Farming and birds in Europe: the Common Agricultural Policy and its implications for bird conservation

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Abstract

Intensified risk-related policies for EU agriculture, and in particular a new farm income safety are not really warranted in view of continued large direct payments and expected conditions on agricultural markets. On the other hand, if tightly constrained by budgetary limits under Pillar 2, introduction of a "risk management toolkit" is likely to do relatively little harm. The reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a timely opportunity to provide a coherent set of interventions that address these challenges.

The European Commission has proposed a number of 'greening measures', including obligatory crop rotation, grassland maintenance, and more specific agri-environment measures, aimed at climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation. The on-going reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) provides an opportunity to increase the sector's resource efficiency and environmental performance. This has direct implications for biodiversity (notably semi-natural and natural habitats), and indirectly for delivery of ecosystem services (including carbon capture and water retention).