

Review of the illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean



Nets on Egyptian Mediterranean coast © Dr Holger Schulz



European Bee-eater © BirdLife Cyprus

Nicola Crockford – BirdLife International

1st meeting of the MIKT

Background

- **Illegal killing and taking of birds** is a **growing issue of concern**, especially across the **Mediterranean region**
 - *Indiscriminate/killing protected species, using illegal devices and poisons, out of legal season, in prohibited areas*
- **Many countries struggling to tackle the issue**
- **Little quantitative information available** on which species might be most affected, which countries are facing the most serious problems, and which are the worst locations

Baseline

Priority-setting



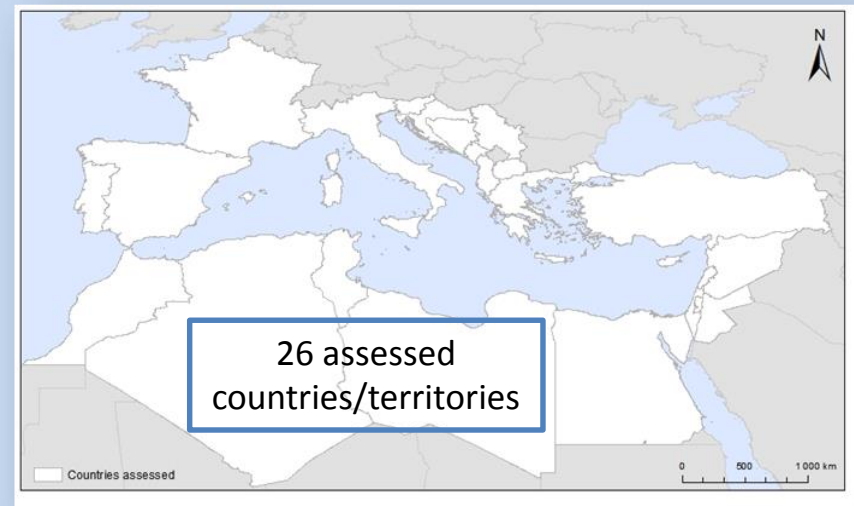
Stone crush trap in Dalmatia (Croatia) © BIOM



Hoopoe trapped on limestick © BirdLife Cyprus

Project objectives

- **Undertake review of national legislation** on hunting, trapping and trading of birds
- **Assess the scale, scope and impact of illegal killing and taking of birds** by compiling info on the species, numbers of individuals, blackspots and illegal practices
- **Develop best-practice techniques and protocols for systematic monitoring** of the different type of illegal activities
- **Raise awareness** of the issue through communications and advocacy
- Results **support prioritisation** re: action of BirdLife Partnership, and contribute to broader international efforts to prioritise action on this issue



Review of national legislation

- Define what is legal/ illegal at national level
- All 26 countries/territories assessed, except Libya, have **hunting/taking regulations**
- Identification of **gaps where legislation fails to comply with international conventions**
 - Legislation not often sufficiently detailed
 - Hunting season coinciding with migration and breeding seasons
 - Species of conservation concern huntable
- Factsheets available on Birdlife website (Datazone: Country profiles) and in final project report

Summary of National Hunting Regulations: Cyprus



Updated in August 2014

HUNTING AND TRAPPING LEGISLATION/ RESOURCES

Name of main legislation: Law 152(I)/2003 regarding 'Protection and Management of Wild Birds and Game Species'.

Year of publication: 2003

Supporting legislation: Law 153(I)/2003 regarding 'Protection and Management of Nature and Wildlife'. Law 2002 regarding 'Dogs'. Law 2004 regarding 'Shooting and non-shooting weapons'.

Legislation updates: Latest update on Law 152(I)/2003 was in 2012

Hunting legislation (web link): Law 152(I)/2003 and updates
http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/wildlife/wildlife_new.nsf/web18_gr/web18_gr?OpenDocument

Authority in charge of controlling hunting (web link): Cyprus Game and Fauna Service

Major inconsistencies or loopholes detected (if yes please describe): None.

Derogations (on EU Birds Directive and/or Bern Convention): Crow hunting (during summer, as a pest control measure).

