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Vol. 5, Issue 5  
June 2011

## Editorial

### News from the EU



- [Poles at the EU wheel during the reforms kick-off](#)
- [NABU launches first Fishing for Litter initiative in Germany](#)
- [Strong partnerships for Natura 2000](#)

### News from the BirdLife Partnership



- [An appeal for birds in French overseas departments](#)
- [NABU celebrates 100 years anniversary of Federsee boardwalk](#)

### From the Conservation point of view



- [OTOP's Carpathian project takes flight](#)
- [Audouin's Gull plummets in Greece](#)

## Norther Bald Ibis campaign



- [SEO/BirdLife conservation campaign Northern Bald Ibis](#)

## Tana River Delta Campaign



- [Help us save the Tana River Delta, Kenya](#)

## Events



- [International Events](#)

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## Editorial

Could it be more obvious? Without fish there won't be any fishing. Sadly, EU politicians seem not to understand or consciously keep ignoring this simple fact.

In the EU, nine stocks out of ten are overfished and a third of them are in worrying state. It is not only that we catch too many fish, but we hardly allow reproduction. One does not need to have a degree in science to understand that this is not only unsustainable in the long term but it is also clearly against the interests of the fisheries sector, where the signs of decline are already clearly visible.

Fish are not the only victims of the EU's appalling management of the seas – fisheries activities seriously impact wider marine ecosystems. BirdLife estimates than 200.000 seabirds die yearly as bycatch in EU fisheries and the situation is similar with other group of species such as turtles and sea mammals – all protected by EU environmental legislation.

In the coming weeks, the European Commission is going to publish its proposals for the reforms of policies which determine how we manage our natural environment, the Common Fisheries Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy being the most relevant ones. BirdLife's European and Central Asian Partnership will continue to engage in those debates and demand our politicians to take decisions which are in the interest of all and not only in the short term interest of a few businesses.

Tatiana Nemcova  
Senior EU Advocacy Officer

[-> Top](#)

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## Poles at the EU wheel during the reforms kick off



The Polish Presidency starting on 1st of July 2011 won't have a moment for contemplation. It will have on its plate nothing less than a concomitant discussion on the new EU multiannual budget and all key sectoral policies.

BirdLife Europe shares the Polish Presidency's view that the new EU budget should be 'an investment tool'. However, it must be ensured that the investment supports long-term well-being and prosperity of EU citizens. There is no doubt now that ensuring biodiversity and functioning ecosystems is a public good that is essential not only for human wellbeing, but also for our economic activities. Poland as a country rich in Europe's natural capital, will be best placed to ensure that biodiversity is taken as one of the priorities in the debates about the new EU budget and reformed EU policies.

Following the endorsement of the 2020 EU Biodiversity strategy during the Hungarian Presidency, the Poles will lead discussions with the Member States about what actions are needed to reach the six targets. The EU has a disturbing track record of empty political commitments without any delivery action. BirdLife Europe has all eyes on the Polish Presidency with the hope that the 2020 Biodiversity target won't be another in the list. The price of not safeguarding our natural capital would be too high to pay.

More information: [Tatiana Nemcova](#), Senior EU Advocacy Officer.  
To download BirdLife Europe's Greening Europe for the Polish Presidency, please click [here](#).

[-> Top](#)

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## **NABU launches first Fishing for Litter initiative in Germany.**



Last month, NABU/BirdLife in Germany launched for the first time the Fishing for Litter initiative in Germany. A regional alliance of fishermen, communities and industries will reduce marine litter in the Baltic Sea.

On the 5th May 2011 the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU) started Fishing for Litter projects in Heiligenhafen and Burgstaaken (Fehmarn), two fishery harbours in north-west Schleswig-Holstein. About 15 vessels are joining this Baltic Sea pilot scheme; several others have signaled follow.

