



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

Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt®
Foundation Pro Biodiversity®

Field Report:
**AUTUMN 2017 BIRD PROTECTION CAMP
CYPRUS**

(27th August – 29th October 2017)



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SUMMARY

In August, September and October 2017, the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) and the Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA – Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt) conducted their 7th Autumn Bird Protection Camp (BPC) in Cyprus. The Camp took place from 27th August – 29th October 2017.

28 activists from 12 different countries participated at the Camp and monitored bird trapping activity in the south-eastern part of the island: Famagusta and Larnaca Districts within Republic of Cyprus (RoC) and in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) – British Overseas Territory in Cyprus. During the Camp, 370 known trapping sites were investigated and **198** (53.5%) of them were found to be active. Overall, the number of active trapping sites shows that the illegal trapping is still very common and widespread in Cyprus. However, the percentage of active trapping sites is the lowest recorded during an autumn Bird Protection Camp and is 6.9 percent lower than the previous autumn (2016). The majority of confirmed active sites were found in the Famagusta District. The density of active trapping sites was highest in the UK Eastern Sovereign Base Area, where we located 77 active trapping sites or 0.6 sites per km² during the Camp.

In total, 3432 limesticks, 145 mist nets and 108 electronic bird callers were seized during the Camp. 595 protected wild birds belonging to 26 different species were found trapped or killed during the Camp.

During the Camp we cooperated with police officers from the Cyprus Police, Sovereign Base Area (SBA) Police and with game wardens from Game and Fauna Service (GFS). We reported 188 active trapping sites to them and they investigated 154 of them (82%). The number of reported cases is the highest ever observed during our autumn Bird Protection Camps and the percentage of investigated cases is the highest as well. This is due to the daily engagement from CABS of the SBA on-duty police and the Anti Poaching Unit of the SBA police. **Unfortunately, despite the efforts made to engage the law enforcement units, the officers caught and prosecuted trappers at just 19 sites out of the 188 reported by our teams.** Within the RoC in 81 cases no law enforcement unit was available and the volunteers had to dismantle the traps on their own.

1 INTRODUCTION

Cyprus lies on one of the key migratory routes that birds use during their journey between Europe and Africa, with around 100 million birds visiting the island every spring and autumn (Lederer 2016). Cyprus is also an important overwintering area for birds which migrate to Cyprus to avoid the harsh winter conditions in continental Europe.

Cyprus is one of the main hotspots of illegal bird killing in the Mediterranean. It is estimated that more than 2 million migrating birds are caught and killed in illegal traps every year in Cyprus (Brochet et al. 2016). Trapping has affected a total of 153 recorded wild bird species, of which 78 are threatened and listed on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive or listed in one of SPEC (Species of European Conservation Concern) categories (Birdlife Cyprus 2016).

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

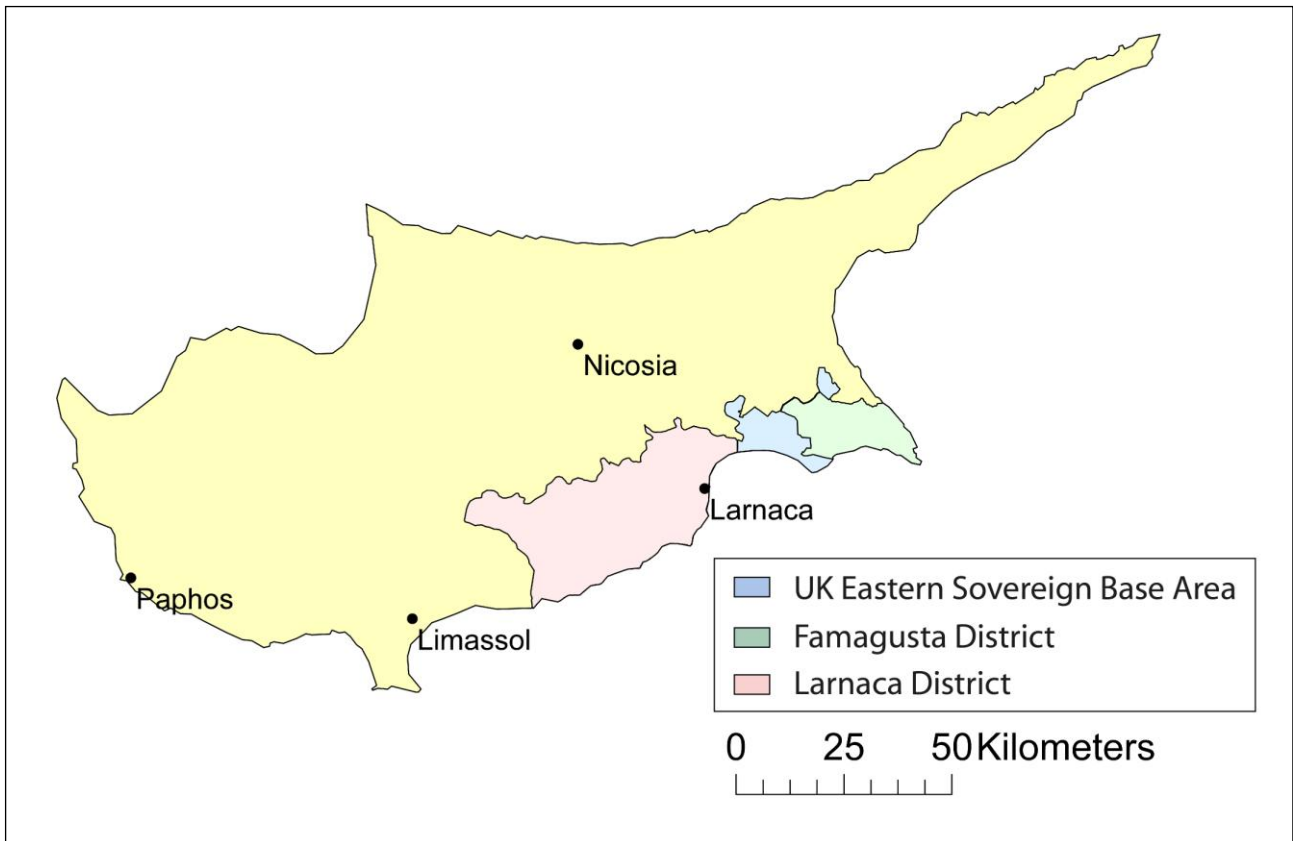
This autumn, the 7th successive Autumn Bird Protection Camp was organised by CABS and SPA in Cyprus. It took place from 27th August – 29th October 2017.

2 WORKING METHODS

A total of 28 activists from Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Great Britain, Slovenia, France, Serbia, Spain, Poland, Hungary and the United States participated at the Camp. Participants searched for active trapping sites in the field and reported them to enforcement agencies for immediate investigation and action against trapping.

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

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



Picture 1: Cyprus and the areas monitored during Autumn 2017 Bird Protection Camp

3 RESULTS OF THE BIRD PROTECTION CAMP

3.1 MONITORING OF OVERALL BIRD TRAPPING ACTIVITY

In autumn 2017 CABS and SPA organised the longest ever Autumn Bird Protection Camp, lasting for 60 days in total. The long duration of the Camp allowed us to cover most of the autumn trapping season, which starts in August and lasts until November. Our teams investigated 370 bird trapping sites during the Camp. Of the 370 sites, 198 were found to be active, either with set traps, active electronic callers or with evidence of recent trapping, such as feathers on the ground.

