



# annual report 2022

## Dear CABS friends and supporters,

As we do at the end of every year, we would like to present you with this activity report to give a solid overview of some of 2022's highlights in Germany and the Mediterranean region.

In addition to the bird protection camps organised by CABS for many years in Italy, Cyprus and Malta, we also carried out numerous small and larger operations against bird poaching in Germany, Spain and Lebanon. Over 170 international bird conservationists participated in our missions. In this report you can find out how many birds were released from captivity, how many traps were destroyed and how many poachers the police were able to arrest as a direct result of our fieldwork!

A decisive factor in the successes achieved has been the now well-established cooperation with law enforcement agencies in all areas of operation, such as the Carabinieri Forestale in Italy, the SEPRONA unit of the Guardia Civil in Spain, the Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) of the police in Malta, the British Military Police and the Game & Fauna Service in Cyprus, as well as the Internal Security Forces (ISF) in Lebanon.

One of the few countries where, unfortunately, there is no national police unit specialised in combating wildlife crime is Germany. Nevertheless, we were able to uncover numerous cases of illegal raptor persecution and bird trapping in Germany as well over the past 12 months. A first for us this year was the cooperation with the authorities in Austria in October, where the Salzburg customs investigation office

was able to shut down an illegal trophy trader based on our research work. More than 45 taxidermy specimens of strictly protected species were confiscated, including two lions, four storks and several stuffed specimens of the Bird of the Year 2022 – the hoopoe.

Even though some of the cases we solve are complex and convicting the perpetrators often requires a lot of expertise: As the Committee against Bird Slaughter (CABS), we see ourselves explicitly as a community of action in which everyone can participate and make their contribution to the protection of our migratory birds. The possibilities range from participating in a bird protection camp, sharing information to helping with public awareness and fundraising ideas and campaigns. Whether you discover a dubious offer for sale on the internet or a possibly illegal trap in the forest – please contact us! Our experts will look into the matter, recommend what to do and, if necessary, immediately involve the authorities.

During our bird protection camps of 2022 in Spain, Italy, Malta and Cyprus and in Lebanon, we have help convict a staggering 319 poachers! 1,039 bird traps, 532 trapping nets and 3,413 limesticks were seized and more than 2,500 birds were freed alive from traps, nets and decoy cages. Tens of thousands of other migratory birds were protected from being shot or trapped in the first place. Results that would not have been possible without your support!

**With thanks from all of us at CABS HQ!**

## Donation accounts

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## JANUARY

### Waterfowl hunting in the Italian Po Delta

At the turn of the year, our teams checked whether hunters comply with the applicable protection laws when hunting waterbirds in the Po Delta of Italy. The lagoons near Venice are an internationally important resting and wintering area for numerous ducks, geese and other migratory water birds. In cooperation with the police, six people were convicted of illegal hunting and charged. They are accused of shooting protected ducks and geese and using illegal electro-acoustic decoy devices.

### Hunting of songbirds in Cyprus

Our team took action against the illegal hunting of wintering thrushes in the south of the island. In the process, 82 cases of poaching were documented, including the shooting of protected species as well as the widespread use of illegal electronic decoy callers that play loud thrush songs in order to lure more “prey”. With the help of the police, 30 decoy callers were seized, and 23 hunters were convicted.

Song thrush in an illegal net on Cyprus



### Wildlife crime in Bavaria

A taxidermist from the district of Traunstein was sentenced to pay a fine of 1,200 euros for illegal taxidermy trade with stuffed hunting trophies. The man was hit by the authorities following a report from CABS HQ, after we discovered dodgy online sale offers by the man and filed a criminal complaint for violation of the Federal Nature Conservation Act.

### Poachers arrested in Lebanon

With the help of the Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) trained and financed by us, the police were able to convict four men of poaching in the district of West Bekaa. They are accused of shooting several strictly protected birds of prey and an endangered striped hyena. A video showing the shooting of the hyena was provided to the authorities by us. The men are later sentenced to fines of around \$1000.

