



# Wildlife Crime Newsletter

November-December, 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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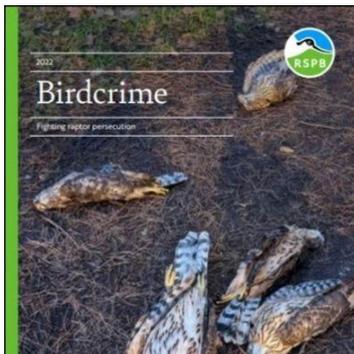


Photo: Tibor Horváth

**Featured news**

## Stone-crush traps got banned in France

Although the EU Birds Directive generally prohibits bird trapping, the French government has continued to authorise the use of stone-crush traps - so called "tendelle" - in southern France. The animal welfare organisation, One Voice took legal action against the brutal hunting method and the Supreme Administrative Court ruled that Stone-crush traps are banned with immediate effect. Read [more](#).



## 2022 RSPB Birdcrime report published in November

The RSPB's annual Birdcrime report details the illegal shooting, trapping and poisoning of protected birds of prey. The data reveals 61 confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents nationally. 39 Hen Harriers have been confirmed killed or have 'suspiciously disappeared' across the UK. At least 64% of all incidents are linked to land used for gamebird shooting. See the report [here](#).

The problem doesn't seem to ease. In total 113 Hen Harriers confirmed 'missing' or illegally killed in UK since 2018 and 2023 has seen highest level of killing in six years. Read the latest summary [here](#).

## Cross-boarder collaboration closes down trafficking scandal in Poland

Italian citizen, settled in a Polish village, was detained by the police for trapping wild birds under the guise of legal breeding. Approximately 500 birds, kept in deplorable conditions, were discovered on the breeding grounds. Polish and Italian BirdLife partners: OTOP and Lipu in cooperation with the Committee Against Birds Slaughter (CABS) raised the issue to the competent authorities, which was able to charge the perpetrator. For more information, read the [article by Polityka](#) or the [press release of CABS](#).



## Rome Strategic Plan updates

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](#). CMS and BirdLife International organize a side event at the COP14 on 14 Feb specifically on the global illegal taking of birds. In 2024, CMS MIKT and the Bern Convention is going to hold a joint, in-person meeting on IKB. The meeting is planned for the autumn, but the exact date and location has not been announced yet.

## More news

### Cyprus: The battle over songbird slaughter (podcast)

For BBC's "Crossing Continents" podcast series, Antonia Bolingbroke-Kent sees the trappers in action in Cyprus, and meets those determined to stop the mass killing of birds, including colleagues from BirdLife Cyprus and RSPB. [Click here](#) to listen.



### RSPB Scotland: Can we end the illegal killing of birds of prey? (podcast)

In this episode of Nature News from RSPB Scotland, Stephen Magee meets those working to end raptor persecution. He hears from RSPB Scotland's Head of Investigations Ian Thompson, Ruth Tingay from the influential Raptor Persecution UK blog and campaigner Chris Packham. And there's the very latest on what's happening in the Scottish Parliament for the new [Wildlife Management Bill](#). [Click here](#) to listen.

### Hunters who killed the owl family got convicted

A protected long-eared owl and its four chicks were brutally shot out of a nest in Pram, Austria on April 23rd. A witness (36) observed how three men positioned themselves in a meadow around a large tree and fired shotguns at least 15 times into the treetop. The father (67) and two sons (36 & 31) have now been legally convicted. The Linz Higher Regional Court confirmed fines of 8,000 euros for the older son and twice 1,200 euros each for the other two. The hunters also have to bear the costs of the procedure. Read more [here](#).



### Vulture killing hunters eventually received suspended prison sentence

Both offenders were sentenced to suspended prison sentences for shooting a GPS-tagged cinereous vulture in April 2021 in Hungary. The bird originated from the reintroduction program in Bulgaria. The court sentenced the first defendant (guest hunter) to 8 month prison suspended for 2 years, while the second defendant (professional hunter) was sentenced to a cumulative sentence of one year and six months imprisonment suspended for 3 years. The professional hunter was banned from hunting for 5 years. Read [more](#).

