



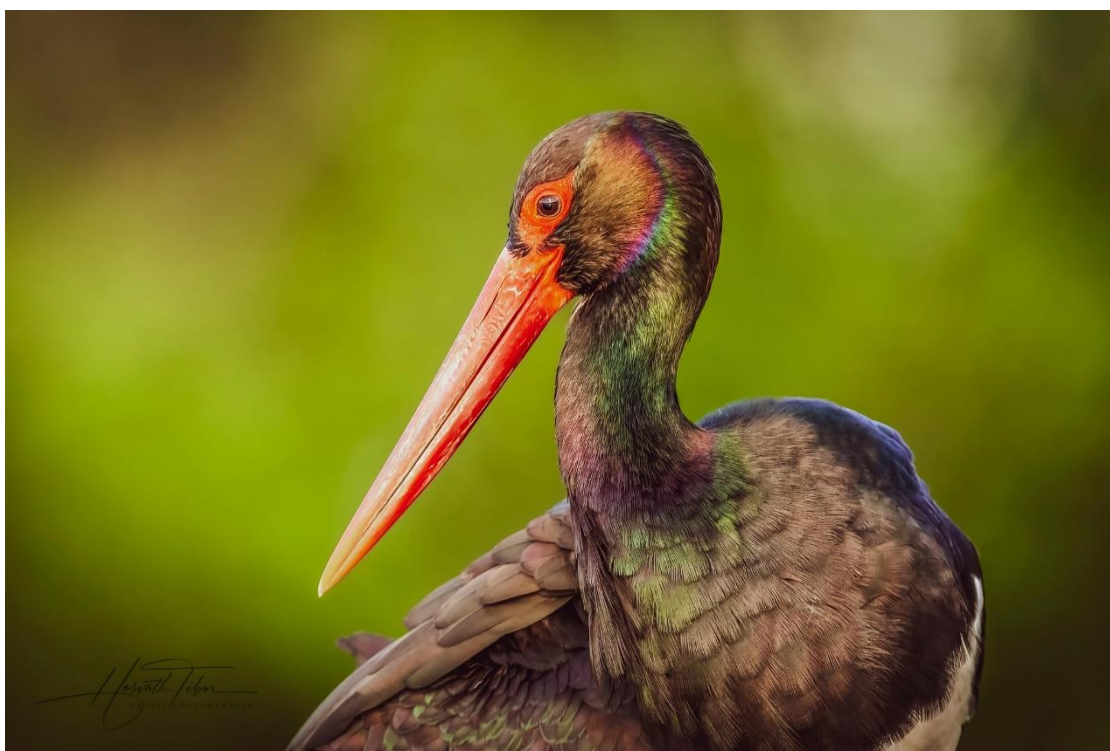
Wildlife Crime Newsletter

July-August, 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.

Cover photo: Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) by Tibor Horváth.

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Featured news



Smuggling bust of nearly 3,000 finches destined for Malta

Italian authorities intercepted a Maltese man in Sicily, attempting to smuggle 2,867 protected finches—valued at around €400,000—into Malta. The birds, including goldfinches, greenfinches, and chaffinches, were crammed into cages inside boxes and kept at -2°C to avoid detection. The case highlights the ongoing illegal finch trade between Sicily and Malta, where birds are sold for use as live decoys. Authorities released the seized birds back into the wild in a Sicilian nature reserve. Read [more](#) or watch the [video](#).

900+ finches seized in Catalonia

Agents Rurals dismantled an illegal bird trafficking facility near Barcelona, seizing 922 finches (goldfinches, greenfinches, linnets, and chaffinches), of which 114 were already dead. The operation also uncovered protected tortoises, prohibited trapping devices, veterinary drugs without prescriptions, and evidence of doping substances. Investigations revealed the finches had been illegally trapped across Spain, mainly in Andalusia and Huesca, and falsely marked with rings to appear captive-bred. The surviving birds were transferred to a wildlife recovery center for rehabilitation and release. Find out [more](#) (in Catalan).





Lead ammunition will be banned in the UK

In a historic move, England, Scotland, and Wales have announced a ban on toxic lead ammunition in outdoor shooting, effective from 2026, with a three-year transition period. The ban will prevent the release of an estimated 7,000 tonnes of the toxic metal into fields, forests and wetlands each year. Read [more](#). EU countries must now follow suit and adopt a strong restriction on lead as soon as possible. To help this, please sign the [#BanLeadNow petition!](#)

International Policy Updates

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. The Meeting Report is available online. Click [here](#) for the webpage of the event.

