

Conservation and Recovery of Threatened Birds in the European Union







Service Information

Author: Boris Barov, BirdLife Europe Editors: Rob Hume (RSPB) and Kerstin Sundseth (Ecosystems Ltd)

This brochure was prepared for the European Commission by BirdLife International as subcontractor to the "N2K Group" in the frame of Service Contract N#070307/2007/488316/SER/B2 "Technical and scientific support in relation to the implementation of the 92/43 'Habitats' and 79/409 'Birds' Directives".

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union 2011. ISBN: 978-92-79-20501-9 doi: 10.2779/92566 © European Union, 2011

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Printed in Belgium





Fea's Petrel Pterodroma feae has a restricted distribution in the East Atlantic, breeding only on the Portuguese island of Bugio with 160–180 breeding pairs. An EU Action Plan was adopted in 1996 and its implementation in 2006–2010 was supported by a LIFE Nature project. As a result the tiny population of this globally threatened sea bird is now stable.

Cover: Great Bustard Otis tarda © Javier Milla

The Great Bustard was heavily hunted in the past and by the end of the 20th century it survived only in small fractions of its former range. Due to continuing habitat loss and degradation, many local populations are on the verge of extinction. Further fragmentation of the population can be stopped only by largescale implementation of habitat management schemes.

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Introduction to the Birds Directive

Birds enjoy a special place in the EU biodiversity policy because they are the most easily recognisable part of biodiversity and their conservation is possible only through collective efforts of all Member States. The first piece of Community nature legislation was the Birds Directive¹, adopted in 1979, which has been in force now for more than 30 years. It and the Habitats Directive² form the key pillars on which the entire biodiversity conservation policy of the European Union is built.

In 2010 it became clear that the EU target to halt the loss of biodiversity could not be achieved as threats to species and natural habitats from human activities and climate change are still widespread and growing. But we now have evidence that, thanks to the Birds Directive, the fate of the most threatened European birds at least has improved. A 2007 article in the prestigious journal *Science*, and other recent studies, demonstrated that many of Europe's most threatened birds have successfully been saved from extinction or further decline thanks to the Directive³.

The success of the Birds Directive lies in the fact that it addresses the conservation of all wild bird species that occur naturally across the land and marine territory of the EU. It requires Member States to take all necessary measures to maintain the populations of these wild birds at levels determined by ecological, scientific and cultural needs, having regard also to economic and recreational needs. In other words, the Directive is a powerful piece of legislation that protects birds across their entire natural range in the EU, irrespective of national boundaries.

By implementing the Birds Directive, all 27 EU Member States can achieve far more together than they could if each operated on its own. In particular they can:

- protect all bird species from persecution and unsustainable exploitation, and establish a
 comprehensive system to manage hunting, which is a legitimate form of use of the bird
 species listed in annexes II/1 (applicable to all Member States) and II/2 (restricted to certain
 Member States);
- take special conservation measures to maintain and restore the habitats of the 192 species listed as threatened in Annex I of the Directive;
- establish a coherent network of Special Protected Areas (SPAs), where sufficient habitat for threatened and migratory birds should be conserved.

Since 1994, all SPAs have formed an integral part of the Natura 2000, the largest and most comprehensive international ecological network in the world.

1 Directive 2009/147/EC 2 Directive 92/43/EC

Jinternational Conservation Policy Delivers Benefits for Birds in Europe. Paul F. Donald, Fiona J. Sanderson, Ian J. Burfield, Stijn M. Bierman, Richard D. Gregory, Zoltan Waliczky (Science, 10 August 2007)



Developing EU Species Action Plans for threatened birds

The establishment and management of the Natura 2000 Network is by far the most important measure for the conservation of Europe's threatened birds. More than 26,000 sites, covering more than 750,000 square kilometres, have been included in the Natura 2000 Network so far. However, in some cases this alone will not be enough to ensure the recovery of certain species whose populations have suffered sharp declines in the past, or are still too vulnerable.

To help the recovery of such species, the EU has been supporting the development of Species Action Plans for priority birds since 1993 and, more recently, Management Plans for huntable species. So far 56 such plans have been approved by the European Commission for threatened species and subspecies listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive (see Annex 1, page 22). The plans are not legally binding, nor do they engage Member States beyond their existing legal commitments under the Birds Directive, but they do serve as useful management tools in deciding which actions to take to ensure the conservation of the species and where to set priorities.

What do Species Action Plans do?

Species Action Plans (and Management Plans for huntable species considered to be in unfavourable conservation status) help Member States to understand the conservation needs of threatened birds. They assist Member States in fulfilling their obligation to restore and maintain bird populations at sustainable levels. Each plan analyses and evaluates the threats and describes the most suitable conservation actions needed for particular species and is prepared in close consultation with key stakeholders. This creates a useful framework for the Member States agencies, conservation organisations and land managers to implement the right kinds of conservation measures in their country. At the same time, the European Commission and national governments can use the plans as valuable management tools. They help to target the limited financial and human resources available for biodiversity conservation more effectively.

In reality, in a densely populated continent such as Europe, where nature and human civilisations have coexisted for millennia and continue to depend on each other, biodiversity cannot be conserved in isolation. Saving individual species won't prevent habitat loss and degradation – which are the main reasons

for the demise of entire populations and ecological communities.

Species Action Plans have been most effective where their actions have been used to guide implementation through a combination of:

- targeted species recovery projects (such as the EU LIFE co-financed projects);
- integration and implementation across sectors (CAP rural development measures, fisheries).

Action Plans will not achieve their mission if they fail to adopt both these approaches.

The integration of biodiversity conservation measures into key economic sectors and land management policies lies at the heart of the EU Biodiversity Policy. Productive sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, energy and forestry, share special responsibility to biodiversity and must contribute to its conservation.

Traditional farming and livestock grazing play a vital role to maintain the quality of the habitats for many of the European threatened bird species. For example, sheep and cattle grazing is and essential element of the Hungarian puszta on which great bustards, Eastern Imperial Eagles and Red-footed Falcons depend.



How species are selected for an EU species Action Plan

The so called Red Lists maintained by the World Conservation Union IUCN are universally recognised as the best system to identify threatened species that face a high level of risk of global extinction⁴. Such Red Lists of birds are compiled and annually reviewed by BirdLife International at the scale of the European continent and provide a starting point for prioritising species for conservation action.

While the EU has relatively few truly endemic⁵ species (or subspecies), it nevertheless hosts significant populations of many other birds, some of which entirely resident in Europe. Others have their major breeding, staging or resting areas in the EU. For example, most wild geese breed in the Arctic region but their entire populations migrate and spend the winter in the EU. Migratory birds are of particular importance for coordinated actions at international level.

Other species have larger global populations that only just reach into the EU and for which conservation action in the EU is not likely to contribute much to their global state. Therefore, when prioritising species for the development of EU Species Action Plans it is important to take into account both elements: the risk of extinction and the relative importance of the EU for their population. One such system has been developed and proposed by BirdLife (Figure 1).

