

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

The Scoreboard: Assessing progress in combating the Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean

A self-assessment framework
for national use





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Introduction

The illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds (IKB) is a serious conservation issue in the Mediterranean region. Birds are targeted (especially during migration periods) and killed or trapped for food, as pets, or for trading. The methods for trapping or killing vary across the Mediterranean and include traps, lime sticks, nets, snares, shotguns, and poison. Estimating the scale of IKB is extremely difficult, but a coordinated study by the NGO BirdLife International in 2016¹ estimated that as many as 25 million birds could be getting killed annually across the Mediterranean, affecting 375 of the 561 species (ca. 65%) recorded in this region.

To address this issue, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) adopted Resolution 11.16 (Rev. COP14) in 2014. This resolution promotes international cooperation to reduce the illegal killing, taking, and trade of migratory birds, bringing together many stakeholders to develop a shared approach to tackle this complex challenge. The adoption of Resolution 11.16 (Rev. COP14) led to the creation of the Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT)².

The work of MIKT for the period 2020-2030 is guided by the [Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030: Eradicating Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade in Wild Birds in Europe and the Mediterranean region](#) (RSP), the common strategic framework of the MIKT and the Council of Europe's Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention). The RSP sets the overarching goal of eradicating IKB within the geographic extent of the Bern Convention and the

CMS MIKT. Additionally, it sets the goal of reducing the scale and scope of IKB by 50% by 2030 compared to a 2020 baseline.



A Trapped Red-backed Shrike

The Scoreboard

The Scoreboard to assess the progress in combating illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds (IKB) is a voluntary self-assessment tool developed by the Bern Convention and the CMS MIKT. It helps countries monitor their progress and set priorities. Adopted in 2017, countries have reported three times: 2018 (for 2016-2017), 2020 (for 2018-2020), and 2023 (for 2020-2022). Assessments are held every three years, with the next scheduled for 2026. Countries are encouraged to complete the Scoreboard assessment by involving all relevant stakeholders in a joint process to address illegal killing, taking and trade of birds. The results help identify where support and training are most needed.

- ▶ The Scoreboard is based on 28 different questions and indicators related to five thematic areas.

There are five key areas of indicators to monitor:

A National monitoring of IKB

Data management of scope and scale of IKB: This first set of four indicators is about setting the scene of the problem in the country and scoring the degree of understanding.

The first set of questions asks countries to report what they know about the scale and nature of IKB. Respondents submit an Excel file showing the number of birds affected by region, season, and year. They also rate the quality of their data: qualitative information receives a lower score, while data based on solid records receive the highest. Countries are also asked to describe trends in IKB during the reporting period and report how many prosecution cases occurred and how complete the official crime statistics are. Finally, they provide an Excel file detailing IKB cases, including the type of offences, number of people prosecuted, and birds seized.

B **Comprehensiveness of national legislation**

The second set of nine indicators explore the national legislation regulating hunting, poaching and international trade in wildlife and its products.

Respondents provide information on their national policies and the laws that support them. They indicate whether their legislation clearly distinguishes between protected species and those that can be hunted, and whether it sets clear rules. They also report if their laws prohibit certain methods of trapping or killing birds, or the possession and trade of live or dead birds. Additional questions cover exceptions, sanctions and penalties, and whether existing criminal or organized crime laws can be used to prosecute IKB cases.

C **Enforcement response**

Preparedness of law enforcement bodies and coordination of national institutions: The third set of six indicators relate to law enforcement

The respondents are asked if the country has an Action Plan to combat IKB and to what extent they are implementing it, or if it is at a stage of development. They are asked to what extent IKB enforcement is a priority for the responsible agencies. The questions also investigate the level of multi-stakeholder engagement at national level and the levels of training and capacity building offered to responsible agencies.

D **Prosecution and sentencing**

Effectiveness of judicial procedures: The fourth set of four indicators covers the effectiveness of the judicial system against IKB. Judges and prosecutors benefit from training and awareness raising regarding the seriousness of IKB crimes, and that leads to dissuasive penalties.