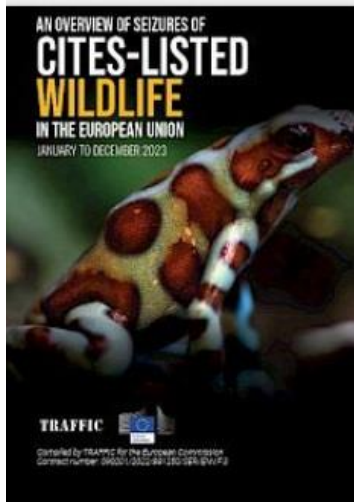
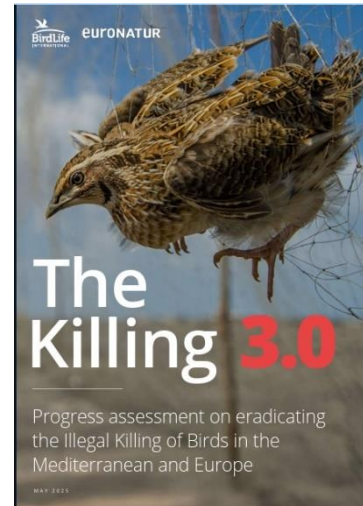
South-West Asia

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. The first meeting of the Task Force fulfilled its planned objectives, including the finalization and endorsement of the Terms of Reference for the Task Force, recommending them for adoption by the CMS Standing Committee, and the elaboration of a draft Illegal Taking of Birds Action Plan (SWAITB Action Plan). The CMS Secretariat is now invites all Range States of the SWAITB to nominate a Focal Point as a national representative for the Task Force, as well as stakeholders and Range States to propose nominations of observers for the Task Force.

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](#).

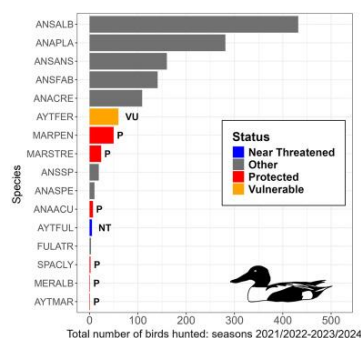


EU still a hub for Illegal Wildlife Trade, TRAFFIC Report 2023

A newly published TRAFFIC report, “[An Overview of Seizures of CITES-Listed Wildlife in the European Union: January to December 2023](#),” reveals that the EU remains a major global hub for illegal wildlife trade. In 2023, nearly 5,200 seizures occurred across EU member states, involving over 1 million specimens—including more than 600,000 live animals and 10,000 live plants. Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Spain accounted for about 75% of all seizures.

Illegal bird hunting in Iran: results from a survey in Fereydunkenar

This research seeks to examine the major driving factors of illegal hunting of game birds in the Mazandaran Province in Iran. Data for this study were collected through a survey questionnaire administered to cc. 400 people in the city of Fereydunkenar. The findings suggest the importance of social norms in combination with deterrence to improve bird conservation in this region. Find out [more](#).



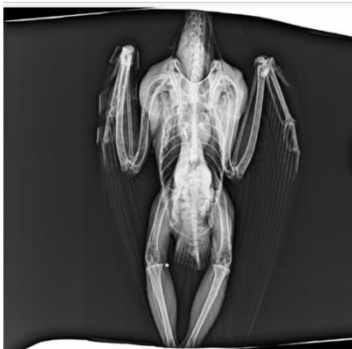
Non-selective waterbird hunting in a Natura 2000 site results in killing of protected species: A case study from western Poland

The study presents evidence from three consecutive hunting seasons spanning autumn 2021 to spring 2024 at a Natura 2000 site in western Poland, based on analyses of hunting bag photographs, local hunting records, and standardized bird monitoring data. The researchers recorded 1331 hunted individuals from 14 species, 43% of which are protected under national or EU legislation. Statistical comparisons between species' environmental abundance and their representation in hunting bags indicated no selectivity in shooting, pointing to indiscriminate hunting practices. Read the [full article](#).

More news

Rüppell's Vulture poisoned in Southern Portugal

A critically endangered Rüppell's Vulture (*Gyps rueppelli*), tagged in Morocco, was discovered dead near Beja, Portugal. The carcass was collected and transported for necropsy and forensic analysis. During the investigation, two dead Eurasian jays (*Garrulus glandarius*) were found nearby—heightening suspicions of poisoning. Read more [here](#).



Bulgarian Saker Falcon shot in Hungary

A young Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*), ringed in Bulgaria as part of a reintroduction program, was found shot with pellets in Hungary's Hortobágy National Park. The bird suffered a broken wing and leg and may never fly again despite surgery at Budapest Zoo. Authorities filed a criminal complaint, as the case highlights the continued threat of persecution to this endangered species. Read [more](#) (in Hungarian).

Another Egyptian Vulture poisoning in Bulgaria: female died, chick rescued

In August 2025, a tagged female [Egyptian vulture](#) [was found dead](#) in Bulgaria's Eastern Rhodopes, suspected to have ingested poisoned bait. Her sole chick was rescued and is now under care at the Green Balkans Wildlife Rescue Centre. This incident marks the second poisoning of an Egyptian vulture in the region this year. Authorities have initiated an investigation, and anti-poison



teams have neutralized the suspected bait to prevent further harm to wildlife. Read more [here](#).