5 'Endemic' is a species whose distribution is limited to one or few distinct geographical areas, such as an island, a mountain range or a country.

							`
			Rela	tive size of t	the EU vs. gl	obal popul	ation
			75–100%	50-74%	25-49%	1–25%	None (0%)
Urgency at global and EU level		CR	1	1	1	2	
	Global threat status (2010 IUCN Red List)	EN	1	1	2	2	
		VU	1	2	2	3	
		NT	2	2	3	3	
	EU threat status (2004 Birds in the	CR	2	3	3	4	
		EN	3	3	4	4	
		VU	3	4	4	5	
		Declining	4	4	5	5	
		Secure, Depleted, Rare, Localised					

Figure 1. A system for prioritising species for conservation action, proposed by BirdLife International. Colour indicates a level of priority for conservation action – red is top priority.

Europe's threatened birds

Of the nearly 10,000 bird species in the world, about 530 occur regularly and naturally in the wild in Europe, including about 460 in the EU. According to BirdLife International, 12% of the world's bird species are threatened and have a relatively high risk of global extinction⁴. Some 43% of European species are considered to be in unfavourable conservation status at continental level (BirdLife International 2004a), and 48% at the level of the European Union (BirdLife International 2004b).



⁴ BirdLife International 2008, www.iucnredlist.org

New Action Plans for threatened birds in the EU

Building on the success of the first Action Plans and following its internal and external obligations, the European Commission has continued to fund the development of Action Plans for threatened species. In 2008 to 2010 six new plans have been prepared and nine existing plans were revised, with the assistance of BirdLife International and a wide circle of experts from governments and NGOs. The species were carefully selected to include priority species of European and global significance. All new plans can be accessed online at the European Commission website. Here we briefly outline some of them:

Egyptian Vulture

Neophron percnopterus Endangered, migratory

Threats

Poisoning, electrocution and insufficient food, windfarms

Priority actions

Prevent risks of poisoning, improve powerlines and avoid windfarms near important breeding areas.

Maintain livestock grazing.

European Roller

Coracias garrulus Near threatened, migratory

Threats

Changes in farming methods and decline of large insects

Priority actions

Promote grazing, bare ground and natural vegetation in arable lands. Protect individual trees and riparian vegetation.

Red Kite

Milvus milvus Near threatened, partly migratory

Threats

Poisoning, loss of food base, badly located windfarms

Priority actions

Prevent poisoning, map and protect nest sites and avoid harmful developments nearby.

Marbled Teal

Marmaronetta anguirostris Vulnerable, migratory

Threats

Wetland drainage and pollution, illegal shooting, disturbance

Priority actions

Restoration and improved management of wetlands, awareness raising among hunters, farmers and water managers

Key Member States Spain, Italy



Red-footed Falcon

Falco vespertinus Near threatened, migratory

Threats Changes in farming methods and loss of breeding habitats

Priority actions Promote suitable land

management through agrienvironment measures. Maintain nest boxes and stop persecution of rooks.

Semi-collared Flycatcher

Ficedula semitorquata Near threatened, migratory

Threats

Not well known, but perhaps linked to loss of old oak and beech forests.

Priority actions

Identify and monitor threats and evaluate impact on the population. Protect old oak and beech forests with diverse habitat structure.

Great Bustard

Otis tarda Vulnerable, partly migratory

Threats

Loss of undisturbed open habitats with suitable vegetation structure, collision with powerlines, destruction of eggs and chicks by agricultural activities.

Priority actions

Put underground the powerlines where risk of collision exists, ensure that agricultural practices are protecting chicks and nests, ensure protection and management of breeding sites through agrienvironmental measures

Key Member States

Spáin, Portugal, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Slovakia, Romania





Photo credits: Egyptian Vulture Ramón Elosegui, Red-footed Falcon Csaba Loki, European Roller Gabi Sierra, Semi-collared Flycatcher S. Spasov, Red Kite John Carey, Dupont's Lark © Jamie MacArthur www.ornithography.com, Marbled Teal Damiel, Aquatic Warbler Sporava Kakorytsa, Red-breasted Goose Richard Taylor-Jones, Spanish Imperial Eagle Juan Martin Simon, Balearic Shearwater J.M. Arcos, Azores Bullfinch Pedro Monteiro, Little Bustard Francisco Martin, Great Bustard M. Zumrik, Lesser Kestrel Javier Milla



Aquatic Warbler

Acrocephalus paludicola Vulnerable, migratory

Threats

Loss of traditional land management practices and abandonment of wet meadows, drainage of wetlands

Priority actions

Protect key sites and restore water regime and vegetation management in its habitats

Key Member States

Breeding: Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland On migration: The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal

Spanish Imperial Eagle

Aquila adalberti Vulnerable, resident

Threats

Electrocution at dangerous powerlines; use of poison baits and other sources of poisoning

Priority actions

Maintain abundant habitats and rabbit prey, improve and isolate powerlines and prevent poisoning through effective control and continue conservation actions

control and continue conservation act

Key Member States Spain, Portugal

Azores Bullfinch

Pyrrhula murina Endangered, resident

Threats

Loss of natural habitat to invasive plants, food shortage

Priority actions

Restoration of laurel forests, prevent encroachment of alien vegetation, produce saplings of native fruiting trees

Key Member States Portugal

Dupont's Lark

Chersophilus duponti Near threatened, resident

Threats

Not enough grazing in steppes and their loss to construction and arable farming.

Priority actions

Identify breeding areas and improve their management, prevent land conversion.



methods in the wintering areas, illegal shooting and disturbance, habitat loss through displacement, climate change.

Red-breasted Goose

Priority actions

Branta ruficollis

Protection of key sites used for roosting and grazing, promote suitable agricultural practices ensuring wheat and grass for grazing, protection from disturbance and avoid further habitat loss.

Key Member States

Romania, Bulgaria

Balearic Shearwater

Puffinus mauretanicus

Endangered, migratory

Threats

Accidental by-catch in fishing gear (e.g. longlines), nest predation by cats and genets and marine pollution

Priority actions

Reduce predation in colonies, develop and promote safe fishing methods and mitigation measures, apply strict marine pollution prevention measures

Key Member States

Spain, marine areas of France, Portugal, UK, Ireland

Little Bustard

Tetrax tetrax

Vulnerable, partly migratory

Threats

Farm machinery killing females and chicks, shortage of insect food, loss of farm mosaics with suitable vegetation structure and habitat fragmentation

Priority actions

Modifý harvesting methods to protect birds from killing, maintain diverse habitats in the farmland, ensure that SPAs holding the species are suitably managed

Key Member States

France, Italy, Portugal, Spain

Lesser Kestrel

Falco naumanni Vulnerable, migratory

Threats

Shortage of large insects and loss of habitats suitable for hunting them, transformation of dry cereals to irrigated crops

Priority actions

Maintain grazing and cereal cultivation, reduce pesticide use, protect colonies and roosting trees

Key Member States

France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain









Evaluating the implementation of Species Action Plans

Bird populations respond rapidly to threats and changing environmental conditions and their population trends are indicative of those changes. To be effective the species recovery process should be iterative – in order to learn from experience. Monitoring and reviewing of the implementation of Species Action Plans is therefore essential. It allows conservation managers to check the effectiveness of the plans so far, improve their actions where needed, and use resources efficiently.