Table 1: Results of monitoring bird trapping activity during Autumn 2017 Bird Protection Camp.

No. of trapping sites investigated	370
No. of active trapping sites found	198
No. of active trapping sites with limesticks found	99
No. of active trapping sites with nets found	94
No. of active trapping sites with both limesticks and nets found	5

In Table 2 results from this autumn are compared with results from previous autumns. The number of active trapping sites found this autumn is second highest found at Autumn BPCs since 2012, showing that the illegal trapping remains very common in Cyprus.

Table 2: Results of field investigations at Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2017

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Duration of Bird Protection Camp (days)	17	24	28	40	47	60
No. of participants	13	15	14	22	28	28
No of sites investigated	227	247	186	260	519	370
No. of active trapping sites found	132	170	135	162	315	198
Percentage of active trapping sites	58.1	68.8	72.6	62.3	60.6	53.5

As we investigated less trapping sites this autumn than we did in 2016 and more than we did in previous autumns, a direct comparison of active sites found this autumn with the number of active sites found previous autumns is not possible. For the comparison of trapping activity for different years, the proportion between all active sites and all checked trapping sites can be used. This autumn, the percentage of active trapping sites was 53,5 %. This is the lowest in the last six years.

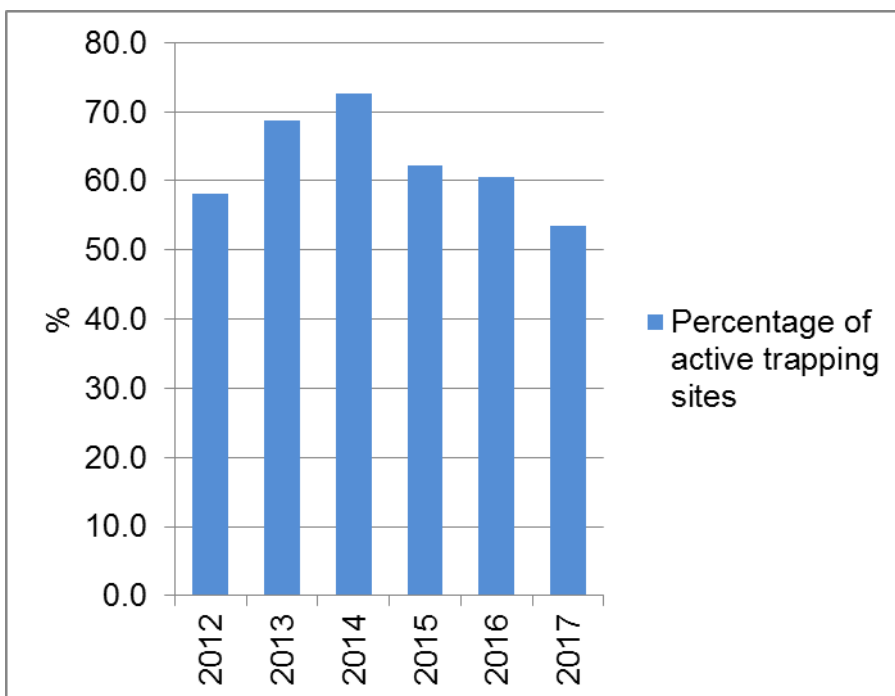


Figure 1: Percentage of active trapping sites recorded at Autumn Bird Protection Camps between 2012 and 2017

3.1.1 TRAPPING ACTIVITY OVER THE DURATION OF THE CAMP

Trapping activity on 198 sites, found to be active during the Camp, was detected 326 times, meaning that on average, each site was found active 1,6 times.

Table 3 presents the number of detections of trapping activity for each week of the Camp. Number of active trapping sites found in October was higher than it was in September.

Table 3: Detected trapping activity from first until last week of Autumn 2017 Bird Protection Camp

Week	28.8. - 3.9.	4.9. - 10.9.	11.9. - 17.9.	18.9. - 24.9.	25.9. - 1.10.	2.10. - 8.10.	9.10. - 15.10.	16.10. - 22.10.	23.10. - 29.10.
No. of active sites found	23	16	36	34	53	47	39	37	33

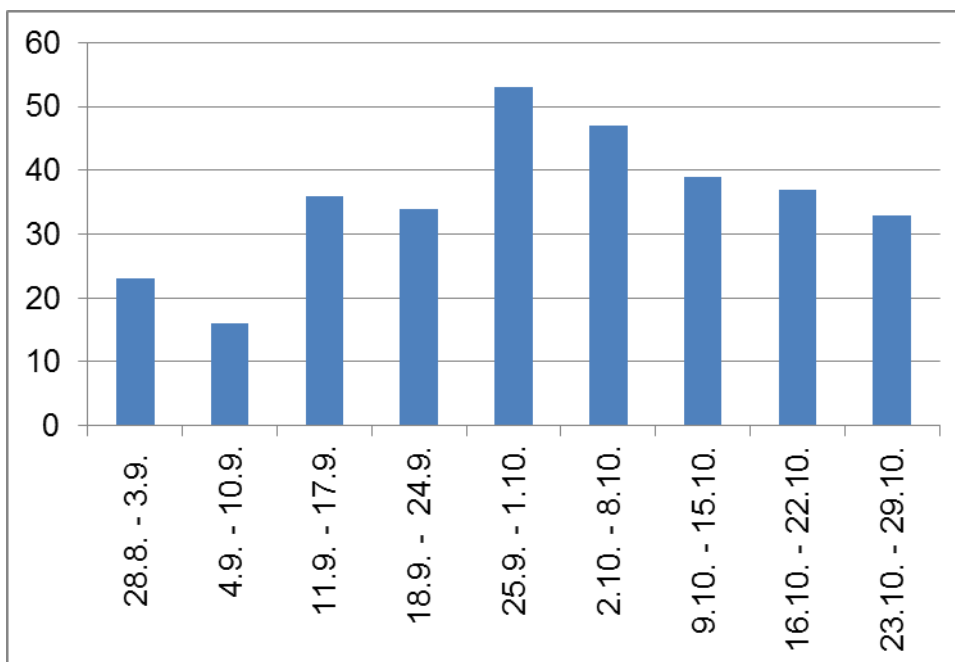


Figure 2: Total number of active trapping sites detected per each week of the Camp.

3.1.2 ACTIVITY OF TRAPPING SITES WITH PREVIOUS PROSECUTIONS (REACTIVATIONS)

During our field investigations, we regularly find repeated incidents of trapping activity at sites where poachers have been caught and prosecuted in the past. This autumn, we checked 51 trapping sites with previous prosecutions and 27 of them were found to be active.

Table 4: Comparison of activity of the trapping sites with previous prosecutions investigated during Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2013-2017

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

3.1.3 TRAPPING ACTIVITY AND TRENDS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

In order to evaluate trapping trends in the Republic of Cyprus as a whole, we present in this chapter the results of our investigations in the Republic of Cyprus for the last 6 autumns (Table 5). The results achieved in 2017 are in line with the previous years and show a small decrease of trapping activity that has started in 2014. Unfortunately this decrease has diminished in 2017, in correlation with the reduction of engagement from the APS, as we will show in chapter 3.2.4.

