



Wildlife Crime Newsletter

May-June, 2026

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](mailto:wildlifecrime@birdlife.org).

Cover photo by *Tibor Horváth*.

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Featured news



### **Middle East workshop to reduce demand for wild birds**

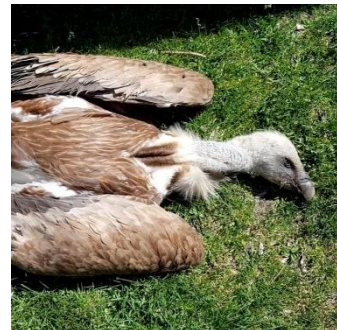
Under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Bint Al Hussein, BirdLife International - Middle East and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), in cooperation with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), the Princess Alia Foundation and the Jordanian Ministry of Environment organized a highly successful regional workshop entitled “*Promoting Positive Community Behaviour to Reduce Demand for Wildlife and Birds in the Middle East*” in Amman, Jordan on 3-4 June 2026, bringing together representatives of governments, national, regional and international environmental organisations, as well as experts in nature conservation from across the region. Read [more](#).

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### **Banned pesticide poisoning vultures in Austria**

Seven Griffon Vultures were poisoned with a long-banned pesticide (carbofuran) in the Lesachtal Valley, Austria. Six of them are dead, and only one could be saved. Conservation organisations BirdLife Austria, WWF Austria and the Vulture Conservation Foundation have condemned the incident, stressing its serious implications for Austria’s important summering population of Griffon Vultures. Read more [here](#) (in German) or [here](#) (in English).

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### **Italy: Bill 1552 on hunting approved by the Senate**

A controversial reform of Italy's hunting law could allow shooting in protected areas, reopen pressure on Alpine migration routes and reduce penalties for hunting offences. The bill was passed by the Senate on 23 June, so it will now have to be considered by the Chamber of Deputies. Italian environmental and animal welfare organisations warn that the bill has significant implications for biodiversity, EU law, public safety, and constitutional principles, and are urging lawmakers to halt its approval. Read [more](#) (in Italian) or [here](#) (in English).

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### **Vulture poisoning suspect arrested in Serbia**

In early May in eastern Serbia a strictly protected Cinereous Vulture was poisoned. The bird was part of an international reintroduction program. Conservationists and ornithologists from our Serbian partner organization, BPSSS, found the dead vulture next to a prepared carcass that had been treated with insecticide. Shortly afterward, a suspect attempted to destroy evidence by removing the carcasses. However, the police were able to secure them and arrested the man. Read more [here](#) (in Serbian) or [here](#) (in German) or [here](#) (in English).



### **International Policy Updates**

The [CMS MIKT](#) Secretariat will be organising, together with the National Agency for Waters and Forests of Morocco and with the support of the Raptors MOU, a workshop on National Action Plans on illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds (IKB). The workshop is addressed to North

African countries: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, and will take place in person from 29 Sept to 1 Oct 2026, in Tangier, Morocco.

In 2026, the MIKT and Bern Convention countries will be requested again to submit the self-evaluation Scoreboard to assess progress against the Rome Strategic Plan objectives. This process is expected to be launched over the summer.

The next joint meeting of the Bern Convention Special Focal Points of IKB and CMS MIKT (MIKT7) will be held in October (date to be confirmed) in a fully online format.

## Events



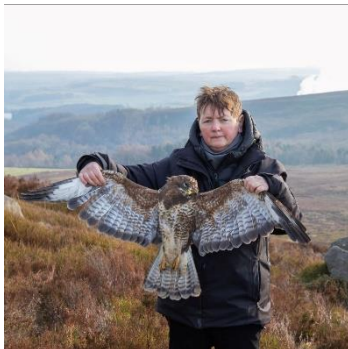
### **NCE launches national dialogue on sustainable bird hunting in Egypt**

BirdLife partner, Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE) convened a multi-stakeholder workshop bringing together government institutions, parliamentarians, religious leaders, civil society, academics, and international partners to strengthen bird hunting governance and develop a national roadmap for 2026–2030. Participants highlighted the need for stronger legislation, improved enforcement, and coordinated action to address unsustainable and illegal bird hunting. Read more [here](#).

