



**Committe Against
Bird Slaughter - CABS**

Komitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V.

Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt®
Foundation Pro Biodiversity

Field Report:
Spring 2014
Bird Protection Camp,
Republic of Cyprus,
5 April – 11 May 2014



Bonn / Bielefeld, Germany: Thursday, 4 September 2014

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Authors:

Andrea Rutigliano, Field Investigations Officer, CABS

Bostjan Debersek, Field Investigations Officer, CABS

Klitos Papastylianou, Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus, CABS & SPA

Reviewers:

Alexander Heyd, General Secretary, CABS

Roland Tischbier, Chairman of the Board, SPA

Photos credits:

CABS

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Contact Details:



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

1 INTRODUCTION

The *Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS)* has conducted bird protection camps in the poaching hotspots of the Mediterranean region for more than 20 years. On Cyprus, CABS has been active on a small scale since 2001; but regular bird protection camps began in spring 2008, in cooperation with the *Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA)*. In 2014, the 7th Spring Bird Protection Camp was conducted over a period of four weeks, from 5 to 20 April and from 27 to 11 May, to cover the most of the pre-nuptial migration.

Bird Protection Camps (Περιοδείες Προστασίας Πουλιών in Greek) are major field surveys and anti-poaching campaigns organised during the two annual bird migration seasons and have three main objectives:

- To locate and report as many illegal trapping installations as possible to the responsible law enforcement agencies, in order to arrest poachers red-handed, confiscate trapping paraphernalia and ensure a safe passage on migration for birds;
- The collection of data in order to evaluate the true impact of the massive use of non-selective trapping methods – such as limesticks, mist nets and electronic decoys – on wild bird populations and species;
- The collection of data in relation to the strategies and efforts implemented by the competent law-enforcement agencies (Game Fund, Cyprus Police, British SBAs Police) to tackle bird trapping.

CABS is always seeking the cooperation and support of the competent authorities of the Republic of Cyprus (Cyprus Police Anti-Poaching Squad and the Game Fund) and the British Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) Police, to assist them in combating illegal, non-selective and large-scale trapping, killing and trade of protected wild birds.

2 SUMMARY

After the suspension of our cooperation in the field in April 2013 and the withdrawal of the Cyprus Police Anti-Poaching Squad (APS), CABS and SPA have tried to restore their cooperation with the Cyprus Police, eventually succeeding a few days before the beginning of the spring 2014 bird protection camp. Then, the Minister of Justice and Public Order and the new Chief of the Cyprus Police invited CABS and SPA's Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus to two official meetings in Nicosia, on the 4th and 7th of April, where they officially informed him that the APS would again provide escort and follow up the monitoring work conducted by CABS teams during the whole BPC. CABS had previously offered to conduct low profile operations, with a single team of only 2-3 volunteers on the field, to decrease the risk of violent reaction by the trappers, mainly in the Famagusta area. This suggestion was approved and further extended by the Cyprus Police with the order not to dismantle any traps and not to be in the field without escort. Though this was a huge drawback in the operational capacity of CABS, it was accepted with the precondition that the Cyprus Police would be present on the field on a daily base. The APS showed also an increased proficiency in their power of enforcing the law: ambushes were successfully introduced, house premises within trapping sites were searched with search warrants and the will of prosecuting (and not only disturbing) trappers has clearly been shown.

As a result, at the end of the camp that lasted 23 operational days:

- 15 trappers were arrested red-handed,
- 1,469 limesticks, 12 mist nets, 6 electronic decoys, 717 dead birds were confiscated in the 15 cases of prosecution, while 19 birds were released from traps.
- 787 limesticks, 15 mist nets and 4 electronic decoys were confiscated without any prosecution by the APS.

- In 10 cases the poachers were not been prosecuted, but instead they were given a verbal warning and their traps were seized by the APS.

The sheer presence of the APS on daily base in the main trapping area had a successful deterrence effect though: even if in many trapping places signs of recent trapping were detected during the season, trappers were clearly alerted and shifted back to a cautious random trapping pattern, trapping only a few hours and in average only once in the week, but using proficiently time and the best trapping trees to implement the number of captures. Nevertheless, considering the whole picture, spring 2014 was probably the one with the lowest level of trapping ever observed by CABS in Cyprus.

3 SPRING 2014 BIRD PROTECTION CAMP DATA AND RESULTS

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

A total of 11 volunteers, from Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Hungary and Slovenia participated in the camp. All of these had previously participated in a CABS camp in Cyprus and had good knowledge of the area. Two to four volunteers were active per week. As requested by the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus and in order to make the work of the police patrol easier, only one team was working together with the APS and left the field every time the APS was given a case for prosecution. In this way, the APS patrol did not have to look after the security of the volunteers, but could devote their time to the prosecution. In case that CABS had a second team available, it was driving during the night to detect tape lures or during the day to study the patterns of suspicious trapping sites, thus making available important data on single resilient trapping sites.

3.2 WORKING SCHEDULE AND AREAS

Teams started working around 2-3:00 a.m. in order to locate active trapping sites following the calls of tape lures by driving in public roads. The meeting with the APS was set mainly at 5:00, shortly before dawn, to allow the police to remain unseen in the proximity of the active trapping site that were detected in the night. The operations usually continued until 1:00 p.m. patrolling the area and checking additional trapping sites. Alternatively, in some days the meeting was set later at 8:00 a.m. and the joint operations continued until 4:00 p.m. for a total of 8 scheduled hours on a daily base.

Operations were concentrated in the Famagusta District, from Paralimni in the East to Liopetri / Vrysoules in the West. In spring this area accounts for around 95% of illegal bird trapping in the territory of the Republic of Cyprus. In 5 days spent patrolling the districts of Larnaca and Nicosia only 1 active trapping site was found.

3.3 SITES CHECKED

Over the past five years, CABS (together with the other NGOs that are monitoring illegal bird trapping in the field – BirdLife Cyprus and Migratory Birds Conservation in Cyprus – MBCC) located and listed 837 trapping sites (44 new trapping sites were located during the spring 2014 BPC). During the 23 days of the camp, the teams monitored 311 of these sites (37.2%). Many sites which were particularly important were checked more than once on different dates and times of day.

Of the 311 sites checked, 102 were found active (32.8%), i.e. with traps or recent signs of lime and feathers. Out of these, in 49 (15.8%) of those there was a confiscation or prosecution or both. The rest (209 sites) had no signs of recent trapping (but could be in use on a random and sporadic basis).

Table 1: Monitoring of trapping sites each spring since 2011

Spring season	2011	2012	2013	2014
Duration of Bird Protection Camp (days)	13	25	27	23
No of trapping sites checked	122	238	267	311
No. of active trapping sites found	78	120	111	102
Percentage of active trapping sites	63.9	50.4	41.6	32.8

Table 1 shows steady decrease of spring trapping activity since 2011. In 2011, more than every second site was found active (63.9 %). In the following springs we observed decrease in trapping activity with record low in this spring, when 32.8 percents of all trapping sites were found active. The decrease is also presented with graph (figure 1).

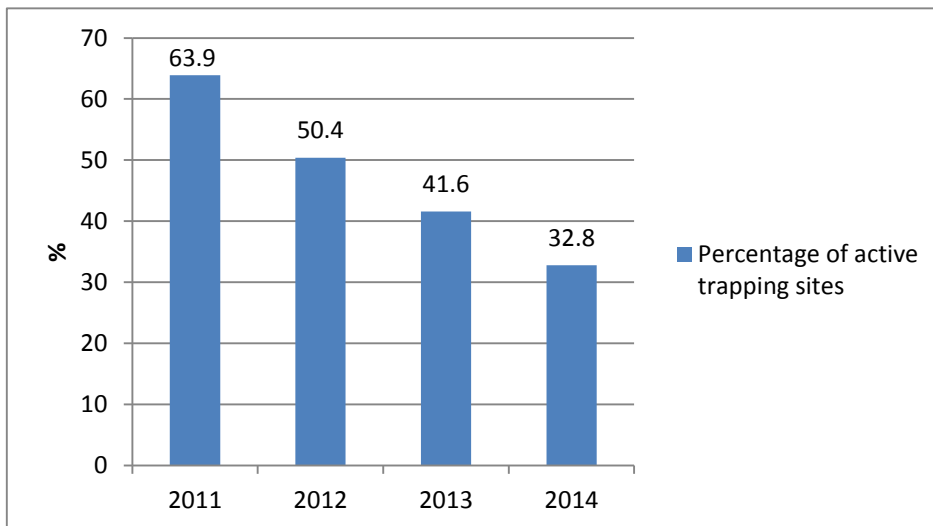


Figure 1: Activity of spring trapping sites since 2011

3.4 RESULTS

As a result of the 23 days of joint operations with the APS, the following illegal items were seized:

- 2,256 limesticks,
- 27 mist nets,
- 10 electronic decoys,
- 717 dead / frozen birds,
- 19 birds in captivity were released,
- 15 poachers were prosecuted (14 from Famagusta district and 1 from Larnaca district) and
- 10 poachers were orally warned (all from Famagusta district).

In addition, as part of the camp, the Game Fund following our report seized 117 additional limesticks and 1 electronic decoy in one trapping site, whereas in a joint operation the ESBA police seized more than 300 meters of cable, 60 iron

poles for mist nets, 25 iron bases for mist nets and 1 loud speaker in two different trapping sites.

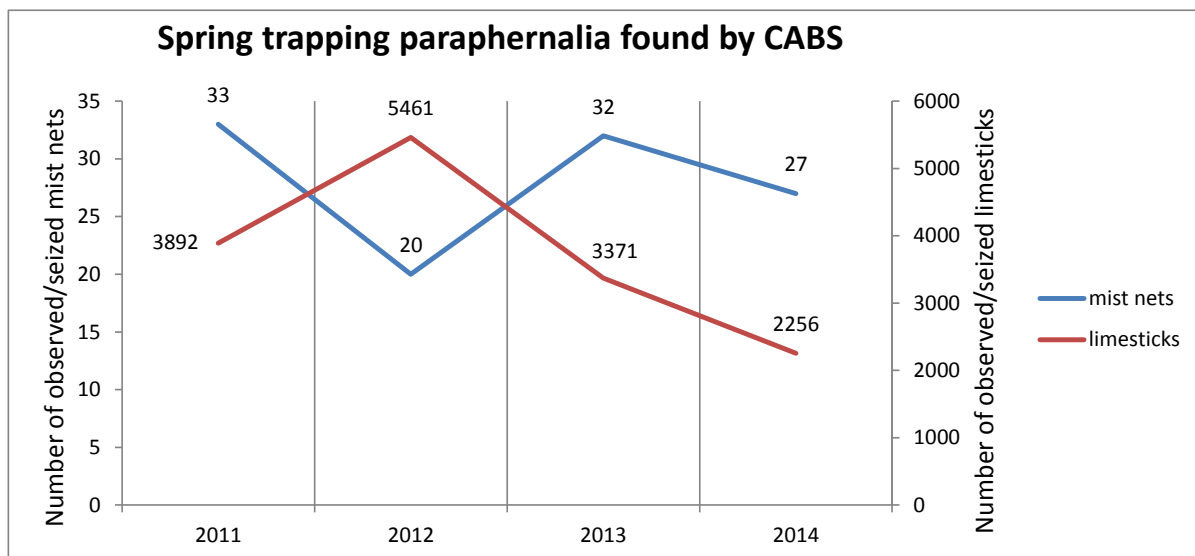


Figure 2: Spring bird trapping activity with the use of mist nets and limesticks (including non collected traps and reports from other NGOs – MBCC and BirdLife Cyprus) since 2011

4 CHANGES IN CABS' WORK METHODOLOGY

According to the orders given by the Cyprus Police, for security reasons, CABS volunteers should not remove any traps in the field neither should they enter fenced or even unfenced private properties, gardens, orchards or fields without the escort of the APS.

As in the past, this regulation was accepted by CABS, even if it slowed down the teams causing a significant decreases in the number of traps collected (after 1 p.m. no traps could be located and removed) and in the presence of the volunteers on the territory (hence a minor deterrence effect). This was considered to be an acceptable compromise that matched the necessity of a proficient police work and a lower profile approach for volunteers.