### Attack in Cyprus

On 9 Jan. 2022, a pyrotechnic device was detonated on a CABS patrol car parked in the city of Larnaca. The vehicle was severely damaged. Shortly before, one of our activists from Italy was brutally attacked by a poacher during a site inspection and sustained injuries to the head. The police launched an investigation in both cases, but no convictions were made. Our winter campaign against bird trapping continued until the end of February, despite the attempts of intimidation.

Attack in Cyprus on 9 Jan. 2022





Illegally shot turtle dove

## FEBRUARY

### 1,000 Euro fine for hunter on Malta

A Maltese hunter, filmed by a CABS team illegally shooting a turtle dove in spring 2020, was fined 1,000 euros by a court in Valletta. In addition, the man’s hunting licence was also confiscated. Despite a ban enforced by a ruling of the European Court of Justice, illegal spring hunting of turtle doves remains a widespread problem in Malta, with thousands of birds falling victim every year.

### Bird trapping in Münsterland

In the district of Warendorf (Germany), CABS staff discover two illegal traps for catching wild animals while inspecting a known “problem area”. A freshly caught marsh tit was freed unharmed. The responsible nature conservation authority was informed and initiated proceedings against unknown persons. The investigation is later discontinued without result.

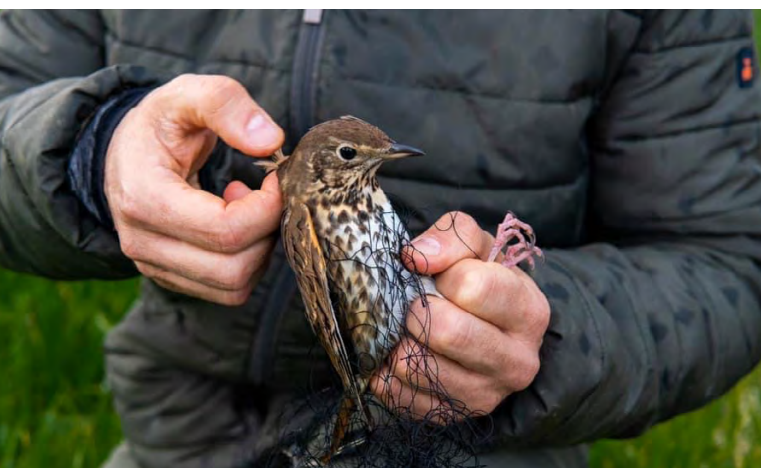
### Bird hunter fakes attack and ends up in court himself

In Brescia (Italy), the public prosecutor’s office brought charges against a bird hunter who had put up considerable resistance during a spot check conducted by the forest police in autumn 2020 and later claimed that the officers had attacked him. Along with wildlife offences, the charges also included defamation as well as resisting state authority. The inspection was triggered by a CABS report, when one of our teams had discovered numerous protected birds in the defendant’s hunting lodge.

### Successful operation against illegal migratory bird hunting in Cyprus

From mid-December to the end of February, participants of our bird protection camp in the south of the island discovered and shut down 21 active trapping sites for blackcaps and other songbirds. Together with the police, 44 nets, 144 limesticks and 19 electronic decoy callers were dismantled and seized. A total of 107 birds were released alive. Charges were filed against ten bird trappers!

Successful operation against bird hunting in Cyprus



Screenshot from a video shows fake attack





White-tailed eagle shot down in Saxony-Anhalt

## MARCH

### White-tailed eagle shot down

In Saxony-Anhalt (Germany), a strictly protected white-tailed eagle was shot dead in early March. Using data from a GPS transmitter attached to the bird, CABS and our partners from the LIFE EUROKITE project succeeded in convicting the local gamekeeper as the perpetrator. The public prosecutor's office initiated criminal proceedings against the man and seized his weapon as a means of committing the crime. He faces a heavy fine and the revocation of his hunting licence.