Of the 56 Species Action Plans for Annex I bird species approved in the EU, the implementation of 31 plans has been *reviewed* at least once. By looking at how action plans achieve their targets scheduled for the short, medium and long-term, one could compare the progress made between the years. Such comparison could be made for 17 action plans for which three separate assessments were available (Figure 2).

Reviewing the action plans involves evaluating their implementation through a system of scores. By comparing the scores one can judge the relative effort made to implement each Species Action Plan, to compare across countries and to see which actions are implemented better than others.

According to the results of the 2010 assessment of 17 such plans (Figure 4), highest levels of implementation have been achieved in species which are well covered by protected areas (e.g. Fea's and Zino's Petrels, Dalmatian Pelican) or are localised in few places (e.g. the endemic Laurel Pigeons of the Canary Islands and Madeira).

On the contrary, implementation has been weaker for species that are dispersed over large areas (e.g. Lesser-spotted Eagle, Lesser Kestrel) and whose conservation requires tackling large-scale landuse pressures, such as agricultural intensification, commercial fisheries or urbanisation, all of which are causing habitat loss and degradation (e.g. Little Bustard, Balearic Shearwater).

The progress with implementation of the plans in different countries can be generalised and compared using country scores. As the number of species in each country is different, average scores were used for this purpose (Figure 5). However, this information is only indicative and does not represent the overall effectiveness of a given country to conserve species.



Figure 2. Number of EU SAPs for globally threatened species achieving their recovery targets (unknown, none, short, medium and long). Comparison for 17 SAPs across three assessments could be made, including the following species: Fea's Petrel Pterodroma feae, Zino's Petrel Pterodroma madeira, Dalmatian Pelican Pelecanus crispus, Red-breasted Goose Branta ruficollis, Marbled Teal Marmaronetta angustirostris, Cinereous Vulture Aegypius monachus, Eastern Imperial Eagle Aquila heliaca, Spanish Imperial Eagle Aquila adalberti, Lesser Kestrel Falco naumanni, Great Bustard Otis tarda, Audouin's Gull Larus audounii, Madeira Laurel Pigeon Columba trocaz, White-tailed Laurel Pigeon Columba junonae, Dark-tailed Laurel Pigeon Columba bollii, Aquatic Warbler Acrocephalus paludicola, Blue Chaffinch Fringilla teydea, and Azores Bullfinch Pyrrhula murina.



Figure 3. Comparison of the population trends of threatened bird species in the EU, Europe and globally, based on three BirdLife International assessments: State of the World Birds (2010), Birds in Europe (2004) and Birds in the European Union (2004). The figure shows that the trends of those species in the EU is on average more favourable than for their European and global population.

Population trends of the European species on the global Red List (2010)



Figure 4. Average implementation of 17 Action Plans assessed in 2010. (4 = full implementation, 3 = significant progress, 2 = some progress, 1 = no implementation).

Information about the implementation of action plans was collected through questionnaires and literature review from 35 countries and territories, including 18 EU Member States. As threatened birds are not evenly distributed in all countries some countries have been underrepresented in this assessment (e.g. UK, Latvia, Lithuania presented with only 1 species), while others (e.g. Portugal, Spain, Greece, Bulgaria and Italy) have been represented with 7 to 11 species.

g)

The implementation of action Ine implementation of action plans was generally highest in countries with small number of applicable plans (e.g. Austria) and in countries with strong traditions and systems of species recovery work (e.g. France, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Estonia) where implementation was driven by implementation was driven by legislation or active voluntary working groups. Notable efforts have been made in Portugal and Spain, the Member States with highest number of threatened species, that was often with the help of EU LIFE funding.



Figure 5. Average implementation of 17 Action Plans by the Member States (plans assessed in 2010 for the species presented in Figure 4).

	NAME AND ADDRESS OF TAXABLE PARTY.	and the second s			
	Increasing	Azores Bullfinch, EN Zino's Petrel, EN Eastern Imperial Eagle, VU Spanish Imperial Eagle, VU Lesser Kestrel, VU	Blue Chaffinch, NT Dalmatian Pelican, VU Bearded Vulture, LC	Cinereous Vulture, NT	
rrent trends	Stable	Aquatic Warbler, VU Marbled Teal, VU Bonelli's Eagle, LC Red-footed Falcon, NT	Eleonora's Falcon, LC Fea's Petrel, NT Lesser Spotted Eagle, LC Madeira Laurel Pigeon, NT Red Kite, NT	Audouin's Gull, NT	Trends uncertain (stable or increasing) Dark-tailed Laurel Pigeon, NT White-tailed Laurel Pigeon, EN Trends uncertain (stable or decreasing
Cur	Decreasing	Balearic Shearwater, CR European Roller, NT Dupont's Lark, NT Egyptian Vulture, EN	Little Bustard, VU		Semi-collared Flycatcher, NT Red-breasted Goose, EN
		Decreasing	Stable	Increasing	Hard Barris Barrison Barrison
		Trend	State of the state		

Figure 6. Comparison of the population trends change, as an indicator of the Action Plan impact. It can be deduced that the status of species in the top and middle cells has improved, at least partly because of implementation of Action Plans. Species in blue font have only recently adopted SAPs whose implementation is still limited.

Birds of dry grasslands

The original grassland ecosystems that covered much of SW and E Europe (such as the steppes) have long been replaced by agricultural land. The fields, pastures and meadows that replaced them mimic the ecological conditions of steppes and provide suitable living conditions for a great variety of birds, both resident and migratory, that have adapted to live alongside traditional farming. Agricultural and grassland habitats in Europe harbour the greatest diversity of birds. No fewer than 173 species are considered to be dependent on agricultural habitats. Among them, the steppic birds have adapted to arable lands with mixed cultivations and crops that include pasture, cereals, fodder crops and grazed fallow land. This type of farmland holds the biggest number of threatened species (83%) of any other agricultural habitat.

Because agricultural land is simple in structure, some patches of vegetation or non-cultivated land are extremely important to maintain biodiversity. Forest patches, hedges, ditches, wetlands or rocky habitats offer a refuge and suitable breeding conditions in which invertebrates and larger animals can breed, hide or roost. The presence of such micro-habitats in the farmland mosaic is essential to maintain biodiversity.

Modern farming practices change the landscape and greatly reduce the diversity and abundance of plants and animals. The most typical scenarios described as threats in recovery plans are the substitution of dry cereals with permanent cultures (e.g. olives and vineyards), or the introduction of crops that require more water, fertiliser and mechanisation. The loss of fallow land as an element of the farming mosaic is also an important factor in countries with intensive farming systems.

