



# Wildlife Crime Newsletter

September-October, 2023

BirdLife's approximately bi-monthly newsletter: keeping you up-to-date with what's happening in the fight against the illegal killing of wild birds and other forms of bird persecutions in the African-Eurasian Flyway. Please, send us your feedback to [wildlifecrime@birdlife.org](mailto:wildlifecrime@birdlife.org).

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**Featured news**

## French government vs. traditional trapping: to ban or not to ban?

The Ministry of Ecology wanted to organize a [so-called scientific study](#) aimed at authorizing the traditional trapping of bird species once again. [\[link\]](#) LPO and One Voice quickly acted upon the trickery and achieved legal success suspending the prefectural decree authorizing the "experimental" trapping of 500 lapwings and 15 golden plovers in the Ardennes. At the same time, the administrative court of Bordeaux suspended the prefectural decrees authorizing the "experimental" capture of 6,000 skylarks using pantes (horizontal nets) or matoles (dropping cages) in the departments of Gironde and Lot -et-Garonne.



On the other hand, the administrative court of Pau rejected on November 3, 2023 LPO's requests for suspension of the prefectural decrees authorizing the "experimental" capture of skylarks in the departments of Landes and Pyrénées-Atlantiques.

[\[link\]](#)



## Violent actions against anti-poaching activists

[Serbia](#): On the 9th and 10th of September 2023, BPSSS/BirdLife Serbia volunteers discovered illegal use of electronic calling devices and encountered three armed Italian citizens who were found in possession of eight freshly shot quails, without the requisite hunting or weapon permits. Promptly, the BPSSS activists reported this incident to the local authorities. The situation has escalated further due to the dissemination of dangerous misinformation by the president of a local hunting society on social media, which led to the emergence of over 60 hate posts, including explicit death threats, targeted at the BPSSS members. Read more [here](#).

[Italy](#): a volunteer's car was set on fire shortly after a hunter was questioned by a WWF volunteer guard during an anti-poaching patrol In the mountain village of Collio (Val Trompia/Brescia) Read more [here](#).

[Cyprus](#): CABS (Committee Against Bird Slaughter) member's car was damaged by poachers near Aradippou when CABS members found a huge trapping site. The trapper first blocked the access road, then smashed the windscreen of CABS' vehicle with a brick. Read more [here](#).

## Rome Strategic Plan updates

The Bern Convention published the [Assessment of the 3rd National Scoreboard Reporting](#) on its page. This time only 22 countries out of the 54 range countries submitted a scoreboard. Furthermore, only 4 of the 22 countries report a decreasing trend of IKB and almost half (10) report that they do not have a comprehensive picture of the scale yet.

The [14th Meeting of the Conference of the CMS Parties](#) will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from 12 to 17 February 2024 (COP14). The meeting documents related to the Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Birds can be found [here](#) with the addendum of the Scientific Council's comment [here](#).

## More news

### IKB getting out of hand in Malta

[Malta has been steadily delivering](#) a great deal of illegalities [since the beginning of the hunting season](#). Here are some of the many cases:

#### [Latvian Osprey killed in Malta](#)

This was already the second illegally shot Osprey recovered in less than a week following [another](#) shot Osprey recovered by the staff of BirdLife Malta at Għadira Nature Reserve. Most of these birds originate from Baltic and Scandinavian countries where intense conservation efforts are expended to help this species thrive. However, this was [not the last shot one](#)...

#### [Czech GPS-tagged birds of prey disappear in Malta](#) (article also in [Czech](#))

Czech Black Kite, rehabilitated Honey-buzzard and colour-ringed Lesser Spotted Eagle were amongst the studied birds that disappeared over Malta in early October, as illegal hunting on land as well as at sea takes its toll on protected species.



BirdLife Malta also successfully recovered an injured [Greater flamingo](#) and a [Western Marsh-harrier](#) which could be taken to rehab.

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### **Maltese Government adopted another bird trapping 'research' season, despite EU proceedings**

The ORNIS Committee decided to allow another trapping season for finches, disguised as 'research', despite the derogation being soon subject to a final deliberation at the European Court of Justice (ECJ), the final step in the European Commission's Infringement Proceedings initiated against Malta to stop this illegal derogation. The Committee also voted in favour of opening again a trapping season for 5000 Song Thrushes and 700 Golden Plovers. Read more [here](#).

