



OUR IMPACT

BirdLife Europe and Central Asia
Annual Review 2024

WE ARE BIRDLIFE

**When birds are thriving, nature is thriving, and so are humans.
Like the birds we look after, we are everywhere.**

By monitoring and protecting vulnerable bird species, we are able to protect all life. More than any other living being, birds tell us where and how we can make the greatest difference; they're nature's early warning system. BirdLife is present in 119 countries around the world.

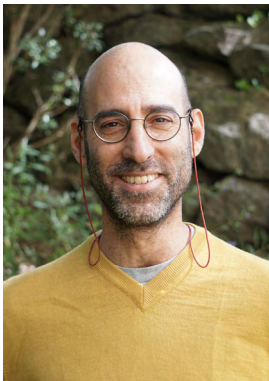
We work with a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, researchers and local communities to achieve our goals, and we benefit from the expertise and knowledge of over 2700 conservation professionals.



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL DIRECTOR



Ariel Brunner
Regional Director
of BirdLife Europe
and Central Asia

Wildlife populations across the globe are in crisis, reflecting the terrible way our ecosystems are mismanaged. The already dire situation has been compounded by the ongoing spread of avian flu, which has emerged from intensive poultry farming to devastate bird populations worldwide. Meanwhile, 2024 was recorded as the hottest year in history, further exacerbating the climate crisis and placing even greater pressure on vulnerable ecosystems.

Sadly, the stark reality of these interlinked crises is too often met with wilful denial. Too many politicians, across our region and around the world, have resorted to lies, toxic narratives, and attacking the messengers – whether they be scientists or NGOs. A year that began with the future oriented vision of the EU Green Deal and the Kunming-Montreal Agreement has rapidly given way to a darker reality, with shrinking civil space and mounting environmental deregulation.

In the face of this grim backdrop, it is more important than ever to recognise and celebrate our significant achievements – those long, hard-fought victories that are beginning to yield real, tangible results. One of the most promising developments has been the adoption of the EU Nature Restoration Law. After years of determined effort

and a challenging public campaign, we now have a powerful legal instrument to repair ecological damage, restore nature, and position nature at the heart of climate action. This milestone carries global relevance, sending a strong, coherent message to the rest of the world.

At a more specific level, the recovery of the Turtle-dove population – at least along its Western Flyway – serves as another powerful example of meaningful change. Years of dedicated work, combining science, advocacy, legal action, and public campaigning, have led to sound political decisions and an immediate positive response in population numbers. This reminds us that positive change is not only possible - it is happening.

In the pages that follow, you will find a selection of examples that reflect how we are standing up for nature, giving a voice to the voiceless, and building hope from the ground up. With your continued support, we can go even further.

PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

Our planet is facing a biodiversity crisis, but through dedicated conservation, species are bouncing back. Thanks to your support, BirdLife is working tirelessly to bring birds back from the brink.