HUNTING AND TRAPPING: METHODS AND RESTRICTIONS

	Legal methods/restrictions	Notes
Hunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Licensed hunting is permitted in certain seasons and for certain species (see below). - Only rifles are permitted in Cyprus. All other hunting methods included in the Birds Directive are forbidden including use of calling devices or live decoys, shooting from a moving vehicle of any sort, falconry. - Restrictions include: no hunting at night, no hunting out of season, no hunting in Wildlife Conservation Areas - It is prohibited to hunt within 500 metres from built up / residential areas, 200 metres from isolated housing, 300 metres from military barracks / installations and 150 metres from fenced areas. 	
Trapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trapping is completely illegal in Cyprus - Possession of non-selective methods such as mist nets, limesticks and calling devices is illegal in Cyprus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is illegal to possess, sell or eat trapped birds - No establishment in Cyprus has to date been licensed to serve game – so even legally shot game such as chukar, partridges or hares cannot currently be served in a restaurant.

Disclaimer: The information found in these factsheets prepared by the BirdLife Partnership was updated in August 2014. Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the information presented is current and accurate at this time, but recent legislative changes may not be reflected. The content of these factsheets is for information only and is not intended as legal advice. If official legal documentation of national legislation is required it should be sought from the relevant national government authority.

Assessing scale, scope and impact of illegal killing and taking

Illegal killing and taking of birds = any form of deliberate action that results in the death/removal from the wild of an individual of a bird species that is prohibited under national or regional legislation

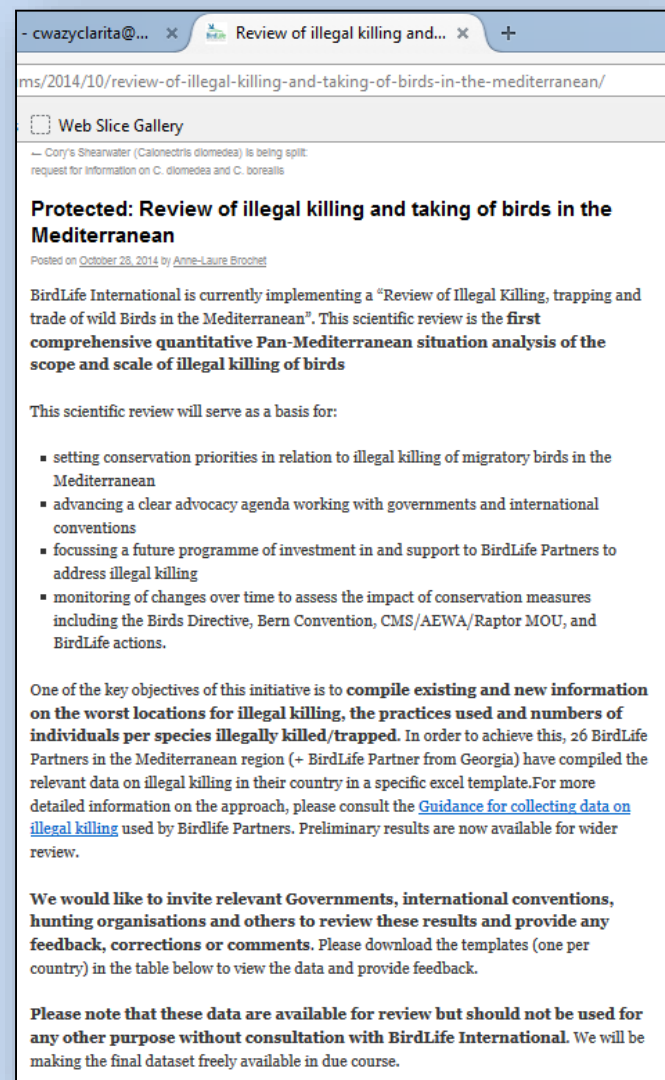
Approach to estimates

Our approach: estimates with credible min and max bands given the level of uncertainty

- ✓ Template and guidance provided – input from CMS family and others
- ✓ Extrapolation from sites data, rehab centres, violation records, mist net capture rates, expert opinion etc. Social media could be used
- ✓ Min and max limits of the estimate could be very wide (e.g. 100-10,000)
- ✓ Justification notes explaining how estimates have been derived, so the logic and audit trail is transparent
- ✓ Caveats and confidence limits highlighted in any outputs produced using these data