CABS teams had an unusual availability of time during the prosecution work of the APS and after the shift to conduct investigations that helped in the understanding of trapping patterns for each trapping site. These investigations were undertaken by car and using binoculars to collect information that the APS could use for prosecution at a later point, but also to understand how trappers were reacting to the presence of the law enforcement agents and prosecutions.

5 REACTION OF TRAPPERS TO THE PRESENCE OF ANTI-POACHING SQUAD

The continuous presence of the APS on the field acted as a successful deterrent. The longer the patrol was on the field, the more careful trappers became and less trapping installations were found to be active each day.

In our *'Field Report: Autumn 2013 Bird Protection Camp'*, we stated that the U-turn made by Cyprus government towards bird trapping was blatant and hence in average trappers:

- Reactivated installations which were not in use anymore in the last seasons,

- Increased number of traps set out,
- Shifted back from random trapping to continuous trapping and
- Showed a sense of impunity, reactivating in few days raided trapping sites [¹].

We believe that the renewed presence of the APS on the ground has again reversed this trend. It is true that some of the sites which were raided by the APS were reactivated within few days, but after the second raid, there was no reactivation anymore. The number of traps found in each installation was again low, less gardens than usual were found with set traps and – the most striking evidence – only a bunch of trappers insisted on continuous trapping, most of them having shifted to a safer random trapping.

After four seasons of joint operations with the APS and an acceptable sample of cases, we are now able to draw some conclusions on the effect of law enforcement on trappers in spring. To summarize our observations:

- 1) As soon as trappers detect the insistent presence of the APS on the field, they reduce the number of traps set out (limesticks) down to 10-30 in an attempt to avoid prosecution (see Annex 1). They seem to know that the police will go for a verbal warning instead of prosecution.
- 2) Most trappers use their installation only once in the week, without a regular pattern, in an attempt to avoid detection.
- 3) Tape lures are used to their minimum. In spring 2014, very few decoys were detected during the night and day. Decoys make a site detectable from the distance.
- 4) Trappers tend to remedy the fewer days used for trapping with the use of appropriate tree species to lure birds. In the last spring seasons, limesticks were set out in spring both on olive trees, *Pistacia lentiscus* (mastic trees) and other fruit trees. In spring 2014, they were concentrated almost only on *Morus* (mulberry plants) and *Eriobotrya japonica* (loquat trees). The use of these two tree species in spring (which we observed newly planted in trapping gardens) allows good captures in short time, serving as a natural bait (in garden 816 on a small mulberry tree 10 limesticks caught 3 birds within 45 minutes between 8:15 and 9:00 am). The use of only 1-2 specific trees makes a trapping installation less visible to law enforcement agents within a garden.
- 5) Trappers are not ready to completely abandon a trapping site. Even if they are caught red-handed and prosecuted, a large number still continues with trapping, even amateur trappers. CABS believe that imposed fines are not high enough to deter even smaller amateur trappers (not to say large and professional trappers). The following table shows a first sample of trappers who were caught in the past and were found again trapping. In the following years it will be possible to further observe this phenomenon [²].

Serial N°	Area	First Prosecution	Follow up
582	Kamos – Paralimni	April 2013, convicted for possession of around 30 limesticks and decoy	The trapper sees the APS coming and throws out of the garden a basket with 89 limesticks to avoid prosecution
311	Kokkines – Paralimni	April 2012, convicted for possession of 60 limesticks	APS arrests the trapper for possession of 240 limesticks and 43 dead birds in the fridge
184	Profitis Elias – Paralimni	The trapper says to APS this is the third time he is caught in the same trapping place	APS arrests the man with 61 limesticks, a decoy and 11 just killed birds

444	Water Reservoir - Ayia Napa	Arrested on the 18th April 2014 with 61 limesticks set out	On the 11th May 2014 he is observed trapping again in his garden
500	Kalavassos	Arrested by Game Fund with 2 nets in autumn 2012	Net detected in his fenced property by BirdLife Cyprus in autumn 2013
122	Paralimni	Arrested twice by Game Fund in 2013 (after CABS report)	Game Fund finds again 117 limesticks and one decoy in his garden in April 2014. The same person is patrolling the area

Table 2: Effect of prosecutions on spring trapping activity

	2012		2013		2014
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn	Spring
No. of sites with prosecution	16	33	17	11	15
No. of sites prosecuted for second or third time	1	1	3	0	2
No. of sites checked after being prosecuted¹	1	4	15	14	23
No. of reactivated prosecuted sites	1	2	8	12	9
Percentage of reactivated prosecuted sites	100	50	53,3	85,7	39,1

Note 1: Including sites prosecuted in previous springs.

Table 2 shows that the trapping doesn't stop even after owner is prosecuted. In spring 2012, we checked only one site after prosecution, as we assumed prosecutions will significantly deter trapping activity. As this one site was active again after prosecution, we decided to increase monitoring of previously prosecuted sites. Results show that many sites are reactivated after owners are prosecuted. Reactivation of trapping sites in autumn 2013 stands out with very high percentage (85.7 %). In our view, the reason was the lack of political will from the competent authorities to take effective actions against illegal bird trapping and consequently limited enforcement activity taken by the Cyprus Police in this season. Nevertheless, prosecutions clearly have a good effect since the percentage of reactivated sites, if we exclude autumn 2013, is steadily decreasing and only little more than 39 percents of sites with previous prosecutions was observed to be active again this spring. Table 2 includes data gathered also by other NGOs (MBCC and BirdLife Cyprus).

6 ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The most important aspect of spring 2014 anti-poaching campaign was the re-establishment of our cooperation with the APS, which significantly improved its performance and results, showing that if the necessary political will is shown, the Cyprus Police can be much more proficient against trapping and the methodology used much more effective. The APS switched from "seizure" to "prosecution" also in unfenced trapping sites (by setting up ambushes) and when a trapper was caught red-handed, the premises of the house were searched and dead birds seized, thus giving a strong signal to trappers. On the other side, the 'zero tolerance' policy was not implemented in cases with small quantities of limesticks and police officers renounced to the prosecution of trappers if the number of limesticks was low (See Annex 1). This decision can be interpreted as a "softer" way to implement the law, a sort of moral suasion, but we would like to stress out that this strategy has been used, mostly by the local police, for at least 14 years now and has brought no

decrease in bird trapping. Trappers who are only verbally warned simply continue trapping (if even amateur trappers fined keep on trapping, why should moral suasion be more effective?).

The Game Fund itself did not escort our teams in the field in spring 2014, although that CABS requested escort by a joint patrol of the Game Fund and the United Nations Police (UNPOL) for the Sector 4 of the United Nations Buffer Zone (UNBZ). Nevertheless, the Game Fund asked CABS to submit all of the trapping points and then send a patrol to monitor them. The Game Fund patrol checked 5 out of 22 trapping points within the Sector 4 of the UNBZ, but none was active in spring. Especially in relation to the Game Fund, BirdLife Cyprus also notes that *“in total, 16 trapping locations were reported, but no feedback has been provided to BirdLife Cyprus to this date (July 2014) and it is therefore assumed that no prosecutions or confiscations took place. If this is so, it’s a very disappointing outcome on behalf of the Game Fund and Fauna Service (Larnaca & Famagusta district) and BirdLife Cyprus hopes to see much more active engagement during the autumn season”* [3]. Apart from this practice of non-cooperation in the field with environmental NGOs, it also has to be noted that, unfortunately, the Game Fund has not published any results on its monitoring and enforcement efforts since October 2013 [4].

In the following table we list the “plus” and “minus” of the APS work in this spring:

PLUS	MINUS
The APS made successful ambushes in the field catching red-handed trappers in open fields and non fenced gardens and proving to be able to adopt wildlife police techniques that are usually employed by game wardens.	Ambushes are still too short, lasting 2-3 hours. Even if most trappers check their traps in the morning, sometimes it is a good practice to continue the ambush for a whole shift (6-8 hours), if policemen are sure their presence has not been detected. Longer shifts in these cases should be foreseen.
The APS asked for search warrants in the District Court of Larnaca and showed the necessary will to extend shifts and follow time consuming procedures, in order to prosecute trappers and solve cases.	Policemen clearly feel a negative pressure on them from politicians and the public opinion, as they are avoiding “disturbing” too much people in the countryside. They fear backlash and they tend to avoid uncertain or difficult situations.
The APS did not limit its action to the seizure of set out traps and trapped birds, but in case of prosecutions searched houses and premises, seizing hundreds of dead birds	Policemen are obliged to secure evidence until the owner of a fenced plot comes to the spot, even in fenced properties. This rule obliges policemen to wait hours outside the property without intervening until owner comes. If he does not come for any reason, traps are left and the owner cannot be prosecuted (see <i>“Field Report: Autumn 2012 Bird Protection Camp”</i> , chapter 5.3 and <i>“Field Report: Spring 2012 Bird Protection Camp”</i> , chapter 5 [5]).
The APS was willing to call the owner of a fenced property in order to search his garden with his authorisation, even when no evidence was visible from outside, but on the base of previous records of trapping in that site. These operations (which very often resulted to the finding of traps) were particularly important, because they destroyed the sense of impunity of trappers, who used to hide traps in hidden corners of the garden and were sure to avoid prosecution.	The APS decided in 11 cases to renounce to prosecution and only seized the traps. All these cases were related with relatively low numbers of limesticks (10 to 35).

7 LEGAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

7.1 BACKGROUND

With the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union (EU) in 2004, the Cypriot Government pledged its commitment to tackle songbird poaching, in order to ensure effective conservation and protection of wild birds, in accordance with both existing national legislation [N.51(I)/2003] [6] and the EU Birds Directive [2009/147/EC (codified version of 79/409/ECC)]. [7] As BirdLife Cyprus observes, “bird trapping in Cyprus became illegal in 1974, when legislation of hunting was introduced with Law 39/74, when a number of bird species were listed as protected, including water birds, birds of prey, endemic species, such as the Cyprus wheatear and the Cyprus warbler. In accordance with this law, the game species were the hare, the chukar and the black francolin and non-selective methods, such as mist nets, limesticks and traps were prohibited. Moreover, in 1988 Cyprus ratified the 1979 Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, enlisting more bird species as protected, including also the Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) for the first time. Blackcaps are the main target species of illegal bird trapping in Cyprus and with this important legislative amendment blackcaps obtained a protected species status in Cyprus, in addition to the previous prohibition for the use of non-selective methods for the killing of birds”. [8]

Nevertheless, according to the Game Fund, “trapping of wild birds (*ambelopoulia* and *tzikles*) with the use of mist nets and limesticks, with the aim of trade [...] as we all know very well it is extremely profitable, as currently it is estimated that the price of a dozen of *ambelopoulia* in specific restaurants is sold between 50-70 Euro, while the overall annual budget of this illegal activity is estimated that is above 15 million Euro” [9].

As we stated in our “Field Report: Autumn 2013 Bird Protection Camp” (chapter “4.1 Cyprus in Year Zero”) [10], the history of anti-trapping efforts in Cyprus presents the same pattern since the very beginning, with long periods of “laissez faire” activities interrupted by seasonal raids, followed by protests from the poachers’ lobby and restoration of the tolerance. According to Magnin (1986), the first effort was made in **1985** when “after years of protests the Government of the Republic of Cyprus decided in December 1984 to improve the situation for migratory birds in Cyprus”. In 1985, trappers using mist nets were prosecuted, but huge tolerance was shown towards limesticks trappers: “especially in the south-east of Cyprus, where the authorities proved to be completely complacent about applying the law concerning limesticks” [11]. The situation became worse again in the following years, until the final procedure for the accession of the Republic of Cyprus into the EU, when the Government of the Republic of Cyprus committed itself to seriously combating songbird poaching. Indeed, according to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) (2003), in **2002** levels of poaching were very low [12]. But in October 2002, trappers responded to the new wave of inspections and complaints, by returning as a form of protest, 7,000 vote ballots, stating that because of repression they were losing income for the missing sale of birds [13]. The government once again gave up, with trapping increasing exponentially in the following years, to the point that BirdLife Cyprus (2010) described it as an environmental emergency [14]. The third wave of prosecutions against trappers was between autumn **2011** and spring 2013, after the Larnaca Declaration which claimed a “zero tolerance policy against bird trapping”. A better cooperation between NGOs and authorities (APS and Game Fund) led to increased numbers of prosecutions and managed to finally target the main trapping hotspot of Eastern Famagusta [15]. In spring **2013**, bird trapping with both mist nets and limesticks was at its lowest level. However, trappers again claimed their right to trap; on 27 April, a group of 25-50 trappers gathered in the central square of Paralimni to demonstrate against anti-poaching activists and for the legalisation of limestick trapping. The following day, the Minister of Justice and Public Order withdrew the APS and interrupted the anti-poaching campaign [16]. Since then, the APS has not been systematically engaged in the effort to combat illegal, non-selective and large-scale trapping, killing and trade of protected wild birds”.

