Putting Action Plans in place to eradicate wildlife poisoning

Title

According to the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment, in a period of 10 years (2000-2010), over 6,500 birds have been killed in Spain. Poison-baiting is the most widely used predator eradication method worldwide and is undoubtedly one of the biggest threats to bird life and biodiversity in Spain. Under Life+ ***VENENO*** SEO/BirdLife (BirdLife in Spain) has developed a draft action plan and protocol to stop this illegal poisoning and the unnecessary death of hundreds of birds each year.

Poison-baiting is considered a massive and non-selective method for killing predators, prohibited by national and regional law and punishable under the Spanish Penal Law. Despite this ban, poison is still used regularly. Lack of prevention, surveillance and investigation are to blame for the high degree of impunity. To solve this threat to wildlife, the development of strategies, action plans and specific protocols have been key instruments in many Spanish regions. In regions where there are legal documents providing action plans against wildlife poisoning, the number of poisoning incidents have been reduced dramatically. Currently five regions have action plans in place to address illegal poisoning, but the Life+ ***VENENO*** project strives to go further. In the framework of the project, all of Spain's 17 autonomous regions have committed to develop and/or review their action plans.

SEO/BirdLife (BirdLife in Spain), who is coordinating Life+ *VENENO*, has collaborated with all of the key stakeholders in the fight against poisoning in Spain and drafted a plan that is tailored to the reality of nine autonomous regions. The plan's objectives are: to extend and improve available information, to work towards the prevention, deterrence and surveillance of the illegal use of poisoned bait, to boost prosecution efficacy, to control the sale of toxic substances likely to be used for preparing poisoned bait, and to improve liaison and coordination among all stakeholders involved.

Illegal poisoning not only affects national species but migratory species as well, so the battle against this wildlife threat needs to be fought transnationally. Plans and protocols developed under *Life+ VENENO* could be used help develop European and international instruments against poisoning, which would create a common framework that connects regions and provide a cohesive action plan to eradicate the use of poison.

For more information, please visit www.venenono.org