



EAZA contribution to the Birds (Council Directive 2009/147/EC) and Habitats Directives (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) fitness check 2014-2016

EAZA, the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria, represents and links nearly 400 Member institutions across 44 countries. Formed in 1992, EAZA's mission is to facilitate cooperation within the European zoo and aquarium community towards the goals of education, research and conservation.

EAZA views biodiversity conservation as one of its core activities, and together with its members actively engage in a range of efforts to save species. It is also recognized that European zoos play a special role in saving biodiversity in Europe itself. This is evidenced by our work on species such as fire salamanders, corncrakes, European bison and Corfu killifish. EAZA believes that the Birds and Habitats Directives are crucial for our work as they form the foundation of the EU's biodiversity legislation.

During the public consultation of the fitness check process on these Directives, EAZA Members participated greatly and indicated that they believe these Directives to be very important in protecting European biodiversity. They form the main legal framework in which zoos and aquariums work to save European species, and help in encouraging conservation measures where needed.

One of the tools which has helped the work of EAZA and its Members is the Natura 2000 network. These sites provide safe places to live for European animals and plants and can stimulate the recovery of some of our most endangered species. The implementation of these Directives costs money, but looking at the benefits for biodiversity and nature in Europe, EAZA believes strongly that the benefits greatly exceed the costs. In addition, EAZA sees that nature can only be protected on a European level as it is not limited by borders. Actions in one Member State can affect biodiversity in neighboring countries and therefore it is crucial that biodiversity protection is harmonized across the EU.

Although both Directives take a holistic approach and take into account other policy areas, EAZA asserts that agricultural, fishery and economic policies should also reflect the vital importance of a strong and unified environmental policy.

EAZA is pleased to note that the results of the REFIT found that both Directives remain highly relevant and are considered fit for purpose. EAZA and its Members look forward to continue working within these important legislative acts and keep protecting Europe's biodiversity.

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