Since the publication of our “Field Report: Autumn 2013 Bird Protection Camp”, our cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and the Cyprus Police has been restored; as a result, the APS escorts CABS teams in the field and significantly improved its operational results. Furthermore, during the past semester there were several positive

developments at the political, legal and social level on which a ‘zero tolerance’ policy and a ‘strategic action plan’ could and should be based in the future.

7.2 POLITICAL ASPECTS

On 17th March 2014, CABS and SPA published their “*Field Report: Autumn 2013 Bird Protection Camp*” that received quite an extensive coverage by the mass media at the national level and in which we publicly declared that “zero tolerance policy” against songbird poaching should not be just a rhetorical political statement, but an actual, consistent and permanent effort by the competent political authorities and law enforcement agencies to protect wild bird species and populations from the use of non-selective and large-scale trapping and killing methods, as well as to ensure environmental justice by combating this several wildlife crime in Cyprus [17]. Indeed, from that moment until today, **several major steps have been taken – mostly by the competent authorities of the Republic of Cyprus rather than the Administration and Police of the British SBAs – towards the actual implementation of a ‘zero tolerance’ policy.**

As BirdLife Cyprus notes [18], “*at the international level, the issue of trapping was covered in newspaper articles in the Daily Mail and The Times, two very popular and widely read newspapers in the UK. In particular the former one with title ‘Stop the barbaric slaughter’*”, on Sunday, 23rd of March 2014 [19], “*made reference also to the letters that Prince Charles sent to both the Sovereign Base Area Administration and the President of Republic of Cyprus, where the Prince was asking for effective measures to be taken in order to stop this large scale, illegal and profitable activity. This ecological problem was also covered by a journalist at the Agence France-Presse (AFP), an international news agency, giving worldwide exposure to this issue*” in another article published on Monday, 19th of May 2014, and then re-published by several international news agencies for a whole week [20].

In the meantime, after the suspension of our cooperation in the field in April 2013 and the withdrawal of the APS, CABS and SPA have tried to restore their cooperation with the Cyprus Police, eventually succeeding a few days before the beginning of the spring 2014 bird protection camp, when the Minister of Justice and Public Order and the new Chief of the Cyprus Police invited CABS and SPA’s Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus to two official meetings in Nicosia, on the 4th and 7th of April, where they officially informed him that the APS would again provide escort and follow up the monitoring work made by CABS teams during the whole bird protection camp. CABS had previously offered to conduct low profile operations, with a single team of only 2-3 volunteers on the field, to decrease the risk of violent reaction by the trappers, mainly in Famagusta area. This suggestion was approved and further extended by the Cyprus Police, with the order not to dismantle any traps and not to be in the field without escort. This has caused a huge shrink in the operational capacity of CABS, but has been accepted as long as the Cyprus Police could be present on daily base on the field. The APS showed also an increased proficiency in their power of enforcing the law: ambushes were successfully introduced, house premises within trapping sites were searched with search warrants, the will of prosecuting (and not only disturbing) trappers has clearly been shown.

The results of this cooperation are clearly demonstrated in four different cases of prosecutions made by the APS, in cooperation with CABS teams during the spring 2014 bird protection camp, between 17th of April and 7th of May 2014, which were published by the Press Office of the Cyprus Police Headquarters:

- In the first case, on Thursday, 17th of April 2014, a 51years old trapper was arrested in Paralimni, with 62 limesticks, 1 electronic decoy and 11 freshly killed wild birds;
- In the second case, again on Thursday, 17th of April 2014, a 73years old trapper was arrested in Xylophagou, with 261 limesticks, 6 mist nets, 1 electronic decoy and 298 packed wild birds in the fridge [21];
- In the third case, on Saturday, 3rd of May 2014, a well-known trapper was arrested in Maroni, with 1 mist net, 1 electronic decoy and 182 packed wild birds in the fridge [22];

- In the fourth case, on Sunday, 4th of May 2014, a 48years old trapper was arrested in Ayia Napa, with 240 limesticks, 28 packed wild birds in the fridge and 1 aviary with 19 protected wild birds in captivity (8 Partridges, 6 Song thrushes, 3 Goldfinches, 1 Common Wood Pigeon and 1 Turtle Dove) [23].

Furthermore, between Wednesday and Friday, 21st to 23rd of May, “twenty-six (26) delegates from conservation NGOs in twenty (20) countries met in Nicosia for a flyway conservation workshop organised by BirdLife International, supported by MAVA Foundation and hosted by BirdLife Cyprus. Illegal bird trapping – a chronic and growing problem in Cyprus – has been among the major topics for discussion at a workshop, entitled ‘Capacity Development for Flyway Conservation in the Mediterranean: Developing a sustainable network of NGOs delivering flyway conservation in the Mediterranean’, which took place in Nicosia [...], within the framework of the ‘BirdLife Migratory Birds and Flyways Programme’. At the workshop, BirdLife Cyprus presented for the first time its Strategic Action Plan (StAP) addressing the persistent and serious issue of illegal trapping in Cyprus, which was developed involving organisations, such as the enforcement agencies (Game Fund, Anti-Poaching Squad of Cyprus Police and Anti-Poaching Unit of SBA Police), various Ministries (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Public Order), government departments (Department of Forests and Department of Environment), the office of the Cyprus Commissioner of the Environment, the Environment Department of the SBA Administration, the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, the Cyprus Tourism Organisation and a number of NGOs (Friends of the Earth Cyprus, Terra Cypria, the Committee Against Bird Slaughter and the Foundation Pro Biodiversity). The Strategic Action Plan (StAP) is the result of two workshops held in 2013 by BirdLife Cyprus and supported by MAVA Foundation, with the involvement and recommendations of over 30 representatives of various stakeholders, a crucial step forward in facing the problem of illegal bird trapping in a joint and coordinated effort” [24].

On Friday, 13th of June 2014, CABS and SPA released the results of the spring 2014 bird protection camp, while at the same time welcomed the **release of an extremely important Report on Illegal Bird Trapping in Cyprus by the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Cyprus** [25]. The report was prepared due to a complaint filed by CABS and SPA almost a year ago. The complaint turned against the Ministry of Justice and Public Order regarding the violation of the principles of the rule of law and good governance, due to the suspension of the cooperation between the two international environmental organisations and the APS. The decision for the withdrawal of the APS was taken after a protest staged by the so-called “Friends of Limesticks” in Paralimni, in spring 2013, during which they disrupted the elections of the governing party, *Democratic Rally (Demokratikos Synagermos – DISY)* [26].

Initially, the Ombudsman’s report presents the legal framework, in particular the ‘Directive 2009/47 of the European Union for the Conservation of Wild Birds’ and the ‘Law 152(I)/2003 of the Republic of Cyprus for the Protection and Management of Wild Birds and Game Species’. In addition, the report refers extensively to the ‘Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats’, as well as to the ‘Declaration of Larnaca’, which was the result of the ‘1st European Conference on Illegal Killing of Birds’, held in Larnaca by the Council of Europe, the Game Fund and the Ministry of Interior, on July 2011. Then, it presents the problem of illegal, non-selective and large-scale trapping, killing and trade of protected wild birds in Cyprus, as well as the interest of the international media and the international community. The report also cites the results of the most recent bird protection camps organized by CABS and SPA, while it also refers to the allegations against the activists and the legal proceedings that led to their acquittal. Moreover, it presents the results of field surveys conducted by BirdLife Cyprus, but also the positions and data of the competent authorities, in particular the Game Fund, the Cyprus Police and the Ministry of Justice and Public Order. The report, also, addresses the critical issue of the adoption of a ‘Strategic Action Plan for Combating Illegal Bird Trapping’, as well as the repeated recommendations of the European Commission and the infringement procedure open to investigation against the competent authorities of the Republic of Cyprus. Finally, the report refers to the most recent developments, the most important of which was the suspension of the cooperation in the field between environmental organizations and the APS of the Cyprus Police. The report concludes with the Ombudsman’s comments, conclusions and recommendations. The report was sent to the complainant organizations and the competent authorities on 27th of May 2014 and on 12th of June 2014 was published on the Ombudsman’s website.

The Ombudsman's comments and conclusions emphasized that the illegal, non-selective and large-scale trapping, killing and trade of protected wild birds is an **“activity, the motive of which is the high untaxed profits for persons or rings engaged in organized crime. [...] Thus, the reactions to the prohibition of trapping, as well as to the measures / actions / campaigns that aims to the prevention and law enforcement are quite strong and will be continued in Cyprus, as long as the demand for ambelopoulia continues and the illegal trade remains strong”**.

Following Larnaca Declaration and **“evaluating as complex the whole problem, due to its many and different parameters”**, the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights **“considers necessary the unquestionable condemn of all forms of illegal bird trapping and trade, as well as the adoption of a zero tolerance policy against them, not only by the governments, the competent authorities and the local communities, but also by non-governmental organisations as well, including hunting organisations”**.

Furthermore, the Ombudsman notes that **“the law itself is not enough”**, as **“there is also the need for the sensitization of targeted groups, such as hunters, farmers, children and youth, in order to ensure political support and effective investigation for gathering enough evidence during the criminal procedures and imposing high fines by the Courts”**.

According to the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, **“the general public does not seem to be aware of the environmental importance of the prohibition deriving from the European policy and the national legislation. The basic principle of the Directive”, according to which wild birds “are the common heritage and their effective protection is an environmental issue, directly related to the broader aim of sustainability, has not penetrated at the social level, does not even has influenced the long perceptions and traditions. Ambelopoulia are still considered as any other product of luxury consumption, without any consideration or doubt in relation to the way that they are cached or the impact on the biodiversity. It is also uncertain the level of realization by the general public of the offences and the fines imposed by the law. This is certainly not the case for trappers. However, as long as ambelopoulia are served in dozens to restaurants for 80 or 90 Euro and the total annual income from their trade is coming up to many millions Euro, trappers continue to undertake the danger of trapping with limesticks and mist nets. If and when they will be led to the Court, the fines that would possibly be imposed are much lower than their income”**.

Concluding, in its 36-pages report, the Ombudsman states that **“the role of ecological / environmental organisations, as well as the Hunting Federation, is very important; according to Larnaca Declaration this should be active and harmonized with the role of governments, the competent authorities and the local communities, in the ‘struggle’ against illegal bird trapping. Consequently, it is not appropriate or useful to anyone, except from trappers, the provision of limited support to relative activities of environmental organisations, such as their annual bird protection camps, or the underestimation of their importance and or the overestimation of protests and reactions. These should be predictable, as long as the profit is the motive of trappers, the social sensitization is not so strong and a broader movement against illegal bird trapping has not been formed yet.**

The result of the legal procedure, which started with the prosecuted activists and ended with the condemn of a trapper and the compensation of an activist is indicative of the danger that real incidents could be framed so differently that would led to misdirection and or become the reason for tension. While, the volunteers / activists of the organisations – with a special interest on the protection and conservation of the environment, and sometimes expertise, useful for conducting studies and surveys that document their object and aim – could be good partners of the competent authorities and contribute in the extremely difficult, complex and hard work of law enforcement, that is needed from now on, in order to turn into practice the statement of the Minister of Justice for ‘implementing a zero tolerance policy against poaching and the illegal, non selective killing of protected wild birds’.

