

The Birds and Habitats Directives

‘Fit as a fiddle!’

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BirdLife Europe

- European and Central Asian Partnership of BirdLife International
- Partners in all EU Member States
- Long history with the Birds and Habitats Directives
 - Important Bird Areas
 - Implementation
 - BirdLife-FACE Agreement

Effectiveness

LETTER

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Assessing the Performance of EU Nature Legislation in Protecting Target Bird Species in an Era of Climate Change

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Keywords

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Abstract

International legislation forms a cornerstone of conservation, yet its efficacy is rarely quantified. We assess whether species listed on Annex I of the European Union (EU) Birds Directive, for which EU Member States are obliged to implement special conservation measures, differ systematically in their short-term (2001-2012) or long-term (1980-2012) population trends from those of non-Annex I species. In both periods, Annex I species had more positive trends than non-Annex I species, particularly in countries that joined the EU earlier. There were additional signatures of climate change and life history strategy in the trends of species in one or both periods. Within Annex I species, long-distance migrants fared significantly worse than other species, suggesting that enhanced protection on the breeding grounds alone may be insufficient for these species. We conclude that the EU's conservation legislation has had a demonstrably positive impact on target species, even during a period in which climate change has significantly affected populations.

Effectiveness



Efficiency

- Mature and clear legal framework
 - EC Guidance, European Court of Justice, sectoral good practice.
- Long-standing cooperation with stakeholders
 - Renewable Grid Initiative
 - Cement industry (Heidelberg Cement, CEMBureau)
 - FACE
 - Port developers

Relevance

- Birds and Habitats Directive among the most popular pieces of EU legislation
 - 500 000 responses to the public consultation as part of the #NatureAlert campaign
 - Citizens rely on the EU – a large number of citizens every year ask the European Commission to take action to protect their nature.

EU added value

- Nature as a common heritage
- Migratory species (but also sedentary ones!)

Coherence

Supported by:

- ✓ Environmental policy (on water, air, environmental crime etc.)

Potentially supported by:

- ? Common Fisheries Policy 2014-2020

Undermined by:

- ✗ Common Agricultural Policy 2014-2020
- ✗ Energy Policy (bioenergy: biogas, intensification for first generation biofuels, forests inside EU)

What the Birds and Habitats Directives need (1/2)...

Better implementation

- Enforcement
 - Illegal killing of birds
 - More enforcement capacity in the Commission and the EU Member States
 - Minimum standards on Environmental inspections
 - Acces to Environmental Justice
 - Modern technology
- Investments
 - Only 10-20% of the funds for management of Natura 2000 currently available
 - Way to unlock the potential of sites and create income to rural communities

Partnership for nature and people

What the Birds and Habitats Directives need (2/2)...

Policy reform

- Common Agricultural Policy



<http://europe.birdlife.org>