



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

Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt®
Foundation Pro Biodiversity®

Field Report:
CABS & SPA AUTUMN 2018
BIRD PROTECTION CAMP
CYPRUS

(29th August – 11th November 2018)



Photo on the cover:

CABS activist and game warden removing limesticks from trapping site during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp (Photo: CABS)

Authors:

Boštjan Deberšek, Field Investigations Officer, CABS
Andrea Rutigliano, Field Investigations Officer, CABS

Contact Details:



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

Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS)

Komitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V.

An der Ziegelei 8

D-53127 Bonn

Germany

Telephone: +49 228 665521

Fax: +49 228 665280

Email: info@komitee.de

Website: www.komitee.de/en/homepage



Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA)

Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt

Meisenstrasse 65

D-33607 Bielefeld

Germany

Telephone: +49 521 2997 888

Fax: +49 521 2997 889

Email: team@stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org

Website: www.stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org

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SUMMARY

In August, September, October and November 2018, the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) and the Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA – Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt) conducted their 8th successive Autumn Bird Protection Camp (BPC) in Cyprus. The Camp took place from 29th August – 11th November 2018.

29 activists from 10 countries (Australia, Cyprus, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, and Switzerland) participated at the camp and monitored bird trapping activity in the south-eastern part of the island: Famagusta and Larnaca Districts within the Republic of Cyprus and in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) – British Overseas Territory in Cyprus.

During the camp, 299 known trapping sites were checked and 131 (43.8 %) of them were found to be active. Overall, the number of active trapping sites shows that the illegal trapping is still very common and widespread in Cyprus. However, the percentage of active trapping sites is the lowest recorded at autumn bird protection camps and is 9.7 percent lower than the previous autumn.

In total, 2596 limesticks, 53 mist nets and 69 electronic callers were seized from active trapping sites during the camp. 524 protected wild birds belonging to 20 different species were rescued from traps and further 278 wild birds were found dead during field investigations.

CABS activists cooperated with police officers from Cyprus Police, Sovereign Base Area (SBA) Police and with game wardens from Game and Fauna Service (GFS). They reported 140 active trapping sites to them during the camp and enforcement officer investigated 102 sites (72.9 %). Enforcement officers caught and prosecuted trappers at 14 sites reported by CABS activists. At the remaining investigated sites either trapping paraphernalia was seized or no evidences of trapping were found during the investigation. For 38 reported active trapping locations law enforcement units were not available to investigate.

In addition to the high trapping activity, massive extent of illegal bird hunting was observed during the camp. We estimate that several hundred electronic callers imitating quails were active across south-eastern Cyprus in the nights. Also frequently observed was the use of callers by hunters, imitating blackcaps, skylarks and other bird species, in the daytime. As our teams were busy with monitoring trapping activities, we could spend only a limited amount of time to investigate and act against illegal hunting. As a result of our investigations and actions against illegal hunting, 48 electronic callers used for hunting

were seized during the camp and three hunters were caught and prosecuted for illegal hunting.

1 INTRODUCTION

Cyprus lies on 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). Cyprus is also an important overwintering area for birds which migrate to Cyprus to avoid the harsh winter conditions in continental Europe.

Cyprus is one of the main hotspots of illegal bird killings in the Mediterranean. In 2017 CABS activists located 473 active trapping locations in the south-eastern part of the island. It is estimated that several hundred thousand birds were trapped and killed in Cyprus in 2017 (Debersek 2018). Trapping is affecting more than 150 species of wild birds, 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 with the support of 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 CABS activists monitor bird trapping activities in the field and report active trapping sites to the competent authorities for immediate intervention. Besides monitoring of trapping activity, which is the main activity of bird protection camps, participants of the camps also investigate and report illegal bird shootings.

This autumn, the 8th successive Autumn Bird Protection Camp was organised by CABS & SPA in Cyprus. It took place from 29th August – 11th November 2018.

2 WORKING METHODS

A total of 29 activists from Australia, Cyprus, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, and Switzerland participated at the Camp. 22 of them already participated at previous Bird Protection Camps in Cyprus, while 7 of them participated for the first time.

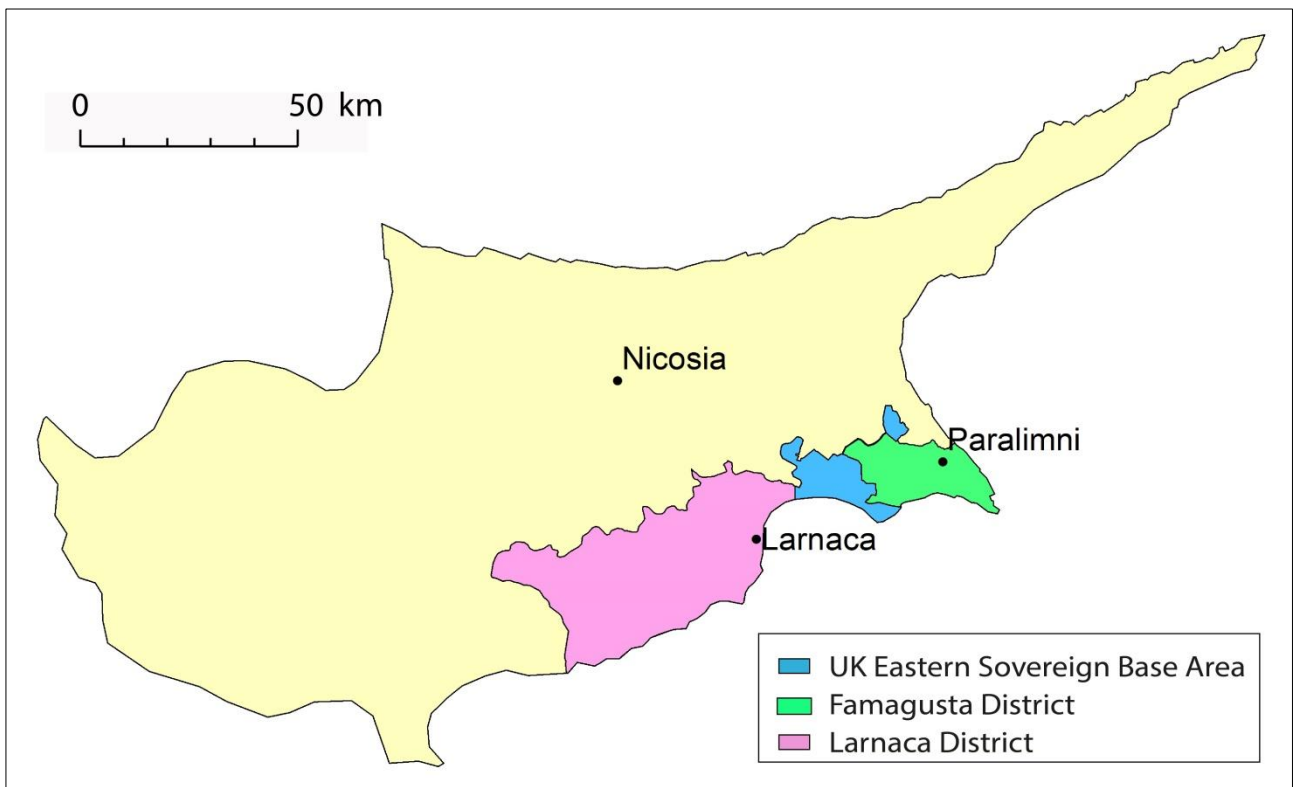
The camp participants searched for active trapping sites with set traps in the field and upon finding them, they reported them immediately to the enforcement agencies for investigations and actions against trapping. Active trapping locations were reported by phone to the officers that were on duty at the time of the call in order to get their support in shortest possible time. As trapping activity on certain site lasts only few hours on average,

