

The Birds Directive and habitat protection- an unfinished journey

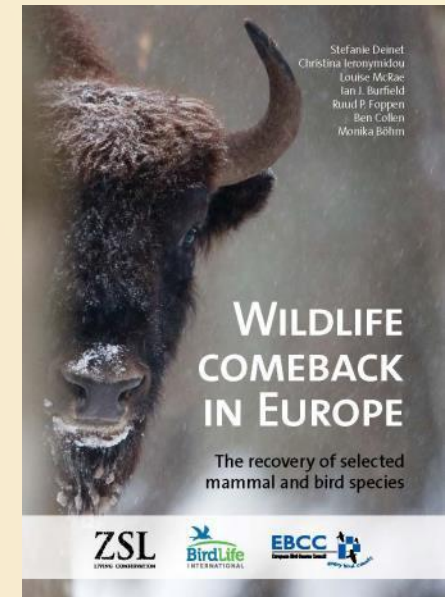
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A new vision for the Birds Directive & the positive role of hunting,
Committee of the Regions September 23rd 2014

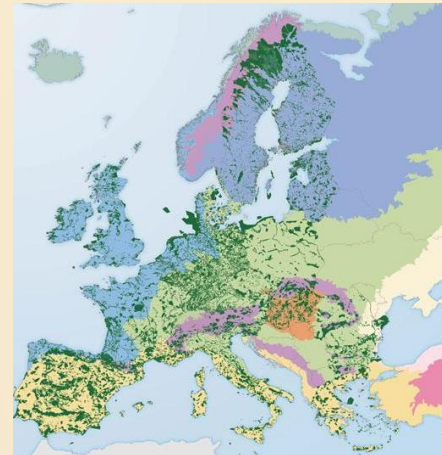
Hunters and conservationists- beyond the conflict

- Much better today
 - Agreed legal framework; lower levels of social conflict
 - Better regulation of hunting (eg no shooting of breeding stock)
 - Results on the ground- widespread recovery of species historically damaged by persecution/unsustainable harvest
 - Plenty of disagreements, but we have the tools for dialogue



Natura 2000, a long construction

- Designation has taken over 30 years, many conflicts, infringements against most MS
- Marine designation process only happening now
- Many years to establish legal clarity, guidelines, engage stakeholders
- Actual management stage only really starting!
- And yet, we know it works



Implementation- unfinished business

- Hunting regulations have, with rare exceptions been implemented
- Some successful Species Action Plans, LIFE funding
- Site protection still very patchy
- Implementation of management plans has been limited
- Provisions on habitat protection and connectivity hardly implemented at all
- Reporting is going through its first effective cycle.



Law enforcement- a challenge for all of us

- Despite the long delays and implementation gaps, we have in the EU some of the best legislation in the world. BUT illegality is still rampant in many parts of Europe
- Good news
 - Consensus on zero tolerance (Larnaca declaration)
 - Clear to do list (EU roadmap, Tunis action plan)
- Need for an inspections directive



Habitat conservation – lesser known corners of the Nature Directives

- Obligation to achieve a **good conservation status across the country** (Natura 2000 is one key tool, but not enough!)
- BD Art. 3: *“preserve, maintain or re-establish a **sufficient diversity and area of habitats for all the species of birds...**”*
- BD Art. 4(4): *“**avoid pollution or deterioration of habitats** [also outside SPAs]”*
- HD Art.3(3) /Art.10 : **ecological coherence of Natura 2000** through connecting landscape features



Saving habitats- we need you on board

- The loss of habitats, particularly to intensive farming has continued relentlessly
- Main problem is other policies, notable the CAP
- New pressures emerging e.g. bioenergy
- And yet we know how to bring wildlife back (LIFE, agrienvironment, successful SAPs)



Conclusions

- The Birds Directive (and HD) is a modern, flexible and effective framework for biodiversity conservation
- After many years of uncertainty, it is only now getting to the point where it can fully bring its benefits
- It is in no one's interest to tamper with the framework and go back to ideological conflict, civil strife and long years of uncertainty
- Anyone that has biodiversity (or wildlife, or game) at heart should unite behind a push to achieve full implementation, better financing and law enforcement
- Fine tuning of hunting activities and their harmonisation with conservation efforts should be taken foreword on scientific basis and through constructive dialogue. The new approach to species recover plans is the right framework.



Thank you for your attention!

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