

BirdLife Malta prepares for another illegal spring hunt

Title

Spring is around the corner, and with it all kinds of events will be coming to life from our BirdLife Partners. BirdLife Malta has announced Spring Watch Malta 2011, a conservation camp which forms a crucial part of their fight against the illegal spring hunting that is rife in Malta. Spring Watch Malta is scheduled for April 10th – April 24th, during the peak spring migration period in Malta and thus the period with the highest expected hunting intensity. Malta has a chequered history of abiding by the EU Birds Directive, which rules such hunting as illegal. It was found guilty by the European Court of Justice for opening spring hunting seasons in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. While the case proceeded during 2008 and 2009, no hunting seasons were opened, resulting in two fantastic years for Malta's breeding birds. In 2010, following its guilty ruling, Malta's government not only opened a one week spring hunting season, but also adopted legislation making longer future seasons with larger bag counts possible. Legal proceedings were subsequently renewed against Malta last October, but in reaction, Malta's Prime Minister defied the Commission by stating that Malta is prepared to go all the way on spring hunting, even if this means being fined by the European Court of Justice. Hunters have been assured a season. Dates have yet to be announced. What will be in 2011? Anticipating another hunting season being opened this year, Spring Watch Malta will act as both watchdog and deterrent to illegalities by monitoring the extent of hunting and collecting video and photo evidence to help police investigations. www.birdlifemalta.org
