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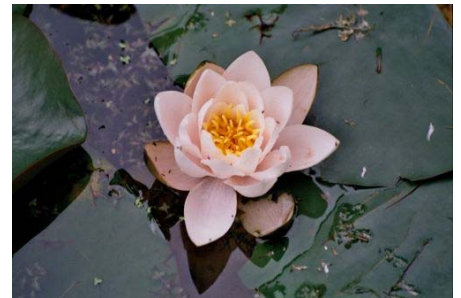
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Editorial: 2010: the year of the Tiger



Dear Reader,

Everybody knows that 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity. Probably less people know (at least in Europe!) that, according to the Chinese Zodiac, this is also the Year of the Tiger. According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the tiger is endangered, with a decreasing population. It is already extinct in most of Asia, and is on the brink of extinction in China.

If we do not act, the wild tiger will disappear one day, together with many other species that are simultaneously under threat because of human activities.

Will the next "years of the tiger" still be a time for celebration rather than a time for mourning? At BirdLife, we believe so. This is why we engage, with millions of members and supporters worldwide, to make it happen.

Biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are not just an option among others. They are a necessity for a sustainable future. They provide us with the five elements, which in several philosophies are thought to be essential materials of all existent aggregates and phenomena: earth, water, air, fire, aether.

Earth and fertile soils, are the basis for food production, man-made or wild. Water is so important for life, that, as far as we know, water IS life. Air is the delicate balance of gases of planet Earth that, combined with food and water, makes living species live. Fire, is the energy provided by nature, under the form of fossil fuels, a fantastic gift of prehistoric biodiversity, or biomass or renewables.

"Earth", "Water", "Air", "Fire", remind us of an impressive list of services provided by biodiversity and ecosystems.

Losing biodiversity means losing these services, and that means also economic loss.

A study into The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), supported by the European Commission and German Government, has shown that by 2050, if biodiversity loss continues unchecked, the costs would amount to about 7% of global GDP. But without healthy ecosystems and without biodiversity, our economy would collapse on the long term.

Just think at what happened to Rapa Nui... covered by forests, its inhabitants overexploited its natural resources to a point that the island ecosystem collapsed, meaning death for many and the end of a once advanced civilisation. The earth is a small island in the vast universe... Haven't we learned the lesson? Can we afford to lose the tiger and the many thousands of vulnerable, endangered and critically endangered species?

Biodiversity has also a spiritual value, represented by the fifth element, "Aether". We are intelligent creatures, meant to elevate ourselves not only by satisfying our primary needs, but also by fulfilling our spiritual needs. We need beauty around us to be happy. Biodiversity is a source of beauty and happiness. The bond between humanity and biodiversity, which is reflected in the art, religions and traditions of Europe, will be lost if we continue to destroy its basis – nature itself.

Biodiversity **IS** on the brink, as we said loudly during our exhibition in the European Parliament on 26 January, but we can still act, we can still change the trend. At BirdLife we know that we are not alone.

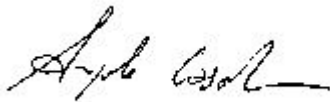
We will do it together with our members and supporters and millions of concerned citizens in Europe. We will do it together with other civil society organisations. We will do it together with forward-looking businesses, farmers, hunters, land owners. We will do it together with the EU Institutions and with other European governments, were an increasing number of decision-makers and high officials are aware and engaged to stop the loss of and restore European biodiversity and natural Heritage.

By addressing the biodiversity crisis, we will also address the climate change crisis. As President Barroso said in a recent letter: "Climate and the status of biodiversity are irrevocably intertwined. Healthy ecosystems – to which the Natura 2000 network is a major contribution – play a critical role in resisting environmental stresses such as climate change".

After the failure of the Copenhagen talks, the year of Biodiversity and the October Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, offer reasons for hope. Europe, and the world, cannot afford a second failure.

Let us work together, doubling efforts, funding and creativity, to make 2010 a memorable year for nature.

With best wishes,



Angelo Caserta
Regional Director
BirdLife International European Division

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Is Europe ready for global leadership on biodiversity in 2010?



