND WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY FARMING

For well over a decade, BirdLife Europe has been the leading environmental voice engaged with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union. **Farming practices represent some of the major threats facing European biodiversity**, but at the same time much of Europe's wildlife depends on positive management by farmers.

The CAP is a policy that began some 50 years ago to ensure that Europe could produce enough food for its citizens. While initially effective in feeding a starving continent, the policy soon spiralled out of control, leading to unsustainable intensification and over-production. When information about butter mountains, wine lakes and the wider environmental

footprint became visible, policy makers started to look for a change. Twenty years of reforms focused mainly on the market, and led to a new phase in discussions. This time, the focus is on greening the policy as past reforms have often had a green lining, but not enough green content.

The lack of green substance in the CAP has been denounced in several reports by BirdLife Europe and its Partners. Our most recent analysis was in the summer of 2010 and dealt with transparency in CAP subsidies. **These reports have shown that the current policy maintains incentives for farmers to continue harmful practices**, not only for the environment but for the natural resources that

are vital for agricultural production: soil, water and biodiversity. The magnitude of the environmental crisis in our countryside requires not just further marginal tinkering with the policy, but a real reform which ensures that public money is used to support farmers who deliver public goods, while halting any perverse subsidies.

Years of awareness-raising and engaging with the policy ensured that our voice was heard and a new direction for the CAP now seems possible. **After highlighting the problem, BirdLife Europe also engaged in the solution. We took the lead in formulating a new vision for Europe's agriculture policy,** which we discussed with four other leading environmental and sustainable farming organizations working in Brussels and the Member States (The European Environmental Bureau, the Forum for Nature Conservation and Pastoralism, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements and WWF). The shared vision is based on the principle of **public money for public goods.**

#### **Public goods**

Public goods include clean water, a stable climate and rich biodiversity - not only wildlife, but also agricultural genetics, which is the fundamental basis of our food production system.

While society depends on these goods, they do not have a market value, so farmers have no incentive to produce them. Our vision sets out in detail a new structure for the CAP, starting from the basis of the 'polluter pays' principle. Beyond that, farmers and land managers should be given an option

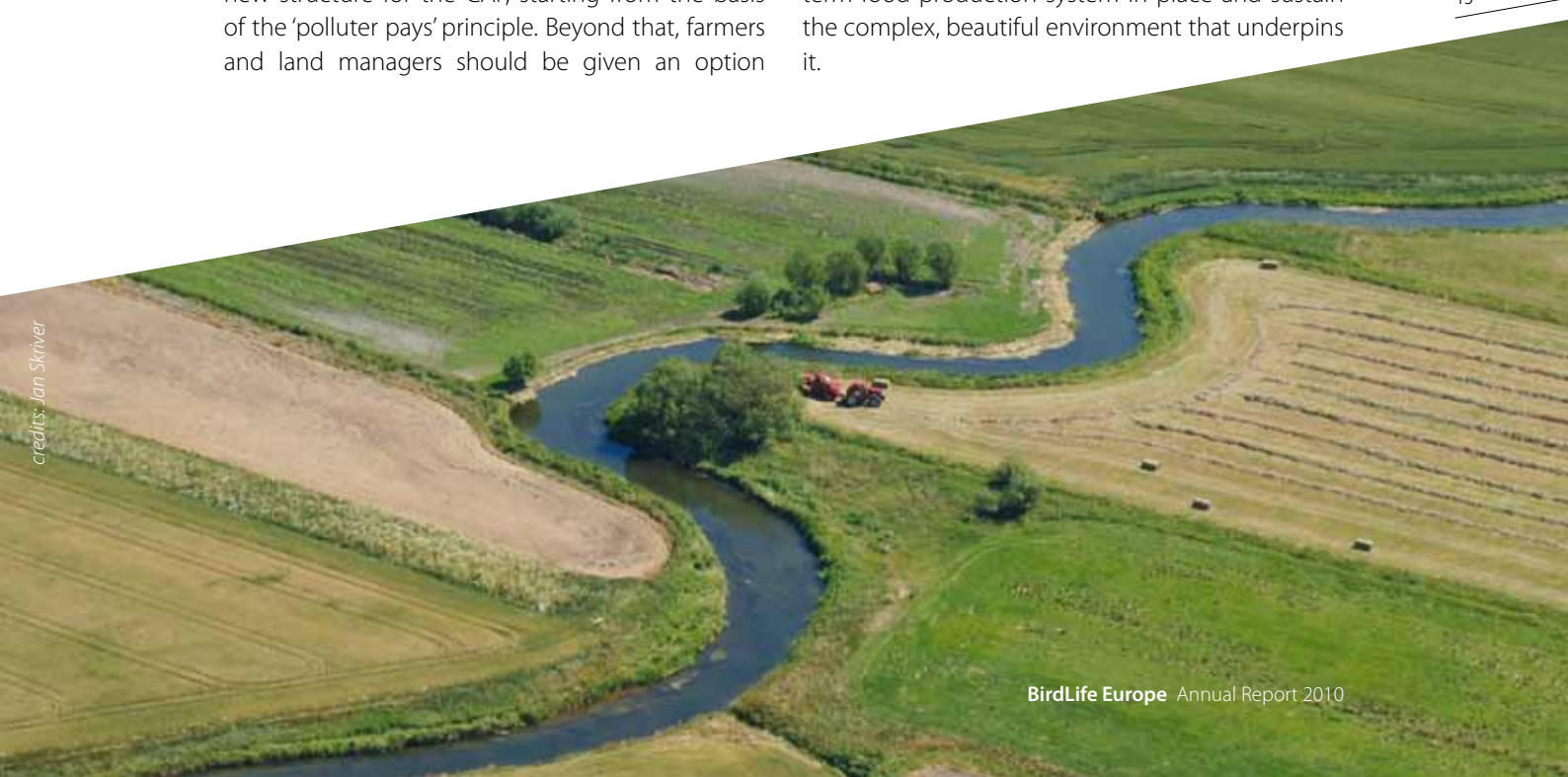
to enter into a contract with society to deliver the public goods that are currently not delivered by the market. The vision pays special attention to traditional extensive farming systems, which are environmentally important but vulnerable to abandonment.

