



2010

Turning or Breaking Point for Europe's Wildlife?



**A report by BirdLife International on EU
progress towards halting biodiversity loss**

2010 – Turning or Breaking Point for Europe's Wildlife?

A report by BirdLife International on EU progress towards halting biodiversity loss

Published May 2010 by
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
on behalf of BirdLife International

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
The Lodge
Sandy
Bedfordshire SG19 2DL
www.rspb.org.uk

BirdLife International European Division
Avenue de la Toison d'Or (2nd floor)
B-1060 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 280 08 30
Fax: +32 (0)2 280 38 02
E-mail: europa@birdlife.org
<http://europe.birdlife.org>

© RSPB and BirdLife International

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of BirdLife International.

Edited by: Zoltan Waliczky

Produced, designed and typeset by: The Creative Mix (www.creative-mix.co.uk)

Cover photographs: Cork Oak forest by Pedro Geraldès, Griffon Vulture by Mike Lane (rspb-images.com), Eurasian Lynx by Peter Cairns (rspb-images.com), Green-winged Orchids by Mike Read (rspb-images.com), White Storks by Roger Tidman (rspb-images.com)

Case studies were received from the following BirdLife Partners: HOS (Greece), LPO (France), LNVL (Luxembourg), RSPB (United Kingdom), VBN (Netherlands)

Executive summary

By 2010 the EU should have halted the loss of biological diversity within its own territory and beyond. This assessment, carried out by the BirdLife International Partnership, shows why the EU has failed to achieve this target and that it is still a long way off from preventing further loss of wildlife and habitats.

Pressure on wildlife and ecosystems is still high, with agriculture, transport, energy and urban development identified as the most important drivers of biodiversity loss. Experts from BirdLife Partners in the 27 EU Member States evaluated progress, measured against 10 major groups of indicators (see table overleaf). Three of them are rated as 'highly insufficient', while all the rest are considered 'inadequate'. The picture emerging from our assessment is one of continuing impoverishment of biodiversity and of inadequate responses to counteract this.

However, despite the overall failure, there are many examples of best practice and localised success stories that send an important positive message: the EU already has powerful conservation tools and, where there is political will to implement science-backed action, the results invariably follow. The report highlights examples from Member States that show how a strong biodiversity policy should be properly implemented across the EU.

Some of the main findings of the assessment are:

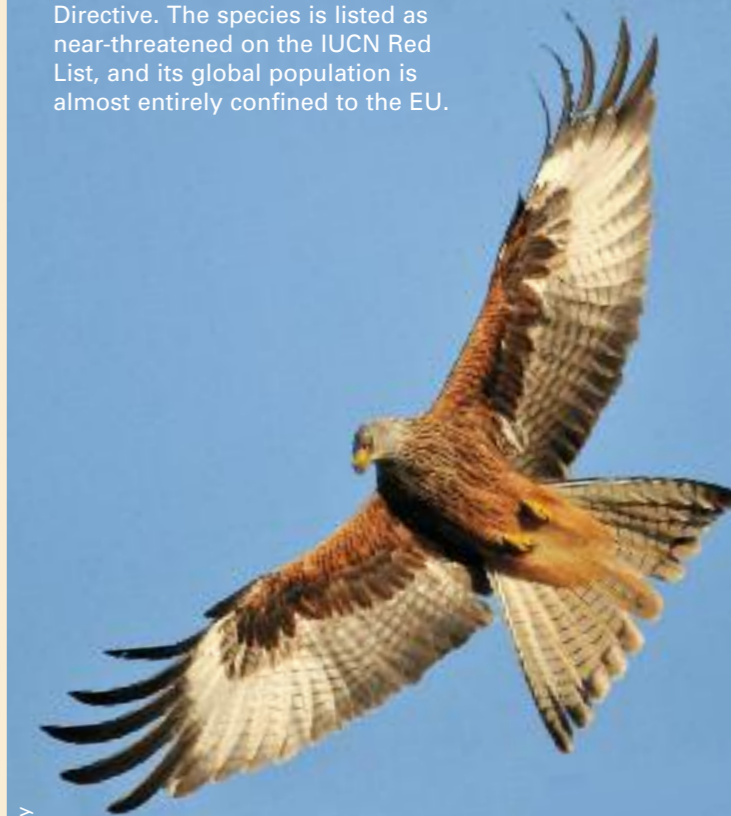
- Some of the most threatened groups of birds such as the birds of prey and the birds listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive are recovering, indicating the effectiveness of targeted conservation action.
- Great progress has been made in setting up the terrestrial Natura 2000 network of protected sites, but the network is still incomplete. The marine component of the network seriously lags behind. In most Member States proper management is still poor or lacking.
- Integration of biodiversity concerns into other policies and a severe shortage of funding are still the main stumbling blocks.
- The scientific underpinning of conservation has greatly improved with the development of national Red Lists and rapidly expanding bird monitoring schemes to show the way for biodiversity monitoring in many countries.
- Public access to environment information is generally regarded as good, probably as a result of the Aarhus Convention.

Based on these findings, the current report draws up specific recommendations for resolving the biodiversity crisis. It presents BirdLife's long-term vision for Europe's wildlife. It proposes a list of measurable and achievable targets and indicators, which would allow progress to be tracked. Finally, it proposes specific actions that would enable a new EU biodiversity policy framework to achieve its goals. These are grouped under four main headings: stronger governance and new legislation, investing in natural capital, building a green infrastructure and counteracting the drivers of biodiversity and ecosystem loss.

The message is clear: the EU needs to take rapid and decisive action if it wants to turn the tide on the deepening biodiversity crisis. We know what to do. The question is: do we have the will and the courage to take action before it's too late?

Further information can be found on the BirdLife Website: www.birdlife.org/eu/biodiversity_assessment

Red Kite – a bird of prey included in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive. The species is listed as near-threatened on the IUCN Red List, and its global population is almost entirely confined to the EU.



John Carey

Results at a glance

<p>Status of birds in the EU: <i>Forest birds are the only group generally considered to be in good condition across much of the EU.</i></p>	inadequate
<p>Status of birds globally: <i>Red List Index of birds steadily going down as more species move closer to extinction</i></p>	highly insufficient
<p>Status of species and habitats of European Community importance: <i>Only 17% of the habitats and species other than birds are in a favourable condition.</i></p>	highly insufficient
<p>National biodiversity legislation: <i>Transposition of relevant EU/international legislation, integration of biodiversity into sectoral policies and land use planning and enforcing National Red Lists are all considered inadequate while National Biodiversity Strategies are highly insufficient.</i></p>	inadequate
<p>Implementation of national biodiversity legislation: <i>Both enforcement of relevant legislation and national administrative capacity are inadequate.</i></p>	inadequate
<p>National protected areas networks: <i>Terrestrial Natura 2000 network and State protected area network are incomplete, while the marine Natura 2000 network and national ecological networks are highly insufficient. Management plan coverage is also highly insufficient.</i></p>	inadequate
<p>Research and monitoring: <i>National bird monitoring is rated good, while both national biodiversity monitoring and national biodiversity research are inadequate.</i></p>	inadequate
<p>Financing: <i>Financing for all categories: Natura 2000, biodiversity outside N2K, monitoring and research are highly insufficient.</i></p>	highly insufficient
<p>Public awareness: <i>Public awareness of biodiversity in general as well as of Natura 2000 generally low in most countries.</i></p>	inadequate
<p>Governance: <i>Public participation in environmental decision-making is inadequate while public access to environmental information is considered adequate.</i></p>	inadequate



The Prespa lakes (see Case Study p10) – a key nature conservation area in the Balkans and recognised as an Important Bird Area (IBA)

Part I: Background

2010 – a historic year for nature and wildlife

Some dates are especially significant, and the year 2010 is one of them: it has been designated by the United Nations as the ‘International Year of Biodiversity’ (IYB). This means that 2010 is dedicated to nature and its diversity in myriad splendid forms, from lowly bacteria and worms to more charismatic species such as the White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and Iberian Lynx (*Lynx pardinus*). The slogan of the year, “Biodiversity is life – biodiversity is our life”, conveys the fact that all life forms, including humans, are part of what we call biological diversity and that we rely on the complex and highly co-dependent web of life for our own survival. As ever increasing proportions of human populations now live in cities, where these linkages are far from obvious, the IYB reminds us just how precarious our existence is, and how much we rely on the life-giving support of nature. Protecting biodiversity should be a daily act of every citizen from all walks of life – not just the task of a small group of conservationists.

