

## One step closer to transparency in fisheries – if you pay

**Today the PECH committee of the European Parliament adopted the Data collection regulation. If adopted by the full Parliament, EU member states would be obliged to supply data to the European Commission about the impact of fisheries on the wider ecosystem. This kind of data will help understand the levels of incidental bycatch of seabirds and other species occurring across Europe - the first step towards solving the bycatch problem. However, the “catch” is that the data might not be available for free - NGOs and scientists could have to pay to access this information.**

Seabirds are amongst the world’s most threatened group of birds. Across Europe, it is roughly estimated that around 200,000 seabirds are accidentally caught and killed by commercial fishing hooks and nets each year. In many cases, the lack of systematic data on the number of birds caught makes it difficult to identify the extent of seabird bycatch within a specific fishery.

The data that will be collected thanks to this new regulation would be very useful for providing solutions to eliminate seabird bycatch but only if the databases can be easily accessible and available for free. Furthermore, the European Commission has estimated that €300 million a year would be saved if the data would be easily accessible by users.

It is also unfortunate that data on the environmental impact of freshwater aquaculture will not be mandatory, given the EU’s intention to boost the sector. It will be difficult for the EU to evaluate the sustainability of this sector without this information.

**Bruna Campos, EU Marine and Fisheries Policy Officer, BirdLife Europe & Central Asia said:** *“We are happy to see that the EU is taking leaps to improve the scientific information, especially on the impact of fisheries on the wider ecosystem. However, the transparency process is moving too slow and the thought that NGOs and researchers should pay for this information is ridiculous – especially when EU taxpayers’ money pays to collect it”.* **ENDS**

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**Notes:**

[1] Briefing: Revision of the Data Collection Framework (DCF)

[http://www.birdlife.org/sites/default/files/attachments/briefing\\_-\\_ngo\\_views\\_on\\_ec\\_proposal\\_to\\_revise\\_dcf\\_final.pdf](http://www.birdlife.org/sites/default/files/attachments/briefing_-_ngo_views_on_ec_proposal_to_revise_dcf_final.pdf)

[2] European Marine Observation and Data Network. Impact Assessment.

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*BirdLife Europe and Central Asia is a [partnership of 48 national conservation organisations](#) and a **leader in bird conservation**. Our **unique local to global approach** enables us to deliver high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of **nature and people**. BirdLife Europe and Central Asia is one of the six regional secretariats that compose BirdLife International. Based in Brussels, it supports the European and Central Asian Partnership and is present in **47 countries** including **all EU Member States**. With more than **4100 staff** in Europe, **two million members** and tens of thousands of skilled volunteers, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, together with its national partners, owns or manages more than **6000 nature sites** totalling 320,000 hectares.*