



## BirdLife Europe e-news

### **Editorial: a new vision for land management in Europe-**

When we talk about agriculture people often expect us to complain about intensification, perverse subsidies and the effect that this has on biodiversity. [Read more](#)

### News from the EU

**BirdLife's new CAP vision document launched** - On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, BirdLife International publicly launched in Brussels its new vision document on the future of the CAP called "New Challenges, New CAP". [Read more](#)

**Sustainable and strategic development of Renewable Energies**- On September 25<sup>th</sup>, the European Parliament approved in plenary vote the "Thomsen report" on the EU renewable energy policy (a roadmap for Renewable Energy in Europe). [Read more](#)

**Malta Spring Hunting**- The European Commission sent Malta a final written warning on October 17<sup>th</sup>, regarding the practice of spring hunting of wild birds, which is illegal under EU law. [Read more](#)

**IBA Inventory Launch for Bulgaria and Romania**- On September 18<sup>th</sup> the BirdLife Partners from Bulgaria (BSPB) and Romania (SOR) presented inventories of the most important sites for wild birds in these two new EU Member States to the European Commission in Brussels. [Read more](#)

**Polish government backs down for now over road construction – breathing space for threatened Rospuda Valley**- On the 7<sup>th</sup> of September the Polish government announced that the construction work through the Natura 2000 designated Augustow Forest will not start until a final ECJ judgment on the case. [Read more](#)

**New report: Environment tools in EC development cooperation**- At the end of September 2007, BirdLife, FERN and WWF published a new study "Environmental tools in EC Development Cooperation" which reviewed transparency and the public availability of documentation in the programming of EU external aid. [Read more](#)

### Calendar & Events

12-13 November 2007, Lisbon

#### **Business and Biodiversity Conference**

<http://countdown2010.net/business>

19-20 November 2007, Berlin

#### **Climate Change Seminar for BirdLife Partners**

27-29 November 2007, Riga

#### **BirdLife European Partnership Meeting**

05 December 2007, Brussels

#### **Brussels Launch of the CEMEX/BirdLife International Conservation Book "Birds and People"**

4-5 December 2007, Brussels

#### **European Organic Congress**

[www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org](http://www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org)

12-14 December 2007, Brussels

#### **Birds and Habitats Directives Task Force Meeting and Casework Seminars for BirdLife Partners**

### Office News

**Ellen Townsend**, our EU Policy and Advocacy Officer, has left BirdLife at the end of October. We thank her for the fantastic work she has done and we wish her all the best in her future career. **Angeline Dubois** has joined our team as



Project Assistant, helping us with the organisation of the EPM.

Since last August, three new communication officers have joined the BirdLife European Partnership. **Marija Schranz** is now a member of the BirdLife Malta team, **Móni Kaiser** is taking care of communications and press work for BirdLife Hungary and **Claire Lux** has joined LPO France as press officer. The BL European Division would like to welcome them and wishes them good luck in their activities.

News from the European Partnership

**Dalmatian Pelicans have wardens now in Russian steppe reserve-** 40 pairs of Globally Threatened Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) breed in a colony in Svetlinsky reserve (Orenburg region, Russia). [Read more](#)

**Campaign against bird-trapping in Catalonia-** During the month of September, SEO, BirdLife in Spain, together with other organisations, launched a petition against a draft Decree of the Catalan Department of Environment to allow the trapping of birds with birdlime and 'filat' nets. [Read more](#)

**EuroBirdwatch 2007-** Every year Birdlife International organizes EuroBirdwatch, a pan-European event which draws the attention to migratory birds, their routes and the issues involved. [Read more](#)

**Imperial Eagle in Azerbaijan-** In April 2007, AOS (BirdLife Affiliate in Azerbaijan) carried out with the help of MME (BirdLife Partner in Hungary) a in-depth survey of Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) in North West Azerbaijan. [Read more](#)

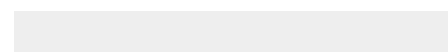


Recently, a new open group is available on the BirdLife extranet ([www.birdlife.net](http://www.birdlife.net)): the **Communication Task Force**. The purpose of this group is to create and reinforce a European communication network where news is efficiently distributed and shared. All communicators are invited to join to be informed about partner issues and press releases which require Europe-wide attention and promotion.



