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Dear Reader,



I would like to start this issue of our newsletter by telling you the story of an enchanted forest. It is a lush tropical forest, just inland from the beautiful Indian Ocean coast in Kenya. It is home to some truly remarkable birds such as Sokoke Scops Owl *Otus ireneae*, Fischer's Turaco *Tauraco fischeri* and Southern Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinerascens*, species that can only be found in the narrow sliver of forest hugging the slender waist of Africa. Beyond the birds, it hosts a bewildering array of other creatures, many of whom rare and unique to that region. It is also home to the Watha people, who find in the forest wood for cooking and lighting and clean water for drinking. Sounds like the sort of exotic paradise you should put on the wish list for your future holidays? Well, you better be quick...

If a currently proposed project gets through, the unique Dakatcha forest will be bulldozed out of existence by an Italian investor to make space for an industrial plantation of a toxic bush called *Jatropha curcas*. The forest, its birds and people would be pushed out to make space for the production of biodiesel: "green fuel". And it would be done in the name of the environment and sustainable development.

You would wonder who could have inspired such an aberrant idea. Unfortunately, the blame lies with the EU and its ill conceived love affair with biofuels. The EU is artificially creating the world's most lucrative market for biofuels and other bioenergy and this is already triggering a "gold rush" of forest clearing from Kenya to Indonesia. Some weak and loophole riddled sustainability criteria have been written into the Renewable Energy Directive, so we should be able to keep out of the EU market the dirtiest fuels like the potential Dakatcha biodiesel. But as our study on indirect land use change shows, this would be just masking the problem. The EU will be still consuming huge land resources, and this land will have to be found somewhere, to the expense of nature, the climate, and vulnerable people everywhere. On our website you can read about our work to expose the false assumption underpinning the whole madness- the idea that any bioenergy is by definition good for the climate. It is just the latest contribution to a big and fast growing body of evidence that EU decision makers keep wilfully ignoring. And until they wake up, their policy machine will keep breeding forest eating monsters.

With best wishes,

Ariel Brunner
Head of EU Policy
BirdLife International European Division

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[Will 190 governments manage to save one planet?](#)



In October the International Year of Biodiversity will culminate in the 10th Conference of the Parties (COP-10) at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nagoya, Japan. The global Partnership of BirdLife International will be represented by a strong delegation, supporting - and loudly asking for - progress and meaningful results of this huge meeting of 190 governments and countless representatives from NGOs, indigenous communities and the private sector. It still

remains to be seen whether Nagoya will be finally a turning point, or rather another disappointment for biodiversity conservation: nobody has forgotten the spectacular failure of the Copenhagen climate summit, and politicians still have to demonstrate that they learnt their lesson about what true leadership and responsibility mean. BirdLife will measure the success of the COP-10 against the following five asks:

1. A comprehensive and ambitious new strategy for saving the world's biodiversity and ecosystems is adopted, including a 2020 target for stopping biodiversity loss and starting the recovery of most species and habitats.
2. Governments, especially the rich EU countries, make significant additional commitments for financing the protection of biodiversity, following the example of Germany (500 Million EUR by 2012 and from 2013 500 Million EUR on a yearly basis)
3. The COP-10 adopts binding targets for the establishment of a global network of protected areas. By 2020 20% of the globe should be effectively protected, and most progress has to be made at sea.
4. The COP-10 concludes and adopts a legally binding Protocol on international Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) – to ensure a fair share of profits from genetic resources and thus create incentives for their protection.
5. Governments take steps to better link biodiversity and climate policy: the COP-10 adopts a Joint Work Programme of the three Rio-Conventions on biodiversity (CBD), climate (UNFCCC) and desertification (UNCCD) and sends strong messages on biodiversity safeguards in bioenergy production.

