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Editorial

Dear readers,

One of BirdLife's most important roles is serving as the official authority for birds for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This involves collating information from many sources and assessing the extinction risk of each species. The resulting classification – the Red List for birds – is used to help focus global conservation efforts. It is therefore essential that the data are kept up to date.

In recent years, it has been possible to remove several European species from the Red List. Some of these, such as White-tailed Eagle and Lesser Kestrel, have undergone genuine recoveries and can be rightly celebrated as conservation success stories. Many have benefited from international Species Action Plans and focused conservation action, much of it funded by EU Member States and the EU's LIFE programme. Unfortunately, over the same period, more than twice as many species have been added to the Red List, like Egyptian Vulture, Black-tailed Godwit, European Roller and Dartford Warbler.

In most cases, the EU has responded by funding the production of international Species Action Plans, to provide a framework for action. However, the latest results of the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS – a joint initiative of the European Bird Census Council and BirdLife International) show that some of these species are still declining. In other cases, particularly in eastern and south-eastern Europe, there is often simply no monitoring in place.

Having missed the 2010 target to halt biodiversity loss, and now set an even more ambitious target for 2020, governments need reliable information about species' trends more than ever. PECBMS demonstrates the cost-effectiveness of encouraging volunteers to feed their local records into wider monitoring schemes. The modest cost of coordinating such citizen science schemes is far less than that of employing professional fieldworkers. Those governments that are now considering cutting such funding should remember that any potential short-term financial gain is far outweighed by the risk of more species declining and being added to the Red List. Prevention is not only better but also cheaper than cure.

Best wishes,

Ian Burfield
European Science & Data Manager

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Leaked CAP proposal seems to keep pumping cash into EU's most environmentally harmful farms



Environmental NGOs and farmers condemned plans to greenwash the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) as revealed in a leaked Commission document. BirdLife Europe and other green groups say that unless the proposals are overhauled to provide real environmental commitments, the policy will remain devoid of any legitimacy.

BirdLife believes that after all the rhetoric, the Commission proposal only superficially commits to public goods. Our analysis shows that a greening of the policy through rewarding farmers for the delivery public goods is not guaranteed and that moreover most of the commitments are empty, not real or backtracking on the status quo.

Some of the most problematic issues in Pillar I are: no additional support farmers maintaining protected natural habitats in the Natura 2000 network, organic farmers or High Nature Value farmers (those managing farm- and grasslands crucial for biodiversity and the climate); the greening component is not ambitious enough to make a real difference for biodiversity; the Water Framework Directive is not directly included in cross compliance; and finally that some of the previous reform is being reversed by including coupled subsidies and reversed modulation (certain Member States are allowed to move money from Pillar II to Pillar I).

For Pillar II, which has the largest potential to deliver public goods, one of the key problems is being downgraded by scrapping mandatory spending on the environment, and by indirectly prioritizing other measures through more attractive co-financing rates. Moreover, new "risk management" tools are being introduced which are not tackling the cause but just the consequences of the risks. Finally there is no environment or climate proofing mandatory for all measures.

This is not incentivizing farmers to do better or to continue doing the positive management they are already doing. Therefore, BirdLife, other environmental NGOs and farmers are calling on the Commission to radically improve the proposal and put substance back in the proposal.

For more information, please contact [Trees Robijns](#), EU Agriculture and Bioenergy Policy Officer

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New CFP proposal needs more teeth



On Wednesday 13 July Commissioner Damanaki revealed her proposal for the new Common Fisheries Policy setting a framework for EU fisheries management after 2012. While the reform proposal introduces some important innovations, overall it does not provide the instruments for the radical shift towards sustainability we so badly need.

With 72% of assessed fish stocks overfished, it's highly commendable that the Commission has tabled a strong commitment to stop overfishing by 2015 at latest. However, unless this requirement is embedded in a solid delivery framework and is accompanied by the right tools, its value is no better than words written in sand.

First of all, the EU must cut its excessive capacity and the Regulation must include targets, timelines, system of penalties for non-compliance and, very importantly, a mechanism ensuring that the 'right' capacity will be achieved in both quantitative and qualitative terms. We don't share Commission's view that the Transferable Fishing Concessions offered as the sole and obligatory tool will solve the problem.

Secondly, the Regulation must ensure that, as in US legislation, catch limits and fishing efforts cannot be set above scientifically recommended levels.