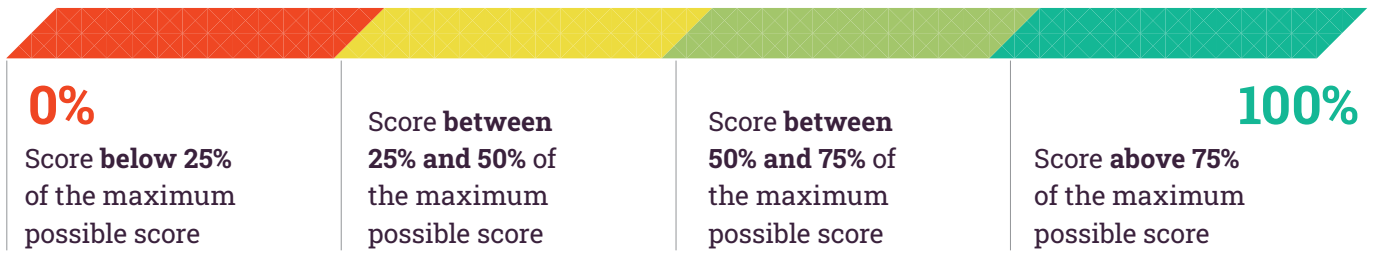
Respondents are asked how aware the judiciary is of the seriousness of IKB, and whether sanctions are applied effectively. They report on the training and awareness of prosecutors and judges, as well as how long court cases typically take. Countries can give the highest scores when criminal cases are resolved within a year—or within three months for administrative cases—when specialized prosecutors are involved, and when fewer than 10% of cases end in acquittal.

E **Prevention**

Other instruments used to address IKB: The fifth set of five indicators covers the use of other instruments like awareness raising, addressing demand side, and drivers and motivations for IKB, international cooperation and stakeholder engagement

The respondents are asked about whether they have carried out surveys of drivers and motivations for IKB in their country, whether their countries participate in international initiatives, such as MIKT, and whether they are supporting work on public awareness, and raising awareness of the hunting community.

The overall self-assessment score a country gives itself for each group of indicators or overall is measured in percentages. A colour scale is also attributed according to the level of the score.



39
out of 54 countries have submitted the Scoreboard

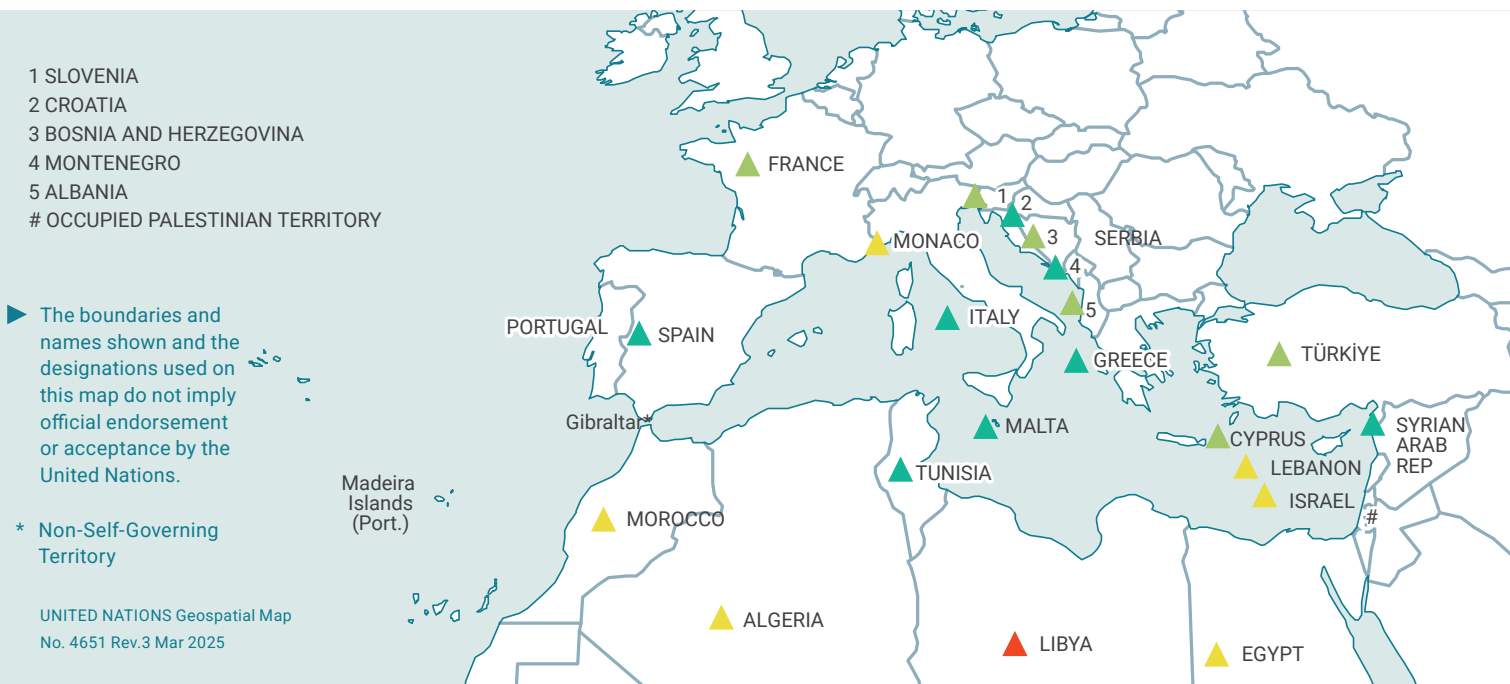
By answering all the questions, countries assess their progress and give themselves a score from 0 to 3. These scores are then grouped and summarized for each thematic area and for the entire Scoreboard. The percentage results are also shown using a colour scale, indicating how close each country is to the maximum possible score in each area and overall.

