

Illegal trapping, killing and trade of birds, Experience from the field

Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS)



STEPS BACK IN RECENT YEARS

CABS is observing a worsening of the situation, with often an increase of the illegal killings and trade of birds.

Reasons are:

1. New laws used as smokescreen to protect illegal killings
2. Weakening of the enforcement
3. Not deterrent judicial system



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CYPRUS

The Anti-poaching Unit of police, the only enforcement body able to face professional trappers, was halved in 2017 and dismantled in 2019.

As long as no one was enforcing the law for illegal hunting, the killing of one bee-eater was sanctioned 2000 euros. As soon as CABS started forcing for the implementation of this law, the law was amended: now the killing of up to 50 bee-eaters, is sanctioned 200 euros. This counts for 14 protected species, those normally targeted by hunters.



ITALY

The national action plan lists as high priority the increase of fines, frozen since 1992 (only case related to crimes against animals). The Parliament refused to undertake any change.

Illegal killings are considered minor crimes and 'particolare tenuità del fatto' (particular tenuity) and 'oblazione' (on-spot fine) are applied.

There are continuous attempts to limit the enforcement (high visibility for volunteer hunting guards, limits to the controls of bird rings...).



MALTA

In 2021 again spring hunting of quails and even vulnerable turtle doves was allowed. In a frame of systemic annihilation of enforcement (best officers removed, absence of patrols in Gozo and in the night...) and blatantly failing monitoring schemes (SMS) with ridiculously low figures of killings.

“Research project” is used as a smokescreen for illegal trapping of finches.

Judicial system fails to impose deterrent sanctions.



THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

Investigate what the drivers of IKB are, can be distracting. The question now is not 'Why people kill birds, whether for fun, food or money' but 'Why European countries are systematically protecting IKB?'. The continuous influence of hunting lobbies on regional and national administrations is mining the efforts to reduce IKB and effectively protect wildlife.



Proposals: binding tools which effectively combat poaching and prevent states to further go backwards (a functioning anti-poaching unit dedicated specifically to IKB, deterrent fine system calibrated on national problems and gravity factors, removal of obstacles in the judicial proceedings).