

## Environmental Sustainability Policy and Green Procurement

### Hellenic Ornithological Society/BirdLife Greece

Last Review: 10/01/2025

Next Review: 10/01/2026

The **Hellenic Ornithological Society** (HOS), as an environmental non-profit organization dedicated to protecting wild birds and their habitats, acknowledges its responsibility towards the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources for the benefit of future generations. This responsibility is grounded in international, EU, and national legislation.

HOS recognizes that despite its mission to protect wild bird species and their habitats, its activities may nonetheless have an environmental footprint. Therefore, the core objective of its environmental policy is to follow the principles of sustainable development, reduce environmental impact, and support efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change. To achieve these goals, HOS commits to using natural resources sustainably and actively promoting the responsible production and consumption of energy, goods, and services. Integrating these principles into HOS's strategic planning and everyday practices is considered essential. Continuous refinement of this policy and the optimization of implementation practices are key to enhancing HOS's environmental performance.

Finally, as part of its commitment to environmental sustainability, HOS strives to inspire and encourage its members, partners, and volunteers to adopt and apply these principles in their daily work and conduct.

#### **Responsibility for Policy Implementation**

The Management of HOS is responsible for the effective implementation of this sustainability policy, as well as for regularly reviewing and updating its objectives. All employees, members, and volunteers are expected to actively contribute to the successful application of the policy within the scope of their responsibilities.



**HOS commits to adopting the following sustainable environmental management practices:**

## **1. Materials and Packaging**

### **Paper**

- Where possible, HOS uses products made from recycled paper for its operational needs.
- When virgin paper is necessary, preference is given to products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and such products must be accompanied by certification documentation.
- If FSC-certified paper is unavailable, suppliers must demonstrate how they are transitioning to certified or recycled pulp.

### **Wood and Wood Products**

- HOS prioritizes the use of reusable or recycled wood and wood products over new materials, provided this is technically feasible. All wood must be FSC-certified.
- Wood supplied from rare or endangered tree species and threatened habitats will not be used. The same applies to products that are illegally logged.
- All wood used should be reusable for future construction projects or recyclable.
- Locally produced FSC-certified wood products are preferred over those sourced from distant suppliers.
- Imported wood must only be used when no other equivalent local alternative is available.

### **Plastics**

Plastics are among the most environmentally harmful material categories, associated with the release of toxic chemicals throughout their life cycle- from production and use to disposal or recycling.

- HOS aims to significantly reduce plastic use and, where feasible, eliminate it entirely. When plastic use is unavoidable, recyclable materials should be prioritized, and waste generation minimized.
- Non-recyclable plastics or those containing toxic substances must be avoided.
- The burning of plastic waste is strictly prohibited.

### **Chemicals and Cleaners**

HOS is committed to using environmentally friendly chemicals and cleaning products to protect both human health and ecosystems.

- All cleaning products must be biodegradable and, where possible, certified with environmental labels (e.g., EU Ecolabel).



- When chemical use is unavoidable, proper storage and handling must comply with safety and hygiene regulations (e.g., CLP & REACH).
- Chemical waste should be collected by licensed partners or recycled, where feasible, in line with legal standards.
- Only organic fertilizers will be used in cultivation practices, avoiding synthetic chemical agents.

### **Toxic Substances**

HOS is committed to minimizing the use of toxic and hazardous substances to protect human health, wildlife, and the environment.

- Toxic substances should be avoided where possible and replaced with safer, non-toxic alternatives.
- Rechargeable batteries will be used to cover routine energy needs.
- Only organic agricultural inputs will be used in cultivation, excluding synthetic chemicals.

Where the use of hazardous materials is unavoidable:

- Handling must follow all health and safety regulations.
- Certified professionals must conduct disposal according to environmental laws.
- Batteries, light bulbs, lubricants, and other hazardous waste from vehicles and equipment must be systematically recycled.

### **Packaging**

Packaging Product packaging must comply with legal standards and serve the actual protective and transport needs of the item.

- Excessive or unnecessary packaging is not permitted. Packaging materials must be minimized.
- Environmentally friendly packaging materials and techniques are preferred to reduce environmental impact.
- Where feasible, biodegradable, recyclable, or compostable alternatives to conventional plastics must be used.
- The use of recycled raw materials for packaging is prioritized and actively encouraged.

## **2. Waste Management**

HOS implements a waste minimization policy, promoting prevention, reuse, and recycling in all activities.

- Waste generation should be minimized from the planning stages of actions and procurement.



- Recycling packaging materials, paper, and leftover raw materials from technical work and construction is prioritized.
- All product purchases should include criteria for recyclability at the end of their life cycle.
- At the Antikythera Bird Observatory, all organic waste is composted to reduce overall waste volume.

### **3. Energy Consumption & Transportation**

Reducing energy consumption and promoting sustainable transport are key priorities in minimizing HOS's environmental footprint.

- Energy-efficient solutions are consistently selected for lighting, heating, cooling, and other operational needs.
- The procurement of electrical and electronic devices prioritizes energy-efficient models with certifications (e.g., A+++).
- Preference is given to goods and materials sourced from nearby locations to reduce emissions and energy use associated with transport and logistics.
- Urban and regional travel follows the most efficient routes, with public transport prioritized in urban areas, and alternatives like cycling or walking encouraged.
- When using HOS's vehicles or vessels, minimum fuel consumption is required while ensuring staff safety and minimal disturbance to wildlife. This applies during both transit and fieldwork.
- The vehicle and vessel fleet is regularly maintained to ensure engine efficiency and reduce emissions.
- Air travel is avoided whenever possible and undertaken only when necessary and no viable alternatives exist.

### **4. Water**

The principle of HOS is to minimize the consumption of water resources. For this purpose, the following actions must be ensured:

- Water-saving devices (e.g., pressure reducers, low-flow faucets) are installed in all facilities.
- Staff and collaborators are encouraged to use water responsibly in daily activities.
- Equipment cleaning must use the minimum amount of water necessary, while maintaining hygiene standards.
- Cultivation is irrigated via drip systems or other water-efficient methods, avoiding overuse.
- The disposal of waste, chemicals, or toxic substances into water bodies is strictly prohibited to protect the quality of surface and groundwater.



## 5. Policy Monitoring and Improvement

HOS aims to gradually reduce its environmental footprint through measurable targets and clear timelines.

- Sustainability principles are integrated into strategic and operational decision-making.
- Ongoing training and awareness for staff, members, and volunteers fosters a shared culture of environmental responsibility.
- The policy is reviewed regularly to improve its effectiveness and set increasingly ambitious environmental goals.

## 6. Fostering Environmental Awareness

Environmental awareness is fundamental to the success of HOS's sustainability policy. Participation, training, and collaboration are vital at all levels.

- All staff are actively involved in the implementation of the policy and encouraged to adopt sustainable practices in their daily work.
- Policy reviews are conducted through participatory processes, incorporating input from staff and, where appropriate, other stakeholders.
- Staff receive regular training on environmental sustainability, best practices, and broader environmental issues.
- HOS collaborates with suppliers, partners, and subcontractors who follow documented environmental policies.
- Where feasible, local labor is preferred to reduce carbon emissions and support local economies.
- Through its awareness-raising and educational activities, HOS promotes sustainability principles to the public and partners.

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