Thirdly, we welcome the proposal to develop multiannual plans for each fishery as the key tool for managing fish stocks sustainably in the long term and for putting an ecosystem based approach into practice, but the Regulation must put more emphasis on the urgency of having these plans for each fishery by including an ambitious deadline.

And, very importantly for BirdLife, the Regulation, must include stronger objectives and tools ensuring that the impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems is minimised, be it bycatch of protected species or destruction of valuable habitats. The new CFP must ensure that European seas are once again productive and that they are safe for all the marine life they support.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.birdlife.org/eu/EU_policy/Fisheries_Marine/CFP_reform.html

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Record number of volunteers for this year's raptor camp in Malta



BirdLife Malta's largest ever Raptor Camp kicked off on Wednesday 14 September with the first teams of bird watchers going out into the countryside to monitor bird migration and deter illegal hunting.

The camp will run until the 2nd October and during this period 66 international volunteers from ten countries; Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, and the UK will take part.

The camp is timed to cover the peak migration period for raptors when many of these birds stop overnight in Malta, to rest while on their autumn migration to warmer climates. Although raptors are protected by law they are highly prized by illegal hunters and form the majority of shot protected birds received by BirdLife Malta.

Scientific ringing studies have confirmed that raptors shot in Malta come from at least four of the countries Raptor Camp volunteers come from; Finland, Germany, Latvia and Poland.

Since the start of the opening hunting season BirdLife Malta has received daily reports of illegal shooting, several birds have been photographed in flight with gunshot damage, and six shot protected birds have been received by the organisation.

One of the main problems in countering the illegalities is a severely under-resourced ALE unit (Environmental police in Malta), which normally consists of around 20 officers.

During the 2011 spring hunting season the European Commission requested an increased police presence in the countryside and ALE numbers were temporarily increased to 43, after around 5,600 hunters applied for spring hunting licenses (1).

"There are nearly twice that number of hunters licensed for the autumn hunt, but without pressure from the Commission it is unlikely that ALE numbers will be increased proportionately." stated Nicholas Barbara, BirdLife Malta Conservation and Policy Officer. "Despite the quiet migration the past few days numerous illegalities have been observed – without a strong police presence, migration picking up is only likely to lead to many shot protected birds."

BirdLife Malta encourages members of the public to report illegalities to the police. Instructions on what information would be required and how best to pass it on are available on www.birdlifemalta.org

People may also reveal illegalities they witness by describing them in an email to mynews@birdlifemalta.org

For more information please contact:
[Geoffrey Saliba](#), BirdLife Malta Campaigns Coordinator

Notes:

1) The numbers of licenses and of additional enforcement officials can be seen here:
<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20110413/news/spring-season-opens-hunters-torn-between-politics-and-pragmatism.359553>

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Stopping Illegal Killing of Birds: still a lot to be done

Cyprus is one of the hot-spots of illegal bird trapping in the Mediterranean but despite of its reputation as a hot-bed of illegal trapping, it is also a country where a lot is being done by the Government and NGOs to curb this problem. One of the recent highlights was the hosting of the International Conference on Illegal Bird Killing under the Bern Convention of the Council of Europe. The two day meeting in July made a thorough review of the scale, impact and causes of bird taking that is illegal according to international and national legislation in all European countries. According to BirdLife data presented at the Conference it is a widespread phenomenon and no country has managed to fully eradicate it. Of the numerous reports presented, some recent trends could be identified:

- the illegal and inappropriate use of poisons against predators or pests is again on the increase across the EU, which already has dire consequences on birds of prey who also suffer from direct persecution;
- trapping and illegal shooting of migratory birds for consumption, trophies or illegal trade is not being counteracted effectively by the law enforcement authorities. Declaring a practice illegal is not enough, if legislation remains on paper only;
- and because bird conservation requires close international cooperation, the risk of 'exporting of the problem' to neighbouring countries with weaker enforcement systems (but lots of birds) is not to underestimate. Organised illegal hunting is a well known practice in many SE European countries.