Red-footed Falcon

The Red-footed Falcon suffers from losing its breeding habitat and from changed farming practices that replace grasslands and cereals with maize and sunflower. The new cultures support fewer insects, which are also more difficult to hunt. This comes on top of its chronic 'housing problem': the falcons nest in rooks' nests and rook colonies are disappearing or moving to urban areas, where the falcons cannot follow.



Little Bustard

The European Little Bustard population is struggling to maintain its numbers. The main reason for its unfavourable state is the adoption of modern farming practices such as mechanised harvesting. Females and recently hatched chicks fall victim to farm machinery moving at high speed and even at night. This selective pressure on the population leads to reproductive females becoming increasingly rare.

Sara Sánchez



Typical threats to this group of birds

- Crop or grassland improvements such as increased use of fertilisers, pesticides or new crop varieties.
- The replacement of traditional crops, such as wheat with maize, sunflower, barley, or perennial crops such as olive plantations and vineyards.
- Irrigation of dry arable land and its conversion to intensively cultivated fields with increased application of pesticides, leading to a drastic reduction of invertebrate animals.
- Abandonment of marginal land or its conversion to other land-uses.
- Disappearance of non-productive habitat features, such as field margins, natural vegetation, wetlands.
- Cultivation of grasslands; conversion of hay meadows to silage.
- Crop specialisation and monocultures.
- Drainage of wetlands and depletion of aquifers.

European Roller

The European Roller is the only representative of its colourful family of birds breeding in Europe. It is a typical grassland bird that requires a mosaic of farmland habitats, in which to hunt large insects. It also needs trees with holes to breed in which are often found along rivers and small forest patches.



Reduced breeding success

Decreasing prey has immediate impact on the productivity and breeding success of many birds in this group. Their offspring starve to death and cannot support the growth of the population.

Threats

Irrigation schemes bring formerly unproductive land into intensive production, with increased use of agrochemicals and complete shifts of crops and land uses. Once irrigated the farms are often converted to more profitable crops, such as vegetables, olives or vineyards, which leave little space for the original diversity of organisms living in the typical traditional farm mosaic. The use of poisons to control pests or for persecuting predators is a sad relict, with grave consequences to threatened birds such as the Eastern Imperial Eagle, Red Kite or other unintended victims.



Marine and island birds

Europe's seas cover some 47 million km², which is almost five times the area of the continent itself. A large proportion of the sea areas constitute international waters. The importance of the marine ecosystems and biodiversity to our civilisation is huge, fishing is just one of the most obvious examples. Fish are an essential component of many European diets. The European Union fishing fleet grounds 6% of the world's marine fish catch, making the EU27 the fleet with the third largest fishing capacity. Our impact on the marine environment goes well beyond the European seas.

European Seabirds

Europe's seas support 62 bird species, or around 12% of all European birds. Seven of these are listed as threatened or near-threatened on the IUCN Red List (www.iucnredlist.org), including the critically endangered Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*, the endangered Zino's Petrel *Pterodroma madeira* and the vulnerable Steller's Eider *Polysticta stelleri*. According to BirdLife 45% of Europe's seabird species have an unfavourable conservation status at European level (BirdLife International 2004). All of these species are totally dependent on marine and coastal habitats throughout their life cycles. The distribution of seabirds in our seas is not even: 51 species occur in the seas of northwest Europe, 14 in Macaronesia and 13 in the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

Seabirds in particular are among the most visible elements of biodiversity in an otherwise cryptic marine environment. The populations of many seabirds have suffered from exploitation in the past and are now threatened. The number and size of their nesting colonies have fallen dramatically because of overfishing and because of threats at the colony: habitat destruction and invasive species.

Besides fishing, the European seas provide goods and services such as aquaculture, carbon storage, climate regulation, shipping, oil and gas extraction, aggregate and mineral extraction, energy generation, waste disposal (involving millions of tonnes of sewage sludge and dredged materials annually), military activities, and recreation – the Mediterranean is the top tourist destination globally.

Threats to birds at sea

Marine birds today are extremely vulnerable to threats that kill individuals or lead to loss of their habitat and prey. At sea, birds are threatened by over-exploitation of their prey species by:

- commercial fisheries,
- incidental catches on fishing gear (on longlines and by entanglements in nets),
- bottom trawling,
- pollution with oil, chemicals and plastics,
- increasing boat traffic,
- artificial structures, and
- climate change.

Balearic Shearwater

loana Andrade

Islands

One of the key features that makes islands so important for birds is that islands provide predator-free breeding sites. Unfortunately, this makes island breeding seabirds especially vulnerable to threats to which they have had no chance to adapt in the course of evolution.

The most common threats to island birds

The colonial breeding and wide ranging habits of many seabird species expose them to introduced and or native predators, soil erosion, vegetation change, disturbance and coastal development. Threats include:

- Habitat destruction, e.g. building on the shoreline, construction of infrastructure, clearing of native vegetation or overgrazing. Due to the limited area of islands, their capacity to absorb such pressures is limited.
- Pollution Human activities produce increasing amounts of waste, both solid and liquid, whose management is more difficult on islands due to the scarcity of land and water and the absence of long

rivers that can carry waste water away from the interior. Saline intrusion into the aquifers can also be a problem.

• Invasive Alien Species (IAS) are particularly detrimental on islands due to the fragility of the native species. On the other hand prevention and eradication are feasible on islands, but are almost impossible on the mainland.

The European islands, especially in the Mediterranean and Macaronesian regions, are particularly rich in endemic species. The native laurel forests of Madeira and the Azores have been reduced to tiny remnants of their former size, but are still home to endemic birds such as the globally Endangered Azores Bullfinch and White-tailed Laurel Pigeon and the near threatened Madeira Pigeon and Dark-tailed Pigeon. On the drier Canary Islands there are several other remarkable endemic species and subspecies: the near threatened Blue Chaffinch and the Fuerteventura Stonechat, as well as the Canarian sub-species of the endangered Egyptian Vulture.

Zino's Petrel

Zino's Petrel *Pterodroma madeira* is Europe's rarest seabird and one of the rarest birds in the world, nesting only on a few mountain ledges in the rugged central massif of Madeira island. Once on the edge of extinction, with numbers down to a few dozen pairs, intense conservation action in recent decades, led by the Parque Natural da Madeira (PNM) with support from SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal) and others, has seen its population grow to almost 80 breeding pairs. However, it is still listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.



Invasive Alien Species

An introduced species can become 'invasive' when it starts to compete for resources, destroy the habitat, introduce pathogens, breed with or simply eat a native species. IAS are especially harmful to island birds: it is estimated that IAS are the cause of more than half of the world bird extinctions. In the EU, IAS bring enormous costs to society, estimated at more than 12 billion Euro per annum⁶ for the last 20 years.