Recognising the importance of biodiversity, back in 2001, the Heads of State of the European Union Member States vowed to “halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010”.¹ A year later, a similar but less ambitious global target (to significantly reduce the rate of loss) was adopted by world leaders at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. Now the deadline has expired, the world and the EU need to take stock of what has been achieved and analyse why these targets have not been met. The EU’s Biodiversity Action Plan adopted in 2006² provides a good starting point for such an assessment.

Biodiversity – why does it matter?

Biological diversity means the wealth of life forms (animals, plants, biological communities) at any given time and place on Earth. The total number of species is still unknown, but scientists agree that it amounts to many millions, inhabiting all corners of the planet. All are unique and irreplaceable. BirdLife, like many other organisations, believes that species have an intrinsic value and the right to exist and thrive alongside humans.

But there is much more to biodiversity than that. Individual species form communities, and these in turn interact with their non-living environment to form recognisable, evolving, dynamic systems called ecosystems, such as a lake or a forest. Humans benefit from having naturally functioning ecosystems in many ways through the services they provide, which include food, water purification, floodwater retention, storm protection, fuel wood, pollination, recreation... the list goes on and on. Many of these ecosystem services are taken for granted, and because they are not included in traditional economic frameworks, there are no markets for many of them. Consequently, all too often there is no obvious cost associated with their destruction and degradation, and at the same time few people are willing to pay for them. It should come as no surprise then that ecosystems are being degraded everywhere, according to the comprehensive Millennium Ecosystem Assessment published in 2005.³

According to a recent study for the European Commission,⁴ the current global economic value of the loss of ecosystem services is about 50 billion Euros per year. By 2050, the report estimates that the value of this loss could reach about 10 trillion Euros, a truly staggering sum. However, this is probably an underestimate, as ecosystems under stress may behave in unpredictable ways and can reach thresholds beyond which they provide very few or no services to humanity. If this happens at a large enough scale, the results are usually famine, emigration, resource conflicts, unstable governments and eventually economic and political crisis.

BirdLife’s 2010 assessment – how was it done?

The year 2010 must be a year of taking stock: has the target of halting the loss of biodiversity been met by the EU and globally? The current report summarises the main findings of national level assessments made by BirdLife International Partner organisations in late 2009 in all 27 Member States of the European Union. Each assessment was based on a questionnaire, where Partners scored both the current status and trends of a number of indicators covering the main aspects of the EU’s Biodiversity Action Plan that was adopted in 2006 to serve as the road map to achieve the 2010 target.

1 European Commission (COM (2001) 264 final) A sustainable Europe for a better world: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development.
 2 European Commission (COM (2006) 216 final) Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond. Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being. Technical annex.
 3 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Biodiversity Synthesis*. World Resources Institute, Washington, DC.
 4 L. Braat & P. ten Brink (eds.) 2008 *The Cost of Policy Inaction – the case of not meeting the 2010 biodiversity target*. Executive Summary. Study for the European Commission, DG Environment.

These aspects are:

- biodiversity itself: birds (covered by the Birds Directive) and other species and habitats (covered by the Habitats Directive)
- development of protected area networks
- transposition and enforcement of relevant legislation
- administrative capacity of governments regarding biodiversity protection
- biodiversity research and monitoring
- financing for biodiversity
- biodiversity awareness, public access to information and public involvement in decision-making regarding biodiversity.

The responses from BirdLife Partners reflect a very diverse situation, not just at the national but also often at the regional level, based on data of variable standards. This variety, and the simple scoring system used, means that these results need to be interpreted with caution. Still, the key messages arising from this exercise point to an overall unsatisfactory state of the EU’s biodiversity: the response actions are too weak

while the pressures on biodiversity are continuing to increase. In other words, the EU has missed its target by a wide margin. Fortunately, there are some exceptions and good examples to show that, where there is a will, conservation action can make a significant difference in protecting Europe’s biodiversity from decline as a condition for truly sustainable development.

The following section presents the key messages emerging from the results of this exercise, backed up by a summary of the main findings of the questionnaire survey, as well as other supporting data. The key messages are brought to life by a set of case studies and figures or photographs illustrating the main findings. The annex to this document includes a simple overview table, presenting average scores for a number of indicators using a traffic light system, for easy comparison across countries. More information, including additional case studies and a copy of the original questionnaire, can be found at the following website: www.birdlife.org/eu/biodiversity_assessment



White-tailed Eagle – biodiversity in its most charismatic form

Mark Hamblin (spb-images.com)

Part II: The crisis of Europe’s biodiversity – BirdLife’s summary assessment of the status and trends in the main pressure, state, and response indicators

1. The pressures on biodiversity

Key messages

The most commonly identified drivers of biodiversity loss continue to be agriculture, transport, energy, mining and urban development, so reform of these sectors is essential.

Pollution in general has decreased in importance as a threat, but other threats, such as energy production and transportation, are growing in importance.

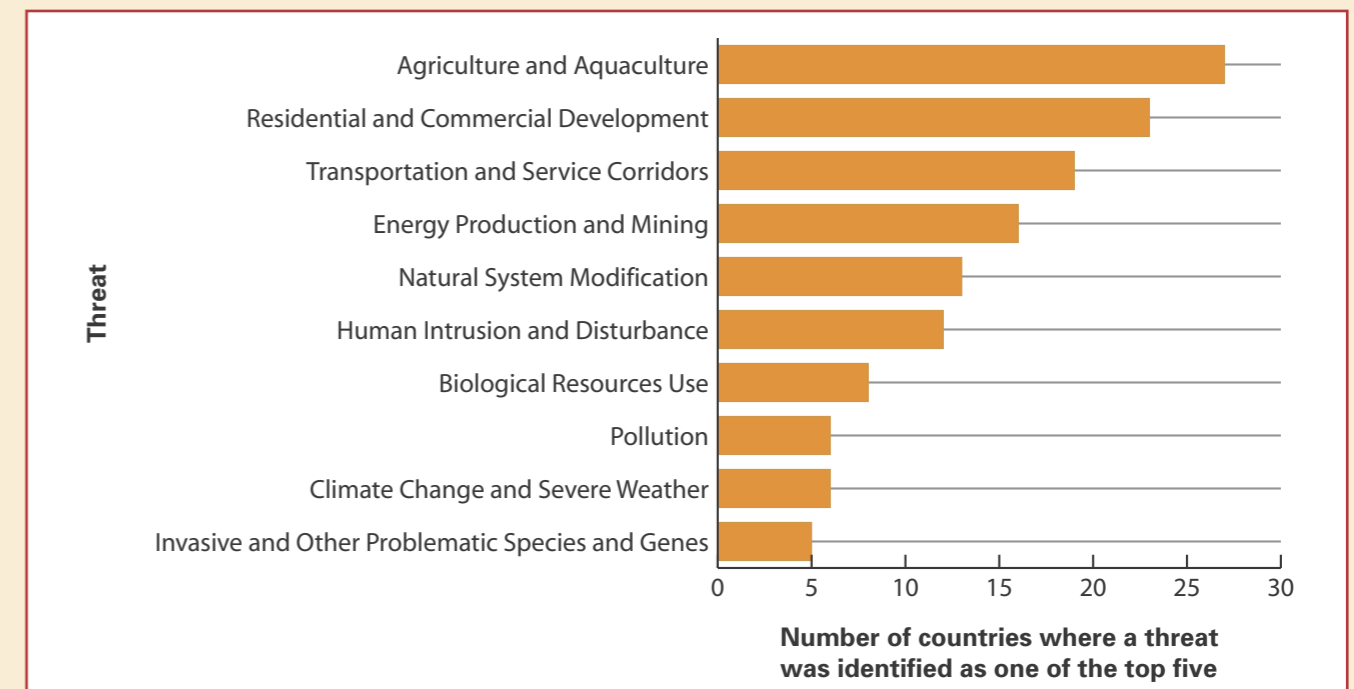
The general impression provided by the responses is not surprising, as these pressures have been identified by many studies and reports as the most important causes of loss and deterioration of wildlife and ecosystems. The EU itself remains an important trigger of biodiversity and ecosystem loss. Of the EU budget, 45% goes to regional development (largely for new

infrastructure projects) and 42% to farming and rural development, often with only scant attention to the needs of nature. In many cases such public subsidies can drive the loss and fragmentation of wildlife habitats, resulting in disturbance, impoverished communities of plants and animals, and a decline in ecosystem services.