In Cyprus, as in some other countries, illegal killing and trapping of birds is clearly generating significant illicit profits to individuals and groups organized in criminal networks, operating in an environment where supply meets demand. Hundreds of thousands of migrant birds are being illegally slaughtered in Cyprus annually to feed an appetite for illegal "ambelopoulia" delicacies. Trappers using limesticks and mist nets are making huge profits while threatening Europe's natural heritage. But trappers would go 'out of business' if it wasn't for the restaurants serving unaware or close eyed customers 80 Euro servings of black caps. Clearly, the solution of the problem in Cyprus, as in most other countries that have this problem, is in finding a potent mix of political will, effective enforcement and culturally sensitive public awareness campaigning You can help generate the political will to end this indiscriminate killing by joining the BirdLife Cyprus anti-trapping campaign and by signing [BirdLife Cyprus's petition](#).

For more information about the campaign to stop illegal trapping in Cyprus: [Martin Hellicar](#)

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Natuurpunt (BirdLife Belgium) welcomes new Director

2011 is an important year for Natuurpunt: the co-BirdLife Partner organisation in Belgium, active in Flanders and Brussels. First of all they celebrate our 10th Anniversary after the merger of Natuurreservaten and De Wielewaal. Natuurpunt also welcomes their new Director of Natuurpunt, Mr Chris Steenwegen. Chris is a biologist, environment-engineer and management expert. He left the Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO), a scientific institute of the Flemish Government in Belgium, and became the Director of Natuurpunt on the 1st of September 2011.

Chris is replacing Mr Willy Ibens, who has worked for Natuurpunt for the last 18 years. He not only successfully realised the merger, but under his wings Natuurpunt grew to a family of 88,000 members and thousands of volunteers. Natuurpunt has achieved some large nature reserve acquisitions and is now managing more than 500 nature reserves covering more than 18.000 ha. Thousands of observers enjoy citizen science projects and millions of nature observations are recorded.

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Launch of BirdLife's new Local Empowerment programme



BirdLife is launching a Local Empowerment Programme to provide more effective support for Local Conservation Groups, and to strengthen and expand networks of local organisations. The Local Empowerment Programme (LEP) will also help communicate this work more effectively to donors and decision-makers, to increase its impact, and leverage more resources for this essential aspect of BirdLife's activities.

It is recognised throughout BirdLife that working with people locally is critical to effective, sustainable, equitable conservation. One of the BirdLife Partnership's most distinctive approaches has been to support the emergence and strengthening of networks of individuals and organisations at the site or community level, who share BirdLife's objectives, and are committed to site or species conservation.

BirdLife Partners support these groups with the management, monitoring, development and defence of 'their' Important Birds Areas (IBAs), providing an approach that is rooted in local distinctiveness. This enables traditional approaches and diversity to shape responses that are very unlikely to be achieved through externally managed interventions.

Approaches reflect the diversity of culture, history, legislation and social norms that underpin social organisation in different places.

Empowerment involves building the confidence, skills, knowledge, resources and rights that enable people to overcome obstacles. It is about enhancing their ability to make decisions, and building skills for improving personal and collective circumstances. It concerns attitude: positive thinking about the ability to make change. And it is about the ability to engage and inform the perceptions, actions and decisions of others.

The vision of the programme is that "Local organisations at critical sites for biodiversity are empowered to effectively conserve, manage and defend their sites, so that biodiversity values and benefits are provided locally, nationally and globally in the long term". The LEP aims to achieve this by expanding the coverage of LCGs and local engagement generally; building capacity; linking groups and individuals for effective sharing of experience and knowledge; promoting rights for local people to conserve and manage resources sustainably; and by generating resources for local group development, networking and action.

To find out more about the Local Empowerment Programme contact [David Thomas](#), or visit <http://www.birdlife.org/community/2011/09/launch-of-birdlife%e2%80%99s-new-local-empowerment-programme/>

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Bad days are over for the migrating waterbirds at the southern of Sicily



After more than a decade of lobbying from LIPU - BirdLife Italy, "Pantani di Vendicari e di Capo Passero", the most southerly IBA of Italy, has been entirely designated as a Nature Reserve.

In addition "Capo Murro di Porco and Penisola della Maddalena", another area important for many migrating passerine species, located along the eastern coast of Sicily, has received interim protection. Hunting will be banned in both areas, before the next hunting season starts. This means that Ferruginous Duck, Marbled Duck, Flamingos, many other waterbirds and passerine species that have been in the past regularly slaughtered during the hunting season, will have a chance to thrive.