Combating the phenomenon in question, which prevailed as part of the tradition and habits, but is now turning into lucrative profits and perpetuated, while some are overexploiting the commons with dramatic consequences for sustainability requires the cooperation of all forces that could voluntarily support public authorities.

In view of what has been analysed in the report, the efforts to combat illegal trapping estimated that have not been upgraded, even after the Declaration of Larnaca and the framework of its recommendations / directions. They have

remained mostly within the context of policing and without the required strengthening, without implementing the National Strategy, without adopting new measures focusing on prevention, awareness, enlightenment and configuration of the necessary support of the competent authorities by groups of the wider population, as stated in the Declaration. In addition, there was an increasing trend of bird trapping in 2012, the suspension of the cooperation between the Cyprus Police and international environmental organisations during the last week of their bird protection camp in spring 2013 and the continuation of this policy of non-cooperation with the international environmental organisations during their autumn 2013 bird protection camp, have supported the belief that there is no political will against this phenomenon.

In this context, the recent decision of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order to provide the necessary support to environmental organisations during their spring 2014 bird protection camp is welcomed as a breakthrough. It enhances the efforts of environmental organizations against illegal bird trapping and recognizes the need for police presence during their bird protection camps for the implementation of the legislation. Without the presence of the Police in the trapping areas, it is impossible to completely safeguard the on-spot arrest of the trappers. Additionally, the decision of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order demonstrates the will to **implement the principle of 'zero tolerance', which is not only designed to policing, but prevention as well. The commitment to zero tolerance will also act as a deterrent for trappers and restaurant owners, as well as a motive for public concern and encouragement to abstain from ambelopoulia demand**".

The report by the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights concludes with the following recommendations:

- ***"It will take many years and a tremendous 'struggle', as Larnaca Declaration states, to combat permanently the phenomenon of illegal bird trapping and implement rigidly the law.***
- ***This is the reason why the zero tolerance policy adopted by the competent authorities should be stable, with no exceptions or flexibility, and pass once and for all from the stage of declaration to the final stage of practical implementation, regardless of the tensions or reactions that are likely to occur again or any mass protests, even if these are applauded by the public.***
- ***The emphasis of the efforts of the competent authorities should be given to the areas of Larnaca and Famagusta, where 75% of illegal bird trapping is recorded, but this should not led to the abandoning of the monitoring of trapping areas in other districts or even weakening those efforts to the extent that the trappers will act there uncontrolled.***
- ***It is necessary to utilize the existing staff of the Game Fund and the Cyprus Police to the maximum extent possible, including the staff of the local police stations, as well as the coordination between the two agencies, in order to ensure as much as possible the systematic presence of law enforcement personnel in the major trapping hotspots, improve the results of their efforts and the performance of the system of cross compliance, but without weakening / decreasing at the same time the investigations that should be conducted regularly to restaurants.***
- ***Budgetary constraints due to the economic crisis may not allow the strengthening of the operational capacity of the Game Fund and the Cyprus Police personnel in order to significantly increase the possibilities of monitoring all major trapping hotspots and restaurants serving ambelopoulia. Nevertheless, this issue should be examined by the Ministries of Interior and Justice and Public Order, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, particularly in relation to the two critical trapping periods, in spring and autumn. Furthermore, if the Game Fund and the Cyprus Police estimate that their staff is minimal compared to the extent of trapping areas and it is impossible to contribute more, this should be recorded later this year through the reduction of the trapping rate and the supply of restaurants with ambelopoulia.***

- **The Cyprus Police should continue providing support to the bird protection camps of environmental organizations, which are interested and provide volunteers, as it started doing in 2008, in order to use these camps as an additional monitoring activity.**
- **In addition to the above, the two competent Ministries should pursue to develop a better cooperation with the authorities of the British SBAs, as an increase of bird trapping is observed in the territory that is under their jurisdiction and the European Commission has already asked to be informed of the measures that will be taken to strengthen the enforcement of the law.**
- **The Game Fund should manage to complete the work on the National Strategy against illegal bird trapping, publicize it and start its implementation until the end of this year. The National Strategy can be turned into a new beginning for broader activities of the competent authorities, structured and targeted, with the involvement of all stakeholders who can contribute, and would not be limited to law enforcement. It needs to be extended in the fields of prevention, educational programs, the broadest possible information that will be appropriate and accessible to the general public, in collaboration with the mass media, as well as to factors and measures that will contribute to public awareness, the advancement of scientific research, the documentation from the relevant government authorities of trapping levels per year and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures.**
- **The National Strategy, including a comprehensive program of activities, campaigns and measures that will aim to tackle the parameters that comprise the phenomenon of illegal bird trapping, should become a catalyst for the reversal of the current trapping trend, in order to support the basis of biodiversity's existence and eventually turn bird trapping into a socially non-acceptable practice" [27].**

On July 2014, BirdLife Cyprus published the results of its illegal bird trapping monitoring programme [28], according to which *"the spring survey data and the analysis showed relatively low levels of bird trapping activity, following the pattern of recent spring seasons, but BirdLife Cyprus will remain cautious until the next autumn season, which is a far more reliable indicator of the overall bird trapping situation in Cyprus – in autumns 2012 and 2013 the trapping activity levels revealed a far more alarming situation"* [29]. In detail, BirdLife Cyprus states that *"with the trapping finds [...] it is estimated that nearly 200,000 birds could have been killed within the survey area and around 265,000 could have been killed across the whole of Cyprus during spring 2014"* [30].

Additionally, BirdLife Cyprus states that *"it has continued with its initiative funded by the MAVA Foundation, through BirdLife International, to develop a Strategic Action Plan to tackle illegal bird trapping in Cyprus. The effort begun in 2013 with the organization of two (2) workshops and a consultation process was undertaken to receive comments and feedback from all key stakeholders. From the discussions at the workshops, the stakeholders identified seven (7) key areas of action to be included in this strategy:*

1. Enforcement,
2. Courts,
3. Policy,
4. Awareness raising,
5. Habitat management,
6. Economic consequences and
7. Monitoring & coordination.

A final 'Strategic Action Plan' document was sent for adoption to all the key stakeholders at the end of April 2014 and we are now at a critical stage in this pioneering initiative. BirdLife Cyprus has been following up with all the stakeholders for the adoption of the 'Strategic Action Plan' and we are calling upon the various stakeholders to do so. The adoption of the 'Strategic Action Plan' will give us the tool to begin working jointly in order to put an end to this ecological disaster and its adoption and publication is expected in July 2014" [31]. Unfortunately, the 'Strategic Action Plan' has not been adopted and published until the end of August 2014. Following the recommendations of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, CABS and SPA urge the competent Ministries of Interior and

Justice and Public Order to immediately adopt, publish and implement the ‘Strategic Action Plan to Tackle Illegal Bird Trapping in Cyprus’ before the end of 2014.

Following all of these positive developments at the political level, it seems that the competent law enforcement agencies are also adopting and implementing a proactive and thus preventive and effective ‘zero tolerance’ approach in the field. In particular, from mid- to late-August 2014, all competent law enforcement agencies seem to have prosecuted large and professional trappers, in order to send a clear-cut ‘zero tolerance’ message to songbird poachers, from the beginning of the forthcoming trapping season of autumn 2014. These efforts include:

- The arrest of two trappers with mist nets and electronic decoys by the British ESBA Police, on Monday, 18th of August [³²];
- The arrest of two trappers for the illegal possession of a loaded hunting rifle, a number of cartridges, 4 dead wild birds, a wooden bat, a pepper spray, €1,100 Euro and 2 grammars of cannabis by the APS of the Cyprus Police, in the district of Larnaca, also on Monday, 18th of August [³³];
- The arrest of two trappers in two different occasions with search warrants by the Game Fund and the Cyprus Police in the district of Paphos, on Monday, 26th of August: in the first case, a trapper was prosecuted for the illegal possession of 14 packed wild birds in his fridge; in the second case, a trapper was prosecuted for the illegal possession of 9 packed wild birds in his fridge, two skulls of the endangered and protected species of Cyprus Mouflon, as well as a steel trap for Mouflon [³⁴].

As stated in our “*Field Report: Autumn 2011 Bird Protection Camp*”, a greater effort should be made to proactively monitor and control songbird poaching from mid-August to early September, the start of the main autumn trapping season. CABS and SPA welcome these proactive and preventive efforts of the competent law enforcement agencies, but at the same time are stressing out that these efforts – particularly from the side of the Cyprus Police and the Game Fund – should also include the major trapping hotspot of Famagusta District [³⁵].

7.3 LEGAL ASPECTS

Following BirdLife Cyprus, “*encouragingly, there has been a big step forward towards the adoption of a ‘zero tolerance’ approach within the courts regarding illegal bird trapping*”, both in the territory of the British SBAs and the Republic of Cyprus.

Indeed, “on two separate occasions British SBA Courts sentenced bird trappers to imprisonment”:

- On 7th February 2014, “*the Episkopi SBA court sentenced a bird trapper to 2 months imprisonment and a fine of €700 for trapping wild birds with the use of mist nets and live birds as decoys for the purpose of illegal trade as cage birds. This was the first time that a bird trapper was put in prison for a bird trapping offence*” [³⁶].
- On 20th May 2014, “*the Dhekelia SBA court sentenced a trapper to 3 months in prison for the illegal possession of wild birds and other game and illegal hunting. This is the first time ever that someone is imprisoned for illegal bird trapping and killing in the Dhekelia SBA, which in recent years has become a mist netting hotspot, giving a clear message that bird trapping is a serious wildlife crime and that a ‘zero tolerance’ will be implemented*” [³⁷].

As BirdLife Cyprus rightly observes, “*these SBA Court decisions are truly milestone cases where deterrent court penalties have been imposed for the first time on illegal bird trapping offences. Such penalties are in line with the Larnaca Declaration for a ‘zero tolerance’ approach against illegal bird killing and trapping, which is a serious wildlife crime*” [³⁸].

CABS and SPA urge the judicial authorities, the Attorney General and the Law Service of the Republic of Cyprus to critically review and increase the scale of penalties imposed for poaching, and to implement existing national legislation more rigidly, in order to assist in stamping out this serious environmental criminal activity and ensure that

environmental justice is meted out. More deterrent court penalties for the offences of bird trapping, killing, possession and trade are necessary, both in the territory of the British SBAs and in the Republic of Cyprus [³⁹].

Moreover, there were two recent decisions by the Famagusta District Court in the Republic of Cyprus “*vindicated CABS activists, who on two occasions were wrongfully accused of trespassing and causing damage to private property*”. Again, as BirdLife Cyprus notes, “*these court decisions are particularly encouraging as they give justice to the legal activities and efforts of environmental organisations to put an end to illegal bird trapping, and give a clear message to the illegal trappers that unsubstantiated accusations of ‘trespassing’ and ‘causing damage to private property’ are not to be accepted by any court of justice*” [⁴⁰].

Indeed, during the past few years, members of CABS have faced physical attacks, verbal abuses and beatings by poachers, while at the same time they have been accused and slandered by politicians and the songbird poachers’ lobby. In every single case, CABS and SPA have asked the responsible officials to answer to and officially publicize any evidences that they may have had, in order to support their ludicrous accusations. This has never happened [⁴¹]. CABS and SPA, also consequently asked from the Cyprus Police itself to investigate all the accusations that have been published by the mass media against their members. In none of these cases, no official complaint has been filed from the complainants’ side and none criminal offences have been established by the Cyprus Police [⁴²].

On the contrary, from 2010 until today, the Famagusta District Court examined three cases in which CABS members have been involved:

- In the first case (Penal Case 5550/2010), on June 2010, a person was convicted and paid a fine of €300 for a joint assault against four activists of CABS and the well known US reporter and novelist Jonathan Franzen, who was accompanying them during the bird protection camp in spring 2010 [⁴³].
- In the second case (Penal Case 4682/2013), on Thursday, 6th of March 2014, all the charges against four members of CABS have been dropped and in the context of a Court’s settlement, the activists received a compensation of €7,000 by the prosecuted man for causing them bodily harm, whilst he was also convicted and was made to pay a fine of €500 for the illegal possession and use of 60 limesticks [⁴⁴].
- In the third case (Penal Case 3566/2013), a member of CABS was falsely accused by a person, who has been convicted in the past for the criminal offence of the illegal possession of 30 protected wild birds in captivity, for trespassing into private property with the aim of conducting a criminal offence and malicious damage, but was found innocent by the Famagusta District Court after the hearing procedure, on Friday, 9th of May 2014 [⁴⁵].