**Together with the Partnership, we brought this vision to policy makers, the public and the farmers, and it had an impact.**

In the Communication of the European Commission (EC), setting out the ideas for a new CAP, **the environment was recognized as being one of the three major challenges** of the new CAP. This will open the door for a better CAP and a better targeted CAP budget (approximately 40% of the EU budget or around 50 billion euros per year) for the agricultural environment.

However, having the environment as a key challenge in the EC's Communication will not be enough as we certainly have not reached the final stage yet. **2011 will be another crucial year for CAP reform.** This will be the year in which the Commission must produce more than a vague vision paper, by publishing an in-depth legal proposal for the policy.

In conclusion, the realities behind the current policy have now been exposed, and a workable vision for reforming it has been developed and promoted. Now we need to ensure that the policy drafted over the next two years will be sufficient to keep a long-term food production system in place and sustain the complex, beautiful environment that underpins it.



# ALL EYES ON THE EU BUDGET

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The EU is in the process of profoundly revising its budget, setting a new spending framework for the period 2014 to 2020.

**BirdLife Europe has been actively working with other environmental organisations, the European Commission and the European Parliament in order to influence the process and outcome.**

The current EU budget is helping to support some of the best biodiversity conservation projects in Europe. Unfortunately it also still includes

huge perverse subsidies that exacerbate the ongoing environmental crises, from overfishing to unsustainable agriculture and ever more polluting and inefficient transport investments.

In 2010, by coordinating a group of six major NGOs, BirdLife Europe published a proposal<sup>2</sup> aiming to ensure that the next 'financial perspectives', as the EU budget is known, catalyse the transition towards **a just society that guarantees the well-being of citizens in a globally responsible way**, within the ecological limits of the planet.

2. [http://www.birdlife.org/eu/pdfs/Changing\\_Perspectives\\_101201.pdf](http://www.birdlife.org/eu/pdfs/Changing_Perspectives_101201.pdf)

**We proposed that the next financial framework should play a key role in addressing the great environmental challenges of our time:**

- Climate change and energy crisis
- Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse
- Resource inefficiency

This proposal, a substantial policy document covering all aspects of the EU budget, was officially launched on November 18th 2010 at an event attended by many representatives of EU institutions and key stakeholders.