Just before Christmas, BirdLife International presented its environmental priorities for the Spanish Presidency of the EU.

After a promising preparation by Sweden, BirdLife has now high expectations towards the Spanish government: "It will be very much in the hands of the incoming Spanish EU Presidency whether 2010, the International Year of Biodiversity, will be remembered as a milestone for rescuing the planet, or just as another missed opportunity", commented Mr Kreiser, EU Policy Manager at BirdLife International's European Division.

As for every Presidency of the EU, BirdLife International also launched its

publication 'Greening Europe' highlighting BirdLife's EU policy priorities for the upcoming six months.

BirdLife provided Spain with **"five keys to a successful Presidency"**:

- The EU must adopt, at the highest political level, a highly ambitious new 2020 biodiversity target and show credible leadership for the global negotiations on biodiversity in 2010.
- The Presidency and Member States must decide how the EU will ensure its fair contribution to international climate financing, stopping the destruction of tropical forests and strengthening the resilience of ecosystems.
- The Presidency should urge the European Commission to propose and adopt a strong and sound set of sustainability standards for all bioenergy applications.
- The Presidency should ensure that all relevant Council formations have an open debate on the future of the EU Budget, based on the Commission's Budget Review paper (expected in early 2010).
- The Presidency should urge the European Commission to propose without any delay a strong "EU Seabird Action Plan" for reducing seabird bycatch for approval by Parliament and Council still during the Spanish Presidency.

Six months from now, BirdLife will evaluate the successes and failures of Spain on these top recommendations.

Download the Greening Europe at

http://www.birdlife.org/eu/pdfs/Greening_Europe_spanish_presidency.pdf

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Attention turns to Mexico after Copenhagen climate conference ends in anticlimax

The UN climate change conference held in Copenhagen in December largely failed to meet the hopes and expectations of most observers, including BirdLife. Lacking the necessary elements to ensure that global temperatures do not rise above the critical two degrees Celsius – such as a 50% emissions reductions target by 2050 and an ambition to have global emissions peak before 2020 – the Copenhagen "Accord" will be far from the final word in the climate change negotiations.

Also in terms of adaptation, deforestation and rules for accounting emissions from land use in rich countries – questions that are especially important from a conservation perspective – much of the detail remains to be worked out. The question that now arises is how the EU and the international community can move on towards the next UN climate change conference in Mexico in December this year and the hoped-for conclusion of a legally binding agreement. The Copenhagen Accord notably does not contain a clear path forward, adding confusion to an already bewildering process. Having been sidelined by other major actors in Copenhagen, the EU now needs to reaffirm its global leadership on climate change.

A good start would be to adopt the more ambitious 30% emissions reductions target that is currently conditional upon other countries' commitments.

For more information please contact Linus Blomqvist at linus.blomqvist@gmail.com

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International Year of Biodiversity is not just a celebration, but a call for action



The United Nations has launched 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity at an event in Berlin, Germany. Speakers included Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, and a video message from UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon.

"BirdLife International welcomes the UN's decision to choose biodiversity as its focus for 2010", said Dr Marco Lambertini, BirdLife International's Chief Executive. "With threats to biodiversity growing faster than ever, this is an important recognition of the urgent need for more action to halt its loss."

It was only in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro that the world's governments together recognised, for the first time in international law, that biodiversity is 'a common concern of humankind'. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was created, and adopted by nearly 200

countries.

Importantly, the CBD set global targets to significantly reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010. These targets, along with national plans to achieve them, have been adopted by most of the world's governments. BirdLife Partners throughout the world have helped their governments to compile national biodiversity inventories, and to develop their biodiversity action plans. Some BirdLife Partners have also joined their government's delegations at meetings of the parties to the CBD.

For BirdLife International, the world's largest Partnership of conservation organisations, the International Year of Biodiversity is an important focus of attention on the failure of nations to meet their 2010 targets, while spotlighting the need for real and binding future targets. The next conference of the Convention of Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010, will assess international progress towards the target.

BirdLife is an official partner of International Year of Biodiversity. With its sound base in science, and the BirdLife Partnership's global repository of information on bird populations, BirdLife International is uniquely placed to comment and report on the state of biodiversity for the CBD.

