

Brussels – 23 May 2016

To the members of the press – EMBARGOED until 24 May 2016

New report shows that climate targets can be met in harmony with nature

The RSPB ^[1] (BirdLife's ^[2] UK partner) has assessed, by using pioneering mapping approaches, whether the UK's 2050 climate targets can be achieved using high levels of renewable energy whilst avoiding sensitive species and habitats. The results presented in the new report 'The RSPB's 2050 Energy Vision' ^[3] show that the UK has the potential to deliver up to four times the UK's current energy consumption from renewable sources with low risk to wildlife.

'The RSPB's 2050 Energy Vision' report shows that the UK could generate as much as 6,277 TWh (terawatt hours) per year using only renewable technologies, almost four times more than the UK's total energy consumption in 2014. Crucially, this level of renewable energy could be produced whilst avoiding important sites for wildlife, using a mix of solar, onshore wind, bioenergy, offshore wind, wave and tidal power.

The research was carried out by RSPB scientists who developed pioneering mapping approaches to assess where renewable energy technologies could be located to avoid sensitive wildlife areas, as well as taking account of other planning constraints. Using a practical approach, the RSPB has incorporated a range of criteria including housing, shipping lanes and other important infrastructure to take into account other constraints to deploying renewable technologies.

Ariel Brunner, Senior Head of Policy at BirdLife Europe stated: *“The RSPB's 2050 Energy Vision' report shows that we can take radical action against climate change while preserving biodiversity at the same time - if we do it right. This should inform the new generation of EU climate and energy legislation to avoid the mistakes and conflicts of the past”*

“The fossil fuel industry likes misusing concerns about renewables while some unscrupulous renewables developers wave off biodiversity concerns in the name of climate action. The RSPB report shows the choice is not between renewable energy and nature but just between doing things right and doing them wrong”.

The report presents ten recommendations for how to achieve low carbon energy in harmony with nature in the UK. The RSPB is calling on governments across the UK to follow its recommendations in order to protect wildlife in the UK's low carbon transition. **ENDS**

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Notes:

[1] The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a member of BirdLife International, a partnership of conservation organisations working to give nature a home around the world. <https://www.rspb.org.uk/>

[2] BirdLife Europe is a Partnership of nature conservation organisations in 47 countries, including all EU Member States, and a leader in bird conservation. Through its unique local to global approach BirdLife Europe delivers high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of nature and people. <http://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia>

[3] The report 'The RSPB's 2050 Energy Vision' is available on the RSPB's website and via Dropbox:

www.rspb.org.uk/energyfutures

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/s08zcryuebgo8ac/AAABvwV60tQiKlv8IHha1nGa?dl=0>