

SPA - Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt

CAMP DIARY January - February 2018

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| <p>Day 1:</p> | <p>5 active trapping sites found in the night. 3 reported to SBA Police. They removed 2 nets and caller on 1 site and rescued 12 song thrushes. They were too late with investigating other 2 sites as there was nothing at the time of visit. We called game wardens to report 1 active site to them but they didn't answered our call</p> <p>1 active trapping site found in the day. Reported to game wardens and they have collected 25 limesticks. We rescued one common redstart</p> <p>1 illegal hunting site found in the day. Reported to wardens but they investigate it too when the caller was already switched off</p> <p>1 aviary with protected birds found in the day. Reported to game wardens. Protected birds (3 blackbirds, 1 song thrush, 2 wood pigeons, 1 starling and 1 chaffinch) were released.</p> |
| <p>Day 2:</p> | <p>4 active trapping sites found in the night. 2 sites were reported to the SBA Police. At first site they seized 4 nets. Together we them we have rescued 40 birds, 39 song thrushes and 1 blackbird. At second site they seized 3 nets and caller. There were no birds in the nets. Third site was reported to game wardens. They seized 4 nets and caller. We have rescued 20 birds; 19 song thrushes and a blackcap</p> <p>3 illegal hunting sites found in the day. At first site the wardens caught the hunter using electronic caller. He was taken to the police station and he was issued on the spot fine of 500 €. They took his gun away and he will get it back when he pays the fine. Other 2 hunting sites were also investigated by wardens but they made the investigation too late as the caller was already switched off.</p> |
| <p>Day 3:</p> | <p>5 active trapping sites found in the night. All in the ESBA. 2 were investigated by the police. At first site police seized 5 nets and caller. 13 birds were rescued (7 song thrushes, 4 blackbirds and 1 blackcap). At the second site police seized 4 nets and caller. 30 birds were rescued (29 song thrushes and 1 starling).</p> <p>1 active trapping site found in the day. Game wardens seized 75 limesticks. We have rescued 4 birds (1 song thrush, 2 spectacled warblers and 1 common redstart). Song thrush had an injury on the wing from the struggle to get free, but was able to fly well.</p> <p>1 illegal hunting site found in the day. Game wardens have visited again on their own the location in Cape Greco we have reported 1 day earlier. They have caught and prosecuted the hunter for using electronic caller. He was issued a fine of 500 € on the spot.</p> |
| <p>Day 4:</p> | <p>2 active trapping sites found in the night. At first site 2 nets and caller were seized by SBA Police. 3 song thrushes were released. At second site 1 net and caller were seized by SBA Police</p> <p>Our team has been attacked while investigating one trapping site. While approaching the site, they were spotted by trappers. 2 cars appeared and started searching for them. 1 car had a big spotlight in the back to help them with search. While searching for us they kept shooting in the air from both cars.</p> |

