Illegal trapping of birds in Cyprus – how an EU Inspections Directive could help

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Illegal Bird Killing
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Overview of the problem

• Illegal
  – Since 1974 in national legislation but weak implementation
• Non-selective methods (mist nets, limesticks)
  – 153 birds species affected, 78 threatened status
• Large scale trapping
  – Hundreds of thousands of migratory birds killed / year
• Organised criminal networks involved
  – Bird crime chain
  – 15 million euros per year
• Demand & Supply – restaurants, key economic driver
153 affected species

Cyprus Scops Owl
*Otus scops cyprius*
153 affected species

European Bee-eater
*Merops apiaster*
153 affected species

Red-backed shrike
*Lanius collurio*
Illegal Bird Killing in Mediterranean

The map of illegal killing in the Mediterranean shows the number of birds killed and the reasons for the killing. The map highlights the regions with the highest number of birds killed, with percentages indicating the types of crimes committed.

In Cyprus, the statistics show a significant number of birds killed, with 248 killed per km² and 196 killed for every 100 people.

BirdLife Cyprus

Σύνδεσμος Κύπρου

The map also includes a chart showing the minimum, mean, and maximum figures for bird killings in Cyprus.
Bird crime chain

**SUPPLY**

**Suppliers of trapping equipment**
- Limestick-makers
- Mist nets suppliers
- Calling devices / Decoys
- Other trapping paraphernalia

**Trappers**
- Small
- Medium / organised
- Big / organised & criminal network

**DEMAND**

**Restaurateurs**

**Domestic consumption**
- Own use
- Sold in shops
- Sold to houses

**Enforcement & penalties**

**FOCUS?**
BirdLife Cyprus campaign

- Monitoring – Surveillance programme for illegal bird trapping
- Lobbying / Advocacy
- Awareness raising and educational actions
Monitoring – Surveillance programme

Main trapping hotspots areas no 1 & 2
Scale of Illegal trapping in Cyprus
Evidence of trapping activity

Pole bases & poles

Fresh feathers

Pebbles and irrigation hoses for acacia patches
Evidence of trapping activity

Set nets *in situ*

Unset nets *in situ*

Limesticks in carob tree
Surveillance Programme

- **47% increase** in mist netting for autumn 2014 vs autumn 2002 (TRIM analysis)
- > 6 000 limesticks located in autumn 2014
- Estimated **2.5 million birds killed in 2014** (spring, autumn & winter seasons)
Surveillance Programme

Google Earth map with trapping finds & GPS tracks – reported to law enforcement agencies (LEAs)
Law enforcement agencies

• Different jurisdictions
• Republic of Cyprus
  – Game and Fauna Service ~ 90 wardens for Cyprus
  – Cyprus Police anti poaching unit ~ 5-10 officers
• UK Dhekelia Sovereign Base Area
  – SBA Police anti poaching unit ~ 5-10 officers
• United Nations - control of Buffer zone
• Limited resources
Feedback from enforcement agencies

- BirdLife Cyprus reports active trapping sites to LEAs
- Feedback **NOT** always provided to BC
- Response time variable (from 1 day to > 1 month)
- Validity of feedback provided **not** possible currently
EU Inspections Directive – how could it help

• Independent inspection body $\rightarrow$ pressure on LEAs
• Validation & assessment of enforcement action by LEAs & of feedback provided to NGOs
• Set criteria for response time by LEAs
• Prioritisation of enforcement on hotspot trapping areas
• Inspect enforcement on restaurants – very limited and much reduced in 2013-2014 vs 2010-2012
• Assess the effectiveness of any law changes e.g. on the spot fines for calling devices instead of prosecution
• Ensure greater transparency
• Assess pressure on repeat offenders/trapping sites