



**Committee Against
Bird Slaughter - CABS**
Komitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V.

Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt[®]
Foundation Pro Biodiversity

Field Report:
Autumn 2016 Bird Protection Camp,
Cyprus

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1 SUMMARY

In September and October 2016, the *Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS)* and the *Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA – Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt)* conducted their 6th Autumn Bird Protection Camp (BPC) in Cyprus. The Camp started on the 7th of September and ended on the 23rd of October.

28 people from 8 different countries participated at the Camp and monitored bird trapping activity in southern and south-eastern part of the island. During the Camp our teams investigated 519 known trapping sites and 315 of them were found to be active, either with set traps or with signs of recent trapping activity. The number of active trapping sites is the highest ever found at autumn BPCs and it shows that the illegal trapping is still very common and widespread in Cyprus. The density of active trapping sites was highest in the UK Eastern Sovereign Base Area, where we located 116 active trapping sites or 0.9 sites per km² during the Camp.

In total, 4164 limesticks, 180 mist nets and 109 electronic bird callers were found and seized from active trapping sites. 667 birds were rescued from traps, 14 from aviaries and 595 dead birds were found and seized during police investigations conducted at residential premises of the persons involved in illegal trapping. Cooperation with enforcement agencies led to 27 prosecutions for trapping.

During the Camp we carried out joint field operations with police officers from the Cyprus Police Anti-Poaching Squad (APS) and SBA Police Anti-Poaching Unit (APU). We worked cooperatively with APS officers for 18 days. This allocated period was insufficient to investigate all active trapping sites found by our teams, officers investigated a mere 37 out of 173 active trapping sites found in Republic of Cyprus. At 20 investigated sites, APS officers caught and prosecuted trappers. With APU officers from SBA Police we cooperated for 11 days. Similar as with APS, this period was insufficient to investigate all trapping sites found by our teams; they investigated just 21 out of 116 active trapping sites found in the ESBA. At 5 investigated sites, APU officers caught and prosecuted trappers. 7 trapping sites were reported to local police officers and game wardens. They investigated all reported sites and they caught and prosecuted trappers at 2 sites.

2 INTRODUCTION

Cyprus is one of the key migratory routes that birds use during their journey between Europe and Africa with around 100 million birds visiting the island every spring and autumn (Lederer 2016). Each year, more than 2 million migrating birds get caught and killed in illegal traps (Brochet et al. 2016). Trapping affects a total of 153 wild bird species, of which 78 are threatened and listed on Annex 1 of the Birds directive or listed in one of SPEC (Species of European Conservation Concern) categories (Birdlife Cyprus 2016).

CABS & SPA organise Bird Protection Camps in Cyprus three times per year; in spring, autumn and winter season, to prevent illegal, non-selective and large-scale trapping, killing and trade of migratory birds passing through Cyprus. During the Camps our volunteers monitor the bird trapping activity in the field and report active trapping sites to the competent authorities for immediate intervention.

This autumn, the 6th Autumn BPC was organised by CABS & SPA in Cyprus. It started on the 7th of September and ended on the 23rd of October and covered most of the autumn bird migrating season.

3 METHODOLOGY

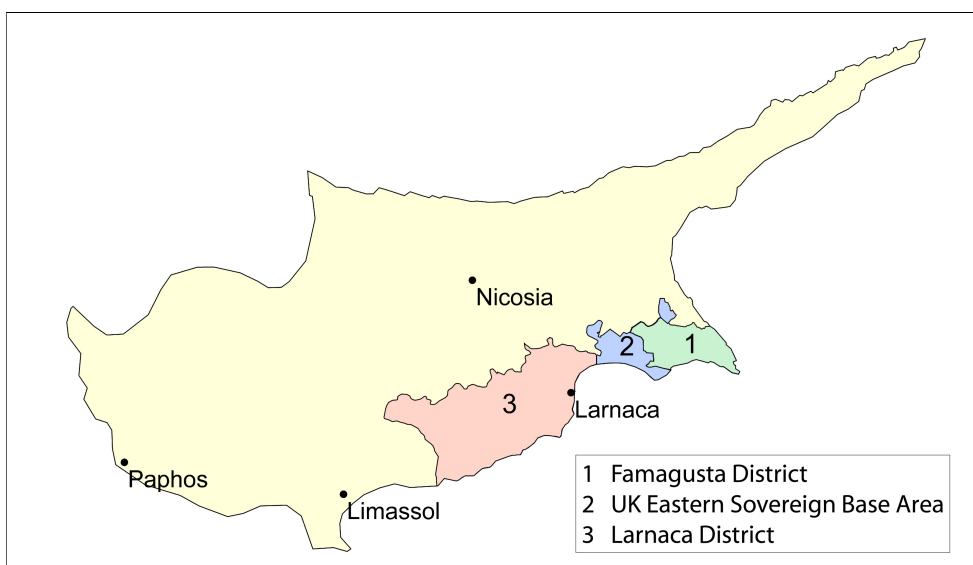
3.1 PARTICIPANTS

A total of 28 people from Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Great Britain, Hungary, Slovenia and Malaysia participated to the camp.