### Successful anti-poaching operation in the Lombardy/Venetian Prealps region

The anti-poaching operation of the Forestry Carabinieri called "Pettiroso" was concluded, coordinated by the Operational Department - SOARDA (Anti-poaching and Animal Crimes Operational Section). The Forestry Carabinieri operated with the active contribution of volunteers from CABS, LIPU, Legambiente, WWF, LAC, NOGEZ and Fare Ambiente, citizens and hunters. The operational activity carried out led to the reporting of 123 people for crimes perpetrated against wild birds, no. 2 arrests for possession of illegal weapons and narcotic substances and the seizure of 3564 birds, of which 1433 live specimens and 2131 dead specimens, including numerous non-huntable species and particularly protected species, all captured or killed illegally. Furthermore, 1338



illegal capture devices, 75 rifles and 4055 ammunition were seized.

Read more [here](#).

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### More than 120 bird poaching traps are seized in Sanlúcar, Spain

The patrol of the Environmental Protection Unit ([Uproma](#)) of the Local Police of Sanlúcar has identified three people suspected of poaching of migratory songbirds. The police seized more than 120 traps, five electronic lures, and found several caged birds. Illegal hunting of birds can lead to severe penalties, reaching up to 300,000 euros in Andalusia. Read [more](#) (in Spanish).

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**Malta:** This [video](#) highlights some of the illegalities witnessed by BirdLife Malta in just under 3 weeks of the 5-month autumn hunting season in 2023. Between 22nd of Sept and 11th of Oct, 163 illegalities were recorded, which ranged from detecting illegal electronic callers to observing protected birds shot down. The autumn hunting season will end on the 31st of Jan 2024. Read more cases [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).



### Releases of rehabbed Flamingo, Marsh-harrier & Honey-buzzard in Sicily

Three shot protected birds that had been collected earlier during the autumn hunting season in Malta were successfully released at LIPU's Saline Di Priolo Nature Reserve in Sicily after being rehabilitated by BirdLife Malta. These protected species had been illegally shot and are just three lucky ones out of many shot birds recovered by BirdLife Malta and the police. The decision to release the birds in Sicily after completing their rehabilitation process was taken after last October's release of a GPS-tracked Honey-buzzard on Comino MT, which lost transmission later in the same day while trying to migrate south. Watch the video [here](#).

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### Stopping night poachers in Lebanon

Based on reported evidence submitted by ethical hunters to the APU (Anti-Poaching Unit) in partnership with the Lebanese BirdLife partner (SPNL) and with the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS), the Environmental Prosecutor took action and the judicial police arrested several poachers in the Qaa region of the Bekaa valley. Read more [here](#).



### Egyptian Vultures rescued in Lebanon found partners in captivity

In 2022, five Egyptian Vultures were transported from Lebanon to Prague Zoo to become part of the captive-breeding program for the species. The Anti-Poaching Unit and the Lebanese BirdLife partner (SPNL) saved these Egyptian Vultures from poachers. Now three birds have found partners and are ready to breed. Read [more](#).

## Research & publications

### Intercontinental collaboration secures Egyptian Vulture population

Ten years ago the Egyptian Vulture population in eastern Europe was in freefall, because too many birds were killed by human activities, especially illegal killing and poisoning. By expanding conservation efforts across three continents, conservationists have now shown that even such globetrotting species can be rescued. See the original article [here](#).



## Conferences & events



### Technical workshop to assess the global impact of songbird trade

More than 60 experts, policymakers, and stakeholders from over 30 countries gathered for the hybrid [Technical Workshop on Songbird Trade and Conservation Management](#) organized by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) from 11-14 December 2023 at the United Nations Convention Centre in Bangkok, Thailand to consider the scale and scope of international songbird trade and the management and conservation priorities of songbird taxa involved in such trade. Read more [here](#).

### Meeting of the Working Group on the South West Asia Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds

The meeting will take place on 15-16 January 2024, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. It will provide an opportunity for the representatives of range states (Bahrain, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen) to discuss the current work occurring in the region on the illegal hunting, taking and trade of migratory birds ahead of the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties (CMS COP14). Read [more](#).



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