According to the analysis of the 2023 Scoreboard results³, of the 21 MIKT countries in the Mediterranean 20 have completed the Scoreboard at least once. Eight countries have completed the

Scoreboard all three times, i.e. in 2018, 2020 and 2023; six have completed it two times; and another six have completed it once, i.e. in 2018, or 2020 or 2023. In the wider geographical area, which includes the Council of Europe’s Bern Convention countries, 39 countries out of 54 countries invited have submitted the Scoreboard at least once and 15 have submitted it all three times.

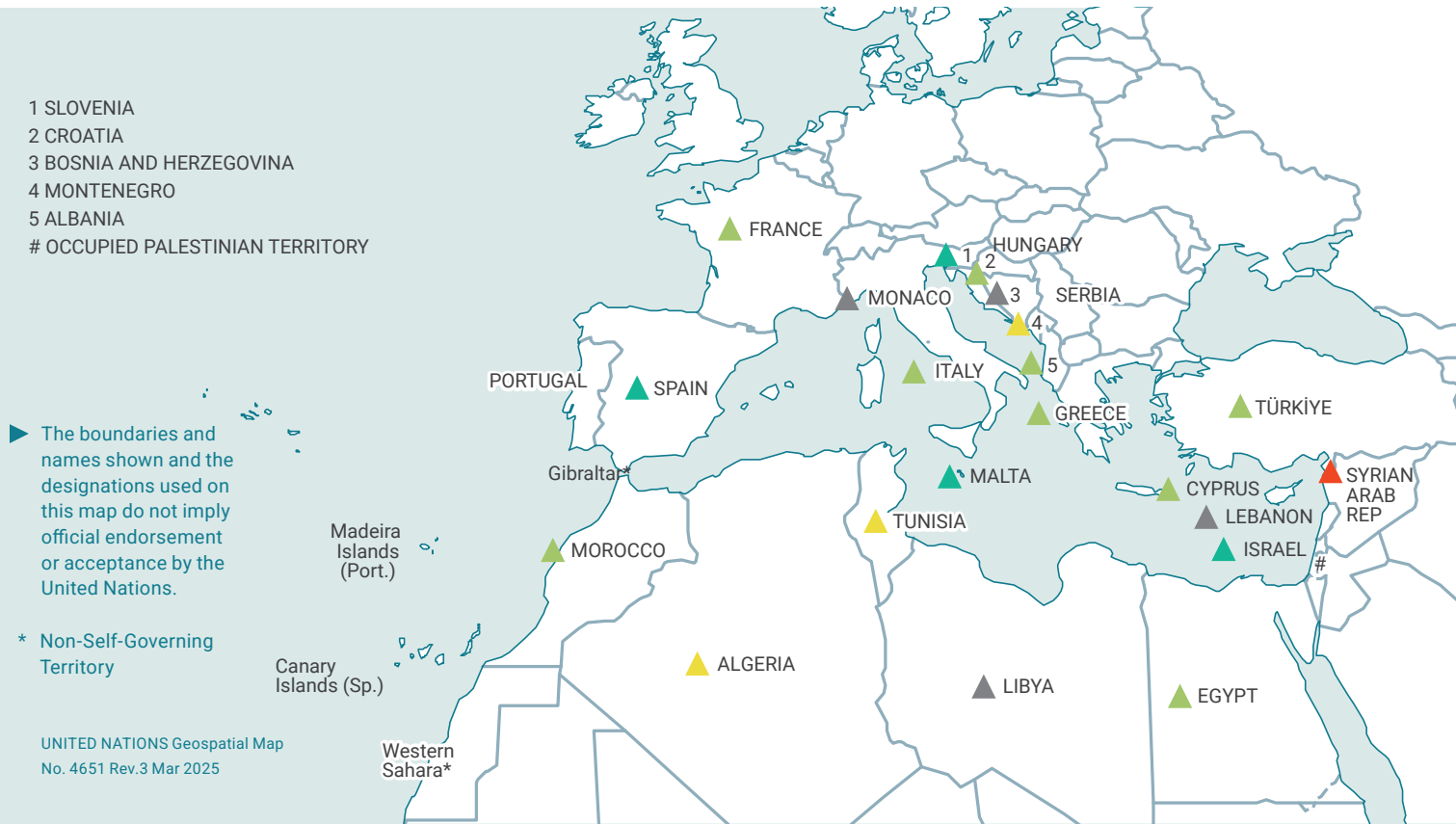
Countries assess their progress and give themselves a score from 0 to 3.

Map of the Mediterranean showing the number of times each country has replied to the Scoreboard (only MIKT Countries):



- ▶ All three times: 2018, 2020 and 2023
- ▶ Two times out of three
- ▶ One time out of three
- ▶ Never

Overall Scoreboard results of countries



- ▶ 75-100%
- ▶ 50-75%
- ▶ 25-50%
- ▶ 0-25%
- ▶ Incomplete or no data

Overall self-assessment scores (%) for Mediterranean countries based on 2020 or 2023 Scoreboard results according to the colour scheme of the Scoreboard. Countries in grey either did not submit a Scoreboard, or submitted only one in 2018, or submitted incomplete information.

Based on the 2020 and 2023 results submitted by countries⁴, the overall self-assessments scores for Mediterranean countries show that most of them assess themselves as having achieved at least 50% of what is required (light green or dark green). The highest performance area is legislation, achieving average scores of around 80% and in many countries influencing the overall score.

Monitoring IKB is a challenge, as it is an illegal activity, however, results show that some countries are making progress, by deciding on a long-term methodology for assessing IKB and agreeing a scale against which to compare progress. Arriving at an accurate estimate of IKB is critical,

not only for assessing progress, but also for building support and ownership for eradicating it.

Contrary to legislation, the scores for Prosecution and sentencing and Enforcement response are much lower, averaging around 50%.

Prosecution and Enforcement have been relatively low scoring from the first Scoreboard in 2018 and continue to score lower than other areas.

- ▶ Most countries assess themselves as having achieved at least

50%
of what is required

Scores are related to capacity at the national level which depends on many factors. However, there are also very important examples of good training opportunities and the role of projects and exchanges between countries, such as the work of the Wildlife Crime Academy⁵, which has supported investigation and enforcement agencies in many Mediterranean countries.