Action for birds has also been shown to benefit other biodiversity, while protecting and restoring the ecosystem services on which people and their livelihoods depend. Apart from its work on threatened bird species, the BirdLife Partnership's work ranges from the restoration of damaged small island ecosystems to the establishment and management of national and transboundary Protected Areas. Across the developing world, BirdLife is working with marginalised and impoverished communities, helping them to achieve security through land rights and representation, and sustainable livelihoods.

The CBD Secretariat has called for countries around the world to raise the profile of the International Year of Biodiversity by celebrating the importance of biodiversity. "The local nature of the BirdLife Partnership means that we are well placed to run activities to celebrate biodiversity", said Dr Lambertini. "Many BirdLife Partners will undertake events and actions in 2010 in support of the International Year of Biodiversity. These will range from formal education and public awareness programmes to festivals and events celebrating biodiversity."

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2010: celebrating Swallows as Bird of the Year in Hungary



Already since 1979, MME (BirdLife in Hungary) has been choosing its Bird of the Year among the most threatened and vulnerable species.

In this International Year of Biodiversity MME has decided to celebrate the swallows, meaning the three common species in Europe, Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, House Martin *Delichon urbicum* and Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*. Because of its similarities to swallows, also the Common Swift *Apus apus* is part of the group, even if it belongs to the hummingbirds' family.

All the swallows have dramatically declined over the past years. These amazing migratory birds face severe hazards during their travel to Africa and back, due to habitat loss, conversion to cultivated lands, agriculture intensification and drastic desertification. Besides, increasing unforeseen conditions caused by climate change hit them all along their route: from sudden windstorms to heavy rainfalls, from torturing droughts to lack of food.

These conditions have a serious impact on their resistance and survival, as only 40% of the juveniles normally manage to come back home!

MME organises several initiatives to celebrate their Bird of the Year, including swallow-watching tours, ringing demonstrations and lessons on how to build them nests.

For more information visit

<http://www.mme.hu/napi-madarvedelem/madarvedelmi-eszkozok/fecskevedelmi-eszkozok/sargyujtu-hely.html>
(<http://www.mme.hu/napi-madarvedelem/madarvedelmi-eszkozok/fecskevedelmi-eszkozok/mu-fecskefeszkek.html>)

(<http://www.mme.hu/napi-madarvedelem/madarvedelmi-eszkozok/fecskevedelmi-eszkozok/fecskepelenka.html>).

Or contact Zsombor Berenyi, Program Coordinator at MME (BirdLife in Hungary) at berenyi.zsombor@mme.hu

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Music & Migration - music for the birds



New CD launched in support of Born to Travel, the BirdLife Flyways Campaign

A new music compilation on CD, Music & Migration, is supporting BirdLife's Born to Travel campaign. Each of its 21 songs are by different artists and are new and exclusive to the record.

"BirdLife is proud to have the support of the many musicians who made Music & Migration. It shows that people really care about the miracles of nature, and that BirdLife is not alone in wanting to save migratory birds", commented Ania Sharwood Smith, Campaign Coordinator of Born to Travel.

Each of the songs on Music & Migration is inspired by both the miracle of the migratory impulse and the man-made threats that birds face today. The album showcases contemporary post-classical composition, idiosyncratic folksong and pastoral soundscaping.

"Perhaps it's an innate empathy with birdsong, or the fact that internationally touring artists enjoy a natural kinship with anything that regularly migrates, but musicians do seem to have a particular affinity with our feathered friends", said Martin Holm from DOF (BirdLife in Denmark), who co-ordinated the project in his spare time. "So when BirdLife International wanted to increase awareness about the threats to the breeding grounds and 'air lanes' of migratory birds across the globe, through its Born To Travel Campaign, it seemed logical to ask musicians to be the mediators of the message."

Music & Migration is the second release of the Second Language record label. Like all the label's work, it is released in a limited edition, with much attention given to its hand-tooled, recycled packaging.

For further information about purchasing Music & Migration please check the website:

<http://www.seconlanguage.com> or email second-language@hotmail.com

You can listen to some of the tracks from Music and Migration at www.myspace.com/musicmigration

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Spring is coming!



