



# Sveriges Ornitologiska Förening

Partner i BirdLife International

## YTTRANDE

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Ärendenummer

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### **Environmental impacts from the wind farm Windanker in the German exclusive economic zone (EEZ)**

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The Swedish Ornithological Society (SOF) – BirdLife Sweden – has received information from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and reviewed the attached documentation regarding the wind farm *Windanker*. Here we present our conclusive summary. It is recommended that this process is shared between the countries involved, as this project has cross-border environmental impacts. The Swedish Ornithological Society (SOF) – BirdLife Sweden is generally positive to offshore wind farms away from shallow waters, e.g. offshore banks, and concentrations of seabirds.

### **SUMMARY**

According to the document “*Maritime environment study for the application of the Windanker offshore wind farm*”, which provides background information on the potential effects on birdlife, fairly low numbers of birds have been documented in the project area. However, the proximity to the “Westliche Rönnebank” and the “Adlergrund”, which are important areas for birds, and indications of e.g. Razorbill (*Alca torda*) and Common Guillemot (*Uria aalge*) feeding in the project area, requests the planned environmental surveys to confirm that the Windanker wind farm does not pose a substantial risk to these or other seabirds. It should be noted that some bird population numbers and trends presented in the report have changed in recent years. Most notably the population of Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) wintering in the Baltic Sea has decreased dramatically, while the Swedish Crane population has increased.

The report states that very few Cranes (*Grus grus*) have been documented to pass through the project area, as only a total of 300 individuals were noted during a two-year study in preparation for an adjacent wind farm. SOF – BirdLife Sweden wish to



point out that a considerable part of the cranes migrating from Sweden to Rügen may pass (via Bornholm) through the proposed wind farm area, especially under certain weather conditions. Therefore, it seems unlikely that just a few hundred cranes would pass through the proposed area for Windanker wind farm each year. It is also possible that cranes fly within the planned rotor-swept area, as their flight altitude decreases after long distances over water. SOF – BirdLife Sweden requests a study in which at least one full spring and autumn migration of cranes is appropriately documented (including flight altitudes), before the wind farm can be accepted.

SOF – BirdLife Sweden wish to emphasize the importance of mitigations to avoid adverse negative impacts on birds. One such mitigation act is appropriate lighting. Nocturnal migrants are known to be attracted to and collide with illuminated obstacles like light houses, towers and other high buildings. This mainly happens in severe weather conditions, e.g. heavy fog, during periods of intense migration. Short, flashing lights have less attracting effect on birds than permanent lights. As of today, there are functional systems that turn on the lights only when airplanes approach the wind farm. Such systems would effectively minimize the risk of mass collision events. SOF – BirdLife Sweden strongly suggests the use of this technique. Lighting systems for boat traffic should be placed low above water.

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