7.4 SOCIAL ASPECTS

Apart from the political and legal level, during the past semester there were also several positive developments at the social level, which are demonstrating that a ‘zero tolerance’ policy against illegal, non-selective and large-scale trapping, killing and trade of protected wild birds could foster social learning and consequently the change of social attitudes on this severe environmental problem.

Specifically, on 7th of February, the President of the Cyprus Hunting Federation and Wildlife Conservation publicly stated, in an interview given in the context of the ‘*Bio for Life*’ project [⁴⁶], that “*the Cyprus Hunting Federation is strongly against poaching and any form of illegality. Poaching obviously impacts on the balance of game species and definitely on the balance of the broader biodiversity*”. Especially in relation to bird trapping, he repeated that “*the Cyprus Hunting Federation is against poaching and any form of illegality*”, while he also added that “*the trapping of migratory and other species of wildlife is, according to the existing legislation, an illegal act and negatively impacts on the broader biodiversity, as well as game species, such as song thrushes (tzikles)*” [⁴⁷]. CABS and SPA welcome this public statement by the President of the Cyprus Hunting Federation, as it is harmonized with the framework of ‘*Larnaca Declaration*’ and contributes in developing and strengthening social understanding and learning on the true impact of illegal bird trapping on the population and species of both migratory and endemic wild birds.

Furthermore, on 7th and 16th of February, national newspapers published the results of a survey of public opinion (poll) on nature and environment, which was conducted by RAI Consultants Ltd, in the context of the ‘*Bio for Life*’ project [48]. The sample included 602 persons, both men and women, older than 18 years old, from all over Cyprus, living both in urban and rural areas. The interviews have been conducted by phone, between 27th and 29th of November 2013, while the results are compared with those of two previous surveys, conducted on June 2011 and November 2012. The poll included three questions on illegal bird trapping [49]:

1. Why do you believe that some people are opposed to ambelopoulia trapping?

A. Results:

- 33% answered “*the methods used are killing many different species of birds*” (in comparison with 23% in 2011 and 32% in 2012),
- 32% answered “*ambelopoulia is an endangered species*” (in comparison with 24% in 2011 and 32% in 2012),
- 21% answered “*it is prohibited by the EU*” (in comparison with 31% in 2011 and 24% in 2012),
- 8% answered “*environmentalists are extremists*” (in comparison with 8% in 2011 and 7% in 2012),
- 3% answered “*for other reasons*” (in comparison with 6% in 2011 and 3% in 2012) and
- 3% answered “*do not know / do not want to answer*” (in comparison with 8% in 2011 and 1% in 2012).

B. Analysis:

These data are demonstrating that social awareness regarding the reason why bird trapping is illegal has been increased within the past three years, as more people understand that the methods used are non-selective (“*are killing many different species of birds*”). At the same time, less people believe that “*it is prohibited by the EU*” and this is “*due to other reasons*”, while there is also a decrease of those who stated that they “*do not know*” or “*do not want to answer*”. Unfortunately, the percentages of people who believe that “*ambelopoulia is an endangered species*” and “*environmentalists are extremists*” remained stable. In terms of gender, men seem to be more aware of the reason why bird trapping is prohibited, as 35% answered that the methods used “*are killing many different species of birds*”, while 26% believe that “*ambelopoulia is an endangered species*”, 24% that “*it is prohibited by the EU*” and 10% because “*environmentalists are extremists*”. At the same time, women do not seem to be so well aware of the reason why bird trapping is prohibited, as only 32% understand that the methods used are non-selective and indiscriminate, thus “*are killing many different species of birds*”, while 38% believe that “*ambelopoulia is an endangered species*”, 19% that “*it is prohibited by the EU*” and only 7% because “*environmentalists are extremists*”. In terms of age, the people who are older than 30 years old seem to be more aware of the reason why bird trapping is prohibited, while the majority (52%) of people who are younger than 30 years old believe that it is prohibited because “*ambelopoulia is an endangered species*”. Lastly, it is crucial to note that in the areas where illegal bird trapping is widespread (Famagusta and Larnaca) a significant percentage of people believe that bird trapping is illegal because “environmentalists are extremists”: specifically, 20% of the interviewees from Famagusta and 11% from Larnaca districts are blaming environmentalists, instead of understanding that the methods used for trapping ambelopoulia are non-selective and indiscriminate.

2. How often do you eat ambelopoulia?

A. Results:

- 84% answered “*never*” (in comparison with 88% in 2012),
- 10% answered “*once a year*” (in comparison with 9% in 2012),

- 5% answered “2-5 days per year” (in comparison with 3% in 2012) and
- 1% answered “more than 10 days per year” (in comparison with 0% in 2012).

B. Analysis:

These data are demonstrating that the consumption of ambelopoulia in 2013 has been significantly increased. This seems to be a result of the fact that the competent authorities have not demonstrated a ‘zero tolerance’ policy in 2013 [⁵⁰], while several politicians publicly supported the consumption of ambelopoulia as a ‘traditional meze’ [⁵¹]. At the same time, the so-called ‘Friends of Limesticks’ enjoyed a lot of publicity by the mass media and went so far as to argue that they are going to organize themselves in order to demand the legalization of limesticks and the consumption of ambelopoulia [⁵²]. In addition, the raids against restaurants selling and serving ambelopoulia have been significantly decreased in 2013 (7 restaurants checked and 3 prosecuted), in comparison with 2010 (20 restaurants checked and 13 prosecuted), 2011 (32 restaurants checked and 16 prosecuted) and 2012 (18 restaurants checked and 8 prosecuted) [⁵³]. Last but not least, we also have to note that to this date no restaurant license has been revoked from a restaurateur convicted for illegally offering trapped birds, even if he was convicted more than two times and although that the Game Fund has estimated that the illegal and untaxed bird trapping ‘business’ is of the order of 15 million Euros per year. Untaxed of course! [⁵⁴]. At this point it is crucial to note that a plate of ambelopoulia, which is served in restaurants between €70-90 Euro, could not be considered as a ‘traditional meze’, but rather as a ‘luxury meze’: this fact seems to explain why only 10% of the interviewees eat ambelopoulia once a year, 5% 2-5 days per year and only a tiny 1% more than 10 days per year.

Nevertheless, we have to highlight the fact that these data are clearly demonstrating that the vast majority of the population (84-88%) does not eat ambelopoulia. Moreover, it is also important to note that according to this poll, the consumption of ambelopoulia is a privilege of men, as 27% of the men interviewed answered that are eating ambelopoulia at least once a year. In contrast, 94% of the women interviewed answered that are never eating ambelopoulia. However, it is alarming that a higher percentage of younger people appear to consume ambelopoulia: 23% of the interviewees between 18-29 years old, 16% of those between 30-49 years old, 14% of those between 50-64 years old and 10% of those older than 64 years old answered that they eat ambelopoulia. This seems to be a result of the fact that there are currently no (and never have been) national communication strategies, public awareness campaigns and environmental education projects aiming at changing attitudes on this issue. Apart from the efforts of environmental NGOs (CABS and SPA, BirdLife Cyprus, Cyprus Conservation Foundation Terra Cypria and Friends of the Earth Cyprus), the loudest ‘voices’ heard in the public debate on the problem are poachers and politicians from the major trapping areas (Larnaca and Famagusta), speaking out in support of this serious criminal activity and environmental atrocity. All relevant state authorities – including the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, and the Ministry of Interior – generally display no interest in the prospect of changing public attitudes to ambelopoulia eating, and do little or nothing to promote all necessary public communication, awareness and education strategies needed to tackle the problem at its roots [⁵⁵]. This is also evident by the fact that the majority (60%) of the interviewees who stated that eat ambelopoulia is coming from the major trapping hotspots of Famagusta and Larnaca districts. Specifically, 34% of the interviewees from Famagusta and 26% of those from Larnaca answered that they consume ambelopoulia, in comparison with 18% in Limassol, 11% in Nicosia and only 6% in Paphos.

3. Are you trapping ambelopoulia yourself or are you consuming them in restaurants?

A. Results:

- 58% answered that was “provided ambelopoulia from relatives and friends” (in comparison with 63% in 2012),

- 39% answered that is “*consuming ambelopoulia in restaurants*” (in comparison with 26% in 2012) and
- 14% answered that is “*trapping ambelopoulia themselves*” (in comparison with 13% in 2012).

B. Analysis:

These data are clearly demonstrating that the lack of a ‘zero tolerance’ policy against illegal bird trapping encourages the medium and semi-professional trappers and lends them a sense of security not only for trapping, but also for ‘dealing’ ambelopoulia to relatives and friends. In addition, small and amateur trappers continue to trap for home consumption and maintain that they have a traditional right to trap and consume protected wild birds. As stated above, the most alarming development in 2013 is the fact that there was a significant increase of the consumption of ambelopoulia in restaurants, something which acts as a driver of the black market and creates huge profits for big and professional trappers, who are providing restaurants with protected wild birds, as well as for the restaurant owners themselves who are serving them.

Furthermore, as BirdLife Cyprus notes, “*at the national level bird trapping was covered in newspapers articles, radios and TV programmes*” [56], mostly due to the communication work of CABS and SPA, as well as within the context of the ‘*Bio for Life*’ project, which is coordinated by the Cyprus Conservation Foundation Terra Cypria and implemented in partnership with *Dias Publishing Public Ltd*, a major media agency including among others the TV station *Sigma*, the news portal *SigmaLive* and the newspapers *Simerini (Daily)* and *City Free Press* [57]. Especially in relation to the latter, several TV shows have been broadcasted and several newspapers articles have been published on illegal bird trapping. According to BirdLife Cyprus, “*although most of the coverage was supportive of the anti-trapping effort, highlighting the large scale killing of birds and the non-selective nature of this activity, there was also pro trapping coverage. During the programme ‘Anoikti Grammi’ (‘Open Line’) at Sigma TV channel on the 16th May 2014, the President of the so called ‘Association of Traditional and Sustainable Hunting Methods’ (previously called ‘Association of the Friends of Limesticks’), Mr Stavros Neophytou, claimed that the data of environmental NGOs with regards to the large scale and non-selective killing of migratory birds in Cyprus are unsubstantiated and wrong, and an attempt to mislead the general public. During the show the Mayor of Paralimni, Mr Theodoros Pyrillis, and a Member of the Cyprus Parliament, Dr Kyriakos Xadjigiannis, spoke on air and supported the continuation of illegal bird trapping and that it is a traditional, small scale practice. In a very bold manner, the Mayor of Paralimni also admitted that money made from illegal bird trapping funded his university studies, a clear indication of the large scale, money making business that bird trapping has become*” [58]. BirdLife Cyprus prepared a press release dismissing all the misleading and unsubstantiated claims made by the pro trapping lobby during the show [59]” [60].

Nevertheless, in the next programme of ‘*Anoikti Grammi*’ on illegal bird trapping, which was broadcasted by Sigma TV on Wednesday, 2nd of July 2014, the milestone report of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights was extensively discussed. The guests of the programme were the President of the so called ‘*Association of Traditional and Sustainable Hunting Methods*’ (previously called ‘*Association of the Friends of Limesticks*’), Mr Stavros Neophytou, the Officer of the Ombudsman’s Office, Ms Maria Tsotsi, and the Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus of CABS and SPA, Mr Klitos Papastilianou. After the TV programme, RAI Consultants Ltd conducted another poll by phone, once again in the context of the ‘*Bio for Life*’ project, regarding the credibility of the arguments raised by the guests of the programme. The sample included 501 persons, both men and women, older than 18 years old, from all over Cyprus, living both in urban and rural areas. The interviews have been conducted by phone, between 7th and 11th of July 2014. The poll included five questions [61]:

A. Questions and answers:

1. Have you watched the programme ‘*Anoikti Grammi*’ on ambelopoulia last week, at Sigma TV channel with Ms Alexandrinou?