3.2 WORKING METHODS AND AREAS

Participants worked in teams, monitoring known trapping areas within Famagusta District, Larnaca District and the UK Eastern Sovereign British Area (ESBA) (picture 1).

Fieldwork was done both independently and in cooperation with law enforcement agencies. With Cyprus Police APS we cooperated for 18 days; 10 days were dedicated for joint field operations in Famagusta District and 8 days for joint field operations in Larnaca. With SBA Police APU we cooperated for 7 days, all joint field operations were conducted in the ESBA.



Picture 1: Areas monitored during Autumn 2016 BPC

4 RESULTS OF THE BIRD PROTECTION CAMP

4.1 MONITORING OF THE TRAPPING ACTIVITY

This autumn we organised the largest Camp in Cyprus so far. It was the longest ever with 47 days and with the highest number of participants, 28 in total. Long duration of the Camp and high number of participants allowed us to carry out extensive field investigations of bird trapping.

Table 1: Trapping activity detected during autumn BPCs (2011-2016)

Autumn BPC	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Duration of Bird Protection Camp (days)	9	17	24	28	40	47
No. of participants	8	13	15	14	22	28
No of sites checked	143	227	247	186	260	519
No. of active trapping sites found	99	132	170	135	162	315
Percentage of active trapping sites	69.2	58.1	68.8	72.6	62.3	60.6

Our teams checked 519 known trapping sites. Of the 519 sites checked, 315 sites were found active either with set traps or with signs of recent trapping, such as feathers on the ground. The number of active trapping sites is by far the highest found at autumn BPCs and it shows that the illegal trapping is still very common and widespread in Cyprus.

As we checked more trapping sites this autumn as in previous years, a direct comparison of active sites found this autumn with the number of active sites found previous autumns is not possible. For the comparison of trapping activity for different years, the proportion between all active sites and all checked trapping sites is used. This autumn, the percentage of active trapping sites was 60,6 %. This is only slightly less as the previous autumn and the lowest in the last four years.

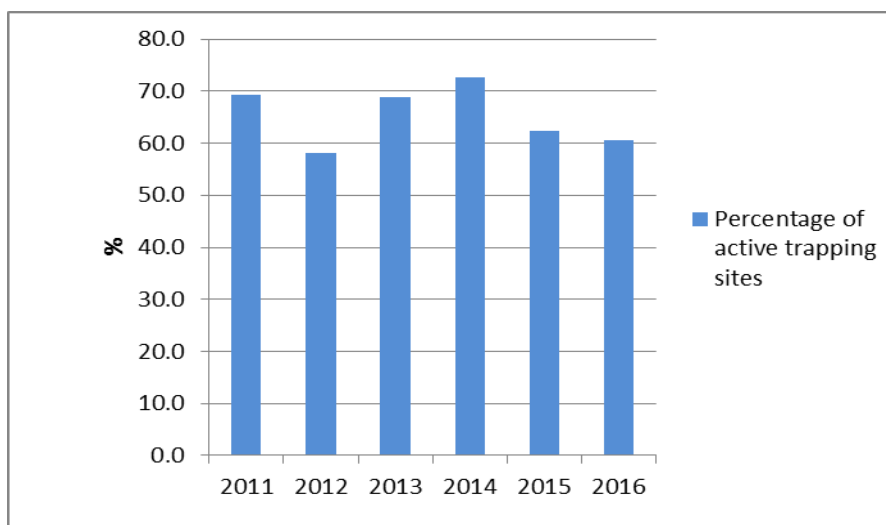


Figure 1: Percentage of active trapping sites recorded at autumn BPCs in the last six years

