



Wildlife Crime Newsletter

July-August, 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. Cover photo Common snipe by Tibor Horváth.

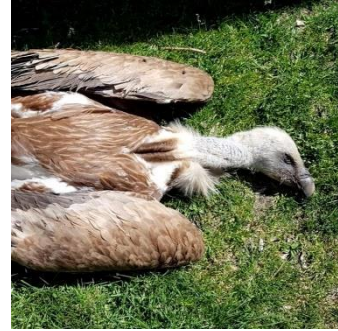
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Featured news

Nine birds poisoned in Bulgaria

A mass poisoning incident in Central Balkan National Park has killed at least eight vultures and a raven, including one of the first young [Bearded Vulture](#) reintroduced to Bulgaria. A poisoned cattle carcass is believed to have been used as bait intended against a local bear. Criminal investigation is underway and one suspect was already [arrested](#). Read more [here](#).



Feliks, the Eastern Imperial Eagle returned home to Serbia

After surviving illegal capture in Syria, ransom demands, and more than six months in a shelter in Lebanon, the Eastern Imperial Eagle named Feliks has safely returned to Serbia thanks to international cooperation. Following weeks of care, rehabilitation, and flight training, he was released back into the wild on August 6. Read about his adventures [here](#). Besides this successful save of a specimen, the species itself is "[a symbol of nature conservation in Serbia](#)"

International Policy Updates

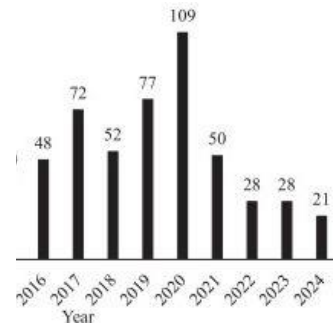
The [CMS MIKT](#) Secretariat will be organising, together with the National Agency for Waters and Forests of Morocco and with the support of the Raptors MOU, a workshop on National Action Plans on illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds (IKB). The workshop is addressed to North African countries: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, and will take place in person from 29 Sept to 1 Oct 2026, in Tangier, Morocco. The provisional agenda is available at the event's [website](#).

The next joint meeting of the Bern Convention Special Focal Points of IKB and CMS MIKT (MIKT7) will take place ONLINE on 22 October 2026, from 9:30 - 13:00 (CET). The provisional agenda will soon be available online.

Research & publications

Gunshot wildlife admissions in Czech rehabilitation centres

From 2010–2024, 719 gunshot-injured animals—mostly pigeons and birds of prey—were admitted to 31 Czech wildlife rehabilitation centres, including many protected species whose injuries indicate illegal shooting. Outcomes were poor: 40.6% died, 16.8% were euthanized, and only 11.8% could be successfully released. Read the article in the Journal of Nature Conservation, vol. 94. [\[link\]](#)



High human-caused mortality in GPS-tracked Red Kites across Europe

The LIFE EUROKITE project is publishing a scientific paper representing a most comprehensive analysis of Red Kite mortality to date. Between 2013 and 2022, researchers tracked 2,346 Red Kites using high-resolution GPS satellite telemetry, enabling the detection and investigation of 979 mortality events. Illegal killing, particularly poisoning, was identified as the primary non-natural cause of death, with poisoning alone accounting for 25% of all cases. Read more [here](#).

How to stop the songbird trade: reframe it

Researcher Neva Nur Durmaz Çerençe examines the cyber-enabled illegal songbird trade by comparing interviews with international wildlife experts and Turkish bird enthusiasts. It finds a sharp divide: experts frame the trade as an ecological, animal-welfare, and cybercrime crisis, while local actors view birdkeeping as a threatened cultural tradition and justify capturing birds through narratives of care and appreciation. The study argues that effective conservation must pair regulation and digital monitoring with culturally tailored behavior-change strategies. Discover the findings [here](#).

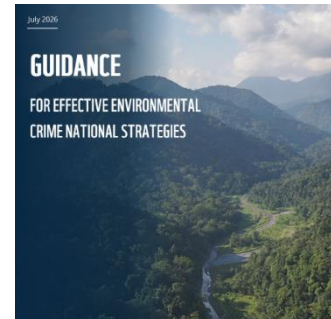


Hen Harrier Brood Management Trial Report

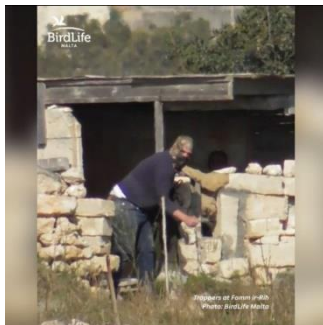
Natural England [published the final reports](#) on the Brood Management Trial in July. “Whilst there was an increase in Hen Harrier breeding numbers under the initial years of the trial, illegal persecution has continued regardless. The survival of both brood-managed and wild-reared young was below the levels that would be expected if illegal killing were absent. This means that being reared from a brood-managed nest does not confer protection from subsequently being illegally killed.” - [responded the RSPB](#).