quick response from enforcement officers was needed to prevent trapping and catch trappers.

The Camp participants also investigated and reported cases of illegal bird shootings.

Trapping sites considered as active are those with set traps (either limesticks or mist nets), as well as those with no traps present at the time of inspection but with evidence of recent trapping activity. For example, feathers on the ground at trapping sites or pieces of glue on branches indicate that the site was recently active. Furthermore, trapping sites with electronic caller in use, even if there are no traps set out at the time of inspection, are recorded as active. These callers are sometimes used solely in the night to attract birds to the trapping site and the poachers then set their traps in the early morning.

Due to the small number of people participating at the camp, field investigations were limited to the main trapping hotspots in Cyprus: Famagusta District, Larnaca District and the British overseas territory on Cyprus, the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) (picture 1).



Picture 1: Cyprus and the areas monitored during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp

3 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS AND ACTIONS AGAINST BIRD TRAPPING

3.1 MONITORING OF BIRD TRAPPING ACTIVITY

3.1.1 OVERALL RESULTS

In autumn 2018, CABS and SPA organised the longest Bird Protection Camp ever organised in autumn season in Cyprus, lasting 75 days in total. The long duration of the Camp made it possible for the first time to cover the entire autumn trapping season, which starts in August and lasts until November.

Our teams investigated 299 bird trapping sites in south-eastern Cyprus during the Camp. Of the 299 sites, 131 were found to be active: either set traps were found, active electronic callers were found or we found evidences of recent trapping, such as feathers on the ground.

Table 1: Results of monitoring bird trapping activity during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp

No. of trapping sites checked	299
No. of active trapping sites found	131
No. of active mistnetting trapping sites found	52
No. of active limesticking trapping sites found	69
No. of active trapping sites with unknown type of traps used for trapping	10

In Table 2 the results from this autumn are compared with results from previous autumns. As CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps vary in length and in the number of people participating, a direct comparison of active sites found this autumn with the number of active sites found previous autumns is not the best to compare trapping activity between years. For comparison, the proportion between all active sites and all checked trapping sites is better to be used.

Table 2: Results of field investigations at Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2018

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Duration of the camp (days)	17	24	28	40	47	60	75
No. of participants	13	15	14	22	28	28	29
No of sites checked	227	247	186	260	519	370	299
No. of active trapping sites found	132	170	135	162	315	198	131
Percentage of act. trapping sites	58.1	68.8	72.6	62.3	60.6	53.5	43.8
Trapping trend (%)	/	+10.7	+3.8	-10.3	-1.7	-7.1	-9.7
No. of seized limesticks	4331	4703	3950	3115	4164	3432	2596
No. of seized nets	113	68	116	163	180	145	53

This autumn, the percentage of active trapping sites (ratio between active and all checked sites) was 43.8 %. This is 9.7 % lower compared to the previous autumn and the lowest in the last seven years.