The EU budget has implications reaching well beyond the EU's borders. In partnership with Conservation International (CI) we have worked to identify funding opportunities for biodiversity in

the Overseas Entities (regions administered by EU countries outside of Europe). In addition, following the release of a joint position paper with CI and WWF on EU Development Cooperation, our next step in the development arena will be to analyse how the EU's financial framework can sustain Europe's global funding commitments for biodiversity, climate adaptation and halting deforestation.

**Biodiversity conservation, environmental protection and human development are inextricably linked and we believe that European financial resources must catalyse a change towards global Green Economies that help lift people out of poverty in a sustainable way.**





# BIOFUELS

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE,  
OR ACCELERATING THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS?

Confronting climate change is a key objective of the EU. BirdLife Europe, as an active part of the environmental movement, sees climate change as a clear and present danger for our society – a threat to people and their livelihoods, birds and biodiversity.

**BirdLife Europe is thus contributing scientific knowledge and grassroots campaigning to the efforts to mitigate climate change.**

Several years ago, we realized that the climate agenda was running the risk of being hijacked by

unhelpful ideas and even potentially damaging ones.

One such policy is biofuels. The EU Renewable Energy Directive, intends to stimulate the decarbonization of our current oil-dependent economy and society. It is a key part of the EU Climate Policy. It does this by encouraging renewables through an EU-wide, 20% renewable energy target and a 10% renewables target specifically for the transport sector. Motivating countries to invest in greener technologies is a valid idea, but the technologies being promoted should first be evaluated on their climatic and environmental merit. Bioenergy has not gone through such analysis before targets have been set.

On this premise, our engagement started. With the Renewable Energy Directive under discussion, BirdLife Europe and others realized the potential dangers, particularly that of the 10% target. Targets run the risk of prompting countries to take up the 'easy options'- i.e. using 'off the shelf' technologies which do not necessarily score the best grades in terms of climate reductions or environmental sustainability.

**BirdLife Europe's engagement contributed to the adoption of mandatory sustainability standards for biofuels and bioliquids** (while biomass is not yet subject to such standards). Unfortunately, these sustainability standards ignore a crucial problem. By encouraging the expansion of biofuels (made of crops like sugar cane, rapeseed, palm oil, etc), this policy creates an extra land demand. This can be 'new land' (land not currently in agricultural production, but often important natural habitat) or 'old land' (land on which agricultural production is already taking place). In the case of old land, the food or feed previously produced will still need to be produced somewhere else. The inevitable result is land conversion for agricultural expansion. This conversion unfortunately happens too often in valuable natural sites and habitats.

Europe is, in effect, putting in place a policy which is driving conversion of tropical forests and highly diverse grasslands all over the world. While mandatory sustainability criteria for biofuels and bioliquids can try to tackle the direct conversion problems, the problem of the indirect land use change (ILUC) described above remains. Ignoring ILUC means ignoring an important amount of extra emissions.

With biomass production free of mandatory sustainability standards, this policy threatens to create double standards by ignoring both the climatic and environmental problems tied to its use.

In 2010, we put the spotlight on both of these problems. First of all, we brought the issue of ILUC closer to the policy makers. The European Commission was asked by the European Parliament to produce studies on ILUC, but these studies' results were not made transparent and in addition,

publication was delayed. In response, BirdLife Europe and a coalition of other NGOs took the Commission to court over a request to make the results public. We also commissioned a study to review different ILUC models and compare the results for biofuel emissions to the threshold set by the Renewable Energy Directive.

**The study confirmed that ILUC is significant and that ignoring these emissions could potentially completely negate any climate benefits.**

Next, BirdLife Europe commissioned a study calculating the impacts of indirect land use change. Summing 23 EU countries' projected use of biofuels (all those currently available) will bring land up to twice the size of Belgium into production. In terms of emissions, this equals 12 to 26 million extra cars on European roads.

Concerning biomass, BirdLife Europe and other NGOs commissioned a study on the carbon accounting problems around woody biomass. The results made it clear that just burning wood for fuel would be very damaging to the climate, as it can take up to 260 years before emissions from cutting trees are recaptured. For BirdLife Europe this means that to protect the climate, biodiversity and wider ecosystem services related to forests, mandatory, EU-wide standards should be put in place to prevent biomass production being advanced without scrutinizing its impacts.

