

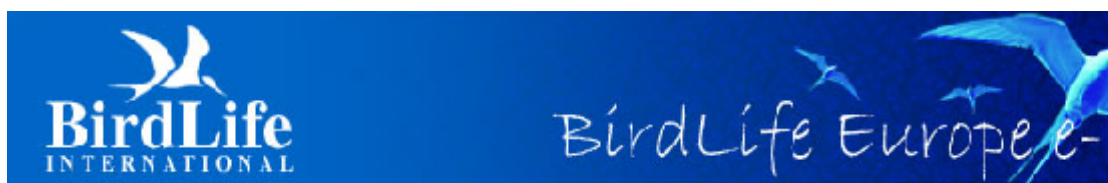
**Herlinde Herpoel**

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**From:** Herlinde Herpoel [hherpoel@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** jeudi 24 février 2011 11:34  
**To:** Herlinde Herpoel  
**Subject:** FW: BirdLife Europe e-news January-February 2011  
**Attachments:** adresbalk\_r.jpg

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To: hherpoel@hotmail.com  
Subject: BirdLife Europe e-news January-February 2011  
Date: Thu, 24 Feb 2011 04:31:10 -0600  
From: birdlife-international@birdlife-e-news.org



<http://europe.birdlife.org>  
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## Editorial: Spring is just around the corner

Dear reader

Spring is just around the corner! You might not have 'seen' it yet, but by the bird sounds in the morning in Brussels there is definitely no doubt about it that we are nearly entering the finest season of the year.

Here at BirdLife, we are already in spring-mood as our European campaign 'Spring Alive' is in full swing since the beginning of February. Through Spring Alive, more than 30 BirdLife Partners engage children and their families in exploring nature through outdoor activities. Meanwhile, participants are asked to spot five specific 'spring messengers' as we call them, migratory birds which indicate the start of spring upon their arrival to Europe for the breeding season. Read on and you will find out more...

But as you know, BirdLife is so much more than birds, and Spring Alive illustrates this beautifully. Children and their families re-discover nature, enjoy being together, relax and exercise while

marvelling at the phenomenon of bird migration. A wonderful weekend-idea, which was shared last year by thousands of people all over Europe who went online to register their bird sightings and talk about the feeling of spring. Consequently, BirdLife received over 100 000 sightings in total.

Early February, we also saw the start of the International Year on Forests. At BirdLife, we not only want to reflect this year on how to protect the forests and their species but also celebrate all the joys forests provide us with. Remember your last walk in the forest? The smell, the sounds, the feeling of finally being able to relax? Spring is on its way, lets make the most of it.



Herlinde Herpoel  
Head of European Communication and Marketing  
BirdLife Europe

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## Hungarians at the wheel of the European Union



Hungary is third country from so called 'new member states' which has taken on the responsibility and the honour of the Presidency of the European Union.

Their Presidency comes in a critical period when EU policies with the biggest impact on the natural environment are up for reform with Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) being the most relevant. Hungarians will preside over the Council discussions on the new EU Biodiversity Strategy which is to be proposed by the Commission during spring this year.

If the EU is to meet its 2020 biodiversity target endorsed by Heads of States and Governments in March last year, the Hungarian Presidency has to ensure that the EU's Biodiversity strategy puts the bar high enough to ensure that suggested subtargets and actions match the ambition of the previous political commitments.

This has to go hand in hand with radical reforms of EU policies, including the EU budget to ensure that these policies stop driving the loss of biodiversity and become a vehicle to protect Europe's nature capital, on which the European economy and wellbeing of its people depend.

More information: [Tatiana Nemcova](#), Senior EU Advocacy Officer at BirdLife Europe

[Click here to download the PDF version of the Greening Europe for the Hungarian Presidency.](#)

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## EU postpones cleanup of biofuels policy again



Hopes of a sustainable future for EU biofuels policy have been dealt a blow following the European Commission's decision to delay a critical decision on how to account for the impacts of 'indirect land use change' (ILUC).