### Hard times for poachers in Malta

During joint operations between CABS and the Malta police Environmental Protection Unit (EPU), a total of 41 illegal clap-nets for trapping songbirds (mainly finches) were discovered and shut down. 18 bird trappers were caught red-handed and await a date in court. More than 120 live greenfinches, hawfinches, linnets and other finches are confiscated and later released.

### Joint action in the Baltic Sea

Sea Shepherd Germany and CABS draw attention to the death of protected seabirds in set fishing nets. During an investigation in the Hohwachter Bay (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany), the joint team was able to document the death of several eider and scoter ducks in gillnets. Set net fishing is one of the main threats for seabirds and harbour porpoises in the German Baltic Sea.

### Outreach in Lebanon

Together with our partners and the police, experts from CABS monitored important bird migration corridors on the border with Syria for the first time in spring. The area is a stronghold of poaching, to which millions of European migratory birds fall victim every year. Right in the first days, four poachers were caught red-handed and their weapons are confiscated by Internal Security Forces (ISF) officers. Thanks to the resulting deterrent effect, tens of thousands of birds are able to migrate unharmed in the following weeks.

Maltese police shut down illegal trapping site



Shot Great spotted cuckoo (Lebanon)





**APRIL**

**Prohibited goshawk trapping in Germany**

In the village of Neppermin (district of Ostvorpommern) police officers confiscated an illegal goshawk trapping basket with two live decoy pigeons on a private property on 27 April 2022. The operation was prompted following a CABS investigation that had uncovered and reported the case. A local pigeon fancier subsequently admitted to setting the trap. The police launched criminal proceedings for violation of the Federal Nature Conservation Act.

**Operation against illegal bird trapping in Lebanon**

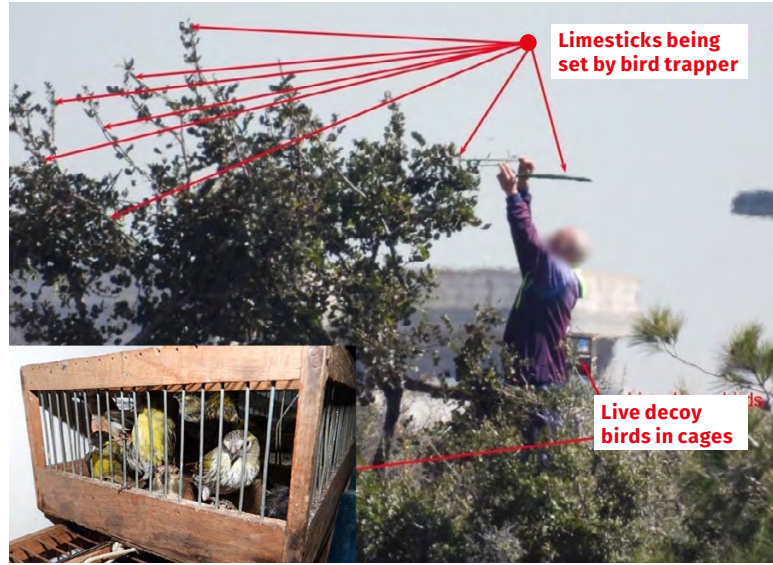
On the coast near Batroun and near Khalde, a CABS team together with colleagues from the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL) and the Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) shut down two illegal trapping installations for catching songbirds with limesticks. The police arrested four men and confiscated 190 limesticks, four electronic decoys and 20 dead and 42 live birds, including white-throats, siskins, goldfinches and wagtails.

**Illegal migratory bird trapping in Malta**

In Malta, the participants of our bird protection camp reported a total of 53 incidents of illegal migratory bird trapping to the police in April. In addition to clap-nets for catching finches, five nets and cage traps for mass trapping of migrating turtle doves were also reported. The police, confiscated the trapping equipment and freed more than 200 live birds, including hawfinches, red-throated pipits and turtle doves. 16 people were caught red-handed catching birds and reported to the police.