Table 5: Trend of trapping and results of bird trapping investigations in the Republic of Cyprus during autumn BPCs (2012-2017)

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
No of sites investigated	198	232	195	220	359	280
No. of active trapping sites found	105	155	126	124	170	118
Percentage of active sites found	53.0	66.8	64.6	56.4	47.4	42.1
Trend	-	+13.8	-2.2	-8.2	-9	-5.3

3.1.3.1 TRAPPING ACTIVITY IN FAMAGUSTA DISTRICT

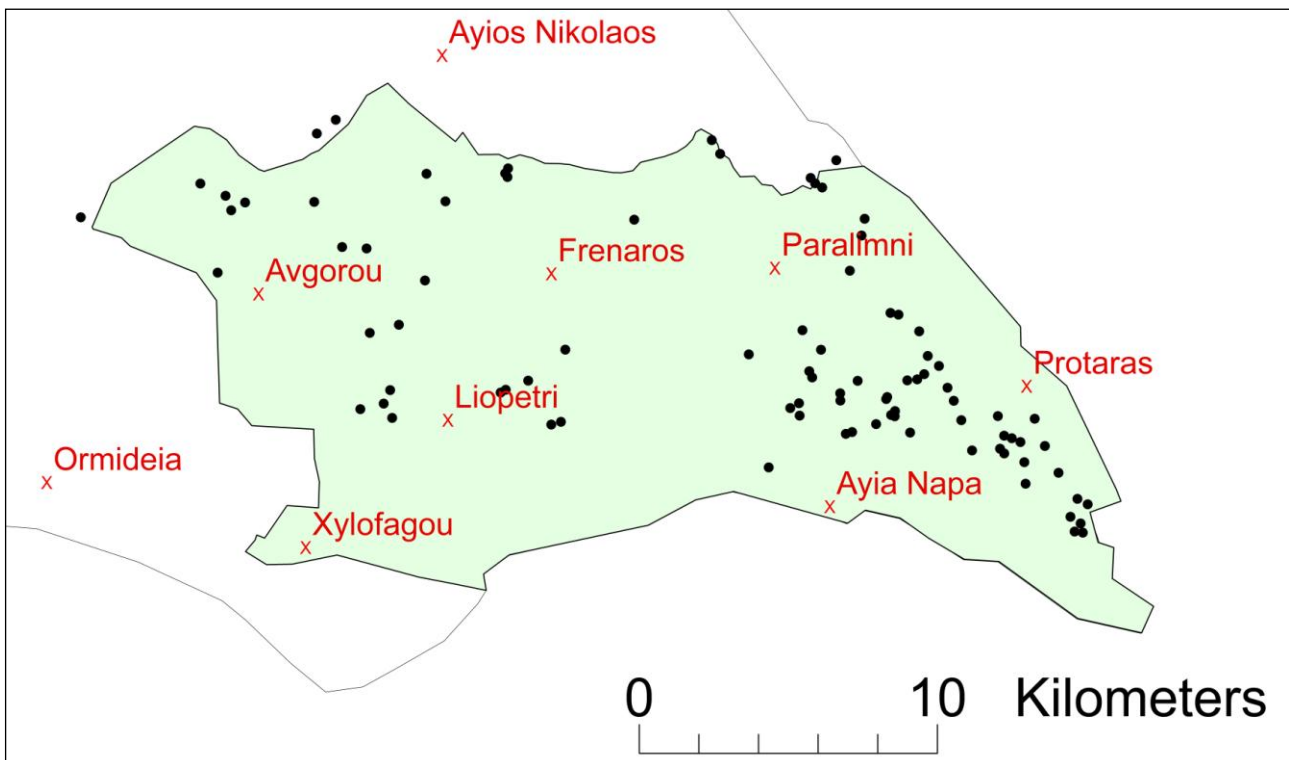
The areas monitored during the Camp can be divided in four regions: Famagusta District, Larnaca District, UK Eastern Sovereign Base Area and Buffer zone controlled by United Nations.

Out of 360 bird trapping sites checked during the Camp, more than half, 191, were in Famagusta District, one of the six districts within the Republic of Cyprus (Table 6). At the majority of the trapping sites we found active in this district, limesticks were used for trapping.

Table 6: Results of monitoring bird trapping activity in Famagusta District

No. of trapping sites investigated	191
No. of active trapping sites found	89
No. of active trapping sites found with limesticks in use	71
No. of active trapping sites found with nets in use	16
No. of active trapping sites found with both limesticks and nets in use	2

Detected trapping activity in Famagusta District (excluding the ESBA area) was most dense in the area between Paralimni, Protaras and Ayia Napa (Picture 2).



Picture 2: Distribution of trapping sites found to be active during Autumn 2017 BPC in Famagusta District

Table 7: Results of bird trapping investigations in Famagusta District during autumn BPCs (2012-2017)

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
No of sites investigated	187	204	151	152	257	191
No. of active trapping sites found	98	133	83	75	109	89
Percentage of active sites	52.4	65.2	55.0	49.3	42.4	46.6

Observing the number of active sites detected over the last 6 years, it is obvious that in the Cypriot trappers stronghold, the phenomenon does not show signs of decrease. Alarmingly the percentage between inspected sites and active sites in 2017 was higher than in Autumn 2016.

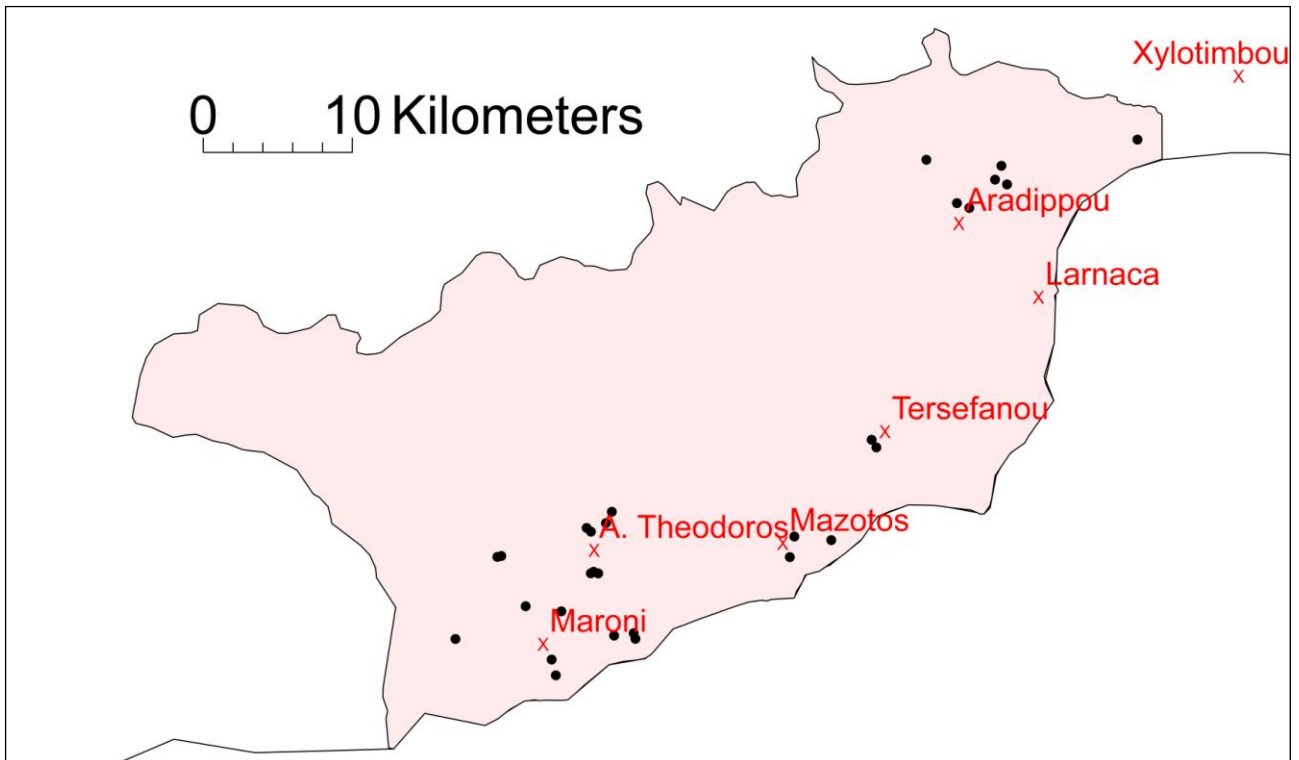
3.1.3.2 TRAPPING ACTIVITY IN LARNACA DISTRICT