The decline in various types of pollution is, to a large extent, the result of stringent EU legislation in this area, although new threats are still emerging, requiring careful scrutiny for their possible impacts on biodiversity. The development of the EU’s Trans-European Transport Network has been identified as a potential source of conflicts between different policy objectives, namely increased mobility and protecting the EU’s natural heritage.

See Case Study overleaf: Via Baltica – saving Rospuda valley

The relative importance of different types of threats to biodiversity in the EU member states



Key message

Climate change will deepen the biodiversity crisis and pile additional pressure on biodiversity and ecosystems.

Rospuda river is now safe thanks to intense lobbying from NGOs

G Zawadzki

Climate change is being caused by an unprecedented rapid increase in the concentrations of so-called greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere, due to increased anthropogenic emissions of these gases arising from the burning of fossil fuels, other industrial activity and land-use changes such as deforestation. Climate change is manifested in increased average global temperature levels and through a range of regional climatic variations and change, including larger and more frequent extreme weather events, with dire consequences to both human society and nature. In recent years, climate change has become one of the top threats to individual species and complex ecosystems alike, by rapidly changing environmental conditions worldwide.

Future projections of the possible impact of climate change on the distribution of species indicate massive changes. The climatic atlas of European breeding birds published in 2007⁵ projects that, at an average global temperature rise of 3°C, species' potential distributions will shift on average about 550 km to the north-east, and that they will lose about one-fifth of their current distribution area. Species on the extreme edges of Europe are projected to suffer the greatest losses in their potential distribution, signalling a higher risk of extinction. Species restricted to Europe and those with small populations are also likely to suffer under this scenario.

Case Study: Via Baltica – saving Rospuda Valley

Key Natura 2000 sites in north-east Poland including the Rospuda Valley, one of Europe's last truly wild places, were under threat from road projects on the so-called 'Via Baltica' international road corridor, linking Helsinki to Warsaw. The corridor was being upgraded by a series of separate projects rather than being planned in a strategic way. For over seven years the Polish authorities continued to plan individual projects without properly considering the obligations of the Nature Directives. This case captured the public imagination, clearly demonstrating how much people care about biodiversity – people camped out on site in the freezing cold winter of 2007 to stop machinery starting work, wrote petitions and complaints, and wore green ribbons as a symbol of support. This campaign ultimately resulted in the case being referred to the European Court of Justice and an injunction to prevent damage to a Natura 2000 site.

After extensive delays and under pressure from the EU, the new Polish Government decided to take a new approach and integrate biodiversity objectives into the transport plans. The result is excellent – in late 2009 the Polish Government announced an alternative route for the entire Via Baltica expressway. This will now avoid important wildlife sites, including the world famous Biebrza marshes. They also chose a new route for the Augustow Bypass – Rospuda Valley is now officially safe.

This is a fantastic result for biodiversity and demonstrates the power of the Nature Directives to facilitate the planning of sustainable projects that simultaneously achieve development and biodiversity objectives. In recognition of this achievement, Malgorzata Górńska, OTOP's project coordinator received the Goldman Environmental Prize for Europe in 2010.

Contact: Helen Byron, helen.byron@rspb.org.uk

⁵ B. Huntley, R.E. Green, Y.C. Collingham & S.G. Willis (2007) *A climatic atlas of European breeding birds*. Durham University, the RSPB and Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.

Case Study: Wind sensitivity maps – minimising conflicts between birds and blades

With the growing awareness of the climate change crisis, alternative energy sources such as windfarms are gaining importance everywhere. BirdLife International recognises the importance of switching to greener methods to generate energy. However, we ask for the full environmental impacts of such methods to be assessed in advance and minimised during the strategic planning phase. Windfarms have been found to have potentially high impact on birds and other animals: directly, through killing and injury, and indirectly, through disturbance and habitat loss. Some groups of birds, like large raptors, waterbirds and migratory birds are particularly vulnerable to such impacts. To help the proper siting of windfarms in areas of least impact, several BirdLife Partners have been pioneering the production of 'wind sensitivity maps' for birds and other animals (particularly bats) in the UK (Scotland and England), Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Spain. These sensitivity maps show geographical locations with the highest concentrations of breeding and migratory birds, especially Important Bird Areas (both protected and unprotected) and migratory flyways where large numbers of birds pass during the spring and autumn migrations. The maps are particularly helpful during the development of national wind energy strategies and plans and for strategic environmental assessment of large numbers of windfarms. We hope that through the widespread use of these plans by governments and industry, a sensible compromise solution can be found without having to waste time, energy and money in lengthy legal proceedings.

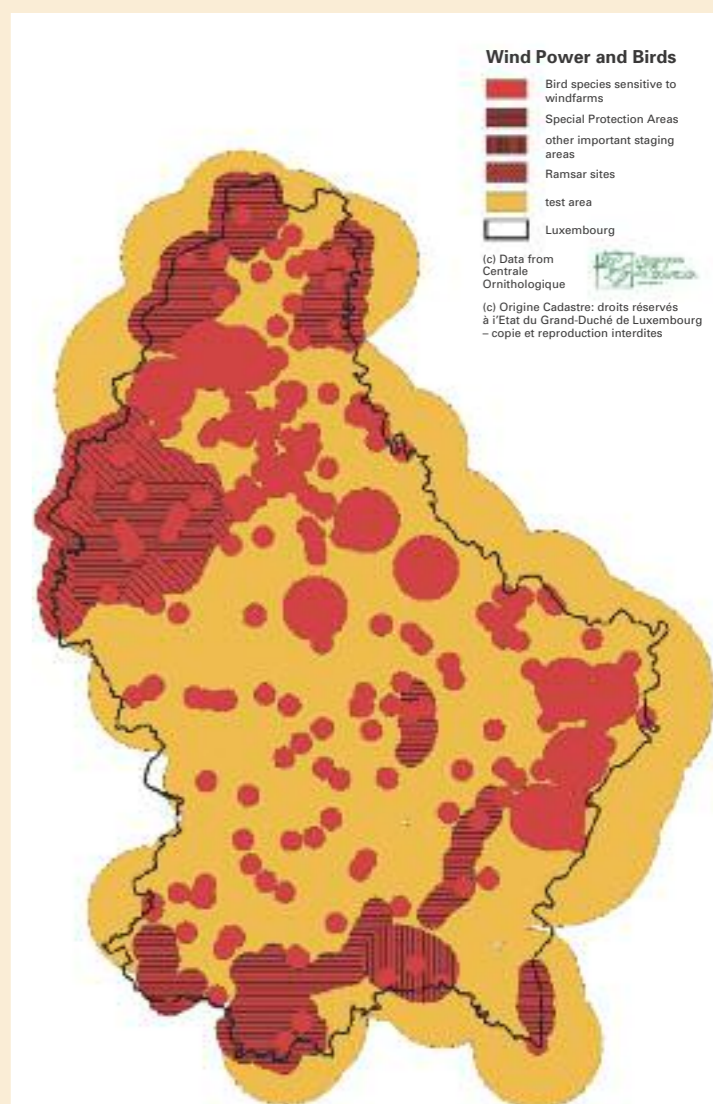
Contact: Daniel Pullan, daniel.pullan@rspb.org.uk

Human responses aimed at mitigating the impact of climate change can exacerbate the situation by competing for space in a small world to make way for new infrastructure (e.g. windfarms) and bioenergy crops, or by removing an ever bigger proportion of biomass from the land. On the other hand, conservation and restoration of carbon-rich habitats such as forests, grasslands and peatlands can offer advantages for both climate mitigation and biodiversity. Furthermore, carefully designed adaptation measures that are based on the natural resilience of complex ecosystems can help both wildlife and human communities to cope with the worst consequences of climate change, such as drought, crop failure, flooding and sea-level rise.

See Case Study: Wind sensitivity maps – minimising conflicts between birds and blades

Wind sensitivity map of birds for Luxembourg

(This map was reproduced with the permission of LNVL – BirdLife Luxembourg)



2. Status and trends of biodiversity

2.1 Status and trends of birds

Key messages

Relatively few European bird species have a high risk of extinction at present, but some have declined seriously, especially farmland and migratory birds.

The positive trends of birds of prey and species listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive can be linked to long-term conservation work on these groups.

Overall, forest generalist species have the most favourable status of the various categories assessed, with almost all respondents scoring their condition as ‘good’ and their trend as ‘stable’, ‘fluctuating’ or ‘increasing’. This corresponds to the stable trends of common forest birds covered by the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme. However, these species include a large number of generalists capable of using a wide variety of wooded habitats, whose populations in many countries have increased in line with increasing forest cover in Europe, often in the form of plantations. Thus, they may reflect forest quantity rather than quality.