ILUC takes place when land, which used to grow crops for food or feed, is grown with crops for fuel so that

that food or feed crops need to be grown on other land. This other or 'new land' is mainly found in natural areas like grasslands or forests. The emissions which are released into the atmosphere because of this conversion are currently not accounted for and thus create a wrong impression of biofuels being carbon neutral. On top of that, there is a lot of biodiversity which is threatened by this new land conversion.

On December 23rd of last year the European Commission came out with a report that on the one hand recognized the problem of indirect land use change but on the other hand delayed further action until July 2011. BirdLife Europe, together with a whole group of environmental NGOs, has pointed to the problems around indirect land use change caused by biofuels since years. These biofuels are stimulated and subsidized under the renewable energy directive which is meant, amongst others, to decrease climate change. The subsidized biofuels also have extra safeguards, the so-called sustainability criteria, which are trying to ensure they are good for the climate (decreasing or definitely not increasing emissions) and are not harming the environment. However, without honest accounting of the ILUC emissions, nor the climate nor the environment is helped.

Already since the renewable energy directive was written, the European Parliament asked the commission to come up with a solution to the problem. However, even after countless scientific studies, including one of the Parliament itself, ([click here to access the document](#)) which are clearly showing that Europe's biofuel policy currently causes more environmental problems than it solves, the European Commission is not taking action.

One of these studies, commissioned by BirdLife and other NGOs (click [here](#) to access the document), calculated the cumulative impact of the 27 Member States' national plans outlining their vision on renewables in transport by 2020. The outcome of this report showed that an amount of land at least two times the size of Belgium will be needed for this extra biofuels production. That is equivalent to adding approximately 12 to 26 million cars on Europe's roads by 2020.

Taking all this evidence into account, BirdLife asks the European Commission to consider the full environmental impacts, including those from ILUC. Such an approach is the only way of ensuring that biofuels sold on the EU market are better than the fossil fuels they replace and are not threatening some of our most precious biodiversity on earth.

More information: [Trees Robijns](#), EU Agriculture & Bioenergy Policy Officer at BirdLife Europe

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## Tackling Invasive Alien Species

Invasive alien species are non-native species that establish, spread and cause harm to native biodiversity, ecosystems, socioeconomic interests or human health. They are one of the principal causes of biodiversity loss, and have been partly or wholly responsible for the extinction of at least 68 bird species over the last 500 years.

Despite this, there is no instrument at EU level dedicated to tackling invasive alien species, and

provisions that do currently exist are both inadequate and difficult to implement. National measures vary enormously between Member States, with little or no harmonisation.

A coordinated, EU-wide strategy to tackle invasive alien species is urgently needed. BirdLife has published a briefing leaflet to increase the awareness on the issue in the 27 EU Member States and promote adoption of appropriate legislation in Brussels.

The leaflet sets out BirdLife's proposals for EU legislation to tackle the problem through:

- Prevention, by adoption of white/black lists of invasive alien species
- Identifying and dealing with priority pathways for invasive alien species
- Applying risk assessment based approaches
- Developing early warning and rapid response mechanisms
- Containing, controlling and eradicating invasive alien species and restoring affected ecosystems
- Financing mechanisms to support these measures

The new leaflet will be available from mid-February 2011. The European Commission is expected to publish its proposals for a new EU Strategy on invasive alien species in November 2011.

More information: [Alistair Taylor](#), EU Biodiversity Policy Officer at RSPB (BirdLife in the United Kingdom)

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## BirdLife's migratory bird campaign reaches out to Africa



2010 brought with it a new member into the Spring Alive Campaign community. Between October 4<sup>th</sup> and December 15<sup>th</sup> we were able to watch the arrival of the winged Spring Messengers in the Southern Hemisphere in the Republic of South Africa, bringing the Spring Alive season 2010 to an end with a record observation number of 103,582! Children, teachers and local officials attended engaging events in the Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces of the country. Joe Peu, the Spring Alive Coordinator for BirdLife South Africa, engaged school children from different regions to come together and share the passion of birdwatching while camping out in tents and exploring the wildlife reserves, while taking part in numerous educational activities, from star gazing to water testing - all aimed at getting kids 'hooked on nature'. The rest of us in the Spring Alive community were able to get a sneak peak at the behavior of how birds who left us in autumn, spent their time during their non-breeding season. While in South Africa, the birds