In Larnaca District we checked 89 trapping sites this autumn and 29 of them were found to be active.

Table 8: Results of monitoring bird trapping activity in Larnaca District

No. of trapping sites investigated	89
No. of active trapping sites found	29
No. of active trapping sites found with limesticks in use	21
No. of active trapping sites found with nets in use	7
No. of active trapping sites found with both limesticks and nets in use	1

Detected trapping activity in Larnaca District was most dense in the area around Aradippou, Maroni and Agios Theodoros (Picture 3).



Picture 3: Distribution of trapping sites found to be active during Autumn 2017 BPC in Larnaca District

Table 9: Results of bird trapping investigations in Larnaca District during autumn BPCs (2012-2017)

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
No of sites investigated	11	28	44	68	102	89
No. of active trapping sites found	7	22	43	49	63	29
Percentage of active trapping sites	63.6	78.6	97.7	72.1	61.8	32.6

In Larnaca District trapping markedly decreased in autumn 2017 when compared to previous autumns..

3.1.4 TRAPPING ACTIVITY IN UK EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA

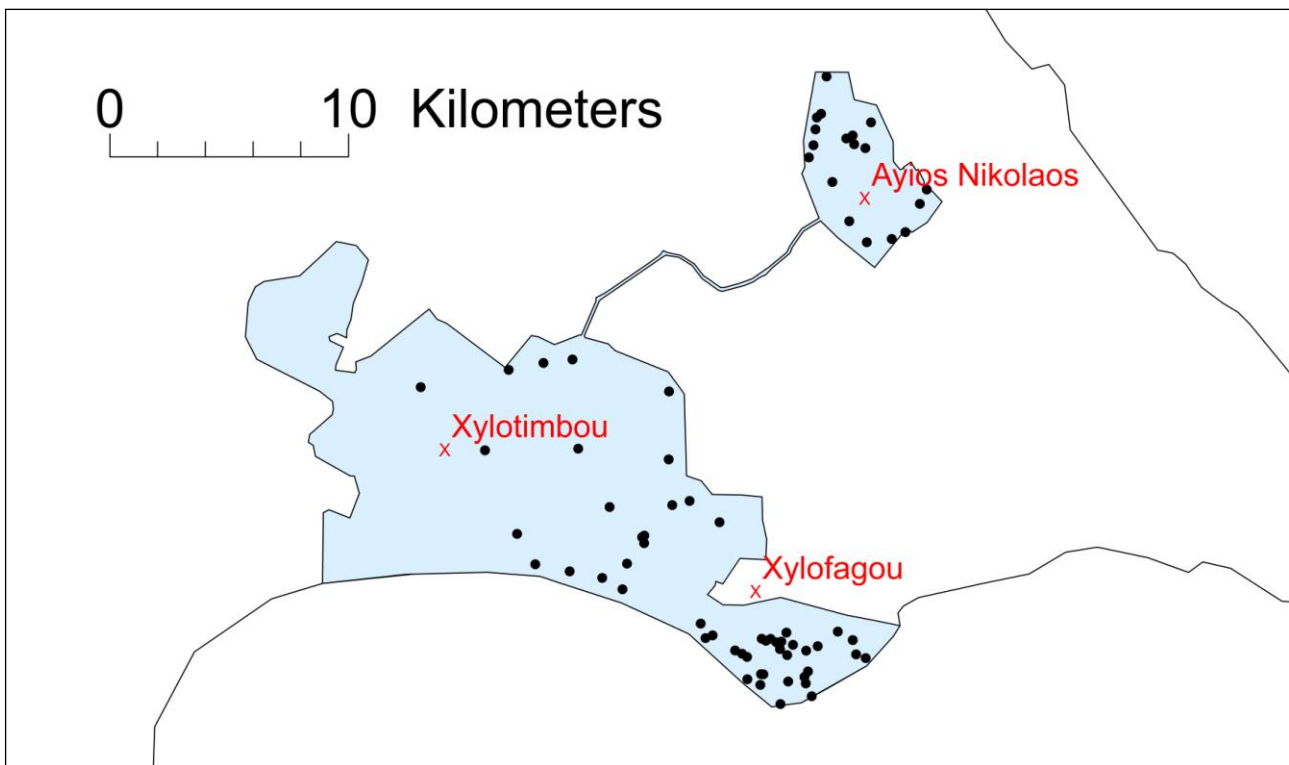
The UK Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) is one of two British Overseas Territories on the island of Cyprus. The ESBA is well known for the massive level of illegal bird trapping, especially the southern part, Cape Pyla, which is the most notorious trapping area in whole of Cyprus.

This autumn we investigated 83 trapping sites in the ESBA and 77 of them were found to be active. Opposite to trapping in Famagusta and Larnaca District, where most trapping is done with limesticks, the majority of trappers in ESBA use nets for trapping (Table 10).

Table 10: Results of monitoring bird trapping activity in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area

No. of trapping sites investigated	83
No. of active trapping sites found to be active	77
No. of active trapping sites with nets in use	68
No. of active trapping sites with limesticks in use	7
No. of active trapping sites with both limesticks and nets in use	2

The density of trapping sites found to be active this autumn was highest in Cape Pyla and in the Agios Nikolaos area around the village of Vrysoulles (Picture 4).



