



Towards a future maritime policy for the Union: a European vision for the oceans and the sea

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BirdLife International welcomes the Commission's intention to produce an integrated maritime policy for the EU. In particular, we welcome the statements in the Green Paper about the need to protect the resource base and the recognition that marine biodiversity and the environment as a whole need to be protected and enhanced. BirdLife also welcomes the links with the European Marine Strategy and the Commission's proposed Marine Strategy Directive and the acknowledgement that an ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities is necessary.

At the same time BirdLife would like to highlight following issues:

- The Commission and Member States will only achieve sustainable development and the vision for the marine area if environmental considerations are fully integrated into all policy and decision-making, and move away from the 'twin pillar' approach that suggests conflict between environmental considerations and securing economic growth and jobs.
- Environmental sustainability must form the context or framework for the development of a sustainable Maritime Policy in EU waters. Without proper protection and management of marine biodiversity, ecosystems and resources, the benefits that the marine environment provides will not be delivered for EU citizens or Europe's industries.
- The full range of environmental policies, legislation and tools are employed to ensure appropriate consideration of environmental issues, including:
 - proper implementation of and compliance with EU Directives such as the Birds and Habitats, Water Framework, etc, as well as the European Marine Strategy and the proposed Marine Strategy Directive (MSD);
 - full assessments of environmental impacts using SEA, EIA and appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive;
 - designation of sites (Natura 2000, OSPAR MPAs) to protect important marine wildlife;
 - implementation of the ecosystem-based approach to management of human activities, especially in fisheries should be progressed urgently.



- Any system of marine spatial planning at the EU-level must add value to national systems, where they exist, and plans, be based at the scale of the marine regions and sub-regions as proposed under the Marine Strategy Directive and further the delivery of the objectives of good environmental status under the Marine Strategy Directive.
- Climate change is already having serious impacts on the marine environment and wildlife. We want more action on combating climate change through the reduction of CO₂ emissions. We also support a move towards carbon-free energy generation, but ensuring that the design and location of renewable energy generators provides adequate safeguards for marine wildlife.

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