**Robins for the cooking pot**

In Italy, CABS staff and police uncover an illegal trade in poached robins. The hub of the business is a bar in Leno (Brescia), where the birds were being sold under the counter. After our report, Carabinieri officers searched the bar and were able to convict a suspect with 30 dead robins in his pocket! The man is awaiting trial.



Limestick trapper in Lebanon (top),  
Illegally caught Robins in Italy (middle),  
Clapnet locations in Malta (bottom)

## MAY

### Successful campaign for migratory bird protection in Cyprus

Between mid-April and May, our activists found 20 active songbird trapping sites and reported them to the authorities. Officers from the police and Game & Fauna Service confiscated 335 limesticks and two electronic decoy callers. Nine bird trappers were convicted and 21 freshly caught birds – mainly blackcaps – are freed from limesticks, cleaned and released back into the wild.

### Paddle boarding across the English Channel for CABS

As part of a crowdfunding effort, our long-time member Andy Short crossed the English Channel on a stand-up paddle board on 14.5.2022! After six hours of continuous paddling and a total distance of 33.8 kilometres, Andy finally reached the port of Boulogne in France. Through donations and sponsors, an impressive £5000 (about 5800€) was raised to support and enable our campaigns and operations!

### Bird protection on Italian isles

On the islands of Ischia and Palmerola, a CABS team documented illegal spring hunting of turtle doves and trapping of whinchats. Three poachers were covertly filmed and later convicted by the police. During house searches, three unregistered shotguns, 20 bird traps, 900 rounds of ammunition and several freshly shot birds were discovered. The men now face criminal proceedings.



Liberation of a songbird from a limestick (Cyprus)

### Illegal bird traps in Germany

During site inspections in the district of Prignitz (Brandenburg) and in the district of Heinsberg (NRW), CABS staff discover two illegal live traps for trapping birds of prey and crows. Two suspects – both hunting licence holders – were filmed at the traps and reported. The police confiscate the traps and initiate criminal proceedings against both men.

Our member Andy Short crossing the English Channel on a stand-up paddle board



Discovery of two illegal live traps in the districts of Prignitz and Heinsberg (Germany)





Karl-Heinz Kreutzer



Prohibited ground-nets in Cyprus

## JUNE

### Karl-Heinz Kreutzer new President and Chairman of CABS

At our AGM on 11.6.2022 in Bonn, the biologist Karl-Heinz Kreutzer from Augsburg was elected as the new President and Chairman of CABS. He succeeds Heinz Schwarze, who has successfully steered our fortunes for more than 20 years and will remain on the Board as an assessor and advisor. Dr. Bettina Volpe, Dr. Andrea Rutigliano, Axel Hirschfeld and Alexander Heyd as CEO were confirmed in their positions as further members of the Board.

### Action against prohibited ground-nets in Cyprus

In Cyprus, we took action against prohibited ground-nets used to keep snakes away from houses. Within two weeks, our teams documented the cruel deaths of 74 wild animals in such nets, including hedgehogs, birds, snakes, lizards and chameleons. In the Famagusta district, 20 nets were reported and subsequently dismantled by the local authorities and the homeowners were warned.

### Success against poaching in Lebanon

In the district of Keserwan, our Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) caught two poachers shooting protected songbirds in the middle of the breeding season. The men were arrested by the police and later fined. The officers confiscate their hunting weapons and a bag with about 30 freshly killed birds.

### Trapper sentenced to a fine in Germany

The Fulda District Court sentenced a man to a fine of 1000€ for violating the Federal Nature Conservation Act. During an inspection on the property of the person responsible, several active trapping devices for songbirds and an aviary containing approximately 60 illegally kept finches and other birds were discovered in autumn 2021. The inspection was triggered following a report from CABS, which had documented the man's illegal activities in detail.