Picture 4: Distribution of trapping sites found to be active during Autumn 2017 BPC in UK Eastern Sovereign Base Area on Cyprus

Table 11: Results of bird trapping investigations in Eastern Sovereign Base Area during autumn BPCs (2012-2017)

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016**	2017
No of sites checked	29	14	7	36	130	83
No. of active trapping sites found	27	14	7	34	116	77
Percentage* of active trapping sites	93.1	100.0	100.0	94.4	89.2	92.8

* Differently than in the Republic, this percentage can't be used to compare trapping activity between years in the ESBA, because the fieldwork focuses on detecting tape lures in the night, without random searches during the day. For this reason, it is better to look in absolute terms to the number of detected active sites found

** Systematic and intensive monitoring of trapping activity in the ESBA started only in Autumn 2016 for security reasons

In autumn 2017, although our teams spent more time than ever investigating the ESBA territory, we could observe a significant reduction in the number of active trapping sites. During Autumn 2016 Bird protection Camp we found 116 active trapping sites and this autumn only 77 (33 % less).

The decrease in the number of active trapping sites occurred due to multiple factors:

- increased amount of field investigations and actions against trapping made by CABS & SPA teams in the ESBA this autumn, especially in both hotspots of trapping, Cape Pyla and Ayios Nikolaos
- improved cooperation between CABS & SPA members and SBA Police. This autumn we have reported the highest number of trapping cases to the SBA Police at Autumn BPCs. In total we reported 110 trapping cases and most of them (103) were immediately investigated by the police officers
- the use of drone by SBA Police to tackle bird trapping for the first time. Drone proved to be effective for detecting trapping activity and for gathering evidences used to catch and prosecute trappers
- the increase of SBA Police personnel dedicated to tackle bird trapping and an overall improvement in the policy of deterring the trappers' community. This was part of a major and welcome change of policy in the SBA Police.

3.2 COOPERATION WITH ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

3.2.1 RESULTS OF COOPERATION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

During the Camp, we cooperated officially and systematically with police officers of the APS (Anti-Poaching Squad) from the Cyprus Police and police officers from Sovereign Base Areas (SBA) Police and randomly with the game wardens from the Game and Fauna Service and agents of the local police stations. Altogether, we reported 188 active trapping sites to them and 154 were investigated by the authorities. Only 19 investigations ended with catching and prosecuting individuals involved in illegal bird trapping (Table 12), which equates to approximately 10% of all reported sites.

Table 12: Results of cooperation with law enforcement units during Autumn 2017 Bird Protection Camp

Monitoring of trapping sites	APS	Local Police	GFS	TOT. RoC	SBA Police	TOT. CYP
No. of active trapping sites reported by CABS	50	6	22	78	110	188
No. of active trapping sites investigated by the law enforcement officers	31	5	15	51	103	154
No. of sites with prosecution of trappers	11	2	4	17	2	19
No. of sites with confiscation of trapping paraphernalia only	11	3	11	25	51	76
No. of sites where nothing was found by officers	9	0	0	9	41	50
No. of sites without investigation	19	1	7	27	7	34
Seized trapping paraphernalia						
Limesticks	821	178	629	1628	78	1706
Mist nets	32	0	5	37	87	124
Tape lures	18	0	5	23	48	71

(Legend. APS= Anti-Poaching Squad of Cyprus Police, GFS= Game and Fauna Service, RoC= Republic of Cyprus, CYP.= Cyprus, including both the Republic and the ESBA).

Table 13: Comparison of seized paraphernalia during Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2017

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Duration of BPC (days)	17	24	28	40	47	60
No. of seized limesticks	4331	4703	3950	3115	4164	3432
No. of seized mist nets	113	68	116	163	180	145
No. of seized tape lures	64	85	35	79	109	108
No. of prosecutions	13	1	27	37	26	19

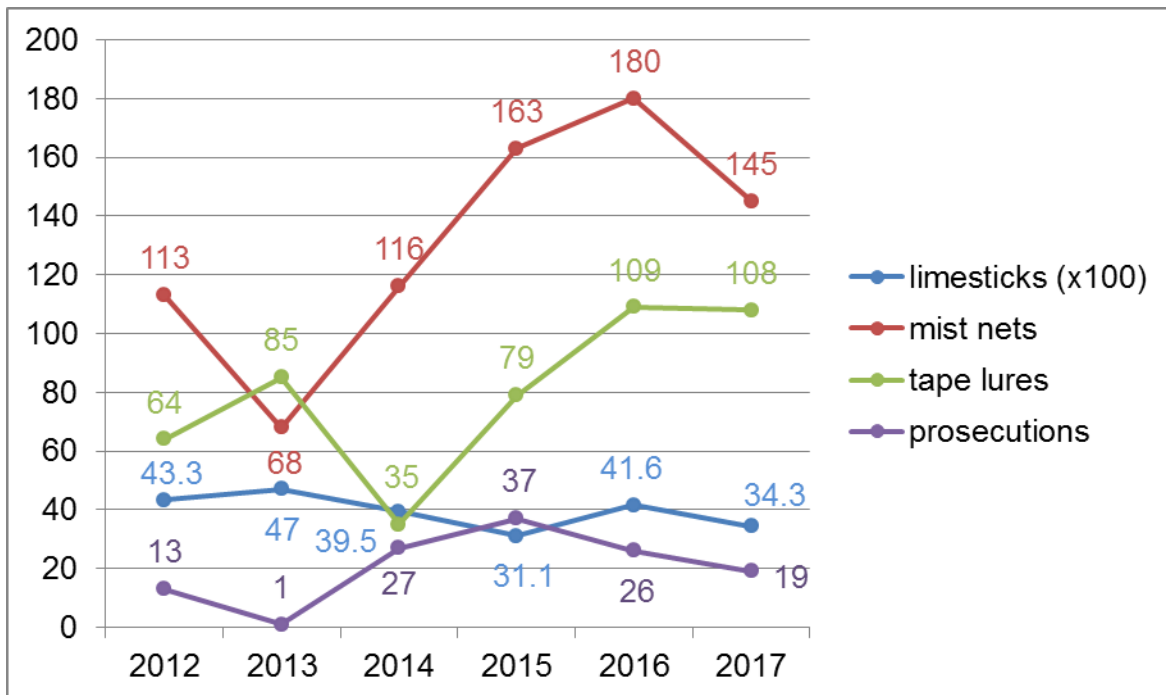


Figure 3: Seized limesticks, mist nets and tape lures during Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2017

3.2.2 OBSTACLES IN THE COOPERATION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT UNITS WITHIN THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Structured cooperation with law enforcement units during the Camp was not as productive as in previous years.

On the 14th of June 2017, we officially requested the Chief of Game and Fauna Service, Mr. Hadjigerou, to establish a continuous cooperation with the game wardens over the autumn season, in order to report more of our findings to the authorities, considering that already in the previous years the APS could only deal with a minority of our findings. Unfortunately, our request was rejected by Mr. Hadjigerou on the 29th of June 2017 (Annex 1). As a result, the reporting of active trapping sites to the game Wardens happened only on a random and sporadic basis.

In addition, right at the beginning of the Camp, one of the seven APS agents, who was performing all the ambushes, being a key figure in most prosecutions, was taken away from the unit allegedly for 2 weeks and never reincorporated.