4.1.1 FAMAGUSTA DISTRICT

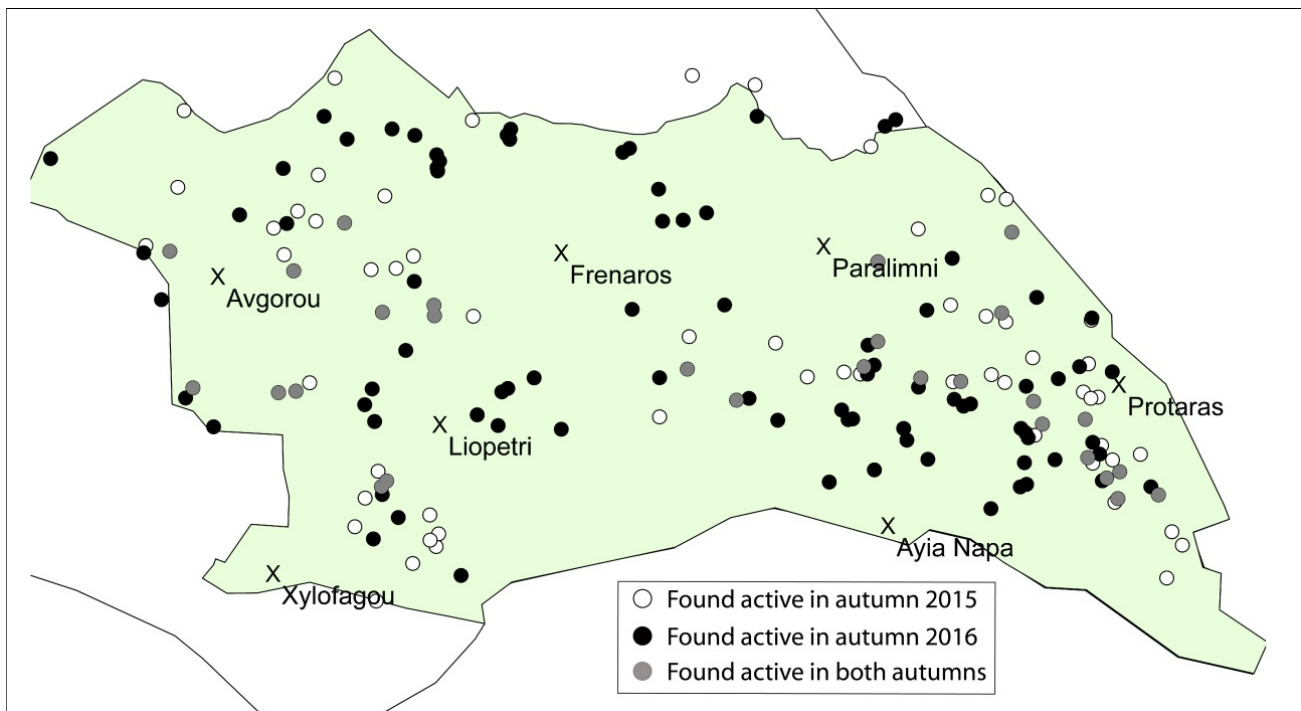
Areas monitored during the Camp, can be divided in three regions: Famagusta District, Larnaca District and the UK Eastern Sovereign Base Area. As in the previous autumn BPCs, highest number of checks were made in Famagusta District, one of the six districts within the Republic of Cyprus. Almost half of all checked trapping sites this autumn, 257, were in Famagusta District.

Table 2: Results of investigations in Famagusta District during autumn BPCs (2011-2016)

Autumn BPC	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
No of sites checked	134	187	204	151	152	257
No. of active trapping sites found	91	98	133	83	75	109
Percentage of active sites found	67.9	52.4	65.2	55.0	49.3	42.4

Our extensive and frequent investigations of trapping and numerous actions against it in Famagusta District during the last 6 years are showing positive results, as the percentage of active trapping sites was low this autumn with 42,2 % of all checked sites found to be active. Trapping activity in Famagusta District is slowly but steadily decreasing over the past 6 years.

Picture 2 illustrates the distribution of trapping sites found active this autumn in Famagusta District. Beside them, sites found active in autumn 2015, are displayed for comparison. All sites, which were found active in both autumns are marked separately.



Picture 2: Distribution of active trapping sites found in Famagusta District during Autumn 2015 BPC and Autumn 2016 BPC



Picture 3: Trapping site with 101 limesticks and bird caller found in Famagusta District in September 2016