Italy has prepared a guide for all enforcers and prosecutors dealing with bird crime⁶ to help them understand the national situation with IKB, the national and international legislative framework and the strategies in place for addressing the problem. Experience shows that when prosecutors and judges understand the multi-faceted nature of wildlife crime and the importance of it, then sanctions and penalties increase.

Prevention is an area which has shown most improvement since the 2020 Scoreboard exercise but is also an area in which most countries agree a lot more can be done.

Awareness raising and training on IKB issues is very linked to available funding.

In the Mediterranean context, EU countries have had a lot more access to appropriate funding than middle Eastern or north African countries. Awareness raising in most countries is led by NGOs, which focus on children and the general public. Raising awareness among the public has a direct effect on demand, because a lot of people who consume killed or keep trapped birds are unaware of the ecological importance or unlawfulness. Awareness raising among specialized groups of users, e.g. hunters, is organized either by the government or NGOs.

The overall results of the Scoreboard should be considered against the background of the severity of IKB in the country, because countries with very small incidence of IKB will inevitably put less priority on the issue.

Currently, the only comprehensive estimates of number of birds killed or taken annually across the Mediterranean are from NGO BirdLife International studies conducted in 2016⁷. Based on that study, and the latest available data on IKB numbers, the severity levels adopted in the Scoreboard in 2017, are the following:

IKB Severity level as in Scoreboard 2017 and country classification according to latest data up to 2023.

IKB Severity level Class	Number of birds annually	Countries
Class I	more than 2,500,000	Egypt, Lebanon, Italy and Syrian Arab Republic
Class II	between 750,001 and 2,500,000	none
Class III	between 100,001 and 750,000	Albania, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Libya, Malta, Montenegro, Tunisia
Class IV	less than 100,000	Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain and Türkiye
	less than 7,000	Israel and Monaco