On the 27th of September, he was officially removed together with two more agents from the Unit, leaving the APS undermanned with only 3-4 agents on duty for the rest of the autumn season. This happened just the day after CABS & SPA wrote a letter to the Assistant Chief of Police, Mr. Papatheodorou, in which the NGOs pointed out that the skills and experience to perform anti-poaching operations were now in possession of only 2

agents (and their names were mentioned in the letter), who were carrying the burden of all the operations. CABS suggested to the Assistant Chief of Police to start a training process, in order to have more agents able to perform anti-poaching operations. One day later these 2 agents plus a third one were removed from the unit, resulting with consequent drop in the performance of the APS.

Out of the 23 days of cooperation, 13 were carried with fully manned APS unit and 10 with an undermanned unit. In the first 13 days 9 prosecutions for trapping and 1 prosecution for illegal hunting were achieved (0,77 prosecution per day). In the following 10 days, only 2 prosecutions for trapping were achieved (0,2 prosecution per day).

It should also be noted that the peak trapping activity was recorded 2 weeks after the removal of the APS agents (see chapter 3.1.1).

3.2.3 THE ROLE OF THE APS IN TACKLING BIRD TRAPPING

We believe that the engagement of the APS, whose performance and professionalism in the last 6 years has been boosted up by the cooperation with CABS & SPA volunteers and a mutual adaptation to each other's modus operandi, has been the main driver of the steady decrease of trapping in the Republic of Cyprus, first in spring seasons and slowly also in autumn seasons.

Table 14: APS results and trapping trend in the last 6 years (2012 - 2017)

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Prosecutions made by APS	13	0	27	26	20	11
Sites investigated by APS officers	?	0	70	74	36	31
No of days APS was present in the field	13	0	26	29	18	23
Percentage of active sites detected by CABS & SPA	53	66.8	64.6	56.4	47.4	42.1
Trend of activity*	0	+13.8	-2.2	-8.2	-9	-5.3

* ratio between percentages of active trapping sites found at Autumn Camps that year and the year before

If we look at table 14 we can observe that the highest trapping activity was recorded in 2013, when the APS was known to be inactive. In the following two years, the number of prosecutions the number of sites investigated (visual deterrence) and the days of presence in the field of APS were the highest. The effect of APS enforcement activity in 2014 caused the first steady decrease of activity trend by -8.2% in the following year, while the similar results achieved in 2015 caused the decline in trend by -9% in 2016. In 2016,

regrettably the APS was forced to reduce its engagement (less days, less slowing down of the downwards trend. If we are right in our analysis, the poor results achieved by the APS in 2017 will have a negative impact on the decrease of trapping in 2018.

Interestingly, health status of APS unit is immediately mirrored in the trapping activity. In 2013 the lack of enforcement from APS caused the highest trapping activity level. Similarly, the removal of 3 agents on the 27th September 2017 can be correlated with the peak trapping activity in the following 2 weeks (See chapter 3.1.1)

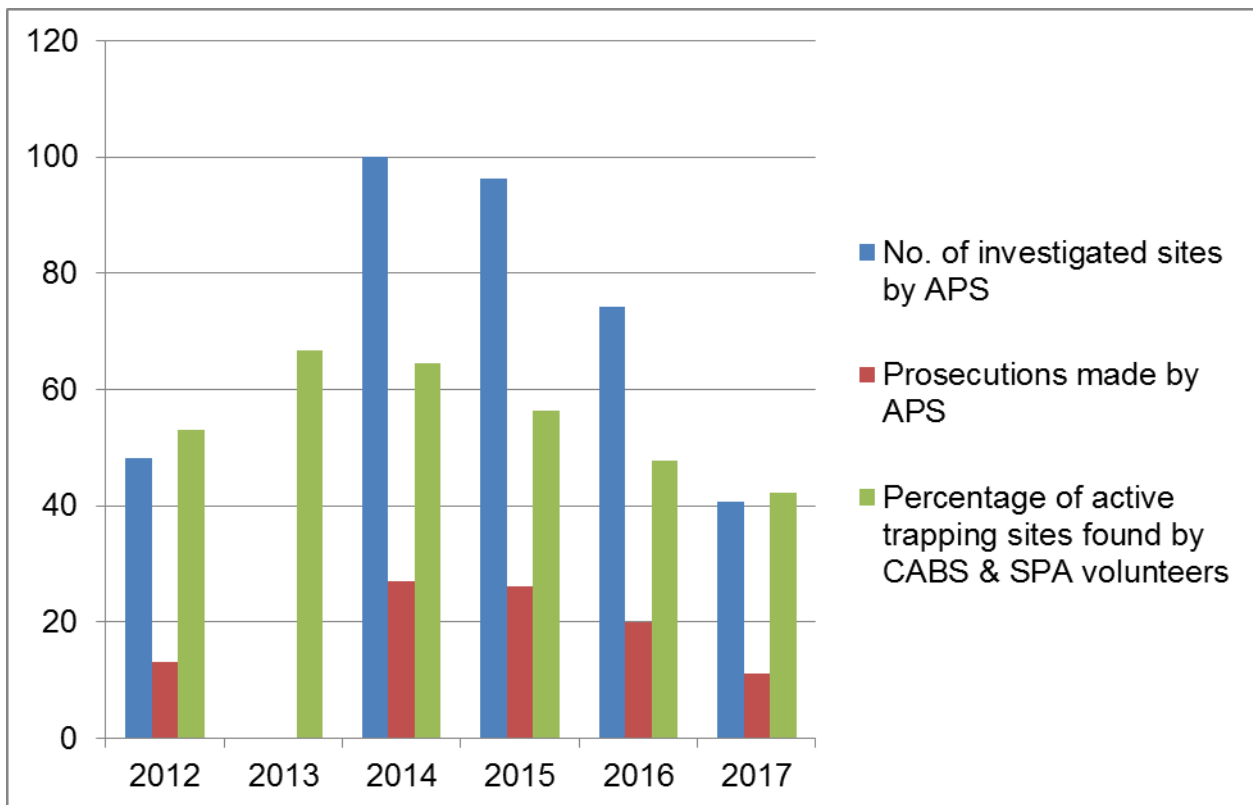


Figure 5: Correlation between APS activity and trapping activity recorded at Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2017

The reduction in prosecutions made by the APS cannot be explained with the slow decrease of trapping. Table 15 and figure 6 shows the trend of prosecutions compared with the trapping activity recorded at Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2017. Since 2014 the number of prosecutions made by APS has decreased by 60%, whereas trapping activity in the Republic has decreased by 22,5%

Table 15: Comparison of enforcement efforts made by APS and percentage of trapping sites found to be active during the Autumn Bird Protection Camps (2012 - 2017)

Autumn Bird Protection Camp	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

Prosecutions made by APS	13	0	27	26	20	11
Prosecution trend*	48,1	0	100	96,3	74,1	40,7
Percentage of active sites found	53	66,8	64,6	56,4	47,4	42,1

* Trend is the ratio between number of prosecutions made in 2014, the year when the highest number of prosecutions were made during the Autumn Camp, and the number of prosecutions for the other Autumn Camps