Data review

- Datasets available online for **review by external experts** from scientific/ technical bodies and/or national focal points of relevant international conventions including CMS family, conservation and ornithological organisations, hunting associations
- Aim: to ensure that the **estimates were as accurate as possible and integrated all relevant information**
- Any feedback was then used by the national experts to **revise the data**



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying a URL related to a review of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean. The page content includes a 'Web Slice Gallery' header, a sub-header about Cory's Shearwater, and a main article titled 'Protected: Review of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean'. The article is dated October 28, 2014, and is by Anne-Laure Brochet. The text describes BirdLife International's initiative to review illegal killing, trapping, and trade of wild birds in the Mediterranean. It lists four key objectives: setting conservation priorities, advancing a clear advocacy agenda, focussing on a future investment programme, and monitoring changes over time. It also mentions that 26 BirdLife Partners have compiled data on illegal killing in their countries. The article concludes with an invitation for governments, international conventions, hunting organisations, and others to review the results and provide feedback. A final note states that the data is available for review but should not be used for any other purpose without consultation with BirdLife International.

ms/2014/10/review-of-illegal-killing-and-taking-of-birds-in-the-mediterranean/

Web Slice Gallery

— Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*) is being split: request for information on *C. diomedea* and *C. borealis*

Protected: Review of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean

Posted on October 28, 2014 by Anne-Laure Brochet

BirdLife International is currently implementing a “Review of Illegal Killing, trapping and trade of wild Birds in the Mediterranean”. This scientific review is the **first comprehensive quantitative Pan-Mediterranean situation analysis of the scope and scale of illegal killing of birds**

This scientific review will serve as a basis for:

- setting conservation priorities in relation to illegal killing of migratory birds in the Mediterranean
- advancing a clear advocacy agenda working with governments and international conventions
- focussing a future programme of investment in and support to BirdLife Partners to address illegal killing
- monitoring of changes over time to assess the impact of conservation measures including the Birds Directive, Bern Convention, CMS/AEWA/Raptor MOU, and BirdLife actions.

One of the key objectives of this initiative is to **compile existing and new information on the worst locations for illegal killing, the practices used and numbers of individuals per species illegally killed/trapped**. In order to achieve this, 26 BirdLife Partners in the Mediterranean region (+ BirdLife Partner from Georgia) have compiled the relevant data on illegal killing in their country in a specific excel template. For more detailed information on the approach, please consult the [Guidance for collecting data on illegal killing](#) used by Birdlife Partners. Preliminary results are now available for wider review.

We would like to invite relevant Governments, international conventions, hunting organisations and others to review these results and provide any feedback, corrections or comments. Please download the templates (one per country) in the table below to view the data and provide feedback.

Please note that these data are available for review but should not be used for any other purpose without consultation with BirdLife International. We will be making the final dataset freely available in due course.