From the Conservation Point of View

**Cinereous Vulture Conservation in Armenia-** The



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Armenian Society for the Protection of Birds is putting continuous efforts to save this magnificent and globally 'near threatened' vulture from extinction in Armenia. [Read more](#)

***BirdLife Malta's 2007 Raptor Camp***- BirdLife Malta's 2007 Raptor Camp brought together 56 volunteers from seven countries to monitor raptor migration and report illegal hunting. [Read more](#)

***BirdLife Partners discuss marine IBAs***- In early October, as part of the LIFE-Nature project "Marine Protected Areas in the Eastern Baltic Sea" BirdLife International co-organised an international seminar on marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Jourkalne on the Latvian west coast. [Read more](#)

***Balearic Shearwater further threatened by climate change?***- Recent research has revealed that the Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*, Europe's only Critically Endangered seabird, is forced to travel increasing distances to find its fish prey. [Read more](#)



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## What's More

***As LIFE+ deadline approaches, BirdLife workshop shares resources and experience***- BirdLife's European Division Office and the RSPB's International Funding Unit hosted a LIFE+ Workshop for BirdLife partners on October 17. [Read more](#)



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## BirdLife Europe e-news

### *Editorial: a new vision for land management in Europe*

When we talk about agriculture people often expect us to complain about intensification, perverse subsidies and the effect that this has on biodiversity. The truth is that the problem is two fold. On the one hand there is intensification, with the well known dramatic effects that this has had on farmland bird populations, in Western Europe and not only, and on the other hand there is abandonment of agricultural land and of traditional farming methods, especially in Southern and Eastern Europe. The EU Common Agricultural Policy, despite successive reforms, is still largely failing to deal with both problems. BirdLife's concerns and proposals presented in October at the launch of our vision for a new CAP in Brussels aimed to address both, based on the principle of 'public money for public goods'. The issue of abandonment is also a particularly pertinent issue for countries outside the EU. In this edition of the newsletter, the story about the cinereous vulture in Armenia has its origin in abandonment of traditional agricultural and farming methods, which in the past have helped maintain diverse ecosystems and many species of birds.

As we move into the 21st century the challenge for Europeans will be to manage the land in such a way that will be able to maintain diverse habitats and a rich diversity of species, while at the same time adapting to climate change.

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## BirdLife Europe e-news

### News from the EU

#### ***BirdLife's new CAP vision document launched***

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, BirdLife International publicly launched in Brussels its new vision document on the future of the CAP called "New Challenges, New CAP" (download the document at [http://www.birdlife.org/eu/pdfs/CAP\\_%20Brochure.pdf](http://www.birdlife.org/eu/pdfs/CAP_%20Brochure.pdf)) The event attracted more than 130 people from a wide array of Member States, NGOs, Commission services and other institutions.

Graham Wynne, Chief Executive of the RSPB (BirdLife Partner in the UK) presented the new vision which is centered on the need for the CAP to evolve into a sustainable land management and rural development policy based on the principle of "public money for public goods", a policy that would pay farmers for the delivery of public goods, such as biodiversity conservation, that the market is failing to reward properly.



EU Agriculture Commissioner Marianne Fischer-Boel, MEP Thijs Berman, Chairman of the Land Use and Food Policy Intergroup and Giacomo Ballari,

President of the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) reacted to the BirdLife proposal during a lively panel debate, animated by David Baldock of the Institute for European Environmental Policy.

This event was BirdLife International's first official contribution to the debate around the "CAP health check" and EU budget review, a debate that will have far reaching implications for the future of farmland biodiversity and environmental quality in the EU.

More information: <http://europe.birdlife.org>

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## BirdLife Europe e-news

### News from the EU

#### *Sustainable and strategic development of Renewable Energies*

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, the European Parliament approved in plenary vote the "Thomsen report" on the EU renewable energy policy (a roadmap for Renewable Energy in Europe). BirdLife particularly welcomes the Parliament's calls for Strategic Environment Assessment for national Renewable Action Plans; this should allow for a proper national level planning process leading to an optimal deployment of all available renewable energy technologies to mitigate climate change, while minimising their potential adverse environmental impacts and to avoid delays and conflicts on the ground. We also welcome the strong call for a mandatory and comprehensive certification system for biofuels produced within and imported to the EU and the reference to the need of monitoring of global impacts of biofuel production.

