

EN

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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(16.10.2026)

Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive¹, which also applies to Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive², requires Member States to avoid significant disturbance of species for which those areas were designated, including from activities outside Natura 2000 sites. Under Article 7 of the Birds Directive hunting must not jeopardise conservation efforts and must comply with the principles of wise use and ecologically balanced control. It is for the competent Finnish authorities to assess, based on the specific circumstances and best available scientific information, whether baiting and associated hunting comply with these requirements.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)³ can support the creation or restoration of ponds or small wetlands in areas adjoining Natura 2000 sites to protect biodiversity and water. Such support is available under Finland's CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027⁴. With regards to the EU programme for the environment and climate action (LIFE)⁵, projects may include actions for improving the habitats of huntable bird species, exceptionally, and for demonstration purposes only⁶. Any LIFE application, however, should be supported by Member States authorities to ensure that the project is fully justified and will not have negative impact on protected species and habitats.

The ongoing stress test of the Birds and Habitats Directives aims to identify potential areas for simplification and administrative burden reduction while maintaining the Directives' ambition and high standards for nature protection. Its results – planned for end 2026 – will form the basis for the Commission to decide on the appropriate follow up.

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy_en.

⁴ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/cap-my-country/cap-strategic-plans_en.

⁵ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/life/wp-call/2026/call-fiche_life-2026-sap-nat_en.pdf.