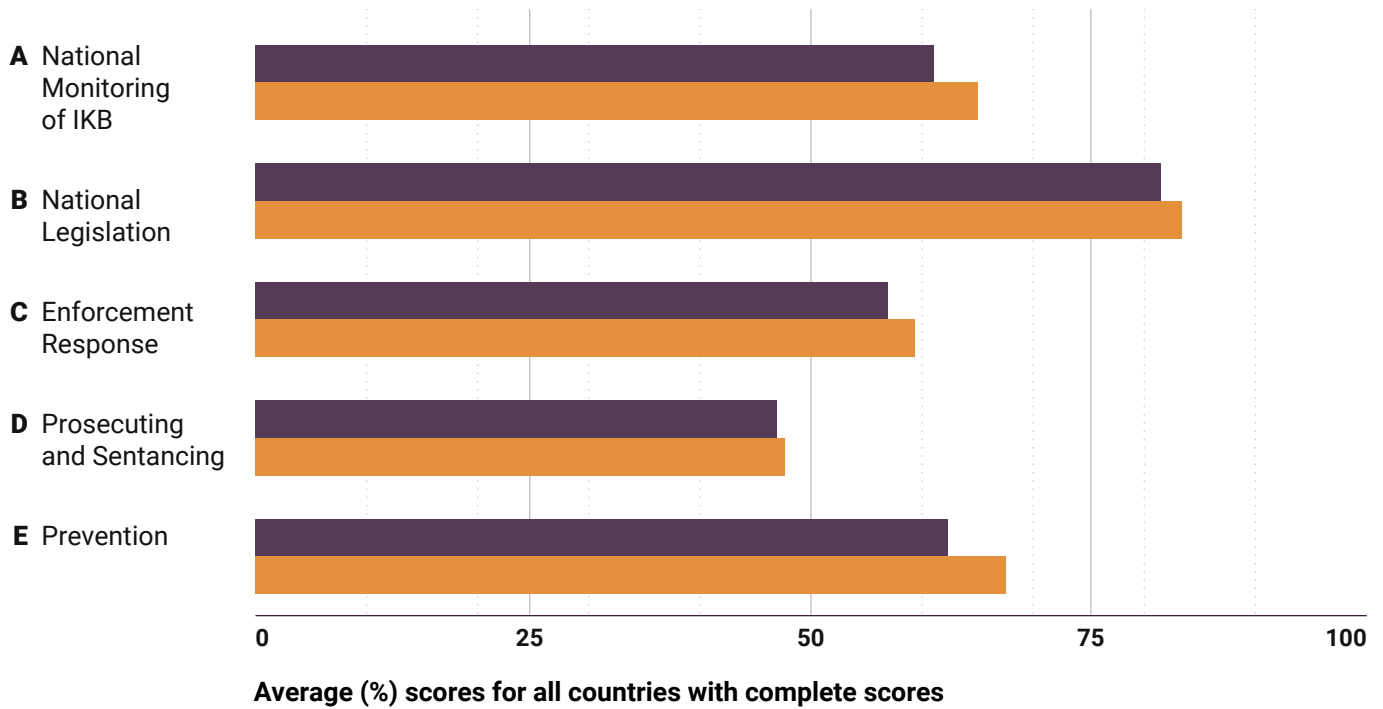


B Goldfinches trapped

Comparing the average scores from the five indicator areas in the 2023 and 2020 Scoreboard assessments shows small improvements across all areas, with the biggest progress in Prevention. This demonstrates that the Scoreboard is a valuable tool for helping countries evaluate their efforts and report their progress in addressing IKB.

Engaging in the process of completing the Scoreboard stimulates and guides action, sets priorities and brings results.

Average scores per indicator area in 2023 and 2020/2018 assessments



▶ 2018 or 2020
 ▶ 2023

CMS Initiatives on the Prevention of Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds

Addressing the illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds is complex and varies by country and local context. It can be driven by unclear laws, limited enforcement capacity, cultural traditions,

poverty, profit, and low awareness of the scale and impact of wildlife crime. Solutions require varied approaches and strong collaboration among stakeholders.

The Convention on Migratory Species adopted in 2014 [Resolution 11.16 \(Rev. COP14\) on The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds](#). Based on the mandate of this Resolution, the CMS Secretariat convened the [Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean](#) in 2016, the [Asia Pacific Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds Intergovernmental Task Force \(ITTEA\)](#) in 2023, and the [Task Force for Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds in South-West Asia](#) in 2025.



Endnotes

- 1,7 Brochet, et al. (2016) Preliminary assessment of the scope and scale of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean, Bird Conservation International, 26:1–28
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/bird-conservation-international/article/preliminary-assessment-of-the-scope-and-scale-of-illegal-killing-and-taking-of-birds-in-the-mediterranean/34A06A94874DB94BE2BBACC4F96C3B5F>