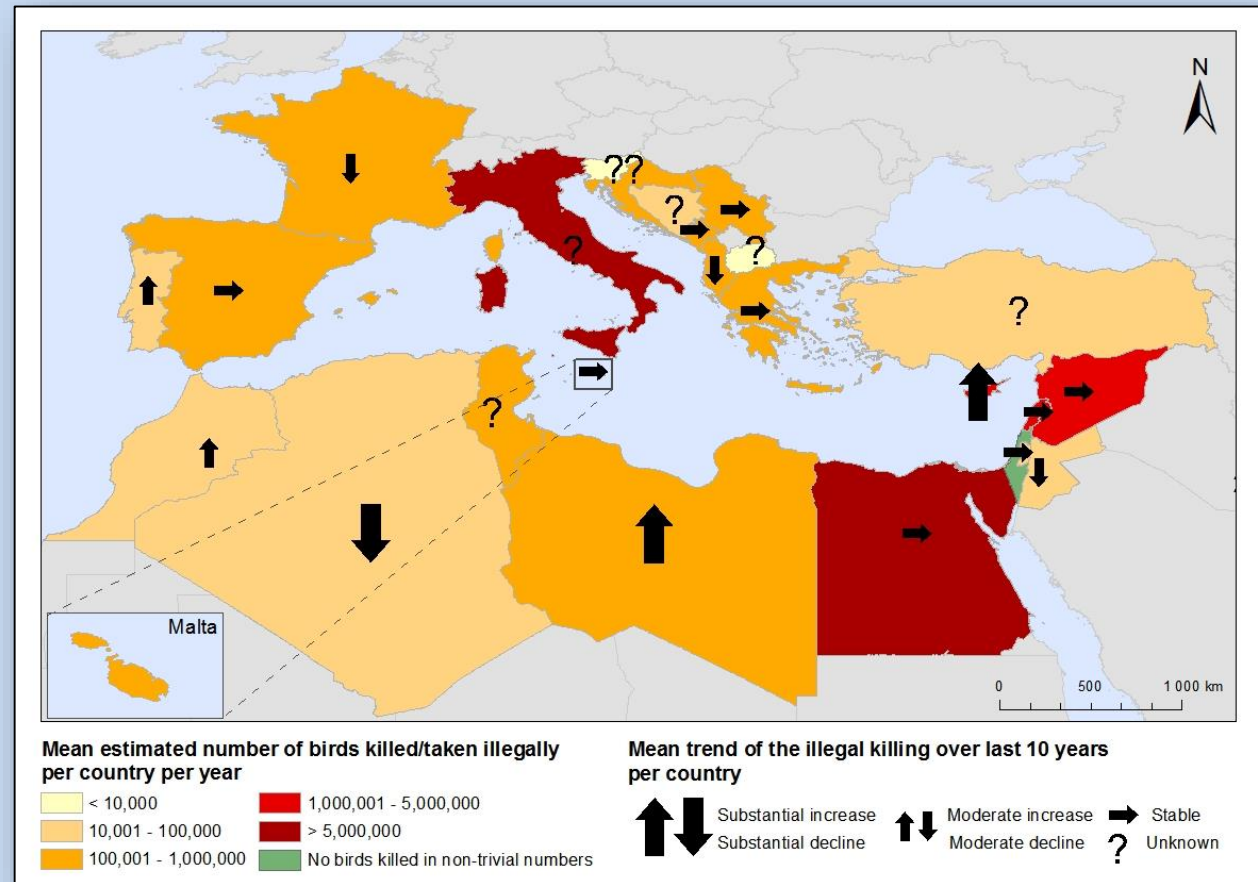
Results - all bird species



Number of birds illegally killed across different countries of the Mediterranean

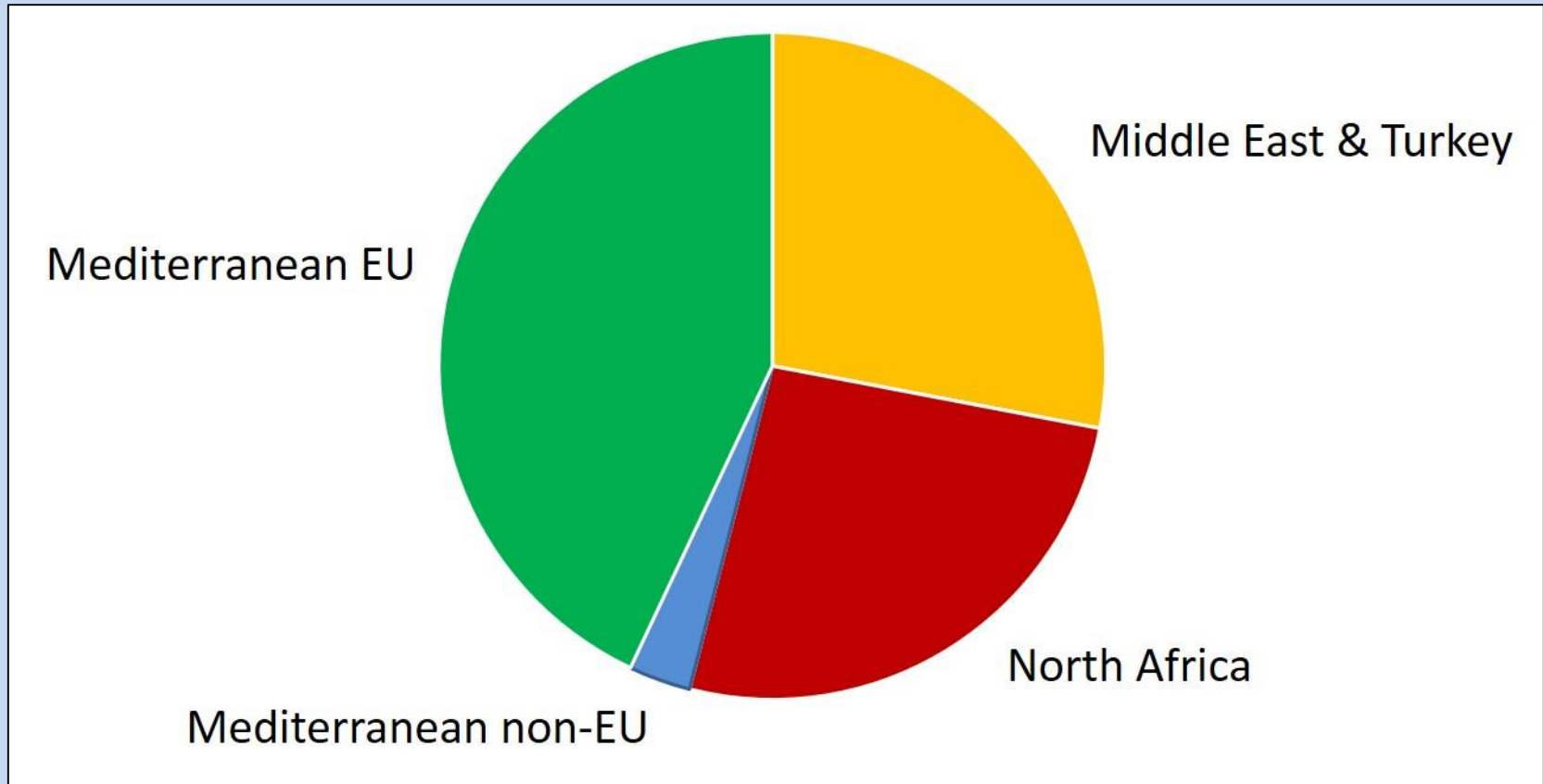
- Illegal killing was reported to be **widespread all around the Mediterranean: 11-36 million birds** may be illegally killed/taken per year

1. Italy
2. Egypt
3. Syria
4. Lebanon
5. Cyprus
6. Greece
7. France
8. Croatia
9. Libya
10. Albania



Brochet *et al.* 2016. BCI

Illegal killing in different areas of the Mediterranean



43% of birds reported to be killed/taken around the Mediterranean on average may be killed/taken **in the EU**

Number of birds illegally killed/taken among different groups of birds

Group	Mean estimated no. individual birds illegally killed/taken per year (min – max)
Passerines	19,900 000 (9,400 000 – 30,300 000)
Waterbirds	1,000 000 (500 000 – 1,600 000)
Pigeons, Doves	700 000 (400 000 – 1,000 000)
Raptors	80,000 (40,000 – 100,000)
Others	1,800 000 (1,100 000 – 2,500 000)



