



**BirdWatchIreland**  
birdwatchireland.ie  
protecting birds and biodiversity

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## **BirdWatch Ireland asks for people, nature and climate in the next Government**

### **Build resilience**

- Establish a new funding pot so NGOs like BirdWatch Ireland can access match funding for LEADER, LIFE and other projects.
- Fund the National Parks and Wildlife Service annually with the necessary current and capital funding to ensure the organisations requirements and legal obligations to coordinate the national response to the biodiversity crisis can be fulfilled.

### **Supporting farmland birds and farmers**

- Fund a Farmland Bird Monitoring Programme as a better reflection than the common farmland bird index of how threatened, Red-listed farmland birds are doing.
- Significantly increase the budget of the NPWS Farm Plan Scheme.
- Ensure that farmers can stay on the land by properly funding measures in Ireland's agri-environment schemes to pay farmers for the valuable ecosystem services they provide including the protection and restoration of farmland bird populations.
- Ensure that the administrative and IT systems within government bodies managing agri-environment and farm plan schemes are adequately resourced and fit for purpose to eliminate delays in payments to farmers.
- Strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply, protect producers against below cost selling and competition from Free Trade Agreements and support EU Just Transition Fund for farmers.
- Ensure that implementation of the Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan is fully resourced and ambitious to halt the declines of this critically-endangered bird of prey of international importance.

### **Protecting our seabirds and the opportunities in our seas**

- Designate marine Special Protection Areas for birds based on BirdWatch Ireland and BirdLife International Important Bird Areas mapping. Ensure robust management plans for these areas are established and resourced.
- Publish and pass strong and effective Marine Protected Area legislation as soon as possible.



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- Ensure that the essential and critical roll out of renewable energy and new ‘renewable energy acceleration areas’ are underpinned by robust bird sensitivity mapping to avoid threats to wild bird populations.
- Fund the additional research needed to plug gaps in our knowledge of seabirds movements and behaviours to ensure we can better protect them from the impacts of offshore renewables.
- Publish an action plan for a just transition to low impact fisheries (in terms of bycatch and habitat disturbance). This action plan should be based on best scientific evidence and prioritise small scale, coastal fisheries, considering diversification of activities and income models, including through incentives to apply for ecological, economic and social criteria for the allocation of fishing quota.
- Fully implement the EU Common Fisheries Policy for the wider health and resilience of our marine environment and ecosystems.
- Introduce a ban on 18 metre trawlers in the six nautical mile zone and ban bottom trawling in Marine Protected Areas and phase out of destructive fishing practices in all water.

#### **Protecting and restoring nature for people, wildlife and climate goals**

- Continue the work to review and amend national wildlife legislation and ensure that legislation is in line with EU environmental law and in particular the Birds and Habitats Directives. Also ensure that there’s an effective communications campaign on the legislation and that government is resourced to enforce it.
- Establish and resource an effective Wildlife Crime Unit.
- Design, fund and implement an ambitious National Nature Restoration Plan which will set nature on the pathway to recovery and supported by an expert working group, including environmental organisations like BirdWatch Ireland.
- Champion the establishment of an EU Nature Restoration Fund.
- Ringfence funding for nature in the Infrastructure Climate and Nature Fund.

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