BirdLife International has once again launched its annual Spring Alive campaign to celebrate the miracle of bird migration. Now in its fifth year, the campaign gets European children aged between 8 and 12 years old to send in their first sightings of four species of bird, White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*, Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, Common Swift *Apus apus* and Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*, via the Spring Alive website.

Last year the campaign collected nearly 94,000 observations and this year, for the first time, Spring Alive will also be collecting sightings in Africa.

"Following childrens' sightings of these species from their non-breeding to their breeding grounds will highlight how they connect people, countries and continents", said Magdalena Chrzanowska, the European Coordinator of Spring Alive.

"Through encouraging children, their parents and teachers to contribute to the campaign with their bird observations, we also want to focus attention on the declines of many of our most familiar species."

To take part in this year's Spring Alive, all you need to do is to register your first sightings of any of the four species at www.springalive.net

For more information contact Magdalena Chrzanowska at [magdalena.chrzanowska@otop.org.pl](mailto:magdalenachrzanowska@otop.org.pl)

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Marine IBA inventory published for the first time in Spain



SEO/BirdLife (BirdLife in Spain) has just published the first national inventory of Marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs). This follows the recently launched Portuguese inventory, and is the result of a parallel project covering the whole of Iberia.

The LIFE Project, "Marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Spain", has just been concluded after more than four years of work, and together with the already identified areas for seabirds on the mainland, this inventory will address the complete protection of these birds through a network of integrated areas.

Many of the 42 selected areas have also been identified as important for the protection of other species, such as sea turtles and fish. The project monitored and surveyed an area of about 1 million km².

During the successful launch of the inventory, Elena Espinosa, the Spanish Environmental Minister, commented: "The inventory of Marine IBAs will be a key tool to develop, in collaboration with autonomous communities, a policy aimed to protect seabirds and the most sensitive and emblematic marine species. This document will be fundamental in extending the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment."

Asunción Ruiz, SEO/BirdLife Manager of the LIFE Project added: "SEO/BirdLife offers to the Spanish state a complete, coherent and rigorous reference which should represent the future network of marine Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds in Spain". A Special Protection Area (SPA) is a designation under the European Union (EU) Birds Directive. EU Member States have a special duty to safeguard the habitats of threatened birds and migratory birds. Together with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), the SPAs form a network of protected sites across the EU, called Natura 2000.

The identification of marine IBAs is the first step in ensuring the complete protection of seabirds, and the marine environment as a whole. Following the preparation of this inventory, the next steps in guaranteeing the future of seabirds is now to achieve effective protection of marine IBAs and designate them as SPAs, and to provide proper management through the development and adoption of relevant management plans.

The LIFE project has received the support from the Spanish Minister of Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs (Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Medio Rural y Marino - MARM) and the European Commission.

Check the inventory at <http://www.seo.org/avesmarinas/flash.html>

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Towards a better knowledge on game species

BirdLife was one of many organisations represented at a workshop on providing a knowledge basis for sustainable hunting and biodiversity conservation in the EU, held in Uppsala, Sweden, on 15-16 December 2009. The workshop was hosted by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences under the rotating EU presidency, and was attended by 40 participants from 12 countries.

The aim was to propose further actions to provide policy-makers and stakeholders with information, such as bag statistics, needed for managing huntable species in a European context. BirdLife demonstrated how data from national common bird monitoring schemes have been brought together to produce European trends for individual species and a successful biodiversity indicator through the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (www.ebcc.info/pecbm.html).

Amongst the key messages emerging was the need for sound, scientific monitoring to ensure that hunting is sustainable and in line with EU policies. Game monitoring has the potential to deliver messages about the state of an important facet of biodiversity, which also provides valuable ecosystem services. Some countries already have well-established monitoring schemes run by hunting organisations, which could form the basis of a European platform for game monitoring. If established, such a forum could potentially collate information about the state of game populations and provide input into EU policy decisions. It could also help ensure high standards, by encouraging collaboration between national hunting organisations, authorities and scientific expertise.