We have, however, been disappointed by the EP's endorsement of the 10% biofuels target, despite the recent emergence of an impressive set of authoritative warnings and worrying signs, all suggesting that the implementation of the mandatory biofuel target is much more likely to cause environmental and social harm, than to help the fight against global warming.



The Commission is now expected to publish, in early 2008, a legislative proposal on renewable energy development. BirdLife will go on lobbying in favour of the 20% renewables target and its implementation through sound planning processes, while opposing the biofuels 10% target and arguing for safeguards to be put in place before any further development of this particularly problematic option.

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## BirdLife Europe e-news

### News from the EU

#### ***Stopping Spring Hunting in Malta: another important step taken***

The European Commission sent Malta a final written warning on October 17<sup>th</sup>, regarding the practice of spring hunting of wild birds, which is illegal under EU law. Every spring since its accession to the EU in 2004, Malta has permitted hunting and trapping of Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) and Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*), in direct contravention of the EU Birds Directive.

Based on a complaint by BirdLife, the Commission started legal action against Malta in 2006 but progress was slow.

BirdLife International and BirdLife Malta have continuously campaigned against spring hunting in Malta. The EU Birds Directive specifically protects birds by banning hunting during their spring migration back from Africa to their breeding grounds throughout the European Union.



In its reaction to the warning letter sent, BirdLife welcomed the firm action taken by the Commission and reiterated that the EU needs to tow a tough line on this case. Otherwise other countries might be tempted to follow Malta's example, which could seriously harm the general credibility of the EU.

BirdLife Malta also stressed that every open spring hunting season has been used as a cover by many Maltese hunters to shoot protected species, many of which are threatened with global extinction, such as the Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*) and others.

[http://www.birdlife.org/eu/Malta\\_SpringHuntingCampaign\\_Euractiv.html](http://www.birdlife.org/eu/Malta_SpringHuntingCampaign_Euractiv.html)

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## BirdLife Europe e-news

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#### ***IBA Inventory Launch for Bulgaria and Romania***

On September 18<sup>th</sup> the BirdLife Partners from Bulgaria (BSPB) and Romania (SOR) presented inventories of the most important sites for wild birds in these two new EU Member States to the European Commission in Brussels.

Altogether 244 of these internationally important sites for biodiversity, known as Important Bird Areas (IBAs), were identified covering 23% of the land surface in Bulgaria and 17.05% in Romania.

The IBAs identified cover a diverse range of habitats such as lowland and mountain forests, wetlands and grasslands-landscapes that are rapidly disappearing from the rest of Europe. In Bulgaria, the IBAs designated host species like Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), Semi-collared Flycatcher (*Ficedula semitorquata*) and Red-Breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*). For this latter species Bulgaria hosts 70% of the global wintering population. Romania plays an important role in hosting the main European breeding populations of seven species: Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*), Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), Saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*), Corncrake (*Crex crex*) and Roller (*Coracias garrulus*).



BirdLife is very concerned that the legal protection of these areas is not keeping pace with rapid economic development taking place in those countries, examples

include the construction boom for tourism along the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria and in the mountains of Romania.

Under EU law both countries are obliged to designate and protect these areas as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) so they become part of the Natura 2000 network. At the event in Brussels, BirdLife urged the European Commission to take the appropriate steps so that the two countries make progress in

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protecting their unique natural heritage. Apparently with success as on 17<sup>th</sup> October the Commission started legal action against Romania because of insufficient SPA designation.

[http://www.birdlife.org/news/pr/2007/09/IBAbooklaunchRom\\_Bul.html](http://www.birdlife.org/news/pr/2007/09/IBAbooklaunchRom_Bul.html)

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### News from the EU

#### ***Polish government backs down for now over road construction – breathing space for threatened Rospuda Valley***

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of September the Polish government announced that the construction work on the controversial section of the Augustow bypass through the Natura 2000 designated Augustow Forest, will not start until a final judgment of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) on the case. This final decision is not expected for two years.