Migratory birds have declined substantially in recent times, although the exact reasons for their decline remain poorly known and are a high research priority.⁶ After forest birds, birds of prey and Annex I species

show the best overall trends, and indeed they have many species in common. The modest improving trends of Annex I species are in line with the results of a more detailed analysis of the effectiveness of the Birds Directive published in Science.⁷ Farmland and migratory species were reported as having the most negative trends, echoing the findings of the previous BirdLife publication regarding the status of birds in the EU.⁸

2.2 Status and trends of species and habitats of Community importance

Key message

EU Member States are very far away from the overarching objective of the Habitats Directive to achieve favourable conservation status of species and habitats of Community interest.

In 2009, the European Commission published the first-ever comprehensive assessment of the status of the species and habitats listed in the Annexes of the Habitats Directive, based on data provided by the Member States. This report paints a worrying picture, with only 17% of the species and habitats reported as having a favourable status, 15 years after the Directive entered into force. Grassland, wetland and coastal habitat types appear to be under the most pressure from various activities. Some of the more charismatic species, such as Wolf (*Canis lupus*), Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*), Beaver (*Castor fiber*) and Otter (*Lutra lutra*), are showing signs of recovery, but the vast majority are far from achieving healthy, sustainable

populations. The report also showed that data availability remains poor for many of the species and habitats – the number of ‘unknown’ classifications was particularly high for species found in the countries of southern Europe, and for the marine environment.

2.3 The state of global biodiversity

Key message

The world is facing a massive extinction crisis with potentially enormous repercussions for human society.

We are currently living through a new mass extinction event, but unlike previous extinctions, this one is caused by a single species – *Homo sapiens*. Although the exact scale of the problem is unknown (in the absence of complete inventories of all species), it is estimated that the current rate of extinctions is several orders higher than the ‘background rate’, i.e. the standard rate considered to be historically ‘normal’ before human impacts began. BirdLife International is the official authority for birds for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, and it publishes regular updates of the status of birds around the world. According to the latest (2008) assessment, 1,227 bird species (12.4% of the total) are considered globally threatened with extinction, and this figure has increased steadily since this process began in the 1980s. The picture is even gloomier for other taxonomic groups that have been evaluated by the IUCN so far: 30% of amphibians, 21% of mammals and 70% of higher plants are considered to be globally threatened. Furthermore, the massive reported loss and

degradation of species-rich ecosystems like tropical rainforests and coral reefs will inevitably result in large-scale extinctions of many other animal and plant species.

3. Response indicators

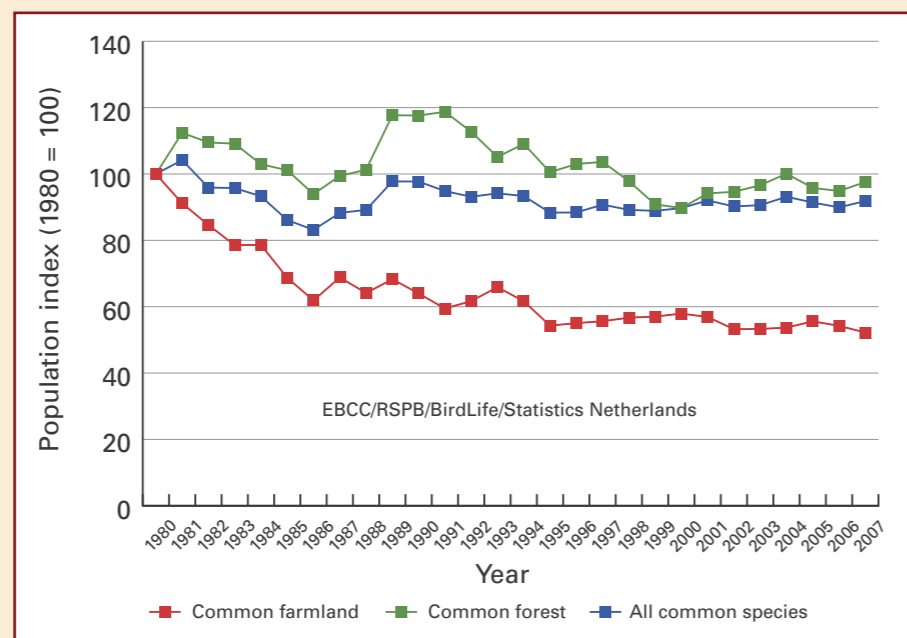
3.1 Transposition and enforcement of legislation

Key message

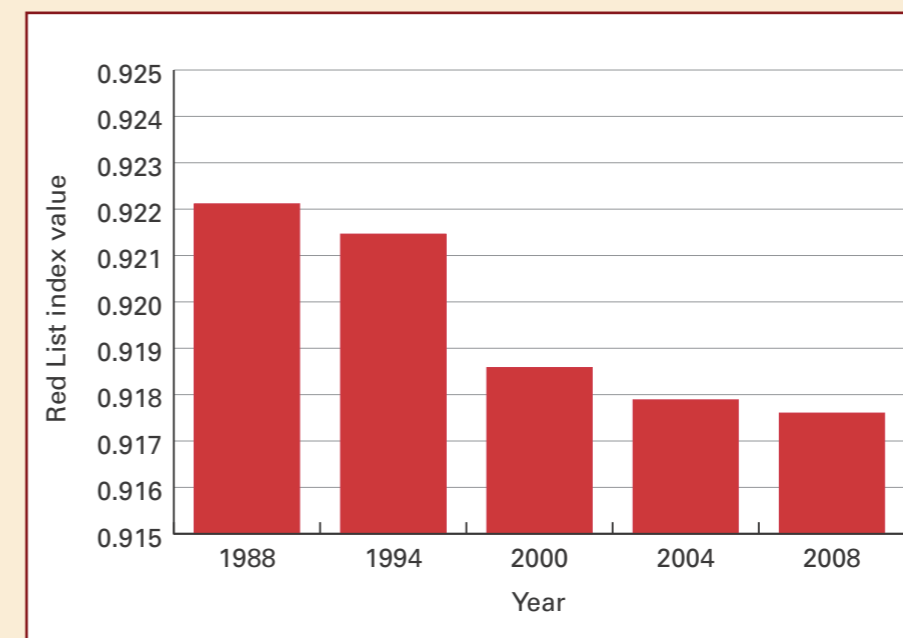
The transposition of Birds and Habitats Directives is still unsatisfactory, although good progress has been made recently.

Transposition is the process by which the rules and objectives set out in Directives of the European Union are applied by Member States through national laws. The correct transposition of EU legislative instruments is an essential first step towards their full implementation and enforcement. Overall, most BirdLife Partners gave medium scores for the transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directives, despite the fact that these have been in force since 1981 and 1994. Reasonably good progress in transposition of the Directives in recent years is at least partly due to the Commission initiating legal procedures against Member States for non-implementation: in fact, at the end of 2008, 168 nature cases were open. According to the Commission’s own statistics, nature conservation legislation accounts for between a fifth and a quarter of environmental infringements, and the nature sector accounts for the highest number of open environmental cases.⁹

The wild bird index for Europe 1980–2007



6 F.J. Sanderson et al. (2006) Long-term population declines in Afro-Palaearctic migrant birds. *Biological conservation* 131: 93–105.
 7 P.F. Donald et al. (2007) International conservation policy delivers benefits for birds in Europe. *Science* 317: 810.
 8 BirdLife International (2004) *Birds in the European Union: a status assessment*



The Red List Index for birds shows that there has been a steady and continuing deterioration in the status of the world’s birds between 1988 and 2008 (1 = all species in category Least Concern, 0 = all species Extinct)

9 Situation In The Different Sectors [SEC(2009) 1684/2], accompanying document to the 26th Annual Report On Monitoring The Application Of Community Law (2008), [COM(2009) 675]; http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/docs/docs_infringements/annual_report_26/en_sec_sectors_autre_document_travail_service_part1_v4clean.pdf

Key message

The low status of national biodiversity strategies is a black spot, showing very low attention paid to the Convention on Biological Diversity at the national level.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the major international treaty dedicated to conserving the diversity of life on Earth. It was adopted at the Earth Summit that took place in 1992 and has now been signed by almost all the world’s countries. One of the requirements of the Convention is that Parties to it should develop national Biodiversity Strategies and Plans to indicate how they wish to implement the measures adopted within the framework of the Convention. Most Member States of the EU, it appears, do not give a high priority to this task as, according to BirdLife Partners’ evaluation, very limited progress has been made in developing or updating national biodiversity strategies.