More information: [Konstantin Kreiser](#), International Biodiversity Policy Officer at NABU

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Discussing the future of the Common Agricultural Policy

In July the European Commission hosted a conference entitled: 'The CAP post 2013 – conference on the public debate', which was the summit of a public debate which the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Ciolos launched in April in the European Parliament. This debate represents the start of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform process, which will draw a policy that has the potential to influence up to half of Europe's land and thus also a considerable part of the EU's biodiversity. The Commissioner kick-started the more formal discussion by asking citizens, research institutes, think tanks and different stakeholders about their opinion.

Although the outcome of the discussion was as varied as EU agriculture, some issues came back more than others. Some recurring themes were the need for a common EU agriculture policy which delivers safe and healthy food at affordable prices, ensures sustainable land use, the provision of environmental public goods and provides Europeans with long term food security. Tied to this is what the Commission dubs the 'vitality of rural areas'. During the conference, it became clear that while there seems to be broad agreement on the problems, consensus on how policy should address these issues is still far away.

The conference was a good opportunity to allow BirdLife and other like-minded organizations to voice their concerns and present their [vision for a new CAP](#). Unfortunately, there were still some critical voices which did not get an invitation. In general, BirdLife was pleased with the initiative of the Commissioner, who seemed to be genuinely interested in hearing from European citizens and stakeholders. The question will now be if Mr. Ciolos will be able to deliver.

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

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Strong support for EU action on seabird bycatch

On 9 August the European Commission closed its stakeholder consultation on the EU Action plan for reducing seabird bycatch. From more than 200 responses to the consultation the majority broadly supported the Commission's proposals.

Bycatch is globally known as a fate of birds that get caught during fishing operation. When scavenging for food, they get hooked on a baited hook or entangled in nets where they subsequently drown and die.

In general, there was wide consensus amongst stakeholders about recognition of the problem and the need for more data and research on seabird bycatch. There was also agreement on the need for close involvement of the fisheries sector in the development and testing of seabird mitigation measures. Naturally, representatives of the fishing sector and some Member States expressed concerns that introducing measures aimed at stopping birds from dying as a result of fisheries operations might place an extra burden on the sector.

BirdLife presented the Commission with evidence showing that in some fisheries (eg longline), the use of bird-scaring methods not only reduces seabird bycatch but at the same time increases the catch of the fish. Depending on the particular fishery, applying mitigation measures will imply some costs but they will be minor compared to the overall cost of fishing.

200,000 birds are dying yearly in EU fisheries. BirdLife hopes that the Commission's proposal, to be adopted in 2011, provides a strong framework, backed up with legislation, which will stop fisheries taking such a toll on biodiversity.

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

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EU funds help BirdLife Partners to protect our nature



At the latest round of decisions recently announced, six BirdLife Partners received funding for their LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity projects to be implemented in the coming years. Of the 194 proposals received, the European Commission selected the 84 most relevant Nature and Biodiversity ones, contributing to the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives, to the Natura 2000 network and ultimately to stop biodiversity loss in Europe.

The projects from the BirdLife Partnership cover a wide range of priorities: from restoring habitats infested by invasive alien species to implementing action plans and save endangered species.

With two new projects **Natuurpunt (BirdLife in Belgium)** aims at restoring more than 60ha of Annex I habitats, including sandy soils and ones which depend on freshwater tides, in a very important Belgian region, promoting socio-economic and tourist potential of the area and informing people about invasive alien species.

Focusing on its overseas departments, the French project, led by **LPO (BirdLife in France)**, wants to contribute to stop the biodiversity loss in Reunion, Martinique and the French Guyana by developing techniques to reduce the human induced mortality of some species, protecting and managing sites and developing new tools adapted to these regions' particular conditions.

With its project **SOS/BirdLife Slovakia** will reverse the decline of Great Bitterns *Botaurus stellaris* and Ferruginous Ducks *Aythya nyroca* in Slovakia by restoring appropriate water regimes in degraded wetlands.