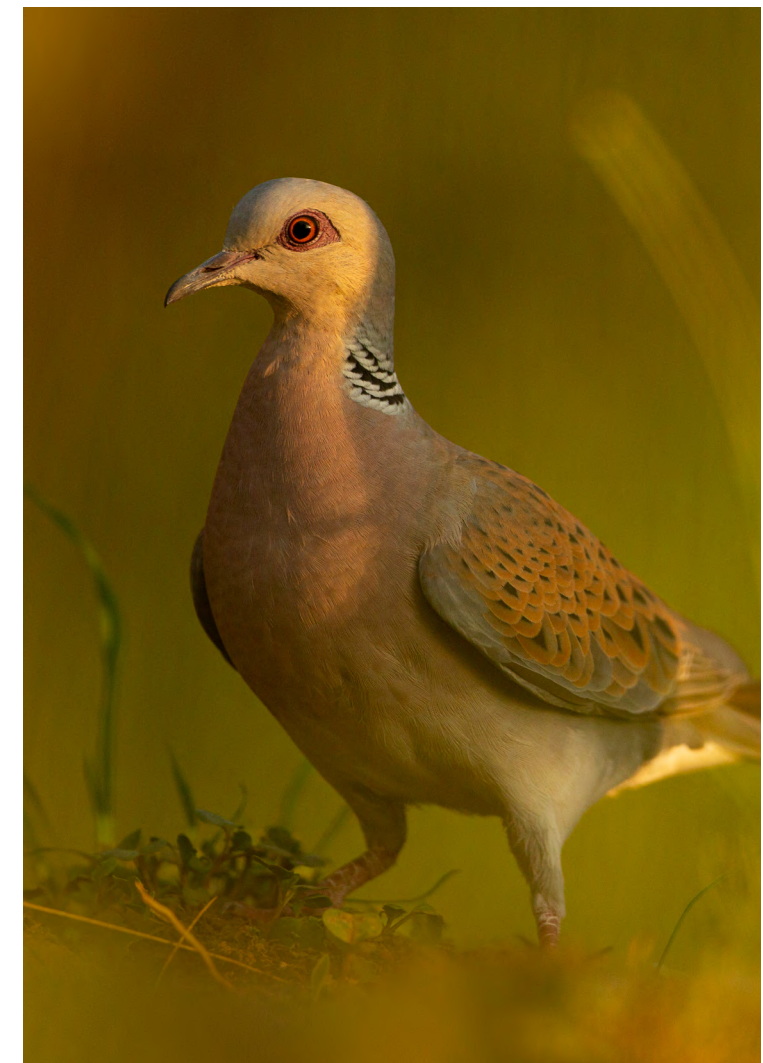


Hope for Lapwings: Protecting a vanishing species

Switzerland's Northern Lapwing population had plummeted to just about 100 breeding pairs by 2005 due to intensive farming practices. BirdLife Switzerland, alongside other organisations and volunteers have been protecting, restoring and expanding their habitats, leading to a doubling of the population, with 205 breeding pairs recorded at 23 sites in 2024. A record 177 chicks successfully fledged, the highest number since conservation efforts began in 2010.

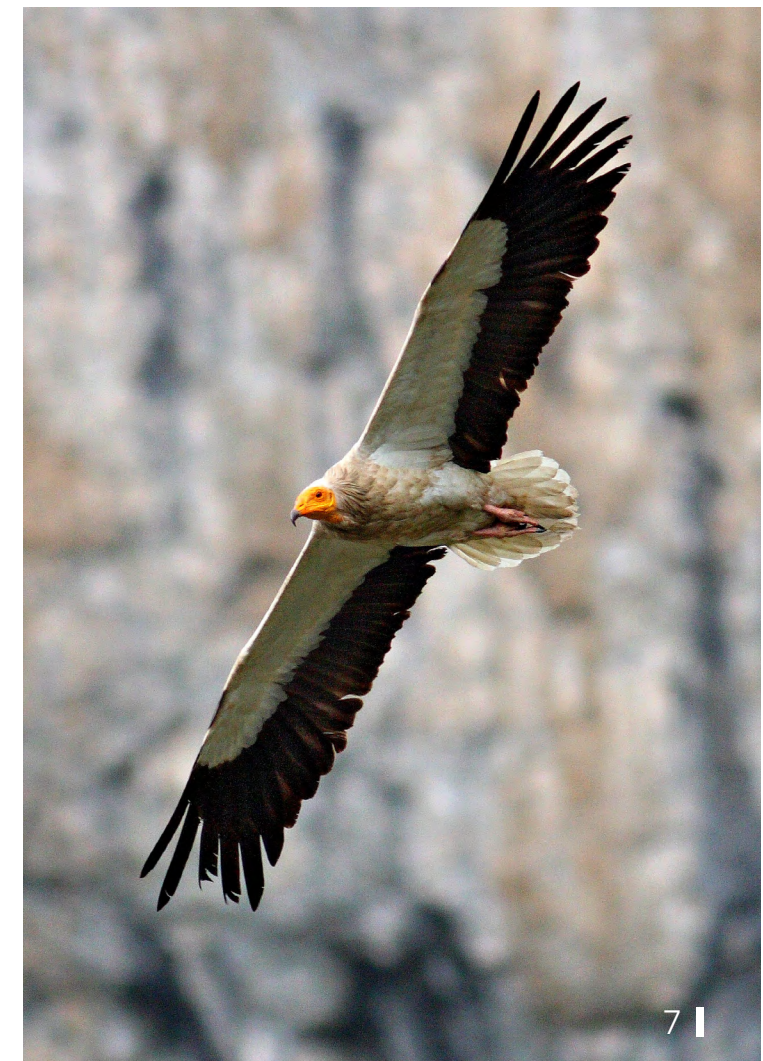
A brighter future for the European Turtle-dove?