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## SEO BirdLife organized workshop on global initiatives

On 23 June 2026, an online international workshop - organized by SEO BirdLife in Spain - brought together participants from along the African-Eurasian Flyway to discuss global initiatives addressing the illegal killing and unsustainable taking of migratory species, with a particular focus on the outcomes of CMS COP15 and the Safe Flyways 3 project. The event attracted strong interest and featured expert presentations. Read [more](#) (in Spanish)



### Raptor persecution talk with Dr Ruth Tingay

In a talk given to Yorkshire-based charity, Friends of the Dales, Wild Justice Co-Director Ruth Tingay gave an insight into raptor persecution and the impact that these crimes have had on Scottish legislation. If you missed, you can watch Ruth's talk, '*How Illegal Raptor Persecution led to Grouse Moor Licensing in Scotland*', by following this [link](#).

Research & publications

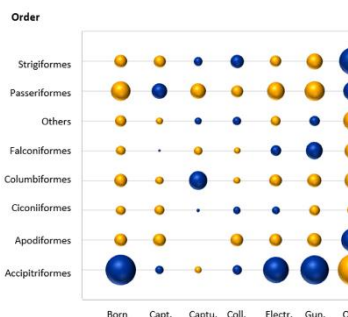


## Understanding how bird hunters' desires shape prospects for sustainable hunting

Stella Portelli's research highlights how understanding hunters' underlying desires can help bridge the divide between hunting and biodiversity conservation. Based on ethnographic research with Maltese bird hunters, the study argues that encouraging self-discipline and redirecting hunting passions—such as towards bird photography—could, in some contexts, support more sustainable hunting practices. Read the article [here](#).

## Austria's ongoing wildlife crime threat analyzed

A new report published in May by BirdLife Austria and WWF Austria documented 310 wildlife crime cases involving 487 illegally killed or persecuted animals between 2017 and 2025, with birds of prey accounting for the vast majority of victims. Download the report [here](#) (in German)



## Long term patterns of rehab center data in N Portugal

A total of 5090 birds from 135 species were analysed from admission data of a wildlife rehabilitation center in northern Portugal between January 2007 and October 2025. The most common causes of admission were orphaned birds (26.2%),

followed by seizures from illegal captivity (12.2%) and collisions (5.0%). Read the full [article](#).

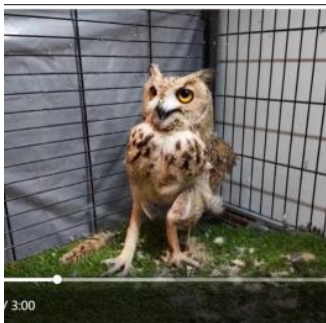
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### **EU action plan against wildlife trafficking - Progress report for 2024 published**

The latest European Commission's progress report on the EU Action Plan Against Wildlife Trafficking finds that illegal wildlife trade patterns remained broadly stable in 2024. The report highlights persistent demand for illegally sourced wildlife and identifies online marketplaces as a continuing challenge for detection and enforcement. Download the report [here](#).



More news



### **Awareness raising raptor videos from the Middle East released to mark World Migratory Bird Day**

BirdLife Middle East shared two new short documentaries highlighting the challenges that raptors face. Produced by Pangolin Pictures and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, these films showcase local conservation efforts—from caring for injured birds that can no longer return to the wild in Kuwait to exposing the growing threat of illegal raptor trade in Iraq. Please watch the videos from [Kuwait](#) and [Iraq](#).

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### **BSPB has launched regular patrols to combat poisoned baits**

The Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB) has launched regular anti-poison patrols with a specially trained detection dog to detect illegal poisoned baits in key bird areas of the Sub-Balkan region and Upper Thracian Plain. The initiative, part of the EU LIFE-funded [Life for the Falcon](#) project, aims to prevent wildlife poisoning, strengthen enforcement, and promote cooperation with pigeon breeders through non-lethal solutions to reduce conflicts with birds of prey. Read more [here](#).