- 89% (445 persons) answered “*No*” and

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- 11% (56 persons) answered “Yes”.
- 2. Which guest has convinced you with his arguments (only those 56 persons who answered “Yes” in the previous question were asked)?**
- 71% (40 persons) answered “Mr Papastylianos who was supporting the implementation of the legislation and the immediate enforcement of the law”,
 - 27% (15 persons) answered “Mr Neophytou who was supporting the legalization of ambelopoulia trapping” and
 - 2% (1 person) answered “none of the two”.
- 3. Was this programme able to change your view on the issue of ambelopoulia trapping (only those 56 persons who answered “Yes” in the previous question were asked)?**
- 14% (8 persons) answered “Yes” and
 - 86% (48 persons) answered “No”.
- 4. Are you going to continue eating ambelopoulia after watching this programme (only those 56 persons who answered “Yes” in the previous question were asked)?**
- 42% (23 persons) answered “Yes”,
 - 14% (8 persons) answered “No” and
 - 45% (25 persons) answered “I haven’t been eating ambelopoulia before watching the programme”.
- 5. Do you believe that the phenomenon of illegal trapping of migratory birds and the consumption of ambelopoulia could have a negative impact on our tourism (all 501 interviewees were asked)?**
- 50% answered “Yes”,
 - 49% answered “No” and
 - 1% answered “I don’t know”.

B. Analysis:

This poll demonstrates that social change through the strengthening of environmental education and social learning is possible. It is important to note 19% of the interviewees from Famagusta district, who were the main targeted audience, watched the programme; this was the highest percentage in comparison with 16% from Paphos district, 12% from Limassol district, 10% from Nicosia district and 7% from Larnaca district. Moreover, the vast majority of the interviewees who watched the programme were convinced by the argumentation on the need to adopt and implement a ‘zero tolerance’ policy against illegal bird trapping. Equally important is the fact that 14% of the interviewees who watched the programme stated that this discussion was able to change their view on the issue. In terms of gender, 7% (2 of the 32 interviewed men) and 24% (6 of the 24 interviewed women) answered that this discussion was able to change their opinion on the problem, something which demonstrates that women are more possible to being sensitized on this issue. At the same time, 14% stated that will not continue eating ambelopoulia after watching the programme. Once again, in terms of gender, 20 of the 32 interviewed men answered that they will continue consuming ambelopoulia, while only 4 of the 24 interviewed women answered the same, something which confirms that the consumption of ambelopoulia is a privilege of men. However, half of the interviewees have not been convinced that the severe environmental problem of illegal bird trapping could have a negative impact on our tourism. Once again, in terms of gender, it is useful to note that 44% of the men interviewed answered that illegal bird trapping

could have a negative impact on our tourism; in contrast, 56% of the women interviewed answered the same. Lastly, in terms of age, 52% of the interviewees between 18-29 years old, 34% of the interviewees between 30-49 years old, 59% of the interviewees between 50-64 years old and 68% of the interviewees who are older than 65 years old believe that illegal bird trapping could have a negative impact on our tourism. Although that this is not so clear, it seems that older people have the maturity to view the problem in a more holistic way and take into consideration the broader negative impacts that illegal bird trapping has on our tourism.

8 INCIDENTS OF AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE

Thanks to the new strategy employed with less visibility of the volunteers in the field and no physical involvement in prosecutions, there was neither incident of aggression, nor verbal threats against CABS' members.

9 THE BRITISH EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA

During spring season trapping in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) of Dhekelia is less intense and regular than in autumn and winter: the scarcer presence of birds probably makes less rewarding for professional trappers to invest time in trapping. Nevertheless, the usual and well-known trapping sites are found active also in spring on a smaller scale. According to our night monitoring, every night a different trapping site was detected in activity, showing that each trapper picked a day of the week for some random mist-netting, probably for leisure or home consumption. In our sample the same trapping site was never active in the following nights. The same pattern can be observed also in the Republic of Cyprus, just beyond the eastern ESBA border, around the village of Xylophagou and Liopetri.

We engaged the ESBA Police on one of these sites, on the 15th of April. The site was detected active in the night and the meeting was set before dawn with the ESBA police. Nevertheless, the ESBA police officers decided to only dismantle the decoy and made no ambush at dawn to catch trappers red-handed. Once again the ESBA Police showed no will to prosecute the trappers.

Despite BirdLife Cyprus reported and observed numerous active trapping sites in the ESBA, only few prosecutions have been made by the British Police in spring 2014. According to BirdLife Cyprus, *"in total 19 trapping locations were reported, but no confiscations or prosecutions were made. In many cases, the SBA Police checked the location 1 month or more later, and the feedback included mainly the clearing of trapping paraphernalia, such as pole bases and poles or that no activity was found"*. BirdLife Cyprus notes that *"there must be a much quicker response time i.e. within a day or so (except in circumstances when a big operation may be planned for a big trapping site), in order for enforcement to act as a deterrent to this activity and to start implementing a 'zero tolerance' approach on the ground"*. Through their cooperation with the ESBA Police, CABS and SPA also believe that there is neither a 'zero tolerance' policy nor proactive law enforcement on the ground in the British ESBA [62].

10 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Republic of Cyprus: A positive change has taken place this spring with the re-establishment of the cooperation between CABS and the APS in the field. The effect was visible after few days and the bare presence of the police worked as a deterrent, forcing trappers to decrease their trapping activity. Common strategies used and observed were trapping only once in the week, only on fruit "lure" trees (loquat and mulberry), in order to increase capture even in short time spans. Or they trapped every day and all the day using few limesticks and relying on the practice of the verbal warnings, once and if caught red-handed.

CABS and SPA urge the competent authorities of the Republic of Cyprus to adopt and implement the recommendations made by the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights. Moreover, CABS and SPA are calling the competent authorities of the Republic of Cyprus to:

- Increase the minimum fine in order for the Judges and Courts to impose higher and more deterrent penalties;
- Zero tolerance must be implemented on the ground: verbal warnings are virtually infinite (no record is kept of a warned person and policemen often turn over) and judges give either way low fines for the first conviction. If the goal is to stop a trapper, the verbal warning only makes the process some steps longer;
- Increase the operational capacity of the APS, by doubling its staff, at least during bird trapping and hunting seasons;
- Require that all law enforcement agencies keep an average number of prosecutions every year to avoid huge fluctuations in the enforcement efforts, mainly dependent on political will rather than real change in trapping trends;
- Require that all law enforcement agencies regularly publish their results, in order for third parts to evaluate their efforts.

ESBA: Many developments took place during the last two seasons in the ESBA area. The approach of the ESBA police has been strongly criticized by environmental NGOs and even by other institutions that now look with scepticism at the very poor results achieved by the Administration and the Police of the British ESBA. On March 2014, Prince Charles himself wrote an open letter to the ESBA Administration asking for a U-turn in finally clamping down bird trapping on the territory under British jurisdiction and ordering immediate measures, such as the eradication of the acacia plantations, which are planted, irrigated and used by bird trappers in Cape Pyla.

Environmental NGOs expect therefore a change in the attitude of the Administration and Police of the British ESBA. To the best of our knowledge there are only two positive changes during the last semester – the increase of fines and penalties imposed by the Court of the British SBAs, as well a proactive arrest of two songbird poachers in late August. With the exemption of these two positive developments, as far as know until now the approach of the British ESBA Police was to please NGOs monitoring illegal bird trapping, without combating the phenomenon.

CABS and SPA urge the British SBAs Administration and Police to adopt and implement a ‘zero tolerance’ policy in praxis and not just in theory, following the recommendations of ‘Larnaca Declaration’ and the United Kingdom Police Partnership Against Wildlife Crime [⁶³].

11 ANNEX 1: LIMESTICKS, AN UNDERESTIMATED ECOLOGICAL THREAT

Both the public opinion and the competent authorities still consider limesticks a sort of “*natural, traditional and sustainable trapping method*” [sic]. Even when not clearly said, the attitude of police officers tends to be more tolerant towards someone who is using limesticks. Limesticking is seen as a misdemeanor: in some cases policemen even accept the thesis that they are set out to protect fruit trees from birds. Unfortunately, these assumptions are not based on any evidence of a more selectivity or of a minor catching rate of limesticks compared with mist nets, but only on the Cypriot image of the “traditional” aged trapper, which – even when this is true – does not mean that they do not pose a serious threat to birds. In spring 2014 we have carefully recorded in our log the number of birds found in mist nets and limesticks together with the APS and, when possible, we have noted down the time elapsed between the setting of the traps and our intervention. The 10 cases where all this info was available are listed below and shed light to trapping catching rate of nets and limesticks. Following observations can be made:

- 1) Mist nets have a very low catching rate in our sample. This can be explained though with the location of the trapping sites, located in Maroni, Liopetri and Vrysoules, outside the main migration route, which in spring takes place mainly on the south eastern coast of Cyprus.
- 2) The number of caught birds does not increase proportionally with the number of limesticks in use. Few limesticks catch proportionally more birds.
- 3) The use of fruit trees (mulberry and loquat) allows the highest catching rate, even higher than the use of tape lures.
- 4) The cases n° 1, 2, 3 and 4 (low number of traps, no tape lure) are dealt by the police (and Game Fund) with oral warning, whereas the rest are prosecuted. This means that an amateur trapper that wisely uses his trapping trees every day setting 5-10 limesticks can catch 2-4 birds in a couple of hours and up to 8-12 in one day (if he collects trapped birds more than once in the day). The same number of birds can be killed by a professional trapper (case 6 and 7) with 62 limesticks and tape lures in 2 hours at dawn. This trapper will be prosecuted. Two different strategies lead to the same result, but the “low profile” one allows trappers to avoid prosecution virtually forever.

Serial N°	N° of caught Birds	N° of limesticks/nets	Time elapsed	Fruit trees	Tape lure	Catching rate Bird/traps
1	2	2 limesticks	5 hours	Yes	No	1/1
2	2	4 limesticks	2 hours	Yes	No	½
3	3	10 limesticks	1:30 hour	Yes	No	1/3.3
4	7	20 limesticks	About 3 hours	Yes	No	1/2.8
5	7	42 limesticks	About 3 hours	Yes	No	1/6
6	9	62 limesticks	2:00 hours	No	Yes	1/6.8
7	11	62 limesticks	2:00 hours	No	Yes	1/ 5.6
8	4	73 limesticks	2:20 hours	No	Yes	1/18.2
9	5	2 nets	1:40 hours	No	Yes	1/ 0.25
10	6	2 nets	2:30 hours	No	Yes	1/0.3
11	6	2 nets	5:00 hours	No	Yes	1/0.3

As BirdLife Cyprus notes, “*nowadays, bird trapping in Cyprus is widespread and extensive, contributing to the large scale killing of hundreds of thousands of migratory and wintering birds, and survey records show that 152 bird species have been found bird trapped in mist nets or limesticks, of which 78 are listed as threatened by the EU Birds Directive and / or BirdLife International. This is a clear indication of the non-selective nature of these methods. This illegal activity has become a profitable business which is controlled to a large extent by the ‘big’ trappers who are also involved in organised crime, and the Cyprus Game and Fauna Service estimated this illegal business to be of the order of millions of Euro*” [64]. The use of limesticks poses an equally significant threat to the populations and species of wild birds, as the use of mist nets.