⁶ Shine *et al*. 2009

Vultures, eagles and soaring migrants

There are 39 species of diurnal birds of prey (also known as raptors) in the 27 EU member states. Among them are some of the most spectacular masters of the sky, such as the vultures, eagles and kites. According to data compiled by BirdLife, 62% of the birds of prey in Europe have an unfavourable conservation status, which is a disproportionately high number in comparison to other groups of birds. Historically raptors have been heavily persecuted by man, but this practice has long been banned by legislation. Still, raptors continue to face new threats today and their populations either recover slowly, or not at all. Worryingly the number of European raptors on the global Red List has increased from seven to ten in the last decade, reflecting genuine reductions in the populations of several species as a result of modern threats.

Threatened raptors in the EU

The European raptor most threatened globally is the Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*, which is **endangered** in the global Red List and rapidly declining in most countries.

Five species are listed as vulnerable:

- Saker Falcon Falco cherrug
- Greater-spotted Eagle Aquila clanga
 Eastern Imperial Eagle Aquila heliaca
- Spanish Imperial Eagle A. adalberti
- Lesser Kestrel Falco naumanni.

Three other are listed as near threatened: • Red Kite Milvus milvus (which is virtually

- endemic to Europe) Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*.



At the same time, some of the most remarkable success stories in bird conservation are focused on birds of prey. Over the last 15 years Species Action Plans were developed for 19 European raptors and adopted by the EU (17 species) and the Bern and Bonn Conventions (two more species).

Threats to scavengers

Human activities with high land use impact (e.g. agriculture, forestry, mineral resource extraction, urbanisation) are among the greatest threats to birds in Europe, because they cause permanent loss of suitable habitat. Scavengers and large birds of prey are very sensitive, because they require large expanses of preserved habitat and do not easily coexist with humans. Once exposed to a threat, their populations are slow to recover and remain vulnerable for a long time, even after the immediate reason for the decline is eliminated. However, some threats are specifically important for this group of birds, because being on the top of the food chain makes them particularly vulnerable.

Poison baits

Poisons form the most important threat for all scavenging birds of prey in Europe today (vultures, kites, buzzards and some eagles). It is caused by the illegal use of baits to poison terrestrial predators, to protect livestock and game. Although the use of poison baits is strictly prohibited in the EU it is still widespread in many countries.

Poisonous substances

Pesticides that are legally used in agriculture are often used illegally in poison baits (e.g. PCB organochlorines). As these chemicals are easy to obtain

on the free market, the control of their application remains a huge challenge. Other sources of secondary poisoning include the consumption of inappropriately disposed poisoned animals (e.g. rodents) at rubbish dumps, consumption of dead livestock treated with veterinary medicines or consumption of lead pellets (lead shot).

Eastern imperial eagle Aquila heliaca

This magnificent eagle was formerly distributed throughout the steppes from Central Europe to Mongolia, but its European population was nearly extinct. Thanks to concerted conservation efforts in its Pannonian stronghold, the EU population has seen a dramatic recovery. From as few as 20 pairs left, there are now 200 and numbers are growing. There is much more work to be done before its status is again secure, but recent achievements through LIFE and other funding have paved the way to its recovery.



Threats to soaring birds on migration

The larger and broad winged raptors, storks and pelicans are collectively referred to as 'soaring birds', due to the fact that they cannot maintain active flapping flight over long distances. Instead they depend on rising hot air (thermals) over the dry land, on which they can soar and glide along their migratory routes, avoiding seas and high mountains on the way. This energy saving, passive flight method also makes them extremely vulnerable to dangers, especially at the so called bottleneck sites – places where geographical features concentrate the migratory routes of soaring migrants.

There are two broad types of threats common for many species in this category.

- Habitat changes at stopover sites, where birds need to store energy before crossing ecological barriers, can limit the available prey or safe roosting places, thus reducing the fitness and survival of soaring birds during this challenging journey. With the help of radio and satellite tracking it has been possible to study the effect of the loss of good habitats to e.g. urbanisation.
- For all soaring birds the collision with aerial structures, such as power-lines and wind turbines, represents a significant threat when these structures are badly located. While some species can cope with the impacts of these threats, others are already threatened by other factors and this additional mortality can bring them over a tipping point.





Egyptian Vulture Neophron percnopterus

The smallest of the vulture species is currently the most threatened European raptor. It is also a truly migratory species, spending the entire non-breeding period in Sub-Saharan Africa. Egyptian vultures live many years but reproduce very slowly. Therefore if adult birds die the overal loss to the population is very difficult to compensate. The most widespread threats to this species are poisoning, followed by the scarcity of food resources in its changing habitats related to agricultural intensification, decline of grazing livestock and increased sanitation of rural areas. The recent expansion of wind farms and electric grids has increased the number of casualties by collision and electrocution.

Cinereous Vulture Aegypius monachus

The population of the largest European vulture has been increasing by 10–20% since the adoption of its action plan in the mid-1990s. Active conservation measures in Spain, France and Greece have been extremely successful in bringing this magnificent bird back from the brink. Key threats – persecution and disturbance by forestry operations – have been addressed by legal measures and with the designation of protected areas. The decline of grazing wildlife and livestock, especially in the mountain regions, remains the main obstacle to its further recovery. Poisoning is a critical threat to the species, whose home range extends well beyond the largest of protected areas. Restoring the population to its pre-decline levels and recolonisation of countries from which it has gone extinct remains very unlikely due to the permanent loss of suitable habitats. Therefore, this long lived and slowly reproducing species is likely to remain dependent on conservation measures for a long time.

General overview of threats to the habitats of threatened birds

Did the introduction of the Common Agricultural Policy into the new member states result in similar major declines in key bird populations? In the German state of Saxony-Anhalt, after 1990, farming shifted from rotational cultivation (e.g. root-crops) to oilseed rape and winter cereals, which led to a reduction in grassland area and increased insecticide and herbicide use. In the same period, Red Kite numbers fell by 50% from more than 40 nesting pairs to about 20 pairs per 100 km² (Nicolai et al. 2009).



Birds are vital component of any healthy ecosystem and they play an important ecological role. Birds belong to the top levels of the food web and their populations are affected both directly and indirectly by underlying changes, for example through their habitats or the organisms they feed on. Many of the threatened birds show some degree of specialisation to particular habitat features on which they depend. The loss or alteration of these special features is particularly detrimental to those birds, known as habitat specialists. Human activities in the wider environment often lead to ecological simplification, a direct result of the loss of species diversity.

In addition to their breeding grounds, migratory species are exposed to threats and pressures both in their non-breeding range and along their migratory routes. While the effects of some threats can be compensated by more successful breeding, other threats cannot be compensated and their negative impact accumulates. The following table summarises the most commonly reported threats to the habitats of threatened bird species in three key ecosystems in the EU as identified by EU Species Action Plans.

