

Appeal to EU policy makers to stop needless seabird bycatch

Title



BirdLife Europe launches exhibition at the European Parliament with stunning albatross images On Tuesday 18 October, BirdLife Europe and LPO/BirdLife in France opened its remarkable photo exhibition 'Albatrosses, legendary birds', showing sixteen giant photos demonstrating the spectacular beauty and the unique adaptation of these birds to life in the harsh environment of the southern oceans, with a focus on the problem of their needless deaths through bycatch in the course of longline fishing operations. The exhibition also stresses the dire consequences of this impact on albatross populations. Indeed, 17 out of 22 species are already in danger of extinction. It is now urgent to take action to save them. Jacques Perrin, French actor, filmmaker and the producer of beautiful wildlife documentaries, including the famous 'Microcosmos', 'Winged Migration' and 'Ocean's', opened the speeches and illustrated the extent of the problem 'Just one longline fishing boat can use a line of 130 km long, attached to which are 10-20 000 hooks. [?] Each year, 100 000 albatross die this way.' Mr Perrin continued 'Albatrosses are an ideal indicator of the health of our oceans, and we know they are being destroyed by short term fishing policies and exploitation practices by our nations' 'Not only albatrosses are suffering from seabird bycatch, but also hundreds of thousands of birds in the EU seas' stressed Angelo Caserta, Regional Director of BirdLife Europe. On a positive note he added: 'We have solutions for this problem. It's not difficult and it's not costly. We can create win-win situations for fishermen.' For Estelle Grelier, the French socialist MEP who hosted the event, a data collection related to bycatch is a precondition to finding effective solutions, 'Just as for the Common Fisheries Policy reform, fishermen will need to be associated to this process' Lowri Evans, Director General of DG Mare confirmed that the Commission is planning to adopt the EU Seabird Action Plan by the end of the year, containing monitoring and mitigation measures that will reduce seabird

bycatch in both European and international waters. She stressed, as advocated in the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, the need to move to a wider approach to fisheries management encompassing all elements of the ecosystem including seabirds. She called upon Members of the European Parliament, Member States, NGOs, the fishing industry and civil society to help bring about this change. BirdLife Europe is encouraged by the positive news about the upcoming publication of the EU Seabird Action Plan, but at the same time highlights that this is just a first step in our efforts to save the birds. To be effective, the Action plan will need to be translated into the ongoing CFP reform and be accompanied by research, development of technical mitigation solutions, and awareness rising within the fisheries sector.