2011 will be another important year in the bioenergy saga. The European Commission will propose a solution to ILUC. We expect no less than crop-specific emission estimates that will result in more realistic and honest accounting of biofuel and bioliquid emissions.

For biomass, we expect more work to be done toward mandatory sustainability standards as these safeguards are needed to ensure that the Renewable Energy Directive will fulfil its purpose: saving carbon without damaging our planet in other ways.



# BIRDLIFE'S IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS PROGRAMME

OUR BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESSFUL  
NATURE PROTECTION

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For thirty years, BirdLife International has been identifying, documenting and conserving sites that are vital for the long-term viability of bird populations.



The global network of terrestrial Important Bird Areas (IBAs) has obtained wide recognition as an objectively identified set of prime sites for the conservation of birds and biodiversity. In Europe, IBAs are an important scientific reference for the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under

the Birds Directive of the European Union, and for Emerald Network sites in the rest of the continent. **IBAs have thus become a key ingredient of international biodiversity conservation efforts.**

As of 2010, nearly 67% of IBAs in the EU have been designated as SPAs and thus form part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas – the world's largest ecological network. This coverage varies from country to country, with some Member States having designated nearly 100% of their IBAs as SPAs.

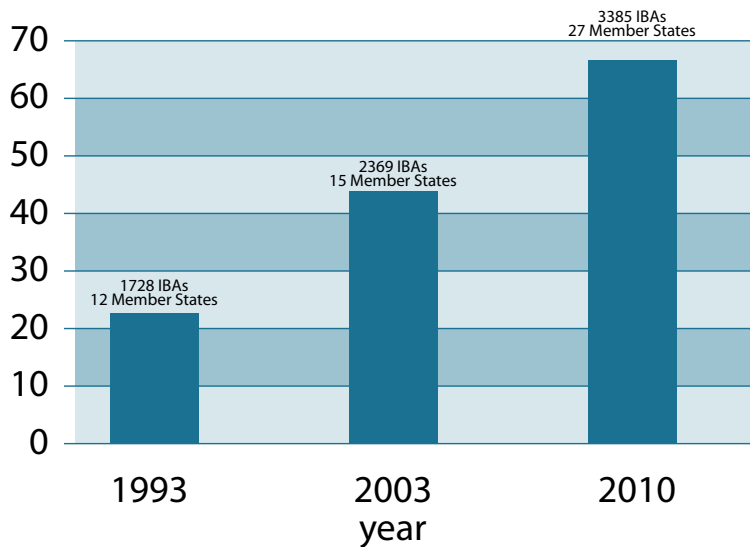
While identification has largely been completed for the terrestrial network, it is still in progress for marine environments.

Identifying and designating IBAs as protected areas is not the end of the programme however. It is the start of a new phase. For many BirdLife Partners, 2010 has marked the beginning of their engagement with Natura 2000 management, monitoring and ongoing protection. Managing protected areas in such a densely populated and heavily modified continent as Europe is not an easy task, requiring in-depth understanding of the legal and managerial toolkit, as well as imagination and creativity. Management boils down to having the ability to bring together people and their interests as landowners, managers, economic actors and end users of nature's benefits. **BirdLife's European and Central Asian Partnership has implemented**

**a great number of pilot projects to help national governments find the best possible management approaches.**

Unfortunately, IBAs are also increasingly threatened by unsustainable human activities. Our work to protect key sites has never been more important. In 2010, for example, BirdLife Europe helped SOR (BirdLife in Romania) to request the intervention of the European Commission to prevent tourism development from damaging sensitive parts of the Danube Delta ecosystem. In Greece, 66 of the IBAs identified by HOS (BirdLife in Greece) were finally designated as SPAs.

### % overlap between the areas of IBAs and SPAs





# A SEA CHANGE FOR SEABIRDS

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Marine ecosystems, of which seabirds are an integral part, face unprecedented pressure from human activities. BirdLife Europe is addressing this challenge by advocating changes in damaging policies, identifying and ensuring legal protection and adequate management for key areas for the conservation of sea birds and supporting conservation action for endangered species.

