Title

Articles 7-9 of the Birds Directive regulate the hunting of birds. Illegal killing of birds also refers to “hunting” activities that occur outside this legal framework.

The bird species that can be hunted in the EU are listed in the Birds Directive’s Annex II. This annex is divided in two parts. AnnexII/1 lists all species that might be hunted in all Member States and Annex II/2 lists species that is possible to hunt in particular Member States. Within these limits each Member State is free to decide which species are huntable in the respective country.

- Art.7(4) of the Birds Directive states a number of principles how hunting should be practiced and prohibits any hunting during the period of reproduction (breeding/rearing) and during the return of birds to their breeding grounds (spring migration). These periods are defined for each Member State and each huntable species in the so called “Key Concepts” document issued by the European Commission.
- Art.8 prohibits a number of hunting methods, e.g. trapping with nets, which are listed in Annex IV of the Directive.
- Art.9 provides the possibility for Member States to derogate from Articles 5-8 for certain reasons and under strictly defined circumstances.

A detailed interpretation of these provisions and reference to case law from the European Court can be found in a Guidance Document produced by the Commission. The document is available in all EU languages at the Commission’s web-page on sustainable hunting.

- Why EU Policy matters
- Illegal killing of birds

- The provisions of the EU Birds Directive on hunting
- Our dialogue with the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE)
- Our Species Conservation work
- Our work on the implementation of the EU Birds Directive
- Back to Species Protection and hunting

About the Birds Directive

The Birds Directive (more formally known as Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds) is a European directive adopted in 2009, as a response to increasing concern about the declines in Europe's wild bird populations resulting from pollution, loss of habitats as well as unsustainable use. It is the EU's oldest piece of nature legislation and one of the most important, creating a comprehensive scheme of protection for all wild bird species naturally occurring in the Union, and recoginising that wild birds, many of which are migratory, are a shared heritage of the Member States and that their effective conservation requires international co-operation.

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