



Wildlife Crime Newsletter

May-June, 2025

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*.

[Subscribe](#)



Featured news

Council of Europe adopts Convention on Environmental Crimes

On 14 May, the Council of Europe's 46 member states adopted the Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law, marking a major milestone for environmental protection and justice. This groundbreaking treaty establishes a common legal framework to criminalise and prosecute serious environmental offences, ensuring stronger accountability and safeguarding ecosystems across Europe. Read [more](#).



Albania adopts 10-year Action Plan to tackle wildlife poisoning

In April, Albania has officially approved its National Action Plan to Combat Wildlife Poisoning (2025–2035), a significant step toward protecting biodiversity and preventing one of the most pressing threats to wildlife in the region. The plan outlines strategic measures for prevention, enforcement, awareness-raising, and cross-sector collaboration to eliminate the use of poison in the environment. Read [more](#).

International Policy Updates

South-West Asia

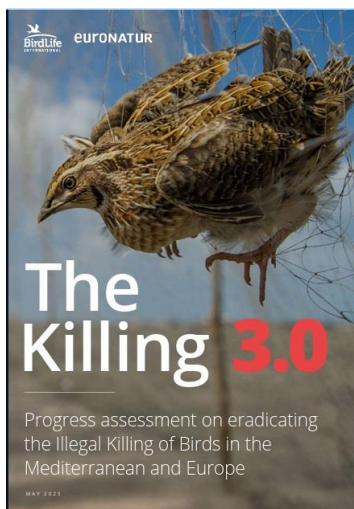
The [1st Meeting](#) of the South-West Asia Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds Intergovernmental Task Force was held on 20-21 May 2025 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. It successfully brought together representatives of all ten range states—Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen – alongside international organisations, NGOs, and enforcement bodies.

At the meeting a new UN-led task force has been launched to combat IKB in South West Asia. This marks a crucial step in addressing one of the region's most urgent conservation challenges. Read the press release [here](#).

Mediterranean and Europe

The Joint Meeting of the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points (SFPs) on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping, and Trade in Wild Birds, and the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT) took place from 13-15 May 2025 at the UN Campus in Bonn, Germany. Click [here](#) for the webpage of the event.

Research & Publications

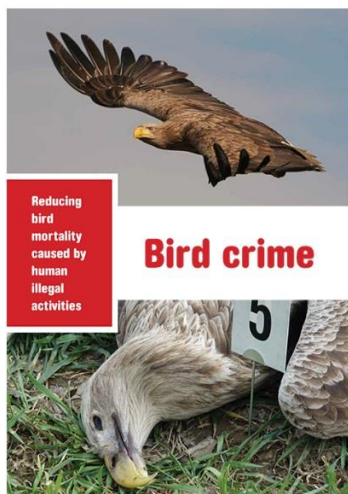
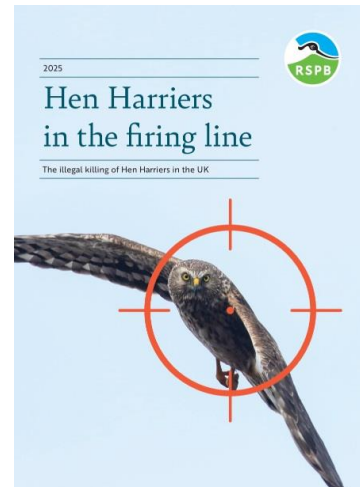


The Killing 3.0 Report exposes ongoing IKB in the Mediterranean

The new *Killing 3.0* report - launched by the broad partnership of BirdLife International and EuroNatur - reveals that millions of migratory birds are still illegally killed each year across Europe and the Mediterranean, with 38 of 46 countries off track to meet international targets. The detailed analysis of the national situation assessments calls for urgent action, stronger enforcement, and cross-border cooperation to meet 2030 conservation goals and provides country-specific recommendations for governments in the Mediterranean region. Read the full report [here](#).

