



# Annual Report 2022

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BirdLife Europe & Central Asia in Brussels is one of the six global offices of BirdLife International – the world's largest partnership of conservation organisations. Our mission is to protect and conserve birds and their habitats, and to ensure that nature is protected for future generations. We represent 44 national BirdLife Partners from 43 European and Central Asian countries, including all EU Member States.

We work with a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, researchers, and local communities to achieve our goals, and we benefit from the expertise and knowledge of over 2,700 conservation professionals.

We focus on birds because they are vital indicators of the health of our environment. By protecting birds, we can secure the conservation of entire ecosystems and fight both the climate and biodiversity crises. Our work is guided by the best available science and our actions are based on evidence and expert knowledge.



# Table of contents

Foreword	4
Time to act	5
<b>OCEANS</b>	
More fish for seabirds at Dogger Bank	6
Precious space: Maritime Spatial Plans can bring back nature at sea	7
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>	
The Common Agriculture Policy still fails to deliver for farmers and nature	8
Our fight for a better Renewable Energy Directive continues	9
<b>NATURE AND CLIMATE</b>	
The EU law to restore nature: history in the making	11
Recovering Nature in the East	11
New BirdLife partnership with Sibelco brings nature back to quarries	13
<b>BIRDS AND HABITATS</b>	
The impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on wild birds and their habitats	15
Four BirdLife Partners selected as finalists Natura2000 Award	16
Stopping birds from getting electrocuted by power lines	18
Hunters and ornithologists partner up to end raptor persecution	19
Thank you to our supporters!	20
Governance & Finances	24
The Team	26

## Foreword

2022 has been a year defined by the resurgence of large-scale conflict in our region. While other parts of our region have seen violence, repression and instability, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has sent shockwaves that reverberate through nearly all aspects of our work.

Our immediate priority has been to provide relief to our colleagues fleeing the war in Ukraine and the political repression in neighbouring Belarus where our Partner APB has been forcibly shut down by the government.

And amidst this chaos, vested interests have exploited the devastating war, notably the agricultural and forestry lobbies, to impede action on the nature and climate crises and derail the EU Green Deal. Undeterred, we have persistently and tirelessly fought back to ensure that nature takes its much-necessary place on the agenda. In the midst of this unfolding tragedy, there is a silver lining: the remarkable acceleration of renewable energy

deployment. Now, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that the energy transition takes place hand-in-hand with the preservation of nature and the well-being of people.

While the dark clouds of political violence and ecological collapse loomed ahead, we also witnessed many sparks of hope. From local and national conservation successes spearheaded by our 44 BirdLife Partners to the global commitment to protect and restore nature, adopted in Montreal at the end of 2022, we can see a more hopeful path for humanity being carved out. It is a path built on cooperation and shared responsibility in ensuring a liveable future for all. From advocating for ground-breaking EU legislation to restore nature, to launching a major restoration initiative to the eastern part of our region, we stand at the forefront of transitioning from merely preserving what remains of nature, to bringing back what has been lost.

As we celebrated our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we reflected on BirdLife's achievements over the past decades in the fields of science and policy, as well as our triumphs in saving species from the brink of extinction. With our newly adopted ten-year strategy, we will continue to leverage our robust scientific knowledge, pragmatic approach, deep grassroots connections, and unique local-to-global structure, to amplify the voice of nature and of the millions of citizens who care about it.

**Ariel Brunner**  
Regional Director, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia

## Time to act

In 2022, BirdLife published the fifth edition of its flagship report, the "State of the World's Birds".

Birds are better known and more widely studied than any other group of animals. With their popularity, global presence, and ability to swiftly respond to environmental changes they serve as excellent "ecological indicators". By collating and analysing bird data, we not only understand how their population is doing but are also afforded an unparalleled insight into the health of the natural world as a whole. By studying birds, we are able to take the pulse of the planet.

The State of the World's Birds summarizes what birds, as barometers of planetary health, tell us about the state of nature, the pressures upon it, and the necessary solutions. Alarming, the data paints a deeply concerning picture with nearly half of all bird species in decline, and more than one in eight facing the risk of extinction. The causes behind these declines are well-known, with human activities being the primary driver. Conservation efforts face mounting challenges, and time is of

the essence. This is the critical decade that demands immediate action.

Fortunately, birds also tell us which actions are needed to help restore nature and show us that conservation action truly works. BirdLife celebrated its 100th anniversary in September 2022 – a historic moment that brought together conservationists and renowned advocates for the environment to work together and bring nature back from the brink. The historic milestone presented the perfect opportunity to launch our new, ambitious ten-year global strategy, designed to combat the nature and climate crises threatening our very existence.