Once in sharp decline, the European Turtle-dove is making a strong comeback, thanks to dedicated efforts across the BirdLife Partnership. Following a 2018 Species Action Plan developed by BirdLife and our UK Partner, the RSPB, a zero-take hunting policy was introduced in 2021 across France, Spain, Portugal, and parts of Italy. This has helped the species reach its highest recorded population in 2024 – a 40.5% increase, with 615,000 new pairs. This success proves that strong conservation policies work, reinforcing the need for continued action to secure the Turtle-dove's future.



Love in the skies: Egyptian Vultures return to Meteora!

After a six-year absence, a pair of Egyptian Vultures have returned to Meteora, Greece. The last male of a once-thriving colony has finally found a mate, marking a crucial moment for this Critically Endangered species and for our Partner HOS/ BirdLife Greece. With just six pairs left in Greece, and over 80% of their Balkan population lost in the past three decades, conservation efforts, including monitoring, feeding stations, and anti-poisoning measures, are proving vital in giving these iconic birds a fighting chance.



Left: Northern Lapwing. © Grzegorz Dlugosz
Top right: European Turtle-dove. © Ben Andrew
Bottom Right: Egyptian Vulture. © Svetoslav Spasov

PROTECTING VITAL HABITATS

Across Europe & Central Asia, together with our Partners, we are restoring key sites for birds and biodiversity. Your support helps us secure victories for nature where they matter most.

Victory for nature: Poland cancels controversial dam

In a major win for nature, the planned Siarzewo Dam on the Vistula River, part of the E40 waterway, was cancelled in December 2024. This decision follows seven years of relentless campaigning by our Partner OTO/BirdLife Polska and allies, backed by 140,000 petition signatures. The dam would have devastated the Vistula's biodiversity, threatening 200 protected areas, including 66 Natura 2000 sites. This victory is a milestone in protecting Poland's natural heritage.