Guidance for effective environmental crime national strategies

WWF alongside six other NGOs provide key recommendations to support EU Member States in developing robust national strategies to combat environmental crime by 21 May 2027. The guidance outlines key recommendations that will support Member States in elaborating robust strategies including on the elaboration process, content and format for the strategies, as well as their implementation, monitoring and review. Read the guidance [here](#).



More news



Lifetime ban and €3,000 fine for illegal hunting

Two men in Malta have received €3,000 fines and lifetime bans from hunting or trapping following separate illegal incidents they had committed last spring. BirdLife Malta's evidence helped secure the convictions. Read more [here](#).

House Martin nests destroyed in Ireland

A man and a woman in County Laois, Ireland, have pleaded guilty after 57 protected House Martin nests were deliberately destroyed during power-washing work on a house being prepared for sale. The incident is estimated to have killed around 205 birds. The court ordered the pair to donate €10,000 to wildlife rehabilitation. Read the full story [here](#).



35 rare birds of prey seized in Kazakhstan

Authorities in Kazakhstan have arrested a local man after discovering 35 rare birds of prey—including Saker Falcons, Golden Eagles and a Peregrine Falcon—illegally kept at his property. The birds were transferred to a zoo and will be released back into the wild once legal proceedings conclude. Read [more](#).

Over 5,000 plucked songbirds seized in Lebanon

A major anti-poaching operation in Lebanon uncovered more than 5,000 illegally captured warblers - and exposed a network of people involved in their online sale. The perpetrators, including a local butcher, have been reported to the



authorities. Police are already interrogating four of the individuals involved. Read [more](#).



Preventing quail poaching in Serbia

BPSSS, BirdLife partner in Serbia successfully prevented poachers from using illegal equipment. Police confiscated five prohibited electronic bird callers hidden in an alfalfa field used for attractkng quails for hunting. Read the [post](#) (in Serbian)

Poaching operation targeting rare raptors uncovered in Spain

Wildlife officers in Alhaurín el Grande dismantled a suspected poaching operation targeting Northern Goshawk and Eurasian Sparrowhawk chicks, which were stolen from nests during the breeding season. The birds were allegedly given fake leg rings and forged breeding documents to disguise them as captive-bred and sell them illegally for high prices. Read [more](#).





Asian Houbara releases in Uzbekistan criticised over links to hunting

Uzbekistan has released thousands of captive-bred Asian Houbara, officially to restore populations of this vulnerable species. Critics argue that the programme may primarily support falconry and hunting, warning that releases cannot offset unsustainable killing without scientifically determined hunting limits. Read [more](#).

Shooting at rare, protected birds occurred in several countries during summer, here are some recent cases that have come to light:

Pallid Harrier shot in Finland

A Pallid Harrier was found seriously injured in Laukaa, Finland, with a broken wing and leg and shotgun pellets in its body. The bird had to be euthanised, and a criminal report has been filed; Finland has only an estimated 5–25 breeding pairs of the species, making the loss particularly significant. Find out [more](#) (in Finnish).



Gull-billed Tern shot in France

A GPS-tagged Gull-billed Tern from Germany was shot in western France south of Nantes this August during its autumn migration. Its undamaged GPS logger helped pinpoint the bird's final location, while two pellet wounds confirmed it had been shot while foraging over a field. Read more [here](#).

Three Squacco Herons shot in Malta

Three protected Squacco Herons were killed after a hunter allegedly fired at a flock of around 30 migratory birds along Malta's Żonqor coastline. BirdLife Malta reported the incident to police, leading to the recovery of the birds and the expected prosecution of two individuals for illegal hunting. You can watch the video evidence about the incident [here](#).



Campaigns and calls



Understanding the threat: A comic guide on poaching

LIPU's free comic, *Bracconaggio: Manuale di autodifesa* (meaning *Poaching: Self-Defense Manual*), explains how illegal hunting threatens wildlife, biodiversity, and respect for the law in Italy. Designed for young readers, families, and educators, it also shows who is fighting poaching and how everyone can help protect nature. If you speak Italian, download it [here](#).

Beyond our region

China launches nationwide crackdown on illegal bird killing

China has launched a nationwide campaign targeting poaching, with a particular focus on firearms, drones and online wildlife trafficking. The operation targets the entire illegal trade chain and strengthen cross-border cooperation, building on previous efforts that uncovered thousands of wildlife crimes. Read more [here](#).



Indonesia's songbird trade pushes species toward extinction

Indonesia's hugely popular songbird-keeping culture and competitive singing events are driving demand for wild-caught birds, with millions trapped and many dying during transport or remaining caged for life. Conservationists warn the trade is contributing to an "Asian songbird crisis," while rescue centres are working to rehabilitate confiscated birds and return them to the wild. Read the full article [here](#).

Mapping Mexico's illegal parrot-trafficking routes

Researchers analyzed 27 years of confiscation records using an electrical-grid-inspired model to map Mexico's parrot-trafficking corridors. Their interactive tool could help law enforcement predict trafficking hotspots, protect endangered birds, and potentially track other contraband moved by organized crime. Read [more](#).



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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.