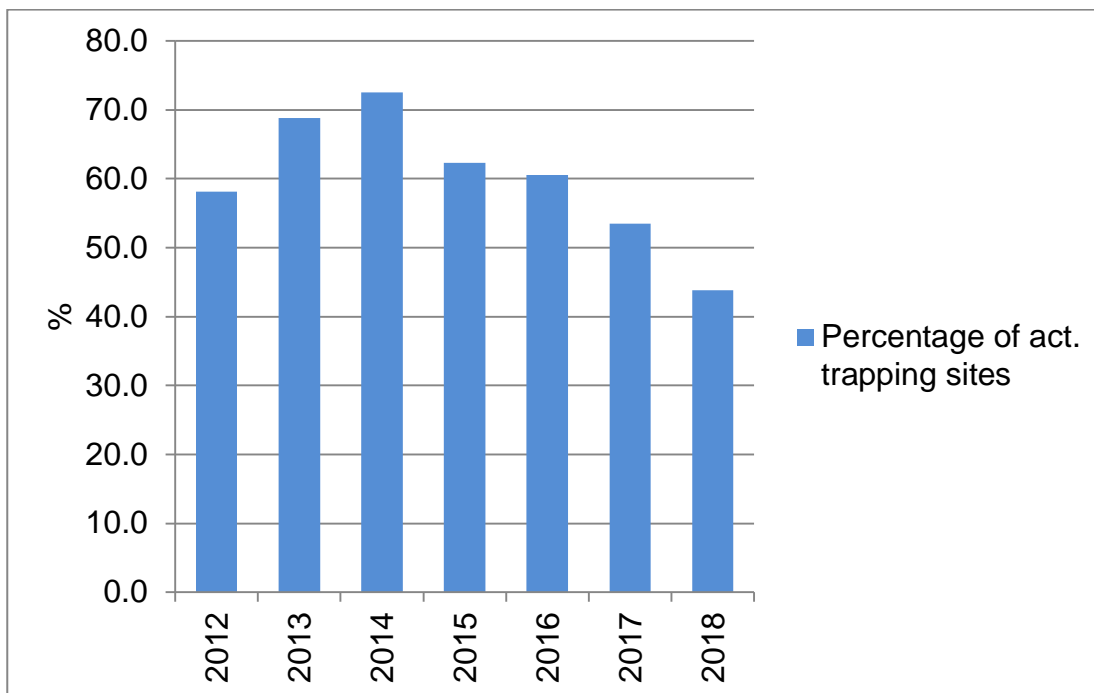


Figure 1: Percentage of active trapping sites recorded at Autumn Bird Protection Camps between 2012 and 2018

3.1.1.1 TRAPPING ACTIVITY OVER THE DURATION OF THE CAMP

Trapping activity on 131 sites, found to be active, was detected 258 times during the Camp, meaning that on average, each site was found active 1.97 times.

Table 3 and Figure 2 present number of active trapping sites found at each week of the Camp. According to our findings, trapping activity was at its peak in the last week of September and in the first 3 weeks of October, when we found the highest number of active sites per week.

Table 3: Detected trapping activity from first until last week of Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp

Week	29.08. - 02.09.*	03.09. - 09.09.	10.09. - 16.09.	17.09. - 23.09.	24.09. - 30.09.	01.10. - 07.10.
No. of active sites found	8	16	17	17	34	27
Week	08.10. - 14.10.	15.10. - 21.10.	22.10. - 28.10.	29.10. - 04.11.	05.11. - 11.11.	
No. of active sites found	36	28	25	33	19	

* - 5 days

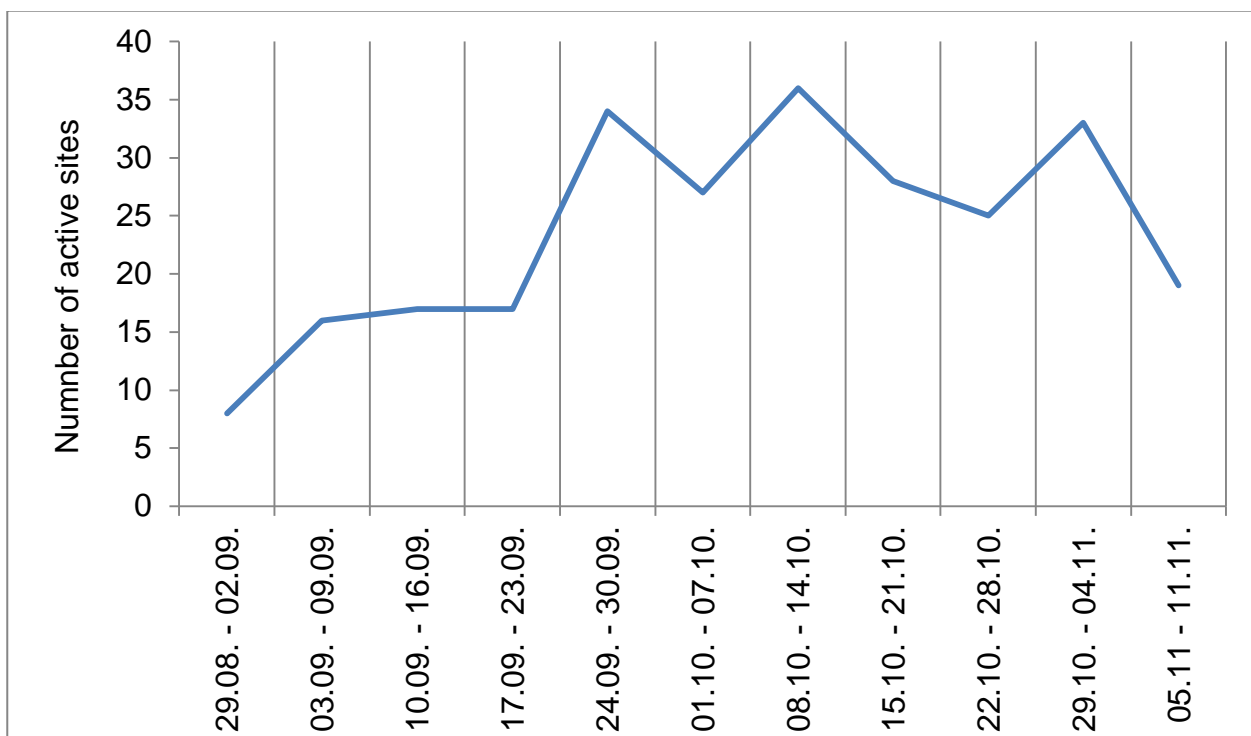


Figure 2: Total number of active trapping sites detected per each week of the Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp



Picture 2: Active trapping site with set net and caught birds found during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp (Photo: CABS)

3.1.1.2 ACTIVITY OF TRAPPING SITES WITH PREVIOUS PROSECUTIONS (REACTIVATIONS)

During our field investigations, we regularly find trapping activity at sites where poachers were caught and prosecuted in the past. This autumn, we checked 61 trapping sites with previous prosecutions and 32 (52.5 %) of them were found to be active again.

The percentage of reactivated sites found this autumn was the lowest of the last 6 autumns, however it remains very high (Table 4).