The presentations made at the workshop, and the conclusions emerging from discussions, will be made available on the following website in due course: <http://www-conference.slu.se/gamemonitor/>

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BirdLife assists the European Union in conserving threatened birds

Over the next 20 months BirdLife International will be providing scientific and technical assistance to the European Commission to support species protection under the EU Birds Directive. The scope of this important new contract covers the review and improvement of the methodologies and procedures for conservation planning: action plans for threatened species (from Annex I of the Birds Directive) and management plans for huntable species (from Annex II of the Directive). We will work closely with the most important stakeholders and Member States to identify obstacles in the implementation of these plans and to improve their acceptance. In this challenging task BirdLife will receive valuable support from the Federation of European Hunting Associations (FACE) with whom we will be sharing the responsibilities under this contract. With joint efforts we hope to improve the Key Concepts document that sets the rules for sustainable hunting of migratory birds. Both organisations will strive to reach common understanding on the science and law, thus eliminating any ambiguity over these sensitive issues. In implementation of this important project BirdLife will rely on the advice and support of the international conservation community and its network.

For more information, please contact Boris Barov, European Conservation Manager at the European Division at Boris.barov@birdlife.org

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His future is in your hands - Sign our pledge to stop 200,000 seabird deaths!



This is a Cory's shearwater chick *Calonectris diomedea* breeding at the island of Corvo, Azores, one of the largest seabird colonies of the Atlantic. His parents will spend the next six months wandering through the Atlantic in the face of strong winds and storms to find food to keep him alive. This is the only chick they will have this year.

When he fledges he will start foraging for himself along the Atlantic coasts of Africa and South-America. But like thousands of other seabirds, he will be heading into terrible danger.

The bait on longline fishing hooks is a tempting meal for hungry seabirds like this, but when they grab it, they are snared, dragged underwater and drowned.

We already know how to stop this, but we need your help. There are many simple, inexpensive measures that fishing boats can take to prevent seabirds becoming hooked or entangled in nets.

Many species are being killed faster than they can reproduce. The Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus* may face extinction within a human generation unless urgent action is taken to reverse its decline.

We estimate that more than 200,000 seabirds die each year at the hands of EU fishing boats. Please sign our pledge (www.birdlife.org/eu/EU_policy/Fisheries_Marine/seabird_pledge.html) to the new Commissioner for Fisheries, Maria Damanaki, urging her help to stop this slaughter.

"The European Commission has been promising to produce an EU Seabird Action Plan for ten years to address the problem of seabird bycatch in fisheries. Disappointingly, no action plan has yet been written", commented Sacha Cleminson, EU Advocacy Manager at the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK)

Help us make our fisheries more environmentally sustainable.

To find out more: http://www.birdlife.org/eu/pdfs/Seabird_bycatch_glossy_october_2009.pdf

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A Successful Iberian Ornithology Congress in Portugal

 SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal) and SEO/BirdLife (BirdLife in Spain), joined for the

fourth time in the organization of the Iberian Ornithology Congress, which was also the VI SPEA Ornithology Congress. The event, held last 5th-8th December in the city of Elvas (Alentejo region, in southern Portugal), gathered almost 250 ornithologists coming from all over Europe and South America.

The scientific programme included more than 70 oral presentations from invited speakers and participants, 70 posters, and 4 workshops. The social programme included a nature fair with stands, exhibitions, film projection and activities for children, as well as some outdoor activities. Fieldtrips, a football game and, of course, some gastronomic visits with a congress dinner with 150 participants! A Silent Auction has also helped raising money for some conservation actions to be held in one of the visited Important Bird Areas (IBAs).

At the end of the congress participants highlighted the importance of the joint efforts held in Portugal and Spain for the identification of marine IBAs, and the control of invasive species in the Macaronesia region (e.g. Azores and Canary Islands). The increase in ornithological tourism initiatives and its potential for nature conservation and rural development, together with the role of environmental NGOs, has also been stressed. There was also time to pay a tribute to all the volunteers that contribute to several projects (e.g. bird census programmes, IBA caretaking) and to award the farmers who won the SPEA Campaign "Know the birds in your Property 2009" – a prize that rewards farms with high bird biodiversity indexes and nature friendly farming practises.