OTOP the BirdLife partner in Poland stated that this meant that the Augustow Forest and the unique Rospuda Valley mires were safe for the time being. However the residents of Augustow risk facing further delays with the construction of an essential bypass, because the Polish Road Agency and authorities so far refuse to undertake a serious analysis of alternative routes, in compliance with European legislation. Instead they continue with construction works on sections of the Augustow Bypass outside the Natura 2000 site. This poses significant financial implications if Poland loses the case in the ECJ: if this happens then the town of Augustow could be left with a road to nowhere.

<http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2007/09/ViaBalticaroadhalted.html>



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## BirdLife Europe e-news

### News from the EU

#### ***New report: Environment tools in EC development cooperation***

At the end of September 2007, BirdLife, FERN and WWF published a new study "Environmental tools in EC Development Cooperation" which reviewed transparency and the public availability of documentation in the programming of EU external aid.

The report is based on research carried out during a six months period and provides a "snapshot" in time of the availability of environmental documentation held by 63 European Commission delegations in developing countries and seven regional offices that are responsible for programming and disbursing of EU aid. 57 delegations and three regional desk officers provided information across Africa, the Caribbean, Pacific, Asia and Latin America.

The study followed up on the findings of a report by the European Court of Auditors from 2006, which severely criticised the lack of access to environmental information within



Commission delegations. On the one hand the study identified significant improvements in some areas, such as the carrying out of Country Environment Profiles. On the other hand, a lack of consistency in facilitating public access to documents has been identified as a serious drawback. Another area which needs to be improved is carrying out Environment Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) on the EU funded projects and programmes.

A summary leaflet was printed and is available in French, Spanish and English on request. Otherwise you can find the English version of the full report at: <http://www.birdlife.org/eu/index.html>

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### ***Dalmatian Pelicans have wardens now in Russian steppe reserve***

40 pairs of Globally Threatened Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) breed in a colony in Svetlinsky reserve (Orenburg region, Russia). Due to lobby efforts of the Russian Bird Conservation Union (RBCU, BirdLife in Russia) the reserve is now guarded by three wardens. The Governor of the region Mr. A. Chernyshov signed a decree on the establishment and funding of administration and protection for Svetlinsky regional biological reserve. Orenburg is a Russian region shared between Europe and Asia.

The reserve (8,400 ha) was established on part of IBA RU217 Shalkaro-Zhetykolski lake system in 2005. The reserve protects few steppe lakes with total surface 5700 ha. More than 160 bird species have been recorded here. Eleven species are of Global and European Conservation Concern. Among them are Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*), White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*), Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*), White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarious*), Collared Pratincole (*Glareola pratincola*-check), Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*).



The lakes of the reserve and unprotected part of the IBA are very important breeding and summering sites as well as stopover sites for waterfowl. During fall migration one can see here up

to 300,000 geese and up to 15,000 of the Globally Threatened Red-Breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*).

The recent decree of the Governor as well as the establishment of the reserve two years ago became reality due to lobby efforts of Orenburg branch of RBCU which is guided by Anatoly Davygora. The branch has strong support from the head of Orenburg regional committee on the environment Vitaly

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Kuksanov. Local conservationists recognize also the influence of the International workshop devoted to IBA conservation which was organized by RBCU and BirdLife International in Orenburg in March 19-24, 2007. The workshop was supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (The Netherlands) in the frame of the BBI-MATRA project "Strengthening civil society's contribution to the protection of core areas in the Pan-European Ecological Network in Russia". Workshop participants visited the reserve, something which raised its profile in eyes of the Orenburg government.

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### ***Successful campaign against bird-trapping in Catalonia***

During the month of September, SEO, BirdLife in Spain, together with other organisations, launched a petition against a draft Decree of the Catalan Department of Environment to allow the trapping of birds with birdlime and 'filat' nets. The main species of birds affected by this would have been Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*) and Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) but also Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*), Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*), Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) and Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) are typically trapped, as well as Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*) and Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*). The proposed Decree would have legalised a massive and non-selective trapping practice, which would affect protected species and which is prohibited by the EU Birds Directive.