Table 4: Comparison of activity of the trapping sites with previous prosecutions investigated during Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2013-2018

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of previously prosecuted sites checked	22	30	42	63	51	61
No. of previously prosecuted sites found to be active (reactivated)	15	19	35	36	27	32
Percentage of reactivated prosecuted sites	68.2	63.3	83.3	57.1	52.9	52.5

3.1.2 TRAPPING ACTIVITY IN REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

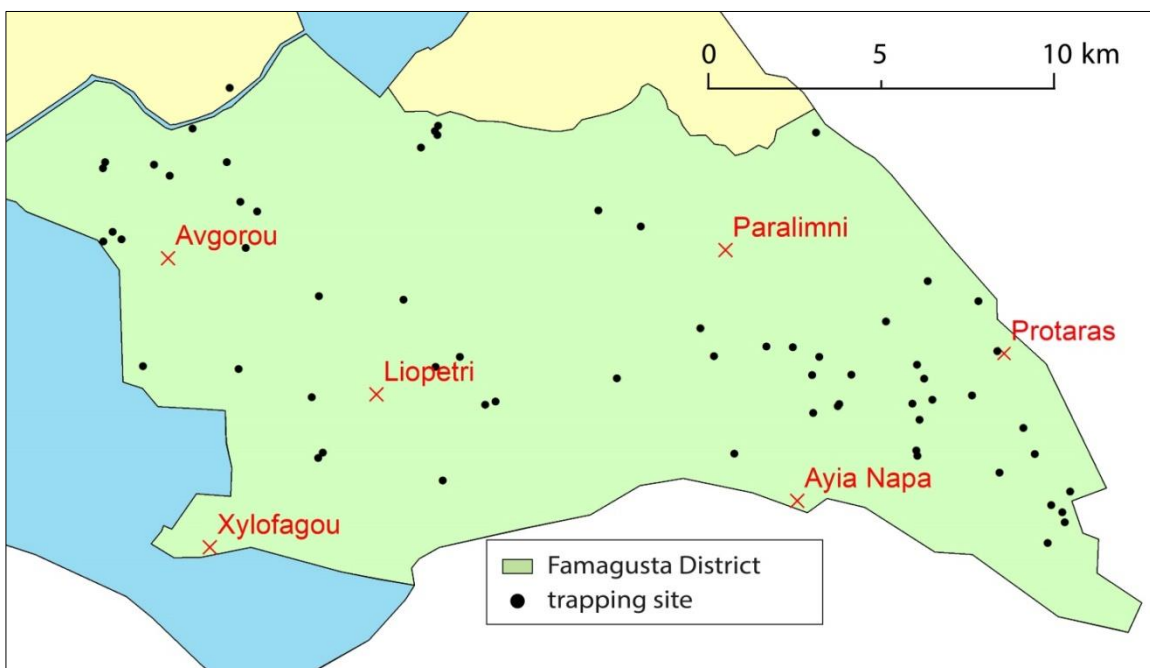
The areas monitored during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp are part of two jurisdictions: Famagusta District and Larnaca District are part of Republic of Cyprus and the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) is one of two British overseas territories on Cyprus.

Out of 299 trapping sites checked during the Camp, majority of them, 272, were checked in Famagusta and Larnaca Districts, two of the six districts within the Republic of Cyprus. 111 checked sites were found to be active. At most of the sites, found to be active in the Republic of Cyprus, limesticks were used for trapping (Table 6).

Table 6: Results of monitoring bird trapping activity in Republic of Cyprus during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp

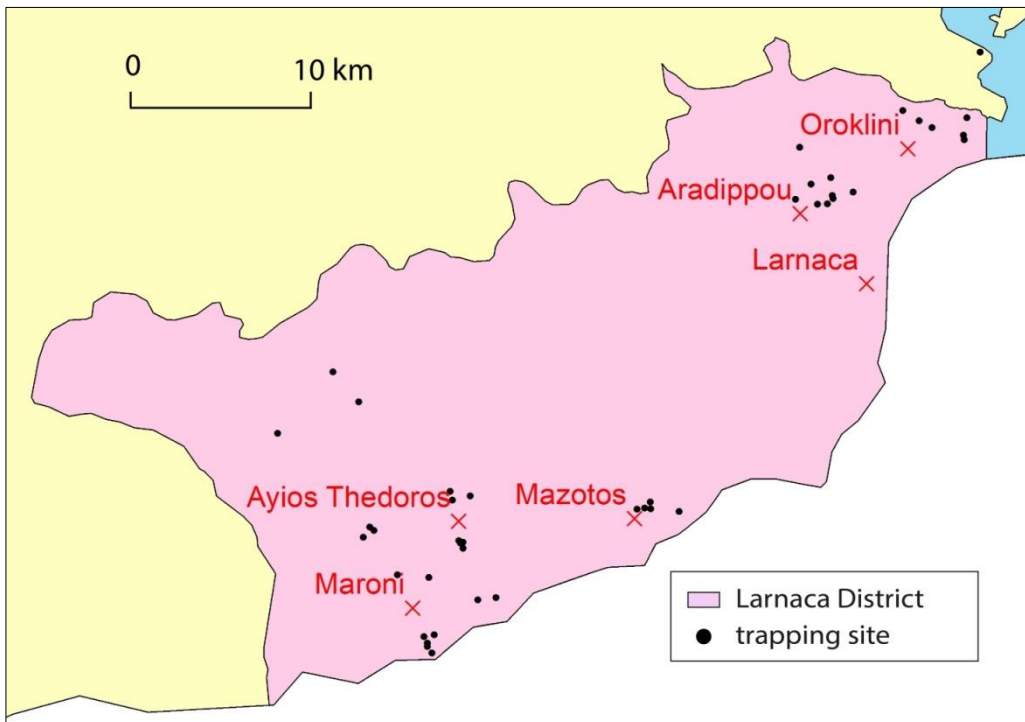
No. of trapping sites checked	272
No. of active trapping sites found	107
No. of active trapping sites with limesticks used for trapping found	68
No. of active trapping sites with nets used for trapping found	31
No. of active trapping sites with unknown type of traps used for trapping	8

Detected trapping activity in Famagusta District was concentrated in the area between Paralimni, Protaras and Ayia Napa and around Avgorou (Picture 3).