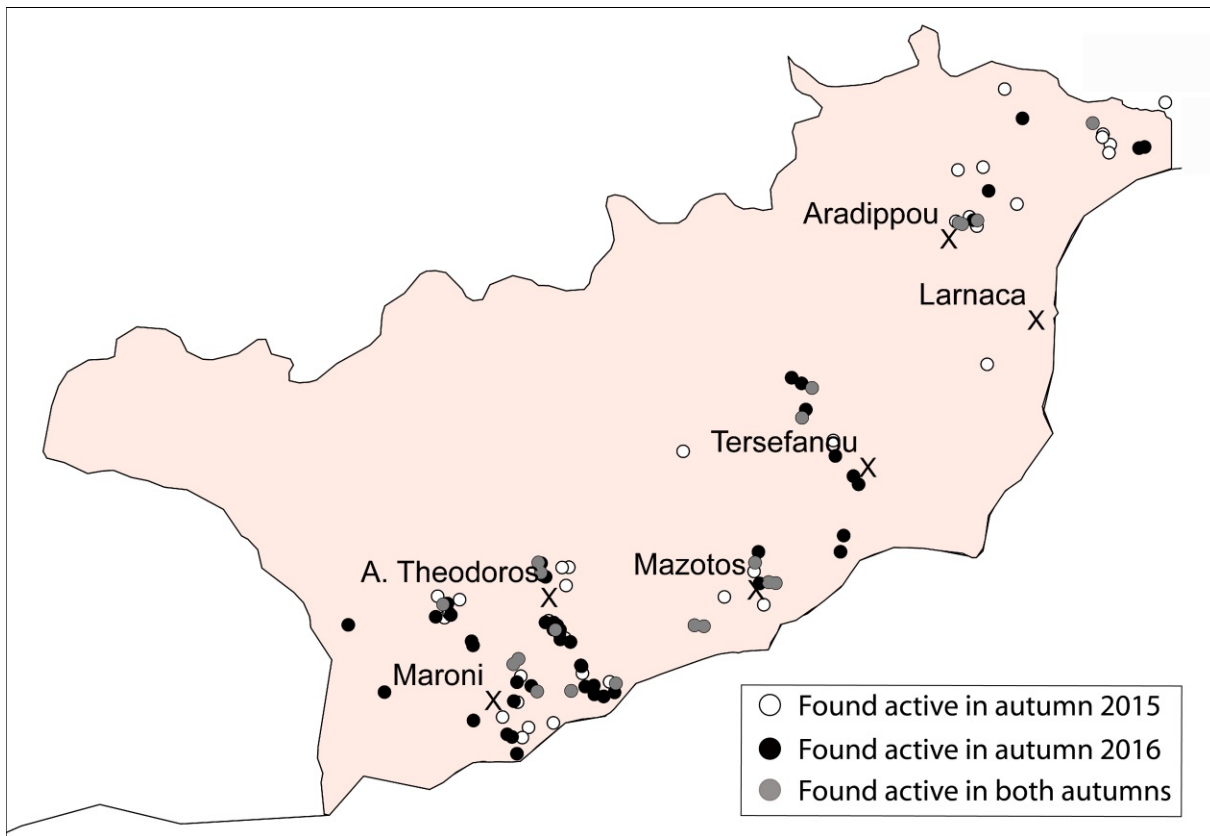
4.1.2 LARNACA DISTRICT

In Larnaca District we checked 102 trapping sites this autumn and 63 of them (61,8 %) were found active.

Table 3: Results of investigations in Larnaca District during autumn BPCs (2011-2016)

Autumn BPC	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
No of sites checked	6	11	28	44	68	102
No. of active trapping sites found	5	7	22	43	49	63
Percentage of active trapping sites	83.3	63.6	78.6	97.7	72.1	61.8

Due to the large size of this District, field investigations across the entire District were not possible, but we did increase the extent of investigations this autumn in regard to previous autumns. The highest density of active trapping sites was detected in areas around the villages of Maroni and Agios Theodoros.



Picture 4: Distribution of active trapping sites found in Larnaca District during Autumn 2015 BPC and Autumn 2016 BPC

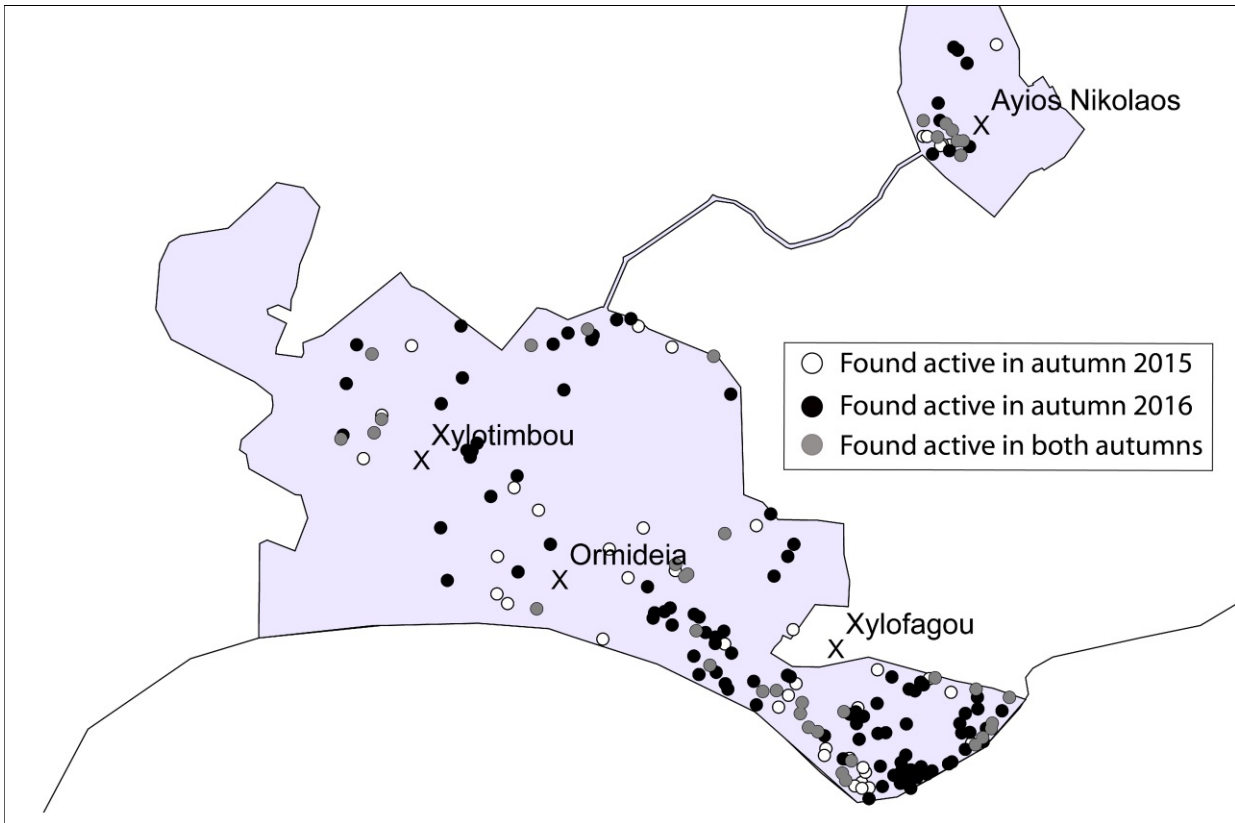
4.1.3 UK EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA

The UK Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) is one of two British overseas territories on the island of Cyprus. The ESBA is well known for the massive level of illegal bird trapping, especially the southern part, Cape Pyla, which is the most notorious trapping area in whole of Cyprus.

