



Wildlife Crime Newsletter

November-December, 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.

Many thanks for the cover photo to: *Tibor Horváth*.

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Featured news



International crackdown uncovers massive egg smuggling

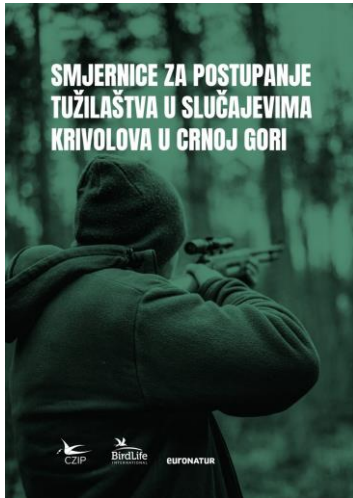
As part of a global operation to combat wildlife trafficking, authorities in the UK have seized over 6,000 illegal wild bird eggs in the largest haul of its kind in the country. The raids, carried out in several regions including Scotland and Wales, were part of Operation Pulka, a joint international effort targeting a highly organized wildlife crime network. The operation began in Norway, leading to 16 arrests and the seizure of 50,000 eggs, and continued in Australia, where 3,500 eggs were confiscated. Read [more](#).

Research & Publications

Bird crime and the assessment of risk areas in Slovakia

Open access article published by Tomáš Veselovský et al. (Raptor Protection of Slovakia (RPS)) shows that bird crime remains an issue in Slovakia, with 92 cases involving 33 species recorded between 2016 and 2022, resulting in the deaths of 249 protected birds and 78 mammals. The most common illegal activity was intentional poisoning, often using carbofuran, followed by shooting and trapping, with the total damage valued at €696,250. The study found that districts with higher percentages of arable land were at greater risk of bird crime, suggesting targeted preventive measures could help reduce incidents. Read the article [here](#).





New guideline document for prosecution on poaching published in Montenegro

The Centre for Protection and Research of Birds (CZIP) in Montenegro has presented guidelines for prosecutors on handling poaching cases. In cooperation with the [WildLife Crime Academy](#) and supported by the EU's LIFE programme, the Montenegrin authorities will soon have an opportunity to improve their fight for wildlife protection. Find more info [here](#) (in Montenegrin).

UK Wildlife Crime is worrying while convictions drop

A 2023 Wildlife Crime Report by [Wildlife & Countryside Link](#) reveals that wildlife crime incidents remain high, with 4,735 cases reported last year, yet convictions are at an all-time low. Badgers, bats, and marine mammals are among the most affected species. Conservationists are urging better wildlife crime recording, increased police resources, and stricter sentencing guidelines to combat the rising threat and improve prosecution rates. Read more / download the report [here](#).



[More news](#)



Widespread killing of birds in the Chorokhi delta

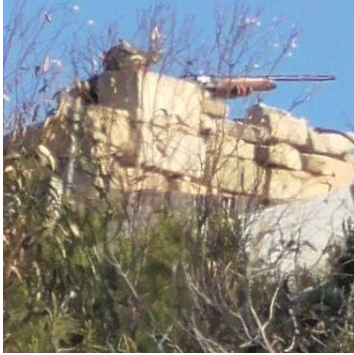
The Chorokhi delta in Georgia, a vital stopover for migratory birds, is plagued by unregulated hunting and illegal killing. Despite its status as a protected area and growing popularity among birdwatchers, illegal killing of birds remains rampant, with poachers shooting at protected species.

Conservationists urge local authorities to enforce hunting bans and strengthen ecotourism-friendly policies to preserve this key habitat and reduce wildlife crime. Read more [here](#).

Albania launches Environmental Crime Police Unit

In a major step for wildlife protection, Albania has established its first dedicated environmental crime police unit to combat illegal wildlife killing, trafficking and habitat destruction. Supported by projects like [BalkanDetox LIFE](#) and organizations like the Albanian Ornithological Society (AOS), the unit aims to expand and receive specialized training to tackle growing environmental threats. This initiative marks a turning point in Albania's conservation efforts and sets an example for the Balkans. Read [more](#).





Illegal killing in protected bird sanctuaries in Malta

BirdLife Malta compiled video evidence of the widespread illegalities happening in the protected bird sanctuaries of Buskett and Comino. These incidents show the urgent need for stronger enforcement to protect these safe zones for migratory and nesting birds. Watch the video [here](#).

Anti-poaching operation in Rome leads to 17 charges

The Recall operation in Rome's province, led by Lipu/BirdLife Italy volunteers and Carabinieri forestali, resulted in 17 individuals charged and the seizure of 16 firearms, 12 electronic bird lures, and dozens of illegally hunted birds. The joint effort targeted poachers using banned devices to hunt songbirds during migration. Authorities highlight the ongoing need for vigilance and strict enforcement to protect wildlife. Read [more](#) (in Italian).