Migrant species with potentially highest numbers illegal killed/ taken



Globally threatened species potentially most affected by illegal killing/taking

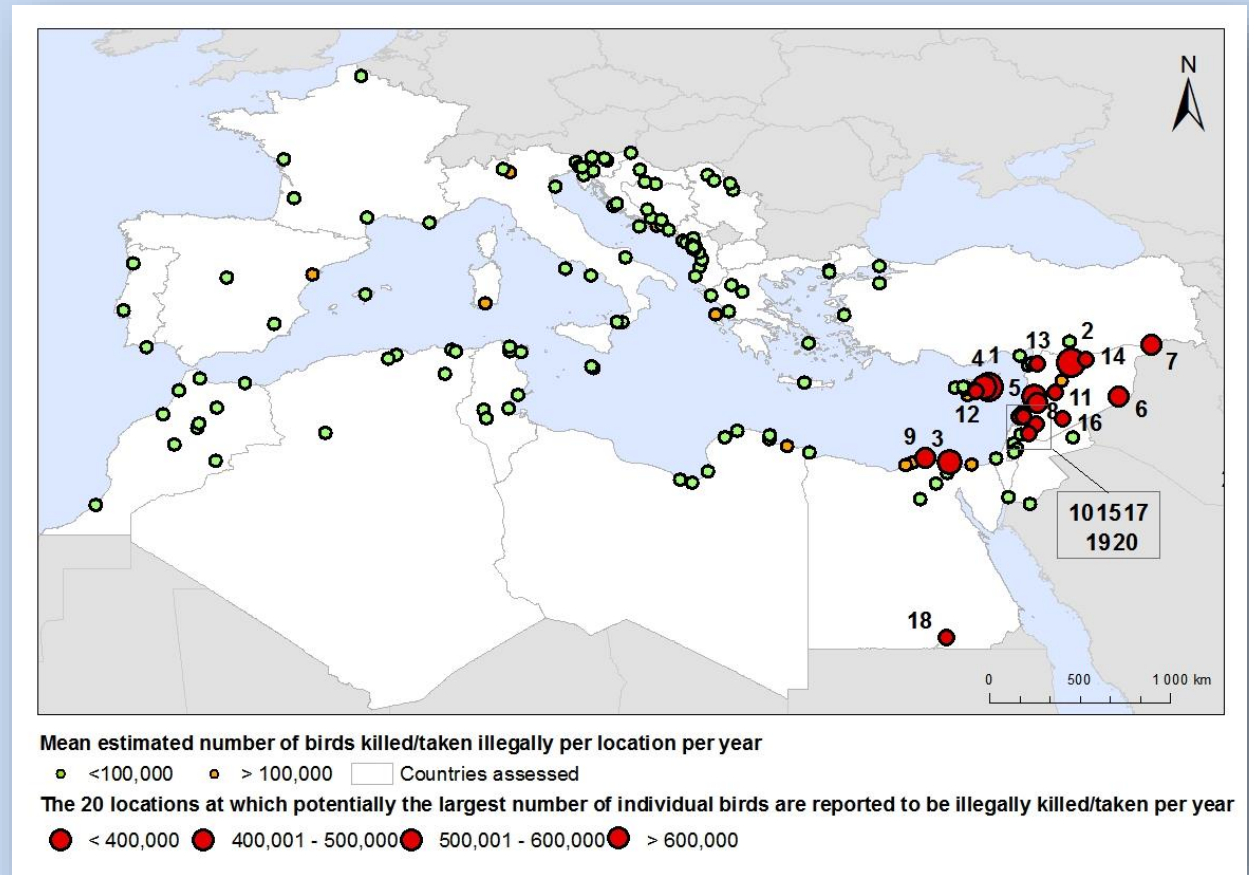
Of greater concern, some **globally threatened or Near Threatened species** may have a **large proportion of their global population impacted** by illegal killing

Species	Ratio of estimated no. individual birds illegally killed/taken to the global population (min – max)
Rock Partridge (NT)	0.045 (0.014 – 0.101)
African Houbara (VU)	0.041 (0.017 – 0.103)
White-headed Duck (EN)	0.035 (0.003 – 0.089)
Spanish Imperial Eagle (VU)	0.035 (0.008 – 0.061)
Ferruginous Duck (NT)	0.029 (0.014 – 0.053)

Worst locations for illegal killing and taking in the Mediterranean

- **All the 20 potential worst locations** reported were concentrated in the Eastern Mediterranean