Goldfinches



Egyptian vultures seized in Lebanon

## JULY

### Confiscated vultures fly to Prague

Two Egyptian vultures seized from a private zoo by our team in autumn 2021 were flown from Lebanon to the Czech Republic. After veterinary assessment concluded that two of birds would not stand a chance back in the wild their new home is Prague Zoo, where they will be integrated into a conservation breeding programme funded by the EU. A third, uninjured Egyptian vulture, which was confiscated during the same operation, was successfully released into the wild. Egyptian vultures are among the world's most endangered species!

### Goldfinch trapping in Germany

In Krefeld (NRW), CABS staff discovered several dozen limesticks for trapping goldfinches after receiving a tip-off. The traps were dismantled, and the case was reported to the authorities. Shortly afterwards, 74 goldfinches were confiscated during a customs inspection in Essen. In another case we filed a complaint against a bird keeper from Saxony who was offering un-ringed goldfinches for sale.

### CABS at the Birdfair

At our stand at the Global Birdfair in Rutland (UK), we showcased our campaigns and operations to the British public. Many of our former and active "Bird Guards" answered questions, gave presentations on our work and recruited new volunteers and supporters for our bird protection camps in the Mediterranean region.

### Trappers caught in Spain

In the province of Valencia, CABS activists, together with the environmental police SEPRONA, shut down two huge illegal bird trapping sites. At both sites, the perpetrators were caught in-situ and arrested. In total, more than 290 live wild birds were confiscated and released, including 132 goldfinches, 45 serins, 43 siskins, 27 greenfinches, 20 thrushes and five turtle doves.

CABS team at the 2022's Birdfair







## AUGUST

### Successful breeding season for our Black Terns

This summer 30 pairs of terns raised a total of 27 young birds on the breeding rafts installed by CABS on the Old Elbe near Jerichow (Saxony-Anhalt) and on Lake Pritzerber (Brandenburg). A nice success for our project and the conservation of this rare bird species, which is classified as “endangered” on Germany’s Red List of Breeding Birds. The total population in Germany is estimated at just 900 to 1,100 pairs!

### Action against wader trapping

Following reports from CABS, the Maltese police were alerted to the illegal trapping of waders and other water birds, which the perpetrators target with nets at specially constructed ponds. In the course of the investigation, two men were arrested and around a dozen live birds, including wood sandpipers, little sandpipers and little ringed plovers, were confiscated and later released.

Seized Wood sandpipers (Malta)



Illegally caught Black-necked stilt (Malta)



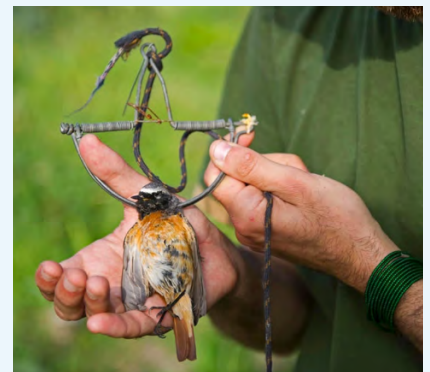
### Active trapping sites tracked down in Italy

During patrols in the mountains west of Lake Garda, CABS staff track down seven active trapping sites for Tree Pipit and Pied Flycatcher in late August. Following our reports to police, six poachers were caught and convicted, and

230 traps were dismantled and seized. During house searches, further traps, five large trap nets, four hunting weapons and 270 dead pied flycatchers were also discovered and seized.



Black redstart (left) and Common redstart (bottom) caught in snap traps in Italy





Turtle dove

## SEPTEMBER

### Success for Turtle Dove protection

The autumn hunting season for Turtle Dove hunting in France and Spain was once again banned this year. CABS and our partner associations have protested for years against the legal mass shooting in the two countries, in which more than one million turtle doves are killed each autumn. By comparison, their breeding population in Germany is estimated at only 20,000 pairs. They are the UK's fastest declining species with just 3,500 pairs. Tendency: decreasing.