Picture 3: Distribution of trapping sites, found to be active during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp in Famagusta District

Detected trapping activity in Larnaca District was concentrated in the areas around Aradippou, Mazotos, Maroni and Ayios Theodoros (Picture 4).



Picture 4: Distribution of trapping sites, found to be active during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp in Larnaca District

3.1.2.1 TRAPPING ACTIVITY IN REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS AT AUTUMN BIRD PROTECTION CAMPS 2012-2018

Table 7: Results of bird trapping investigations in Republic of Cyprus during Autumn BPCs 2012-2018

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of trapping sites checked	198	232	195	220	359	280	272
No. of all active trapping sites found	105	155	126	124	172	119	107
No. of active sites with limesticks used	/	/	/	/	/	93	68
No. of active sites with nets used	/	/	/	/	/	21	31
No. of active sites with unknown type of traps used	/	/	/	/	/	5	8
Percentage of all active sites found	53.0	66.8	64.6	56.4	47.9	42.5	39.3
Trapping trend	-	+13.8	-2.2	-8.2	-8.5	-5.4	-3.3

Trapping trend shows a very small general decrease (3.3 %) of trapping in the Republic of Cyprus in autumn 2018 in comparison to autumn 2017. Despite our efforts to prevent

trapping during the Camp, trapping levels in autumn 2018 remained almost the same as in the previous autumn.

We are pleased with the decrease of trapping sites with limesticks but on other hand trapping with nets is on the rise in the Republic of Cyprus. In autumn 2017 we found 21 trapping sites with nets used and this autumn the number of netting sites increased to 31.

3.1.3 TRAPPING ACTIVITY IN UK EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA

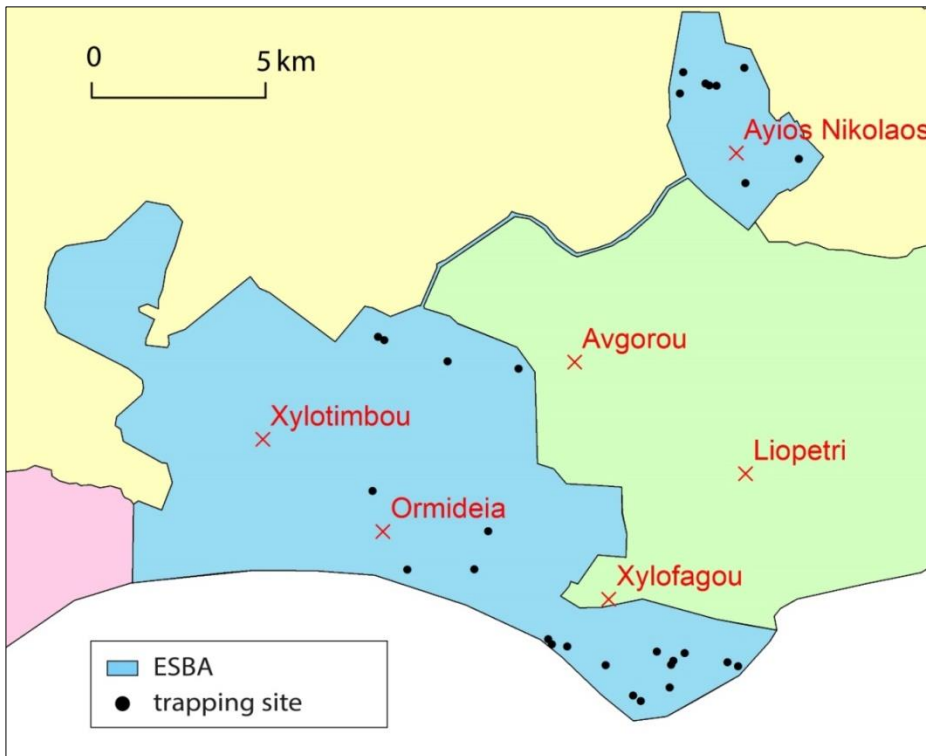
The UK Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) is one of two British Overseas Territories on the island of Cyprus. The ESBA is well known for the massive level of illegal bird trapping, especially the southern part, Cape Pyla, which is the most notorious trapping area in whole of Cyprus.

This autumn we investigated 26 trapping sites in the ESBA and 23 of them were found to be active. Opposite to trapping in Famagusta and Larnaca District, where most trapping is done with limesticks, the majority of trappers in ESBA use nets for trapping (Table 10).

Table 10: Results of monitoring bird trapping activity in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp

No. of trapping sites checked	26
No. of active trapping sites found	23
No. of active trapping sites with limesticks used for trapping found	1
No. of active trapping sites with nets used for trapping found	21
No. of active trapping sites with unknown type of traps used for trapping	1

The density of trapping sites found to be active this autumn was highest in Cape Pyla (south of Xylofagou) and in the area around village of Ayios Nikolaos (Picture 5).



Picture 5: Distribution of trapping sites, found to be active during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp in UK Eastern Sovereign Base Area on Cyprus

In autumn 2018 we observed strong reduction in the number of active trapping sites found in the ESBA in comparison with number of active sites found in autumn 2017. The decrease was already observed last autumn in comparison with autumn 2016 but this autumn the decrease was bigger, with 70.1 % less active sites found as in autumn 2017 (Table 11).