"LIFE has made a great difference for many of the threatened birds and biodiversity in Europe" commented Boris Barov, European Conservation Manager at the BirdLife International European Division. "As usual BirdLife Partners have shown a remarkable success rate in their applications to this exciting programme and what is even more important is that many of our projects end up in the hall of fame of 'Best projects'".

The project proposed by **BSPB (BirdLife in Bulgaria)** will introduce land management measures in Northern Bulgaria to ensure suitable habitats and stabilize the wintering population of Red-breasted Geese *Branta ruficollis*, one the most threatened goose species in the world.

Linking the production of biomass as a renewable energy source with the large scale mechanized management of the fen mires home to the Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*, **OTOP (BirdLife in Poland)** will demonstrate that conservation management of this habitat can also be economically viable.

The British project led by **RSPB (BirdLife in the UK)** will focus on increasing the newly reintroduced UK population of Great Bustards *Otis tarda*, establishing special management areas, monitoring the interaction of the species with the environment and developing agri-environment options to improve the suitability of the wider countryside for the species.

More information: [Boris Barov](#), European Conservation Manager at BirdLife International

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New Polish IBA inventory



Providing an accurate description of the 174 Polish Important Bird Areas (IBAs), the new inventory published by OTOPI (BirdLife in Poland) denounces for the first time the threats birds have to face on these sites, based on the accurate data gathered during monitoring activities.

The sites presented in the book vary greatly in size, habitats and bird species but they are essential for an efficient protection of birds in Poland. The previous IBA inventory, published 6 years ago, was used as the basis for creating the Natura 2000 network in Poland, whereby all 140 listed sites were designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within the network. This new inventory offers up-to-date information on those 140 sites and presents 34 new sites recently recognized as IBAs.

Poland plays a special role in protecting many threatened European bird species such as Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*, Great Snipe *Gallinago media* or Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*. Polish IBAs are also extremely important for many species migrating through central Europe, such as Bean Goose *Anser fabalis* and Eurasian Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*. The new inventory indicates priority sites in bird conservation, and the next step will be to ensure specific actions aimed at their effective protection.

The book would not have been published without the hard work of many people and institutions that offered their support at all stages of its preparation process. Quantitative data is presented in the book as collected by hundreds of volunteers throughout Poland, acting as individuals and as part of regional ornithological associations. The publication was financially supported by Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway through their Financial Mechanism and by the Polish NGO fund.

More information: [Maria Jujka](#) from OTOPI

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Escalation of violence in Malta

A BirdLife Malta fieldworker was physically attacked and injured by an individual illegally trapping Waders.

A BirdLife Team witnessing the illegal activity called the police and as the BirdLife Malta team provided details to the police and pointed towards the area where the trappers stood, they came towards the BirdLife team and began hurling verbal abuse at them. The police had to restrain two of the aggressors, but the third then attacked the BirdLife volunteer. He was taken to a policlinic for medical examination. Already last April one of the trappers was arrested by the police after he was filmed by BirdLife volunteers at the Spring Watch Camp illegally trapping Waders on the same site. On that occasion, the trapper was caught on video screaming "I will kill you" at the volunteers, in the presence of police officers.

The reports of illegal Wader trapping continued to increase as Wader migration peaked over Malta.

More information: contact [Geoffrey Saliba](#), Campaigns Coordinator at BirdLife Malta

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Best breeding season ever for Ireland's Roseate Terns



You probably know that the largest colony of Roseate Terns *Sterna dougalli* in Europe is located in Ireland, on Rockabill Island, close to Dublin city. Each year BirdWatch Ireland (BirdLife in Ireland) fieldworkers spend the birds' breeding season on the island to monitor their progress as part of a conservation project backed by the Irish National Parks and Wildlife Service. The 2010 breeding season was the best yet for this rare species, with a record of 1,079 pairs nesting successfully. This success was mirrored by the other tern species in the colony, with 1,954 pairs of Common Terns *Sterna hirundo* and 250 pairs of Arctic Terns *Sterna paradisaea* also nesting on the island.