### Bird trappers arrested on Malta

The participants of our large bird protection camp on Malta were successful this autumn and tracked down more than 55 sites for the illegal trapping of songbirds and waders. The police were able to catch 32 bird trappers and seize trapping equipment worth tens of thousands of euros. In addition, more than 400 live birds were confiscated and released, including Black-winged Stilt, Wood Sandpiper, Plover, Yellow Wagtail and numerous Finches.

### Successful presence of our team in Lebanon

A total of 18 local and international activists took part in our major autumn outreach in Lebanon! Thanks to the permanent presence of our teams at two "bottle necks" that are important for bird migration, poaching was significantly disrupted and prevented. Five hunters shooting at Lesser Spotted Eagles and other birds of prey were arrested by the police. Across the Bekaa valley and along the coast, more than 50 mist-nets were also dismantled and numerous birds were released, including turtle doves, orioles and cuckoos.

### Hunting ban in Cyprus

CABS and our partners from BirdLife Cyprus called on the government to impose a hunting ban in the area of Lake Soros. The reason for this is the discovery of more than 50 illegally shot migratory birds, including bee-eaters, orioles and several specimens of the endangered European Roller. As with last year, numerous dead protected birds were discovered there. The Salt Lake near Larnaka is a resting area of international importance for bird migration.

Shot Honey buzzard/Honey buzzard feathers at a 'butcher site' (Lebanon)



Shot Bee-eater on Cyprus





## OCTOBER

### Raid in Austria

Following a report from CABS HQ, the Salzburg customs investigation office searched the premises of an Internet dealer who was offering taxidermy of protected bird species for sale on a large scale. More than 45 stuffed animals were confiscated, including three hoopoes, four storks, marsh harriers and two stuffed young lion cubs. Criminal proceedings have since been initiated against the man, who cannot produce any papers or proof of origin.



Brescia bird protection camp 2022: Seized live decoys (left), CABS bird guard in the Italian Alps (middle), measurement of the ring of a Skylark decoy (right)

### 41 poachers caught in Brescia (Italy)

During our four-week bird protection camp in the province of Brescia (Italy), our teams found a total of 62 trapping sites for the illegal capture of robins and other songbirds. Following our reports, the police caught 41 bird trappers and a total of 248 snap traps, 315 bow traps and 36 set nets were also seized. Almost 350 freshly caught birds or birds used as live decoys were successfully released into the wild.

### Charges against lark hunters

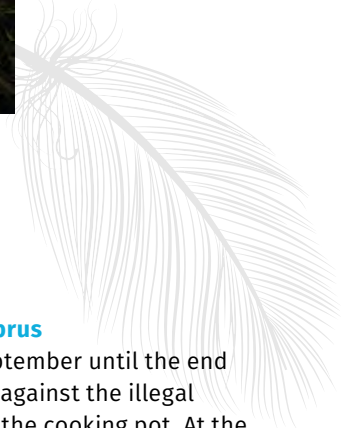
Following another tip off from our Italian team members, the police in Bergamo (Italy) conducted compliance checks on four hunters who were keeping numerous skylarks as decoys in their hunting huts. More than 120 live larks marked with forged or manipulated breeding rings were confiscated. Some of them had docked wings and will never be able to fly again. About 60 freshly caught birds were unharmed and could be released.



Shot Skylarks (Italy)



Spain: Caught Song thrushes (left), limesticks (bottom)



## NOVEMBER

### Outreach against bird trapping with limesticks in Spain

In the regions of Valencia and Catalonia, a CABS team was able to catch 26 bird trappers this autumn. Officers of the Guardia Civil, who were called in, found 620 limesticks, six nets, 15 Japanese nets, 106 snap traps and dozens of dead thrushes. 145 birds - song thrushes, blackcaps, linnets and a little owl - were also set free.

### New habitat for frogs and water birds

As part of our "Frogland" project, CABS is created a total of 17 small ponds, pools and small bodies of water in Schleswig-Holstein in 2022. The new biotopes created with the help of excavators provide additional habitat for amphibians, insects and birds. As in previous years, the state covers 100 % of all costs incurred. The total number of ponds created since the project's inception is now 463.