3.2 Protecting species in the European Union

Key message

Targeted species recovery programmes can make a real difference to species conservation.

Considerable scope exists to conserve and use biodiversity sustainably through more effective management of individual species. Although ‘habitat-based’ approaches to species conservation are critical, they are by no means a replacement for ‘species-based’ approaches. Species threatened with extinction need all the support they can get. The threats they face are diverse, and so are the measures that are needed to address them. Species action plans or recovery plans are designed to identify the threats behind the precarious state of priority species and to recommend actions to be implemented to bring them back from the brink of extinction. BirdLife has been leading on the development of Species Action Plans at the EU and European level for birds: so far such plans have been completed for 54 species and sub-species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. National or regional level action plans are obligatory and legally binding in some Member States, such as in Spain. In the EU there have been many cases of successful species recovery locally or at the national level, which shows that in emergency situations this approach can bring success.

See Case Study: More pelicans than ever at Prespa

Case Study: More pelicans than ever at Prespa

The Prespa lakes, shared between Greece, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), have long been considered one of the key nature conservation areas in the Balkans, and because of their pelican colonies they are therefore recognised as an Important Bird Area (IBA). In 2009, more than 1,400 pairs of Dalmatian Pelicans (*Pelecanus crispus*) bred on the colonies on the northern side of Lake Mikri Prespa, in Greece. This is a historical maximum for this globally threatened species, and it represents more than 20% of its world population. Spectacular population recoveries have been observed also in White Pelicans (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) and other species such as egrets and ibises.

Pelicans and other birds were persecuted and killed in Prespa in the not-too-distant past and their recovery is a powerful example of what legislation and conservation investment can achieve in a relatively short period of time.

The lakes’ recovery owes as much to habitat conservation as to the end of direct persecution. The SPP, a local conservation organisation that has as founding and supporting members both the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS, BirdLife in Greece) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB, BirdLife in the UK), has used the EU LIFE grant to improve management of the water levels of Lake Mikri Prespa. It has implemented active habitat management measures and therefore maximised their benefit for breeding birds. Benefits are not limited to wildlife: the agricultural sector has seen benefits through the application of wise water management. Fish have also increased in abundance: for the past two years local fishermen and relevant authorities have not felt the need to re-stock carp (a practice that had been in place for several years).

These conservation efforts have been crowned by the creation of the trilateral Transboundary Prespa Park, between Greece, Albania and FYROM.

Contact: Angelos Evangelidis, evangelidis@ornithologiki.gr

Key message

Strong EU legislation and local enforcement are key to preventing direct persecution of birds and other wildlife.

It is not only threatened species that need strong protection from persecution. The Birds Directive provides general protection to all wild bird species in the EU, while the Habitats Directive has specific provisions to protect a long list of animal and plant species wherever they occur, including outside protected areas. Both Directives also strictly regulate the taking (killing, capturing, trade) of wildlife. In fact, the desire to curb the unsustainable hunting of migratory birds was one of the main reasons behind the adoption of the Birds Directive in 1979. Enforcement of the restrictions on exploitation is key. In general, BirdLife Partners scored the enforcement of measures regulating hunting higher than the enforcement of other species conservation measures or measures aimed at the conservation of sites, which indicates that most countries comply with such measures. There are some notable exceptions, though, the most notorious being the illegal killing and trapping of migratory birds in the Mediterranean region.

See Case Study: When bird flu saved wild birds

Case Study: When bird flu saved wild birds

In early 2007 the European Union introduced a permanent ban on the importation of wild-caught birds under the threat of bird flu. BirdLife International welcomed this decision as a significant step forward for bird conservation. We see this as a part of the jigsaw of halting biodiversity loss by 2010.

Previously the EU had imported an estimated 1–2 million wild-caught birds each year, mainly for the pet and collector markets. Yet little or no systematic information had been gathered on the conservation impacts for most species in trade.

One species for which more was known was the African Grey Parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*). Despite 20 years of protection under international wildlife trade laws, the African Grey Parrot is now under threat across much of its range. The wild bird trade played a significant role in this decline, with the EU having accounted for 90% of its international trade, importing 122,000 birds between 2000 and 2003.

Despite an existing ban on imports of wild birds being based on disease prevention grounds, BirdLife campaigned tirelessly to ensure that the ban was made permanent for conservation reasons. This was rewarded when Tony Blair, then UK Prime Minister, backed BirdLife’s campaign and soon after an indefinite ban was enforced.

Contact: Sacha Cleminson, sacha.cleminson@rspb.org.uk



Dalmatian Pelican: the species has made a spectacular recovery in Greece



Captive parrots in transit

Key message**Invasive Alien Species pose a major threat to European and global biodiversity.**

Invasive Alien Species (IAS) are non-native species introduced by humans outside their natural range where they cause damage to other wildlife. IAS not only represent a threat to native species of fauna and flora, but can also cause major disruption to ecosystem health, with resultant damage and loss of the goods and services that these ecosystems provide. Other stresses on ecosystems, such as pollution, extraction of biomass, habitat alterations or climate change, can facilitate the establishment of IAS and can exacerbate their impact on native species and on ecosystem structure and function.

For birds, IAS are a very significant global threat that have contributed to half of all known bird extinctions and are affecting about a quarter of all threatened and near-threatened bird species worldwide. IAS often cause major economic damage, and controlling and eradicating them can be very costly. There are no comprehensive figures published for the EU, but globally the damage may be as high as 12 billion Euros a year.¹⁰ The EU has no comprehensive legislative framework to address the often complex and international problem represented by IAS. As a result, the level of protection across the EU against what is by its very nature a transboundary problem is only as good as the weakest laws in place at Member State level. There are, nevertheless, good examples of successful projects carried out to eradicate invasive species. These projects demonstrate that

targeted action can be successful and must be part of a range of responses including prevention, early detection, and long-term control and containment to manage this problem in the EU.

See Case study: Ruddy Ducks vs White-headed Ducks – a trans-atlantic conflict

3.3 Protecting key biodiversity sites in the European Union**Key message**

The EU's Natura 2000 network is nearing completion on land but is highly inadequate at sea, where much remains to be done to identify and protect the best marine sites.

Natura 2000 is the EU's system of protected areas established under the Birds and Habitats Directives to protect priority species and habitats throughout the

**Case Study: Ruddy Ducks vs White-headed Ducks – a trans-atlantic conflict**

The White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), one of Europe's most threatened breeding species, is at risk of extinction due to hybridisation with the North American Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*). Introduced to UK captive wildfowl collections in the 1930s, Ruddy Duck escapees began to breed in the wild. As their numbers increased in the UK, so did the number of birds reaching Europe where they hybridise with White-headed Ducks, producing fertile hybrids with the risk of losing the latter species in its pure form. Successful conservation efforts to recover the affected White-headed Duck population in Spain, through protecting wetlands and addressing illegal hunting, stood to be undermined by the continuing influx of Ruddy Ducks from the UK. In 2005, following years of research into potential control methods, the UK Government launched a five-year programme to eradicate the Ruddy Duck in the UK, part-funded by the EU LIFE-Nature Programme. Good progress has been made – numbers of Ruddy Ducks in the UK have been reduced by more than 80% since 2005 – and eradication looks to be feasible. Taking this action will help secure the future of the White-headed Duck, while the Ruddy Duck will continue to thrive in its native North America. It is, however, vital that other European countries with feral Ruddy Duck populations, particularly France and the Netherlands, act quickly to eradicate them.

Contact: David Hoccom, david.hoccom@rspb.org.uk

territory of the EU. The terrestrial network of some 25,000 Natura 2000 sites now covers around 17% of the land surface of the EU and it is the first of its kind: a truly unique and magnificent continent-wide set of sites, based on scientifically agreed criteria and a rigorous selection process.

BirdLife's own Important Bird Area (IBA) concept was inspired by the site conservation requirements of the Birds Directive, and IBA inventories are now used to aid the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the Directive, and to assess the adequacy of site lists drawn up by Member States. The designation of terrestrial Natura 2000 sites is still not complete, but there has been reasonably good progress in completing the designations over the last decade. Historically, Denmark was the first to achieve almost complete coverage of Important Bird Areas by SPAs. Progress is partly due to the legal proceedings brought against various Member States by the European Commission for not complying with the Directives' requirements to designate such sites. Indeed, at a certain point in time, 11 out of the 12 new EU Member States faced such proceedings for non-designation of SPAs and as a result the proportion of IBAs designated in these countries is very high, at about 85%. The same figure for the whole EU is 66%.