Recent biodiversity trends in the EU

According to recent reports of conservation status of habitats and species in the EU (EEA, 2010):

- Only 21% of the forest habitat types are in favourable conservation status.
- 70% of the species and 76% of the habitats linked to agro-ecosystems are in unfavourable conservation status.
- Farmland birds have declined with about 50% since 1980, worse than any other group of birds in the EU.
- Of 152 bird species associated with grassland habitats, 89 (59%) are considered as having unfavourable status.

Threat	Farmland and grasslands	Forests	Marine and coastal areas
Habitat loss and degradation	Irrigation Replacement of extensively managed crops Loss of grasslands to other land-uses Loss of habitat diversity and natural elements Depletion of prey Inappropriate levels of grazing Abandonment and overgrowth with shrubs	Fragmentation of suitable habitats Loss of nest sites Disturbance by operations Loss of habitat diversity (e.g. specialised micro-habitats) Increased risk and exposure to natural disasters and threats Limited movements and exchange of individuals	Construction in coastal zone Loss of intertidal ecosystems Dredging and bottom trawling Drainage and pollution of wetlands
Invasive alien species	Invasive vegetation Loss of natural species diversity (e.g. competition by IAS)	Invasive vegetation Food resource depletion Exotic plantations	Invasive marine species Predators on islands Food web disruptions
Pollution and nutrient load	Pesticides Fertilisers	Soil acidification Increased nutrient loads Pesticides	Eutrophication Marine litter Oil and chemical pollution Toxic algae blooms
Overexploitation and unsustainable use	Intensification of farming Increased mechanisation Loss of set aside/fallow	Logging, especially clearfells Loss of mature trees and structural diversity	Depletion of fish and other marine organisms Incidental catch in fishing gear
Climate change	Accelerate habitat changes Salinisation Loss of wetlands Impacts on prey	Intense forest fires Changes in the hydrology (e.g. drainage of peat bogs and mires)	Surface temperature rising Coastal squeeze e.g. loss of intertidal habitats Changing erosion/accretion

Natura 2000 and threatened birds

The identification and conservation of the key territories (sites) where a species breeds, uses for feeding, roosting and stop-over during migration is a critical requirement in any species recovery effort. In the EU, the establishment of the Natura 2000 Network is the main tool and legal requirement that follows directly from the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. Under the Birds Directive, sites need to be classified for 192 species of birds listed in Annex I of the Directive. Member States must classify sites for other regularly occurring migratory bird species not listed in Annex I, bearing in mind the need to protect their breeding, moulting



and wintering areas and staging posts along their migration routes, for example wetlands of international importance. These sites are called Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and are included directly into the European Natura 2000 Network. SPAs must be subject to special habitat conservation measures in order to ensure the survival and reproduction of the migratory and Annex I birds in their area of distribution.

Natura 2000 is an ecological network of sites spanning 27 EU countries, which includes over 26,000 sites so far, covering about one-fifth of the EU's land area. The Natura 2000 Network extends also the marine environment where the designation of sites is still ongoing.

The review of Species Action Plans carried out recently by BirdLife shows that there has been significant progress with the inclusion of threatened birds' populations in Natura 2000. For the large majority of the species Natura 2000 holds more than half or even 100% of their population at any given stage of their life cycle. For other species, which are still more common or are thinly dispersed over large areas, their inclusion in protected areas is lower. Their conservation must be therefore achieved through other means. For example, agrienvironmental schemes and improved management of the forests has been vital to implement the action plans of several species, such as the Spanish and Eastern Imperial Eagles, Great Bustard, Lesser Kestrel and others.





Legend

Not Protected

Sources

Important Bird Areas: BirdLife International, 2011 Protected Areas: World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), compiled by UNEP-WCMC (WDPA custodian), 2010

(WDPA custodian), 2010 Natura 2000: European Environment Agency, 2010

Bathymetry: Reproduced from the GEBCO Digital Atlas published by the British Oceanographic Commission (of UNESCO) and the International Hydrographic Organisation (2003).

Topography: Reproduced from GLOBE Digital Elevation Model. The Global Land One- kilometer Base: Elevation (GLOBE) Digital Elevation Model, Version 1.0 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administraton , National Geophysial Data Centre, 235 Broadway, Boulder, Colorado 80305-3328 U S A

Map created January 2011

0 250 500 1,000 kms

Projection - European Terrestrial Reference System 1989 Lambert Azimuthal Equal Area

Figure 8. Protection status of IBAs with occurrence of 17 threatened species with EU action plans, whose implementation was assessed in 2010: Balearic Shearwater (*Puffinus mauretanicus*), Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*), Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), Zino's Petrel (*Pterodroma madeira*), Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*), Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), Fea's Petrel (*Pterodroma feae*), Audouin's Gull (*Larus audounii*), White-tailed Laurel Pigeon (*Columba junionae*), Dark-tailed Laurel pigeon (*Columba bollii*), Madeira Laurel Pigeon (*Columba trocaz*), Blue Chaffinch (*Fringilla teydea*), Lesser-spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), Eleonora's Falcon (*Falco eleonorae*), Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraeetus fasciatus*), Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*).

LIFE for threatened birds

The LIFE fund has been the main tool used by the Commission to stimulate the implementation of priority conservation measures for the threatened species and habitats in the EU. For example during 1992–2003 LIFE-Nature has invested some €367 million in projects targeting threatened bird species. This figure is not yet final for the current LIFE+ period, but estimates were made for a subset of threatened birds during their action plan reviews (Figure 9).

Once the species in need of action were identified and the necessary conservation actions clear, LIFE was the element of the bird conservation strategy of the EU that helped with the development, testing and implementation of conservation actions on the ground. To focus the project applicants to the need of implementing the action plans, LIFE offered increased (up to 75%) co-financing to projects that aimed at priority species. Each year LIFE has supported on average 30–40 projects targeting birds, among which at least five are exclusively for priority species.

In relation to threatened birds in particular, the contribution of LIFE has been very successful. This is



LIFE projects between 2004 and 2010 to the implementation of the action plans of 17 threatened species reviewed in 2010.

confirmed by the fact that eight out of the 23 best LIFE projects in 2009 were projects targeting the conservation of threatened birds. Furthermore, thanks to LIFE it was possible to bring several bird species back from near-extinction. Below are some examples.

The return of the Spanish Imperial Eagle

Thanks to targeted strategic support from the LIFE programme, the Spanish Imperial Eagle population has increased six-fold in the past 15 years. This has seen numbers of the species increase from a vulnerable 50 reproductive pairs in 1995 to a much more stable 300 pairs in the Iberian peninsula today.

Since 1992 LIFE has funded a three-phase action programme for the conservation of the Spanish imperial eagle, with separate but connected projects taking place simultaneously in Castilla y Leon, Castilla la Mancha, Extremadura, Andalucia and Madrid. In total, LIFE has invested more than 10 million Euros into conservation of this species. Of course, measures targeted at conserving the habitat of such a top predator as the Imperial Eagle benefit many other species.