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| | <p>We have called SBA Police to help us rescue our team as they were unable to get away. Luckily police did respond and arrived on the spot in half an hour. If they would need a bit more time, our team would be probably caught by poachers. Even in presence of the police car poachers shot several times in the air. Police officer managed to catch one of the shooters and have seized a gun from him. The others escaped. The shooter was later brought to the police station and he will be trialed for the attack.</p> <p>While our team was in the police station to make the statements, 10-12 people arrived to give support to the person who was arrested for shooting. They have spotted our members in the station and took pictures of them.</p> |
| Day 5: | <p>2 active trapping sites found in the night. 1 in the ESBA and 1 was heard from the Northern part of Cyprus. The one in the ESBA was investigated by the SBA Police but they arrived too late, when the nets were already gone.</p> <p>1 active trapping site found in the day. 18 limesticks collected.</p> |
| Day 6: | <p>5 active trapping sites found in the night. 2 were investigated by the SBA Police. At first site they seized 4 nets and caller. 4 birds were rescued. At second site they seized 3 nets and caller. There were no birds in the nets. 1 site was investigated by Cyprus Police. 2 nets and caller were seized. No information about birds</p> |
| Day 7: | <p>3 active trapping sites found in the night. 2 sites were reported to the SBA police. The officers on duty were busy with a case of drunken driver and are unable to make investigations.</p> |
| Day 8: | <p>2 active trapping sites found in the day. 1 site is reported to Cyprus Police APS. They seize 2 nets and caller. No birds in the nets</p> <p>4 illegal hunting sites found in the morning. 1 site is reported to SBA Police. When they arrive at the site, the caller was off. They check the hunters but nothing illegal is found. 3 sites were reported to game wardens. They were unable to come as they are somewhere far in Larnaca District</p> |
| Day 9: | <p>2 active trapping sites found in the night. First one reported to game wardens. They arrive quickly and investigate the site at 2:00 but it was already too late. The nets and caller were already removed by trapper. Second site is reported to SBA Police officers. They seize 1 net and caller and release 7 song thrushes from the net.</p> <p>1 illegal hunting site found in the morning. Hunters were using caller to attract the thrushes. Reported to game wardens. They arrive immediately as we arranged the cooperation previous day. Wardens also heard caller from distance but when they get close, the hunters shut down the caller.</p> |
| Day 10: | <p>102 birds rescued by our teams last night!</p> <p>6 active trapping sites found in the night. Two sites were investigated by SBA Police. They seized 9 nets, 2 callers and rescued 28 song thrushes from the nets. At two sites we removed 4 nets and rescued 72 song thrushes and 2 blackbirds. Two active sites were not investigated.</p> <p>The number of trapped birds at two sites in Maroni was incredibly high. At first place 40 birds were caught in 2 nets and at second place 34 birds were caught in 2 nets. This is by far the highest number of birds per net I have witnessed at winter Camps. Usually there are less than 5 birds caught per net and my previous record, set few days ago, was 10 birds in one net.</p> <p>2 illegal hunting sites were found in the morning. Hunters were using callers to attract</p> |

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| | <p>thrushes. We called the game wardens, but they were unable to investigate as they were busy with another case</p> |
| Day 11: | <p>1 active trapping site found in the night. The caller was shut down when we were walking towards the site. Because of that we were unable to locate it</p> |
| Day 12: | <p>Important raid was made this night. SBA Police raided the trapping site of Vrysoulles gang following our report. 6 nets and electronic caller were seized and 15 song thrushes were rescued. Vrysoulles gang is responsible for brutal attack against our team last winter when they repeatedly hit our car.</p> <p>This is the third raid at the trapping site used by Vrysoulles gang this winter. In December SBA Police removed 8 nets first time and 6 nets second time from that site following our reports.</p> <p>Beside the gang site, 2 more active trapping sites were found in the night. At first site SBA Police removed 1 net. Net was used without caller. No birds were in the net. Second site was found in buffer zone. We engaged game wardens but they didn't make the investigation. They explained to us to arrange the investigation with UN Police. We met the UN Police in the afternoon and arranged the joint operation with UN Police and game wardens tomorrow night</p> |
| Day 13: | <p>We had a free night and free day because of the bad weather. It was raining and it was very windy</p> |
| Day 14: | <p>4 active trapping sites found in the night.</p> <p>At first site we seized 6 nets and rescued 5 birds. 4 song thrushes and 1 blackbird (photo).</p> <p>Second site was reported to Cyprus Police APS officers. They seized 1 net and caller.</p> <p>Third site was reported to the police officers at Zygi police station. We went to the site together with officers. Officers seized 2 nets and caller. 14 birds were rescued, 12 song thrushes and 2 blackbirds.</p> <p>We couldn't determine the exact location of the fourth site. We discovered it late in the night and when we started walking towards it, the caller was switched off. As the sound of the caller was not leading us anymore, we couldn't find the site</p> |
| Day 15: | <p>6 active trapping sites discovered in the night. 4 were visited by SBA Police. 14 nets and 4 electronic callers seized. 75 birds rescued (74 song thrushes and 1 blackcap). 7 dead birds found.</p> <p>3 illegal hunting sites found in the morning. All were reported to game wardens. They investigated all 3 sites. The callers were off at all 3 sites at the time of their visit so no action was taken against hunters. They did check licenses of hunters at 2 sites.</p> <p>High trapping activity discovered in Ayios Nikolaos, the northern part of the UK Eastern Sovereign Base Area in Cyprus. 4 active trapping sites were discovered. All of them were the sites that have been already raided several times by the SBA Police.</p> <p>Two sites that were found active belong to notorious Vrysoulles gang. Police have raided one of these two sites already 3 times this winter and collected 8+6+6= 22 nets. Last raid happened just 3 days ago. Trappers from Vrysoulles gang had 8 nets set again yesterday.</p> |