## Championing the identification of Important Bird Areas at sea

Because the selection of IBAs is based on applying solid scientific criteria, BirdLife Europe's IBA

inventories have repeatedly been acknowledged by the European Court of Justice as a benchmark for the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Extending the IBA programme to the oceans, while a logical and significant development, has posed both conceptual and practical challenges.

To assist with tackling some of these issues, BirdLife Europe has compiled a Marine IBA Toolkit, which offers guidance on the treatment and analysis of a range of data types and recommends rules to follow when identifying marine IBAs. In 2010, this report was acknowledged by the European Commission as an important contribution towards establishing the marine Natura 2000 network. It has been

offered to Member States as a methodology for use in identifying and designating marine SPAs.

To date, only a few Member States have delivered on their legal commitments in this regard. To expose this, in 2010, BirdLife Europe and its Partners published 'Marine IBAs in the European Union' a report providing a country-by-country overview of the state of the current network of marine IBAs and SPAs. The situation is far from ideal, as only six European countries have fully completed their network of marine IBAs and only four have most of their networks protected under the Birds Directive. In 2011 and beyond, **we plan to step up our efforts to ensure that all EU Member States safeguard key areas for seabirds at sea.**

### Campaigning for a more sustainable fisheries policy

In EU waters, fisheries are regulated by the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which has had a devastating impact on marine ecosystems; many are damaged or seriously disrupted, and 72% of fish stocks are overfished. Seabirds are amongst the victims of unsustainable fisheries, with 200 000 dying yearly as 'bycatch' in Europe alone. BirdLife Europe has been a strong voice calling on the EU to take immediate action to halt the needless deaths of species which are protected under EU legislation. We have collected evidence on the extent of the problem and presented solutions to the European Commission: simple technical fixes, which are highly effective at keeping seabirds away from fishing gear, are now common knowledge and are already hard-wired into fishing fleets from South Africa to Chile but not in Europe.

Seabird bycatch is unfortunately just one of many negative impacts of the CFP on marine ecosystems. This is why BirdLife Europe has joined forces with other NGOs to work for a reformed CFP which delivers healthy marine ecosystems, including fish stocks. For this to be achieved, the EU must first reduce its fleet capacity, which significantly exceeds available fish resources. This excessive fleet is a product of a perverse EU fisheries subsidy policy. BirdLife Europe worked with other NGOs in the framework of its position on the future EU budget to present its vision for the new European Fisheries

Fund, which we believe should support only sustainable fisheries and not lead to any increase of the EU's fishing fleet.

#### *Seabird bycatch*

Seabird bycatch is the fate of birds which are caught and subsequently drowned in the course of fisheries operations. This is happening all around the world as birds are attracted to fishing vessels or gear to feed on discarded fish, offal and bait. For some species this has dire consequences with 18 of the 22 species of albatross globally threatened with extinction. In Europe, the Balearic Shearwater is predicted to go extinct within a human generation.

### Saving the most threatened species

The Balearic Shearwater is endemic to Europe, with its global population of just a few thousands pairs breeding only on a few islands in the western Mediterranean. Owing to nest predation and threats at sea, which may include bycatch, the species is declining fast and is currently listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Unless urgent action is taken, it could go extinct within one human generation.

To avert such a fate, in 2010, BirdLife Europe worked with key experts on this species to review and revise its existing Species Action Plan and set out clear conservation priorities for the coming years. Parallel to this, BirdLife Europe and its Partners took action to save the Balearic Shearwater through conservation projects in Spain, Portugal, France and the UK. During the summer, the species disperses out of the Mediterranean into the north-east Atlantic, but its movements remain poorly known. By coordinating coastal counts, attaching geolocators (electronic devices that record the movements of individual birds at sea) and interviewing fishermen, these projects should fill many gaps in our knowledge about this rare and understudied seabird.

# AZORES BULLFINCH

## BACK FROM THE BRINK

credits: Pedro Monteiro

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This small finch, called Priolo in Portuguese is one of Europe's rarest and most localised birds. Its only remaining population lives in Pico de Vara, a Natura 2000 site on the Azores island of São Miguel.

