



Wildlife Crime Newsletter

January-February, 2024

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.

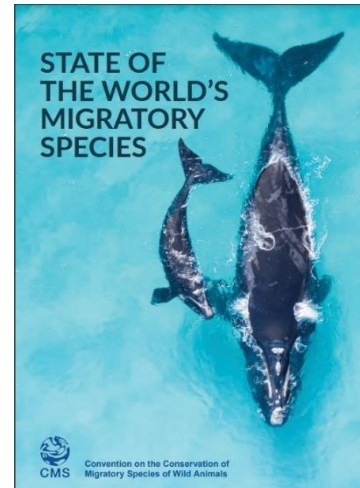
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Featured news

Landmark UN report reveals shocking state of migratory species

The first-ever State of the World's Migratory Species report was launched by the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), at the opening of the CMS COP14 (see next article about the event). The report provides a global overview of the conservation status and population trends of migratory animals, combined with the latest information on their main threats and successful actions to save them. It reveals that 44% of the species are showing population declines. The two greatest threats are overexploitation and habitat loss due to human activity. About seven out of ten CMS-listed species are impacted by overexploitation, including intentional taking as well as incidental capture. Read the [report](#).



Nearly 30 animals found poisoned in Spain

Officers from the Regional Government of Castilla y León are investigating the causes of the death of almost 30 animals found in the Sanabria region, in the municipality of Asturianos. The victims include more than 20 crows, 6 red kites and a shepherd dog. The incident was discovered on Feb 22. Read [more](#) (in Spanish).

14 poisoned animals, including eagles, were found in Bulgaria

On February 28, the team of the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPS)/BirdLife Bulgaria registered another incident in Western Strandzha mountains. A golden eagle, a young white-tailed eagle, three buzzards and nine jackals were found dead. The most likely cause of death was illegal use of poison. The trained sniffer dog and his handler, Nikolay Terziev, also managed to find the likely poisonous bait. Read [more](#) (in Bulgarian).



CMS updates

The [14th Meeting of the Conference of the CMS Parties](#) was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from 12 to 17 February 2024 (COP14). Parties at COP14 adopted various [decisions](#) under CMS COP Resolution 11.16 (Rev. COP13) that address the progress made to tackle the threat posed by the illegal taking and trade of migratory birds through dedicated Task Forces such as the Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking, and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT). Decisions aiming to expand the successful model of the Mediterranean to other regions were approved and will serve as the basis for the creation of a new Illegal Taking Task Force in South-West Asia. A meeting held on 15 January 2024 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia discussed how to possibly advance discussions around establishing such a Task Force for South-West Asia. CMS and BirdLife International jointly organized a side event at the COP14 on 14 Feb specifically on the global illegal taking of birds, which included the launch of the new Southeast Asian bird hunting review (see below at the 'Publications').

More news

Northern Bald Ibis gets illegally shot in Spain

Knubbel, the Northern Bald Ibis that travelled from Germany to Spain was shot dead near the town of Calanda, Aragon, Spain. She was hatched in the reintroduction program of the LIFE20 Northern Bald Ibis project and wore a transmitter that helped to quickly locate the carcass and reconstruct the events. Read [more](#).



When by-catch turns into IKB

AOS-Albanian Ornithological Society reports: almost every weekend at the former Dinamo Factory market in the capital of Albania, various species of wild birds are traded in the market where fish are sold. These birds are caught in the lake with fishing nets and are practically drowned in water. It's cc. €10 for a wild duck and €5 for a coot. Besides trading, free cooking advice is also offered. Find out [more](#)

Two poisoned white-tailed eagles in Czechia – one got saved

Early January, in the Czech Republic, two white-tailed eagles and a common buzzard fell victim to targeted poisoning. The Czech Ornithological Society (ČSO) responded swiftly, with one of the eagles being found alive and taken to a rescue station, where it ultimately recovered and was released back into the wild. Find out [more](#) (in Czech).



BL Malta releases rehabbed birds

On 1st of February, the day after the end of the 2023 autumn hunting season, we successfully released back into the wild another four rehabilitated birds. To ensure they wouldn't be shot again, we had to wait until the end of the five-month long autumn hunting season before releasing them at our Ghadira Nature Reserve. Watch the video [here](#).

CABS report 2023

[In this summary report](#) you can find out what bird protection campaigns and anti-poaching operations the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) carried out in 2023. CABS coordinated 29 bird protection camps with more than 220 volunteers in eight countries in the migratory bird poaching hotspots of the Mediterranean basin. The results speak for themselves: 5,559 traps, 382 nets, 156 electronic decoys were collected, 268 poachers were convicted and over 2,500 birds were rescued and released from illegal traps.





Smoked swan ham for sale

CABS investigation has unveiled that an employee of the Saxon State Office for the Environment has been involved in an extensive illegal trade in the meat of shot mute swans. The accused is suspected of shooting >100 mute swans since 2016 and illegally selling their smoked breast meat to gourmets via an online forum. Read [more](#).