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| | <p>They continue trapping like nothing happened!!! It is clear that only confiscations made by SBA Police are not enough. And if we were not on island and reporting active trapping sites every night, they would do much less confiscations.</p> <p>We will arrange a meeting with SBA Police chief officers and explain to them that confiscation are not stopping the most active trappers. They should start catching and arresting trappers, if they really want to stop massive level of winter bird trapping</p> |
| Day 16: | <p>Another milestone reached at Bird Protection Camps in Cyprus. It was the first time (as far as I know) that the game wardens successfully ambushed an active trapping site reported by us. It happened in village Zygi. We found a place with 3 nets and caller and later took the game wardens there. They made an ambush and caught a trapper. He received on the spot fine at the police station in Zygi. Th penalty should be around 4000 €</p> <p>Beside the active site in Zygi, we found 2 more active sites. Both were reported to Cyprus Police APS officers. At first site we observed 3 nets and caller. The nets were already gone at the time the officers visit the place. They found only inactive caller buried in the ground. At third site APS officers made a short ambush but nobody came. They seized 2 nets and caller and freed 2 birds. Attached picture shows game wardens with limesticks seized two weeks ago.</p> |
| Day 17: | <p>In the night we didn't go out because of bad weather.</p> <p>0 active trapping sites found in the day</p> <p>Breaking news: Trapper in Zygi received a penalty of 8000 €!</p> <p>His trapping site was found active by our team and was shown to game wardens.</p> <p>The total penalty he received was 8000€. According to the information we received, the local community is very upset by the size of penalty. We welcome the huge penalty as it will be a big deterrent on the winter trapping activity.</p> |
| Day 18: | <p>2 active trapping sites found in the night. Both were reported to the SBA Police officers. We arrive at the first site too late and the nets and caller are not there anymore at the time of our visit. It was again the site of the Vrysoulles gang.</p> <p>At second site officers seize 1 net. In the net are 4 dead birds (2 song thrushes and 2 chaffinches) and we rescue one blackcap</p> |
| Day 19: | <p>0 active trapping sites found in the night. One team went to the Northern part of Cyprus. No callers were heard in the area known for trapping in autumn</p> |
| Day 20: | <p>1 active trapping site found in the night. Reported to the SBA Police officers. They have seized 4 nets and electronic caller. We released 1 song thrush from a net. Attached picture is from February 2017</p> <p>The last few days we are observing very low trapping activity. One of the main reasons is bad weather. It has been raining in the nights for the last 3,4 days. We will see how it will be in the next days when the weather should be better</p> |
| Day 21: | <p>2 active trapping sites found in the night.</p> <p>First site is reported to game wardens. We take them to the place and there we surprise the trappers. They drive away with 2 cars and wardens go after them. They manage to stop one car but when the wardens tries to investigate the car and identify the driver, driver drives away. As they got the registration plates, they went to the police station to identify the driver. If they manage to identify him, the driver will receive a big penalty for</p> |

