

# 2018 HIGHLIGHTS





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## INTRODUCTION

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### Dear reader,

We are proud to present to you in this Annual Report a snapshot of the diverse work we undertook in 2018 to protect biodiversity and birds across Europe and Central Asia. We are proud – and yet at the same time acutely aware of being just one oar in the water, and in roiling seas to boot. While we commit to redoubling our energies in the conservation and policy work we do, we know we must, to switch to another relevant metaphor, cast our eyes upwards from the furrows, the soil in which we toil.

**Therefore, as 2018 drew to a close,** we looked ahead to the important European Parliament elections. Although nearly half of our partners in Europe and Central Asia are not members of the EU, she is the engine that leads the train on the continent for sustainability, environmental protection, and the values that make our work possible.

**Is she perfect?** Far from it, of course, but what among mankind's political creations is? We strive every day to make the EU better without denying her challenges, even her failures. But when we cast our idealistic eye across the global landscape, we remain convinced that this unprecedented historical project is as good a vehicle for progress, peace and planetary survival as we have.

**Democracy and a healthy civil society,** which are at the heart of the EU, are indispensable for saving biodiversity, our habitats, our species, our precious birds, our planet itself. Yet today democracy and civil society are more fragile than ever before and under attack everywhere in the world.

**An NGO such as BirdLife,** is accustomed to collecting minute data, agglomerating and analysing it, to effect successful conservation policy and action. We have not often felt ourselves quite so cornered by the vicissitudes of political and economic forces so antithetical to our goals and values.

**We started out, for heaven's sake,** with a passion for birdwatching; noting and counting carefully what we observe. But over these decades, as mankind hurtles itself willfully towards the destruction of this precious earth, we have come to the realisation that we must

join the broader fray – the battle for ideas and values that make nature conservation possible, that make nature conservation an obligation, that make nature conservation a joy.

**The science we do,** as confirmed most recently in the IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity, shows we now have an increasingly diminishing window to together take the steps necessary to save the planet as we know it, for our children, their children, and future generations, of humans, wildlife and all living things. I take solace that the small steps we take every day in the magnificent BirdLife partnership, with the support of so many individuals, companies, and institutional funders, are helping to take advantage of that window.

"We shall", as Longfellow wrote, "toil upward in the night."

### Success

(from *The Ladder of St. Augustine*)

We have not wings, we cannot soar;  
But we have feet to scale and climb  
By slow degrees, by more and more,  
The cloudy summits of our time.  
The mighty pyramids of stone  
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,  
When nearer seen and better known,  
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.  
The distant mountains, that uprear  
Their solid bastions of the skies,  
Are crossed by pathways that appear  
As we to higher levels rise.  
The heights by great men reached and kept  
Were not attained by sudden flight,  
But they, while their companions slept,  
Were toiling upward in the night.

### Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

(1807–1882) was a poet

Angelo Caserta

Regional Director BirdLife Europe & Central Asia

# BirdLife Europe & Central Asia

## KEY FACTS

4,100 staff

2,000,000 members

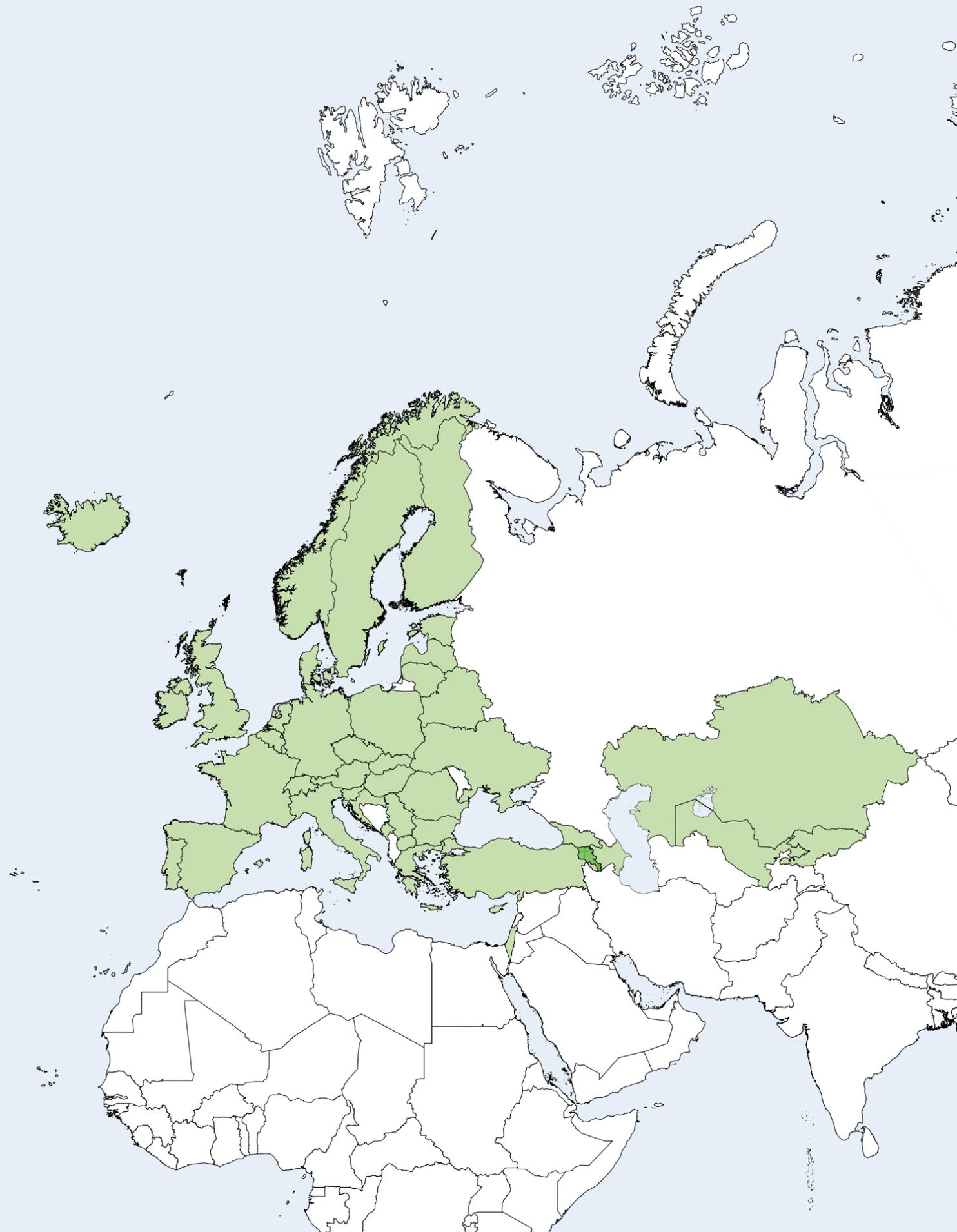
Tens of thousands of skilled volunteers

Partners own or manage more than

6,000 nature sites totalling

320,000 hectares

BirdLife Europe and Central Asia is one of six regional secretariats that compose **BirdLife International** – a world leader in bird conservation and the largest nature conservation partnership in the world. Our unique **local-to-global** approach enables us to deliver high-impact and long-term conservation for the benefit of **nature and people**. Our secretariat, based in Brussels, supports a **regional partnership of 48 national conservation organisations** across 47 countries, including all EU Member States. With more than **4,100 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 **6,000 nature sites** totalling **320,000 hectares**.



## ADVOCATING FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Working towards sustainable agriculture is counter-intuitively one of the steepest and most daunting policy hills we climb. The main battlefield is the EUR58 billion the EU currently spends on its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This vast system of subsidies is largely distributed to the wealthiest and largest industrial agricultural interests in Europe to the enormous disadvantage of smaller family farms, often themselves engaged in more sustainable and less intensive agriculture.

There are few areas about which the public at large is less well-informed than the devastating impact of intensive, industrial monoculture agriculture. Destroying farmland birds, biodiversity, clean water and healthy soil at alarming rates, the agro-industrial lobby is a formidable foe in our struggle to reorient the EU's CAP monies towards nature-enhancing and sustainable farming, farmers and their communities.

With farmland covering 45% of the EU's total land area, the deeply unsustainable agriculture practiced on this massive land mass results in distorted outcomes encouraged by the CAP. Critically, biodiversity is plummeting at devastating rates as evidenced by a staggering 55% freefall in populations of farmland birds in the last three decades. We therefore spend significant effort to better inform the public and their EU political representatives about the importance of reforming the CAP system and how interconnected doing so is with the far more currently "popular" issues of the climate and biodiversity crises. The CAP is due to be reformed as of 2020 and, unfortunately, the plan released in the summer by the European Commission failed on all accounts to reflect an intelligent, sustainable approach in its CAP

– maintaining its failed policies with its devastating environmental impacts. Even more troubling is the return of greater autonomy on CAP spending to national governments, decreasing accountability further, and the likelihood that powerful private vested interests will prevail over the public good. The Environmental and Agriculture Committees of the Parliament will weigh in early next year and overall reform is likely to be bogged down in the process of electing a new Parliament and the establishment of a new Commission. The past five years have not been especially promising either. However, one bright spot included joining our partnership up to WWF in a campaign they launched to protect the critical Water Framework Directives. With industrial agriculture posing a massive and ongoing threat to our water quality, and the quantity available to us, we established a campaign to improve awareness of the linkage between these two areas with an eye on influencing key votes in 2019. Whether through destroying water quality through excessive use of pesticides and fertilisers, or through the excessive over-consumption of water destroying water tables and wetlands, the CAP is also a culprit in rendering at risk the water we drink and need for a sustainable planet.