The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is the world's best and perhaps last chance to halt the loss of nature. Governments must now succeed where they have previously failed, by translating their promises into concrete action. Our future, and that of the world's birds, depends on it.



White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) © Yves Adams



## Oceans

**The EU has pledged to fully protect 30% of the oceans, shift to low-impact fishing, remove pollution from seas, and restore marine ecosystems by 2030. We strive for significant progress towards this goal and to protect our seabirds that wander across land, sea, and sky.**

### More fish for seabirds at Dogger Bank

After decades of advocacy from The Royal Society of the Protection of Birds – our Partner in the UK – the UK government will prohibit the use of damaging fishing gear in four Marine Protected Areas, including in the Dogger Bank, the largest sandbank in the central-southern North Sea. A much-needed step towards protecting the UK’s network of Marine Protected Areas!

The Dogger Bank is rich with sand eel, a small, fatty fish and a key food source for seabirds and their

chicks, including kittiwakes, puffins, and terns, as well as marine mammals and predatory fish. Studies have demonstrated the link between the decline of some seabird species and the reduced availability of sand eel, which is heavily fished in the UK. Prohibiting bottom-towed fishing gear will end targeted sand eel fishing in the Marine Protected Areas.

With our UK Partner, the RSPB, we have been calling on governments to throw a lifeline to some of our most loved seabirds for decades, and this news gives us hope. But much is yet to be done to halt and reverse their decline. Protected areas

are a vital tool to help nature thrive, but out of the UK’s 40 marine protected areas, 36 remain unprotected from harmful activities. A recent report from our colleagues at the Marine Conservation Society has highlighted that damaging fishing activities continued to take place in 98% of offshore protected areas designated to protect seabed habitats around the UK, compromising their purpose since they were originally designated to protect these fragile marine ecosystems.

From properly managing and enforcing Marine Protected Areas to ensuring better protection of seabirds, we are eager to see how governments will fight to recover the internationally important seabird populations for the future.

### Precious space: Maritime Spatial Plans can bring back nature at sea

Our seas are pressed for space. Activities such as fishing, extraction of raw materials, shipping, tourism, aquaculture, as well as installations to produce renewable energy are steadily increasing the density of exploited areas. It is crucial to manage these activities in a coordinated and coherent way. Maritime Spatial Planning aims to do this following an ecosystem-based approach that ensures the achievement of a “Good Environmental Status” for our seas. But will EU Maritime Spatial Plans deliver on this?

According to the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, EU countries should have established their Maritime Spatial Plans by March 2021. Yet in 2022, many EU countries were still lagging, and the Commission opened infringement procedures against five of them. Several Member States that have finalised their MSP still fall short of the requirements. BirdLife assessed the marine spatial plans of Belgium,

Germany, Latvia, and Sweden against 19 criteria to determine the extent to which the plans are likely to support the achievement of EU environmental and climate objectives.

The results are disheartening. Not only are all four plans likely to fail to deliver Good Environmental Status, but they are also likely to significantly increase the cumulative pressures on the marine environment. The plans fail to consider the cumulative impacts across all sectors and to fully account for the volume and intensity of planned/projected activities over the period of the plan. The conservation and restoration of the marine environment should not be subject to the whims of industrial sectors but should define the boundaries and set limits on the scale and intensity of these other uses.

In our new report, BirdLife makes recommendations on how EU countries can improve their plans and their implementation, and to ensure that all established and emerging uses of marine space are included. We also recommend that a systematic and spatially explicit analysis of ecosystem functionality, connectivity, and sensitivity informs all decisions about the planning and regulation of human activities at sea. Plans must be underpinned by a coherent network of effectively managed Marine Protected Areas and include measures for both passive and active restoration, as well as recognise the contribution of marine and coastal ecosystems to climate change mitigation.

In the face of the current environmental, climate, energy, and geopolitical crises, and the scale and speed of the deployment of offshore renewables that is necessary, it is vital that EU countries seize the unique opportunity provided by Marine Spatial Planning to address existing pressures on the marine environment and sustainably manage their sea areas ensuring that nature is well-protected and preserved.



Corn Crane (*Crex crex*) © Yves Adams

# Agriculture

The conversion of natural habitats to agricultural land is currently the largest threat globally faced by birds. In Europe alone, we have lost 60% of farmland birds in just 40 years. At BirdLife, we seek to reverse this decline and take action to prevent environmentally unsustainable agricultural practices and destructive land-use climate mitigation measures.