rest trying to compensate for the energy and weight they lost during migration, moulting their feathers, and recovering from the exhausting breeding season as well as preparing for a new one. For some, like the Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*, it means a quiet, reticent and solitary life, hidden away from sight, while for the White Storks *Ciconia ciconia* forming giant foraging parties to feed on locust and other insects. The Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica* frolic around cities where water and food is abundant, while Common Swifts *Apus apus* remain far off the ground in groups feasting up in the sky on all flying insects, never touching ground.

As with anything new, it proved to be a very valuable and interesting lesson, full of surprises indeed. During the non-breeding season birds have no reason for singing or nest building, thus Spring Alive offered a wonderful treat to those hearing the recording of the cry of the Common Swift for the first time in their life. The Barn Swallows arrived two weeks earlier than expected, while the White Storks

stalled to make their trip to South Africa, most probably due to uncommonly rainy weather. While Europe struggles with winter snowfall, summer is in full swing in the Southern Hemisphere where the Spring Messengers are beginning their preparations to depart for their breeding grounds in the North. For some, the journey will include stopovers, while others will take the direct route sleeping and feeding in flight. Let us welcome both the old and new tireless travelers of spring and share our birdwatching experience with the rest of Europe and Africa during Spring Alive season 2011 at [www.springalive.net](http://www.springalive.net) which started on the first of February 2011.

More information: [Karolina Kalinowska](#), Spring Alive Coordinator at Otop (BirdLife in Poland)

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## Red Alert from Finland! More threatened birds than ever before



December 2010 proved to be a very sad month for Finland's birds. The new Red List, indicating which species are threatened, came out showing that the number of threatened bird species had increased by almost 70%! Finland, like the rest of the world, failed to stop the loss of its wildlife by 2010. Data behind this result showed that the situation for birds that breed in mires, bogs and wetlands is particularly alarming.

Birds are one of the best known animal groups in Finland, with 248 breeding species, and the only group for which long-term population trends are recorded for each species. Threat statuses of 241 bird species were evaluated and 89 were red-listed. The number of threatened bird species is now 59 (up from 35 at the last assessment in 2000) and number of near threatened species is 30.

Among mire-breeding species, the number of threatened species is now 8, up from just one a decade ago. Mire drainage which mainly took place decades ago still affects these species, even in protected areas. Almost 5 million hectares of mires and bogs have been drained by ditching – this is some 55 % of the total area of all peatlands of Finland.

A large-scale restoration of mires is needed to ensure a future for mire-breeding species. Mire birds also depend on wetlands abroad during their non-breeding season, and the rapid decrease of some species such as the Ruff cannot be explained solely by habitat changes in Finland. This alarming situation also reflects on the condition of wetlands in the wintering grounds and migration stopovers.

Many wetland-breeding birds are also in trouble in Finland, with the number of threatened species in this category rising from 9 to 19. Some growth in this number is of statistical illusion because four new species colonised Finland during the last decade, but there are real concerns behind increasing numbers. Common wetland-breeding birds such as the Pochard, Horned Grebe and Garganey are decreasing.

BirdLife Finland says that there is a lack of political will and therefore lack of resources for inland wetland management, which reduces the relevance of Natura 2000 wetlands for birds in Finland.

However, all news from the new Red List is not negative. Relative to 2000, the number of threatened forest birds has decreased slightly, and common farmland birds such as the Partridge are doing much better than they were.

Finland's current focuses should be on the restoration of mires and better management of wetlands. BirdLife Finland and other NGOs will aim to lobby these into political agenda. Parliamentary election takes place in Spring 2011.

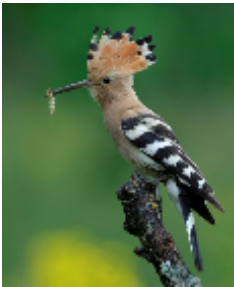
*Picture: Ruff (Philomachus pugnax) was evaluated as Least Concern in Finland only ten years ago. Now it is classified as endangered because of a population crash. Credit: Jan Södersved*

More information: [Teemu Lehtiniemi](#), Head of Conservation and Research at BirdLife Finland.