© Grey Partridge/Rollin Verlinde

## PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

In much the same way that Greta Thunberg raised awareness of the climate crisis in 2018, the very related issue of extinctions began to capture increased public attention. The non-violent civil disobedience movement, Extinction Rebellion, was launched in London on October 31<sup>st</sup> and has been gaining steam since. Increasingly, our times are being referred to as that of the Sixth (or Holocene/Anthropocene) Extinction. This is one of the most significant events in the history of the planet, entirely human-induced, and is expected to result in perhaps the extinction of one million species of plants and animals as per the IPBES Global Assessment.

At Birdlife we have been in the fight since our inception. At a very concrete and specific level, in 2018, we have worked with our tireless partners in Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain and Portugal to support their work, legal and otherwise, addressing the collapse of Turtle-dove populations. Turtle-doves are the subject of one of our successful Species Action Plans. Additionally, our dedicated efforts, led by BirdLife Malta, to ban finch-trapping in Malta have resulted in an European Court of Justice ruling that found the Maltese derogation to trap finches illegal, leading to its suspension.

*"LIFE EuroSAP has sought to do nothing short of taking bird conservation into a new, more collaborative era."*

And 2018 saw the successful culmination of our three year LIFE Euro Species Action Plan (SAP). Involving no less than nine BirdLife Partners, 65 countries and more than 500 individuals, our goal was to change the fate of 16 threatened bird species. These 16 species are reflected in eight targeted Species Action Plans (SAPs for Monteiro's Storm-petrel, Yelkouan Shearwater, Velvet Scoter, White-headed Duck, Dalmatian Pelican, Bearded Vulture, Cinereous Vulture and European Turtle-dove) and one Multi-Species Action Plan (MSAP for 'Baltic' Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Redshank, Common Snipe, Eurasian Curlew, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Northern Lapwing and Ruff).

Though legally non-binding, SAPs are vital conservation tools that can help governments comply with environmental legislation and meet international biodiversity targets. These plans identify definitive actions that must happen within the next ten years (or sooner) to save these species. Despite significant differences in their ecologies and habitats, our findings pointed time and time again to the same set of threats facing Europe's birds: unsustainable farming, fishing and hunting, invasions of harmful alien species, persistent gaps in scientific knowledge, and weak implementation of existing nature laws, leading to illegal killing of birds and habitat destruction.

A particular achievement was the creation of a new online tool to streamline SAP administration, monitoring and communication – the SAP Tracking Tool. Via this collaborative platform, users can easily track conservation progress country-by-country or get involved themselves by providing relevant data on any of the species. Anyone can use this open-access resource to develop a new SAP for any other bird species, and it is hoped that, in time, non-bird species will be catered for too.

The year ended indeed on a high note with the news that all nine of the SAPs covering 16 species were approved by the European Commission.



© European Turtle-dove/Richard Bennett

## IMPORTANT BIRD & BIODIVERSITY AREAS

BirdLife Europe is one of the leading sources of accurate, up to date, science-based information about the status of European bird species, including their conservation status, population size and trends, and conservation priorities for globally threatened and other priority species. It is also the region's expert in monitoring and updating biodiversity data at the EU's 5300+ Important Bird Areas (some 200 million hectares), part of a global network of over 12,000 sites. Using its Partnership and diverse alliances to compile, analyse, present and share data, BirdLife offers it to researchers, conservation organisations, policy makers and the interested public. BirdLife's website includes a datazone containing updated information of bird species, important bird and biodiversity areas, trends and indicators and also the seabirdtracking.org and the marine e-atlas platforms, currently the largest datasets of seabird data and marine IBA in the world.

In 2018, we focused particular efforts on two wetland IBAs in danger: Ulcinj Salina (Montenegro) and Gediz Delta (Turkey). In Gediz Delta, the construction of a highway and bridge was finally halted thanks to the work of the local Partner and the international campaign. Ulcinj Salina, located in the EU candidate nation of Montenegro, is an especially interesting case as we worked to keep the European Commission informed of progress towards its designation as a protected area which we succeeded in having mentioned explicitly as a closing benchmark in the candidacy process. We launched with our Montenegrin partners and others an extensive campaign with a website and petition to support this effort.