Saving the Priolo and its forest

LIFE03/NAT/P/000013 (2009) (Best of the Best in 2009)

The Azores Bullfinch ('Priolo') was one of the most threatened European birds (until recently critically endangered). Focused conservation action funded by LIFE and other donors helped to relieve the threat of extinction to this bullfinch and its native laurel forest. The Priolo project succeeded in generating a high level of mobilisation from local and regional stakeholders in the Azores towards this goal. Extremely positive trends were seen both in recovery of native vegetation and in bullfinch numbers: the population levels at the end of the project reached about 775 individuals – almost three times higher than in 2005.

Dalmatian Pelicans at Lake Mikri Prespa

LIFE02/NAT/GR/008494 (Best of the Best in 2008)

Following successful ecological restoration funded by LIFE, the Prespa lakes, shared between Greece, Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), host the world's largest breeding colony of Dalmatian Pelicans, an estimated 20% of the entire world population of this vulnerable species. Two factors that contributed to this remarkable success: the restoration of the lake's productive ecosystem and controlling persecution and poaching. The conservation project at the Prespa Lakes is a model transboundary cooperation, which is now strengthened with a trilateral agreement and a plan of actions between the governments of the three countries.



EU sector policies impact and contribution to threatened birds conservation

While species recovery is one of the core tasks of the EU biodiversity policy, European biodiversity is primarily affected by human activities (drivers) outside the direct influence of the environmental sector, such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries and urbanisation. Among these, agriculture is still the most important, as half of the EU territory is covered by farmland (including grasslands). Forests cover another 42% of the EU and forestry is another major driver, as 75% of EU forests are commercially exploited (e.g. for fibre and biomass). In the marine environment, fishing and aquacultures, maritime transport and resource extraction are the main human activities affecting marine biodiversity.

Therefore the conservation of threatened birds depends also on broader land-use and water-use patterns. The fundamental condition is to ensure that the relevant policies take into account biodiversity and avoid as far as possible any negative impacts. Agriculture and forestry, for example, can not only co-exist with threatened birds, but actually improve and maintain their habitats if suitable measures are taken. Once this is ensured (e.g. through participatory planning and effective impact assessment) the next step is to bring in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, transport and energy into actively supporting nature conservation objectives through targeted funding or stimulation of favourable management practices.

The Eurasian Curlew Numenius arquata breeds on the wet meadows in Northern Europe and in the tundra but migrates along the coasts and feeds in wetlands. It is therefore exposed to a range of factors influenced by land-use.

Some key ecological objectives for these sectoral policies are to:

1) Ensure that further exploitation of natural resources is sustainable

Our civilisation depends on the already scarce natural resources of our planet. Their overuse is the fundamental cause for most of the environmental degradation, including biodiversity loss. For example, the greater use of biomass from agriculture and forestry has the potential to further degrade habitat quality for many specialised organisms. Any measure towards sustainability should therefore take into biodiversity needs. As EU moves towards a greener and low carbon economy, biodiversity needs should be considered.

2) Maintain the presence of natural features within manmade ecosystems

Semi-natural and other High Nature Value areas are extremely important habitat for Europe's threatened birds. For example, more than 400 IBAs in Europe consist of grasslands used for agriculture. Field margins and forest patches in lowland areas play the role of ecological refuges for biodiversity. Their preservation is essential for the survival of biodiversity in the farmland.

3) Ensure the connectivity of natural ecosystems

Many species are dispersed and their populations cannot be sufficiently represented in protected areas. For example, some forest dwelling species such as the White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos* and Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus* depend on very rare resources and thus live in low densities across the landscape. Their local populations must be functionally connected to ensure their reproduction and survival. Therefore the forest habitats beyond the protected areas should maintain at least a minimum amount of suitable living conditions to enable such animals to migrate. If the habitats between protected areas are ecologically unusable for them, even the most representative populations included in protected areas would be ecologically isolated and prone to extinction.

Sustainable use of birds in the EU

Hunting

Article 7 of the Birds Directive regulates the hunting of birds. Hunting and taking of birds is only authorised for the species listed in Annex II of the Directive. But also for these species hunting has to comply with certain rules, for example:

- hunting must not jeopardise the conservation efforts for these species, and it must comply with the principle of 'wise use'
- Member States must prohibit hunting during the breeding season and during the period of return of migratory species to their breeding grounds
- according to Article 8 Member States must prohibit the use of hunting methods which are non-selective (e.g. trapping birds with nets) – these methods are listed in Annex IV of the Directive
- to derogate from these rules very strict conditions have to be fulfilled (Article 9).

In the framework of its Sustainable Hunting Initiative, the European Commission has issued a *Guide on Hunting under the Birds Directive*. For huntable species that are in unfavourable conservation status, the European Commission, together with stakeholders and Member States, has prepared **management plans** that define priority measures to be taken to return these species to a favourable status.

Management plans for huntable species in unfavourable conservation status

The main tenet set in the Birds Directive for hunting of selected bird species is that any use of wild birds must satisfy the principle of wise and ecologically balanced use. This goes in particular for those huntable species that are in unfavourable conservation status.

Irrespective of whether hunting is among the reasons for the decline of these species, hunters have a special responsibility and interest to work with others to bring these populations back to favourable conditions. The management plans for these species define the actions necessary to reverse the negative trends in their populations, including habitat restoration measures or (if necessary) temporary hunting restrictions or bans. Thus the management plans, just like the Species Action Plans, are also recovery plans – their primary aim is to recover the target species to a favourable state through identifying and prioritising conservation actions.

A regular system of evaluating and updating the management plans is desired. This would include an assessment of the results achieved during the first three years. During this process new objectives for the next period should be identified that will lead most effectively to the recovery of the populations and the achievement of the long-term objective to restore the species to a favourable conservation status.

Approved plans

Plans which have been approved by the national Delegates of the Member States in the ORNIS Committee and NGOs such as FACE, BirdLife International, OMPO and Wetlands International:

- Black-tailed Godwit Limosa limosa
- Velvet Scoter Melanita fusca
- Curlew *Numenius arquata* (near threatened on the global Red List)
- Pintail Anas acuta
- Red-crested Pochard Netta rufina
- Skylark Alauda arvensis
- Turtle Dove Streptopelia turtur

Plans which have been finalised in 2009:

- Scaup Aythya marila
- Common Gull Larus canus
- Golden Plover Pluvialis apricaria
- Lapwing Vanellus vanellus
- Common Quail Coturnix coturnix
- Redshank Tringa totanus



Annex

Current list of European bird species with recovery plans and their endorsement by EU and international agreements (as of June 2011).