Malta's notorious poacher convicted again

On 31 July 2025, a Maltese court sentenced a repeat offender for keeping 137 illegally trapped live protected birds and bird trophies, in one of the island's largest seizures. The man, previously jailed for killing swans and repeatedly caught for illegal hunting of birds, received a one-year suspended prison term and a €1,000 fine. Read CABS' press release for [more](#).

EU closes infringement against Spain, citing Turtle-dove recovery

On 21 July 2025, the EC officially closed its infringement procedure against Spain, launched in 2019 over insufficient protection of the European Turtle-dove. Spain has seen a population decline of up to 35% between 2002 and 2023, along with a 7% contraction in its distribution area. SEO/BirdLife warns that despite the closure of the EU infringement procedure against Spain, the European Turtle-dove remains in a vulnerable state. Read [more](#) (in Spanish).





Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority terminates partnership after being ‘unsuccessful’ at tackling illegal raptor persecution

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has ended its Bird of Prey Partnership, established in 2020 with conservationists, the RSPB, police, Natural England, and representatives of grouse-shooting interests, after finding it had failed to curb illegal raptor persecution. Key partners like the RSPB (in 2023) and the Northern England Raptor Forum (in 2024) had already withdrawn, citing issues with the group’s effectiveness and the influence of the shooting lobby. The Authority plans to adopt a different strategy, aligning with the upcoming National Wildlife Crime Strategy (2025–2028), to better combat wildlife crime. Read [more](#).

A true hero

Anna Giordano began her fight against poaching in the Strait of Messina as a teenager in the 1980s. Despite violent threats, she organised international volunteer camps that helped end the mass killing of migrating raptors such as the Honey Buzzard. In 2025, the 45th camp celebrated a historic milestone—68,000 raptors crossed Messina without a single shot fired! Watch this heart-warming [video reel](#)!





Crisis in the Gambia: 5 mass vulture poisoning cases in mid-summer

In July 2025, The Gambia experienced **three mass mortality incidents** involving Hooded Vultures. In Gunjur, 23 vultures were found dead, with one survivor in critical condition; poisoning was suspected. In Bonto Kuta, a dozen vultures were found decapitated, and in Burufut, 44 vultures faced the same fate. [\[link\]](#)

In early August 2025, **two more mass killings** of Hooded Vultures occurred in the Gambia. In Bwiam, the police arrested two people who allegedly used a poisoned bait to kill vultures; the birds were found beheaded in a nearby bush. The community identified the suspects, leading to their arrest. In Somita, poisoned bait and beheaded vulture carcasses were discovered; the suspect remains unidentified. [\[link\]](#)

Nigeria seizes 1,600 birds in 'largest' wildlife-trafficking bust

In July 2025, Nigeria's Customs Service intercepted more than 1,600 ring-necked parrots and green- and yellow-fronted canaries at Lagos International Airport, bound for Kuwait, marking the country's largest seizure by number. The shipment lacked proper documentation, and authorities are investigating to prosecute those responsible, with the birds slated for rehabilitation and release. Read [more](#).



Upcoming events



Wild Summit, Bristol, UK - 11 September 2025

The Wild Summit is organised by Wildlife and Countryside Link and is supported by dozens of nature and environmental charities from across the UK, green advocates and industry experts, including the RSPB, Woodland Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Oceana, National Trust, WWF UK, Marine Conservation Society, WWT and many more. Find out [more](#).

EP event: Wildlife Trade and Conservation: The EU's objectives for CITES CoP20

"Wildlife Trade and Conservation: The EU's objectives for CITES CoP20" is organised in conjunction with the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE) and the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) on 3 September 2025 between 16:00 - 17:30 at the European Parliament, Brussels. [Registration](#) for the event.



Beyond our flyway



Hundreds of birds seized across Indonesia

Some key incidents ifrom July from [Traffic Southeast Asia](#):

On July 12, 2025 at Pelabuhan Lorens Say, Maumere (Sikka, NTT), authorities seized 1,260 Javan White-eye hidden in eight cages and bound for Surabaya, East Java. At least 140 birds were found dead, while the rest will be released back into suitable habitats; the suspect escaped and remains unidentified.

On July 19, 2025 at Pelabuhan Manokwari (West Papua), officers intercepted 15 Hooded butcherbird hidden aboard KM Sinabung during a routine sweep; 2 were found dead, 13 secured, and later released.

On July 23, 2025 at Pelabuhan Rakyat Dempo, Pontianak Utara (West Kalimantan), a joint patrol seized 625 birds hidden on a livestock boat bound for Surabaya; 607 were alive, 18 dead, with two crew members arrested.

Also in July 2025, two men in a vehicle transporting smuggled birds were convicted and sentenced to 7 months prison + Rp10 million (cc. 600 euros) fine.

36 suspects arrested for IKB in Pakistan

The Punjab Wildlife Department has ramped up its efforts against illegal killing of birds during the ongoing falcon and quail hunting season, registering more than 125 First Information Reports (FIRs) across various police stations in the province. According to the Punjab Wildlife Rangers, over 300 wild birds have been rescued from



poachers and released back into their natural habitats. Read more [here](#) (in English) or [here](#) (in Urdu).

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