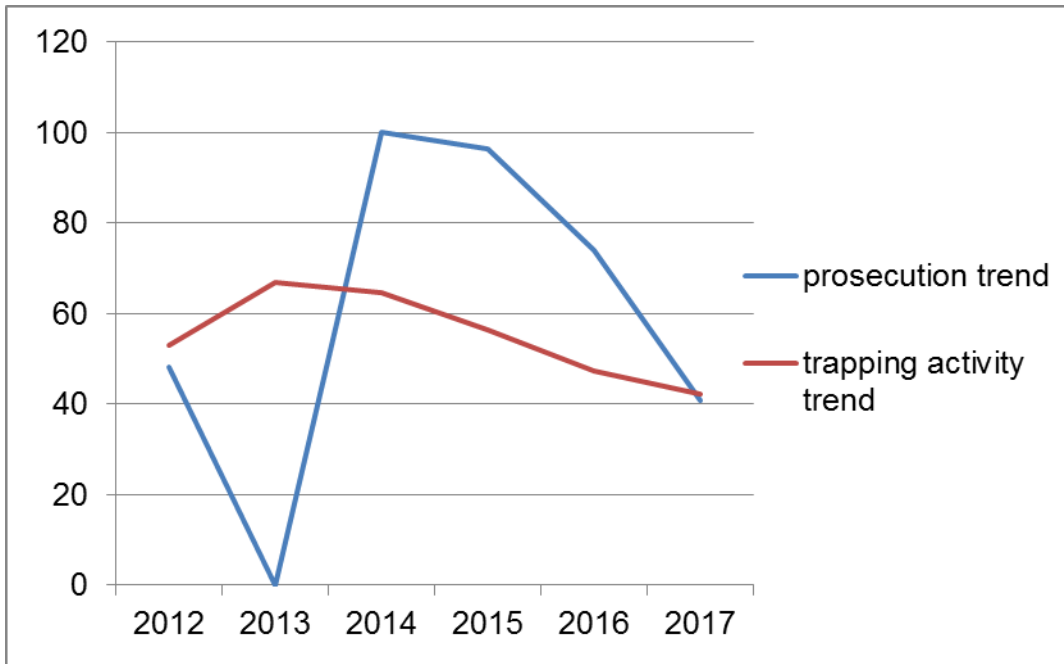


Figure 6: Correlation between prosecution trend and trapping activity recorded at Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2017

3.3 RESULTS OF ACTIONS MADE BY THE PARTICIPANTS OF CAMP

Following the good results achieved in the beginning of the Camp in terms of prosecutions and the high fines imposed on poachers, the trapping lobby reacted in an effort to neutralize the efforts and water down our cooperation with the authorities.

1. On the 29th of August 2017, the Hunting Federation (Κυπριακή Ομοσπονδία Κυνηγίου & Διατήρησης Άγριας Ζωής – ΚΟΚ&ΔΑΖ) issued a press statement accusing CABS & SPA of harassing hunters with the use of drones and other methods.
2. On the 20th of September 2017, ‘hunters’ organised a protest in Liopetri village in Famagusta district to protest against the high penalties imposed for poaching and the action of activist groups against poaching.

3. On the 3rd of October 2017, the Hunting Federation issued a second press statement against our organisation, calling the authorities to stop cooperating with activist organisations and accusing us of trespassing fenced private properties, dismantling illegal paraphernalia, stalking people with the use of drones and harassing hunters. In response the Parliament in November issued a law which punishes the harassing of hunters during hunting with whatever method (ANNEX 2)
4. On the 18th of October 2017 a second protest demonstration was organised, this time in Paralimni village on Famagusta district. Amongst others, the protesters demanded the legalisation of ambelopoulia 'hunting' and that the Police and Game Fund should only deal with the poaching of endemic (and not migratory) species.
5. On the 19th of October 2017, the Head of the Game and Fauna Service, despite having refused any structured cooperation with CABS volunteers, stated in public that "volunteers were acting against the law when removing illegal traps". This announcement was welcomed by multiple attempts to neutralise the efforts made by volunteers.

As a result, we believe that the Cyprus Government has fulfilled the demands of the poachers by halving the operational capacity of the APS and denying cooperating with CABS in the following trapping season, leaving trappers undisturbed for the whole winter season (see attached letter from the Cyprus Ministry of Justice as a reply to our letter of request for cooperation during the winter trapping season). Moreover, since then, the Game and Fauna Service Game Wardens have denied their availability to come and investigate more than half of the incidents reported by us.

As enforcement officers in the Republic of Cyprus were not available to act on the trapping sites found active, volunteers often decided to remove the traps themselves in order to stop the crime against wildlife. During the Camp in 81 cases volunteers removed trapping paraphernalia, namely 1726 limesticks, 21 nets and 37 tape lures.

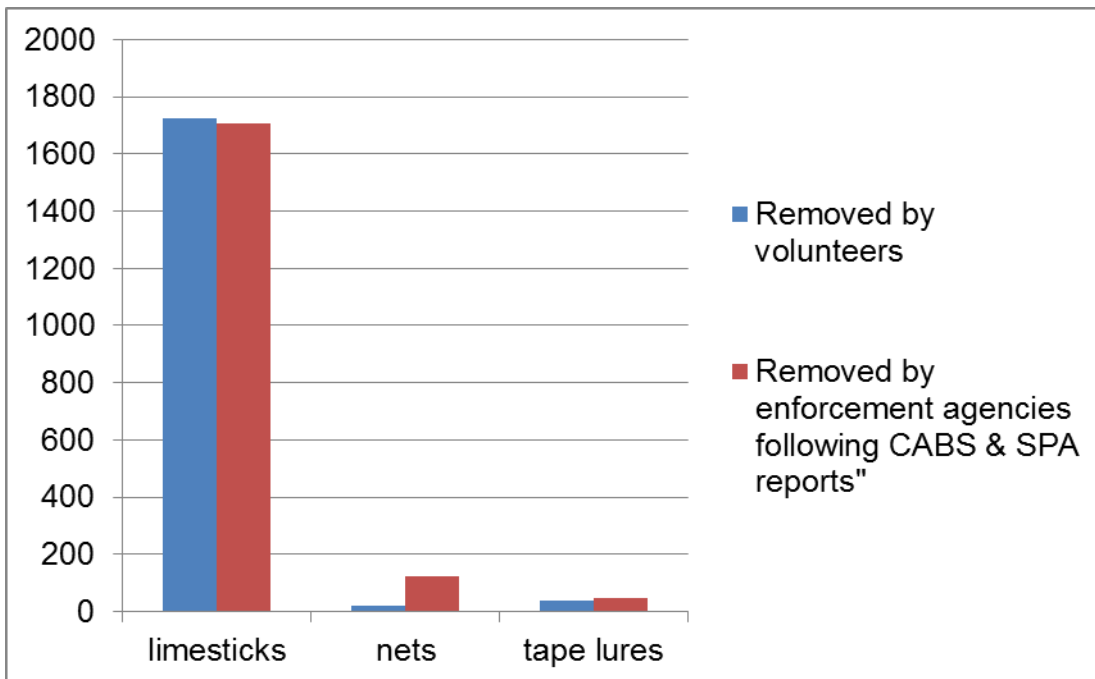


Figure 7: Comparison between trapping paraphernalia dismantled by enforcement agencies at sites reported by CABS & SPA volunteers and trapping paraphernalia dismantled by volunteers on their own during Autumn 2017 BPC without support

3.4 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS AND ACTIONS AGAINST ILLEGAL BIRD SHOOTINGS

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

Our investigations revealed that incidents of illegal bird shootings are as common as incidents of bird trapping and widespread in Larnaca and Famagusta districts. Especially massive in autumn is the use of quail tape lures in the night. These lures are used to attract migrating quails to land in the fields at night in order to be shot in the morning. We estimate that each night several hundred quail lures were used across the Famagusta and Larnaca Districts. Beside illegal quail lures we have observed tens of cases, where illegal blackcap and skylark tape lures were used in the morning to attract these protected species to be shot.