Given that Ireland's tern colonies are amongst the most important in Europe and that BirdWatch Ireland is running a prominent Save our Seabirds Campaign, these beautiful birds were the ideal subject for BirdWatch Ireland's International Year of Biodiversity events. A series of public tern viewing events were held around the Dublin area throughout the summer, and hundreds of people were able to see these remarkable migrants. At Dalkey, in the south of Dublin city, there are currently

several hundred Roseate Terns from the Rockabill colony feeding around the local harbour and roosting on nearby rocks, making this perhaps the most convenient and reliable place in Europe for birdwatchers to see this enigmatic species.

BirdWatch Ireland also held public viewings each day at Ireland's largest colony of Little Terns *Sterna albifrons*, located on a shingle beach close to its headquarters in Wicklow, to the south of Dublin. This conservation project to protect Ireland's rarest breeding seabird, again supported by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, attracted thousands of visitors during the summer. People were also kept up to date by the wardens' "tern blog", which followed the progress of the colony and highlighted the rich biodiversity of the site, from daily visits by Otters *Lutra lutra* and Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* to nightly moth-trapping and bat-watches.

More information: [Niall Hatch](#), Development and Legal Officer at BirdWatch Ireland

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White-tailed Eagles poisoned in Denmark



For the first time in almost a century a pair of White-tailed Eagles *Haliaeetus albicilla* bred in the Danish island of Funen, but tragically the birds were found dead at the end of June. The eagles were a symbol of recent years' nature restoration in Odense Bay and increased optimism on behalf of nature.

The local branch of DOF (BirdLife in Denmark) put up the nest platform at the end of 2009 and if everything had worked out according to plan, the nestling would have left the nest at the beginning of July, but sadly, the nestling and the adult male died after feeding on a poisoned bait.

DOF has settled the probably highest reward in Denmark's history in relation to fauna crime. Members of Birdlife Denmark and concerned locals have promised to double the reward from 25,000 to 50,000 Danish kroner (almost 7000 Euros) for crucial information.

Last July, French laboratory tests ordered by the Veterinary Institute of the Technical University of Denmark and the National Forest and Nature Agency proved that the birds were poisoned with the prohibited and extremely powerful toxicant carbofuran which blocks up the nerve system.

"There is no doubt that DOF – BirdLife Denmark considers it vital to solve the case as fast as possible, and we believe that this reward is a good initiative which will increase birds protection", stated Lennart Pedersen, head of BirdLife Denmark's Eagle Project.

"It is encouraging that our members and others who are appalled by this case are calling us to offer financial support, which can persuade the public to provide information that may help the police in their investigation of the poison killing of the two birds. This shows that friends of nature will not accept attempts on our shared natural amenities and rare birds", concluded Mr Pedersen.

Before 1850 The White-tailed Eagle was relatively common in Denmark with an estimated 50 breeding pairs. However, due to the intense raptor persecution which began after 1950 the species was eradicated from Denmark and the last pair bred in 1911. Fortunately The White-tailed Eagle returned to Denmark in 1995, when one pair bred successfully – and the number of breeding pair in 2009 was a healthy 28.

More information: [DOF-BirdLife Denmark](#)

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Kazakh caretakers meet for the first time



The Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK) recently organised the first meeting of its caretakers in one of the region's key Important Bird Area (IBA) – the Korgalzhyn State Nature Reserve, in the northern part of the country.

Between 2004 and 2008, 121 IBAs including 15,1 million ha have been designated in Kazakhstan, covering 5,5% of the country's land surface. Worryingly only 30% of IBAs are completely or partly protected by national law, whereas the total area of unprotected IBAs is approximately the same size of Bulgaria!

After the IBA inventory was completed, ACBK, together with their network of student nature conservation groups active in six universities, worked hard to identify the best techniques to monitor and protect these exceptional sites for bird conservation.

