

WCC-2012-Rec-161-EN

Protecting the Critically Endangered Balearic Shearwater in the Ebro Delta, Spain

OBSERVING that a governmental institution has proposed an experimental offshore wind energy project in the Ebro Delta Important Bird Area (IBA ES148), Spain;

RECOGNIZING the fundamental role that renewable energies must play in combating climate change;

CONSIDERING, however, that wind projects – like any industrial project – are not without their environmental consequences, particularly the negative impact they have on birds;

CONCERNED that the place chosen for establishing this wind project is an Important Bird Area (IBA), identified for its extreme importance to 11 species of sea bird, 10 of which are listed in Annex I to the European Birds Directive: Balearic Shearwater (*Puffinus mauretanicus*), Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*), European Storm Petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*), European Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*), Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*), Slender-billed Gull (*Larus genei*), Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*), Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*), Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) and Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*);

FURTHER CONCERNED that the location chosen for the project proposed by the Government of Spain is a Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA) under the European Birds Directive;

ESPECIALLY CONCERNED that the location chosen for this wind project is the main feeding area during the breeding season for more than 50% of the global population and 75% of the wintering population of Balearic Shearwater, a species considered globally Critically Endangered by IUCN;

OBSERVING WITH CONCERN that, in the winter, more than 70% of the Spanish population of Mediterranean Gull is to be found in this location, along with 30% of the breeding population of European Storm Petrel and 20% of the breeding population of Audouin's Gull and Cory's Shearwater;

CONSIDERING that all these species are under threat of extinction according to IUCN criteria;

CONSIDERING the recommendations of the guide, *Greening Blue Energy: Identifying and managing the biodiversity risks and opportunities of offshore renewable energy*, published by IUCN in 2010;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the Environmental Impact Assessment has assessed the impact on birds as severe;

OBSERVING that, if the first offshore wind park in Spain were to have a negative impact on these species, this would not only be tragic for the conservation of these species but would also be extremely negative for the future development of offshore wind energy in Spain; and

CONSIDERING that there are other alternative locations on the Spanish coast of less environmental impact where experimental offshore wind energy projects could be conducted;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

1. SUPPORTS the carrying out of experimental offshore wind energy projects;
2. ASKS the Spanish authorities to ensure that the experimental offshore wind project incorporates all the necessary guarantees for the protection of the Balearic Shearwater, and that it avoids any negative impact on the most critical areas for this species in the Ebro Delta Marine IBA, in line with the most reliable scientific information available;
3. ASKS the Spanish authorities to study and assess carefully alternative sites for the location of the experimental offshore wind project, bearing in mind its potential effect on the Balearic Shearwater population, in order to minimize its impact on this population; and
4. URGES the governments of Spain, Portugal, France and the United Kingdom not to authorize offshore wind projects in areas often frequented by the Balearic Shearwater, if they fail to respect the obligations of the European Birds and Habitats Directives.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this Motion for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process.