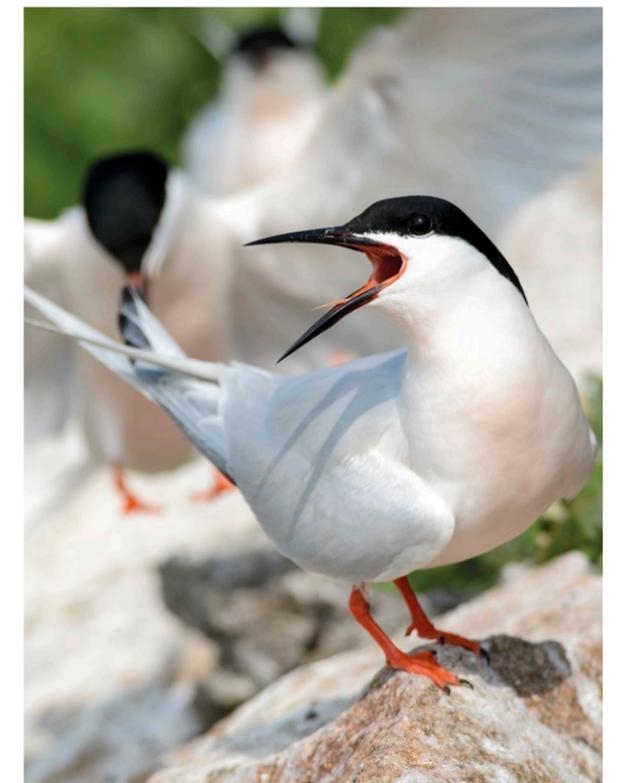
We were encouraged as well in April when the European Court of Justice ruled that Polish logging activities in Białowieża forest were illegal. The defiance of the Polish government to continue its large-scale logging activities in the Białowieża forest is in direct breach of the EU's Habitats Directive.

The European Commission initially sued Poland for its logging of the forest, which is a Natura 2000 site and protected by the European Union, and also a UNESCO World Heritage site.

BirdLife Europe also continued to support the improvement of management plans at priority wetland sites in the Mediterranean by training partners and others in Italy, Tunisia, Montenegro and Albania on the assessment of ecosystem services. We also set up a technical group for the implementation of an ecosystem services toolkit, (TESSA) at their sites. We provided further support to critical Mediterranean coastal wetlands of high ecological value through the provision of seed grants for IBAs and Natura 2000 sites in Spain, Turkey and Portugal. In the Netherlands, with our partner Vogelbescherming Nederland, (VBN) we revised and approved an updated IBA inventory. More broadly, after a consultation with our partners we updated the critical list of IBA's in Danger in 2018.

In the innovation sphere we continued development and testing of a new mobile app which allows the monitoring of threats to biodiversity and habitats within IBAs and Natura 2000 sites. Rolled out first in Spain and Indonesia, we will launch it widely in 2019.

In line with our ongoing efforts to strengthen our partners, we organised the first ever IBA Capacity workshop in Georgia, supported and attended by partners in Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Among the important outcomes was a gap analysis of the Caucasus IBA inventory as well as a better dissemination of effective conservation strategies regionally.



© Roseate Tern/Brian Burke

## PROTECTING MIGRATORY BIRDS

The extraordinary Arctic tern, which migrates from pole to pole forms an emblematic part of our BirdLife logo. One in five birds migrate. Indeed migratory birds are some of the most inspiring and impressive groups of birds because of the incredible distances they cover during their voyages. Migratory birds leave their breeding areas before food gets scarce and land on another continent to build a new life. But we can't assume that they will safely return each year due to the omnipresent threats of the illegal killing of birds (IKB), bird poisoning and collision with and electrocution by energy infrastructure.

We work with our partners to identify and address the main causes of the decline of migratory birds. We start through the gathering of factual data to inform policy work with national and EU governments.

Much of our work in 2018 has been to prepare an extensive awareness-raising and advocacy campaign about illegal killing of birds, especially in the Mediterranean, where our landmark study *The Killing 2.0* indicated that upwards of 25 million birds are illegally killed each year, particularly in black spots in Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Lebanon and Egypt. This campaign, called, *Flight for Survival*, will have kicked off by the time you are reading this. It will continue through 2020.

But in addition to the campaign our diverse work included in 2018 extensive work on working to eliminate the use of lead pellets in ammunition, and more broadly everywhere. With lead outlawed in most every other area of our lives due to its toxicity, we struggle to understand why it is acceptable in hunting, the game we eat, and the environment in which it remains after shot. To that end, BirdLife Europe and 19 Partners contributed to the European Chemical Health Agency consultations on this topic and their proposal to the Commission is in line with our proposals. We continue to closely follow the process.

We also expanded and improved an online Sensitivity Mapping Tool for better wind farm planning processes in new energy sector infrastructure projects, and promoted its use with key actors, including the EU, governments and energy companies.

We shared technical expertise on new technologies in support of IKB research and monitoring (e.g. satellite tracking, remote sensing, citizens' science). And we worked alongside key Partners to develop and implement monitoring protocols to assess the impact of conservation actions on illegal killing (species populations, habitat, socio-economic effects) Additionally we supported national illegal killing advocacy strategies for Croatia, Cyprus, Italy and Greece and supported the full implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species approved multi-species action plan and all

species targeted by LIFE EuroSAP. And to complement our awareness-raising campaign *FlightforSurvival.org*, in the latter part of 2018, we launched a LIFE project, *LIFE Against Bird Crime*. This will contribute to the establishment of a mechanism for further regional monitoring of the scope and scale of illegal bird killing in the Mediterranean, for key sites, including central data storage and reporting.