## The Common Agriculture Policy still fails to deliver for farmers and nature

In 2022, the EU countries' national strategic plans on the Common Agriculture Policy were submitted and approved by the European Commission. While some claimed the plans to be the 'greenest ever', our continuous and careful scrutiny of the Common Agriculture Policy has proven otherwise. Together, with our German Partner NABU and the European Environmental Bureau, BirdLife Europe published a report appraising the environmental

credentials of 17 of the EU's CAP Strategic Plans. Regrettably, the findings make for grim reading. With many EU countries demonstrating a worrisome lack of commitment, largely opting for the bare minimum of environmental requirements in their agricultural plans, and the Commission itself proving impotent to demand further necessary action from EU countries, the result is that the EU is now locked in for five years of inaction in precisely the sector where it is most acutely needed.

While the current CAP, in the context of Europe's 2019 Green Deal, was seen by many as a major

opportunity to guide the transition to a greener and more sustainable future, status quo continuity is the only real winner. With no target-bound climate expectations for Member States to fulfil, the EU's most expensive and extensive policy will continue pouring funding into a sector with little to no conditionality regarding how funds are spent, or which agricultural practices are employed. In many cases, hefty subsidies continue to prop up destructive industries, such as synthetic fertilizers and toxic pesticides, which damage biodiversity, degrade soil, harm human health and put agricultural livelihoods and our future capacity to grow food at risk.

Despite these challenges, we continue to support BirdLife Partners to closely watch the implementation of the national plans in 2023.

## Our fight for a better Renewable Energy Directive continues

The EU has been promoting the use of forest wood for energy production to member states, despite the stark warnings of scientists that this is accelerating the climate crisis and harming already threatened wildlife. Governments continue to count 'bioenergy' as a form of "renewable energy" in the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) and subsidise it with 16 billion euros annually as an alternative to fossil fuels and a solution to tackle climate change.

BirdLife Europe has been working with a coalition of over 100 NGOs across Europe to ask the EU to remove biomass burning and crop-based biofuels from the RED. In May, the

European Parliament's environment committee voted on the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), including an important positive step limiting subsidies for burning forests biomass and crop-based biofuels. This was a major and hopeful outcome, although we knew it was only a first step in the political process of reviewing the RED.

We did not have to wait long to see hope falter. In June, the EU Parliament's industry committee voted on recommendations for the RED that included serious loopholes, leaving most European forests unprotected. In September, the Parliament missed the chance to end support for burning forest biomass and instead redirect misguided subsidies to real renewable energy sources. This means that the EU will continue to promote the burning of forest wood as a source of renewable energy to Member States. The cultivation of food and feed crops for the production of biofuels also continues to be supported.

Even though, in 2022, the European Parliament advocated significantly higher targets for renewable energy than were in the EU Commission's original draft; namely 45% by 2030 instead of the original 32%, the final negotiations between the EU Council and Parliament in 2023, have resulted in a RED containing significant loopholes and misguided support for wood burning, and crop-based biofuels.

**"The science is clear. Burning trees and crops for energy destroys nature and exacerbates the climate crisis. It should not be supported as renewable energy. Forests are our best weapon against climate change. In the dialogue negotiations, the Parliament and Council must agree on an end to the support for wood burning and crop-based biofuels."**  
**Ariel Brunner,**  
**Regional Director**

*Note: On the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2023, the final dialogues on the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive took place. BirdLife is extremely disappointed as the definition of what can and cannot be considered bioenergy is simply too weak to stop the destruction of important forest habitats.*

# Nature and Climate

To have any chance of tackling the nature and climate emergency we know that we need to take transformative action this decade: global greenhouse gas emissions need to peak before 2025 and be reduced by 43% by 2030 to stay within 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels; and the area of the world's land, freshwater and sea that is actively protected, managed or restored needs to be increased to as much as 44% by 2030 to safeguard biodiversity.

Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) © Yves Adams



## The EU law to restore nature: history in the making

On 22 June 2022, the European Commission published its long-awaited proposal for the EU Nature Restoration Law. The Commission proposes to restore at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030 and repair all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

The Commission was expected to present it as early as March 2022, but under pressure from vested interests, the law was delayed. In less than a week, however, more than 14,000 people were mobilized by BirdLife, WWF European Policy Office, and the European Environmental Bureau from across the EU to send letters to the European Commissioners asking them to publish the proposal without delay.

