

European experts on illegal killing of birds draft action plan in Tunis

Title

At the end of May bird conservation experts met in Tunis at the [Week on Conservation of Birds](#) to identify ways forward to tackle illegal killing of birds.

During the event, BirdLife Europe Partners shared best practices on key issues, such as bird poisoning, law enforcement measures and awareness strategies.

The focus of the conference, organised by [CMS](#) and the [Council of Europe](#), was to identify specific actions and priorities to work on, with the goal of ensuring the recovery of especially migratory birds protected by the CMS and [Bern Convention](#).

Attendants reinforced their position on minimizing [migratory bird poisoning](#), considered as *?the one cause that probably has the highest conservation impact?*, as Willem Van den Bossche, Nature Conservation Officer at BirdLife Europe stated at the meeting.

On the same subject, [SEO](#) (BirdLife in Spain) presented the [outcomes](#) of the LIFE+ project [VENENO](#), which is bringing governmental authorities, environmental police and NGOs together. The project aims to fight against poisoned baits, identified as one of the main reasons behind migratory bird deaths, together with rodenticides, lead, veterinary drugs and insecticides. The participants at the Week on Conservation of Birds prepared a draft action plan to reduce the illegal killing of birds.

?When approved and linked to the EU roadmap towards eliminating illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds this will be a good tool to measure progress and results of the actions and to strengthen cooperation between stakeholders within the whole flyway of migratory birds?, says Willem Van den Bossche.

In that sense, the Bern Convention, a treaty which recognises that European wildlife and habitats need to be preserved and handed on to future generations, is seen as *?an opportunity for North African countries which are parties to the Convention to cooperate and protect important bird areas for migrating birds by including them in the Emerald Network , a network similar to Natura 2000 but outside the EU for protecting nature sites?*, stresses Claudia Feltrup-Azafzaf, Executive Director at Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux" (AAO), BirdLife in Tunisia.

At the conference BirdLife Cyprus explained its experience on taking cases into courts to prove that mistnets and limesticks are threatening many migrant birds travelling through the island, and insisted on promoting institutional collaboration and pushing law enforcement to address the issue.

Another example was provided by BirdLife Malta. In Malta the law enforcement of illegal trapping and killing of protected birds still needs to be enhanced. Effects of windfarms and powerlines on migratory birds were also analysed during the meeting. The research info and guidelines that will be produced in the follow-up of this conference will be extremely useful to ensure the zero tolerance approach to illegal killing all parties agree on.