So although the numbers of deaths and challenges facing migratory birds are massive in scale, our work continues at a flyway scale, increasingly implicating our partners north and south, who deal with additional challenges from industrial agriculture threatening breeding to wetlands destruction depriving migrators of critical stop-over and feeding sites. The magnificence of migration inspires nearly everyone who considers the miracle.



© Eurasian Blackcap/Birdlife Europe & Central Asia



## SEABIRDS & MARINE

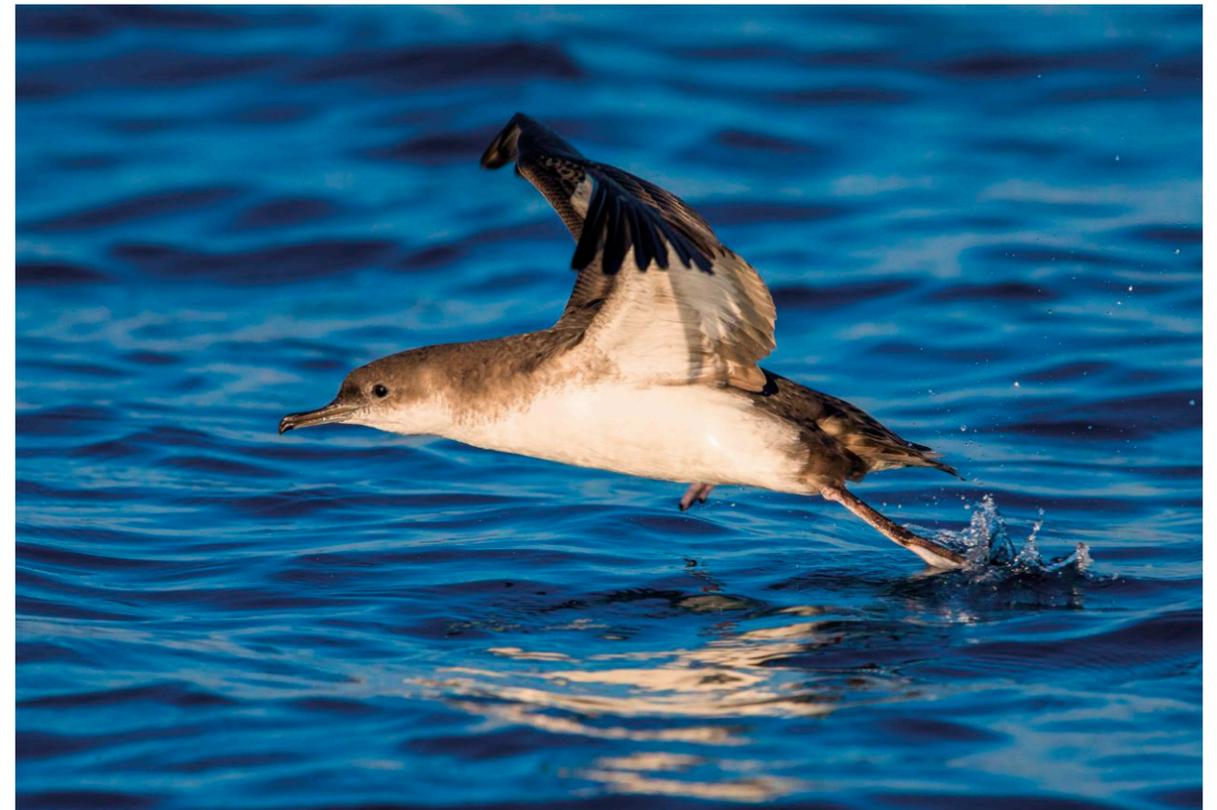
2018 saw broad public awareness about the health of our marine environment increase, especially as regards the outrageous levels of plastics which pollute our waters. Our complementary work to protect marine species and habitats continued unabated in 2018. We participate in a wide range of policy discussions with decision makers at the EU and national levels on critical issues. These broad-ranging issues include diverse sensitivity mapping about the siting of energy infrastructure to developing methodologies for producing maps showing the sensitivity of seabirds to oils spills to inform emergency planning and responses.

We work extensively with our partners in marine SPA/IBA designations looking to build on the success we had with our Greek partner HOS where over one million hectares of Greek sea waters, 22% of the total, have now received Natura 2000 status as protected marine nature sites.

We continue to look to improve both seabird bycatch mitigation through testing of various devices as well as establishing criteria under the new EU Commission Decision designed to deliver good environmental practice in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. We also work to improve the standardisation of data collection in key strategic fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Baltic. We supported our Portuguese partner in a successful effort, along with other partners, to stop

oil drilling plans off the Portuguese coast; our Belgian partner in filing a complaint with the European Commission objecting to the ineffective, even deceptive, marine management measures Belgium proposes for its marine Natura 2000 sites; and our Maltese partner in advocating for sustainable aquaculture practices reducing threats to seabirds, including bycatch.