Compared with the terrestrial network, designation of marine Natura sites is highly insufficient, with limited progress to date. There are only few exceptions to this rule with Denmark, France and Germany leading the way

in terms of the area of marine Natura 2000 sites. BirdLife International has initiated a programme to identify marine IBAs in various countries, with Spain and Portugal recently publishing full inventories of these sites.

See Case study: Special Protection Areas in France

Key message

Management and financing of Natura 2000 are the next major challenges.

Designating protected areas is not the end, in fact, it is only the start of the ongoing process to protect and manage them. Site conservation measures established by the Birds and Habitats Directives are less enforced than species protection measures, according to the BirdLife assessment. These measures are essential in achieving a good status of the species and habitats at each site by demanding a rigorous evaluation of the potential impact of all plans and projects within and in the vicinity of the Natura 2000 areas. Another important tool is the management plan, which is a document setting out the conservation objectives of a site, identifying all the different types of actions needed to achieve these. Despite their crucial role, management plan coverage of the Natura network is highly inadequate, with only two countries rated 'adequate' by the survey. Financial resources currently allocated to the management of Natura 2000 sites are highly insufficient, despite the fact that there is a possibility to use a part of the major EU

Case Study: Special Protection Areas in France

Under the Wild Birds Directive, Member States are obliged to designate Special Protection Areas for birds. After a slow start in the designation process in France, eventually an inventory was compiled of the country's natural heritage, including information on Important Bird Areas. The Ministry of Environment funded the process of IBA identification and the publication of the inventory. The proposals for SPAs encountered strong objection from various stakeholders linked to the land (from farmers, foresters and hunters) but these were finally overcome with positive communication and with the obligation to find ways of cooperation through the elaboration of management plans for each site.

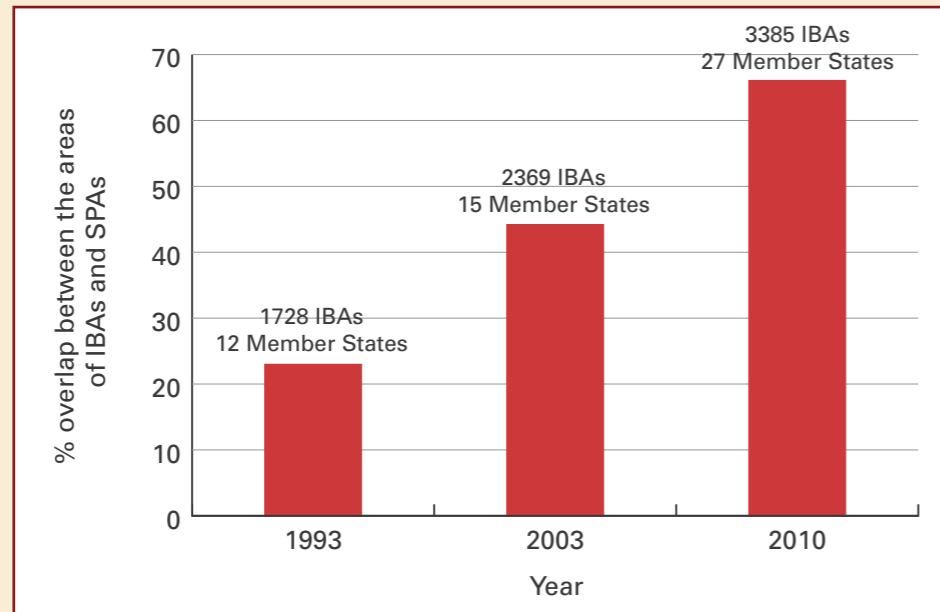
In 2002, France was condemned by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) for the incompleteness of its set of SPAs. Five years later, just before the country was about to be forced to pay penalties for not complying with the ruling, the area of SPAs increased from 1,600,000 ha in March 2005 (222 sites) to 4,600,000 ha in 2007 (371 sites). For birds, the changes are visible and welcome: since the two Directives entered into force, the breeding populations of Annex I birds seem to be doing better than those of other birds.

While site designations continue to be made, many problems remain regarding site boundaries and projects contrary to management plan specifications. Once again, the ECJ ruled against France on 4 March 2010 for not properly transposing the Habitats Directive into its national legislation. In particular, there is a need to improve the process of screening for the possible impact of activities such as hunting and fishing, activities planned in Natura 2000 contracts and also for projects which are not submitted to an administrative authorisation.

Contact: Emilie Watson, emilie.watson@lpo.fr

¹⁰ European Commission (SEC (2008) 2887 et SEC (2008) 2886) Towards an EU strategy on invasive species

The coverage of terrestrial IBAs by SPAs, while still incomplete, has increased strongly in recent years



funds (Structural Funds, Rural Development Funds and the European Fisheries Fund) to cover the costs associated with maintaining the network. The evaluation suggests that the status of the network is still largely unfavourable, but data are missing for several countries, so this result needs to be interpreted with caution.

See Case study: Not all Natura 2000 sites are fully protected – the case of Westerschelde, Netherlands

Key message

National systems of protected areas and ecological networks are highly inadequate to protect biodiversity.

The Natura 2000 network is an obligation under EU laws. Most of the EU Member States also have their own state protected area system, usually consisting of national parks, nature reserves, landscape protected areas and

Case Study: Not all Natura 2000 sites are fully protected – the case of Westerschelde, Netherlands

The Dutch River Scheldt Estuary is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under both the Birds and Habitats Directives (Natura 2000 site 'Westerschelde en Saeftinghe'). It is the largest multi-channel estuary of western Europe and includes Europe's largest salt (brackish) marshes. Over 350,000 birds of 40 bird species depend on the site.

The conservation status of the estuary as a whole and of some of the qualifying habitats and species of birds is 'unfavourable' to 'highly unfavourable', and is still steadily declining. The reason for this is disturbance of dynamic morphological characteristics, increasing tidal volumes and decreasing volume of the estuary caused by dredging, land reclamation, harbour development and other human activities. This results in the loss of shallow waters, banks, mud flats and other habitats important for birds.

The Dutch government is still facilitating dredging programmes, harbour development and many other harmful initiatives. It consequently searches for margins to declare negative effects of these initiatives as 'not significant' and hides behind 'the complexity of the estuarine system' as the main excuse for accepting the 'autonomous' negative development. Initiatives for nature restoration are withheld because of resistance by local communities.

We face losing the unique multi-channel character of the estuary; a great and permanent loss of wildlife and ecosystem functions. The sad story of this estuary seems to suggest that being part of the Natura 2000 network is no guarantee for full protection, not even for securing sustainable conservation management, even in countries that enjoy a green image such as the Netherlands.

Contact: Bert Denneman, bert.denneman@vogelbescherming.nl

various other categories. The level of protection varies from sites where access is strictly controlled to landscape protection areas where human activities are an integral part of conservation. State protected areas can be complementary to the Natura 2000 network, affording protection to nationally (rather than internationally) important landscapes, habitats and wildlife. According to the BirdLife assessment, the completeness of the national protected areas network is considered inadequate, with only limited progress since 2001.

Ecological networks have the aim of establishing functional connectivity between core (protected) areas across the wider landscape, and in this way to help link populations of individual species between the sites. Such connectivity is important to maintain the long-term health of these populations and to facilitate their movements across the landscape, an important condition of adaptation to the changing climate. Whilst there are initiatives in several countries to restore or maintain such connectivity (recently called 'Green Infrastructure', to liken them to the other networks already well established in EU policy, such as the Trans-European Transport and Energy Networks), overall the development of such networks is still rated as highly inadequate.

"The national protected area network covers only 0.6% of the territory, with forests highly under-represented. However, recent changes in national forest legislation should help to raise the area of protected forest to 3% of broad-leaved forests. The new official policy goal is to increase the surface of forest reserves by 10,000 ha in five years, which would be a significant progress if fully implemented."

Natagora/BirdLife Belgium vzw

3.4 Protecting biodiversity in the wider countryside

Key message

Biodiversity integration into sectoral policies is still a major problem.

Failure to integrate biodiversity conservation into the EU's major sectoral policies (in particular agriculture, fisheries, regional development, transport, energy, external assistance, trade and development aid) is already identified in the Commission's mid-term review of the Biodiversity Action Plan from 2008.¹² The responses from BirdLife Partners underline this conclusion, assessing the status of sectoral integration as 'low' in most countries. Given that these same policies are putting the biggest pressure on biodiversity and

River Scheldt estuary: designation may not mean it is protected in practice.



ecosystems, this highlights a major gap in EU policy.

