

BirdLife in Denmark 2010

In a changing climate



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 Birdlife in Denmark
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Lapwing is declining rapidly. The population has been reduced by 75% in 30 years due to intensification of agriculture.



Christian Hjorth, chairman of Dansk Ornitologisk Forening – DOF

DOF contributes to global bird conservation

For over 100 years Dansk Ornitologisk Forening (DOF – BirdLife in Denmark) has worked for a rich and diverse bird life. Our dedicated members have strived to understand and protect wild birds by monitoring and communication, and by influencing legislation, nature management and law enforcement. In the beginning we focused on local birds – particularly raptors. But in recent years, our horizon has broadened and we are now concerned with bird conservation on a global scale.

It must be obvious by now that one of the severest world-wide threats to nature and man is climate change. We are already seeing some changes in Denmark and we are seeing some of the effects it has on nature. There are changes in the habits of migrating birds, and marine birds are having trouble finding their usual food in the oceans around us. In the future, increasing precipitation will result in more nutrients leaching into the shallow coastal waters around Denmark, thus causing the death of plants and fish and thereby reducing food supplies for the birds. Furthermore, rising sea levels will mean the end of internationally important bird habitats on many of our coastal meadows, islets and in shallow fjords.

The task to protect nature, mitigate climate change and deal with its effects wisely must be carried out on an international basis. To this end, national organisations of birdwatchers and nature lovers all over the world have united in the global community of BirdLife International which strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity. I am proud to state that DOF is an active and dedicated partner in this organisation. We strongly support BirdLife's main messages on climate change which include the need to 1) reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation through the conservation and restoration of natural forests, and 2) recognize the role that ecosystems play in helping adaptation to climate change.

BirdLife International work with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. With more than 10 million supporters and partners in 115 countries, BirdLife International is one of the largest nature organisations in the world. Our global network of 11,000 Important Bird Areas, managed and monitored by thousands of local support groups, gives us a unique capacity to bring about change both at a local level and world wide. By the time the network is complete, IBAs will cover around 7% of the earth's land surface.

Dansk Ornitologisk Forening is pleased and proud to contribute to this work.

Christian Hjorth
 Chairman of Dansk Ornitologisk Forening – DOF



← Common Tern is a typical bird of the Danish coasts. The Danish population is around 500 pairs, and it is declining.



conservation
knowledge
enjoyment
participation

Vision

DOF's overall vision is to ensure that present and future generations have:

The opportunity to enjoy a rich and diverse birdlife

DOF's aim is to increase knowledge about and interest in wild birds and nature protection.

To fulfil this aim we work along four tracks. We strive to:

- Conserve birds and improve their habitats
- Collect and communicate our knowledge about birds
- Mediate the enjoyment of birds in nature
- Share our efforts in achieving DOF's goals

This leaflet is an introduction to DOF and our activities. It is grouped around our four tracks for structural reasons, but the tracks are, of course, mutually dependent, and DOF's activities are for the most part a combination of several tracks.

Each track has a headline related to DOF's aim.

Conservation

A natural, rich and diverse bird fauna

Knowledge

Promoting insight into birds and nature

Enjoyment

Profound harmony between people and nature

Participation

Members contribute substantially to achieving DOF's goals

In each chapter there is a description of DOF's activities in this track. Besides this there is a description of the major future goals of DOF and a statement on DOF's aims and activities on climate issues.

←
Numbers of White-tailed Eagle have increased as a result of conservation, and we now boast 29 breeding pairs. A DOF analysis shows a potential for at least 75 breeding pairs in Denmark. Since 2006, DOF has celebrated the Eagles Day every year, inviting the Danish public to see 'our' eagles.



Conservation

A natural, rich and diverse bird fauna

DOF exerts a strong influence on the primary legislation and administration of bird conservation in Denmark. DOF has a seat in the national Game Management Council and on the board of one of the two National Parks. At a local level, DOF is represented in 83 Green Councils in the 98 municipalities of Denmark and maintains a widespread network of caretaker groups monitoring 129 Important Bird Areas.

Apart from this, DOF conducts monitoring programmes and campaigns for rare and threatened species like White-tailed Eagle and Tengmalm's Owl, or groups of birds like long-distance migrating passerines or waterbirds that stage in numbers of international significance. Some of this work is done in collaboration with the Danish Government. Finally, the Bird Protection Foundation, founded by DOF, runs 20 reserves aimed at bird protection and visitor enjoyment.