7.9 million
birds/year at 20
sites – 34% of
mean total

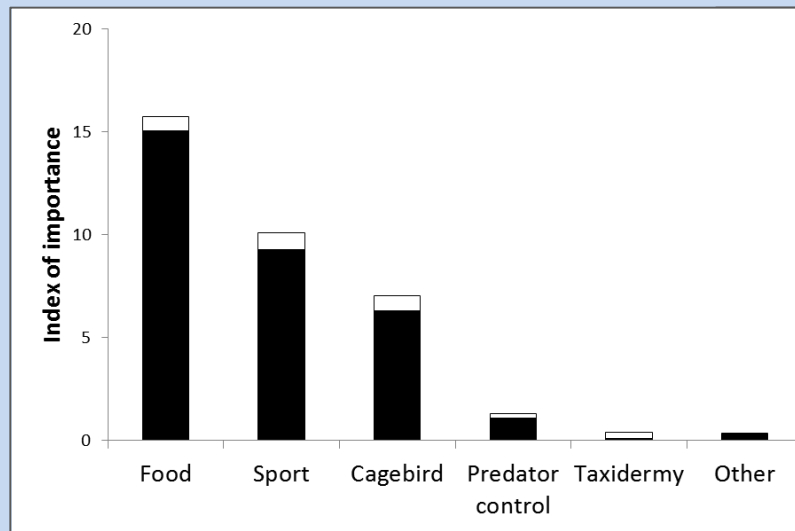


Brochet *et al.* 2016. BCI

Reasons for illegal killing/taking

- Birds in the Mediterranean are illegally killed/taken primarily **for food, sport and for captivity**

Index of importance of the potential reasons for illegally killing/taking raptors in the Mediterranean region. Solid bars indicate the primary reason, open bars indicate secondary reasons.

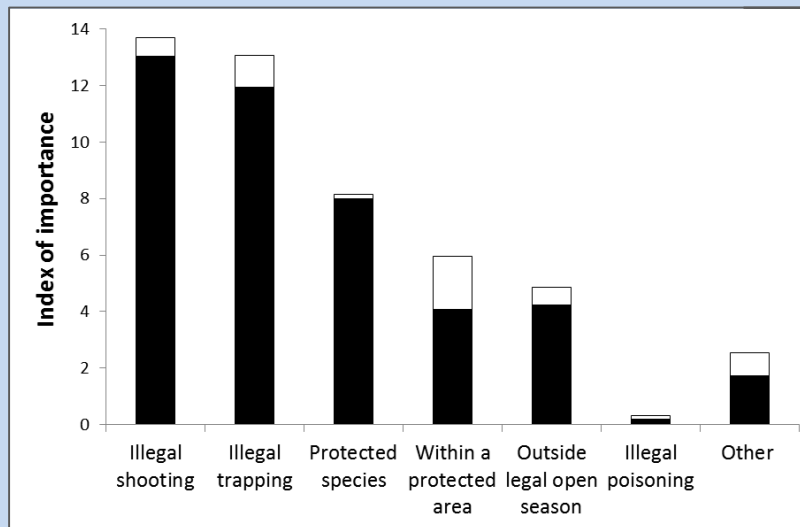


$$\text{Index} = \sum \frac{\text{No. ind killed per species and per country}}{\text{No. ind killed per country}} \begin{matrix} * 1 \text{ if primary reason} \\ * 0.5 \text{ if secondary reason} \end{matrix}$$

Types of illegalities

- **Illegal shooting and illegal trapping** were the most important types of illegality reported

Index of importance of the potential types of illegality for killing/taking raptors in the Mediterranean region. Solid bars indicate the primary reason, open bars indicate secondary reasons.



$$\text{Index} = \sum \frac{\text{No. ind killed per species and per country}}{\text{No. ind killed per country}} \begin{matrix} * 1 \text{ if primary type} \\ * 0.5 \text{ if secondary type} \end{matrix}$$

