

## **Invasives: MEPs give in to fur industry, gutting the proposed regulation through far reaching derogations**

30 January 2014, Brussels - Today the European Parliament's Environment Committee has voted on the Commission's proposal to address invasive alien species, plants and animals that are introduced into Europe and cause significant environmental, economic and health damages. Members of the Committee have approved an amendment allowing Member States to derogate virtually the entire regulation and allow any type of enterprise to breed dangerous plants and animals within the EU. Such derogation would not even require Commission approval and could be justified on any ground of economic interest.

"The amendment approved today seriously undermines the purpose of the directives, which is to achieve coordinated action against the most dangerous species across the entire territory of the EU" said Ariel Brunner, Head of EU Policy at BirdLife Europe.

He continued: "It is shocking to see the Environment Committee caving in to the heavy lobbying by the fur industry, seeking to protect their lucrative production of American mink."

The industry lobby has been heavily supported by Denmark and other member States and joined by other corporate interests such as the biofuels industry, who continues seeking free hand-outs in planting invasive weeds for fuel production.

"The idea of allowing individual Member States to issue derogations is nonsensical" said Carles Carboneras, Species Policy Officer at the RSPB (BirdLife UK). "Invasive species don't recognize national borders, which means the production of one plant or animal in one Member State to impose damage and high costs in other Member States.

Invasive Alien Species represent a cost of approximately €12 billion to the EU annually and are one of the major causes of biodiversity loss in Europe.

BirdLife Europe is calling on the European Parliament to reverse today's support for blanket derogations, even if that means a longer legislative process. Ensuring good legislation that can deliver should take precedence over the rapporteur's haste to get a deal ahead of the elections.

### **ENDS**

BirdLife Europe is a Partnership of nature conservation organisations in 49 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.

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