This will be the first European-wide law to set legally binding targets to restore nature! It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reverse the biodiversity and climate crises by placing the EU's degraded nature on a path to recovery.

In 2023, we call for its urgent adoption and implementation as it is a true and strong attempt to reverse the tide of biodiversity loss and climate change. The European Parliament and Council of the EU must fully endorse the positive elements and strengthen the existing weaknesses without delay.

## Recovering Nature in the East

Halting and reversing global biodiversity loss has never been as urgent as now. Ecosystems support all life on earth and the healthier they are, the healthier we and our planet are. It's time to restore nature, and

we at BirdLife believe the most effective way to do so is through a local-to-global approach.

Eastern Europe and Central Asia offer massive opportunities for nature to recover by protecting its large areas of wilderness and restoring degraded habitats. Our new programme, launched in 2022, Recovering Nature in the East (RENATE) will focus on strengthening BirdLife Partners in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and step up our collective impact to protect and restore landscapes across this region.

Healthy wildlife populations make healthy ecosystems. Our Wildlife Comeback Report shows the urgency to prioritise the comeback of wildlife across Europe. The good news is that quite several wildlife species have made a spectacular return across Europe over the last four decades – proof that nature is resilient and can recover under the right conditions. Increasing the legal protection of sites and species, creating corridors between protected areas and conservation action to support prey species have all contributed to this recovery. Restoring landscapes is also crucial to support food security, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and stopping the decline of biodiversity loss. Additionally, it is also key for the prosperity and well-being of people.

Through RENATE, BirdLife will further empower and strengthen the capacity of our Partners, who in turn will increase their conservation impact through the development of protected area networks and large-scale landscape restoration. In short, this major financial investment will be a real game-changer for our Partners across the Caucasus, the Balkans and Central Asia.

The programme is funded by the Sigrid Rausing Trust and supporting Partners: BirdLife Finland, BirdLife Österreich, BirdLife Schweiz, BirdLife Sverige, MME, and NABU.



Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*) © Yves Adams



Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)  
© Yves Adams

### New BirdLife partnership with Sibelco brings nature back to quarries

When restored and maintained correctly, quarries are important sites full of biodiversity, and often home to many rare and threatened species. Through active restoration work, quarries become a mosaic of different habitats, benefiting both people and nature.

That's why BirdLife has now entered a partnership with Sibelco, a global leader in material solutions. Businesses can play a critical role in helping to protect and restore nature and to fight the climate crisis. By collaborating with conservation experts, they can incorporate evidence-based, measurable, and time-bound targets and commitments into their business models – and actually do good for our planet. As part of the BirdLife strategy to mainstream biodiversity, new collaborations with the private sector are fundamental to bringing about transformative change.

The nature and climate emergency demands action by all of us and BirdLife support those in the private sector who are keen to deliver a nature positive and net zero future. Building on our experience of

working with other companies, we are delighted to be forging a new partnership with Sibelco to help them achieve their ambitious biodiversity goals and make a tangible contribution to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

In 2022, Sibelco celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As part of the celebrations, they have established a management agreement with Natuurpunt, BirdLife's Belgian Partner in Flanders, for a portion of the Schansheide quarry in Dessel-Mol, in northern Belgium. The size of 48 football fields, the almost 35-hectare site comprises a combination of heathlands, grasslands, deciduous and coniferous forests, wetlands and mudflats. The site will undergo further restoration and become a nature reserve.



Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) © Yves Adams

# Birds and Habitats

Amid the nature crisis, the list of threatened species and habitats around the globe continuously increases. The BirdLife Partnership continues to work together to identify and protect the places of greatest significance for the conservation of the world's birds.

## The impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on wild birds and their habitats

On February 24, 2022, Russia again invaded the territory of Ukraine. This threatened not only Ukraine's people but also biodiversity, including a significant number of rare and globally vulnerable bird species.

The nature of the war is characterized by its intensity and the total destruction of the environment. Aerial bombing, the use of drones, artillery shelling and other types of ground combat and the planting of mines destroy not only people's homes and businesses but also the natural environment. It is safe to assume that military actions will significantly affect the state of bird populations in Ukraine.

Ukraine is internationally important for wild birds: 434 species, 18 globally threatened birds, 19 species for which the country hosts more than 15% of the European population and 141 Important Bird Areas covering 2.5 million hectares. All of them are

threatened by the direct and indirect impact of military activity.