Table 16: Results of investigations of illegal bird shootings during Autumn 2017 BPC

No. of all investigated illegal shooting incidents	58
No. of sites with active quail tape lure found	50

No. of cases with use of blackcap tape lure	5
No. of cases with use of skylark tape lure	1
No. of cases were hunters shot at protected birds	2

Whenever we had the chance, we engaged the authorities against illegal hunting. The APS was engaged once in an area where 3 groups of hunters were using blackcap tape lures to shoot warblers. When the unit arrived on site they only managed to check the first hunter who was found in possession of 3 shot bee-eaters and was subsequently prosecuted.

The Game and Fauna Service was engaged twice. In the first occasion, they refused to remove 12 quail tape lures, we had previously located for them. In the second occasion, they arrived on site too late, when a tape lure for skylark, used by hunters, was not playing anymore. The local police were engaged once for hunters using a blackcap tape lure, but no action was taken. In one case CABS team could get no support and directly confronted the hunters warning them about the illegal use of blackcap tape lure.

This random enforcement activity against illegal hunting seemed to disturb a lot the hunting groups, who massively protested against enforcement efforts (see chapter 3.4.3) and managed to have in few weeks a law proposal in the Parliament aiming at stopping any intervention of NGOs in the field against illegal hunting and trapping.

3.6 BIRDS FOUND TRAPPED OR ILLEGALLY SHOT DURING THE CAMP

In total, 595 birds belonging to 26 different species were either rescued from traps, found dead in traps or found illegally shot during the Camp. (Table 17).

Table 17: Birds found trapped or illegally shot during Autumn 2017 Bird Protection Camp

		No. of birds rescued from traps	No. of birds found dead in traps	No. of birds found shot
1	Blackcap (<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>)	177	16	
2	Quail (<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>)	14		
3	Willow warbler (<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>)	10		
4	Common Nightingale (<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>)	7		
5	House sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	5	2	
6	Song thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>)	5		
7	Lesser whitethroat (<i>Sylvia curruca</i>)	4	1	
8	Stonechat (<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>)	4		

9	Garden warbler (<i>Sylvia borin</i>)	4		
10	Red-backed shrike (<i>Lanius collurio</i>)	3	1	
11	Reed warbler (<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>)	3		
12	Masked shrike (<i>Lanius nubicus</i>)	3		
13	Common Redstart (<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>)	3		
14	Sardinian warbler (<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>)	2		
15	Spotted flycatcher (<i>Muscicapa striata</i>)	2		
16	Chiffchaff (<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>)	2		
17	Olivaceous warbler (<i>Iduna pallida</i>)	2		
18	Long-eared owl (<i>Asio otus</i>)	1		
19	Barn owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>)	1	1	
20	Sparrowhawk (<i>Accipiter nisus</i>)	1		
21	Whinchat (<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>)	1		
22	Greenfinch (<i>Chloris chloris</i>)	1		
23	Marsh warbler (<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>)		2	
24	Bee-eater (Merops apiaster)			3
25	Hoopoe (<i>Upupa epops</i>)			1
26	Golden oriole (<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>)			1
	Unidentified	311		
	Total	566	23	5

CONCLUSIONS

Trapping in Cyprus during the Autumn season is still widespread and mostly out of control, although enforcement efforts are causing a slow but steady decrease in the number of active trapping sites each autumn season.

In 2017, a big change was observed in the SBA with a -33% of activated trapping sites and willingness from SBA police to follow up all or most of our reports. Their policy of deterring trappers with the use of drone and constantly manning the blackspot of Cape Pyla has brought about positive results, despite the very low number of prosecutions, which in our experience is the most effective way to deter trapping in the long term.

In the Republic of Cyprus, we could observe a slight decrease, much more marked in Larnaca district, rather than in Famagusta. Unfortunately, this positive result was accompanied by a relaxation of the law enforcement, in terms of prosecutions of offenders. Although CABS reported in real time the highest number of active trapping sites, the

number of trappers prosecuted was very low. Particularly bad was the performance of the APS, who was left understaffed for half of the Camp.

Information from the ground, i.e. from informants coming from the trappers' community, seem to confirm that the APS constitutes the biggest deterrence for trappers and particular attention is paid to their "health status": the more active the unit is, less trapping takes place. Unfortunately, in Autumn 2017 the unit has reached its minimum resource level, with only 4 agents on duty and the most experienced of them removed.

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The first press release of the Cyprus Hunting Federation can be seen here:

<https://www.facebook.com/809201455802841/photos/pcb.1547884648601181/1547949551928024/?type=3&theater>

The second press release of the Cyprus Hunting Federation can be seen here:

<http://www.philenews.com/koinonia/aidiseis/article/433664/proedros-kynign-katapatoy-n-ta-dikaiomata-mas-oi-aktibistes>

ANNEX 1



ANNEX 2

Τροποποίηση του άρθρου 29 του βασικού νόμου. 5. Το άρθρο 29 του βασικού νόμου τροποποιείται με την αντικατάσταση του πλαισιώματος αυτού με τον ακόλουθο νέο πλαισιώμα και με την ένθεση σε αυτό του ακόλουθου κειμένου:

«Παραμπόδιση άσκησης κυνηγετικής δραστηριότητας. 29.-(1) Πρόσωπο το οποίο εκ προθέσεως παρενοχλεί, εμποδίζει, ή παρεμποδίζει οποιοδήποτε κάτοχο άδειας κυνηγίου εν ώρα άσκησης, με νόμιμο τρόπο, του αθλήματος του κυνηγίου ή χρησιμοποιεί φυσικό ή τεχνητό οπτικό, ακουστικό, οσφρητικό, γευστικό ή φυσικό ερέθισμα, για να επηρεάσει τα θηράματα με σκοπό να διαφύγουν τη νόμιμη θήρευση ή χρησιμοποιεί μη επανδρωμένο όχημα ή αεροσκάφος, για να παρενοχλεί κάτοχο άδειας κυνηγίου κατά το χρόνο άσκησης, με νόμιμο τρόπο, του αθλήματος του κυνηγίου ή για να επηρεάσει τα θηράματα με σκοπό να διαφύγουν τη νόμιμη θήρευση ή εισέρχεται σε γραμμή βολής κατόχου άδειας κυνηγίου και θέτει με οποιοδήποτε τρόπο τον εαυτό του σε κίνδυνο είναι ένοχο αδικήματος.

(2) Από τις διατάξεις του πιο πάνω εδαφίου εξαιρούνται τα μέλη της Υπηρεσίας Θήρας και