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³⁹ “Chapter 5.6: Fines and Penalties Imposed by the Courts”, in Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) & Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), *Field Report: Spring 2013 Bird Protection Camp, 5 April – 5 May 2013*. Bonn and Bielefeld, Germany: Monday, 22/07/2013, pages 17-20. Access via:

http://www.stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org/seiten/projekte/Zypern_Vogelschutzcamp-Report_Fruehjahr_2013.pdf

⁴⁰ “Social and Political Attitudes”, in BirdLife Cyprus, “Update on illegal bird trapping activity in Cyprus: Covering the Spring 2014 findings of BirdLife Cyprus’ continuing monitoring programme for illegal bird trapping in Cyprus and providing an overview of the latest developments regarding the problem”, Nicosia: July 2014, page 18. Access via:

http://www.birdlifecyprus.org/upload/BirdLifeCyprus_Spring2014trappingreport_Final_3007.pdf

⁴¹ For example, see the following letters to government officials:

Πτηνολογικός Σύνδεσμος Κύπρου & Φίλοι της Γης Κύπρου, Τρίτη, 1 Μαρτίου 2011, «Κοινή επιστολή διαμαρτυρίας – Προς: Πρόεδρο Δημοκρατικού Συναγερμού, κ. Νίκο Αναστασιάδη – Θέμα: Αποσαφήνιση της επίσημης θέσης του Δημοκρατικού Συναγερμού σχετικά με την παράνομη και μη-επιλεκτική παγίδευση και θανάτωση άγριων πτηνών». Πρόσβαση:

http://foecyprus.weebly.com/uploads/4/1/1/1/411132/01-03-11_I-to-disy-president-nikos-anastasiades.pdf

Φίλοι της Γης Κύπρου, Παρασκευή, 20 Μαΐου 2011, «Επιστολή διαμαρτυρίας – Προς: Επίτροπο Περιβάλλοντος και Βουλευτή Επαρχίας Αμμοχώστου του Δημοκρατικού Συναγερμού, Δρ. Κυριάκο Χατζηγιάννη – Κοινοποίηση: Πρόεδρο Δημοκρατικού Συναγερμού, κ. Νίκο Αναστασιάδη – Θέμα: Επιστολή διαμαρτυρίας με αίτημα τη δημόσια τεκμηρίωση καταγγελίας περί “χρηματοδότησης από την Τουρκία με μοναδικό σκοπό την έκθεση της Κύπρου ως χώρας τουριστικού προορισμού”». Πρόσβαση:

<http://foecyprus.weebly.com/uploads/4/1/1/1/411132/20-05-11-I-to-mp-kyriakos-hadjiyiannis.pdf>

⁴² For example, see the following newspaper articles, which published ill-founded and false accusations against ornithologists and environmentalists:

Ο Φιλελεύθερος, Παρασκευή, 7 Οκτωβρίου 2011, Ένθετο «Όλα για το Κυνήγι – Goal News», Πάμπος Βασιλάς, «Κακόβουλη ενέργεια σε βάρος κυνηγών: Οργή στο Παραλίμνι», σελ. 2 ·

Ο Φιλελεύθερος, Τετάρτη, 12 Οκτωβρίου 2011, «Άνω – κάτω τους έκαναν και φέτος οι ακτιβιστές: Ξέσπασμα οργής και εκδήλωση στο Παραλίμνι. Κάτοικοι: Όργιο παραβίασης της ιδιωτικής ζωής από ‘ξενόφερτους’. Συμπαράσταση από Βουλευτές», σελ. 22 ·

Ο Πολίτης, Τετάρτη, 12 Οκτωβρίου 2011, «Κοκκινοχώρια vs Ακτιβιστές: Στο Παραλίμνι», σελ. 37 ·

Ο Φιλελεύθερος, Παρασκευή, 14 Οκτωβρίου 2011, Ένθετο «Όλα για το Κυνήγι – Goal News», Πάμπος Βασιλάς, «Βασάνιζαν ... ηλικιωμένο ‘κρεμασμένο’ στο δέντρο! Επέδραμαν οι ακτιβιστές. Βουίζει το Παραλίμνι για την υπόθεση: Έπιασαν τη σκάλα που πατούσε και τον γιουχάιζαν», σελ. 3 ·

Η Αλήθεια, Δήμητρα Λάντου, Πέμπτη, 20 Οκτωβρίου 2011, «Κλεφτοπόλεμος με ακτιβιστές στο Παραλίμνι: Ακτιβιστές εισβάλλουν σε περιστατικά χωρίς άδεια για να εμποδίσουν το κυνήγι των αμπελοπουλιών προξενώντας ζημιές», σελ. 16.

Πρόσβαση:

<http://foecyprus.weebly.com/uploads/4/1/1/1/411132/false-accusations-published-in-daily-press.pdf>

See also the relevant letters of environmental organisations and the response of the Cyprus Police:

Φίλοι της Γης Κύπρου, Δευτέρα, 17 Οκτωβρίου 2011, «Ενημερωτική επιστολή – Προς: Υπουργό Δικαιοσύνης και Δημόσιας Τάξης, κ. Λουκά Λουκά. Κοινοποίηση: Γενικό Διευθυντή Υπουργείου Δικαιοσύνης και Δημόσιας Τάξης, Δρ. Πέτρο Καρεκλά. Θέμα: Ενδυνάμωση της συνεργασίας μεταξύ των αρμόδιων αρχών και των περιβαλλοντικών οργανώσεων – Κλιμάκωση των επιχειρήσεων της Κυπριακής Αστυνομίας εναντίον των μεγάλων παγιδευτών άγριων πτηνών – Διερεύνηση καταγγελιών εναντίον περιβαλλοντικών ακτιβιστών και πτηνολόγων ερευνητών». Πρόσβαση: http://foecyprus.weebly.com/uploads/4/1/1/1/411132/letter_to_the_ministry_of_justice_and_public_order_-_17.10.2011.pdf ·

Φίλοι της Γης Κύπρου, Δευτέρα, 17 Οκτωβρίου 2011, «Ενημερωτική επιστολή – Προς: Βοηθό Αρχηγό (Υποστήριξης) και Βοηθό Αρχηγό (Επιχειρήσεων) της Αστυνομίας Κύπρου. Κοινοποίηση: Επικεφαλή Κλιμακίου Πάταξης Λαθροθηρίας της Αστυνομίας Κύπρου. Θέμα: Ενδυνάμωση της συνεργασίας μεταξύ των αρμόδιων αρχών και των περιβαλλοντικών οργανώσεων – Κλιμάκωση των επιχειρήσεων της Κυπριακής Αστυνομίας εναντίον των μεγάλων παγιδευτών άγριων πτηνών – Διερεύνηση καταγγελιών εναντίον περιβαλλοντικών ακτιβιστών και πτηνολόγων ερευνητών». Πρόσβαση: http://foecyprus.weebly.com/uploads/4/1/1/1/411132/letter_to_cyprus_police_headquarters_-_17.10.2011.pdf

Αρχηγείο της Αστυνομίας Κύπρου, Τρίτη, 22 Νοεμβρίου 2011, «Απαντητική επιστολή – Προς: Πρόεδρο Περιβαλλοντικής Οργάνωσης Φίλοι της Γης Κύπρου. Θέμα: Ενδυνάμωση της συνεργασίας μεταξύ των αρμόδιων αρχών και των περιβαλλοντικών οργανώσεων». Πρόσβαση:

http://foecyprus.weebly.com/uploads/4/1/1/1/411132/answer_from_cyprus_police_headquarters_22.11.2011.pdf

[⁴³] Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS), Press release – Friday, 1 May 2011, “Bird conservationists stoned and brutally beaten by Cypriot trappers: Two Italian activists taken to hospital for treatment”. Access via: <http://www.komitee.de/en/projects/cyprus/bird-camp-spring-2010/poachers-attack-volunteers-paralimni> ·

Φίλοι της Γης Κύπρου, Δελτίο τύπου – Τρίτη, 4 Μαΐου 2010. «Οι λαθροθήρες ξυλοκοπούν τους ακτιβιστές και οι ψηφοθήρες υπονομεύουν τη δημοκρατία». Πρόσβαση:

http://foecyprus.weebly.com/uploads/4/1/1/1/411132/04-05-10_pr_-_oi_lathrothires_ksilokopoun_tous_aktivistes_kai_oi_psifothires_tin_dimokrratia.pdf ·

Φίλοι της Γης Κύπρου, Δημόσια επιστολή – Πέμπτη, 6 Μαΐου 2010, «Περί της Μη-Βίαιης Άμεσης Δράσης των Πτηνολόγων-Ακτιβιστών». Πρόσβαση:

http://foecyprus.weebly.com/uploads/4/1/1/1/411132/04-05-10_pr_-_oi_lathrothires_ksilokopoun_tous_aktivistes_kai_oi_psifothires_tin_dimokrratia.pdf ·

Jonathan Franzen, “Emptying the Skies: In the Mediterranean, songbirds are being decimated for fun and profit – and in open defiance of the law”, *The New Yorker*, 26 July 2010, pages 48-61. Access via:

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/07/26/100726fa_fact_franzen ·

Jonathan Franzen, “Appetite for Destruction: It may be criminal, cruel and unpalatable, but poached warbler is still very much on the national menu of Cyprus, where millions of songbirds are trapped each year to feed a lucrative market”, *Telegraph Magazine*, 6 November 2010, pages 28-35. Access via:

<http://www.alu.ua.es/j/jbg13/Birds%20migratory.pdf> ·

Jonathan Franzen, “Der Verwüstete Himmel”, *GEO*, 3 March 2011, pages 94-108. Access via:

<http://www.geo.de/GEO/info/newsletter/abo/67395.pdf> ·

Jonathan Franzen, “The Ugly Mediterranean (2010)” in *Farther Away: Essays*, New York: Picador, 2013, pages 73-110 ·

Ο Φιλελεύθερος, «Πρόσωπα και Προσωπεία – Από τον Χρήστο Μιχαηλίδη: Η “απεχθής Μεσόγειος”, η Κύπρος και ο “εκλεκτός μεζές της”», Δευτέρα, 3 Ιουνίου 2013, σελ.28 ·

Jonathan Franzen – Photographs by David Guttenfelder, “Last Song for Migrating Birds: From a glue-covered stick on Cyprus hangs a life, and a question: How can we stop the slaughter of songbirds migrating across the Mediterranean?”, *National Geographic*, July 2013, pages 60-89. Access via:

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2013/07/songbird-migration/franzen-text> ·

Chris Johns, “Editor’s Note: By Chris Johns – A Flying Shame ... There is another predator: Man”, *National Geographic*, July 2013, page 2 ·

Daniel Stone, “The Moment – Caged Birds: An Interview with David Guttenfelder. Behind the Lens: Taking pictures of birds isn’t your usual line of work”, *National Geographic*, July 2013, page 137. Access via:

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2013/07/songbird-migration/guttenfelder-field-notes> ·

Lifo.gr, «Αναγνώσματα στο Lifo.gr: Ο Τζόνναθαν Φράνζεν για τα αμπελοπούλια. Στο βιβλίο του που κυκλοφορεί από τις εκδόσεις Ωκεανίδα ο σπουδαίος συγγραφέας περιγράφει το βάρβαρο τρόπο που οι Κύπριοι παγιδεύουν αυτά τα πουλιά», Παρασκευή, 27 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013. Πρόσβαση:

<http://www.lifo.gr/guide/cultureblogs/bookblog/34229>.