Illegal killing of Hen Harriers has hit a devastating new high

This new report, written by the RSPB's investigations team, highlights the ongoing criminal persecution of Hen Harriers on driven grouse moors. Newly published figures show 102 Hen Harriers have been confirmed or suspected to have been illegally killed between 2020-2024, mostly from areas managed for driven grouse shooting in northern England. You can read it in full, by [clicking here](#).



Podcast on Bird Crime and BirdCrime brochures

Want to hear first-hand experiences and information from the experts? Check out this recent episode of the Slovak language Podcast "Vtáčia akadémia" by Ochrana dravcov na Slovensku (Raptor Protection of Slovakia) on [YouTube](#).

For those interested in learning more, a comprehensive brochure titled **"BirdCrime – Reducing bird mortality caused by human illegal activities"** is available in multiple languages (English, Slovak, Czech, and Hungarian) [here](#).

More news

Mass vulture poisonings in South Africa

On 6 May 2025 tragic mass poisoning occurred in South Africa's Kruger National Park. In what is now considered one of the largest vulture poisoning events in Southern African history, a total of 123 vultures were found dead—and an other 84 were found alive at the site. Three of them sadly died during rehabilitation. The remaining 81 could be released. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Only a few weeks later an additional 100+ vultures have been found dead in another devastating mass poisoning. The incident took place at Lionspruit Game Reserve near Marloth Park, Mpumalanga, just to the south of the Kruger NP. Read more [here](#).



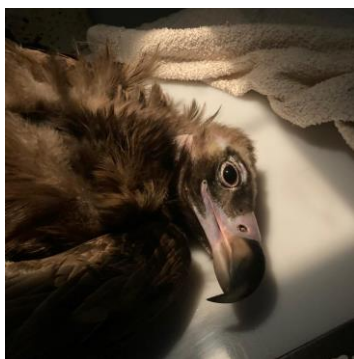
European Commission approves conditional reopening of hunting European Turtle-doves

The European Commission has approved the conditional reopening of the Turtle Dove hunting season in selected EU countries, following encouraging population trends in the Western flyway. This decision is part of the Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) process, which aims to link hunting to coordinated decision-making based on predictive population modelling.

FACE (European Federation for Hunting and Conservation) has recently released a [new report](#) highlighting the positive population trends. BirdLife International [warns](#) that reopening the season may be premature and could jeopardise the full recovery of this vulnerable species.

Council of State downgrades “pest” status of several species in France

In a major victory for biodiversity, France’s highest administrative court has cancelled the classification the “pest” status of several species—including martens, foxes, rooks, crows, magpies, and starlings—following a legal appeal by LPO (BirdLife in France) and its partners. The ruling found insufficient data to justify widespread culling, reinforcing the need for science-based conservation. Read [more](#) (in French).

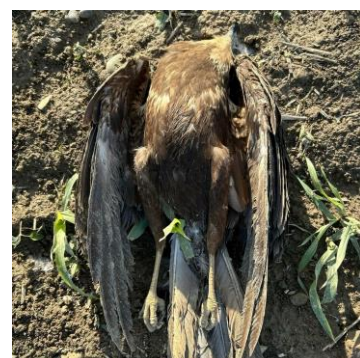


Shot vulture saved in France

A young Cinereous Vulture found with over 60 lead pellets in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, has made a remarkable recovery and returned to the wild after months of rehabilitation. She is one of 26 protected birds confirmed to have been illegally shot in France during the 2024–2025 hunting season. Unlike this (relatively) lucky one, most of those birds did not survive. Read [more](#).

Suspected poisoning in Lower Austria

A tagged Imperial Eagle has mysteriously disappeared near Loipersdorf/Pummersdorf, raising serious concerns. Investigations by the Lower Austria Criminal Police, in cooperation with the LIFE EUOKITE project, uncovered a shocking scene with an additional 6 dead Marsh Harriers, multiple poisoned chicken eggs as baits containing the highly toxic and banned pesticide: Carbofuran.



Investigation is ongoing. Source: [Facebook](#) (in German).