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As part of the KIMO initiative (The Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation), NABU provides fishing vessels with big bags to deposit marine litter. In both harbours large containers are placed for disposal. The collected litter will be analyzed to get information on the composition, constitution and on the litter contamination of the Baltic Sea. The initiative involves key stakeholders to raise awareness of the significance of the problem. It is not only the dramatic and well documented ecological impact; marine litter is becoming more and more an economic and aesthetic issue.

The Fishing for Litter initiative is embedded in the NABU project “Seas without Plastic” which includes coastal cleanup activities, beach litter monitoring, public relation and educational events. More info [here](#).

[-> Top](#)

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## **Strong partnerships for Natura 2000**



Natuurpunt/BirdLife in Belgium, organised a mini-symposium with the same title on May 13th. It took place on the occasion of the celebration of 30 years of ecological restoration in the Valley of the Zuidleie, a fen meadow nature reserve protected by the Habitats Directive and is famous for its botanical value with many thousands of wild orchids. Strong partnerships (in particular with the Waterways Authority) proved to be essential for successful ecological restoration of the area, that once was devastated by dumping of human waste and sludge and by intensive agriculture.

During the event, both representatives of Natuurpunt and Birdlife International emphasized the importance of partnerships to meet the obligations of the Habitats Directive in the field. Conservation NGO's are often the initial driver for restoration actions and are invaluable for their knowhow and embedment in the local community. NGO's are often also more cost-effective compared to other actors. But, in practice, their appropriate funding for land acquisition, restoration and sustainable management is an important bottleneck and is currently under pressure due to the economic crisis. Kurt Vandenberghe, head of the cabinet of European Commissioner Janez Potocnik, confirmed that many more efforts are needed for partnerships and for financial investments if Europe wants to be successful in the implementation of its ambitious biodiversity policy. He was confident that these investments will economically pay off in the form of several ecosystem services to mankind and announced that his cabinet is pushing hard to influence other

Directorate Generals of the Commission to enable a partnership approach. The event closed with the unveiling of a new information plate to inform the public about the European protection status of Flemish nature areas managed by Natuurpunt.

[-> Top](#)

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## An appeal for birds in French Overseas Departments



For the first time in its history, LPO/BirdLife in France, with its NGO partners on the ground, launches an appeal for the protection of birds and their habitats in the overseas departments of France. All funds raised will be dedicated for the LIFE+ CAP DOM programme ([www.lifecapdom.org](http://www.lifecapdom.org)).

This campaign addresses real issues: France's world endangered and endemic biodiversity located in its overseas entities which is under greater threat than elsewhere in France. Halting biodiversity loss in the overseas entities would be a real indicator of our ability to reverse the trend as a whole.

By supporting LPO's campaign "Birds in French Overseas departments, it's also OUR nature", you can help the French BirdLife Partner to lead on concrete conservation actions in three French overseas departments: Reunion Island, Martinique and French Guiana!

French overseas biodiversity in danger,  
[Help us to save it!](#)

More information: click [here](#).

[-> Top](#)

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## NABU Baden-Wuerttemberg celebrates 100 years of Federsee Boardwalk



On the 8th of May, the local community of Bad Buchau together with the Baden-Wuerttemberg branch of NABU/BirdLife in Germany, celebrated the 100 years anniversary of nature conservation and 100 years existence of the "Federsee-boardwalk". Already in 1911, NABU had purchased the first several hundred hectares of land in the area of Lake Federsee, which is today one of Baden-Wuerttembergs most famous SPAs for many water bird species. In her speech, Elisabeth Jeggle, member of the European Parliament, highlighted the importance of the European natural heritage "NATURA 2000" of which the Federsee fen is a part of. NATURA 2000-sites under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives are no curse but a blessing - with the correct understanding and the necessary openness. The Federsee area is a perfect example with a 50% share of



This publication receives its support from the European Commission, the RSPB and numerous other EU BirdLife Partners.

Photo Simon Styrup



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