After the war, a thorough assessment of the overall environmental impacts will be needed to identify targets for future conservation activity, including vital clean-up operations. Long-term prospects for Ukrainian wildlife will depend on the re-establishment of effective management of protected areas, habitat restoration and sustainable management of the country's farmed landscapes.

Finally, reconnecting people to nature – especially young people – will be incredibly important for the psychological healing needed to help people recover from the trauma of war.

Our BirdLife Partner, the Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Birds (USPB) and its partners stand ready to support the Ukrainian Government to restart the conservation programme required to restore cherished Ukrainian landscapes for people and for wildlife.

### Four BirdLife Partners selected as finalists Natura2000 Award

Every year, the European Natura 2000 Award recognizes outstanding nature conservation initiatives across the EU. We are proud to announce that four BirdLife Partners were selected as finalists in 2022: the Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds (SPEA), SEO/BirdLife, the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB), and the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS). Here is an overview of their projects:

#### Fishermen and seabirds, allies of the sea – SPEA (Portugal)

In European waters, more than 200,000 birds are incidentally caught in commercial fishing gear, such as hooks and nets, each year SPEA has developed a cost-effective bird scaring device that can be attached to fishing vessels, alerting seabirds to keep their distance. On top of that, the scaring decoy is cheap and easy to produce, easy to assemble and repair, and does not interfere with fishing dynamics. This simple yet effective solution helps birds avoid entanglement and drowning while minimizing damage to fishing gear. A win-win solution for people and nature!

#### Social inclusion and managing invasive alien species – SEO/BirdLife (Spain)

Pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*) is an invasive alien species (IAS) that affects numerous habitats by displacing native plants and affecting soil quality. To eradicate pampas grass from five coastal Natura 2000 sites in Cantabria in Spain, the LIFE Stop Cortaderia decided to not only stop the spread of this IAS but to simultaneously address the serious difficulties faced by people with disabilities to enter the labour market. To do that, their project included over 60 people with disabilities over four years in the mechanical eradication of the IAS, the

management of green waste, and the replanting of natural vegetation to obstruct future re-growth of the IAS. This collaborative effort between LIFE Stop Cortaderia and SEO/BirdLife demonstrates the power of partnerships between social and conservation organizations.

#### Protecting Pelicans in the lower Danube – BSPB (Bulgaria)

The Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) is the rarest member of the pelican family, breeding in just three EU countries: Greece, Romania and Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, due to the destruction of floodplains where the species would originally have bred, the pelican population had been restricted to only one breeding site, the Srebarna Lake, hosting 80 breeding pairs. Since 2012, our Bulgarian Partner BSPB has fought to increase the population of these pelicans and expand their breeding sites. To achieve this, they first used artificial breeding platforms at the Kompleks Belenski Ostrovi Natura 2000 site. In 2021, the globally innovative idea of using decoy pelicans was successfully tested at the Kompleks Kalimok Natura



foraging areas across seven Greek Natura 2000 sites. The seven sites combined host 3,150 breeding pairs. Among the actions taken, the project partners ran the largest-ever rat eradication operation in Greece to protect eggs and chicks, planted the fruit trees, bushes and cereals that the passerines feed on, and installed over 1,000 artificial nests. Overall, the project increased the breeding success of Eleonora's Falcons by 42% in the project area, as well as leading to an improvement for local ecosystems and other important species.

2000 site. This led to the return of the pelicans to the two sites after more than 60 years of absence from these regions. The new breeding sites now host 91 breeding pairs, doubling the number of Dalmatian Pelicans in Bulgaria!

#### Adaptation of Eleonora's Falcon to climate change – HOS (Greece)

Greece is home to more than 80% of the Eleonora's Falcons (*Falco eleonora*) global breeding population, which is extremely vulnerable to climate change. To help the species adapt, the EU LIFE-funded EIClimA project focused on improving its breeding as well as its conservation status at its

We are thrilled to announce that three of our Partners received awards for their exceptional conservation projects: HOS in the 'Conservation on land' category, SEO/BirdLife in the 'Socio-economic benefits' category, and SPEA in the 'Marine conservation' category. These achievements highlight the dedication and impact of our BirdLife Partners in safeguarding nature.



Eurasian Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)  
© Yves Adams

## Stopping birds from getting electrocuted by power lines

A new study commissioned by our German Partner NABU, and compiled by Raptor Protection of Slovakia, provides an overview of the many solutions available to protect birds from getting electrocuted by and colliding with powerlines across Europe. NABU estimates that in Germany at least 1.5 million birds annually die after colliding with medium and high-tension grid lines.