Red kite shot in Czech Republic

An eight-year-old female red kite was found shot dead in the Hodonín region. The bird, one of the oldest and most productive tagged individuals in the country, had raised 18 chicks. This incident is part of a disturbing trend of illegal killings of birds of prey in the Czech Republic. The Czech Society for Ornithology (ČSO), BirdLife partner in Czechia, has already recorded three red kite deaths this

year: one shooting and two poisonings. Read more [here](#) (in Czech).

Serbia fails to save quails

A case study published in [EuroNatur's Biodiversity Report](#) shows that implementation gaps and cultural norms tolerating illegal hunting practices are exacerbating the situation in Serbia. The Common Quail, though legally hunted throughout most of its range, is among the most affected species in the Balkans. Read more [here](#).

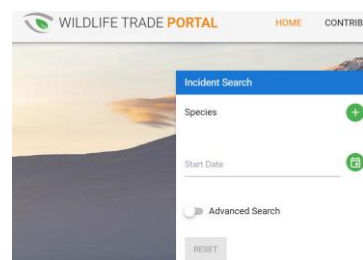


CABS Annual Report 2024

The Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) has published its year-end summary report. In 2024, a total of 216 volunteers from all over Europe took part in the 31 bird camps and over 50 smaller campaigns in 7 countries organized by CABS. 337 poachers were caught - 751 bird traps, 3,853 lime sticks, 477 nets, 190 decoys and 72 shotguns were confiscated. Details can be found [here](#).

Wildlife Trade Database upgraded

The largest wildlife trade database - developed by [TRAFFIC](#) with the generous support of [Arcadia](#) - just got a makeover. With improved visuals and an easier interface, registered users can track global wildlife trade trends and support



conservation efforts. Explore more at wildlifetradeportal.org.

Campaigns & calls



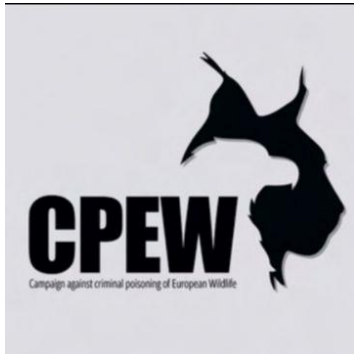
[# Ban Lead Now](#)

Lead is toxic at every level. Yet, 44,000 tonnes are dumped into the EU's environment each year from hunting, shooting, & fishing - poisoning both people and nature. Sign BirdLife's petition to get rid of lead in hunting ammunition and fishing weights in Europe: <https://banleadnow.com/get-involved/>

Call for Volunteers - 2025 in Malta

Recruitment call for volunteers to join next year's SpringWatch camp which will monitor illegalities during the spring hunting season. The dates will be from April 10th to 24th. If you want to monitor the spring migration, the hunting season, and wildlife crime, send an email to Alice Tribe <alice.tribe@birdlifemalta.org>. Visit BirdLife Malta's website to read more on volunteer opportunities [here](#).





Campaign Against Criminal Poisoning of European Wildlife

This [LIFE EUROKITE](#) project consortium has launched a new campaign to combat against the illegal poisoning of wildlife by raising awareness about it. Support for a “European Day Against Criminal Poisoning of Wildlife” on 1st March to engage the public and decision-makers. More information on the campaign can be found [here](#). Support the petition [here](#).

Beyond our flyway

Major illegal bird seizure highlights wildlife trafficking crisis in Indonesia

Indonesia’s quarantine authorities in Lampung seized a record-breaking shipment of 6,514 illegally trafficked birds, marking a significant challenge in combating wildlife smuggling. The birds, crammed into 216 boxes, were transported without necessary documentation, highlighting the scale of the illegal trade. This seizure, one of many in 2024, underscores the pressure on Indonesia’s wildlife, especially as species not protected by law continue to fuel the demand in bird markets. Read more [here](#).





Tackling mist-nets as a threat to wild birds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway

This webinar on 18/01/2025 highlights how mist-nets and other improvised nets pose a threat to wild bird populations in Asia, with case studies from Thailand, Vietnam and China. Expert speakers will share about the scale of the problem, and the species impacted. Solutions will also be highlighted, as are success stories to engage local people and strengthen enforcement in parts of the region. [Register](#), if interested.

Please, help our new Wildlife Crime e-newsletter to reach its audience by sharing it with colleagues and stakeholders, who may be interested in this topic.

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