Table 11: Results of bird trapping investigations in Eastern Sovereign Base Area during Autumn BPCs (2013-2018)

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of trapping sites checked	14	7	36	130	83	26
No. of all active trapping sites found	14	7	34	116	77	23
No. of active sites with limesticks used	/	/	/	/	3	1
No. of active sites with nets used	/	/	/	/	69	21
No. of active sites with unknown type of traps used	/	/	/	/	5	1
Trapping trend (%) *	/	/	/	-	-33.6 %	-70.1 %

* Differently than in the Republic of Cyprus, trapping trend is not evaluated from ratio between all active sites and all checked sites because fieldwork in the ESBA is mainly done in the nights to detect electronic callers and very little in the day due to safety

reasons. Trapping trend directly compares numbers of active sites found in each year. The base year for comparison is 2016 as systematic and intensive monitoring of trapping activity in the ESBA started in autumn 2016.

3.2 SEIZED TRAPPING PARAPHERNALIA

3.2.1 TOTAL NUMBER OF SEIZED TRAPS

Altogether 53 mist nets, 2596 limesticks, 69 electronic callers and 66 net poles were found and seized from trapping sites, found to be active by CABS activists during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp. They were seized by police officers, game wardens and CABS & SPA members.

These totals include all traps seized during the camp: set traps and also unset traps found during investigations stored at the trapping sites or at the residential premises of trappers.

Although Autumn 2018 Camp was longest ever and consequently there were more days to search for traps as in previous years, the number of seized limesticks and nets was the lowest at Autumn Bird Protection Camps in the last 6 years (Table 12, Figure 3).

Table 12: Trapping paraphernalia seized during Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2018

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Duration of the Camp (days)	17	24	28	40	47	60	75
No. of seized limesticks	4331	4703	3950	3115	4164	3432	2596
No. of seized mist nets	113	68	116	163	180	145	53
No. of seized el. callers	64	85	35	79	109	108	69

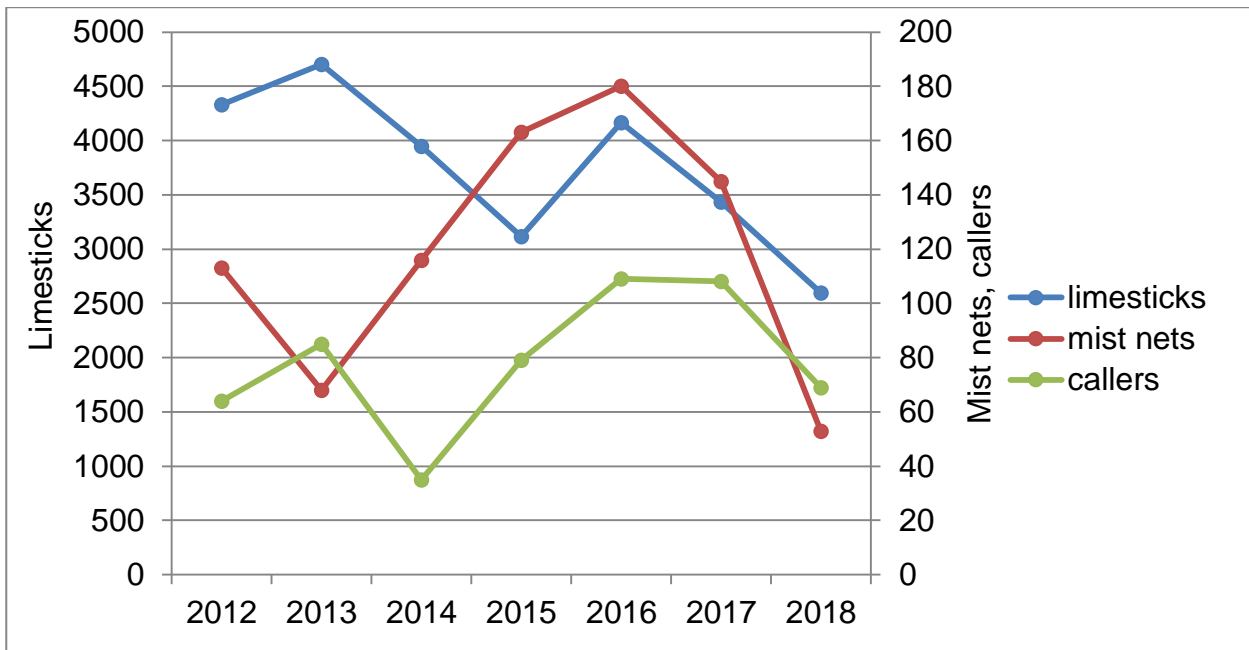


Figure 3: Seized limesticks, mist nets and electronic callers during Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2018

3.2.2 NUMBER OF SET TRAPS SEIZED AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF LIMESTICKS AND NETS USED ON TRAPPING SITES

Table 13 shows number of set traps that were seized during the Autumn Camp 2018. Number of set traps seized during Autumn Camp 2017 is included for comparison. Table also shows the average number of set limesticks and set nets found on trapping sites.

Table 13: Total number of seized set traps and average number of limesticks and nets used on trapping sites during Autumn 2017 and Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2017	2018
No. of all active trapping sites found	198	142
No. of trapping sites with set traps found	95	73
No. of times traps were removed from trapping sites	129	101
Total number of set limesticks removed from trapping sites	3280	2570
Total number of set nets removed from trapping sites	125	50
Average number of limesticks used per trapping site	46.2	36.7
Average number of nets used per trapping site	2.12	1.85

The number of set traps found during Autumn 2018 Camp decreased in comparison with Autumn 2017 Camp. Average number of set traps per trapping site also decreased, both for limesticks and nets.

3.3 TRAPPED BIRDS

In total, 524 protected wild birds, belonging to 20 different species, were rescued from traps during the Camp and further 278 wild birds were found dead during field investigations on the trapping sites or in the possession of trappers (Table 14).