In the past, our investigations of trapping in ESBA were sparse and sporadic. This autumn we have substantially increased the extent of field investigations; we checked 130 known trapping sites and 116 of them (89,2 %) were found to be active.

Table 4: Results of investigations in ESBA during autumn BPCs (2011-2016)

Autumn BPC	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
No of sites checked	/	29	14	7	36	130
No. of active trapping sites found	/	27	14	7	34	116
Percentage of active trapping sites	/	93.1	100.0	100.0	94.4	89.2



Picture 5: Distribution of active trapping sites found in ESBA during Autumn 2015 BPC and Autumn 2016 BPC

Our investigations revealed very high levels of trapping in ESBA. Despite the ESBA being the smallest of all three regions investigated, we located the highest number of active sites here. Density of active trapping sites in ESBA was 0.9 sites per km², which is almost twice as dense as in Famagusta District, the region with second highest density of active trapping sites (table 5).

Table 5: Density of active trapping sites found this autumn per regions

	Famagusta District	Larnaca District	ESBA
No. of active trapping sites found	109	63	116
Size of the area (km ²)	203.4	840.8	131.0
Density of active trapping sites (sites per km ²)	0.5	0.1	0.9

The worst area was Cape Pyla, where our visits in the night revealed incredible levels of trapping. In a single visit to this small peninsula we could count and locate more than 30 active electronic bird callers in the night. They were calling from literally every patch of vegetation that was high enough to conceal mist nets. The situation was not bad only in Cape Pyla, also elsewhere in ESBA we discovered massive levels of trapping.

4.1.4 REACTIVATION OF THE TRAPPING SITES WITH PREVIOUS PROSECUTIONS

During the field investigations we often observed trapping activity on the same trapping sites that were active also in the previous years, including the sites, where trappers were caught and prosecuted in the past.

This autumn we visited 63 trapping sites with known records of prosecution for illegal bird trapping in the past and 36 of them were found active again or reactivated (table 6).

Table 6: Reactivated prosecuted sites found during autumn BPCs

Autumn BPC	2013	2014	2015	2016
No. of sites with previous prosecutions checked	22	30	42	63
No. of reactivated prosecuted sites	15	19	35	36
Percentage of reactivated prosecuted sites	68.2	63.3	83.3	57.1

The percentage of reactivated prosecuted sites would be even higher, if we considered the fact that prosecuted trappers often abandon the trapping site, where they have been caught and use a new one in close proximity. These sites are counted as new trapping sites in our database, but in fact they are reactivated prosecuted sites. Still, more than the half of previously prosecuted sites were reactivated in autumn 2016, despite the trappers being aware that the police knows their exact location.

Table 7: Reactivated prosecuted sites found during Autumn 2015 and Autumn 2016 BPC per regions

	Famagusta		Larnaca		ESBA	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
No. of sites with previous prosecutions checked	19	35	8	12	10	17
No. of reactivated prosecuted sites	15	18	5	5	10	14
Percentage of reactivated prosecuted sites	78.9	51.4	62.5	41.7	100.0	82.4

Like in autumn 2015, the reactivation rate was highest in the ESBA this autumn (table 7). It shows how little effect have prosecutions for trapping on the trapping activity in this region.

All trapping sites, prosecuted and non-prosecuted sites are quickly reactivated in the ESBA. In one specific case our volunteers observed, that only 30 minutes after an active bird caller was removed from a trapping site, a new caller was calling from the same location.

High percentage of reactivated prosecuted sites shows that the Court actions against bird trapping are inadequate and have little deterrent effect on trapping. Illegal trapping proves to be a highly profitable activity, and trappers need to be caught and prosecuted more than once until they learn the lesson.

Fines in Cyprus should be above the average fines in European Union for bird trapping. There are two main reasons for this: Cyprus lies on important migration route for birds and high numbers of songbirds are crossing the country during migration. In addition, there is a high demand of songbirds for consumption. This makes trapping extremely lucrative with high catch rates and big incomes.

4.2 SEIZED TRAPPING PARAPHERNALIA AND PROSECUTIONS

Altogether, **4164 limesticks, 180 mist nets and 109 electronic bird callers** were seized during the Camp. Following our findings, **27 prosecutions for illegal trapping** were made by enforcement officers.

