



Wildlife and
Countryside



News Release

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100 voluntary organisations Unite to Defend Nature

100 voluntary organisations across the UK have joined forces to call for the protection of Europe's natural environment.

EU legislation – the Birds and Habitats Directives – exist to protect the most important wildlife species and habitats in the UK and Europe. However, these laws are now under review and at risk of being weakened.

Today, the 'Joint Links group', representing 100 voluntary organisations across the UK, has published a position statement warning that the European Commission's REFIT 'Fitness Check' of the Birds and Habitats Directives is the single biggest threat to UK and European nature and biodiversity in a generation.

The organisations raise concerns that the Directives are under threat of being weakened by those who mistakenly regard them as a block on business and economic growth. In the current political context any revision of the Directives would expose them to prolonged uncertainty and leave the long-term future of Europe's biodiversity vulnerable to short-term political priorities.

Chair of the Joint Links' Habitats and Birds group Kate Jennings, (RSPB), said:

"The Habitats and Birds Directives are the foundation of nature conservation across Europe and are scientifically proven to be effective where properly implemented. The Directives deliver demonstrable benefits for nature, as well as significant social and economic benefits."

"For over 30 years they have protected some of our best loved and most iconic landscapes from the Scottish Flow Country to the sand dunes and marshes of the north Norfolk coast. They are essential to the protection of species large and small, from the Basking Shark and the Harbour Porpoise, to the Dartford Warbler and the Hazel Dormouse.

"The strength of support from 100 voluntary organisations across the UK shows how significant the Directives are in safeguarding Europe's biodiversity. Uncertainty over the future of the Directives resulting from the 'Fitness Check' review could be bad for nature, bad for people and bad for business."

The Joint Links group's response to the EC consultation sets out a huge volume of evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of the Directives in protecting nature, providing huge benefits for people and providing a stable framework for responsible businesses.

On 30 April the European Commission launched its public consultation on the Directives. Voluntary organisations have also today launched the 'Nature Alert' electronic tool, enabling the public to have their say in one easy click www.naturealert.eu

Please note the weblink will not be operational until the embargo lifts.

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Notes to Editors

1. Joint Links collectively represents voluntary organisations with more than 8 million supporters across the UK. It comprises the combined memberships of [Wildlife and Countryside Link](#), [Scottish Environment Link](#), [Wales Environment Link](#) and the [Northern Ireland Environment Link](#). Each is a coalition of environmental voluntary organisations, united by their common interest in the conservation and restoration of nature and the promotion of sustainable development across the terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments.
2. For more information please contact;
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3. The 'Nature Alert' tool was developed by a coalition of Europe-wide voluntary organisations (BirdLife Europe; European Environmental Bureau; Friends of the Earth Europe; and WWF Europe). The tool is being made available to citizens of 28 European countries and has been translated into 20 languages.