We launched a campaign platform, called OceanAlert, developed as a brand to support BirdLife's political campaigns on marine conservation. It ran two different campaigns in 2018 – on Technical Conservation Regulation and for 25% of the European Maritime Fisheries Fund to be spent on marine protection. We expect to expand the platform in 2019 and beyond.



© Yelkouan Shearwater/Agami Photo Agency

## CLIMATE CHANGE

There can be little doubt that young Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has changed public awareness of the climate crisis in a way that 1,000 NGO's would never have been able to achieve. We join with much of the planet in saluting her and thanking her for her extraordinary commitment and hard work.

We know, of course, that the crisis is largely a result of human activities and our lack of an adequately effective response. The catastrophic impacts of the increases in global warming and excess CO<sub>2</sub> in our atmosphere impact, of course, not only the humans responsible, but those species and habitats we work tirelessly to save from other devastating threats.

We built upon our 2017 investment in our documentary "The Burning Issue" by increasing its distribution through YouTube as well as with interested national television networks, providing translations as requested.

In 2018, we complemented the 2017 filmed documentary with a short animated video entitled "The Carbon Con" which succinctly explained the myth of bioenergy being carbon neutral. This was also translated into multiple languages and promoted extensively online. We increased our production and distribution of informational briefing papers to partners and the European

Parliament on the EU's new and revised climate legislation as it impacts agriculture, forests and land use. The ultimate legislation passed, which fell short of our ambitions, was nonetheless strengthened due to our joint work with partners.

We also worked to strengthen the strategic planning in renewable energy including working with the energy sector through the Renewable Grid Initiative and a Marine Grid declaration to be signed in 2019.

We were gratified that decision makers acknowledged BirdLife Europe's positions and proposals on the sustainability of bioenergy during the finalisation process of the 2018 Renewable Energy Directive (RED) recast. In particular, BirdLife Europe achieved the inclusion of efficiency standards for bioenergy installations and the ability for Member States to develop further sustainability safeguards beyond the minimum standards set by the RED.



© Atlantic puffin/Yves Adams

## BUSINESSES & NGOs



BirdLife understands that industry has some of the biggest impacts on biodiversity loss and if we are to make a positive contribution to stemming the tide, we need to work with private companies both on a national and global scale. We form these partnerships knowing that sustainable change cannot be achieved in a vacuum. For instance, our partners have agreements with companies as diverse as IKEA, Volkswagen, EDF or EVIAN. At a Secretariat level, we have been historically involved in the cement and aggregates sector due to our long-standing partnerships with HeidelbergCement and Cemex. We share a common commitment to sustainable development and responsible environmental practice as we work with them to enhance their positive contribution to biodiversity through habitat management and creation.

### HEIDELBERGCEMENT

2018 began with the three-year renewal of our partnership. One that would involve high-level planning and ground level execution. Over the period of 2018-2020, the partnership would focus on assisting in developing strategies to achieve HeidelbergCement's new Sustainability Commitment 2030, while providing a baseline insight to the Group's impact on biodiversity and to determine ways to further improve the protection and promotion of biodiversity at their quarry sites across Europe, Africa and Asia. BirdLife is committed to using our scientific expertise to inform and support HeidelbergCement to better manage their quarry operations and develop ways of enhancing biodiversity.

2018 also saw the fourth edition of HeidelbergCement's Quarry Life Awards. Featuring a record entry of over 110 projects worldwide, the projects were separated into two broader categories of scientific and community focussed projects. Projects were open to communities, schools, scientist, other academia and NGO's. BirdLife, participating on the International Jury panel, were able to visit many countries to evaluate the quality of the projects. The overall winning of the EUR 30,000 first prize came from the Czech Republic with a scientific project entitled "Seasonal activity of Badoz bee colonies in relation to the biodiversity of quarries".

One of the highlights of 2018 was the completion of HeidelbergCement's Proximity Study – a global study conducted by BirdLife to determine the geographic proximity of the quarries to areas of high biodiversity value. Over 1100 quarry sites were analysed using the spatial location data such as iBAT to identify quarry sites with potential impacts. The study has now formed the basis of creating a global strategy to ensure that all quarry sites with a potential impact have a Biodiversity Management Plan in place.

At the closing of 2018, HeidelbergCement further demonstrated their support for bird conservation and education on biodiversity, agreeing to fund the BirdLife Spring Alive Project for the 2019 season.



Having surpassed ten years, the BirdLife-Cemex partnership clearly shares the vision of environmentally sustainable business development. BirdLife has been working with CEMEX to protect the biodiversity which surrounds their operations and creating environmental conditions similar to or better than those that were present at the beginning of the quarries' life cycles.

Commencing in 2017, CEMEX with the our assistance is striving towards an ambitious goal of ensuring that every working CEMEX quarry that falls within an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) has by 2020 executed a Biodiversity Action Plan. Once identified, methods to protect and enhance conditions for these species will be determined. By the end of 2018, 69% of CEMEX's active quarries in IBAs have Biodiversity Action Plans in place. They span across the UK, Spain, France, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Colombia and the Czech Republic.

