

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000372/26
to the Commission
Asger Christensen (Renew)
(29 January 2026)**

Subject: Need for concrete actions following structured dialogue on the management of the Great Cormorant

The Great Cormorant is protected under the Birds Directive ⁽¹⁾ and its recovery at EU level is well established, with the population today exceeding 1.5 million ⁽²⁾. In several regions, however, increasingly concentrated populations are causing persistent and well-documented conflicts.

In the Danish part of the Western Baltic, research estimates that cormorants consume 15 million cod annually ⁽³⁾, while total cod recruitment is estimated at 4-17 million per year ⁽⁴⁾.

On 28 October 2025, the Commission organised a structured dialogue on this matter with Member States ⁽⁵⁾. While this initiative is welcome, concrete and implementable actions resulting from this process are still missing.

1. Beyond dialogue and guidance updates ⁽⁶⁾, what concrete actions from the October 2025 dialogue does the Commission envisage in order to implement a coordinated management of cormorant-related conflicts at EU level?
2. How will the Commission further implement the key proposals of the European Management Plan for the Great Cormorant, developed by the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission ⁽⁷⁾, for an EU-level tailored framework to address cormorant predation?
3. The Commission announced that, in the context of the implementation of the ‘Strategic guidelines for EU aquaculture’, it would start working on recommendations and good practices for managing interactions with predators. In this context, can the Commission provide an update on the scope, timeline and next steps of the implementation of these guidelines? ⁽⁸⁾ ⁽⁹⁾

Submitted: 29.1.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(23 April 2026)**

In response to requests for a coordinated approach in managing cormorant-fisheries conflicts, the Commission discussed with Member States in October 2025 ⁽¹⁾ to give mandate to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) secretariat to develop an international single-species management plan for the Great Cormorant, promoting cooperation across its flyway.

Due to lack of consensus among Member States delegates at the ninth meeting of the Parties ⁽²⁾, the EU could not put forward the proposal.

On 31 March 2026, the Commission adopted guidance on the protection of birds ⁽³⁾, including ways to address conflicts with the Great Cormorant.

In 2026, the Commission will stress test the Birds ⁽⁴⁾ and Habitats ⁽⁵⁾ Directives to evaluate whether they remain fit to achieve their objectives in a cost-efficient way.

¹ 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, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2009/147/oj>).

² Christensen, A. et al., ‘Call for an EU-wide management strategy for the Great Cormorant while maintaining its favourable conservation status — a long overdue necessity’, 2 July 2025.

³ Jepsen, N. et al., ‘Cormorants and fish populations — documentation of effects’, 2025, <https://www.fao.org/fishery/services/storage/fs/fishery/documents/EIFAAC/presentation-on-cormorants-and-fish-populations-documentation-of-effects-Jepsen.pdf>.

⁴ Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Agriculture Science ‘Fish recruitment in a changing environment’, https://www.cefas.co.uk/publications/files/fish_recruitment.pdf.

⁵ European Commission, ‘Commission invites Member States to discuss cormorants’, 28 October 2025.

⁶ Written Question E-003865/2025, ‘Towards a coordinated EU response on cormorant management’, European Parliament, 2 October 2025, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003865_EN.html.

⁷ European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission, ‘Draft framework towards development of a European Management Plan for the Great Cormorant’, Food and Agriculture Organisation, May 2025.

⁸ European Parliament, ‘Impact of cormorant predation on EU fisheries and aquaculture’, European Parliamentary Research Service, January 2026.

⁹ Answer to Written Question E-003865/2025, 9 December 2025, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003865-ASW_EN.html.

⁽¹⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/meetings/consult?lang=en&meetingId=66824>.

⁽²⁾ AEWA MOP9, 10-14/11/2025, Bonn, Germany.

⁽³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_26_760.

⁽⁴⁾ 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.

⁽⁵⁾ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7-50.

Additionally, it will continue the structured dialogue with Member States and encourage the coordination of measures consistent with EU legislation on the management of the impact of the Great Cormorant.

While the Commission acknowledges that the work undertaken by the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission ⁽⁶⁾ provides information that is valuable for the coordination of action among Member States, it considers that the negotiation and agreement of a management plan should take place within AEWA.

Work has started on a document providing recommendations and good practices on prevention and mitigation of the impact of main predators on aquaculture, including species that are proliferating due to climate change.

The scope of this document in terms of species of predators covered is still under discussion and will depend on available information for the management of the respective species.

⁽⁶⁾ The project was supported with a grant under the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-investment/emfaf_en.