



Wildlife Crime Newsletter

September-October, 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: Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) by Tibor Horváth.

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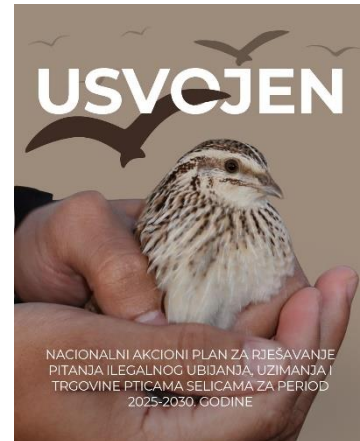


Featured news

Montenegro adopted its National Action Plan against illegal killing of birds

Government of Montenegro officially adopted the National Action Plan against illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds for the period 2025-2030. The final document is available on the [link](#) (in Montenegrin)

This achievement marks a step forward for bird conservation in Montenegro and is the result of six years of dedicated work, dialogue, and advocacy led by the Center for Protection and Research of Birds (CZIP) - the BirdLife partner organization in Montenegro. Read more [here](#).



Spotlight on the illegal killing of Cyprus' songbirds

This autumn, Cyprus has once again found itself in the media spotlight for the grim reality of [illegal trapping of migratory songbirds](#). In cooperation with CABS (Committee Against Bird Slaughter), UK broadcaster Chris Packham and Megan McCubbin, [visited Cyprus](#) to expose the scale of songbird slaughter, focusing on how authorities have long evaded accountability [\[video\]](#). Following this huge [media attention](#), Cyprus police have launched [historic raids](#) this autumn with great results: more than 1,200 birds rescued, over €62,000 in fines levied.

Major anti-poaching operations bring success in Lebanon

In a record-breaking joint operation, the Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) operated by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL) and Internal Security Forces removed nearly 8 kilometers of illegal bird nets in Northern Bekaa, freeing trapped birds, seizing poaching equipment, and marking the country's largest-ever crackdown on mass bird killing. Read more [here](#).

During a previous recent operation, the Lebanese Army and APU successfully intercepted dozens of illegal poachers in Daria -Dinnieh, northern Lebanon. Read [more](#).

In another action in Aabdeh, authorities and partners from CABS, SPNL, and MESHHC dismantled a vast bird-trapping "farm" with 55 mist nets spanning 1,250 metres, where up to 1,500 migratory birds were being caught daily — the largest such facility ever uncovered in Lebanon. Read more about this [here](#) or watch CABS' [video](#) on YouTube.

SPNL, together with CABS, MESHHC and Lebanese authorities, is running a campaign against the illegal capture of songbirds in Lebanon. Read more [here](#).



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.

CMS Secretariat is now hiring a consultant to lead the mid-term assessment of the Rome Strategic Plan (RSP) — a pivotal framework under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) aimed at reducing the illegal killing, taking, and trade of migratory birds (IKB).

East Asian-Australasian Flyway

On 17 September 2025, CMS hosted the [2nd virtual meeting](#) of the Asia Pacific Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds Intergovernmental Task Force (ITTEA) and East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) Task Forces to strengthen regional cooperation against the illegal hunting and trade of migratory birds. The session, held ahead of [EAAFP MOP12](#) in the Philippines, included snippets of the regional mistnet review led by Dr. Ding Li Yong (BirdLife International) and Ms. Rongrong Angkaew (King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi). This work will be presented more in details during the [Illegal Take side event](#) of the MOP12. A draft national self-assessment evaluation form on illegal take will also be introduced, aiming to adapt the MIKT "scoreboard" to the regional specificities of Asia-Pacific.

More news



Malta defies EU rulings by reopening trapping season

Malta once again defied EU law and two European Court of Justice rulings this October by reopening the trapping season for finches, golden plovers, and song thrushes. Over 4,500 trapping sites have been authorised—many linked to past illegal activity—fueling both local trapping and cross-border finch smuggling. Despite mounting evidence from BirdLife Malta and ongoing infringement proceedings, the government

continues to ignore EU obligations while enforcement remains critically weak. Read [more](#).

Over 500 Turtle-doves shot in a single day in SE Libya

In Tazirbu, southeastern Libya, more than 518 European Turtle Doves were reportedly killed in one day, sparking outrage from Libyan conservation groups. The Libyan Wildlife Trust called the incident a grave environmental crime, urging authorities to investigate, enforce wildlife protections, and raise public awareness. Read [more](#).