Large species, especially soaring birds like the Eastern Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*), White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), and Eurasian Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) and many other species can be killed by electric shocks from specific unsafe types of poles. The bird might be

electrocuted by completing an electrical circuit, simultaneously touching two energized parts, or an energized part and a grounded part. This could happen when the bird for example stretches its wings and touches two wires.

Birds collide with overhead lines when they fail to see the cables in time. Collisions are more likely to occur with the overhead static wire, which is less visible than energized lines due to its smaller diameter. Swans, other waterfowl, and large fast-flying birds are the most common victims.

But all of this can be avoided. In this new study, all the technical solutions available are shown and evaluated. By following these guidelines, power lines can become an enemy of the past for birds. In a significant number of countries, NGOs and electric companies

have joined forces to implement safe practices with great success. They are testimony to how people and nature can thrive together.

Creating bird-safe powerlines is not only important to protect birds, but it is also safer for companies and humans. Bird collisions and electrocuted birds can cause power cuts, power outages, and start fires during periods of drought.

## Hunters and ornithologists partner up to end raptor persecution

Despite efforts to tackle the illegal killing of birds in Denmark, the illegal poisoning, shooting, and trapping of birds of prey remain a problem. But in 2022, an unusual partnership has been concluded that could turn the tide. BirdLife Denmark and the Danish Hunter's Association have joined forces to end raptor killings for good.

"While most of our birds of prey are doing well, humans are still a threat. Both hunters and ornithologists find it unacceptable. It makes me happy that we have been able to join forces with a common message", says Egon Østergaard, chairman of BirdLife Denmark.

"When we stand together, we make a stronger and a more serious case to the public and the government. Decision-makers are more inclined to listen when we join forces. Together we can eliminate the misconceptions that lead some people to kill birds of prey", says Claus Lind Christensen, chairman of the Danish Hunters' Association.

The project 'Joint focus on the Danish birds of prey' aims to shed light on the nature of birds of prey by spreading information and eliminating myths and misconceptions. The organisations have worked together to produce educational material for hunters, nature managers and children. A conference on the illegal killing of raptors was held in the late summer with the participation of stakeholders, national authorities, and researchers.

### An example for other countries

Both the Danish Hunters' Association and BirdLife Denmark hope that the partnership will inspire hunters and ornithologists throughout Europe to consider similar partnerships.

Claus Lind Christensen comments: "The illegal killing of birds of prey is a widespread problem in the whole of Europe. We hope that our international partners will explore the possibilities to make similar partnerships to strengthen the mission to stop the illegal killing of birds of prey."

"We need to do our best for nature. This means that when we have a specific goal, we must work together with everyone sharing the same goal, even though we might have other conflicting interests. We hope to continue this partnership for the benefit of the birds of prey and find more areas to collaborate to protect nature", adds Egon Østergaard.

# Thank you to our supporters!

Our impactful work in Europe and Central Asia is made possible thanks to the generous support of our donors, including BirdLife Partners and their supporters. Together, we are truly making a difference.

## **Blue Nature Alliance**

BirdLife is collaborating with the Blue Nature Alliance on our “Strengthening the NACES MPA” project. This initiative aims to enhance the protection of the North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Sea basin Marine Protected Area, spanning 600,000 km<sup>2</sup> in the high seas. The identification of this area was based on BirdLife’s analysis of seabird tracking data. By leveraging scientific research and political advocacy, our project aims to incorporate additional conservation measures, develop a comprehensive monitoring and management plan, and share valuable insights to advance high-seas conservation efforts.

## **Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI)’s Endangered Landscapes Programme (ELP) funded by Arcadia, a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin**

ELP, generously supported by Arcadia, is instrumental in financing various large-scale restoration projects throughout Europe. Our collaboration with local partner Sabuko focuses on enhancing conservation and landscape management in Georgia’s Iori River Valley. This project has successfully completed its initial phase (2019-2022) and commenced the second phase, which aims to safeguard the Kakheti steppes and prevent desertification. Additionally, BirdLife’s involvement

in the “From Iron Curtain to Green Belt” project, led by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, aims to restore ecological networks in Southeast Bulgaria. Although a third project for the restoration of steppes in Ukraine’s Kherson region was approved, implementation was hindered due to the ongoing conflict.

## **Climate Catalyst**

Climate Catalyst has provided crucial support to our advocacy and campaigning efforts in driving the new and ambitious EU Nature Restoration Law. This support ensures that the law serves as a robust instrument to address both the biodiversity and climate crises.