Table 8: Seized trapping paraphernalia and prosecutions made at autumn BPCs (2011-2016)

Autumn BPC	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Duration of BPC (days)	9	17	24	28	40	47
No. of seized limesticks	4327	4331	4703	3950	3115	4164
No. of seized mist nets	35	113	68	116	163	180
No. of prosecutions	1	13	1	27	37	27

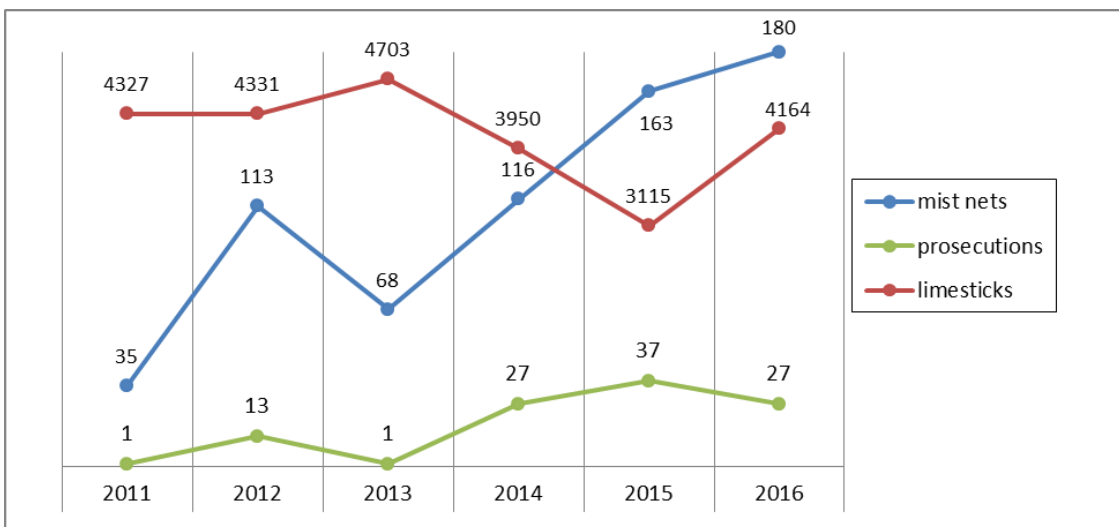


Figure 2: Seized trapping paraphernalia and prosecutions made at autumn BPCs (2011-2016)

The number of seized limesticks and mist nets has increased this autumn, when compared to previous autumn, and the number of prosecutions decreased. Higher number of seized traps this autumn can be explained with larger extent of field investigations made this autumn. Nevertheless, very high number of seized mist nets and limesticks indicate that the level of illegal trapping in Cyprus remains very high also in autumn 2016.

4.3 BIRDS FOUND IN TRAPS AND IN THE POSSESSION OF TRAPPERS

During the Camp, **667 birds were rescued from traps and 14 birds from an aviary**. They were released by our volunteers and police officers. Police officers also seized 595 killed birds during investigations made at the premises of people caught trapping.

Table 9: Details about birds found during the Autumn 2016 BPC

No. of birds rescued from traps	667
No. of birds species rescued from traps ¹	17
No. of birds freed from aviaries	14
No. of birds found dead in traps	2
No. of killed birds found in possession of trappers	595

1- Information is only for birds rescued from traps by our volunteers. We didn't receive the list of bird species rescued by police officers

The species rescued from traps by our volunteers are listed in Annex 1.



Picture 6: Scops owls rescued from mist net in Cape Pyla in September 2016

4.4 COOPERATION WITH ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES: CYPRUS POLICE ANTI-POACHING SQUAD (APS)

This autumn we worked for 18 days together with the Cyprus Police APS. The results of cooperation are presented in table 10.

Table 10: Detailed results of the joint CABS & SPA/ APS operations during autumn 2016 BPC

Monitoring of trapping sites	
Number of days working together with APS	18
No. of active trapping sites reported by our teams	73
No. of active trapping sites visited by APS	37
Sites with prosecution of trappers	20
Sites with confiscation of trapping paraphernalia only	5
Sites where nothing was found by APS	12
Sites without investigation	36
No. of cases with house investigation	4
Seized trapping paraphernalia	
Limesticks	654
Mist nets	77
Electronic bird callers	18

Like in previous years, officers from APS showed the highest level of professionalism and dedication to counter illegal bird trapping among all enforcement agencies with whom we have cooperated during the Camp. In 18 days of joint operations they investigated 37 active trapping sites reported by us and at 20 sites (54,1 %) they caught and prosecuted trappers.

The support of APS for joint field operations this autumn was substantially shorter as in previous autumns. Although we requested APS support for all 47 days of the Camp, we received support for only 18 days. In this period they could only investigate 37 out of 173 active trapping sites found by our teams. This is less than half of the investigations they made in the previous autumn (table 11). Consequently, the number of prosecutions was also smaller as the previous two autumns.

Table 11: Comparison between all trapping sites found and the sites investigated by APS during Autumn BPCs (2014-2016)

Autumn BPC	2014	2015	2016
Duration of joint field operations with APS (days)	26	29	18
No. of all active sites found by our teams in Republic of Cyprus	126	124	172
No. of all sites investigated by APS	70	74	36
No. of sites with prosecution	27	26	20

The main reason for smaller number of cooperation days with APS this autumn is the reduced operational capacity of the unit. Due to political decisions, there were less officers in the unit this autumn as they were in previous years.