Because it functions as a stop over site, a wintering site and is also the most important breeding site for Ferruginous Duck (30 pairs) in Italy, the protection of Pantani is an extremely important addition to the network of protected wetlands in Italy. LIPU - BirdLife Italy, which manages two other protected wetlands in the surroundings for the Region of Sicily, will continue keeping a close eye on the area to make sure that protection is immediately enforced.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for the development of an ecological network in the southern tip of Sicily and we are not going to miss it." says Claudio Celada, Director of Conservation LIPU-BirdLife Italy "Starting from today, the very last European segment of the central Mediterranean flyway, for birds migrating to Africa, is a little safer".

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Birds are neglected in Finnish Bird Protection Areas



The new report published by BirdLife Finland points out the decline of wetland bird species on protected areas in Finland. The long-term decrease of wetland birds has continued (2 % per year the 1960's, when reliable bird monitoring data became available for the first time). Birds have almost disappeared, even from wetlands which were protected as species protection areas (SPAs), and some of them even designated as internationally important bird areas (IBAs).

Bird species that are suffering the most can be divided into two groups. The first group includes species demanding open landscape (waders, gulls) and which are currently suffering from vegetation encroachment. The second group includes waterfowl which feed, either on bottom fauna (eg. Tufted duck, Pochard, Slavonian Grebe), or on invertebrates in shallow water (eg. Garganey, Pintail). Those latter birds have suffered from eutrophication caused by effluents from agriculture and forestry. Banks of many lakes and bays are largely dead and don't provide food anymore for the ducks.

The good news is that recovery of populations will be possible with proper management. The study pointed out that, well targeted, mainly LIFE-funded projects increase the numbers of birds on an average of 50 % per site. On the other hand, badly targeted management, funded by national budget or other EU funding sources than LIFE, has almost no effects on the bird numbers in protected areas. This sends a serious message to decision makers: a significant increase in LIFE funding is needed in the name of cost-efficient and sufficient biodiversity protection. However, site specific management is not enough. The biggest driver, agriculture (with run-off effluents), continues to destroy small protected wetlands and without a revolution in the Common Agriculture Policy many bird species will continue to decline.

So far, management of Finnish SPA-sites has not prevented the decline of conservation value at network level because management action has taken place only on few sites.

When management is taken into account, bird numbers have decreased by 0,6 % per annum over the entire Finnish SPA-network, compared with 2,2 % for sites without management action.

Undermanagement is the consequence of scarce national funds and related delay in management planning and implementation.

The real annual funding needs for restoration, permanent management and monitoring of Finnish SPA-sites from 2012 to 2020 were estimated in the report of BirdLife Finland at 8,4 million € (restoration), 1,7 million € (permanent management) and 1 million (monitoring), totalling 40 € per ha per year. The sum is considered to be conservative because some costs such as land purchase and background studies were not included. In spite of this, the estimated amounts are by far higher than current official plan in Finland. The future of wetlands does not look promising: the Finnish government shows no initiative in allocating sufficient money for wetland management in SPA- and IBA-areas.

For more information, contact [Margus Ellermaa](#), IBA-coordinator, BirdLife Finland, www.birdlife.fi

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BirdLife International and HeidelbergCement become co-operation partners - jointly preserving biological diversity

On Friday 16 September, BirdLife International and HeidelbergCement signed a co-operation agreement. The primary goal of this partnership is to further improve the protection of biodiversity associated with quarrying sites.

The co-operation is initially scheduled to last three years. In the first year, a biodiversity strategy for the partnership will be developed jointly. The strategy will also include goals for the protection of species and habitats. In the second year, joint biodiversity projects will be formulated in different countries. Local management, in particular, will be involved, alongside the national partners of BirdLife International in Europe. From the third year, the first pilot projects in Europe will then be implemented and documented.

"We are pleased that, in BirdLife International, we have been able to attract a highly competent partner for the further development of our biodiversity management", said Dr. Bernd Scheifele, Chairman of the Managing Board of HeidelbergCement AG, who personally signed the co-operation agreement. "Together, we will analyse and optimise our existing work and define new activities in order to promote the preservation of biodiversity at our quarrying sites even more effectively."

"This open and cooperative collaboration should also send a message to our stakeholders. We will give BirdLife insight into the workings of our quarries and sand and gravel pits throughout the Group and implement biodiversity management projects at these sites together. These projects should make our impact on flora and fauna transparent, assess the effects, and deliver improved approaches that will allow us to give back to nature more than we have taken."