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### **Cyprus adopts National Action Plan against poisoning**

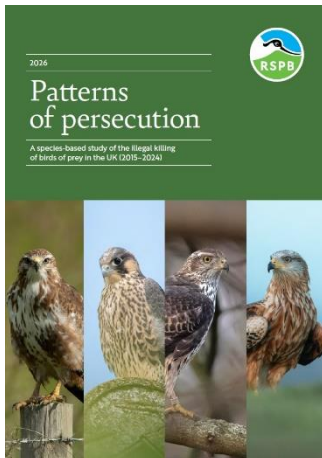
Cyprus has officially adopted a National Action Plan against poisoning, establishing a coordinated framework for preventing, investigating, and responding to the illegal use of poisoned baits, the greatest threat to the island's Griffon Vulture population. Developed through the [LIFE with Vultures](#) project, the plan brings together government authorities and conservation organisations to strengthen wildlife crime prevention and long-term vulture conservation. Read [more](#).

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## Malta's 2026 spring hunting season: birds that don't make it to Europe

During Malta's 2026 spring hunting season, at least 14 protected migratory birds, including kestrel, marsh harrier, bee-eater, hoopoe and corncrake, were confirmed illegally shot. The evidence collected by BirdLife Malta proves that inadequate enforcement and legal loopholes continue to facilitate illegal killing under Malta's spring hunting derogation, despite ongoing infringement proceedings by the European Commission. Read more [here](#) (in Maltese) or [here](#) (in English)

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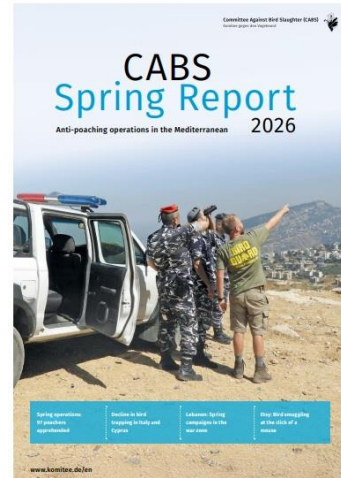
## RSPB's new Raptor Persecution Report

A new RSPB report documents 921 confirmed incidents of illegal persecution of birds of prey in the UK between 2015 and 2024, with more than half occurring on or near land managed for gamebird shooting. RSPB argues that stronger measures are needed, including licensing of gamebird shooting in England and Wales, to better protect protected raptor species and hold estates accountable for wildlife crime. Read [more](#).

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## CABS Spring Report 2026 published

This spring around 100 volunteers of The [Committee Against Bird Slaughter](#) (CABS) took part in anti-poaching operations in Italy, Greece, Malta and Cyprus, Lebanon, and Germany. They identified and reported 97 poachers, and the authorities confiscated 58 mist-nets, 43 pairs of clap-nets, 362 limesticks, 107 other traps, 29 electronic decoys, 16 shotguns, 564 rounds of ammunition, and nearly 400 live birds thanks to CABS. Read the report [here](#).



Beyond our region

## Mass poisoning kills 50 Hooded Vultures in Guinea-Bissau

At the end of May, 50 critically endangered Hooded Vultures and several Palm-nut Vultures were deliberately poisoned in Guinea-Bissau. All Hooded Vultures were found decapitated in what is believed to be a belief-based wildlife crime linked to traditional rituals. Read more [here](#).





### **More than 60 vultures poisoned in Botswana and Senegal**

In early June, more than 60 vultures were killed in two separate suspected poisoning incidents in Botswana and Senegal, bringing the total number of vultures lost in Africa to over 200 across six mass poisoning events since the start of 2026. The cases highlight the continuing threat of wildlife poisoning, driven by human-wildlife conflict and belief-based practices, which remains one of the leading causes of decline for Africa's endangered vulture populations. Read more [here](#).

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### **Investigation launched after 33 vultures found dumped in U.S. national park**

U.S. authorities are investigating the discovery of 33 dead Black Vultures dumped along a roadside in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee. As the species is protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, park officials are seeking information from the public to determine how the birds were killed and illegally disposed of. Read [more](#)



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



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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.