For years, BirdLife has been calling on the EU institutions and Member States to fundamentally reform the Common Agriculture and Fisheries Policies, and we have been working with others to initiate major changes to the regional, external assistance, development aid and trade policies as well. Climate change mitigation and adaptation measures are the new emerging tools of EU environment policy, which have the potential to do a lot of good, but also carry the risk of harming wildlife and natural ecosystems if carried out in misguided ways. The EU Budget, comprising 864 billion Euro over seven years, is a massive force shaping the EU landscape, but currently less than 1% of it is dedicated primarily to environment and nature conservation through the LIFE+ funding instrument.

See Case Study overleaf: The end of EU set-aside – political expedience trumps conservation

3.5 Building up the information base

Key message

Quality of biodiversity research is largely inadequate, partly due to problems in financing.

Understanding the functioning of the natural world and the often complex relationships between ecological processes and human society is a key to our continued survival and wellbeing on the planet. The services provided by ecological systems to the economy are many and diverse, and depend on the underlying biological diversity, and the interactions between the living (species) and non-living (soil, water) components of such systems. Although the volume of ecological research published in the EU is impressive, it often lacks relevance for policy and conservation practice. Despite the EU's research framework programme, funding for biodiversity research is also considered 'highly inadequate', highlighting the need for better focusing and accessibility of these funds, as well as an increase in the amount available.

¹² European Commission (COM (2008) 864 final) A mid-term assessment of implementing the EC Biodiversity Action Plan

Case Study: The end of EU set-aside – political expedience trumps conservation

The EU set-aside scheme, which required farmers to leave a proportion of their land fallow, produced tangible benefits for biodiversity, despite being originally introduced as a market management tool to curb overproduction of agricultural products. Although the ecological value of set-aside land varied considerably, because it covered a large area (typically 5–15% of arable farmland) and was mandatory, its benefits for wildlife and nature were widespread and substantial. The decision to abolish it was taken without appropriate impact assessment, under the influence of a temporary spike in agricultural commodity prices and a misplaced rush to boost biofuel production, despite a substantial body of evidence supporting its environmental benefits. Policy tools that can replicate the biodiversity benefits of set-aside, such as contract-based agri-environment schemes and cross-compliance rules attached to farm subsidies, have been applied in an inconsistent and weak manner following the abolition of set-aside. The loss of set-aside is a typical example of the failure to integrate biodiversity concerns into EU sectoral policies and how biodiversity is systematically overlooked when faced with powerful vested interests.

Contact: Ariel Brunner, ariel.brunner@birdlife.org

Key message

Bird monitoring schemes lead the way in biodiversity monitoring.

Regular monitoring of the populations of selected species and the extent and quality of natural habitats provides us with the means to check the health of protected areas and the wider countryside. To monitor biodiversity in its entirety is a hugely challenging task, but very useful information can be derived from carrying out regular counts of groups of animals and plants that are regarded as good indicators of the state of the environment. Birds, being present virtually in every habitat, highly visible and popular, are an ideal group to monitor through the mobilisation of willing citizens in a cost-effective way, and

have been demonstrated to be good indicators of the state of the environments they inhabit. In collaboration with the European Bird Census Council, BirdLife initiated the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme in 2001 with the goal of collecting, analysing and publishing combined data from national bird monitoring programmes in the EU and beyond. The resulting wild bird indices (see page 8) have been adopted as official EU indicators in various policy processes. At the national level, this assessment indicates that the development and implementation of biodiversity monitoring for other groups lags behind those of birds, and that funding for all monitoring schemes is highly inadequate.

See Case study: Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme

3.6 Public support for biodiversity

Key message

More work is needed to communicate messages about the importance of biodiversity and nature (and especially Natura 2000) to the general public, and to encourage higher participation in its protection.

People care less about things they don’t know about or things they consider unimportant. In today’s world, where a rapidly increasing proportion of humanity lives in urban centres, the direct link between people and nature is severed and feedback is distorted or lost completely. According to the information collected at the national level, public awareness of biodiversity is ‘variable but generally low’ in the overwhelming majority of the EU Member States. Public awareness of the EU’s Natura 2000 network is even lower, being assessed as ‘very low’



or ‘variable, generally low’ in almost every case.

“The German Federal Ministry of the Environment always stated that improving public awareness about Natura 2000 is the duty of the Länder (regions). At the same time, the Länder regularly rejected proposals for

public awareness-projects. Only since 2008, in connection with the development of Management Plans have they begun to engage a little bit more in stakeholder dialogue and consultation.”

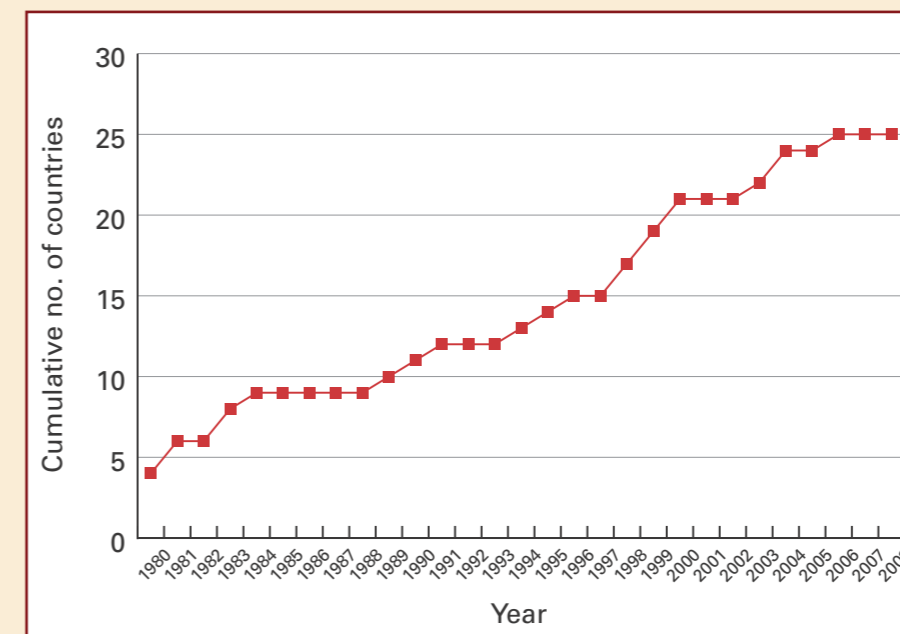
NABU/BirdLife Germany

Case Study: Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme

Birds are good biodiversity indicators and monitoring is crucial for assessing the environmental impacts of various policies and the effectiveness of conservation measures. The Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS) is a joint initiative of the European Bird Census Council (EBCC) and BirdLife International, cooperating closely also with Statistics Netherlands. Since 2003, it has produced annually updated ‘wild bird indicators’, showing the trends of common and widespread breeding birds. The scheme collates data from annually operated national breeding bird surveys in more than 20 European countries and combines them to produce supranational species trends. These are then combined in multi-species indices at various spatial scales to portray trends in groups of species characteristic of main habitats. The national monitoring schemes are based on fieldwork conducted, using standard methods, by thousands of skilled volunteers, making them cost-effective and generating reliable data. Through its extensive network, PECBMS also supports the development of new national monitoring schemes, particularly in eastern Europe, whose data can then be fed into the European indices.

The PECBMS outputs are used as official biodiversity indicators in Europe, representing one of very few fully operational indicators of their kind. In particular, the Farmland Bird Index has been adopted by the EU as a Structural Indicator, a Sustainable Development Indicator, and an indicator of the effectiveness of agri-environment measures under the Rural Development Regulation. The PECBMS wild bird indicators have also been incorporated in the set of indicators to assess progress towards the European target of halting biodiversity loss by 2010. Funded since its inception by the RSPB (the UK BirdLife Partner), the scheme has also been supported financially by the European Commission since 2006. The number of countries contributing data and the number of species covered have increased with almost every iteration, as new schemes have started up and provided their data. Almost all Member States are now represented, along with some neighbouring countries. The ultimate ambition of PECBMS is for every European country to be included, although this remains a major challenge in several large eastern European countries.

Contact: Petr Vorisek, euromonitoring@birdlife.cz



Increasing number of European countries with active bird monitoring schemes since 1980

Part III: The BirdLife rescue plan for Europe’s biodiversity

BirdLife International believes that missing the 2010 target is not a reason for lowering the EU’s ambitions, but rather the opposite: halting further loss is still very important to achieve, but we must now go beyond this and start recovering and restoring what has already been lost. The Birds and Habitats Directives include explicit obligations to this end, and these must now be fully implemented. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment showed that ecosystems are deteriorating rapidly, causing disruptions in the flow of essential services and losing biodiversity in the process; therefore their restoration must also be a top priority. The short-term target should be complemented by a longer term vision that should provide the aspiration for the EU to attain by the middle of the century.