Table 14: Rescued birds and birds found dead during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp

		No. of birds rescued from traps	No. of birds found dead in traps	No. of dead birds found during house investigation
1	Blackcap (<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>)	397	63	
2	Robin (<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>)	15		
3	Song thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>)	14		
4	Red-backed shrike (<i>Lanius collurio</i>)	6		
5	Reed warbler (<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>)	6		
6	Chiffchaff (<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>)	6		
7	Willow warbler (<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>)	5	1	
8	Lesser whitethroat (<i>Sylvia curruca</i>)	5	1	
9	Cyprus warbler (<i>Sylvia melanothorax</i>)	4		
10	Black redstart (<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>)	4		
11	Masked shrike (<i>Lanius nubicus</i>)	2	1	
12	House sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	2		
13	Spanish sparrow (<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>)	2		
14	Sardinian warbler (<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>)	2		
15	Chaffinch (<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>)	2		
16	Stonechat (<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>)	1		
17	Common Nightingale (<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>)	1		
18	Greenfinch (<i>Chloris chloris</i>)	1		
19	Blackbird (<i>Turdus merula</i>)	1		
20	Wryneck (<i>Jynx torquilla</i>)	1		
21	Great tit (<i>Parus major</i>)		1	
	Unidentified	47	3	208
	Total	524	70	208



Picture 7: Chiffchaff rescued from a limestick during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp (Photo: CABS)

3.4 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS MADE BY ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AT TRAPPING SITES REPORTED BY CABS ACTIVISTS

3.4.1 OVERALL RESULTS

During the Camp we reported active trapping sites to enforcement agencies, responsible to tackle illegal bird killings in Republic of Cyprus: the Game and Fauna Service (GFS) and the Cyprus Police and to the enforcement agency operating in the British Eastern Sovereign Base Area: the Sovereign Base Area (SBA) Police.

In total we reported 140 active trapping sites to the enforcement officers and 102 were investigated by the enforcement officers. 14 investigations ended with catching and prosecuting individuals involved in illegal bird trapping (Table 15). This means that prosecutions for trapping were made only at 10 % of all cases, reported by CABS activists, while at the remaining 90 % of reported sites, trappers got away unpunished.

Table 15: Results of cooperation with law enforcement units during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp (APS= Anti-Poaching Squad, ROC= Republic of Cyprus)

	Game and Fauna Service	Cyprus Police APS	Cyprus Police regular units	All ROC	SBA Police	All
No. of active tr. sites reported by CABS & SPA members	92	13	7	112	28	140
No. of active trapping sites investigated by officers	62	9	4	75	27	102
Percentage of investigated sites	67.4	69.2	57.1	67.0	96.4	72.9
No. of sites with prosecution of trappers	6	3	1	10	4	14
No. of sites with confiscation of trapping paraphernalia only	46	1	1	48	5	53
No. of sites where nothing was found by enforcement officers	10	3	2	15	18	33
Seized trapping paraphernalia						
Limesticks	1279	97	74	1450	36	1486
Mist nets	18	8	3	29	13	42
Electronic callers	29	2	1	32	4	36

3.4.2 COMPARISON OF ENFORCEMENT RESULTS MADE DURING AUTUMN BIRD PROTECTION CAMPS 2014-2018

The number of the trapping sites, reported to the enforcement agencies during the Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp is with 140 third highest for the last four CABS & SPA Autumn Camps. Despite the high number of reported sites, number of prosecutions made this autumn was lowest for the last 4 autumns (Table 16).

Table 16: Comparison of enforcement results for cases reported by CABS activists at Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2015-2018

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of trapping cases reported by CABS & SPA members	142	111	188	140
INVESTIGATIONS				
No. of all reported cases investigated by officers	110	65	157	102
No. of cases investigated by Cyprus Police APS	74	37	32	9
No. of cases investigated by Cyprus Police reg. units	0	4	5	4
No. of cases investigated by Game & Fauna Service	0	3	17	62
No. of cases investigated by SBA Police	36	21	103	27
PROSECUTIONS				
No. of all prosecutions made at reported sites	38	27	19	14
Percentage of reported sites with prosecutions	26.8	24.3	10.1	10.0
No. of prosecutions made by Cyprus Police APS	26	20	11	3
No. of prosecutions made by Cyprus Police regular units	0	1	2	1
No. of prosecutions made by Game & Fauna Service	0	1	4	6
No. of prosecutions made by SBA Police	12	5	2	4

The percentage of reported sites with prosecutions this autumn is with 10 % the lowest in the last four autumns. It is clear, that not enough efforts were made to catch and prosecute trappers at sites reported by CABS activists.

