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Our seas are facing unprecedented pressures from a wide range of human activities. This unsustainable use represents a major and mounting threat to the fragile balance of marine ecosystems. Seabirds and their colonies are among the most visible, iconic and highly valued elements of biodiversity in the marine environment and, as such, are key indicators of the state and health of our waters.

Overfishing and damaging fishing gears arguably have the heaviest environmental footprint but many others, such as pollution, invasion of non-native species (often imported in ship's ballast), and increasingly climate change, also contribute to the global and regional loss of marine biodiversity. Collectively they pose a serious risk to our long-term food security, health, the livelihoods of fishermen, and to the attrition of marine species, some of which are almost certainly vanishing before they have even been discovered. As a result, marine ecosystems are rapidly being degraded and losing the ability to provide the goods and services on which our society, our economy and our future well-being depend.

Our European Marine Programme helps our BirdLife Partners to deliver concrete action on the ground. Key island restoration projects have been launched over the past decade and are helping seabird species to make a comeback to previously inhabited sites. A detailed analysis of the impacts that overfishing, renewable energy, maritime transport and marine litter are having on our seas is being carried out across the Partnership.

**Related Topics**

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- [Protecting Seabirds and Marine ecosystems](#)
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- [BirdLife Europe Briefing: Time to halt seabird bycatch in the EU \(April 2013\)](#)
- [BirdLife Europe Position: European Union Plan of Action for reducing incidental catches of seabirds in fishing gears \(April 2013\)](#)



Stichting BirdLife Europe gratefully acknowledges financial support from the European Commission. All content and opinions expressed on these pages are solely those of Stichting BirdLife Europe.