

Question for written answer E-003431/2026
to the Commission
Rule 144
Maria Ohisalo (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Baiting of aquatic birds in the vicinity of Natura 2000 areas

In Finland, numerous small ponds have been dug out and are being used for the baiting and hunting of aquatic birds in the immediate vicinity of aquatic-bird areas that form part of the Natura 2000 network (including the Liminganlahti and Kempeleenlahti bays).¹ This practice puts hunting pressure on the very birds that nest in these protected areas and set off for their migrations from there, including seriously declining species. Only a small proportion of hunters use this method, but it has a disproportionate impact on the total number of birds caught.

1. Does the Commission consider that baiting on the periphery of a protected area and the consequent concentration of hunting might constitute disturbance of a protected species contrary to Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive or Article 7(4) of the Birds Directive (sustainable use)?
2. Does the Commission have the means to ensure that no EU funding has been used for the construction of ponds and wetlands like these (e.g. the Rural Development Fund or LIFE) in a manner inconsistent with the Natura 2000 objectives, and does such aid require an impact assessment in cases like these?
3. In the stress tests used in practice under the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive, and when streamlining regulation, is the Commission ensuring that the protection against non-selective catch methods under Article 8/Annex Iv(a) and the ban on the deterioration of natural habitats under Article 6(2) are not being eroded, and are such practices taken into account when assessing this?

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¹ <https://www.kaleva.fi/kansalaisaloite-vaatii-vesilintujen-houkutusruokin/13609972> (in Finnish).