⁴⁴ Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) & Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), Press Release – Thursday, 6 March 2014, “*Accusations against CABS members dropped and activists compensated for body harm: Poacher received a fine by the Famagusta District Court*”. Access via:

<http://www.komitee.de/en/actions-and-projects/cyprus/court-case-march-2014>

Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) & Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), Δελτίο Τύπου – Πέμπτη, 6 Μαρτίου 2014, «Οι κατηγορίες εναντίον μελών της CABS αποσύρθηκαν και οι ακτιβιστές αποζημιώθηκαν για σωματική βλάβη: Το Επαρχιακό Δικαστήριο Αμμοχώστου έβαλε πρόστιμο σε λαθροθήρα». Πρόσβαση:

http://www.komitee.de/sites/www.komitee.de/files/wiki/2014/03/CABS_&_SPA_Greek_Press_Release_06.03.2014.pdf

Ο Φιλελεύθερος, Παρασκευή, 7 Μαρτίου 2014, «Παγιδευτής πουλιών πιάστηκε στα ξόβεργα του: Καταδικάστηκε από το δικαστήριο με πρόστιμο €7,000 για ξυλοδαρμό ακτιβιστών. Όταν αρνήθηκε τις κατηγορίες, οι ακτιβιστές παρουσίασαν βίντεο με σκηνές από την επίθεση εναντίον τους. Κατηγόρησαν τους ακτιβιστές αντί τους λαθροθήρες: Στον αστυνομικό σταθμό τους ενημέρωσαν ότι οι λαθροθήρες υπέβαλλαν καταγγελία εναντίον τους για καταπάτηση ιδιωτικής περιουσίας. Καλούν τον Ιωνά να αναλάβει την πολιτική ευθύνη», σελ. 19

Ο Πολίτης, Τρίτη, 18 Μαρτίου 2014, Γελοιογραφία: «Βερκά; Εκτεθήκαμε...», σελ.13

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The Cyprus Mail, Friday, 7 March 2014, “*Court orders poacher to pay €7,000, acquits activists*”, page 3

BirdLife Cyprus, Press Release – Friday, 7 March 2014, “*BirdLife Cyprus welcomes Court decision vindicating anti-trapping activists*”. Access via:

http://www.birdlifecyprus.org/upload/2014_03_07_Antitrappingactivists_Courtcase_EN_Final.pdf

Πτηνολογικός Σύνδεσμος Κύπρου, Δελτίο Τύπου – Παρασκευή, 7 Μαρτίου 2014, «Ο Πτηνολογικός Σύνδεσμος Κύπρου χαιρετίζει Δικαστική απόφαση που δικαιώνει τους ακτιβιστές που κάνουν εκστρατείες κατά της παράνομης παγίδευσης πουλιών». Πρόσβαση:

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BirdLife Cyprus, April 2014, “*Court decisions against illegal bird trapping*”. Access via:

http://birdlifecyprus.org/en/news-463-Court_decisions_against_illegal_bird_trapping.html

Πτηνολογικός Σύνδεσμος Κύπρου, Απρίλιος 2014, «Δικαστικές αποφάσεις κατά της παράνομης παγίδευσης πουλιών». Πρόσβαση:

<http://birdlifecyprus.org/gr/news-464-.html>

⁴⁵ Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) & Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), Press Release – Tuesday, 13 May 2014, “*Environmental activism is not a crime: Another CABS member was found innocent by the Famagusta District Court!*”

Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) & Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), Δελτίο Τύπου – Τρίτη, 13 Μαΐου 2014, «Ο περιβαλλοντικός ακτιβισμός δεν είναι έγκλημα: Άλλος ένας ακτιβιστής της CABS αθώωθηκε από το Επαρχιακό Δικαστήριο Αμμοχώστου»

The Cyprus Daily, Wednesday, 14 May 2014, “*Nature: Eco-warriors*”, page 1 and “*Anti-poaching group welcomes court victory*”, page 6

The Cyprus Mail, Wednesday, 14 May 2014, “*Court acquits CABS activist*”, page 6. Access via:

<http://cyprus-mail.com/2014/05/13/court-acquits-cabs-activist/>

BirdLife Cyprus, Press Release – Monday, 14 May 2014, “*Recent Court decisions vindicate anti-trapping activities*”. Access via:

http://www.birdlifecyprus.org/upload/2014_05_14_Antitrappingactivists_Courtcase_.pdf

Πτηνολογικός Σύνδεσμος Κύπρου, Δελτίο Τύπου – Δευτέρα, 14 Μαΐου 2014, «Πρόσφατες Δικαστικές αποφάσεις δικαιώνουν τις οργανώσεις που κάνουν εκστρατείες κατά της παράνομης παγίδευσης πουλιών». Πρόσβαση:

http://www.birdlifecyprus.org/upload/2014_05_14_Antitrappingactivists_Courtcase_GR.pdf

BirdLife Cyprus, June 2014, “*Recent Court decisions vindicate anti-trapping campaigns*”. Access via:

http://www.birdlifecyprus.org/en/news-516-Recent_court_decisions_vindicate_anti_trapping_campaigns.html

Πτηνολογικός Σύνδεσμος Κύπρου, Ιούνιος 2014, «Πρόσφατες δικαστικές αποφάσεις δικαιώνουν τις εκστρατείες κατά της παράνομης παγίδευσης πουλιών». Πρόσβαση:

<http://www.birdlifecyprus.org/gr/news-517-.html>

⁴⁶ “The scope of the Bio for Life project is the development of a communication campaign with the aim of raising the public’s awareness on the subject of biodiversity. The project is co-financed by the Directorate General for Environment of the European Union. Project partners are Dias Publishing Public Ltd, Sigma TV, the Cyprus Conservation Foundation Terra Cypria and CrantXpert Consulting. The key messages to be communicated through the campaign are the following: communicate and explain biodiversity and its importance; raise the profile of Cypriot species; communicate and explain how biodiversity is connected to our economic prosperity and well-being; communicate the pan-European effort to preserve biodiversity through the Natura 2000 Network and the benefits of designation in terms of economic / tourist / ecological opportunities; communicate and explain cross-cutting issues, such as the impact of farming, invasive alien species and illegal bird slaughter on biodiversity; explain that biodiversity and ecosystem services are important for a more sustainable economic model”. Access via:

<http://www.cyprusbiodiversity.eu/the-scope-of-bioforlife.html>

⁴⁷ City Free Press – Bio For Life, Sunday, 25 May 2014, “Poaching ‘kills’ biodiversity: Interview with the President of the Cyprus Hunting Federation and Wildlife Conservation, Antonis Kakoullis”, page 2

⁴⁸ Ο Φιλελεύθερος, Παρασκευή, 7 Φεβρουαρίου 2014, σελ. 17, «Έρευνα του Κυπριακού Ιδρύματος Προστασίας του Περιβάλλοντος – Αμπελοπούλια: Ανδρικό προνόμιο...»

Η Σημερινή, Κυριακή, 16 Φεβρουαρίου 2014, σελ.40, «Οι ηλικιωμένοι και οι γυναίκες δεν τρώνε αμπελοπούλια»

⁴⁹ RAI Consultants Ltd, «Έκθεση Αποτελεσμάτων Έρευνας Γνώμης για τη Φύση και το Περιβάλλον: Ετοιμάστηκε για το Κυπριακό Ίδρυμα Προστασίας του Περιβάλλοντος Terra Cypria», Δεκέμβριος 2013

⁵⁰ “Chapter 4.3: Political Reaction and the Forced Suspension of the Camp”, in Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) & Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), “Field Report: Spring 2013 Bird Protection Camp, 5 April – 5 May 2013”. Bonn and Bielefeld, Germany: Monday, 22 July 2013, pages 6-9. Access via:

http://www.stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org/seiten/projekte/Zypern_Vogelschutzcamp-Report_Fruehjahr_2013.pdf

“Chapter 4.1 Cyprus in Year Zero”, in Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) & Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), “Field Report: Autumn 2013 Bird Protection Camp Republic of Cyprus, 20 September – 13 October 2013”. Bonn and Bielefeld, Germany: Friday, 7 March 2014, pages 3-4. Access via:

[http://www.komitee.de/sites/www.komitee.de/files/wiki/2011/02/Cyprus%20Field%20Report%20Autumn%202013%20\(en\).pdf](http://www.komitee.de/sites/www.komitee.de/files/wiki/2011/02/Cyprus%20Field%20Report%20Autumn%202013%20(en).pdf)

⁵¹ “Annex B: Three Recent Statements Demonstrating the Way that Politicians Conceive the Wildlife Crime of Songbird Poaching”, in Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) & Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), “Field Report: Autumn 2013 Bird Protection Camp Republic of Cyprus, 20 September – 13 October 2013”. Bonn and Bielefeld, Germany: Friday, 7 March 2014, pages 24-25. Access via:

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⁵² “Chapter 4.4: Political Support and Underpinning of the Poachers Lobby”, in Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) & Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), “Field Report: Spring 2013 Bird Protection Camp, 5 April – 5 May 2013”. Bonn and Bielefeld, Germany: Monday, 22 July 2013, pages 10-14. Access via:

http://www.stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org/seiten/projekte/Zypern_Vogelschutzcamp-Report_Fruehjahr_2013.pdf

⁵³ Επίτροπος Διοικήσεως και Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων, Τρίτη, 27 Μαΐου 2014, «Έκθεση Επιτρόπου Διοικήσεως και Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων για το φαινόμενο της παράνομης παγίδευσης πτηνών στην Κύπρο με αφορμή το παράπονο με αρ. Α/Π 1511/2013 κατά του Υπουργείου Δικαιοσύνης και Δημόσιας Τάξης», σελ. 23. Πρόσβαση:

http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy/ombudsman/ombudsman.nsf/presentationsArchive_gr/presentationsArchive_gr?Op=enDocument

⁵⁴ “Chapter 5.6: Fines and Penalties Imposed by the Courts”, in Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) & Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), “Field Report: Spring 2013 Bird Protection Camp, 5 April – 5 May 2013”. Bonn and Bielefeld, Germany: Monday, 22 July 2013, pages 17-20. Access via:

http://www.stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org/seiten/projekte/Zypern_Vogelschutzcamp-Report_Fruehjahr_2013.pdf

⁵⁵ “Chapter 5.7: Communication Strategies”, in Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) & Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), “Field Report: Spring 2013 Bird Protection Camp, 5 April – 5 May 2013”. Bonn and Bielefeld, Germany: Monday, 22 July 2013, pages 21-23. Access via:

http://www.stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org/seiten/projekte/Zypern_Vogelschutzcamp-Report_Fruehjahr_2013.pdf

⁵⁶ “Social and Political Attitudes”, in BirdLife Cyprus, “Update on illegal bird trapping activity in Cyprus: Covering the Spring 2014 findings of BirdLife Cyprus’ continuing monitoring programme for illegal bird trapping in Cyprus and providing an overview of the latest developments regarding the problem”, July 2014, page 17. Access via:

http://www.birdlifecyprus.org/upload/BirdLifeCyprus_Spring2014trappingreport_Final_3007.pdf

⁵⁷ Overall, the communication material on illegal bird trapping of the ‘Bio for Life’ project within the past year includes the following categories and reports:

November 2013 – TV spot on ambelopoulia

Bio For Life Project, Cyprus Conservation Foundation Terra Cypria and Sigma TV, Νοέμβριος 2013, «Αμπελοπούλια: Με τον Χαράλαμπο Θεοπέμπτου, Τέως Επίτροπο Περιβάλλοντος της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας και Λέκτορα του Τεχνολογικού Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου». Πρόσβαση:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7g3ld4ZyxM&feature=youtube_gdata

November 2013 – Do you know why bird trapping is illegal?

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**Committee Against
Bird Slaughter**

The *Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS)* – *Komitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V* in German and *Επιτροπή Ενάντια στη Σφαγή των Πουλιών* in Greek – is an international activist and operational bird protection society, with its head office in Bonn in the Federal Republic of Germany. The society was founded in 1975 in Berlin and since then intervenes in particular where bird trappers, poachers and animal traders commit offences against current nature protection legislation in the European Union. The society is always concerned to harmonise its activities closely with the responsible police, forest or customs authorities. In addition, through initiatives at the parliamentary or judicial level, CABS attempt to achieve improvements in the policy and legal guidelines for wildlife, nature and species protection. Currently, the society has 485 members and 11,300 donors throughout the European Union.

CABS is a registered “*Society*” (Registration Number: VR 7095 – Date of Recognition as a Nature Protection Organization: 03.03.1989) by the authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany. Registration as a charity in the United Kingdom under new EU legislation is currently in progress.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS): www.komitee.de/en/homepage

Extending Our Frontiers – Birds Have No Boundaries!



The *Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA)* – *Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt* in German and *Ίδρυμα για την Προστασία της Βιοποικιλότητας* in Greek – concerns itself with the conservation of endangered wildlife species and species diversity. It defines its role as patrons of wildlife, with the statutory obligation to care for all aspects of the natural world in Germany and Europe.

SPA is an officially recognized “*Foundation*” (Date of Recognition: 26.11.2008) under the German civil law code and is registered with the German Tax authorities (Tax Registration Number: 305/5981/1222) and the Foundation Council of the State of North Rhine Westphalia, Germany.

Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA): www.stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org