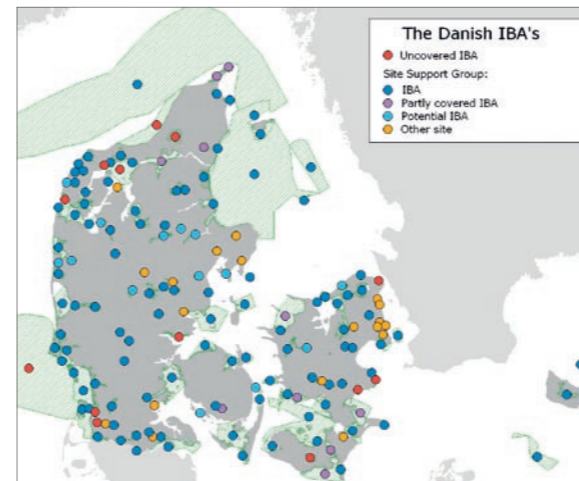
The latest significant results are:

- Four new marine Special Protected Bird Areas have been designated
- There has been a considerable improvement in adapting Danish national legislation to EU nature directives, thereby ensuring a better protection of the sites in general
- Lists of designation species for the Special Protected Areas have been revised and updated
- The numbers of certain waterfowl, raptors and waders are increasing, thanks to hunting regulations
- Several wetlands of importance for birds have been restored
- Mussel fishery in the Wadden Sea has been banned

DOF is also involved in international conservation. Currently (2009) DOF is involved in several projects in collaboration with other BirdLife Partners:

- Livelihood improvement at Important Bird Areas in Kenya
- Conservation and ecotourism on Flores (Indonesia)
- A BirdLife Vision for the Wadden Sea (Netherlands, Germany, Denmark)
- Migrants between Denmark/Europe and Ghana

Seen from a nature conservation perspective, the biggest challenges for the future are coping with and adapting to the huge impacts caused by agricultural intensification and climate change. In this light, DOF is now setting new national and international goals for future activities.



Almost 10% of the European population of Avocet breed in Denmark. It is the most north-western outpost of the population.



Goals for the future

- Influence on Danish and European agricultural politics
- Reduced disturbance from hunting
- Re-establishment of the breeding populations of meadow birds on the marshlands of the Danish Wadden Sea
- Enhancement of the conservation status of Greenland's wildlife and habitats
- Seats in the National Park boards
- Capacity building of staff and volunteers regarding governance, conservation and nature policy
- Strengthened collaboration with BirdLife networks

Climate issues

Ecosystems play an important role in securing the basis for human livelihoods. In the poorest parts of the world, especially, people's lives are closely linked to ecosystems that provide a wide range of functions from water catchment to game reserves. Conservation of ecosystems is crucial for the ability to adapt to climate change, and needs to be incorporated in adaptation strategies across all sectors.

On a local scale, the Danish biodiversity conservation strategy must take the predicted changes in the composition of habitats and species into account, to ensure resilience of ecosystems.

← DOF has joined forces with BirdLife Partners of Germany and the Netherlands to work for a better protection of The Wadden Sea.

DOF cooperates with BirdLife Indonesia to train local village groups in monitoring birds and habitats.



Knowledge

Promoting insight into birds and nature

DOF's political arguments are founded on a solid insight into the distribution, trends, numbers and diversity of birds. The Common Bird Census Programme has provided trend indices for all common Danish birds for more than 30 years. More than 300 volunteers are engaged in the programme. The count data are uploaded to the DOF-database which forms the backbone of all analytical work in DOF.

The DOF-database is a web database, into which more than 1 million observations are uploaded every year. Besides the standardized counts, chance observations by birdwatchers are also uploaded. More than 500 volunteers are conducting systematic counts of breeding, staging and wintering birds at 129 Important Bird Areas in Denmark, hereby providing a solid basis for DOF's site-based advocacy and conservation work.

DOF has previously conducted two Bird Atlas Surveys (in the 1970s and the 1990s) which have been widely used as documentation both nationally and internationally. The Bird Atlas Surveys are some of DOF's most important bird research projects, which have been widely acclaimed by scientists. They are also an example of a very successful citizen science activity that has mobilised hundreds of volunteers in research fieldwork.

The Common Bird Census Programme provides data for the pan-European Common Bird Indicator - one of EU's few biodiversity indicators. During the last few years, data have also been used to develop national Danish bird indicators for farmland and forests. Data from the census programme have shown that a large proportion of the Danish long-distance migrants wintering in Africa is in serious decline. DOF has therefore initiated a research and information project in Ghana, West Africa, in order to collect data that will shed light on conditions in the wintering areas.

DOF makes use of a wide range of information channels to convey results gathered through volunteer participation to members and the general public. Regular press releases are issued with stories on specific species as well as political stories with links to the relevant data as documentation. The status and trends of all the breeding birds in Denmark are described on DOF's website and the texts are updated regularly.

