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[**Editorial: Turning to recycled paper while celebrating birds**](#)

'September, not January, is for me the start of the new year' a friend told me recently. I guess a remnant from school and university days, with all the sense of a new start, new plans, and new ideas when returning refreshed from the summer holidays. That is why I am very happy to highlight in this September issue of our electronic newsletter the dissemination of the LPO/BirdLife France's campaign in Paris and the awards received by the two bird species in Hungary on which MME/BirdLife Hungary is running projects. Both stories have something very special. The French story shows us a way in which collaboration between a conservation organisation and an advertising display company, designers and printers, could lead to a whole revolution in use of resources by the advertising sector, in particular use of recycled paper, while at the same time bringing benefits to the conservation organisation.

The second story from Hungary although it does not demonstrate something new it reminds us of what a wonderful and loved subject we are dealing with: birds. The fact that the public voted for two bird species, the Saker Falcon and the Imperial Eagle, as two of the most important natural treasures of the country among 30 others surely highlights the appeal of birds. Birds have inspired and delighted people from all cultures for centuries and are undoubtedly excellent ambassadors for nature conservation and environmental protection.

Best regards

Dr Claire Papazoglou
Regional Director
European Division

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[**Biofuels debate insight on BirdLife website**](#)



The word *biofuels* – or agrofuels as some prefer to call it – has been on news headlines sometimes as 'the answer to energy security' or 'the solution to climate change', while other times as 'fuelling an ecological crisis' and 'pushing millions of people into hunger and poverty'. How could these very contradicting statements describe the same thing? And why more and more people, particularly those who have the environment at heart, are increasingly opposed to the use of biofuels?

BirdLife International has launched a new website section devoted to explain the many issues around biofuels, with a focus on the global impacts of current biofuels on the environment, biodiversity and the climate.

The website also presents BirdLife's criticisms to the European Commission's proposal on the Renewable Energy Directive, which sets a mandatory target of biofuels used in the transport sector, and suggests a way forward to ensure sustainable bioenergy development.

BirdLife International holds a strong position against the mandatory use of unsustainable biofuels at EU level. This website section provides solid and reputable evidence for anyone interested in understanding the biofuels debate, at a critical time when the proposed Directive is being voted at the European Parliament and discussed in the European Council.

To visit the BirdLife pages on biofuels:
www.birdlife.org/eu/Biofuels_pages/eu_biofuels.html

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BirdLife urges Commissioner Dimas to address consequences of Set-aside loss – and sees breach of nature legislation by Member States



On 18th September BirdLife International has written an open letter to the EU Commissioner for Environment Stavros Dimas, asking him to take urgent action to save farmland biodiversity. BirdLife rings the alarm bell because of the EU's decision to scrap the "Set aside" scheme that obliged farmers who receive EU subsidies to maintain portions of their land un-cropped. This extremely valuable scheme has been abolished by the European Commission and Council without the introduction of any environmental measures that could truly be able to deliver the same benefits.

BirdLife International and many other scientific bodies have presented over the last year comprehensive scientific evidence on the vital role that Set aside has been playing in supporting wildlife in Europe's most intensively farmed landscapes, as well as its importance for water, soil and climate change adaptation. In the letter, BirdLife International draws attention to the obligation that EU Member States have under the Birds Directive, to "take the requisite measures to preserve, maintain or reestablish a sufficient diversity and area of habitats". The abolition of Set aside is depriving many species of a key breeding and feeding habitat and hence leading to infringement of this prescription. If the European Commission and Member States decide, in the context of the "CAP Health check" not to address the problem through the Agriculture Policy, Member States will have to take appropriate measures at national levels if they are to avoid a further collapse in farmland bird populations and hence a violation of EU nature protection legislation.

Read here for more information about BirdLife's position on the [CAP Health-Check](#)

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Reforming the Common Fisheries Policy

The last review of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in 2002 seemed only yesterday but already attention is starting to focus seriously on the next review in 2012. On 2 September Commissioner Borg presented his views during a Commissioners' meeting and in the end of September the French Presidency will be hosting an Informal Council where Ministers of Fisheries will consider and discuss Mr Borg's ideas.

The 2002 review achieved some significant changes in direction, notably long term stock management, halting public aid for building new vessels, and the creation of Regional Advisory Councils. Of particular importance was the commitment to develop an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, a shift which BirdLife International had prioritised in its advocacy for reform.