2018 saw CEMEX, with the assistance of BirdLife's UK partner RSPB, reaching (and going beyond) the target of 1,000 hectares of priority habitat restored. This was achieved three years ahead of scheduled, and has both direct and indirect benefits to IBAs.



© Sand Martin/Yves Adams

## CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Quality or quantity? The answer seems obvious, but in this case it's not. We are rapidly losing our nature, and it is happening everywhere. Therefore, it is imperative that conservation organizations like BirdLife grow their impact, and that they do it fast. The BirdLife model aims to increase impact by empowering grassroots organizations at national level – our Partners. This approach offers a powerful way to engage local societies, ensures a reliable presence on the ground and is highly cost-effective. However, it requires both quantitative and qualitative growth: we need more Partners, especially in mega-biodiverse countries, and we need existing Partners to grow stronger and work increasingly together.

With 48 existing Partners and 11 countries or territories without a BirdLife presence in Europe and Central Asia, this is no small challenge. It requires us to be rational and transparent in setting priorities, to help organizations become self-sufficient as soon as possible rather than leave them relying on external support, and to develop a strict quality support mechanism that feeds back into the decisions by the governance bodies. In 2018, we took a major step towards these aims by agreeing on a Regional Partner Development Strategy which will allow us, for the first time, to keep expanding the Partnership without jeopardizing the work to strengthen existing Partners and maintain the quality of the network.

During 2018, we launched the Capacity Development Fund (CDF), a global mechanism to resource Partner development efforts across BirdLife. In the first phase, which is funded by the MAVA Foundation, we have

been able to provide grants to seven Mediterranean Partners for strengthening actions including unrestricted income generation, strategic planning and membership development. Through the CDF, we have been able to increase our investment in training, and given a boost to mutual learning on communications and fundraising. In the Balkans, the four organizations who joined our Partnership in 2017 have been able to increase their income by a staggering 59%. In the Caucasus, we started working with a new organization in Armenia, which is likely to join us as Partner in a few years. The Partner in Georgia has continued to develop along a strong trajectory, and started a major effort to restore degraded steppe ecosystems through an innovative approach to traditional grazing management. These achievements are the direct outcome of the generosity and readiness to help each other across the BirdLife Partnership.



© Caucasian Snowcock/Dachi

## A BIG THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Our work across Europe and Central Asia is made possible through the generous support of our donors, including BirdLife national partners and the donors that support them. Together we are truly making a difference.

THANK YOU.

### HERE ARE A SAMPLE OF THE WAYS IN WHICH DONORS ARE WORKING WITH BIRDLIFE

#### BALTIC SEA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Primarily through support to our Lithuanian Partner, the foundation is supporting work to address seabird bycatch in the Baltic Sea.

#### DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GIZ) GMBH

BirdLife Europe is contributing to a project, coordinated by the European Environment Bureau, to analyse the role of farming in climate change, engage stakeholders in dialogue and share best practice, contributing to a climate friendly Common Agriculture Policy.

#### EUROPEAN COMMISSION DIRECTORATE GENERAL ENVIRONMENT

The European Commission, through the NGO Operating Grant of DG Environment, supported Stitching BirdLife Europe<sup>1</sup> in its advocacy, conservation and communication work on biodiversity protection and nature conservation. This grant enabled BirdLife to strengthen its European Partnership both on governance and policy related issues as well as providing an effective conduit between the European Union and citizens. Other European Union funds, through the Horizon 2020 science funding, the Erasmus education programme (and through a number of competitive contracts) also supported BirdLife's work in 2018.

#### MAVA – FONDATION POUR LA NATURE

MAVA's support for the EU Nature Alert campaign, implemented by BirdLife Europe, European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Friends of the Earth Europe (FoEE) and WWF-European Policy Office (WWF EPO) succeeded in preventing a rollback of the cornerstones of EU's conservation policy by averting a revision of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. The success of the Nature Alert campaign went beyond the positive decision by the European Commission not to revise the Directives. Following adoption by the EC of the EU Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy in April 2017, this funding enabled project partners to drive forward a number of initiatives to better implement the Directives across the EU. MAVA also supported BirdLife and its Partners to deliver a concerted effort to address the appalling carnage of birds illegally killed, through trapping, shooting and poisoning, that takes place each year in particular hot spots in the Mediterranean. Through this support, BirdLife in Europe and the UK, Partners across the Mediterranean and beyond, and other NGOs are joining together with national and regional governments and key stakeholders to address this intransigent and distressing problem.

MAVA provided match funding for an EU funded LIFE project, LIFE EuroSAP. This project, led by BirdLife International but involving BirdLife Europe & Central Asia, is delivering key updates and improvements to Species Action Plans for threatened species.