Suppressed by invasive plants, the native laurel forests could no longer provide sufficient fruit and flower buds for the Priolo's winter diet, while rats compromised successful breeding. Thus over the course of a century or so, this once common bird declined as it faced several of the most devastating threats to biodiversity in modern times: habitat loss, persecution by farmers and the dominance of invasive alien species over its native ecosystem. In 2005, it was listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List, and considered to be at imminent risk of extinction.

Fortunately, the situation has now changed and since 2010, the extinction of the Priolo is no longer considered imminent! Several years of focused conservation action lead by SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal) has made the Priolo's future slightly more secure, and it has been moved down to a lower risk category (Endangered). However, the story behind this achievement is revealing.

Firstly, successful recovery of the Priolo has only been achieved through fighting invasive plants on its island home. The recovery of the Azores Laurel Forest, rich in endemic plant species, most of them also threatened, was not an easy task. Mechanically clearing invasive vegetation in the difficult terrain began with EU LIFE funds (in 2010, the 2003-2008 LIFE Priolo project was awarded by the European Commission for its 'Best Practice'). Next, a nursery

### ***BirdLife International and the IUCN Red List: assessing extinction risk***

The IUCN Red List of threatened species is widely considered to be the most objective and authoritative system for classifying species in terms of their risk of extinction. Data on the size and trend of each species' population and range are assessed using standard quantitative criteria to determine its relative extinction risk, and thus allocate it to the correct threat category. Globally, 190 of the world's 10 000 bird species are listed in the highest category, Critically Endangered. BirdLife International is the official Red List Authority for birds, making assessments and supplying detailed documentation for all the world's birds to IUCN. BirdLife Europe collates the data required from national monitoring schemes to assess the status of more than 500 European species.

producing native plant material was created. In 2008, the Pico de Vara area was designated a Nature Park.

The attraction of this unique ecosystem and its biodiversity has already contributed to the local economy. This direct conservation action alone has created the equivalent of 25 local jobs and added 335 000 euro per year to the region's GDP. A new visitor's centre at the park has been opened, and promotion of the Priolo as a symbol of the unique island vegetation and the area as a tourist destination was supported. Recent surveys show that the distribution and size of the Priolo population is growing. If everything continues to go well and efforts are maintained, the Priolo may recover sufficiently to be reclassified to an even lower category of extinction risk in a few more years.

# ZINO'S PETREL: COURAGE UNDER FIRE

Zino's Petrel is Europe's rarest seabird and one of the rarest birds in the world, nesting only on a few mountain ledges in the rugged central massif of the island of Madeira, Portugal. Once on the edge of extinction with numbers down to a few dozen pairs, intense conservation action in recent decades, led by the Parque Natural da Madeira (PNM) with support from SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal) and others, had seen its population grow to almost 80 pairs. It is still listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.

Forest fires ravaged parts of Madeira in summer 2010, and on 13 August they hit the heart of the central massif. This area is protected as part of the EU's Natura 2000 network and comprises a very important habitat supporting several endemic plants and animals, including the Zino's Petrel breeding colony, where many nestlings were still in their burrows. On 15 August, as soon as the soil had cooled down sufficiently, PNM staff visited the breeding ledges to assess the damage. The results were shocking: 25 young and 3 adults had been killed, and only 13 chicks were found alive in their underground chambers. The fire also exacerbated soil erosion, destroying several nesting burrows.

Within days of the disaster, recognising the need for immediate action, BirdLife Europe launched an

urgent appeal for funds to help the PNM and SPEA to carry out the emergency conservation work needed before the winter set in. The wide reach of the BirdLife Partnership and our investment in multiple communication channels meant that the story soon reached thousands of people via our website, blog, newsletter, magazine and other means. By December 2010, more than 9 000 euro had been pledged online alone – our most successful online fundraising effort to date. A further 8 600 euro was donated via other routes.

These funds were used to implement an action plan developed by the PNM and SPEA, which included covering areas with anti-erosion materials and constructing artificial nesting burrows, both of which have proven successful on other seabird breeding colonies. The success of these measures will not be known until spring 2011, when the birds return from wintering at sea. Only then will we know how many have survived and whether they take to the artificial burrows. However, the omens are good, and the species has been given every chance to bounce back – thanks to the efficient ground actions by the PNM and SPEA, and the fundraising success of the BirdLife Partnership.





