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Wildlife Crime Newsletter

March-April, 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*.

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Featured news

CABS volunteers attacked in Zakynthos

Three birdwatchers from the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) were violently attacked by 15 masked poachers while monitoring illegal bird shooting on the Greek island of Zakynthos. The victims sustained injuries requiring hospitalisation. Police have already identified the first suspects, and investigations are ongoing. Read [more](#).





EC gives green light to reopen hunting season for Turtle-dove

In April, the European Commission announced that EU member states may reopen the hunting season for the European Turtle-dove in parts of Western Europe, ending a three-year moratorium. While the ban had led to partial population recovery in the Western Flyway, enforcement remains weak, and the species continues to decline in Central-Eastern Europe. Conservationists, including BirdLife International, warn that resuming hunting without robust controls could push the species back toward extinction. Read [more](#).

Illegal hunting surpasses Malta's Turtle-dove quota before season begins

BirdLife Malta reports that the national quota of 1,500 European Turtle-doves has been illegally exceeded even before the official hunting season commenced on April 21. Observations indicate that over 80% of hunters were targeting Turtle-doves during a period reserved solely for Common Quail hunting, with widespread [illegal activity](#) noted across Malta and Gozo. Read [more](#).



Research & Publications



Persistent lead poisoning of waterfowl in southern France 10 years after the ban on the use of lead ammunition in wetlands

The research, published in the journal *Conservation Science and Practice*, shows that one in eight birds studied in the Camargue region had ingested lead pellets. For some species, such as mallards and pintails, that figure rises to one in four. Scientists from the Tour du Valat research institute examined 2,187 gizzards from 13 species of waterbirds hunted in the region between 1998 and 2017. They found no significant drop in lead exposure since a 2006 ban on lead ammunition in and around

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) will take place from 13-15 May 2025 at the UN Campus in Bonn, Germany. The meeting will be held in a hybrid format. 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 will be held on 20-21 May 2025 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. It aims to bring together representatives of all range states (Bahrain, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen) and observers.

More news

A new wave of poisonings threatens Serbia's birds of prey

In the first two months of the year, Serbia witnessed the poisoning of 19 rare and strictly protected birds of prey, including six White-tailed Eagles and two Griffon Vultures. The Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia (BPSSS) warns that this ongoing crisis endangers both biodiversity and public health. Read [more](#) (in Serbian). Serbian authorities are strengthening efforts to tackle the illegal pesticide trade, and have carried out a series of targeted operations leading to multiple arrests and the seizure of thousands of hazardous chemical packages. Read [more](#).





In Pest County, Hungary, illegal poison baits have led to the deaths of a highly protected Eastern Imperial Eagle, eight Common Buzzards, and five Ravens. The toxic substances, unlawfully distributed near Süllysáp and Mende, pose significant risks to humans and domestic animals. Authorities have initiated an investigation, while conservationists urge the public to exercise caution and report any suspicious findings. Read [more](#) (in Hungarian).

Maltese hunters threaten Egypt's migratory birds

15-month-long investigation sheds light on how the EU is spending money to protect the same birds that are being gunned down in Egypt by tourist hunters, particularly from Malta. Despite EU conservation funding aimed at protecting these species, hunters are targeting birds like Turtle-doves and Flamingos for taxidermy and trophies - a practice undermining international conservation efforts. Read [more](#).



Gamekeeper convicted in UK wildlife crime case

A gamekeeper has been found guilty of multiple wildlife offences involving the illegal use of poisons and traps, and has been ordered to pay over £7,000 in penalties. The conviction highlights ongoing concerns about illegal persecution of birds of prey and other protected species in the UK countryside. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) continues to call for stronger enforcement and legal reforms to address these persistent threats to wildlife. Read [more](#).

Serbian authorities have arrested individuals involved in the illegal trapping of songbirds using adhesive baits in the village of Pukovac, Doljevac municipality. The suspects face criminal charges for wildlife crimes. This incident underscores ongoing challenges in combating illegal bird trapping in the region. Read [more](#) (in Serbian).

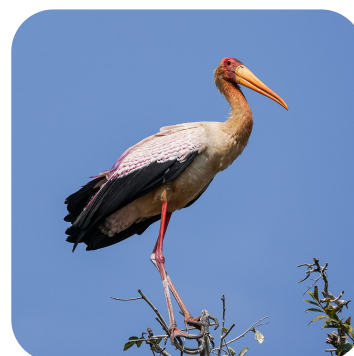


Peregrine Falcon eggs destroyed in livestreamed incident

On 7 April 2025, three Peregrine Falcon eggs were smashed at St Albans Cathedral in Hertfordshire, UK. The act was captured live on a conservation livestream, shocking viewers and prompting a police investigation. The Peregrines had been nesting at the cathedral since 2022, with the livestream launched in 2023 to track their breeding. The man's motives are unknown. Read [more](#).

How Kween youth resort to killing protected birds amid hunger crisis

In Kween District, Uganda, group of young people have been capturing wild birds, including yellow-billed storks, to alleviate food shortages. This practice poses a significant threat to local biodiversity and contravenes wildlife protection laws. Authorities and conservationists are urging for immediate intervention to address the underlying causes of hunger and to implement sustainable conservation education. Read [more](#).



Campaigns & calls



Call for Counters: volunteer opportunity at the 17th Batumi Raptor Count for Autumn 2025

The raptor migration in the Batumi bottleneck has been monitored by volunteers since 2008. Over 1,000,000 migrating raptors pass here every autumn. If interested, visit [this site](#).

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](#).



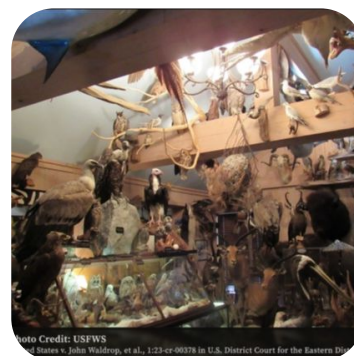
Ban Lead Now

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!](#)

Beyond our flyway

\$900K fine in bird mount trafficking case in the U.S.

Two men were sentenced for trafficking protected birds and eggs into the U.S. One of them was sentenced to pay a \$900,000 fine and serve three years of probation, amassed a collection of over 1,400 bird mounts and 2,500 eggs, including rare species like the Nordmann's Greenshank. The other man received six months of probation. The case has been one of the largest bird trafficking investigations in U.S. history. The collection has been forfeited and will be used in further wildlife forensics research. Read [more](#).



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