We have already pointed out that the received support of APS during previous two BPCs, Winter 2015/2016 BPC and Spring 2016 BPC, was not sufficient to investigate all active trapping sites (Rutigliano et al. 2016, Rutigliano et al. 2016b). During autumn season, when the trapping activity is highest, insufficient police support was even more noticeable. We are once again urging Cyprus Police Headquarters and Ministry of Justice to employ more APS officers in order to counter bird trapping in larger extent and to provide daily support of APS officers for our future Bird Protection Camps.

4.5 COOPERATION WITH ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES: SOVEREIGN BASE AREAS (SBA) POLICE ANTI-POACHING UNIT (APU)

This autumn we worked for 11 days together with the SBA Police APU. The results of cooperation are presented in table 12.

Table 12: Detailed results of the joint CABS & SPA/ APU joint operations during Autumn 2016 BPC

Monitoring of trapping sites	
Number of days working together with the APU	11
No. of active trapping sites reported by CABS/SPA teams	31
No. of active trapping sites visited by APU	21
Sites with prosecution of trappers	5
Sites with confiscation of trapping paraphernalia only	13
Sites where nothing was found by the APU	3
Sites without investigation	10
No. of cases with house investigation	2
Seized trapping paraphernalia	
Limesticks	23
Mist nets	29
Electronic bird callers	15

During the 11 days of cooperation with APU, our teams reported 31 active trapping sites to the police officers. They investigated 21 of them and only at 5 out of 21 investigated sites (23,8 %), trappers were caught and prosecuted for trapping. This is a disappointing result, especially if compared with the result of cooperation with APS from Cyprus Police, where the percentage of caught trappers was 54,1 %.

Beside the low percentage of successfully solved cases, we are not satisfied with the extent of support received from SBA Police. We have requested for support of police officers for all 47 days of Autumn Camp, but received it only for 11 days. In this period APU officers were able to investigate only 21 out of 116 active trapping sites, we have found during the Camp (table 13).

Table 13: Comparison between all trapping sites found and the sites investigated by APU during Autumn 2015 BPC and Autumn 2016 BPC

Autumn BPC	2015	2016
Duration of joint field operations with APU (days)	7	11
No. of all active sites found by our teams in ESBA	34	116
No. of all sites investigated by APU	23	21
No. of sites with prosecution	7	5

The industrial levels of trapping, discovered by our teams this autumn, cannot be efficiently countered with one or two police patrols on the ground, as it is the case in the ESBA. More officers are needed to investigate hundreds trapping sites that are active during autumn season in ESBA. It is also crucial that anti-poaching officers improve their working methods and become more efficient in catching and prosecuting trappers. In 2015, APU officers managed to make only 21 prosecutions for bird trapping in whole autumn season, which is insignificant in comparison with the massive level of autumn trapping in the ESBA.

4.6 COOPERATION WITH ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES: LOCAL POLICE STATIONS AND GAME AND FAUNA SERVICE

As we could arrange joint field operations with APS from Cyprus Police for only 18 out of 47 days of the Camp, we had to seek the support of other enforcement agencies for the remaining days of the Camp. We have asked for and received support from police officers at local police stations and from game wardens. All together, we reported 7 trapping sites to them.

As local police officers and game wardens had also other duties to attend, their investigations of sites, reported by our teams, were short and less thorough as the investigations of anti-poaching officers. They didn't make ambushes, needed to catch and prosecute trappers in open areas and they didn't conduct house investigations at premises of trappers.

Table 14: Detailed results of investigations at sites reported to local police officers and game wardens during Autumn 2016 BPC

Monitoring of trapping sites	
No. of active trapping sites reported by CABS/SPA teams	7
No. of trapping sites visited by police officers and game wardens	7
Sites with prosecution of trappers	2
Sites with confiscation of trapping paraphernalia only	4
Sites where no action was taken	1
No. of cases with house investigation	0

Seized trapping paraphernalia	
Limesticks	292
Mist nets	0
Electronic bird callers	0

5 CABS & SPA WORK ON THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND LEGAL LEVEL

5.1 THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Our joint operations with APS have suffered several constrictions this autumn. We received less days of police support as in previous years and the hours of cooperation were reduced to just 4 hours per working day. To discuss the number of days of cooperation with APS, we have been offered for the Autumn 2016 BPC, we met with the Minister of Justice on the 19th of September 2016. We presented the importance of having two independent police patrols to support us every day during the autumn season. Our request was not met, but we did receive 6 additional days for joint operations.

Until autumn 2016 we have gathered 69 000 protest cards for Stop Bird Slaughter in Cyprus campaign launched by Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt (SPA) in 2015. Huge number of cards, signed by people all around Europe, demonstrate the plead of European citizens, that the slaughter of birds, migrating over Cyprus, comes to an immediate end. We have presented these cards to the Minister of Justice and Public Order during the meeting on the 19th of September.

This summer and autumn we have also been actively involved in the discussion about the new amendments of the Game and Hunting Law (Law 152(I)2003) that ratifies the EU Birds Directive in Cyprus. The majority of new amendments, proposed by Game and Fauna Service are in contrast with provisions of EU Birds Directive and are aimed to loosen the strict protection of wild birds. Among others, new amendments include: the on-the-spot fine regulation for all poaching offences, the introduction of falconry, the possibility to use air rifles for hunting, the legalisation of the consumption of game birds in restaurants and others. The on-the-spot fines would decriminalise poaching offences and put them under minor offences. This would further undermine our efforts to stop illegal trapping on Cyprus.