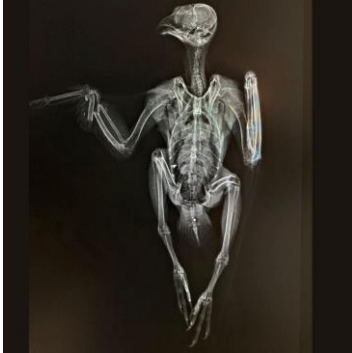
€116,200 for killing a White-tailed Eagle in France

On May 21, 2025, the Grenoble Court of Appeal issued a landmark ruling in the case of a poacher who shot a young White-tailed Eagle released as part of a reintroduction programme. The court nearly tripled the initial compensation, awarding €116,200 in total, including €81,000 for ecological damage — a decision based on the scientifically grounded valuation method presented by LPO, the BirdLife partner organization in France. Read [more](#) (in French).

Poisoning of Ireland's oldest breeding White-tailed Eagle

An investigation is underway in County Clare, Ireland, following the discovery of the body of Caimin, one of Ireland's oldest breeding White-tailed Eagles. The early post mortem results point to possible poisoning. Caimin played a key role in the species' reintroduction and raised multiple chicks at the Mountshannon nest site since 2008. Read [more](#).





Peregrine Falcon shot in Rome sparks outrage

A Peregrine Falcon, male of a well-known nesting pair in Rome, was illegally shot in early June and later died from its injuries. Lipu (BirdLife Italy) condemned the act as a "serious and symbolic crime," pointing to a broader pattern of impunity and weak enforcement against wildlife crime. Read more [here](#) (in Italian).

Happy Bird Day, CABS!

As they mark their 50th anniversary, the **Committee Against Bird Slaughter** (CABS) has hit a major milestone: over 115,000 illegal limesticks collected from the wild! These cruel traps have long targeted migrating songbirds across southern Europe. Huge respect to CABS for five decades of relentless work protecting migratory birds! Read more [here](#).



Campaigns & events



BalkanDetox LIFE wraps up with a closing conference

The BalkanDetox LIFE project officially concluded with a major regional conference in Serbia, celebrating five years of impactful work to tackle wildlife poisoning, the leading cause of raptor deaths in the Balkans. With over 160 GPS-tagged birds of prey monitored, national action plans launched, and 164 prosecutors and judges trained, the project has transformed how countries

respond to this deadly threat. The momentum continues with the WildLIFE Crime Academy project, aiming to train 1,000 more experts and further strengthen Europe's capacity to fight environmental crime. Read [more](#).

World Migratory Bird Day 2025

World Migratory Bird Day is a global campaign that aims to raise awareness of migratory birds and issues related to their conservation. This year's theme "**Shared Spaces: Creating Bird-Friendly Cities and Communities**," highlights the importance of making our cities more bird-friendly, benefitting nature and people alike. Learn [more](#).



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. EU Commission is proposing a ban on lead ammunition and fishing weights. [Sign BirdLife's petition to get rid of lead in Europe!](#)

Campaign against criminal Poisoning of European Wildlife (CPEW)

The CPEW campaign calls on the European Parliament and EU institutions to turbo-charge efforts against illegal wildlife poisoning — the leading cause of red kite deaths and a hidden threat to many raptors. It demands a European-wide poison-incident database, recognition of a “European Day Against Criminal Poisoning of Wildlife” on March 1, and robust enforcement of the Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030. With over 15,000 signatures so far, the campaign urges citizens [to sign the petition](#).



Beyond our flyway



Virginia hunter gets 1 day in jail for killing 20+ birds of prey

In Virginia, U.S., a hunter was sentenced to just one day in jail, a \$9,800 fine, probation, and community service after admitting to poisoning and trapping over 20 juvenile bald eagles and red-shouldered hawks during migration season in 2023 to protect ducks he hunted for sport. Using banned insecticide-laced bait and illegal pole traps, Smith killed the protected birds despite knowing the actions were illegal. The lenient sentence drew criticism given the severity of the crimes and the potential penalties of up to a year in prison and \$100,000 per offense under federal wildlife protection laws. Read [more](#).

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.



Our mailing address is:

wildlifecrime@birdlife.org

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

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 gratefully acknowledge financial support from the European Commission's LIFE programme through the NGO operational grant.