With the help of BirdLife International, ACBK organized the first meeting of local members and collaborators interested in becoming IBA caretakers. BirdLife's Local Conservation Group (LCG) approach aims to engage local people in conservation and sustainable management of the places where people live, for the benefit of people and biodiversity. LCGs are groups or individuals who, together with relevant stakeholders, work with BirdLife Partners to help promote conservation and sustainable development at IBAs. Teachers, policemen, shepherds and other people had a chance to get to know each other and learn more about successful IBA caretaker networks around the globe. A lively example from ASPB (BirdLife in Armenia) helped making the participants understand the importance to develop and implement nature conservation actions on «their» IBAs.

More information: contact [Edith Mayer](#)

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Staff updates

Tatiana Nemcova, our Senior EU Advocacy Officer, came back to the office after her maternity leave and you can contact her again at Tatiana.Nemcova@birdlife.org. We would like to thank Nathalie de Snijder, who covered Tatiana's leave, for her great job and her smiling presence in the European Division.

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BirdLife Malta: Vacancy for the Executive Director

BirdLife Malta is seeking a dynamic and focused person for the post of Executive Director. This is an opportunity to drive the future of Malta's leading environment NGO.

The applicants should fill in the Application Form and return it to office@birdlifemalta.org with a covering letter not later than 15 September 2010. In your letter explain why you would like to work with BirdLife Malta and why your skills are appropriate for this position. CVs will not be accepted.

More information (application form, job description and person specification) available at http://www.birdlifemalta.org/about_birdlife/vacancies/

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BirdLife on the move

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 Trees Robijns, EU Agriculture Policy Officer at the BirdLife European Division



My name is Trees Robijns and I joined the BirdLife European Division as EU Agriculture Policy Officer last March. Before I start introducing myself in more detail, let me clarify one important point. My parents did not want to call me 'trees' commonly understood as: 'a perennial woody plant' but rather 'Trees' the Dutch or Flemish form of Tracy or Thérèse or Teresa. Although I admit that it is quite beneficial for my job and I love the connotation, honesty about my parents' choice is just fairer to them.

Going back to my position in BirdLife, I am not only focusing on European agricultural policy but also on issues related to renewable energy. On the agricultural side, I work together with Partners from all over Europe to try to improve policies and find workable solutions related to producing food in the most environmentally sustainable way. On the bioenergy side, we are studying how the EU is trying to move away from a carbon heavy society and economy to one which is based on real sustainable energy solutions.

As you can see, I am heavy on the politics and maybe less on conservation, and this also reflects my background. I am a political scientist and spent some of my study time abroad looking at how international policies are influencing our daily lives, and they do more than you think!

As part of the generation "change", I firmly believe that we can actually make a difference. This simple belief of being able to make or at least influence our own reality gives me a drive to work for BirdLife, as this is an organization which through firm scientific research and Partners working on the ground, tries to move things forward in a rational and sustainable way. Looking at how the world was burning and drowning and melting away over the summer months, how could I not try to do my part in moving it a little bit out of this chaos and into a more sustainable future?

Contact Trees at Trees.Robijns@birdlife.org

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Events

International events

- July- December: Belgian Presidency of the European Union

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

- 16-18 September 2010, Bükk National Park Directorate, Eger, Hungary: Conservation of Saker Falcon *Falco Cherrug* in Europe - Presenting the Results of the Hungarian-Slovak Saker Conservation LIFE-Nature Programme and Other Saker Conservation Programmes.
More at http://www.sakerlife.mme.hu/uploads/File/Registration_Saker_Conf_in_Hungary%2016_18_09_2010_announcement.pdf

- 15 October 2010, Bruges, Belgium: EEAC-conference on Sustainable Land Use
www.minaraad.be

- 11-12 November 2010, Bulgaria: BirdLife Agriculture Task Force (for BirdLife Partners only)

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