## **European Climate Foundation – ECF**

We are grateful for the ongoing support of the European Climate Foundation (ECF), which has enabled us to advance our work on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in pursuit of an environmentally and climate-responsible approach. Additionally, ECF has supported our collaboration with the European Commission Platform on Sustainable Finance, in which BirdLife Europe and Central Asia played an active role. Their support has also facilitated our efforts to ensure the sustainable deployment of renewable wind energy in the North Sea, reducing risks to biodiversity in partnership

with Renewable Grid Europe. Furthermore, we have received a new grant to assist BirdLife Partners in Italy and Poland, enabling their engagement with national energy transition plans and the identification of suitable areas for wind energy development.

## **European Commission – Directorate General Environment**

Through the NGO Operating Grant provided by DG Environment, the European Commission has supported BirdLife Europe and Central Asia in its advocacy, conservation, and communication work for biodiversity protection and nature conservation. This grant enabled us to strengthen our European Partnership in governance, and policy-related matters and has served as an effective conduit between the European Union and its citizens. We are also grateful for the support received from other European Union funds, such as the LIFE Against Bird Crime project and the European Red List of Birds and Pan-European Bird Monitoring, which have further bolstered our work in 2022.

## **European Commission – Directorate General for Research and Innovation**

As part of a consortium led by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA),

BirdLife Europe and Central Asia was awarded a new Horizon Europe grant in 2022 for the NaturaConnect project. NaturaConnect aims to design a resilient and coherent Trans-European network of protected areas to effectively contribute to the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy.

## **Flotilla Foundation**

Flotilla Foundation has been a valuable supporter of BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, as well as our Polish Partner OTOP, in our joint efforts to develop and advocate for nature-based solutions that combat nitrate pollution in freshwater and the Baltic Sea, resulting from improper agricultural practices. Their support has also extended to our EU Nature Restoration campaign, carried out in collaboration with WWF European Policy Office.

## **Hans Wilsdorf Foundation**

The Hans Wilsdorf Foundation has graciously provided support to BirdLife and its Partners in our ongoing mission to address the illegal killing of birds in the Mediterranean. Building upon the achievements made possible through the support of the MAVA Foundation, this new grant enables us to strengthen capacity, raise awareness among stakeholders and the general population, and generate political momentum, leading to the preservation of millions of birds.



### HeidelbergMaterials

In our ten-year partnership with HeidelbergMaterials (formerly known as HeidelbergCement), BirdLife Europe & Central Asia has guided them in formulating new sustainability commitments and targets aligned with the Global Goal for Nature. With our collaboration, HeidelbergMaterials continues its journey toward reducing its environmental impacts across its sites and striving for biodiversity net gain. In 2022, HeidelbergMaterials generously supported our education programme, Spring Alive, as well as the BirdLife World Congress in September.

### MAVA – Fondation Pour la Nature

MAVA has been a significant supporter of our Partners and BirdLife in addressing the various risks faced by migratory birds in the Mediterranean. Together, we have tackled issues such as illegal killing, trapping, poisoning, and incidents involving energy infrastructure. MAVA has also provided match funding for the EU-funded LIFE project, LIFE Against Bird Crime. In partnership with MAVA, we have worked to improve the functioning of priority wetlands, including the successful campaign to save Ulcinj Salina in Montenegro, and have made international efforts to reduce bycatch of birds, cetaceans, and turtles in fishing gear. These projects are led by BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, BirdLife International, and various NGOs.

### Oak Foundation

The Oak Foundation has continued its support for on-the-ground action against the illegal killing and trapping of wild birds in Italy, Cyprus, and Malta. This three-year project has generated valuable data, reduced incidents of illegal behaviour, rescued trapped birds, enhanced the capabilities of local law enforcement, and educated the next generation about the importance of protecting threatened bird species.

### The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation has awarded BirdLife Europe and Central Asia a new grant to support our core work in the climate change and land use programme, in collaboration with our German Partner NABU. Specifically, the grant focuses on our efforts concerning EU bioenergy policies, aiming to effectively contribute to climate change mitigation while minimizing negative impacts on biodiversity, ecosystems, and vulnerable human populations.

### Rewilding Europe

Support from Rewilding Europe has helped to integrate rewilding principles into the EU restoration agenda, to establish a coherent Ecological Network across Europe. They also commissioned the Wildlife Comeback report, which was a collaborative effort involving BirdLife Europe, ZSL, and WWF.