Goals for the future

- Processing, analysis and publication of more information about Denmark's 129 Important Bird Areas
- A third Bird Atlas Survey in 2013-17
- Collection and communication of information on long-distance migrants from ringing in Denmark and Ghana
- Launch of an improved corporate website with more interactive features
- Promotion of DOF's scientific data as basis for nature conservation

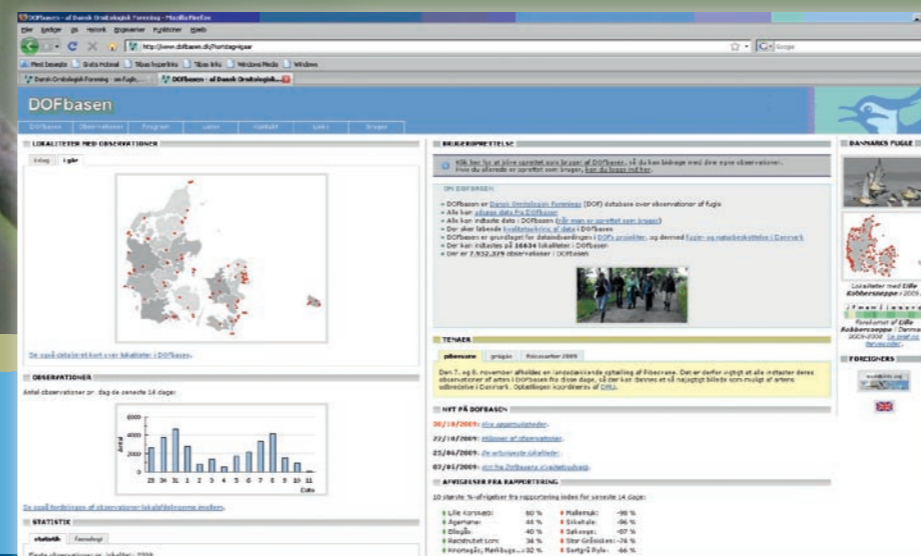
Climate issues

Climate change is very likely to intensify the impacts on bird populations caused by current land use, changes in land use and other human-induced pressures. It is important to identify the main factors causing declines in migrant bird populations in order to determine which areas to focus on politically. DOF will continue to provide the relevant bird data needed to determine the effects of climate change on bird populations, in order to apply proper national management strategies. DOF will collect more data about the fate of our migratory birds in decline through a site-based ringing scheme in West Africa.



The population of Icterine Warbler - formerly a widespread songbird of forested habitats - has been reduced by more than 50% since 1985. Icterine Warblers migrate to West Africa.

The latest feature of the DOF-database is a graph showing the occurrence of certain species based on data from 2003-08.



Five Montagu's Harriers have been equipped with satellite transmitters in cooperation with a Dutch research programme at the University of Groningen and The Ringing Center in Copenhagen.



Local bird watchers in Ghana are trained as ringers as part of DOF's research programme for long-distance migrants between Denmark and West Africa.



Winter brings huge flocks of Waxwings into the gardens. DOF has held Garden Birdwatch counts since 2007.

Enjoyment

Profound harmony between people and nature

DOF conducts a range of information activities aimed at its members and the general public. These include magazines and websites, bird trips and nature events. The core aim of these is to convey the sense of sheer enjoyment in experiencing wild birds and nature. The feeling of and belief in harmony between people and nature is the basis on which to build conservation.

The two member magazines are directed towards the ordinary member and the experienced ornithologist respectively. The contents of the magazines are a mix between sheer enjoyment, political issues and information about birds. Besides the magazines, there is a scientific journal for the member segment with scientific interests.

More than 500 bird trips are offered every year to members. But DOF also has a longstanding tradition for sharing its enthusiasm for birds and nature with others. The national Birds' Day was launched 25 years ago, and four years ago the Eagle Day and the Honey Buzzard Day were added. On these days, volunteers from DOF guide the general public on bird trips all over the country. These and other events initiated by the local branches are well reputed and very popular.

Events are the basic strategy for recruitment. Event participants are offered a free subscription to DOF's popular magazine. After receiving three issues of the magazine they are contacted by phone and offered a membership.

One of the best ways to enjoy birds, however, is on one of DOF's 20 nature reserves, managed by the Bird Protection Foundation. Every year, around 100 bird trips, open to the general public and led by a professional bird guide, take place on the reserves.

Good equipment makes enjoyment even greater. DOF's Nature Shop offers everything necessary for a good outdoor experience. The shop is doing well and the product range is constantly adjusted to meet the needs of the customers.