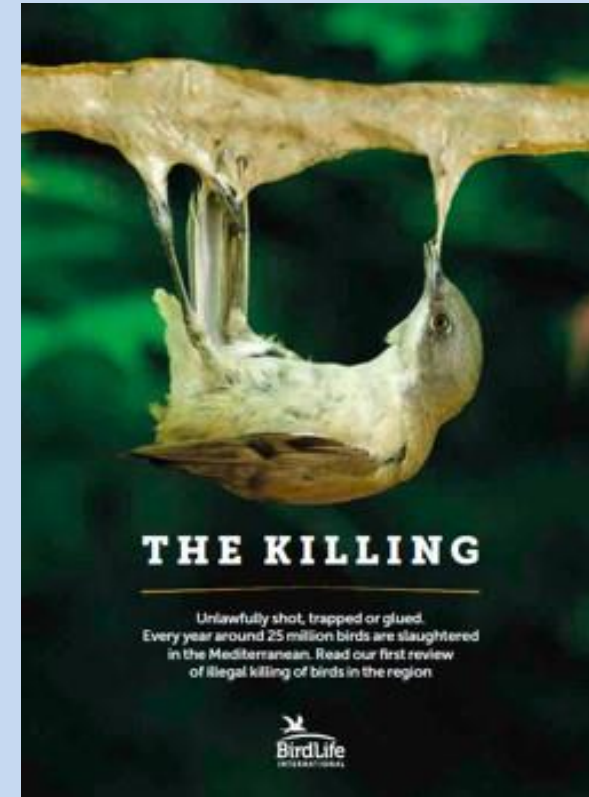
Overview

- **First comprehensive quantitative Pan-Mediterranean situation** of the scope and scale of illegal killing of birds – good baseline
 - Providing **useful indications of the overall magnitude** of the issue
- **Paucity of data on illegal killing/taking of birds, with most estimates having wide intervals**
 - **Monitoring schemes which use systematic sampling protocols** are needed



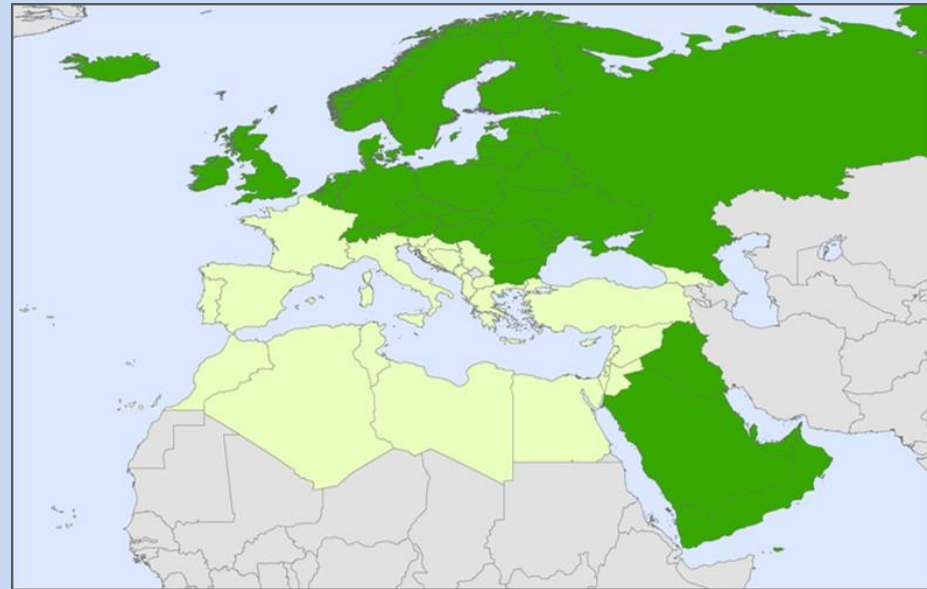
Products from the review and future plans

- Products:
 - **Inf 5.1a** Short comms publication **‘the killing’**
 - **Inf 5.1b** **Scientific paper (open access)**: Brochet et al. (2016) Bird Conservation International. 26(01): 1 - 28
 - **Inf 5.1 c** **Full report** with national annexes
 - **Doc 7** **Guidelines** on monitoring
- Underway:
 - **Pilot use of the illegal killing monitoring guidelines** by Mediterranean Partners in collaboration with others
 - **Conservation action by Mediterranean Partners** to address illegal killing at worst sites in collaboration



Future work

- Continued engagement with CMS MIKT, AEWa, Raptors MOU, AEM LAP, Bern, EU and others
- Data for the Med can be improved over time and similar data needed elsewhere to get flyway-scale picture of the issue
- BirdLife is hoping to begin a similar review of illegal killing and taking in the Arabian peninsular, Iran and the remainder of Europe this year
- Will be seeking your collaboration and feedback



Acknowledgments

Thank you to national experts who worked hard to contribute national information to the review of illegal killing and taking of birds and the organisations that supported them to work on this issue. Thanks too to the experts including from the CMS family who helped to review the guidance/methodology, national data and the draft paper and for useful feedback from participants in Illegal killing side events at Raptors MOU MOS2, AEWa MOP6 and the CMS Scientific Council meeting earlier this year.

This review was funded by an anonymous BirdLife donor.



European Bee-eater © BirdLife Cyprus