### Renewable Grid Initiative

In addition to our collaborative projects, the Renewable Grid Initiative is providing regranting funding to BirdLife Europe and Central Asia to support the work of a dedicated full-time Climate Policy Officer. This support allows us to enhance our capacity on this important topic.

### Sibelco

BirdLife Europe & Central Asia has entered into a new three-year global partnership with Sibelco, a Belgian-based global leader in silica sand extraction and supply. We have worked with Sibelco to review its Sustainability Strategy, ensuring that

the company leaves a positive biodiversity legacy across all its sites through active restoration efforts. Sibelco also generously co-sponsored the BirdLife World Congress held in September.

### Sigrid Rausing Trust

After years of supporting various BirdLife Europe and Central Asia Partners with core funding, the Sigrid Rausing Trust has generously granted us funding to support our new programme, Recovering Nature in the East (RENATE). RENATE aims to strengthen BirdLife Partners in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus, Turkey, and Central Asia, and to increase our collective impact in protecting and restoring nature landscapes across the region.

### Velux Fonden

As part of a project consortium coordinated by the Renewable Grid Initiative and funded by Velux Fonden, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia is involved in the planning of offshore wind energy and the protection of future marine ecosystems in the Northern Seas. Our aim is to ensure that offshore energy development is conducted in harmony with nature.

We extend our gratitude to all donors, including those who supported our campaigns and those who preferred to remain anonymous. Your support is deeply appreciated.

# Governance & Finances

The European and Central Asian Committee, elected by the European Partners, guides and advises the BirdLife Europe and Central Asia Division (BirdLife Europe) and reports to the Global Council. The members of the Europe and Central Asia Committee made up of senior figures from BirdLife partners until December 2021 were: Asunción Ruiz (SEO/BirdLife, Spain), Damijan Denac (DOPPS, Slovenia), Vera Vorona (ACBK, Kazakhstan), Philippe Funcken (Natagora, Wallonia, Belgium) Gergő Halmos (MME, Hungary), Katie-Jo Luxton (RSPB, United Kingdom), Natia Javakhishvili (Sabuko, Georgia) until September 2021, and Lieven de Schampelaere (Natuurpunt, Flanders, Belgium) from November 2021.

Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*)  
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## Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge the following BirdLife Partners and their donors, whose fundraising efforts and unrestricted financial contributions have made significant contributions to the work of BirdLife Europe and Central Asia Division:

Association BIOM, BirdLife Austria, BirdLife Cyprus, BirdLife Suomi-Finland, BirdLife Malta, BirdLife Norge, BirdWatch Ireland, BirdLife Sverige, BirdLife Schweiz, Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB), Czech Society for Ornithology (CSO), Dansk Ornitologisk Forening (DOF), Društvo za Opazovanje in Proučevanje Ptice Slovenije (DOPPS), Estonian Ornithological Society (EOS), Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS), Magyar Madártani és Természetvédelmi Egyesület (MME), Latvijas Ornitologijas (LOB), Biedriba Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli (LIPU), Ligue pour la Protection

des Oiseaux (LPO), Natagora, natur&mwelt, Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU), Natuurpunt, Ogólnopolskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Ptaków (OTOP), SOS/BirdLife Slovensko, SEO/BirdLife (SEO), Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves (SPEA), Societatea Ornitologica Romana (SOR), Vogelbescherming Nederland (VBN), and Lietuvos Ornitologu Draugija (LOD).

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2022 (€)

Incoming Resources		Resources Expended	
Partners	114.666,97	Staff Cost	1.531.604,36
Grants and Donations	3.749.531,69	Travel Conference Events	7.103,81
EU Commission Funding	433.526,08	Rental Equipment & Premises	83.857,17
Grants from Corporates	734.181,29	Support Grants	2.212.721,29
Other Incomes	15.049,46	Professional Services	376.413,76
		Other Costs	309.781,43
		Overheads	45.179,75
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<b>5.046.955,49</b>	<b>Total Resources Expended</b>	<b>4.566.661,57</b>

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

# The Team



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# Together we are BirdLife International

## Partnership for nature and people

COVER PHOTO  
Razorbill (*Alca torda*) © Harry Collins

BACK COVER PHOTO  
Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) © Yves Adams

DESIGN & LAYOUT  
Andrea Canfora



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Through our unique local-to-global approach, we deliver high-impact  
and long-term conservation for the benefit of nature and people



  
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INTERNATIONAL  
EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA