



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JR

T 03459 335577  
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

The Rt Hon George Howarth MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: MC391798/RG

15 December 2015

**From Rory Stewart OBE MP**  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Environment and Rural Affairs

Dear George,

Thank you for your email of 8 December on behalf of a number of your constituents about the EU nature directives review.

I would like to reassure your constituents that I share their belief that the Habitats & Wild Birds Directives have a crucial role to play in protecting biodiversity in the UK and the EU and that I am also well aware of the strength of support for the Directives from the UK public.

As your constituents are aware, the European Commission is undertaking a review of the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives to ensure that they are fit for purpose. This is part of a wider exercise the European Commission is carrying out which is assessing European legislation in many areas. Reviewing a policy is an essential part of the process of ensuring that it is working properly and effectively.

The European Commission is taking an evidence-based approach to its review of the Nature Directives and to support this Defra has provided them with extensive evidence (now published on the Commission website). The review of the EU Nature Directives is expected to report in the spring of next year. The UK intends to take a proactive role in discussions at EU level in the run up to the publication of the report.

**RORY STEWART**