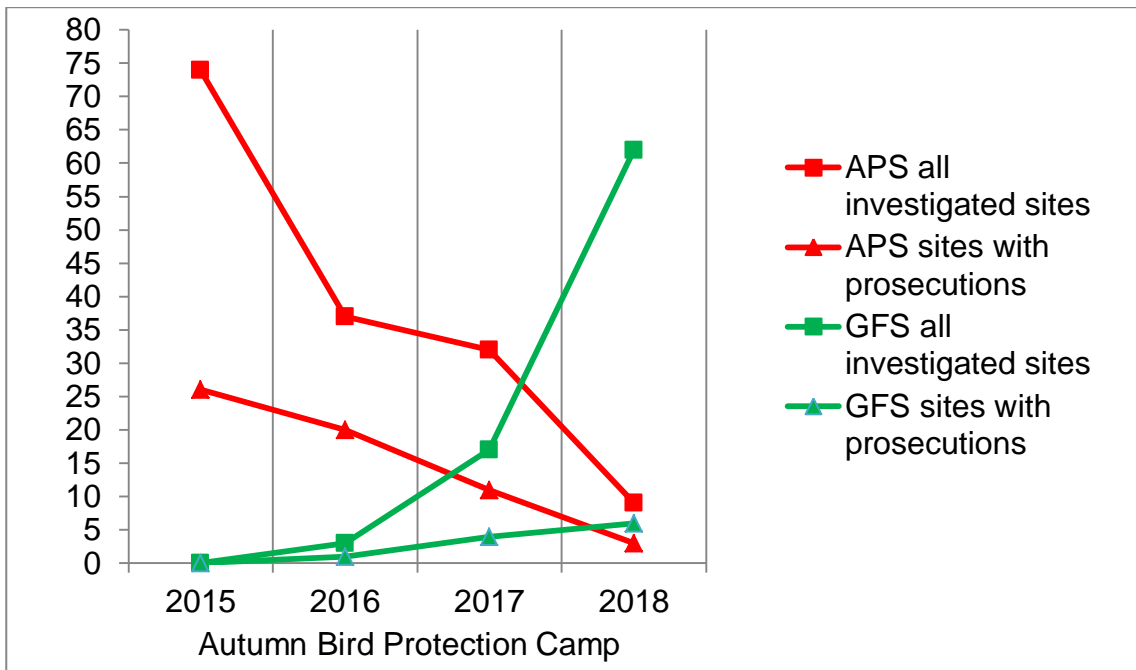


Figure 4: Comparison of enforcement results achieved by Cyprus Police APS and Game and Fauna Service (GFS) for trapping sites reported by CABS activists during Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2015-2018

In 2015 and 2016 CABS activists were cooperating closely with APS and achieved very good results in terms of prosecutions. When APS unit was weakened in 2017, by making it smaller and by removing some of the best officers from the unit, CABS activists started to cooperate more frequently with Game and Fauna Service. This autumn, the majority of all cases reported to enforcement agencies in Republic of Cyprus (92 out of 112) were reported to GFS. Unfortunately GFS officers were far less efficient in catching trappers this autumn as were APS officers were in 2015 and 2016. They managed to catch and prosecute trappers at only 6 sites out of 62 investigated.

4 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS AND ACTIONS AGAINST ILLEGAL BIRD HUNTING

Bird trapping is massive in Cyprus and the participants of the camp were occupied with investigating this illegal activity. We didn't have resources to also conduct extensive field investigations of illegal bird shootings. Nevertheless, while investigating bird trapping activity, we regularly came across illegal bird shootings and we have acted against them.

Our investigations revealed that the incidents of illegal bird shootings are even more common as the incidents of bird trapping and widespread in Larnaca District, Famagusta District and in the ESBA.

Especially massive in autumn is the use of illegal electronic quail callers in the nights. These callers are used to attract migrating quails to land in the fields at night in order to be shot in the morning. We estimate that up to several hundred quail callers were used in the nights across the Famagusta and Larnaca districts.

In the mornings we observed tens of cases, where illegal blackcap and skylark callers were used by hunters to attract these protected species in front of the guns. We also witnessed several cases of shooting of protected species and cases of hunting in areas, where it is not allowed to hunt.



Picture 8: Wings of shot birds, including protected bird species, found on the ground of one of the hunting sites investigated during Autumn 2018 Camp in Cyprus (Photo: CABS)

CABS activists investigated 49 cases of illegal hunting during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp (table 17). Altogether, 48 electronic callers, used for hunting, were seized from investigated illegal hunting sites. They were seized either by enforcement officers, to whom the sites were reported, or by CABS activists.

Table 17: Results of investigations and actions against illegal bird hunting during Autumn 2018 Bird Protection Camp

No. of all investigated illegal hunting sites	49
No. of sites, where electronic caller was used for hunting, found	48
No. of sites, where hunters were shooting at protected birds, found	1
No. of all seized electronic callers	48
No. of seized electronic callers imitating quail calls	44
No. of seized electronic callers imitating blackcap calls	3
No. of seized electronic callers imitating skylark calls	1
No. of prosecutions made for illegal hunting	2

Two cases, reported to the enforcement officers, ended with prosecution of hunters. In the first case, hunter was using blackcap caller to hunt blackcaps. Case was reported to game wardens. Hunter was not charged for using caller as he claimed that it doesn't belong to him. After inspecting his documents, wardens discovered that he didn't even own a hunting license and was charged for that offence.

In the second case, two hunters were issued penalties for using blackcap caller and for having loaded gun in their car.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Slow and steady decrease in the number of active trapping sites in south-eastern Cyprus, found during Bird Protection Camps over the last few autumns, continued also this autumn.

The greatest improvement was again observed in the ESBA, where over 70 percent less active trapping sites were found by CABS activists in comparison with previous autumn. SBA Police chiefs and officers responsible to tackle bird trapping showed, similar as in autumn 2017, that dedication and determination to stop bird trapping makes a big difference and leads to substantial decrease of bird trapping. ESBA, a hell on earth for birds just two years ago, where hundreds of nets were set in the nights, is slowly changing into a safe resting place for migrating birds.

CABS teams have contributed to the big change. Crime Action Team, special unit of SBA Police, responsible to tackle bird trapping, recognised the importance of close cooperation with CABS activists that are searching for active trapping sites every night in the area. CAT officers and CABS activists stayed in touch during the whole camp and regularly

exchanged information about bird trapping activity. This information led to many successful arrests made by police officers.

In Republic of Cyprus, we observed moderate decrease of trapping with limesticks when compared to previous autumn but on other hand an increase of trapping with nets.

Similar as we can contribute the great improvement in the ESBA to the work of SBA Police, we can contribute the poor improvement and even failure, when it comes to trapping with nets, to the inefficient work of Cyprus Police and Game and Fauna Service.

The Cyprus Police APS, once most efficient unit to tackle bird trapping in Cyprus, was undermined in autumn 2017. Out of 8 officers working for APS until 2017, 4, including some of the most experienced, were removed from the unit. With only 4 officers left and with orders to work on other assignments beside bird trapping, the patrols were rarely available to investigate trapping sites reported by our teams this autumn.

With limited support of the APS, our teams reported most of trapping sites, found active in Republic of Cyprus, to game wardens from Game and Fauna Service. The cooperation between wardens and CABS activists as well as the work of wardens at reported sites was not satisfactory. Only 62 out of 92 sites, reported by CABS activists, were investigated by wardens. And only at 6 of 62 investigated sites wardens managed to catch and prosecute trappers. **With such poor enforcement results it will not be possible to stop or even substantially decrease bird trapping in the Republic in near future.**

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