

Birds halt some British home construction

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Construction of homes across 300 square miles of land in southeast England has reportedly been halted in an effort to protect three rare species of birds.

The conflict between British environmentalists and developers focuses on the Dartford warbler (*Sylvia undata*), the nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) and the woodlark (*Lullula arborea*), The Independent reported.

The unprecedented moratorium on construction of thousands of homes is the result of a European Union wildlife protection law, which provides extensive safeguards for the three species.

Acting on advice from Britain's wildlife agency, English Nature, developers have frozen plans for up to 20,000 houses, the Independent said. But English Nature says the problem might be resolved if local councils provide new public open space to accompany all new development, which would absorb the extra pressure from visitors that might otherwise put the birds' nesting success at risk..

At issue is not just the fate of the birds, the newspaper reported, but the protection of Britain's lowland area that is one of England's most attractive and wildlife-rich, but fastest-disappearing, habitats.

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