BirdLife’s global 2050 vision

By 2050, we live on a healthy planet where biodiversity is conserved, for its own sake and for human wellbeing, through the protection and sustainable use of its components.

Proposed 2020 sub-targets

State	Pressure	Response	Benefit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extinction risk of species significantly reduced Human-induced species extinction halted Status of threatened species and habitats stable or improving in the EU Status of high natural value habitats maintained Population declines of species representative of key habitats reversed Good status of freshwater and marine ecosystems achieved Area of semi-natural permanent grassland maintained at 2010 levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threats from novel Invasive Alien Species alleviated; negative impacts of current IAS on biodiversity reversed Negative impacts of use on biodiversity reversed The ecological footprint of the EU reduced to sustainable levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive systems of protected areas established on land and sea Areas of importance for biodiversity in favourable or improving condition International agreements cover all appropriate threatened and near-threatened species Effective conservation action is taken for all threatened and near-threatened species Adequate financing for protected areas Biodiversity traded between countries sustainably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of ecosystem services steady or increasing

BirdLife’s global 2020 target and sub-targets

2020 Target

1. Stop further loss and deterioration of biodiversity.
2. Improve the conservation status of threatened species and habitats, both in the EU and worldwide.
3. Enhance and restore ecosystems to make them resilient to climate change, supporting biodiversity and delivering the services human wellbeing depends upon.

Proposed 2020 sub-targets for the EU

The table below includes a list of sub-targets proposed by BirdLife arranged in the State-Pressure-Response-Benefit framework. All these sub-targets have a baseline, an indicator and milestones identified, thereby making them measurable and operational. More information on these can be found at the BirdLife Website: www.birdlife.org/eu/biodiversity_assessment

Post-2010 EU biodiversity policy

Achieving the new 2020 target and sub-targets will need to be pursued by a strong EU biodiversity policy framework, with the right mix of legislation, implementation, enforcement, voluntary measures and financial instruments. The European Commission is expected to publish its new policy framework at the end of 2010, in the form of a new EU Biodiversity Strategy. In BirdLife’s view, the EU must respond in a comprehensive, rapid and decisive way to the deepening biodiversity crisis by launching a ‘rescue package’ containing a range of measures focusing on addressing the main drivers and problems identified in the previous sections. This new biodiversity package should include the following elements.

Governance and legislation

- **Better implementation of existing biodiversity-relevant legislation, in particular the Birds and Habitats Directives:** BirdLife proposes the introduction of the ‘Four-eye initiative’ – Induction, Information, Inspection and Investigation – to improve implementation and enforcement at the EU level.
 - *Induction:* to train enforcement agents, relevant national authorities, the judiciary and other key civil servants in the requirements of the Directives.
 - *Information:* a more efficient and widespread dissemination of guidance and good practice on implementation and enforcement using the latest information technology capable of reaching all relevant stakeholders.
 - *Inspection:* to set up an EU-wide inspection force to monitor implementation and compliance.
 - *Investigation:* to establish both legislation and a global task force to strengthen cooperation between law enforcement agencies in order to investigate transboundary environmental crime and compliance with EU standards outside the EU.
- **Achieving Favourable Conservation Status of species and habitats:** In line with the existing obligations of the Nature Directives to set and monitor Favourable Reference Values at the site, protected area network and biogeographical levels.
- **Invasive Alien Species:** Introduce a comprehensive EU legislation on IAS based on the principles of a coherent framework to tackle this issue.
- **Better governance for biodiversity and ecosystems:** set up coordination bodies between the various Commission services, Council formations and Parliamentary groups with the explicit goal of achieving the 2020 target; make the Coordination

Group on Biodiversity and Nature a more powerful force for coordination between the Commission and Member States.

Investing in natural capital

- **More funding for biodiversity:**
 - *Inside the EU:* ring-fenced funding for Natura 2000, more targeted and accountable funding for protection and restoration of the wider countryside.
 - *Global biodiversity:* dedicate significant funding to support global conservation efforts. A special focus is needed on migratory species, Overseas Territories, and Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD).
 - *Ecosystem-based adaptation:* prioritise ecosystem-based measures in all sectoral adaptation funds at all levels.
- **New tools to improve financial streams for biodiversity protection:** to develop and implement new policies to finance biodiversity conservation.

Building green infrastructures

- **Natura 2000:** complete the terrestrial and marine Natura 2000 network in the European territory of the EU and extend it to the French Outermost Regions and the EU Overseas Territories.
- **Sectoral 2020 strategies:** the new 2020 target should be put into operation at various levels and the key economic sectors should be involved in the development of sectoral 2020 targets and specific strategies to achieve them. This should be used to re-energise the process of involving stakeholders in achieving EU biodiversity policy, minimise conflicts and commit both industry and authorities to better implementation and financing.

Addressing the drivers of biodiversity and ecosystem loss

- **Achieve biodiversity neutrality of infrastructure and urban development.** Effective policies must be put in place to ensure that any new infrastructure or urbanisation is developed in a way that results in no net biodiversity loss and if possible net gain. Such an obligation would also increase efficiency in the use of land, lead to the recuperation of degraded areas and provide funding for habitat restoration.
- **Sustainable consumption and production:** introduce biodiversity footprint assessment across the board, fully integrate biodiversity considerations into product labelling, green public procurement and promote eco-design and eco-efficiency.

Country-by-country overview of the results

Member state	Status of birds in EU	Trend in birds in EU	Status of species of EC importance	Status of habitats of EC importance	Transposition of international legislation	Integration of biodiversity	National Red List	National Biodiversity Strategy	Enforcement of biodiversity legislation	Nature conservation administrative capacity	Protected Area networks	Management plans	Conservation status of protected areas	National ecological network	Biodiversity research and monitoring	Financing for biodiversity	Public awareness	Environmental governance	Overall score
Austria	green	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	green	red	yellow	red	yellow	red	yellow	red	yellow	red	yellow	yellow	yellow
Belgium	yellow	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	green	red	yellow	red	green	red	yellow	red	yellow	red	yellow	green	yellow
Bulgaria	yellow	green	white	white	red	red	red	red	yellow	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
Cyprus	green	green	white	white	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
Czech Republic	green	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	red	red	red	red	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	green	yellow
Denmark	green	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	red	red	red	red	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	green	yellow
Estonia	green	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	green	yellow
Finland	green	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	green	red	yellow
France	green	green	white	white	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	yellow
Germany	yellow	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	yellow
Greece	yellow	red	white	white	yellow	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
Hungary	yellow	yellow	white	white	yellow	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	green	yellow
Ireland	yellow	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
Italy	green	yellow	white	white	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
Latvia	yellow	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	yellow
Lithuania	green	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	green	red	red	red	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	yellow
Luxembourg	green	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
Malta	yellow	yellow	white	white	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
Netherlands	green	yellow	white	white	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	green	yellow
Poland	green	yellow	white	white	green	red	red	red	red	red	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	green	yellow
Portugal	red	red	white	white	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
Romania	green	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
Slovakia	yellow	red	white	white	yellow	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
Slovenia	green	yellow	white	white	yellow	red	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	yellow
Spain	yellow	yellow	white	white	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
Sweden	green	green	white	white	green	red	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	green	yellow
United Kingdom	green	yellow	white	white	red	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	yellow

Scores: **red** = highly insufficient, **yellow** = inadequate, **green** = adequate



The RSPB speaks out for birds and wildlife, tackling the problems that threaten our environment. Nature is amazing – help us keep it that way.

The RSPB is part of BirdLife International, the global partnership of bird conservation organisations.

This publication is supported by the RSPB.



BirdLife International is a global Partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. The BirdLife Partnership operates in more than 100 countries and territories worldwide. BirdLife International is represented in 42 countries in Europe and is active in all EU Member States.



This publication is part-financed by the European Union.

The RSPB
UK Headquarters
The Lodge
Sandy
Bedfordshire SG19 2DL
Tel: 01767 680551
www.rspb.org.uk

BirdLife International European Division
Avenue de la Toison d'Or (2nd floor)
B-1060 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 280 08 30
Fax: +32 (0)2 280 38 02
E-mail: europa@birdlife.org
<http://europe.birdlife.org>