- 2 <https://www.cms.int/taskforce/mikt>
- 3 Assessment of the 3rd National Scoreboard (2023) reporting by contracting parties to the Bern Convention and members of the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory birds in the Mediterranean (Updated March 2025)
<https://www.cms.int/document/scoreboard-2023-updated-analysis-march-2025>
- 4 For Albania, Egypt, France, Morocco and Slovenia results are from 2020 Scoreboard as they did not submit one in 2023.
- 5 <https://wildlifecrimeacademy.eu/>
- 6 Crimes against wild birds. A thematic focus for an effective law enforcement
<https://www.isprambiente.gov.it/en/publications/technical-documents/crimes-against-wild-birds-a-thematic-focus-for-an-effective-law-enforcement>
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- B Goldfinches trapped ©ORNITHOLOGIKI
- C Hoopoe © BirdLifeCyprus
- D MIKT and Bern Convention Joint Meeting participants, in May 2025, Bonn, Germany. © CMS Secretariat.



MIKT and Bern Convention Joint Meeting participants, in May 2025, Bonn, Germany.



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www.cms.int/taskforce/mikt/ikb-scoreboard

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What is CMS?

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) is a legally binding international treaty under the United Nations. CMS is one of the most important global frameworks for wildlife conservation and plays a vital role in addressing the global biodiversity crisis. By fostering international collaboration, supporting research, and developing conservation agreements and actions among the Range States in which these species are found, CMS ensures the long-term survival of migratory species of wild animals and their habitats, and the vital benefits they provide.

Download this brochure



The European Union was recognized as Champion Plus for their generous support and commitment towards addressing Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean for the period 2015 - 2028.