Recovery plan											
Species	Subspecies or population	Global Red List category (IUCN 2010)	SPEC category (BirdLife 2004)	European Threat Status (BirdLife, 2004)	Approved by the EU	Endorsed by Bern Conv.**	Endorsed by Bonn Conv.	Endorsed by AEWA	Year of preparation and latest revision	Year of latest implementation review	Priority for funding LIFE
Pterodroma feae Fea's Petrel		NT	SPEC 1	VU	Х	Х			1996	2004	x
Pterodroma madeira Zino's Petrel		EN	SPEC 1	(CR)	х	х			1996	2010	х
Puffinus mauretanicus Balearic Shearwater		CR	SPEC 1	CR	х	х			2000, 2011	2010	x
Phalacrocorax aristotelis European Shag	P.a. desmarestii only		Non-SPECE	(S)	х	х			2000		x
Phalacrocorax pygmeus Pygmy Cormorant			SPEC 1	S	х	х	х		1996	2004	x
Pelecanus crispus Dalmatian Pelican		VU	SPEC 1	R	х	х	х		1996	2004	x
Botaurus stellaris Great Bittern	B.s. stellaris only		SPEC 3	Н	х				1996		х
Anser erythropus Lesser White-fronted Goose		VU	SPEC 1	EN	х	Х	х	х	1996, 2008	2008	х
Branta ruficollis Red-breasted Goose		EN	SPEC 1	VU	х	Х	х	in prep.	1996, 2010	2011	x
Marmaronetta angustirostris Marbled Teal	W Med population only	VU	SPEC 1	(VU)	х	х	х		1996, 2008	2008	x
Aythya nyroca Ferruginous Duck		NT	SPEC 1	(VU)	х	х	х	х	1999, 2006		х
Polysticta stelleri Steller's Eider		VU	SPEC 3W	L	х	х	х		1999		х
Oxyura leucocephala White-headed Duck		EN	SPEC 1	VU	х	Х	х	х	1996, 2006	2004	х
Milvus milvus Red Kite		NT	SPEC 2	D	х				2010		
Gypaetus barbatus Lammergeier			SPEC 3	(VU)	х	х			1999	2010	х
Neophron percnopterus Egyptian Vulture		EN	SPEC 3	EN	х				2008		x
Aegypius monachus Cinereous Vulture		NT	SPEC 1	R	х	Х	х		1996	2010	х
Accipiter gentilis Northern Goshawk	A.g. arrigonii only		Non-SPEC	S	х	х			1996		х
Accipiter nisus Eurasian Sparrowhawk	A.n. granti only		Non-SPEC	S	х	х			1996		х
Aquila pomarina Lesser Spotted Eagle			SPEC 2	(D)	х	Х			1999	2010	х
Aquila clanga Greater Spotted Eagle		VU	SPEC 1	EN	х	х	х		1999		х
Aquila heliaca Imperial Eagle		VU	SPEC 1	R	х	х	х		1996	2010	х
Aquila adalberti Spanish Imperial Eagle		VU	SPEC 1	(EN)	х	х	х		1996, 2008	2008	х
Hieraaetus fasciatus Bonelli's Eagle			SPEC 3	EN	х	х			1999	2010	х
Falco naumanni Lesser Kestrel		VU	SPEC 1	Η	х	х	X		1996, 2000, 2011	2010	х
Falco vespertinus Red-footed Falcon		NT	SPEC 3	(VU)	х				2009		х
Falco eleonorae Eleonora's Falcon			SPEC 2	D	х	х			2000	2010	х
Falco biarmicus Lanner Falcon			SPEC 3	VU	х	х			2000		х
Falco cherrug Saker Falcon		EN	SPEC 1	EN	х	х			2006		х
Falco rusticolus Gyrfalcon			SPEC 3	(R)	х	х			2000		х
Alectoris graeca Rock Partridge	A.g. whitakeri only		SPEC 2	(D)	х	х			2000		х

Recovery plan											
Species	Subspecies or population	Global Red List category (IUCN 2010)	SPEC category (BirdLife 2004)	European Threat Status (BirdLife, 2004)	Approved by the EU	Endorsed by Bern Conv.**	Endorsed by Bonn Conv.	Endorsed by AEWA	Year of preparation and latest revision	Year of latest implementation review	Priority for funding LIFE
Perdix perdix Grey Partridge	P.p. italica only		SPEC 3	VU	х	х			2000		х
<i>Crex crex</i> Corncrake		NT	SPEC 1	Н	x	х	x	Х	1996, 2000, 2006	2004	x
Porphyrio porphyrio Purple Swamphen			SPEC 3	L	х	х			2000		x
Fulica cristata Red-knobbed Coot			SPEC 3	CR	х	х			2000		х
Tetrax tetrax Little Bustard		NT	SPEC 1	VU	х	х			1999, 2011	2010*	х
Chlamydotis undulata Houbara Bustard		VU	SPEC 1	(VU)	х	х			1996	2004, 2006	х
<i>Otis tarda</i> Great Bustard	* Middle European populations only	VU	SPEC 1	VU	х		х		1996, 2010	2004, 2006, 2009	x
Cursorius cursor Cream-coloured Courser			SPEC 3	(EN)	х	х			2000		х
Gallinago media Great Snipe		NT	SPEC 1	D	х	х		х	2003		
Limosa limosa Black-tailed Godwit (**)		NT	SPEC 2	VU	х			х	2008		
Numenius tenuirostris Slender-billed Curlew		CR	SPEC 1	NE	х	х	х	х	1996	2004	х
Larus audouinii Audouin's Gull		NT	SPEC 1	L	х	х	х	х	1996	2010*	х
Sterna dougallii Roseate Tern			SPEC 3	R	х	х			2000		х
Columba trocaz Madeira Laurel Pigeon		NT	SPEC 1	(R)	х	х			1996	2010*	Х
Columba bollii Dark-tailed Laurel Pigeon		NT	SPEC 1	(R)	х	х			1996	2010*	х
Columba junoniae White-tailed Laurel Pigeon		EN	SPEC 1	EN	x	x			1996	2010*	x
Coracias garrulus European Roller		NT	SPEC 2	VU	х				2008		
Dendrocopos major Great Spotted Woodpecker	D.m. canariensis, D.m. thanneri only		Non-SPEC	S	X	х			2000		х
Chersophilus duponti Dupont's Lark		NT	SPEC 3	(H)	х				2008		
Acrocephalus paludicola Aquatic Warbler		VU	SPEC 1	(VU)	х		х		2003, 2008	2008	х
Ficedula semitorquata Semi-collared Flycatcher		NT	SPEC 2	D	х				2010		
Fringilla teydea Blue Chaffinch		NT	SPEC 1	R	х	х			1996	2010*	х
Loxia scotica Scottish Crossbill		DD	SPEC 1	DD	х	х			2000		x
Pyrrhula murina Azores Bullfinch		CR	SPEC 1	(EN)	х	х			1996, 2009	2009	х

Legend:

Global Red List category is provided according to IUCN Red List (2010).

SPEC categories and European Threat Status according to BirdLife International (2004) *Birds in Europe: population estimates, trends and conservation status.* Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International. (BirdLife Conservation Series No. 12).

** Limosa limosa Black-tailed godwit has a Management Plan in the EU and a Single Species Action Plan under AEWA.

For more information about the conservation of threatened birds in the EU, including links to the latest documents please visit the European Commission website: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/threatened/index_en.htm