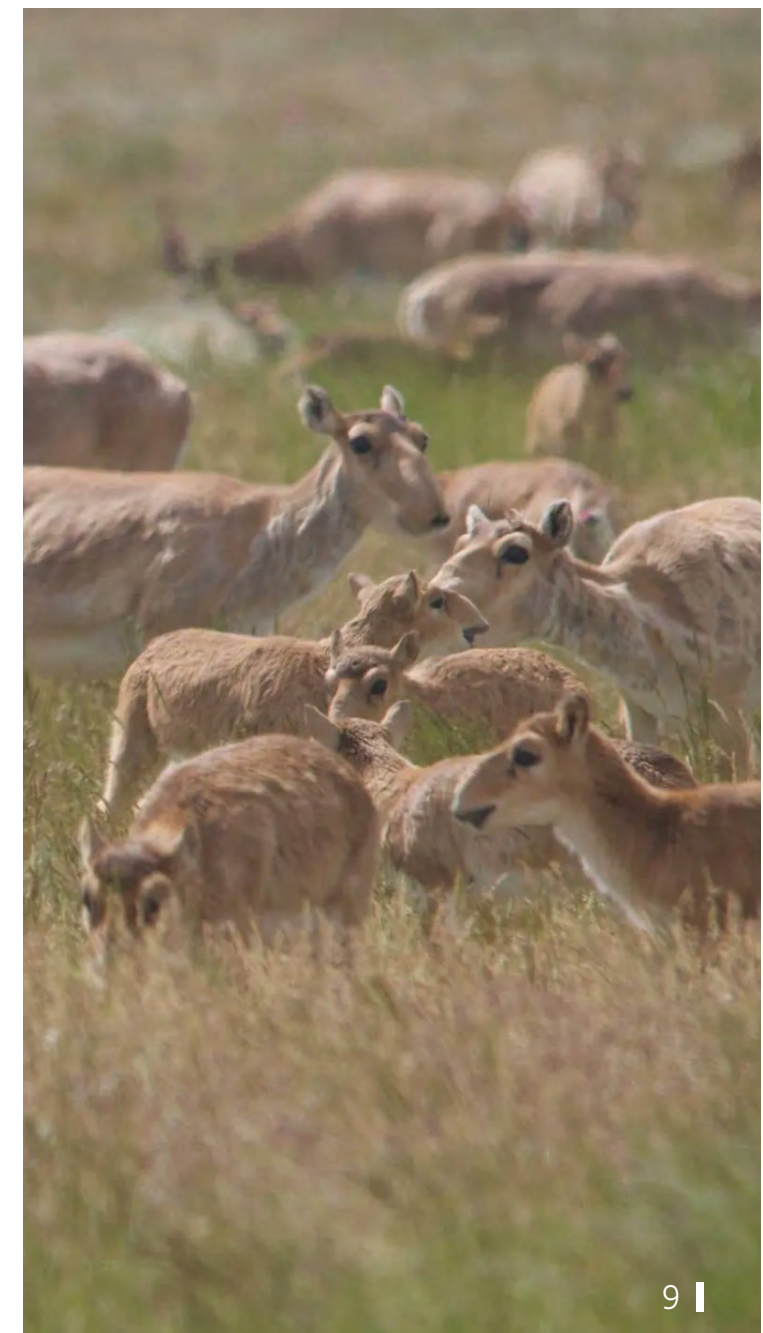
Hazelnut farming crackdown: A win for Italy's wildlife

Intensive hazelnut farming polluted Lake Vico, a protected site in Italy's Lazio region - but a landmark ruling has changed the tide. Following a legal battle led by our Italian Partner Lipu and ClientEarth, the Italian Supreme Court ordered authorities to halt harmful practices and begin restoration efforts within six months. This long-overdue decision holds officials accountable and offers hope for the lake's recovery.

Kazakhstan's grasslands win big: Earthshot Prize 2024

The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative, including our Kazakh and UK Partners ACBK and RSPB, won the 2024 Earthshot Prize for restoring 5 million hectares of Kazakhstan's grasslands, wetlands, and deserts. That is an area size larger than Denmark! Since 2005, the project has revived the Critically Endangered Saiga Antelope from a low of 20,000 to over 2.8 million, as well as species like the Steppe Eagle and Sociable Lapwing, while working closely with local communities. To top it off, ACBK's Executive Director, Vera Voronova, won the MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity at COP16, recognising her leadership in conservation.

Left: Great Snipe. © Daniel Rosangren
Top Right: Lago di Vico. © Chiara Ernandes
Bottom Right: Saiga Antelopes. © Rob Field, RSPB



MAKING HUMAN ACTIVITIES KINDER TO NATURE

From agriculture to energy,
BirdLife is driving solutions
that allow nature and people
to thrive together.

Unexpected sanctuaries: Quarries shelter birds & bees

Restored quarries in Belgium are becoming unexpected wildlife havens. A study by BirdLife Partner Natuurpunt and Sibelco revealed a surprising find – a new wasp species in Belgium, *Nysson distinguendus*, a kleptoparasitic digger wasp that lays its eggs in other digger wasp's nests.