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| | <p>his offense.</p> <p>PS: Another good prosecution made by game wardens:</p> <p>At the site, reported by us yesterday, game wardens managed to catch and prosecute one of the trappers. I wrote yesterday that they stopped one of trappers but the trapper pushed warden and continue driving.</p> <p>After that wardens went to police station and with the help of registration number, they managed to find the owner of the car. He was asked to come to police station.</p> <p>He was issued on the spot fine for trapping. The total sum will be around 4000-5000 €</p> <p>Second active site was reported to SBA Police. They seize 3 nets and caller and free 9 birds.</p> |
| Day 22: | <p>Another very busy night for us. Together with police we have seize 17 nets and 3 callers. We rescued 43 song thrushes</p> <p>The main reason for high trapping activity was because it was Saturday night. Here are the details about investigations:</p> <p>We found 8 active trapping site in the night and were able to investigate 6 of them.</p> <p>First site was reported to game wardens but when they arrived nets and caller were removed.</p> <p>Second site was reported to SBA Police officers. Together with them we seized 3 nets and caller and rescued 20 thrushes. They also found 3 stored nets in the bags.</p> <p>Third site was also reported to SBA Police. The seized 2 nets and caller.</p> <p>At fourth site SBA Police seized 3 nets and caller. Together with them we rescued 7 thrushes from nets. At 5th site SBA Police seized 3 nets. 3 thrushes were freed from nets.</p> <p>Sixth site was found in the buffer zone. Our team released 14 thrushes and seized 2 nets. 4 nets were left behind as trapper arrived on the spot.</p> |
| Day 23: | <p>We didn't work in the night and in the day as 2 out 3 of us were sick</p> |
| Day 24: | <p>2 active trapping sites found in the night.</p> <p>First one was reported to the SBA Police. As it is often the case, trappers saw their vehicle and have shut down the decoy and collected the nets before they arrived to the site</p> <p>Second site was the same as two nights ago, when we were too late. This time we were more careful to not be seen. We have again reported the site to game wardens and they seized 2 nets and caller from the site. Together with them we rescued 21 song thrushes from the nets!</p> |
| Day 25: | <p>4 active trapping sites found in the night.</p> <p>First one is reported to the SBA Police officers on duty. They seize 3 nets, electronic caller and release 10 caught birds. It is one of the sites used by Vrysoulles gang</p> <p>Second site is reported to the CAT (Crime Action Team) officers from SBA Police (we called them APU before). They seize 1 net and caller. Number of released birds is not known.</p> <p>Third site is also reported to CAT officers. They seize 2 nets and caller. Number of released birds is not known</p> |

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| | <p>Fourth site is reported to game wardens. When they arrive at 5:30, nets are already gone. They are interested to catch him some other time. Trapper is president of hunting association in Liopetri and was already prosecuted twice for trapping</p> |
| Day 26: | <p>3 active trapping sites found in the night</p> <p>All 3 sites were found in Ayios Nikolos and reported to CAT officers. Unfortunately none of the sites were active at 3:00 when the CAT officers investigated them. They found only poles on the ground. Poles were removed from 2 investigated sites.</p> <p>I am not sure why trapping was finished so early this night. Someone might seen us or trappers simply started finishing earlier to avoid confiscations of nets</p> |
| Day 27: | <p>After frustrating previous night, when we were too late with police at all 3 active sites, we again achieved good results this night.</p> <p>Altogether we seized 7 nets and freed 49 birds ! We also achieved 2 new records for the Camps in Cyprus. First record is the number of caught birds found in one net in winter. This night we found 33 birds in 1 net in Maroni! Previous record was 20 birds in 1 net</p> <p>The other record was the time needed for a trapper to replace nets after the confiscation. After we confiscated 2 nets and caller in Maroni, the trapper set up a new net and caller in just an hour and a half! Of course we didn't give him a chance to catch new birds with it and we seized that net too.</p> <p>Here are the details about each active site:</p> <p>We found 2 active sites in the night.</p> <p>First site was reported to SBA Police. They seized 4 nets, caller and rescued 10 birds.</p> <p>Second site was found in Maroni. We tried to engage game wardens but they were not answering the phone so we decided to raid the site. We seized 2 nets, caller and rescued 37 birds. Later, when we were checking for other active sites in the area, we heard a caller from the same place. The trapper has set up new net on the same place we have raided. We seized also this net, the caller and rescued 2 birds</p> |
| Day 28: | <p>2 active sites found in the night</p> <p>First site is reported to the APS officers. They make an ambush for 3 hours but nobody comes. They seize 3 nets, caller and rescue 10 caught birds.</p> <p>At second site we found 2 nets and caller. We have confiscated the nets and rescued 1 caught song thrush.</p> |
| Day 29: | <p>5 active sites found in the night</p> <p>First site was reported to game wardens. They seized 2 nets, caller and together with them we rescued 16 birds from nets. 15 song thrushes and 1 blackcap</p> <p>The remaining 4 sites were found in Ayios Nikolaos. Unfortunately all sites were shut down, when we engaged the police. At 3:00, when police was checking them, the nets were already gone. This has already happened before in Ay Nic and we will have to find a new strategy to seize nets from trappers there. They have become very careful.</p> |
| Day 30: | <p>A night of mixed results and 3 sites found, two of which were new.</p> <p>We started in Western Larnaca where we found a new site with a single net and caller. We could hear a second site so decided to not waste time with game wardens and raid the site. We released two song thrush and took the caller and net and continued.</p> <p>We walked Cape Pyla where they found a site with 5 closed nets on the poles and no</p> |