Other key areas of work addressed in partnership with MAVA were a campaign to call for a Fitness Check of the current Common Agriculture Policy; a campaign to ban veterinary Diclofenac in Spain and Portugal because of its devastating impact on vulture populations; partnership work to reduce the mortality of birds as a result of energy infrastructure; various projects across the Mediterranean to improve the functioning of priority wetlands, including the ongoing campaign to save Ulcinj Salina in Montenegro; and an international project to tackle bycatch of birds, cetaceans and turtles in fishing gear. Some of these projects are led by BirdLife Europe, others by BirdLife International, and others by diverse NGOs.

#### OAK FOUNDATION

In response to BirdLife's reporting of the shocking loss of migratory birds through illegal killing, Oak Foundation supported on-the-ground action in Italy, Cyprus and Malta. This three-year project is yielding valuable data, reducing incidents of illegal behaviour, upskilling local law enforcement and educating the next generation about the value of these threatened birds. Following a successful first year, we have been able to scale up this work with funding from MAVA and others.

#### WWF NEDERLAND

Working in partnership with Rewilding Europe, other NGOs and research agencies, this funding supports the mobilisation of rewilding principles in the EU restoration agenda to ultimately create a coherent Ecological Network in Europe.

#### THE DAVID AND LUCILE PACKARD FOUNDATION

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation continued to support BirdLife's leading work, in partnership with Transport and Environment (T&E) on EU bioenergy policies, to ensure they effectively contribute to climate change mitigation while minimising adverse effects on biodiversity, ecosystems and vulnerable human populations. Following extensive research and advocacy, we have been able to raise awareness of environmentally damaging bioenergy, including from distribution of BirdLife's first documentary, 'The Burning Issue' – a powerful exposé of 'bioenergy gone bad'.

THANK YOU ALSO TO THOSE DONORS WHO SUPPORTED OUR CAMPAIGNS AND THOSE WHO WISHED TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS – YOUR SUPPORT IS MOST GRATEFULLY APPRECIATED.

<sup>1</sup> BirdLife Europe & Central Asia – a regional secretariat of BirdLife International – is a Dutch Foundation, Stichting BirdLife Europe, and its operating office is located in Brussels.

## GOVERNANCE & FINANCES

The European and Central Asian Committee, elected by the European partners, guides and advises and the BirdLife Europe and Central Asia Division (BirdLife Europe) and reports to the Global Council. The members of the Europe and Central Asia Committee until October 2018 were: Asunción Ruiz (SEO/BirdLife, Spain), Yves Verilhac (LPO; BirdLife in France), Damijan Denac (DOPPS; BirdLife in Slovenia), Gergő Halmos (MME), Martin Harper (RSPB).

In October 2018 all Members of the ECA Committee remained unchanged and Vera Vorona (ACBK) and Philippe Funcken (Natagora) were also elected.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the following BirdLife Partners and their donors, which have contributed through fundraising and unrestricted financial contributions to the work of the BirdLife European and Central Asian Division:

BirdLife Austria; BirdLife Cyprus; BirdLife Finland; BirdLife Malta; BirdWatch Ireland; Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB); Czech Society for Ornithology (CSO); Dansk Ornitologisk Forening (DOF); Drustvo za Opazovanje in Proučevanje Ptice Slovenije (DOPPS); Estonian Ornithological Society (EOS); Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS); Hungarian Ornithological and Nature Conservation Society

(MME); Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli (LIPU); Lëtzeburger Natur- a Vulleschutzliga (LNVL); Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO); Natagora; Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU); Natuurpunt; Ogólnopolskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Ptaków (OTOP); The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB); Schweizer Vogelschutz (SVS); Slovenská Ornitologická Spoločnosť/BirdLife Slovensko (SOS); Sociedad Española de Ornitología (SEO) – BirdLife in Spain; Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves (SPEA); Societatea Ornitologica Romana (SOR); Sveriges Ornitologiska Forening (SOF); Vogelbescherming Nederland (VBN); Norsk Ornitologisk Forening (NOF); Lietuvos Ornitologu Draugija (LOD).

#### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE (€)

| INCOMING RESOURCES              |                  | RESOURCES EXPENDED              |                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Partners                        | 531,247          | Staff Cost                      | 1,429,169        |
| Grants and Donations            | 1,279,183        | Travel Conference Events        | 87,051           |
| EU Commission Funding           | 682,094          | Rental Equipment & Premises     | 127,516          |
| Grants from Corporates          | 375,200          | Support Grants                  | 887,216          |
| Other Incomes                   |                  | Professional Services           | 118,264          |
|                                 |                  | Other Costs                     | 147,816          |
|                                 |                  | Overheads                       | 70,692           |
| <b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b> | <b>2,867,724</b> | <b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b> | <b>2,867,724</b> |

\* The BirdLife International European Division is a Dutch Foundation, Stichting BirdLife Europe, and its operating office is located in Brussels.

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- Fundraising ●
- Interns ●
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- Policy ●

COVER PHOTO  
BEARDED VULTURE  
*Gypaetus barbatus*  
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