The petition received support from all over the world, from more than 660 organisations, including many BirdLife Partners, and more than 21000 individual signatures.

On October 10<sup>th</sup>, the Catalan government decided to back down on the proposal to legalise lime stick traps and withdrew the decree.

SEO and the other organisations promoting this petition congratulated the Catalan Government on their decision and were thrilled to see so many individuals and organisations joining to stop these bird-trapping practices. However, they remain vigilant, especially in October and November when the birdlime and 'barraca' trapping is usually practised.

More: [http://www.gepec.org/barraca-i-filat/index\\_eng.html](http://www.gepec.org/barraca-i-filat/index_eng.html)

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### ***EuroBirdwatch 2007***

Every year Birdlife International organizes EuroBirdwatch, a pan-European event which draws the attention to migratory birds, their routes and the issues involved. By inviting all Europeans to watch birds travel south for their winter stay, EuroBirdwatch wants to bring people closer to the birds and point out the efforts needed to protect and save threatened species and their habitats.

EuroBirdwatch 2007, which was held during the weekend of 6-7 October, involved BirdLife Partners from all over Europe that organized in total a staggering 1120 events in order to encourage people of all ages to go out, observe, explore and enjoy birds. At various observation posts at each event, people counted birds and all records were referred to Fritz Hirt, this year's coordinator of EuroBirdwatch and member of SVS/BirdLife Switzerland.

Poland was one of the countries taking part in EuroBirdwatch, this year for the 15<sup>th</sup> time. In Poland, EuroBirdwatch is the biggest national event dedicated to wild birds and their habitat, and is organized by the Polish Society for the Protection of Birds (OTOP), the BirdLife Partner in Poland. Last year it assembled over 3700 bird-watchers as well as hundreds of people taking part in shows, contests and exhibitions. This year the form of EB was enriched with new elements: films about nature were shown in Warsaw and observation of migrating birds was organized by OTOP, Toyota and Cemex for over 1500 employees and their families.

In Latvia, LOS (BirdLife in Latvia) used the event to launch a new booklet called 'How to start birdwatching' and SOS (BirdLife in Slovakia), organized a special painting and photography competition for school children.

Fittingly for an event which focuses on migratory birds spanning European countries, AOS (BirdLife in Azerbaijan) were joined at their event by

Ornithological highlights of this year's EuroBirdwatch event included the first observation of Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) in the Marmara Sea in Turkey and the first

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White-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) in the Skocjan Bay in Slovenia.

The most frequently observed species were: Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Black headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) and Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*).

More information: [www.otop.org.pl](http://www.otop.org.pl)



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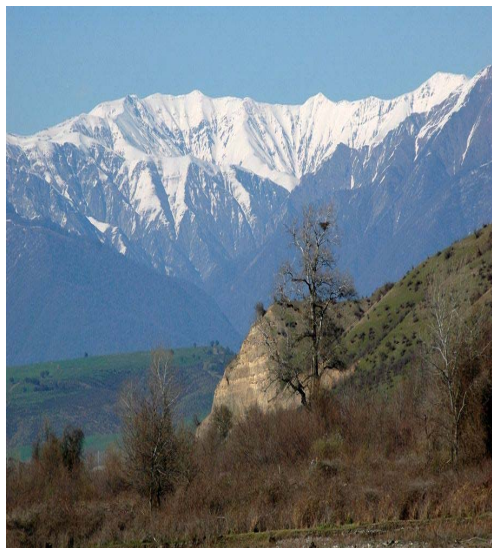
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### *Imperial Eagle in Azerbaijan*

In April 2007, AOS (BirdLife Affiliate in Azerbaijan) carried out with the help of MME (BirdLife Partner in Hungary) a in-depth survey of Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) in North West Azerbaijan. During the nine days of field work 30 active territories (or which 25 nesting pairs) were located putting Azerbaijan among the top six countries for the species in the world.

The population in the area surveyed (which represents about 25% of the potential habitat in the country) is estimated at 35-60 pairs, while previously the national population was estimated in 20-25 pairs! Based on the pair composition (all adults) and on the distribution pattern of nests, it seems that the Imperial Eagle population is stable. AOS caretakers in the region are now monitoring the breeding success of selected pairs.