For more information contact Vanessa Oliveira at vanessa.oliveira@spea.pt

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New staff in the BirdLife Partnership

At the beginning of this year we can welcome **Marcin Kozlowski**, the new Communication Officer in OTOP (BirdLife in Poland) and congratulate **Drs Robert G.M. Kwak**, who has just been appointed Head of the Conservation Department in VBN (BirdLife in The Netherlands). **Zdenek Vermouzek** has also officially started as Director of CSO (BirdLife in Czech Republic)

Nathalie De Snijder from Natuurpunt (BirdLife in Belgium) will work in the European Division replacing Tatiana Nemcova during her maternity leave.

To contact them:

Marcin Kozlowski: marcin.kozlowski@otop.org.pl

Robert Kwak: robert.kwak@vogelbescherming.nl

Zdenek Vermouzek: verm@birdlife.cz

Nathalie de Snijder: Nathalie.desnijder@birdlife.org

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Meet the BirdLife European Partnership

In every issue you have the chance to meet a staff member from the BirdLife European Partnership and learn more about their key priorities and favourite projects

For this issue, we've teamed up with **Martin Holm, Communication Officer at DOF (BirdLife in Denmark)**



Hi everybody, my name is Martin and I have been with DOF (BirdLife in Denmark) for almost seven years, where I am responsible for communication and fundraising and all sorts of other stuff thrown in between for good measure.

Besides me, the Communication Department consists of Tine Stampe, Head of Communication, Eva Svendsen, part-time assistant and Tina Møller, who is helping out between her studies. Further we have a couple of external magazine editors plus a news journalist attached to the department. In other words we're a merry bunch trying to keep all things communication-related afloat.

These days, my main duties are fundraising (I am mostly engaged with private foundations and corporates) as well as managing a member-recruitment scheme called "Nature at Eyelevel" which is the Danish equivalent to "Aren't Birds Brilliant" or "A Date with Nature" as it is now called. I'm quite excited about this scheme as it gives DOF the chance to go out and meet people, who wouldn't

otherwise come into contact with the society and show them that we're catering for more than hardcore birders and scientists!

So why do I enjoy working for bird and nature conservation, you ask? Well, I didn't spring into life with a pair of binoculars around my neck nor have I ever evolved into a fully fledged "birder". However, I did have a so-called "wow experience" some 17 years ago, when a member of the family pointed out a couple of Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus* perched in a roadside tree in Southern Sweden. (I remember we were on a weekend break and the car had blown a tyre and left us stranded on some deserted side road – well, semi-deserted since these big birds were keeping an eye on us like a couple of scavengers waiting for us to fall over. Today I actually believe they were Common Buzzards *Buteo buteo* (which occasionally do feed on carcasses as it happens...) So, yes, it all started with a wow experience (partly because of these impressive creatures and partly because we manage to change the tyre ourselves).

That episode ignited a dawning interest in birds and thus conservation (as fulfilling as the changing of a tyre is, studying car mechanics was never really an option for me) so years later, when the opportunity arose to work for DOF, I took my chance. I feel very privileged to be able to work for a goal that also holds my interest and the sense of working for an ideal purpose is very appealing to me.

When I leave my desk by the end of the day, I didn't ensure that a few shareholders can now put even more money into their pockets – no, I contributed to the fact that nature and thereby we all hopefully are better off than we were when the day started. Being part of the BirdLife Partnership, where so many people all over the world everyday are working towards the same goal, is something that fills me with inspiration and determination – and with something that can best be described as humility.

You can contact Martin at Martin.Holm@dof.dk

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Events

International events

- January-June 2010: Spanish presidency of the European Union

- 22-26 March 2010, Cáceres, Extremadura, Spain: 18th International Conference of the EBCC - "Bird Numbers 2010: Monitoring, indicators and targets"

<http://www.ebcc.info/index.php?ID=370>

<http://www.seo.org/ebcc2010/frmHome.html>

-7-11 September 2010, Victoria, Canada: 1st World Seabird Conference - Seabirds: Linking the Global Oceans
www.WorldSeabirdConference.com

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