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## Europe's wildlife needs renewables success

**The transition from polluting energy sources to renewables needs to be a success in order to protect wildlife in Europe, according to a new study.**

As national energy ministers gather in Brussels to decide on the future of the Energy Union, the Institute for European Environmental Policy has produced a report for BirdLife and its UK Partner, the RSPB.

It examines the energy policies which have worked well and those that have gone wrong up until now and sets out what needs to happen next for the renewable energy revolution to be in harmony with nature.

In Europe binding national targets and plans, agreed at EU level, have successfully driven investment since 2009. However, in many nations this has involved rushed and unplanned delivery of the lowest cost options, such as burning wood in old coal fired power stations or haphazard wind farm planning, putting protected bird species at risk.

Three key points are being made by BirdLife to make sure the transition to renewable energy can be a success; ensure enough investment is being made by the EU and its member states towards renewables, develop national energy plans that are in line with the resources available, rather than leaving investment decisions entirely to the market, and make sure Europe's current environmental protection laws are safeguarded.

**Dr. Ivan Scrase, Senior Climate Change Policy Officer at RSPB (BirdLife in the UK), said:** *"If the great transition to renewables is a success, we can prevent climate change causing a wave of wildlife extinctions in the coming decades.*

*But first we must ensure nature does not pay a more immediate price for the choices we make – we must stop losing wildlife habitats to bioenergy production and causing unnecessary impacts with poorly planned infrastructure."*

**Catherine Bowyer, IEEP Senior Policy Analyst and Lead Author said:** *"Without a clear, planned and robust policy framework the predictability and security of renewable energy uptake and environmental benefits are undermined."*

The IEEP study's publication comes ahead of the release of BirdLife's new report, *The Messengers*, on the threats posed by climate change and the solutions offered by nature, which is published on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November.

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**Notes:**

BirdLife's three key recommendations in full:

1. Enough investment, with all nations contributing. Current proposals for the post 2020 period would not put binding requirements on all Member States to increase their use of renewable energy. This could jeopardise climate targets, and/or increase cumulative impacts on the environment in those nations that are left to make up the difference. Rules governing the Energy Union, and under the revised Renewables Directive, must ensure all nations to make a fair and sufficient contribution.
2. Planned investment. Rather than leave investment decisions entirely to the market, the EU and its Member States need to look at the renewable energy resources they have and plan how they can be developed within ecological limits. National plans should steer investors towards technologies and locations that leave room in Europe for both renewables and thriving wildlife populations.
3. Safeguards for nature. Europe's current environmental protection laws are adequate to enable renewables delivery without harming nature. It will be vitally important that these laws are not weakened in the drive to 'streamline' procedures, and to ensure they are implemented effectively across Europe. Stronger sustainability criteria will have to be applied to all forms of bioenergy, so that overall use is in line with sustainable supplies and does not add to carbon emissions or habitat losses in Europe and beyond.

*Delivering Synergies between Renewable Energy and Nature Conservation: Messages for Policy Making up to 2030 and Beyond. A report for RSPB/Birdlife Europe by the Institute for European Environmental Policy is available to view here: <http://goo.gl/KD9NC2>*

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council is meeting in Brussels on 26<sup>th</sup> November. More details here: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/tte/2015/11/26/>

*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.*

*The Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) is an independent not for profit research organisation dedicated to advancing an environmentally sustainable Europe through the analysis and development of policy, and dissemination of research results.*