

Endangered bird shot in Malta, flown to Germany for rehab

Title

A Pallid Harrier, one of Europe's most-endangered birds of prey, which was shot in Malta, was sent to Germany for rehabilitation by BirdLife Malta, at the end of April. This Pallid Harrier is one of 26 shot protected birds which BirdLife Malta has received since the spring hunting season started on the 13th April. On this list are birds of poor conservation status in Europe including a Black Kite, a Lesser Kestrel, the Pallid Harrier, and a Purple Heron. The Pallid Harrier was recovered on Sunday 1st May after a member of the public found the bird in his garden in the limits of Mosta. The bird had gunshot injuries to the wing and chest that were a few days old, having been shot during the spring hunting derogation period, was emaciated and unable to fly. The bird received preliminary veterinary care in Malta. Since rehabilitation facilities for wild birds are lacking in Malta, the BirdLife partner in Germany, NABU, assisted in arranging to send the bird to the Tierklinik in Berlin. The bird was flown into Berlin on Wednesday and received further veterinary treatment yesterday. There are an estimated 5 to 50 breeding pairs of Pallid Harriers in Europe excluding the Russian population. Due to large historic population declines Pallid Harriers are listed as endangered in Europe. Over the past four years, BirdLife Malta has witnessed several incidents of Pallid Harriers being shot at. A shot Pallid Harrier was recovered from Tas-Silg in 2007, a badly injured bird was seen over Fomm ir-Rih in 2008, and in 2010 another badly injured Pallid Harrier was filmed flying over the Foresta 2000 area on Easter Sunday. Commenting on this year's spring hunting season, Paul Debono, BirdLife Malta Executive Director, said "The season was opened under conditions which could be neither controlled nor enforced. The aim was clearly to allow large numbers of hunters to be out in the field during the peak migration period. The end result ? a procession of shot protected birds.?"