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### **Arrests for illegal use of mistnets**

Catalonia, Spain: Of two individuals, one was intercepted. The Agentes Rurales seized and released the live goldfinch decoy. Kingfisher, swallow, goldfinch and sparrow were found dead in the nets. [\[link\]](#)

Cyprus: A Greek Cypriot man faces fines of up to €6,000 following his arrest for possession of active mistnets and protected ambelopoulia (Blackcaps) stored frozen in his home refrigerator. [\[link\]](#)





### Pure cruelty against a buzzard

A Common Buzzard injured and tied to a fence was reported in Buhal village, Albania - an extremely repugnant case of raptor persecution and animal abuse. Content warning: the [video](#) contains animal cruelty that viewers may find distressing.

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### Mass slaughter of eagles and falcons in Lebanon

The Antipoaching Unit (APU), which is affiliated with the Middle East Sustainable Hunting Center (MESHC) and the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL) is implementing an anti-poaching project in cooperation with BirdLife International and in partnership with the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS), also in cooperation with the Internal Security Forces (ISF), as well as the Information and Investigation Branch, and military intelligence. CABS has published a short video documenting the joint operations with partners from MESHC and SPNL during September-October. Watch the video [here](#).



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### Hunting ban achieved on Lake Nasser, Egypt

The Egyptian Government decided to ban hunting activities in Lake Nasser, which is one of the preferable destinations for hunting tourism. The size of poaching is not known in the area, but many incidents have indicated how harsh those illegalities could be (like on this older [video](#) from CABS). We thank to colleagues at NCE/BirdLife Egypt and all collaborators for this step to provide one more resting place for waterbirds in Egypt.

[\[link\]](#)

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## Some more IKB cases published in September-October

Austria: Common buzzard shot in the nest ([press release](#) and [TV interview](#) in German), young starved to death

Cyprus: BirdLife Cyprus warns that illegal [trapping](#) of songbirds has been on the rise this autumn

France: [shot Eurasian goshawk](#)

Spain: video showing [bird trapping](#) under the guise of a "scientific project" and an [article](#) about the issue (in Spanish)



## Research & publications



### New study shows significant use of banned lead ammunition over wetlands

Despite efforts to encourage compliance with the regulations, which had been in force for 17-18 years at the time of the surveys, about half of the cartridges used appeared to have contained lead gunshot, indicating unlawful use. Hence, efforts to restrict the use of lead ammunition in coastal and riparian wetlands by regulation, with the intention of reducing the risk of lead poisoning of waterfowl, have had limited effectiveness so far. Read the paper [here](#).

### New resources set to improve laws and regulations on illegal wildlife seizures

New resources have become available to improve how wildlife management and enforcement agencies manage the seizure and confiscation of live wild animals across the world. These legal and technical resources are aimed at providing actionable and sustainable solutions to improve laws and regulations for the benefit of frontline officers and the animals they encounter. They were developed by Legal Atlas with support from IFAW. [\[Link\]](#)





## Beastly Business Final Report

The Beastly Business project (2021-2023) brought together political ecology and green criminology to develop transformative approaches to understanding green-collar crimes and illegal wildlife trade in European species. The project has released its final report summarising the findings of this 2.5 years of research.

[\[link\]](#)

## Campaigns & events

### Short campaign films against poaching

In this first video of a series, Fahri Tunç member of Doğa Derneği / BirdLife Türkiye tells about nature advocacy in the Salt Lake Basin (Tuz Gölü) and how he changed from hunting to bird photographer and nature conservationist ([video with English subtitles](#))



### "Scaling up EU Impact to Combat Wildlife Trafficking" conference

The conference was organised on 21st September by the European Commission, the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU, and the Wildlife Conservation Society. The event's summary report, a brief web story and the full video recording are available on the [conference webpage](#).

## LIFE EuroKite mid-term conference

On the 5th of October, the LIFE EUROKITE mid-term conference took place with project partners and cooperation partners in Halberstadt, Germany and online.

The recordings of the conference and presentations can be accessed via this [link](#).



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This newsletter is a joint initiative of BirdLife International's African Eurasian flyway team: Stichting BirdLife Europe - BirdLife Middle East - BirdLife Africa. Stichting BirdLife Europe and BirdLife International gratefully acknowledge financial support from the European Commission's LIFE programme through the NGO operational grant.