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## Lipu develops new methodology to assess the favorable conservation status of birds



One of the requirements of European Union Wild Birds Directive for EU Member States is to maintain bird species in favourable conservation status. A logical consequence of this obligation is that Member States need to assess the conservation status of each bird species naturally occurring in their territory. This is what LIPU (BirdLife in Italy), managed to do for almost all 246 species regularly breeding in Italy, through a project funded by the Italian Ministry of Environment, and in partnership with ISPRA (the governmental Italian institute for nature protection). 79 (32%) of species were found to be in a favourable conservation status, whereas respectively 81 (33%) and 76 (31%) species were

in inadequate and bad conservation status. Finally, for 10 species it was not possible to assess their status.

A methodology aimed at obtaining the Favourable Reference Value (FRV) was also developed and results are due for publication in the next issue of 'Bird Conservation International' (<http://journals.cambridge.org/>). "FRV expresses in a quantitative way how large a population should be, to reach the favourable conservation status", explained Marco Gustin, Species Officers at LIPU -. We think that being able to assess in a quantitative way how our birds are doing is essential for their future, since we can only manage what we measure. A permanent monitoring programme which is currently not in place in Italy, would be crucial. Future work will focus on how to improve the implementation of Species Action Plans, in particular regarding the integration of the plans within relevant sectoral policies, - concluded Claudio Celada, Conservation Director at LIPU.

More information: [Claudio Celada](#), Director of Conservation, LIPU (BirdLife in Italy)

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## BirdLife on air

### Conserving biodiversity, respecting rights, an interview with David Thomas, Head of BirdLife's Communities and Livelihoods Division



Most people are familiar with BirdLife's strapline, 'Together for Birds and

**People'. And many also know that these five words reflect commitments embedded in BirdLife's Mission and Strategy. But fewer will recognise the role of conservation in reinforcing and asserting people's rights. David Thomas, Head of BirdLife's Communities and Livelihoods Division, explains.**

**The BirdLife Partnership recently adopted a position on Conservation and Rights, which "reaffirms BirdLife's commitment to support the basic and procedural rights of the individual within its sphere of influence, and within a framework that brings these rights alongside those of future generations, wider society, and other species". Why are human rights relevant to conservation projects?**

In project after project we have found that conservation can be more effective if people's rights are respected and fulfilled, so that they are involved rather than marginalised or excluded. We have also found that conservation projects that are well-designed and well-executed can make a significant contribution to the fulfilment of human rights. Of course, we also have a legal responsibility, as well as a moral or ethical duty, to respect fundamental human rights, and donors are increasingly requiring NGOs to demonstrate that human rights are respected.

There is a danger that conservation activities implemented without effective safeguards can *harm* human rights. Conservation frequently involves bringing about changes in the way natural resources are used and managed. Strict environmental protection can exclude people and deprive them of resources on which they depend, without providing viable alternatives. Adopting a project process which respects people's rights can help to identify and avoid or resolve such situations. The process should allow people to have a say in the decisions that are made, and give them an opportunity for genuine participation.

**Can you give us some examples of what BirdLife Partners are doing to conserve biodiversity and fulfil human rights?**

Activities which damage the environment, such as mining, industrial development or commercial logging, can deprive people of their livelihoods and cultural rights. The Wildlife and Conservation Society of Tanzania is spearheading a campaign to conserve Lake Natron, a site of critical importance for breeding Lesser Flamingo, which is threatened by plans to construct a soda ash plant on its shores. The development would also be detrimental to the livelihoods of local people. WCST is working with local communities to ensure that their voices are heard by decision-makers, and their rights to life and livelihood respected.

Forest and Bird, the BirdLife Partner in New Zealand, is implementing rat eradication programmes on a number of islands in the Pacific, where birds and their habitats are under intense threat from invasive pests, particularly Black Rat. The rats also cause serious economic loss by damaging crops, and can bring grave human health problems because of their role as disease vectors. So as well as conserving biodiversity, this work is also delivering on Pacific islanders' right to health.