Early morning bird trips to hear Nightingale is a popular tradition. It has been predicted that the population is changing from Thrush Nightingale to 'southern' Nightingale due to climate change.



Active members organise more than 500 bird trips and public events every year.



Goals for the future

- Increased awareness of DOF's brand in the Danish population
- Development of a new concept for events and recruitment - "At Eye Level with Nature" - based on the RSPB's experiences with "A Date with Nature"
- Establishment of an additional nature reserve and/or enlargement of one of the existing reserves

Climate issues

Climate change has been widely accepted as being a major challenge for the global community. However, the close link between well-functioning ecosystems and human survival and wellbeing still needs to be recognised. DOF will highlight this issue by focusing on the subject in its communication to members, legislators and the general public.



The surroundings of Copenhagen provide excellent opportunities for bird watching.

Participation

Members contribute

The many active volunteers, who contribute to the achievement of DOF's goals, are a major asset to DOF's work. DOF has approximately 15,000 members and 2,200 of these are active volunteers.

DOF is divided into 13 local branches. Each branch has a democratic structure with a board and several committees. Members can contribute to achieving DOF's goals in numerous ways – traditionally in terms of member activities but also by undertaking tasks related to information and conservation work. Examples of member activities:

substantially to achieving DOF's goals

- Guiding bird trips for members and non-members
- Counting birds in the Common Birds Census Programme
- Being caretaker for an Important Bird Area
- Doing governance work for the local branches
- Arranging local public events for information and recruitment
- Lobbying politically for local bird conservation
- Advocating DOF's policies to municipalities via local Green Councils
- Acting as spokes-persons for DOF in the local media
- Informing local communities through local websites

The local branches are the organisational pivots of the voluntary work. Support and capacity building for local activities are provided by the secretariat at the office in Copenhagen.

In 2008 a new branch was formed north of Copenhagen. The initiative has already proven successful, as the branch is highly involved in conservation work and advocacy for a new national park in the area.

Goals for the future

- Recruitment of more members for active, voluntary work – particularly for the "At Eye Level with Nature" project, ringing stations and the third Atlas Project
- Production of a manual on voluntary work
- A substantial contribution to international bird and nature conservation by volunteers.

Climate issues

People depend on natural resources everywhere in the world, but people's livelihoods are particularly dependent on ecosystem functions in third world countries. DOF volunteers have been actively engaged in habitat conservation and capacity building projects, for example in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana and Thailand, thereby improving the local communities' ability to adapt to climate change.

DOF members pay a voluntary CO2-fee on travel. The fee is donated to climate-beneficient projects.

Nests of White-tailed Eagle and other rare birds of prey are guarded by volunteer caretaking groups. Several nests can be observed within a few hundred meters distance without disturbing the birds.



Many local events are open for the public which attracts young bird watchers.



Around 2,200 members are active volunteers.



Approximately 12% of Europe's Cormorants breed at the Danish fjords, lakes and coasts, thus putting an international responsibility for the protection of this species on the Danish government.





The hunting ban in force since 1922 and a changed attitude to birds of prey among hunters and landowners have had a positive impact on the numbers of Marsh Harrier. The population is now stable, at around 650 breeding pairs.

Tryggelev Nor

The Bird Protection Foundation has put a halt to the yearly emission of 6,000 t CO₂ by restoring a lake and wet meadow on the foundation's property Tryggelev Nor. Tryggelev Nor is a Danish wetland area on the island of Langeland, south of Funen. This wetland had been drained for 50 years, thus lowering the ground water level by 1-2 meters. This made the soil settle approximately 1.5 meters and created a cold combustion in the 60 hectares of former wetland. During the years as dried wetland the area emitted 300,000 t of CO₂ equalling the emission from 2,000 cars in the same period.



List of photographers

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 Back page: Erik Thomsen



Avocet breeds in many coastal areas – and is a typical inhabitant of shallow lagoons and tidal flats.



Red-backed Shrike is declining because of deterioration of heathland and dry grassland habitats.

Mute Swan is a common sight in Denmark. It is considered the Danish national bird – mainly because of Hans Christian Andersen's tale 'The Ugly Duckling'.



BirdLife in Denmark 2010

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- Collect and communicate our knowledge about birds
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This leaflet is an introduction to DOF's general activities and main climate issues. We consider climate change to be one of the severest threats to nature and man world wide. DOF is a partner in BirdLife International and we strongly support BirdLife's main messages on climate change concerning the need to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation and recognise the role that ecosystems play in helping adaptation to climate change.



A dedicated programme for nest-boxes for Barn Owl has boosted the population from 20 to 300 breeding pairs over the last 20 years.

▶ See more information at www.dof.dk

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Dansk Ornitologisk Forening