Despite those changes things are still not going well. The opening sentence of the UK House of Lords report (2008) on The Progress of the Common Fisheries Policy strikes the right tone for the challenge ahead: 'The CFP has one of the most dismal reputations of any European Union Policy'. Fish stocks are still highly degraded, there is excessive fleet capacity (estimated at 40% by the Commission), extreme discarding, and fishing still inflicts excessive damage on the marine environment. BirdLife's priorities for reform in 2012 will focus on these issues in relation to the emerging marine Natura 2000 network and implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The European BirdLife Partnership will shortly embark on a roadmap for engaging with the process.

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A world's first - a simultaneous survey of the Azores bullfinch



The first comprehensive one-day survey of the entire world range of the Azores Bullfinch *Pyrrhula murina* - or Priolo as it is known locally - has been a huge success.

For the past five years, SPEA/Birdlife Portugal and the RSPB/BirdLife UK, together with other partners, including the Azores Regional Government, have been implementing a LIFE project to save the Azores bullfinch from extinction. This species is Europe's rarest songbird, and the second most globally threatened bird species in the whole continent.

The LIFE project has been improving the Azores bullfinch habitat since 2003, and the population appears to respond well in the areas monitored by the LIFE team.

Last year, conservation scientists decided that there was a need for a complete snapshot of the Azores bullfinch distribution to validate the monitoring efforts carried out so far. Therefore the team in Portugal and in the UK developed a simultaneous survey of all the Azores bullfinches in the complete world range.

The event, partly funded by a generous grant of US\$17,000 from the Disney Conservation Fund, attracted much interest, while 50 volunteers from different countries were trained on Azores bullfinch songs, habitat classification and distance sampling. The atmosphere was electric and everyone was very happy and anxious to count all the Azores bullfinches in the world, even with a 4.30am start!

The big day came in late June with nearly 200 1x1 km squares surveyed and encouraging results: during the 8-minute sampling period per point, 78 Azores bullfinches were counted, so now the emphasis has moved to the painstaking statistical analysis which will be completed in the coming months. All those involved are now eagerly awaiting the results to determine what the new world population estimate is in order to understand how the species has responded to the intensive work of the Life Project.

For more information: http://www.spea.pt/ms_priolo/en/

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LPO's SOS campaign printed on recycled paper

Last summer, LPO/BirdLife France and Clear Channel, one of the most important networks of advertising display companies in France, cooperated in the advertising of LPO's campaign "SOS Oiseaux". The main picture of this campaign represents LPO's staff and volunteers making the SOS sign with their hands. Printed on recycled paper, the campaign ran for more than a month in Paris.

For LPO/BirdLife France, this campaign aimed at alerting people to the protection of the environment, while Clear Channel decided to distribute this campaign on its network to encourage the advertisers to use recycled paper.

This action was conceived for free by the agency @Super, distributed for free for the first time ever by Clear Channel, and printed for free on recycled paper by Lithotyp Group, a printing company. For Clear Channel and Lithotyp Group this poster campaign was a great way of testing recycled paper and its effect on the public.

The results were astonishing and the collaboration will probably continue in the future. These campaigns are a clear example on how companies and NGOs can work together aiming at the protection of environment and biodiversity.

For more information contact Claire Lux at claire.lux@lpo.fr or visit www.lpo.fr



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A new BirdLife milestone publication: the Atlas of Breeding Birds in Bulgaria



The dream of generations of Bulgarian bird conservationists and ornithologists – the Atlas of Breeding Birds in Bulgaria, is already a fact. This impressive 680-pages publication was developed by BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria during the last 15 years, thanks to the invaluable help of BirdLife International and especially to the support from RSPB/BirdLife UK. The publication of the book was kindly sponsored by Vogelbescherming Nederland/BirdLife in the Netherlands and the Dutch Nationale Postcode Loterij. Without any doubts this will be the ornithological ‘Bible’ of the country for the following decades. Developed on the standard methodology of the European Ornithological Atlas Committee on 10-km UTM grid, it covers the period from 1996 to 2005 and presents 297 bird species, nine of which do not breed anymore in the country. Just two species are aliens to

Bulgaria, which shows the very high level of naturalness of the bird fauna of the country. Detailed species accounts include data on historical development of the country’s populations, quantitative data, trends in the distribution and numbers of all breeding species.

The Atlas already significantly contributes to bird conservation in Bulgaria. Together with the sister publication “Important Bird Areas and NATURA 2000 sites in Bulgaria” they are strong tools in trying to persuade the government to establish an adequate NATURA 2000 network, implementing the two EU nature Directives in Bulgaria.