The rights of Indigenous Peoples are of special relevance to conservation, because of their custodianship of land with high biodiversity value, and their close relationship with nature. The BirdLife Affiliate Cameroon Biodiversity Conservation Society is implementing a project around the Ngovayang Massif, to empower the indigenous Bagyeli and Bakola communities to play a bigger role in forest management, and claim their rights to land and resources. A key goal has been to help people obtain national identity cards. Without these, it is hard for them to make claims for tenure or government services. Even marketing of non-timber forest products is problematic, as travel through check points is difficult without identification.

There are also many examples from all BirdLife regions of how conservation is being linked to local development, such as the Kfar Zabad wetland IBA, where the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL) is working with the community to support development through training, employment as tour guides, and the development and sale of local produce.

**So can we achieve a win-win for conservation and rights every time?**

There are other categories of rights that are relevant to conservation (though they are not as universally held as human rights): the rights of society, the rights of nature, and the rights of future generations. In practice it can be impossible to deliver on all these rights (and also on the rights claims of different individuals), in the same place, at the same time. The challenge for conservation is to work through a process with rights-holders which achieves an acceptable level of trade-offs. This might require people whose rights are affected to be compensated in some way.

**BirdLife has been pushing hard for REDD- Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation- to be adopted as a climate change mitigation strategy. But there is concern about the impact on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and forest communities. Can the two be reconciled?**

REDD only makes sense if it conserves natural forests and biodiversity, because it is the plants and animals in forests that help create their carbon density. But it must also respect the rights of Indigenous

Peoples and local communities, and recognise the contribution they make to conserving the forests. In the recent climate change talks in Cancun, BirdLife lobbied hard for the REDD agreement to include safeguards to ensure that the biodiversity benefits of forests are fully recognised, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities are protected.

Where BirdLife is engaged in this kind of project it will be especially important to give close attention to the issue of rights. BirdLife Partner Guyra Paraguay is involved in a joint project with the World Land Trust at San Rafael, one of the largest patches of threatened Atlantic Forest remaining in Paraguay. The project will pay the people of the La Amistad smallholder settlement, which lies within the forest, to retain and improve the quality of forest on their land, in preference to clearing it for agriculture. The project will also work with the Mbyá Guarani, the Indigenous People of San Rafael, helping them secure broader recognition of their interests and rights in their traditional territories.

You can find more detail about the links between conservation and human rights, with examples of how BirdLife Partners are working with local communities on conservation and rights projects, at <http://tinyurl.com/conservation-and-rights>.

You can find the full text of BirdLife's position on Conservation and Rights at <http://www.birdlife.org/action/ground/conservation-rights/index.html>

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## **A warm welcome to the new members of BirdLife European and Central Asian Partnership**

In December 2010, the Global Council of BirdLife International appointed three new affiliates with the European and Central Asian Partnership, bringing the total number of Partners for this region at 45. The secretariat for this region, BirdLife Europe remains in Brussels and continues to support these 45 members.

The new affiliates are the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan ([ACBP](#)), the Public Association ([NABS](#)) in Kyrgyzstan and the Uzbekistan Society for the Protection of Birds ([UzSPB](#)).

Two BirdLife Partners within the region also welcomed new faces leading their organisations into 2011. At DOPPS (BirdLife Slovenia), Damijan Denac has taken over as Director from Andej Medved. BirdLife Malta also recently announced the appointment of Paul Debono, who was previously Executive Director at Greenpeace Mediterranean, as its new Executive Director, replacing Tolga Temuge. Changes have also been in the works for BirdWatch Ireland (BirdLife in Ireland), Ireland's largest nature conservation NGO, with Alan Lauder taking over the helm as Chief Executive from Oran O'Sullivan.

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## **Events**

### **International events**

#### **- January - June 2011: Hungarian Presidency of the European Union**

## - European conference on illegal killing of birds - 6-8 July, Larnaka, Cyprus

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