CABS and SPA representatives, strongly opposing these amendments, have attended the public consultations on the 5th of August and presented arguments against them. The amendments are currently discussed in the Parliament of Cyprus.

5.2 THE UK EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA

During the summer, CABS & SPA representatives took part in the discussions about eradication of invasive acacia (*Acacia saligna*) in Cape Pyla, together with the SBA Administration and BirdLife Cyprus. SBA Administration started with acacia removal in Cape Pyla in 2014 to eradicate this invasive species from Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Cape Pyla and to deter trapping activity, as acacia plantations are used for illegal trapping.

At the discussions we submitted our proposal to SBA Administration to remove acacia plantations from the Pyrgos area, which has the highest concentration of trapping sites. According to information we have received, only small area in Cape Pyla was cleared from acacias in 2016. The removal was halted twice, in summer and autumn, because of the protests and riots of trappers.

As the levels of trapping this autumn remained as high as in previous years, we have decided to expose the issue in the media. We have invited Chris Packham, well known naturalist and TV presenter, this autumn to witness the trapping activity in the ESBA. Packham was shocked by the situation and offered to help us raising the awareness in the UK about trapping in the ESBA. He has published many updates on the social media, several articles and has talked about the issue on TV shows. The BBC also showed interest in the issue and they have send a TV crew to Cyprus this autumn to record the situation in the ESBA.

CABS & SPA representatives attended the workshop about illegal bird trapping organised by SBA Administration on the 12th of October in Dhekelia. We presented the results of field investigations in the ESBA and urged the representatives of SBA Police, present at the workshop, to change their methods of countering illegal trapping, as it was obvious that their current methods have none or very little effect on the scale of bird trapping.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The magnitude of illegal bird trapping observed in Cyprus remains staggering in autumn 2016. 315 active trapping sites, found by our teams during investigations, limited to only few areas in Cyprus, indicate that there were more than thousand trapping sites active across the whole Cyprus this autumn. Trapping was as rampant as in previous years and the authorities of Republic of Cyprus and UK Sovereign Base Areas once again proved their inadequacy to stop it and implement the EU Birds Directive.

This was particularly obvious in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area, where we discovered the highest density of active trapping sites. Although the SBA Administration emphasizes that the countering of bird trapping is their priority, nothing much has changed in the field. In some areas, we observed incredible levels of trapping. In one visit to eastern side of Cape Pyla we counted more

than 30 active electronic bird callers in few hours of field investigations. Furthermore, the efforts of SBA Administration to eradicate invasive acacia plantations in Cape Pyla, used to conceal illegal trapping nets, are irresolute and postponed every time, when local trappers gather to protest against the removal.

Cooperation with APU from SBA Police was limited to 11 days and during this time, just 21 out of 116 active trapping sites, found during the Camp, could be investigated by police officers. To make matters even worse, police officers were able to catch and prosecute trappers at just 5 sites, reported by our teams. Their inefficiency to catch trappers was also observed in previous years; in autumn 2015 they made only 21 prosecutions for illegal trapping in the whole season, and is the key factor allowing such massive levels of trapping in the ESBA.

In the Republic of Cyprus, recent actions of Government are not in line with the implementation of the EU Birds Directive. Among others, government prepared and never withdrew a proposal to legalise selective hunting of the blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*). In addition, the Government is now in the process to introduce new amendments to the Law 152(I)/2003. Some of these amendments are catastrophic and if they are accepted, the protection of wild birds will be severely degraded in Republic of Cyprus and in conflict with the provisions of the EU Birds Directive.

Furthermore, the Government decided to reduce the size of APS in 2015. Despite our appeal last autumn to employ more anti-poaching officers, they did the opposite and moved some officers in the unit to other units. As a result, we received very limited support from APS officers this autumn. During 18 days of joint field operations they could investigate only 37 out 173 active trapping sites found by our teams.

As the extent of illegal trapping remains massive also in autumn 2016, we are pleading to the authorities in Republic of Cyprus and in the Sovereign Base Areas to adopt zero tolerance against trapping and give the countering of illegal trapping highest priority. In accordance with this, more anti-poaching units should be operating in the field and more arrests for illegal trapping should be made by police officers and game wardens.

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Annex 1: List of bird species found in traps during the Autumn 2016 Bird Protection Camp

- 1 Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)
- 2 Bee eater (*Merops apiaster*)
- 3 Lesser whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)
- 4 Reed warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)
- 5 Spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)
- 6 Common redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)
- 7 Scops owl (*Otus scops*)
- 8 Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)
- 9 Willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)
- 10 House sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)
- 11 Garden warbler (*Sylvia borin*)
- 12 Red-backed Shrike (*Lannis collurio*)
- 13 Spanish sparrow (*Passer hispaniolensis*)
- 14 Stonechat (*Saxicola rubicola*)
- 15 Song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)
- 16 Sardinian warbler (*Sylvia melanocephala*)
- 17 Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)