24 raptors species including Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*) and Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*) were registered in good numbers during the survey showing that Azerbaijan is important not only

for its waterbirds, but also for its breeding and migrating raptor populations.

During their stay in Azerbaijan Márton Horváth and Imre Fatér, trained ten AOS members in Imperial Eagle survey techniques and data management. The work was funded by Conservation Leadership Programme of BP.

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### *Cinereous Vulture Conservation in Armenia*

The Armenian Society for the Protection of Birds is putting continuous efforts to save this magnificent and globally 'near threatened' vulture from extinction in Armenia. As elsewhere, reduced availability of food is the major threat, a result of the collapse of centrally subsidized livestock farming and disappearing wild ungulates. Cinereous Vultures (*Aegypius monachus*) in Armenia have declined by more than 60% in the last 40 years and today only nine pairs survive in the Khosrov Reserve, where ASPB implements a Lush Ltd. funded project. The project includes monitoring of the species, a feeding programme and awareness raising activities. The key targets for the awareness raising campaign are the local shepherds who graze their livestock close to the reserve, hunters who use the area and schoolchildren who have been involved in nest robberies and illegal killing. For conservationists and researchers, the dispersal of juveniles after fledging is of particular interest. They want to know more about what they do and what threats they face in order to help them survive and breed. Satellite tracking of one juvenile was made possible in 2006 in cooperation with GCCW (BirdLife in Georgia), Milwaukee Zoo, National Research and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. It revealed a sad story - the bird moved nearly 1700 km to the South-East and finally reached Southern Iran, where after a period of no transmitted movement, ornithologists found its remains. Not discouraged by the results, ASPB fitted two more juveniles with transmitters this year and continue to follow their signal, so far still close to their natal area.

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### ***BirdLife Malta's 2007 Raptor Camp***

BirdLife Malta's 2007 Raptor Camp brought together 56 volunteers from seven countries to monitor raptor migration and report illegal hunting. Between 8–23 September, led by BirdLife Malta staff and local birdwatchers, teams of volunteers were deployed to hunting blackspots across the island to record raptors and other migrants as they passed overhead, en route from Europe to Africa, and to document and report any instances of illegal hunting that were witnessed. The mere presence of these teams deterred many poachers, who knew that any illegal activities witnessed were reported immediately to the police. Despite this, the volunteers observed multiple instances of various protected species being killed, injured or shot at during the camp. Species affected included Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), European Bee-Eater (*Merops apiaster*), Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*), Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*), Common Swift (*Apus apus*), Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*), Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*) and Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*). A new law introduced by the Maltese Government this year saw a blanket ban on all shooting each day after 3 pm between 15–30 September. As most raptors pass through Malta between midday and dusk, this measure doubtless helped to save many birds from the poachers' guns. BirdLife Malta organised a successful press conference during the camp, and stories about persistent illegal hunting incidents continue to make front page news in local newspapers, including the local leading English-language daily newspaper, *The Times of Malta*.

More: <http://www.birdlifemalta.org/>



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### ***BirdLife Partners discuss marine IBAs***

In early October, as part of the LIFE-Nature project "Marine Protected Areas in the Eastern Baltic Sea" BirdLife International co-organised, together with the Baltic Environment Forum, an international seminar on marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Jourkalne on the Latvian west coast.

The seminar was attended by BirdLife Partners from Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Greece, Malta, Spain, Portugal and Germany and received financial support from SOF and LPO (BirdLife Partners in Sweden and France).

Together with experts from the Baltic project and speakers from other European countries, and with representatives of the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania experience was exchanged on the following issues:

- identification and delineation of marine IBAs, and the process of their designation under Natura 2000
- development of conservation objectives and "Favourable Reference Values" for marine IBAs
- assessing and addressing threats to marine IBAs (windfarms, fisheries bycatch and marine transport)

The seminar was a very good opportunity not only to support the Baltic project with expertise from other parts of Europe, but also to inspire and help those BirdLife Partners who are just at the beginning of developing their activities on marine IBAs.