The Atlas of Breeding Birds not only reconfirms the leading role of BSPB in bird conservation in Bulgaria, but also represents a milestone for further monitoring of the changes of the Bulgarian bird fauna and a sound scientific base for successful conservation actions.

For more information contact Petar Iankov at petar.iankov@bspb.org

www.bspb.org

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Protecting the Danube Delta in Romania



Over the last few years SOR/BirdLife Romania has worked closely with relevant authorities such as the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Administration (DDBRA) and the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development to protect the Danube Delta and implement a LIFE project for the Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*.

The Danube Delta - one of Europe’s finest wetlands - is home to over 320 bird species, including globally threatened species such as Dalmatian Pelican and Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*. Already designated as a Biosphere Reserve, Ramsar site and Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive, the Delta is also proposed for designation under the EU Habitats Directive.

The precious Delta is coming under ever increasing pressure from development – such as road upgrades and tourist complexes – and unregulated hunting, fishing and forestry activities. Hence, an increasingly vital role for SOR/BirdLife Romania is promoting the Natura 2000 site management and protection obligations of the EU Nature Directives to national authorities.

Current activities include contributing to the development of the Management Plan for the Delta – establishing targets (Favourable Reference Values) for key species and reassessing zoning in the Delta. Also commenting on individual development proposals, such as tourist and economic developments at Chituc Levee protected area and Sulina, one of the main channels on the Delta, and promoting the need for the design of sustainable developments which provide benefits for people while respecting nature.

More information is available at http://www.sor.ro/index_eng.html or from Marina Cazacu, SOR’s Danube Casework Officer at marina.cazacu@sor.ro

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LIFE goes live on TV in Hungary!



Foto: Bagyura János

At the beginning of 2008 MTV (Magyar Televízió), the Hungarian national television, launched a competition to decide the thirty most important natural wonders in Hungary, from nature reserves to castles, from landscapes to animals. The competition ran until the 22 April and two out of the seven winners were two rare wild birds, the Saker falcon *Falco cherrug* and the Imperial eagle *Aquila heliaca* on which MME/BirdLife Hungary has projects. Each winning species/project was given free dedicated advertising spots valued at 1 million HUF (4,000 Euros) on MTV's two channels.

As MTV is the most important national television channel in Hungary, the exposure will be very wide and that represents a great opportunity for MME/BirdLife Hungary to increase public awareness on these two rare birds of prey, and at the same time to have the chance of attracting new members, subscribers and volunteers.

MME/BirdLife Hungary will also be co-operating with a film-making company on the production of a short film about the two prizewinning species, promoting the conservation of birds of prey. The film will be shown at the Wild Geese Festival of the Old Lake Tata, which takes place at the end of November. At the festival the two

winners will be presented and people will be able to find out more about these rare wild birds and about the importance of the work of MME/ BirdLife Hungary.

If you want to know more about the projects you can visit: www.sakerlife.mme.hu and www.imperialeagle.hu

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Swedish Farmers and Birdwatchers working together

It is not everyday that we see farmers and birdwatchers participate together on the same project.

At the beginning of 2007 the Swedish Ornithological Society/BirdLife Sweden together with Sweden's Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies (SREA) launched a collaborative project that uses the often shared attraction to birds by both farmers and birdwatchers to encourage farmers' to farm in a more biodiversity-friendly ways.

Following detailed discussions with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB/BirdLife UK), the Swedish long-term project - which is similar to that of the Volunteer and Farmer Alliance in the UK - was launched in spring 2007, funded by the European Union, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Swedish Board of Agriculture. The farming community in Sweden has been very enthusiastic about the project. 150 farmers have partnered with skilled birdwatchers to help make the links between farming and biodiversity more explicit, and develop practices that will deliver benefits to birds in the face of changing market demands, technology and public policy.

Every year between May and June, each participating birdwatcher surveys 80 hectares in cooperation with a farmer, so as to provide information on the occurrence and distribution of breeding birds on the farm. Qualified SREA project staff, who have special competences on plant production and bird conservation, offer free advisory services to farmers, such as species-fact sheets and advisory visits. The aim is to monitor the farms over several years so as to study the effects of conservation measures on farmland birds, involving approximately 40 new farms each year.

After two very successful years, when the focus was on encouraging farmers to introduce new conservation measures, the attention will now turn on how these measures really affect species and biodiversity richness.