Many ground-nesting bees and other pollinators have found new homes in transformed quarries, as they struggle to survive in their degrading former habitats. Properly managed and restored quarries can become a shelter and an undeniable new habitat to preserve biodiversity. This shows how collaborations with companies like Sibelco are crucial in the combat against habitat and biodiversity loss.

Nature & farming united: A roadmap for sustainability

To address the growing pressures faced by farmers – many of which stem from ecological collapse and climate instability - the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen launched the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture. For the first time ever, 28 stakeholders, including BirdLife, were brought together to explore a shared vision for sustainable food and farming in Europe. This unique process created space for constructive exchanges between farmers, scientists, and environmental groups, offering a much-needed opportunity to build trust and common ground. It showed that when nature and farming unite, solutions are possible.

After seven months of discussions, a groundbreaking report was released. It calls for stronger environmental laws, subsidies that promote nature-friendly farming, and the creation of a Nature Restoration Fund. The next step is to turn these recommendations into reality.

The North Sea story: Wind farms & wildlife in harmony

As offshore wind energy expands, we're making sure it's done right. We have been cooperating with the offshore wind sector, governments, and the EU to promote sound planning of new energy infrastructures, the use of smart mitigation technologies, and the alignment of energy development with nature restoration. To show how wind farms can coexist with nature, we created our first offshore documentary, exploring the North Sea and highlighting best practices for wildlife-friendly wind energy. With the right strategies, renewable energy can support both biodiversity and climate goals.

RALLYING SOCIETY

In the face of environmental challenges, uniting society is essential. We work with governments, collaborate globally, and partner with the private sector to protect and restore nature. By mobilising communities and empowering youth, we drive positive change for a healthier planet and thriving bird populations.

A historic win: The Nature Restoration Law becomes reality

After years of tireless campaigning, the Nature Restoration Law has finally been adopted! This landmark legislation sets the stage for reviving Europe's degraded ecosystems, but now comes the crucial task of ensuring its full and ambitious implementation.

In 2023, BirdLife fought to rescue the law from political deadlock. By early 2024, its adoption seemed certain - until one government unexpectedly reversed its position just before the final vote. With just weeks to act, BirdLife and others ramped up pressure in key EU countries, where public support was overwhelming but political resistance remained. A survey showed 75% of citizens backed the law, businesses rallied behind it, and as the decisive 17 June EU Environment Council meeting neared, momentum surged.

Against the odds, the law passed on 17 June, with Austria's Environment Minister Leonore Gewessler casting the decisive vote. Despite disinformation campaigns and last-minute obstacles, the Nature Restoration Law made history as a cornerstone of EU environmental policy. With its entry into force on 18 August 2024, EU Member States must now submit their National Restoration Plans by September 2026. To support this, BirdLife has developed guidance to help governments meet legal requirements and deliver real restoration.

The battle is won, but the mission continues. Now we must turn words into action and restore nature across Europe!



Tagus Estuary. © Jaime Sousa

Keeping nature on the agenda: The 2024 EU elections

The 2024 EU elections were a crucial moment for shaping Europe's environmental future. As the climate and biodiversity crises escalate, BirdLife worked to keep nature high on the political agenda, ensuring the European Green Deal remained a priority amid shifting political dynamics.

In April, BirdLife and four other civil society organisations released the EU Parliament Scoreboard, a comprehensive analysis of MEPs' voting records from 2019–2024. Assessing 30 key votes on climate action, nature restoration, pollution reduction, and a just transition, the report revealed stark differences between parties. To inform voters, BirdLife helped develop an interactive tool showing how national parties and EU political groups performed on these issues.

Following the elections, BirdLife swiftly engaged with new EU decision makers to shape the EU's environmental priorities for the next five years, urging the European Commission and EU countries to uphold their commitments to a greener, more resilient future.