# BIODIVERSITY AND BUSINESS

## DELIVERING SOLUTIONS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

24 BirdLife Europe and its business partners strive for effective environmental sustainability. Biodiversity value and impacts are rapidly being recognized by the business sector as an important component of corporate decision making and risk assessment. As the world's leading authority on birds and the largest global Partnership of national conservation organisations, BirdLife offers companies the ideal strategic support to create a lasting difference for biodiversity by:

- Screening potential investments
- Locating an operation in a given region
- Developing action plans to manage for biodiversity impacts
- Completing Environmental and Social Impact Assessments
- Planning conservation, mitigation and offsetting activities
- Reporting on corporate biodiversity performance

Solid business and biodiversity collaborations integrate the values and processes of biodiversity conservation into the core of businesses at the corporate but also at the local operational level. We aim to achieve and deliver practical approaches to conservation, and impact avoidance and mitigation. Our efforts are supported by effective monitoring and informed reporting.

Birds are reliable indicators of the status of wider biodiversity and of the environments in which we live, and we already can rely on a large set of bird data to achieve a change for biodiversity. Birds'

biology and taxonomy are well understood and just like us they are globally distributed in all habitats. Birds are also relatively easily identified and surveyed and respond quickly to environmental changes.

**Working with the BirdLife Partnership is a chance to demonstrate your global commitment to the environment and reinforce your reputation as an environmentally responsible organization.**

### **Knowledge tools for businesses: IBAT**

The Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) for business is an innovative tool designed to facilitate access to accurate and up-to-date biodiversity information to support critical business decisions. IBAT integrates information on Key Biodiversity Areas (including Important Bird Areas) and Protected Areas in a single online mapping environment, allowing users to explore and query the data for their own purposes. The tool is the result of a ground-breaking conservation partnership among BirdLife International, Conservation International, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

To learn more about how companies can become involved with IBAT visit:

<https://www.ibatforbusiness.org/>

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT! TOGETHER WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The BirdLife strategy of protecting species, saving sites, conserving and restoring natural habitats and empowering people, is implemented through a number of programmes that together help us fulfil our vision of a world where people and nature live in harmony, and natural resources are used sustainably. All our work is driven by good science, clear priorities and the strong determination to achieve high impact on the ground. Our programmes are implemented through the unique structure of the BirdLife Partnership, ensuring connectivity and coordination, long-term sustainability and cost effectiveness.

We are extremely grateful for the generosity shown by our donors. Their giving provides the financial backbone to everything we do.

- European Commission, Directorate-General for the Environment
- Conservation International
- The German Marshall Fund of the United States
- The David and Lucille Packard Foundation
- European Climate Foundation
- The Arcadia Fund
- UNDP
- Electrabel/GDF Suez
- The Mitsubishi Corporation Fund for Europe and Africa
- The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE)

## ACE - Supporting our policy and conservation work

ACE, The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment currently supports BirdLife Europe with a project that aims to evaluate the study of European forest birds as indicators of changes in forest habitats. The EU already uses a composite indicator of farmland birds as an official indicator of sustainability in the region. The results of the project proposed here will be used to create an analogous indicator for forest habitats, which makes use of annual results obtained from the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme.

## The David and Lucille Packard Foundation

The David and Lucille Packard Foundation supported BirdLife Europe and three other environmental NGOs in our work on EU bioenergy policies, to ensure that they effectively contribute to climate change mitigation while minimizing adverse effects on biodiversity, ecosystems and vulnerable human populations.



# GOVERNANCE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF BIRDLIFE PARTNERS

## Governance

The European and Central Asian Committee guides and advises BirdLife Europe on behalf of the BirdLife European and Central Asian Partnership and of the Global Council. In particular, it:

- Develops the European and Central Asian programme, assists the Division in its implementation and monitors progress.
- Advises on the workplan and budget of BirdLife Europe.
- Decides on high-level European policy positions.
- Reviews the development of the European and Central Asian Partnership.
- Helps secure funding for the European and Central Asian Programme and BirdLife Europe operating costs.
- Assists in communicating to the wider Partnership.
- Convenes Regional Partnership Meetings.
- Represents the European and Central Asian Region in the Global Council.