"We are delighted to enter in this relationship with HeidelbergCement, a pioneer in integrating environmental sustainability in the activity of extracting resources, and we feel confident that together we can not only reduce the impact but actually obtain an overall net positive benefit for biodiversity at HeidelbergCement quarries all over Europe", said Dr. Marco Lambertini, Chief Executive of BirdLife International.

"Through the unique BirdLife structure of national and membership-based nature conservation organizations across the whole of Europe, we will be able to support action at a site level while maintaining an overall strategic oversight. I am confident that the outcomes of this collaboration with HeidelbergCement will prove to make a real difference in fulfilling the potential many quarries hold for biodiversity."

For more information, please contact:

[Herlinde Herpoel](#), Head of European Communication and Marketing at BirdLife Europe

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2012 Conservation Leadership Programme Conservation Awards - Developing capacity for young leaders in conservation



In 2011 30 projects from various parts of the world received \$492,000 from the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP). Six of these projects are in Eurasia, i.e.:

♣ Assessing the Impact of Electric Power Lines on Birds in the Central Kazakhstan Steppe

- ♣ Assessing Threats to Birds in Proposed Important Bird Areas of Macedonia
- ♣ Conserving the Critically Endangered Darevsky's Viper in Lake Arpi National Park, Armenia
- ♣ Improving Community Capacity for Salmon Conservation on Sakhalin Island, Russia
- ♣ Conservation of Unique Ecosystems for Ecotourism in Kamchatka, Russia
 - ♣ Ensuring Long-term Protection of Rare Endemic Plants at Lake Baikal, Russia

Full list of 2011 projects can be seen at <http://www.conservationleadershipprogramme.org/Projects.asp>

The CLP is re-establishing its self globally after two years (2007 to 2008) focus on 20 countries of which only four were in Europe. However, since 2009 the programme expanded its global remit to cover all countries except those identified as high income economies by the World Bank. The CLP is keen to increase the development of conservation skills, knowledge and leadership competences to young conservationists to a wider geographic scope in Europe, Russia and Central Asia.

The Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) is a partnership of four conservation organisations – BirdLife International, Conservation International, Fauna & Flora International and the Wildlife Conservation Society. The mission of the Conservation Leadership Programme is to promote the development of future conservation leaders and provide them with the capacity to address the most significant conservation issues of our time.

The CLP has over 25 years history of supporting development of biodiversity conservation leaders. What started as a lone award in 1985 has grown into a successful global programme and an international partnership granting more than 500 awards, internships, scholarships, and benefiting over 3,000 individuals.

Whilst proposals from Europe continue to increase from year to year -75% from 2009 to 2011 there is high potential for BirdLife International Partners in Europe to play the role of mentor to young future leaders in conservation to develop winning proposals to the CLP and other donors. The call for proposals to the 2012 CLP conservation awards will be sent out in mid-September so please keep an eye out on the BirdLife International news mediums as well as CLP website <http://www.conservationleadershipprogramme.org/ApplyNow.asp>.

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New book on birds and their important areas in the Czech Republic



Data collected by members of the Czech Society for Ornithology (CSO), BirdLife Partner in Czechia were used to produce this new book on the status of Special Protection Areas (SPA) and species of the Annex I of the Birds Directive.

The book, prepared and published by CSO in cooperation with the Czech Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape, begins with an overview of the history of Important Bird Areas and their evolution into SPAs in the country. The main part is a detailed description of the monitoring methods and the results, reporting on the status of 51 species of the Annex I of the Birds directive and of 41 SPAs, between 2005 and 2007.

Monitoring of SPAs in the Czech Republic is organised in three-year rounds and this book presents the baseline against which future trends of the conservation status of the species and SPAs will be made in the future.

This huge amount of data collection and analysis wouldn't be possible without the invaluable contribution of nearly 400 CSO members who ensured the demanding fieldwork.

Full title of the book: Monitoring of the Birds Directive Annex I species and SPAs during the years 2005-2007 in the Czech Republic.

Authors: Jan Hora, Tomáš Brinke, Eva Vojtěchovská, Vladimír Hanzal, Zdeněk Kučera (eds.)
320 pages, colour photos, tables and graphs, hardcover

ISBN: 9788087051887

Price: 530 CZK (approx. 22 EUR) + postage

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Calendar and Events

- July - December 2011: Polish Presidency of the European Union
- 1 - 2 October: Europebirdwatch, www.birdlife-extranet.ch/ebw11/

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