

Title



The [Birds and Habitats Directives](#) are the cornerstone of EU biodiversity policy. The BirdLife Partnership has been working on their development, transposition and implementation from the beginning. These Directives, and their interpretation by the European Court of Justice, have proven to be our strongest legal working tool.

[The Birds Directive](#) (1979) generates a legal framework of protection for all wild birds in the EU (including their eggs, nests and habitats), offers common rules for the regulation of hunting in the EU and foresees the set-up of special measures of conservation for a list of birds (including the protection of key sites for these species – Special Protection Areas).

[The Habitats Directive](#) (1992) was developed later and aims to protect all other species and habitats ‘of Community Interest’. Among other things this Directive is the legal basis for the designation, protection and management of the [Natura 2000 Network](#).

The network also includes Special Protection Areas designated under the Birds Directive. Natura 2000 sites are not “fenced-off” protected areas ; human activities in the Natura 2000 sites are allowed as long as they do not affect the conservation objectives of the site.

Related topics

- [Scientific expertise for the benefit of society](#)
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- [The Birds and Habitats Directive](#)
 - [Natura 2000 designation](#)
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The Birds and Habitats Directives: The Habitats Directive (together with the [Birds Directive](#)) forms the **cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy**. It is built around two pillars: the [Natura 2000 Network](#) of protected sites and the strict system of species protection. All in all the Directive protects over 1.000 animals and plant species and over 200 so called "habitat types" (e.g. special types of forests, meadows, wetlands, etc.), which are of European importance.



[Natura 2000 Network](#)

Natura 2000 is the centrepiece of EU nature & biodiversity policy. It is an EU wide network of nature protection areas established under the 1992 Habitats Directive. The aim of the network is to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.



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