

## PRESS RELEASE

### **New Strategy to Eradicate Bird Crime in Europe and the Mediterranean**

*Bonn, 14 May 2019* - Two Conventions in the field of wildlife and nature conservation agreed on the elements of a joint strategy to eradicate poaching of birds in the Mediterranean region.

An estimated 20 million birds fall victim to illegal killing, taking and trade in Europe and the Mediterranean every year. It is the main cause of the rapid decline of several species in this region.

The initiative comes shortly after the release of the UN Global Assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services, which predicts the huge loss of species in the future due to human impact.

At an international meeting in Rome last week, representatives of 25 Mediterranean and European countries and over 20 International Organizations and NGOs discussed ways to address bird crime.

The countries provided new data, which shed light on the extent of bird crime and the key drivers of it: birds are taken primarily for food, sport and to be traded as cage birds.

Members of the Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean established by the UN Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and of the Network of Special Focal Points on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds of the Bern Convention have now agreed on developing a joint strategy to tackle the problem over the next decade.

“Bird crime is a complex phenomenon, requiring a multisectoral approach to be effectively tackled. Collaboration between different actors is key and the fact that two international conventions have agreed to further strengthen their cooperation by developing a joint strategy is a significant step forward,” said Marco Barbieri, Officer in Charge of the CMS Secretariat.

As of next year, and until 2030, the Rome Strategic Plan developed under CMS and the Bern Convention will coordinate action to effectively streamline efforts to fight wildlife crime concerning birds. The involvement of governments, legal authorities, police, conservationists, and hunters in the Rome Strategic Plan will be key to its success.

The Rome Strategic Plan will define the objectives and actions at the national and international level to eradicate illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds.

To assess the impact of bird crime and success in countering it, the plan defines monitoring schemes for all countries and includes indicators to measure progress in achieving individual targets.

Last year, several Mediterranean and European countries compiled information on monitoring, legislation, enforcement response, prosecution and prevention at a national level using a dedicated monitoring tool, the so called 'Scoreboard', adopted by both CMS and the Bern Convention.

Continuous monitoring is key to collect data on illegal activities and other parameters as indicators of progress in implementing wildlife laws.

Despite widespread bird crime in the Mediterranean, the first results are good indications for a change for the better. The next assessments by means of this tool on bird crime are planned for 2020 and 2023.

The commitment and political will of countries have resulted in recent actions.

Maria Carmela Giarratano, Director at the Ministry for the Environment of Italy said: "Italy is strongly committed to the eradication of illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds, mainly through the National Action Plan and the collaboration of all public administration, the enforcement personnel, and the stakeholders. These illegal activities are in decline in our country, but there is still a need for further enforcement, prevention and awareness raising."

Italy adopted a national action plan in 2017 to reduce the level of illegal killing of birds in the country. The plan has strengthened police forces, enhanced enforcement and improved regional cooperation in Southern Italy.

Forest police have created a database on trapped, shot and poisoned birds and conducted antipoaching campaigns in several hotspots.

In the future, the government wants to train prosecutors and toughen sanctions against wildlife criminals.

Other countries are following this model or have already launched similar activities to protect shared populations of migratory birds threatened by bird crime.

"It has been a great honour to host the joint meeting of the Bern and the Bonn Convention in the prestigious venue of the Presidential Estate of Castelporziano, providing the opportunity to agree the structure and the objectives of the next Strategic Plan for the eradication of illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds" said Maria Carmela Giarratano.

Notes to editors:

Several initiatives have been launched in the past to combat bird crime including those adopted under the framework of the Bern Convention, CMS and CITES, and those spurred by the EU. The Bern Convention Tunis Action Plan (TAP), the EU Roadmap on the Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds, the European Commission Communication and Council Conclusions on an EU Action Plan Against Wildlife Trafficking, the AEWA Plan of Action to Address Bird Trapping Along the Mediterranean Coasts of Egypt and Libya and the CMS Mediterranean Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds (MIKT) are the key examples.

Related links:

[Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean Programme of Work](#)

[CMS Res. 11.16 The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds Tunis Action Plan by Bern Convention](#)

[The Plan of Action to Address Bird Trapping Along the Mediterranean Coasts of Egypt and Libya](#)

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