### European and Central Asian Committee 2010:

Werner Müller (chair, SVS/BirdLife Switzerland)  
Elena D'Andrea (LIPU, BirdLife in Italy)  
Izabela Flor (OTOP, BirdLife in Poland)  
Tim Stow (RSPB, BirdLife in the UK)  
Xenophon Kappas (HOS, BirdLife in Greece)  
Alejandro Sanchez (SEO/BirdLife, Spain)  
Fred Wouters (VBN, BirdLife in the Netherlands)

### BirdLife Europe Staff in 2010

Angelo Caserta: *Regional Director*  
Liz Auton: *Fundraising Consultant*  
Boris Barov: *European Conservation Manager*  
Yasmine Boxus: *Events & Office Manager*  
Ariel Brunner: *Head of EU Policy*  
Ian Burfield: *European Science & Data Manager (based in Cambridge, United Kingdom)*

Bruna Campos: *EU Financial Perspectives Policy Officer*  
Tatiana Nemcova: *Senior EU Advocacy Officer*  
Herlinde Herpoel: *Head of European Communication and Marketing*

Alessia Pautasso: *Communication and Media Officer*  
Iván Ramírez: *European Marine Coordinator (based in Portugal)*

Trees Robijns: *EU Agriculture & Bioenergy Policy Officer*  
Borut Rubinič: *Partner Development Officer (based in Ljubljana, Slovenia)*

Marina Rollet: *Finance Officer*

Rastislav Rybanic: *EU Nature Policy Officer*

Maria Solernou: *Funding Development Manager for Europe*

**We would like to acknowledge the following BirdLife Partner organisations who have contributed through fundraising and unrestricted financial contributions to the international conservation programmes and the wider work of the BirdLife European and Central Asian Partnership:**

- *The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)- BirdLife in the United Kingdom*
- *Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU) - BirdLife in Germany*
- *Vogelbescherming Nederland (VBN) - BirdLife in the Netherlands*
- *Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli (LIPU) - BirdLife in Italy*
- *SVS/BirdLife Switzerland*
- *BirdLife Austria*
- *BirdLife Cyprus*
- *BirdLife Finland*
- *BirdLife Malta*
- *BirdWatch Ireland - BirdLife in Ireland*
- *Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB)- BirdLife in Bulgaria*
- *Czech Society for Ornithology (CSO) - BirdLife in the Czech Republic*
- *Dansk Ornitologisk Forening (DOF) - BirdLife in Denmark*
- *Drustvo za Opazovanje in Proucevanje Ptice Slovenije (DOPPS) - BirdLife in Slovenia*

- *Estonian Ornithological Society (EOS) - BirdLife in Estonia*
- *Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS) - BirdLife in Greece*
- *Hungarian Ornithological and Nature Conservation Society (MME) - BirdLife in Hungary*
- *Lëtzeburger Natur- a Vulleschutzliga (LNVL) - BirdLife in Luxemburg*
- *Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO) - BirdLife in France*
- *Natagora - BirdLife in Belgium*
- *Natuurpunt - BirdLife in Belgium*
- *Ogólnopolskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Ptaków (OTOP) - BirdLife in Poland*
- *Slovenská Ornitologická Spoločnosť/BirdLife Slovensko (SOS) - BirdLife in Slovakia*
- *Sociedad Española de Ornitología (SEO) - BirdLife in Spain*
- *Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves (SPEA) - BirdLife in Portugal*
- *Societatea Ornitologica Romana (SOR) - BirdLife in Romania*
- *Sveriges Ornitologiska Forening (SOF) - BirdLife in Sweden*

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The BirdLife International European Division is a Dutch Foundation, Stichting BirdLife Europe, and its operating office is set in Brussels

### Incoming resources

Partners	375674
Grants and Donations	186961
EU Commission Funding	305397
Other Income	150450
<b>Total incoming Resources</b>	<b>1018482</b>

### Resources expended

Staff cost	635388
Communications	17569
Equipment and supplies	39647
Support grants	84330
Rent and premises	82586
Professional services	60234
Travel conference events	48147
Realised exchange loss	-277
Other costs	50858
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>1018482</b>



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