With the approaching deadline for EU Member States to complete the marine Natura 2000 network in 2008 it is very important that BirdLife progresses with its work on marine IBAs – to advocate the protection of the most important sites for marine birds, near the coasts and far out in the ocean.

Project websites of marine LIFE projects with BirdLife involvement:

- Eastern Baltic Sea: [www.balticseaportal.net](http://www.balticseaportal.net)

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- Malta: [www.lifeshearwaterproject.org.mt](http://www.lifeshearwaterproject.org.mt)

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### ***Balearic Shearwater further threatened by climate change?***

Recent research has revealed that the Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*, Europe's only Critically Endangered seabird, is forced to travel increasing distances to find its fish prey. The species – which migrates from its Mediterranean breeding grounds each summer to the cooler, food-rich waters of the Atlantic – has been recorded in decreasing numbers in its traditional post-breeding quarters in the Bay of Biscay, whereas records from the coasts of southwest Britain have shown a marked increase. This northwards shift in its post-breeding range is apparently being driven by changes in the distribution of key prey species such as anchovies and sardines, which have declined dramatically in the Bay of Biscay in recent years, probably as a consequence of increasing sea temperatures linked to climate change. Although not yet fully understood, the increased distance that the species is having to migrate – over 600 kilometres, or c.20% further – may be exacerbating its already highly endangered status. In recognition of the increasing threats facing the species in the Atlantic, BirdLife has submitted a proposal to the OSPAR Convention – the international treaty for the protection of the marine environment of the north-east Atlantic – recommending its inclusion in the OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species.

For further information, please contact Dr. Russell Wynn (regarding the research; [rbw1@noc.soton.ac.uk](mailto:rbw1@noc.soton.ac.uk)) or Kate Tanner (regarding BirdLife's work with OSPAR; [Kate.Tanner@rspb.org.uk](mailto:Kate.Tanner@rspb.org.uk))

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### ***As LIFE+ deadline approaches, BirdLife workshop shares resources and experience***

As LIFE+ deadline approaches, BirdLife workshop shares resources and experience-BirdLife's European Division Office and the RSPB's International Funding Unit hosted a LIFE+ Workshop for BirdLife partners on October 17. The workshop was designed for BirdLife partners interested in applying for funding from the EU's funding instrument for the environment, LIFE.

The workshop was well attended, with participants from Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, BirdLife's European Division and the RSPB.

Liz Auton, Fundraising and Development Manager facilitated and Nick Folkard and Adrian Oates from the RSPB provided great presentations and LOTS of practical resources. Loads of discussion throughout helped keep everyone going through the packed agenda.

The day kicked off with a quick look at the participant's experience of the LIFE programme, their plans for future projects and questions. Then followed a brief overview of the LIFE+ programme and the 2007 call for proposals.

We soon got stuck into the details of the regulations and the evaluation system. Lots of questions were raised about the eligibility of particular species or sites, how to deal with the complementarity issue whereby LIFE+ will only fund projects that cannot be funded from other EU instruments and the administrative and financial implications of running a LIFE project.



The two participants from OTOP / BirdLife in Poland raised important questions about using LIFE funds for farmland birds. BirdLife Estonia are involved in two current LIFE projects and had useful advice for prospective applicants.

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Both LPO (BirdLife in France) and HOS (BirdLife in Greece) were planning marine SPA projects, and used the workshop as an additional opportunity to compare notes on this important and very current issue. Claus Mayr, from NABU (BirdLife in Germany), raised the question of small organisations needing audit certificates plus the difficulties of engaging public sector partners given the restrictions on funding for civil servant salaries. We also discussed the issues related to the need for Bank Guarantees, including the importance of budgeting for this major expense in the application. The time delay between application and funding was also raised as a serious problem, especially for projects involving land purchase.

Looking ahead, we also discussed the possibilities of using LIFE funds to support major, international communications initiatives in the future.

The workshop produced a large number of specific presentations, with links to all the required documents plus a number of useful tools. These are now available on the BirdLife Extranet in the newly established European Fundraising Special Interest Group. BirdLife partners may visit [www.birdlife.net](http://www.birdlife.net) and go to Groups / European Fundraising Group to download materials.

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