For more information, please contact: Sönke Eggers at Sonke.Eggers@ekol.slu.se

<http://www.sofnet.org/index.asp?lev=4960&typ=1> (in Swedish)

http://www.ekol.slu.se/ShowPage.cfm?OrgenhetSida_ID=8651 (in English)

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Meet the Communicator !

In every issue you have the chance to meet the communication officers from the whole of the BirdLife European Partnership and learn more about their key priorities and favourite projects

For this issue, we've teamed up with Lauri Hanninen, Communication Officer at BirdLife Finland



My name is Lauri Hanninen and I am the Communication Officer at BirdLife Finland. Despite

what most people outside Finland tend to think when they contact me, Lauri is a man's name in Finland!

Ever since I was a child I was a passionate birdwatcher, and later during my school years I read with great interest the birds' magazine from BirdLife Finland. Little did I know that I was to become its Chief Editor! Before joining BirdLife, I graduated from university as a teacher in biology and geography.

The last five years, I have been working for BirdLife Finland as Communication Officer while being responsible for our magazine, website and media relations. In addition, I take part in many other activities as well like everyone else in our small office of seven hard-working, very motivated staff.

What I like most in my job is the variation in the tasks. No two days are ever the same. Editing the BirdLife Finland magazine is a very rewarding task for me, because it gives me the satisfaction of seeing the results immediately, which is not always the case when you take a closer look at conservation work. I also enjoy meetings with journalists, especially when it gives me the opportunity to take them out on a birdwatching trip!

The most important thing for me however is that I really do feel that my job is useful and relevant to the protection and conservation of birds.

As my main hobby, birdwatching, is now so closely related to my professional work, I 've had to take up a few new hobbies, like learning Spanish, travelling, travel writing and photography!

You can contact Lauri at lauri.hanninen@birdlife.fi

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Travel with Wildlife in the Sofia metro

62 posters of spectacular wildlife are displayed in the trains of the Sofia metro in Bulgaria. Aimed at raising the awareness of commuters about nature, this photo exhibition was organized by Photo Phorum, a popular web portal for photography in cooperation with Metroreklama, an advertising agency. The initiative was readily supported by wildlife photographers, among which many BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria volunteers and staff who donated their shots for the exhibition. Photographing wildlife is experiencing an unprecedented growth in Bulgaria, thus also helping conservationists to spread the word. The pictures can be seen online at:

<http://photo-forum.net/boni/wildlife>

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New positions within the BirdLife International Partnership

There have been some changes within the European Division of BirdLife International. Herlinde Herpoel, the former Communication Officer, recently became Media & Communication Manager, while Alessia Pautasso, who was the Administration and Information Assistant, is now the Communication & Information Officer. You can contact Herlinde at Herlinde.Herpoel@birdlife.org and Alessia at Alessia.Pautasso@birdlife.org

BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria has a new Communication Officer, Dimitar Berov, and a new Agri-environmental Officer, Edita Difova. Dimitar can be contacted at dimitar.berov@bspb.org, while Edita at edita.difova@bspb.org

A new Campaigns Coordinator just has joined BirdLife Malta. You can reach Geoffrey at geoffrey.saliba@birdlifemalta.org

Alan Lauder has recently joined BirdWatch Ireland/BirdLife Ireland as the new Head of Conservation. you can reach him at alauder@birdwatchireland.ie

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Events

International and European events

- July - December 2008: French Presidency of the European Union

- 15 - 19 September 2008, Madagascar: AEWA MOP 4 International Migratory Waterbird Conference
www.unep-aewa.org/press

- 29-30 September 2008, Chambord, France: EU Nature Directors Meeting-French Presidency

<http://www.eu2008.fr/PFUE/lang/en/accueil>

- 5-14 October 2008, Barcelona, Spain: IUCN World Conservation Congress

http://www.iucn.org/news_events/events/congress/index.cfm

BirdLife Events

- 11-13 September 2008, Quimper, France: Conference "Conservation of migratory stopover points for the Aquatic Warbler"

- 3-28 September 2008, Malta: Raptor Camp. www.birdlifemalta.org

- 22-27 September 2008, Buenos Aires, Argentina: BirdLife's World Conservation Conference- Taking on the Millennium Development Challenge

<http://www.birdlife.org/worldconference/>

- 5-6 November 2008, Massaciucoli, Italy: BirdLife International Communication & Education Workshop

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