

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004881/25
to the Commission
Benoit Cassart (Renew)
(10 December 2025)**

Subject: Integrating private bird breeding into EU conservation policies

Many Europeans involved in breeding wild birds in protected areas highlight how this could help conserve biodiversity. With the help of privately bred birds and small-scale European breeding, it has been possible to save or reintroduce several species now classified as threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. These include the Hawaiian goose, Laysan albatross, Mauritian pink pigeon, Grayson's dove, and Bali myna.

At the same time, some Member States are bringing in 'positive lists' that heavily restrict the keeping of bird species, without always taking into account how these captive populations can contribute to conservation. At grassroots level there are concerns that these limits are depleting an important gene pool for future reintroduction programmes, despite the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 encouraging such programmes.

In view of the above:

1. Does the Commission plan to further integrate private breeding into EU *ex-situ* conservation policies?
2. Does it intend to put forward guidelines that will ensure the positive lists are based on scientific criteria that are proportionate and in line with conservation?

Submitted: 10.12.2025

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(5 February 2026)**

As the Commission stated in its reply to Written Question E-004839/2025 ⁽¹⁾, captive breeding is mainly justified in emergency situations and must be part of an approved and evidence-based conservation strategy.

Ex situ conservation is not explicitly covered by EU nature legislation. Thus, the competence for integrating private breeding into ex situ conservation policies lies with the Member States.

However, it should be noted that pursuant to Article 11 of the Birds Directive ⁽²⁾, Member States shall see that any introduction of species of bird which do not occur naturally in the wild state in the European territory of the Member States does not prejudice the local flora and fauna.

In this connection they shall consult the Commission. None of bird species listed in the question occurs naturally in the European territory of the Member States.

As explained in the reply to the written question mentioned above, the reflection on possible positive lists will only start following the conclusion of a study whose results are expected in 2026.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-004839-ASW_EN.html.

⁽²⁾ Council Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds, OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7-25.