Victory for nature: Tagus Estuary saved from airport plans

In a major win for conservation, the Portuguese government scrapped plans to build the Montijo Airport, which would have threatened the Tagus Estuary – a vital Natura 2000 site and key stopover for migratory birds.

This success is thanks to our Portuguese Partner SPEA, who, alongside ClientEarth and other NGOs, launched a legal challenge that ultimately led to the project's cancellation. With crucial support from our Dutch Partner Vogelbescherming Nederland, this achievement sets a strong precedent for protecting Europe's wetlands from harmful development.

While alternative airport plans remain a concern, this decision sends a powerful message: nature must come first.

OUR MAJOR SUPPORTERS AND DONORS

Your generosity empowers BirdLife Europe and Central Asia to continue protecting birds and their habitats throughout the region. Your contributions are deeply appreciated and drive our ongoing success.

We deeply appreciate the annual support from our 46 Partners. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone, including those who supported our campaigns. Together, we are truly making a difference.

- Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
- David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Ecological Restoration Fund
- Endangered Landscapes & Seascapes Programme, part of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative
- European Climate Foundation
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Environment
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
- Flotilla Foundation
- Fondation Hans Wilsdorf
- Heidelberg Materials
- Iberdrola
- Minor Foundation for Major Challenges
- Oak Foundation
- Oceans 5
- Persephone Charitable Environmental Trust
- Renewable Grid Initiative
- Sibelco
- Sigrid Rausing Trust
- Velux Fonden

BUDGET

Income and Expenditure 2024



Incoming resources	Amount in €
BirdLife Partnership	380,512.61
Trust and Foundations	3,954,903.09
EU Commission	460,000.00
Corporates	384,927.00
Other income	19,396.95

Total incoming resources 5,199,784.65



Resources expended	Amount in €
Salaries	2,246,706.53
Activities	2,252,600.35
Operational costs	121,349.97

Total resources expended 4,620,656.85

BirdLife’s European and Central Asian Committee

The European and Central Asian Committee is elected by the BirdLife Partners in this region. This committee provides guidance and advice to the division and reports to the Global Council of BirdLife International.

From October 2024, the members of the Committee have consisted of:

Lieven De Schampheleare, Natuurpunt, Flanders, Belgium
Katie-Jo Luxton, RSPB, United Kingdom
Kjetil Solbakken, BirdLife Norge, Norway
Mika Asikainen, BirdLife Suomi, Finland
Konstantin Kreiser, NABU, Germany
Nicky Petkov, BSPB, Bulgaria
Iza Wilczyńska-Gadi, OTOP, Poland

The Stichting BirdLife Europe board consists of the following members:

Martin Harper, Chairman
Richard Grimmett, Secretary
Helen Bull, Treasurer

OUR TEAM

Governance



Ariel Brunner
Regional Director



Dorothée Guénéheux
Governance and Partnership Coordinator



Irene Marchi
Fundraising Manager



Daniela Arturo Zarama
Fundraising Officer

Fundraising

Operations



Jérôme Jolibois
Senior Finance and Administration Manager



Marcia Pereira
Senior Finance Officer



Jerine Migrino
Finance Assistant



Evans Siaw
Finance Business Partner



Karina Kanarska
HR Advisor

Communications



Honey Kohan
Communications Manager



Caroline Herman
Communications Officer



Erica Gentili
Communications Officer



Saskia Pelzer
Communications Officer



Alessandra Di Placido
Communications Intern

Science & Conservation



Anna Staneva
Head of Science, Species and Site Conservation



Aleksandre Mikeladze
Project Manager



Antonio Vulcano
Marine Officer



Brecht Verhelst
Project Development Manager (Nature Restoration)