RSPB Investigations reflecting on 2023

Combined NE and RSPB data indicates that a shocking 32 satellite-tagged Hen Harriers vanished or were confirmed persecuted in 2023. [Listen this video](#) on X in which Mark Thomas, Head of RSPB Investigations reflects on 2023 and the ongoing issue of raptor persecution in the UK or [read this blog](#) to find out more.



More UK raptor persecution news

- [Two red kites found poisoned](#) in Essex – Police seize firearms & 'other articles' in raid.
- Essex Police are appealing for information after the discovery of an [injured, shot peregrine](#) in the Highwood area of Chelmsford on 15th January 2024.
- [Two men given community order](#) (220 hour and 150 hour community service) for possession and trade of 22 wild Peregrines from Scotland to the Middle East.
- [Pensioner has been found guilty](#) of shooting a Eurasian Sparrowhawk in South Yorkshire, with the court demanding £2,100 in fines.

Operation Recall, Rome province, Italy

Volunteer anti-poaching guards of Lipu (BirdLife partner in Italy) in recurring good cooperation with Carabinieri Forestali carried out joint operations in the province of Rome last autumn and reported several cases with seizures and sanctions for poaching. As a result 14 rifles were seized and 20 administrative sanctions for a total of approximately 3400 euros given to poachers. Read [more](#) (in Italian).



More IKB news

- BirdLife Malta reacts to [acquittal of Gozitan hunter](#) who was last year convicted of gunning down protected Eurasian Collared Dove in Gozo in April 2022.
- [Goose hunting within protected area](#) in Hungarian National Park
- [Bird trapper was caught for a 4th time](#) since 2009 together with environmental police following a mountain patrol by two CABS activists. The known repeat offender operates in the mountains west of lake Iseo, Italy
- [Arrest of 3 men for trapping](#) at the British Sovereign Base Area, Cyprus
- Also in Cyprus, Egyptian fruit bats found caught alongside a dozen song thrushes in four huge [mist-nets](#)

Research & publications

New report on lead contamination of landbirds in Spain and in Europe

The new study on contamination by lead ammunition beyond wetlands, commissioned by SEO/BirdLife from the Institute of Hunting Resources and the Institute of Environmental Diagnosis and Water Studies, gives evidence on the negative impact that the use of lead has on terrestrial wild birds, as well as its potential harm to human health. Read the [article](#) and the full [report](#) (in Spanish).



Bird hunting in mainland SE Asia: Situation analysis & recommendations for conservation action

The report was officially released at the CMS COP14, as contribution to the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds. It brings together information to assess bird hunting - both legal and illegal - in mainland Southeast Asia, covering Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam (plus supplementary info on the situation in Indonesia and the Philippines). The presentation about the release can be found [here](#).

Calls & activities

Call for volunteers by BirdLife Malta

BirdLife Malta is starting to prepare for the annual Spring Watch camp, which will take place this year between 10th and 24th April. Malta is the only EU country that still allows a hunting season in the spring, and we anticipate that hunters will be allowed to shoot Common Quail and European Turtle-dove, two species that are experiencing population declines across their ranges. If you want



to monitor the spring migration, the hunting season, and wildlife crime, visit <http://bit.ly/volunteerwithBLM> and click on the **Spring Watch 2024 volunteers** tab for more information.



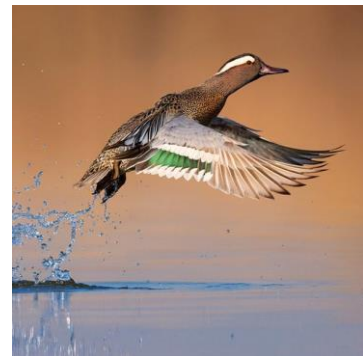
Call for volunteers at the [Galala Observatory](#), Egypt

[Nature Conservation Egypt \(NCE\)](#) is looking for local and international bird counting volunteers to join us the annual Galala Raptor Count of 2024. GRC International Volunteering period from 29 March – 11 April, 2024. Applicants need to volunteer for a week, minimum. If you are interested, please inquire at info@natureegypt.org. Information about previous years can be found [here](#).

Campaign & events

Let them fly in peace!

The Italian government is trying to restart spring hunting, facilitate more the use of live decoys, allow hunting 7 days a week, lengthen the hunting season beyond the current limits, etc. Much of it in blatant violation of EU law. Read the [article](#) and please sign the [petition](#) of Lipu / BirdLife Italy!



Conservation Standards workshop on IKB in Novi Sad

[BPSSS/BirdLife Serbia](#) hosted a dynamic workshop about [Conservation Standards](#) that captivated participants and fostered meaningful dialogue for many of us in the “anti-IKB community”. The training, held between Jan 22-26, in Novi Sad, Serbia was technically prepared by the [Foundation of Success \(FOS\)](#) and financially supported by projects run by [EuroNatur](#) and BirdLife International / [BirdLife Europe](#). Conservation Standards are a widely applied set of tools, principles and practices that bring together common concepts,

approaches, and terminology for conservation project design, management, and monitoring. The workshop was attended by 37 professionals from 18 countries working on tackling IKB throughout the Mediterranean.



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