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| | <p>caller, which had nets confiscated twice already recently this season. 5 nets confiscated. One dead warbler was in the nets so although the trapper wasn't trapping on this occasion, and although the nets looked relatively fresh without any feathers, they must have been used at least once already.</p> <p>We then located our second new site where we found 3 large nets, 2 callers and many (at least 30) birds in the net. We decided to call the Game wardens who arrived at 2:30am. They were very keen to leave the nets for the 4:30am game warden shift so they could arrange an ambush. Despite being a little uncomfortable about leaving so many birds in the nets, we agreed. They assured us they would arrange the ambush with the next shift and we have them some advice as to where they could park and hide and then left. At 5:00am called the game fund to ask if the ambush was in place, but they informed us that they had not been told about this by the earlier shift which was very disappointing. We directed them to the site over the phone and they said they would go to make the ambush. When we spoke to them in the morning they told us they arrived at 5:30am to find everything had gone! Very frustrating!</p> <p>We also spoke to the CAT team who told us they had a site in Ay Nik where the confiscated 3 nets and released 10 birds, and that they had been to a point in Cape Pyla and taken poles.</p> |
| Day 31: | <p>Strange weather last night with very thick fog across the island. We walked the whole of Ay Nik and found nothing. The others team searched the Larnaca district, and some of the more active sites in Famagusta and also found nothing. We also checked a site that has been very active in the Buffer zone and also found nothing.</p> |
| Day 32: | <p>Not much to report. In the afternoon of the previous day we checked some limestick sights. We found signs of trapping at one sight with a lot of feather, and two old limesticks at another. In the night we walked all of Cape Pyla whilst the other team checked Zygi, Maroni, Agios Theodoros, Mazotos, Kelia, Aradipou, Livadia and Avgorou. Then we checked one site in the Buffer and another in Paralimni and found nothing. In the morning we had a meeting with SBA to discuss the findings of the camp.</p> |
| Day 33: | <p>From the afternoon of the previous day we searched a lime stick site in the buffer zone. They didn't find any set lime sticks however they found a bundle of around 30 sticks ready to be prepared on the porch of a property. In the night we found 1497 active within the buffer zone. After a frustrating 1hr 30mins on the phone with the UN we were told they wouldn't be able to do anything until the morning shift started at 7:30am. 3 nets, a decoy, battery and releasing one collared Dove. We also search the area north of Xylotymvou, the area between Ormideia and Cape Pyla, some of Cape Pyla and one site in Liopetri without success. In the afternoon we again did a day search around Araddipou. They saw a man walking down the street plucking blackcaps and dropping the feather on the ground as he went. They searched around to try and find his trapping site but found nothing. We with check the area again this evening.</p> |
| Day 34: | <p>We search Araddipou by foot. Also searched kelia, zygi, Moroni, agia Theodora's, and Mazotos. Then we checked Pergamos and one site in liopetri but found nothing. During the day we searched around Achna reservoir and also found nothing.</p> |
| Day 35: | <p>During the evening we walked Cape Pyla and Ay Nik, and the team in the car team checked Fremaros, Derynia, Aigia Napa and some of the buffer zone to the east. The team were told to leave the buffer zone by a UN patrol who told them they were allowed to be there! We found nothing although I suspect the fenced site in Ay Nik was active as a 1:40am I saw a pick up leaving down the track that leaves the site, however I was too late to get into hearing range to confirm a decoy. In the day we searched around Protaras, Aigia Napa and the buffer but found nothing.</p> |

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| Day 36: | MWe search around zygi, Kalo Chorio, Araddipou, Mazotos, one site in Liopetri, as well as Lythrodontas in the mountains and found nothing. That marks end of camp. This week has been very inactive. The season seems to have ended and the evening temperatures have been very warm. Perhaps birds have moved north. |
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