Daniel Mitchell
Marine Programme Manager



Joana Bores
Nature Conservation Officer



Lilla Barabas
Flyways Officer



Nigel Symes
Conservation Partnerships Manager



Sofia Capellan
Senior Site Conservation Officer



Thomas Sebrechts
Conservation Partnerships Officer



Tom Cabuy
Conservation Partnerships Officer



Willem van Den Bossche
Senior Flyway Conservation Officer

Policy



Anouk Puymartin
Policy Manager



András Takács
Energy Policy Officer



Attila Králl
Nature and Climate Task Force Consultant



Barbara Herrero
Senior Nature Conservation Policy Officer



Cyrielle Goldberg
Marine Policy Officer



David Howell
Senior Energy Policy Officer



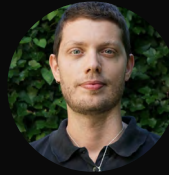
Marilda Dhaskali
Senior Agriculture and Land-use Policy Officer



Marion Bessol
Nature Conservation Policy Assistant



Matthijs Germs
Food Policy Analyst



Riccardo Gambini
Forest and Bioenergy Policy Officer



Sonia Rouabhi
Nature Restoration Policy Officer



Tatiana Nemcova
Senior Agriculture Policy Officer



Wouter Langhout
Policy Consultant

BIRDLIFE ACROSS EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA



We represent 46 national BirdLife Partners from 44 European and Central Asian countries, including all 27 EU Member States and the seven accession countries.

Bluethroat. © Shutterstock

- Albania**
Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania
ppnea.org
- Armenia**
Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets
fpwc.org
- Austria**
BirdLife Österreich
birdlife.at
- Belgium**
Natagora
natagora.be
- Natuurpunt
natuurpunt.be
- Bulgaria**
Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds
bspb.org
- Croatia**
Association BIOM
biom.hr
- Cyprus**
BirdLife Cyprus
birdlifecyprus.org
- Czech Republic**
Czech Society for Ornithology
birdlife.cz
- Denmark**
Dansk Ornitologisk Forening/BirdLife Danmark
dof.dk
- Estonia**
Eesti Ornitoloogiaühingu/BirdLife Estonia
eoy.ee
- Faroe Islands**
Føroya Fuglafrøðifelag
fuglar.fo
- Finland**
BirdLife Suomi
birdlife.fi
- France**
Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux
lpo.fr
- Georgia**
SABUKO
sabuko.org
- Germany**
NABU
nabu.de

- Gibraltar**
Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society
gonhs.org
- Greece**
Hellenic Ornithological Society
ornithologiki.gr
- Hungary**
Magyar Madártani és Természetvédelmi Egyesület
mme.hu
- Iceland**
Fuglavernd/BirdLife Iceland
fuglavernd.is
- Ireland**
Birdwatch Ireland
birdwatchireland.ie
- Israel**
Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel
natureisrael.org
- Italy**
Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli
lipu.it
- Kazakhstan**
Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan
acbk.kz
- Latvia**
Latvijas Ornitoloģijas biedrība
lob.lv
- Liechtenstein**
Botanisch-Zoologische Gesellschaft
bzg.li
- Lithuania**
Lietuvos Ornitologų Draugijos
birdlife.lt
- Luxembourg**
natur&émwelt
naturemwelt.lu
- Malta**
BirdLife Malta
birdlifemalta.org
- Montenegro**
Centar za zaštitu i proučavanje ptica Crne Gore
czip.me
- Netherlands**
Vogelbescherming Nederland
vogelbescherming.nl
- North Macedonia**
Macedonian Ecological Society
mes.org.mk

- Norway**
BirdLife Norge
birdlife.no
- Poland**
Ogólnopolskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Ptaków/BirdLife Polska
otop.org.pl
- Portugal**
Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves
spea.pt
- Romania**
Societatea Ornitologica Romana
sor.ro
- Serbia**
Društvo za zaštitu i proučavanje ptica Srbije
pticesrbije.rs
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vtaky.sk
- Slovenia**
Društvo za Opazovanje in Proučevanje Ptice Slovenije/BirdLife Slovenia
ptice.si
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- United Kingdom**
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