Graduation of first cohort of environmental security officers in Palestine

A groundbreaking ceremony was held recently in Palestine to mark the graduation of the first cohort of environmental security officers, strengthening capacity for environmental protection and law enforcement. The newly trained officers will play a key role in safeguarding natural resources and biodiversity across the region. Read [more](#).

Two Northern Bald Ibises shot in Italy

On Oct 16th, within an hour of arriving in northern Italy, two Northern Bald Ibises were illegally shot in Sondrio Province after completing their Alpine crossing. The incident, detected via GPS tracking, has prompted a police investigation and highlighted the ongoing threat of poaching to this endangered species—illegal shootings account for about one-third of Ibis losses in Italy. Read more in this Facebook post [here](#).

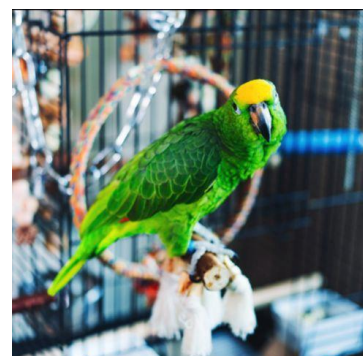


Breeding Cinereous Vulture shot in Bulgaria

On 20 September 2025, a Cinereous Vulture released as part of the Bearded Vulture LIFE reintroduction project was shot in the Omurtag area of Bulgaria, despite being one of three successfully breeding pairs in the Kotlenska Mountains. This act of wildlife crime undercuts years of conservation work and highlights ongoing challenges in enforcing legal protection for endangered species. Read [more](#).

Experts urge EU to criminalise illegal wildlife trade and strengthen traceability

Conservationists and policymakers are calling on the EU to criminalise the import of illegally sourced wildlife and upgrade its TRACES system to track all species entering the bloc. They warn that current loopholes allow trafficked animals to enter Europe legally, urging the EU to adopt new legislation and stronger data systems to close the gap and combat organised wildlife crime. Read [more](#).



Events & campaigns



Petition to "Stop Unregulated Hunting" in Italy

LIPU has launched the “No Caccia Selvaggia” petition, calling on citizens and institutions to oppose the revival and expansion of unregulated, indiscriminate hunting practices across Italy. The petition demands stricter regulation, greater enforcement, and safeguards to protect wildlife from illegal and destructive hunting. Sign the petition [here!](#)

WildLIFE Crime Academy launches new website

The [WildLIFE Crime Academy](#) project has launched its official website—a new hub to support enforcement efforts, share resources, and strengthen international collaboration against wildlife crime across Europe, the Caucasus, and North Africa. The platform features project updates, training news, and downloadable materials, and will soon host a secure Knowledge Exchange Platform to connect trained professionals and foster ongoing cooperation.





“Lead, a Borderless Poison” — International symposium on lead ammunition’s Impact

On 17-18 October 2025 in Gorizia (Italy), experts gathered to examine how lead shot used in hunting contaminates ecosystems, endangers species like vultures, and poses human-health risks. The event combined scientific insight with practical field visits. More information - including abstracts - is available [here](#).

‘Eyes on the Skies’ campaign launched to protect Yorkshire Dales raptors

Friends of the Dales has launched the [Eyes on the Skies](#) campaign to combat the illegal killing of birds of prey and raise awareness about their vital role in the ecosystem. Backed by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and the RSPB, the initiative follows alarming data showing 67 raptor persecution incidents and 29 missing Hen Harriers in the region since 2015.



Call for volunteers - Spring Watch 2026 in Malta

Recruitment call for volunteers to join next year's SpringWatch camp which will monitor illegalities during the spring hunting season. If you want to monitor the spring migration, the hunting season, and wildlife crime, please visit BirdLife Malta's website to read more on volunteer opportunities [here](#).

Beyond our region

Protecting Birds of Paradise from extinction due to poaching

This recently published study examines the growing threat of poaching to the Birds of Paradise in Papua, Indonesia. Despite existing wildlife protection laws, weak enforcement and the rise of online wildlife trade have allowed illegal killing to flourish. The author calls for revising Indonesia's Law No. 5 of 1990 to reflect technological changes and strengthen collaboration among government agencies, NGOs, and international partners to improve law enforcement and conservation outcomes. Download the article [here](#).



DRC finally acts to protect African Grey Parrots from trade

After years of unsustainable trapping and illegal exports, the Democratic Republic of Congo has officially banned the capture, sale, and export of African grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*) — a species listed under CITES Appendix I since 2016. The move follows alarming population declines of over 36% and evidence of massive trafficking networks exporting tens of thousands of parrots annually, often with high mortality rates; the new decree marks the country's first decisive step toward ending this devastating trade. Read more [here](#).

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