### Autumn bird protection camp in Cyprus

In Cyprus, since the beginning of September until the end of November, our teams took action against the illegal trapping and killing of songbirds for the cooking pot. At the time of writing, 66 active trapping sites have been discovered and reported to the authorities. During subsequent inspections, the police convicted 38 bird trappers and confiscated 1,625 limesticks, 81 nets and 98 electronic decoy callers. 535 live birds, including numerous blackcaps, reed warblers and several owls, were released from the traps.

### Trade of Goshawk traps in Germany

CABS once again called on the federal government to finally ban the possession and trade of goshawk traps. Following a recent analysis of sales data from the internet platform eBay.de, more than 1,000 of these traps, specially constructed for catching birds of prey, are sold there alone. The main sellers are hunting outfitters and dealers in poultry farming products.

Creation of a new pond in the CABS nature reserve in Northern Germany



Rescuing a Golden oriole from a net (Cyprus)





Swifts in a Spanish rehab center (left), illegally caught Goshawk in Germany (bottom)



## DECEMBER

### Animal rescue centers 2022

The rescue centres for injured or vulnerable wild animals supported by CABS in Italy and Spain have more work to do in 2022 than ever before. In Spain, an unprecedented heat wave causes countless swift chicks to tumble out of overheated nests – our friends at SOS Vencejos nursed more than 700 young birds back to health. At the time of writing, our rescue centre in Modena, Italy, has taken in 5,234 birds, including 2,061 small birds, 397 birds of prey, 464 ducks and 97 herons. Among the nearly 1,600 mammals, there are 451 hedgehogs and 320 deer, as well as eight wolves!

### CABS in the media

In 2022, numerous German and international journalists once again reported on the CABS operations and campaigns. In addition to countless reports in the daily press in Malta, Cyprus and Italy, our actions were the subject of the British Independent, GEO magazine, Greenpeace magazine as well as the TV stations WDR, NDR, HR and ZDF, which broadcast several extensive reports on the Committee and our work.

### Raptor persecution in Germany

Our nationwide database for raptor persecution and wildlife crime (EDGAR) has recorded a total of 48 cases of illegal raptor persecution in Germany since January 2022. This includes 17 cases of poisoning, twelve cases of trapping or trapping with traps, seven cases of shooting and twelve cases of other methods of persecution. Among the total of 65 victims are seven red kites, four goshawks, five sparrowhawks, 20 buzzards and nine peregrine falcons.





## SUPPORT US IN 2023

In 2022 – Despite the global COVID-19 pandemic, Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) managed to coordinate anti-poaching operations with more than 180 volunteers from eleven countries across Europe and the Middle East, participated in one or more of 31 bird protection camps in 7 countries in the poaching hotspots of the Mediterranean basin.

1039 traps, 3433 limesticks, 532 nets, 224 electronic decoys were collected, 319 poachers were convicted (new record) and over 2500 birds were liberated from illegal traps. A countless number of other birds had their fate changed for the better by our presence and field work.

All of our operations are funded entirely by supporter donations and cost around €400,000 per year. Given the setbacks we've had this year and the free reign migratory bird poachers have been given it's more important than ever that we ramp up our efforts even more in 2023.

Please help us to continue and expand our work with a donation – every cent and penny is used to put boots on the ground and deliver direct action to protect migratory birds from illegal poaching.

### VISIT

[www.komitee.de/en/donate](http://www.komitee.de/en/donate)

or use these bank account details



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and Wildlife Research (IZW, Berlin), the Dachverband Deutscher Avifaunisten (DDA), the Förderverein für Ökologie und Monitoring von Greifvogel- und Eulenarten (Halle), Sea Shepherd Deutschland, the Landesbund für Vogelschutz (LBV) in Bavaria, Pro Wildlife e.V., the NABU and its regional associations, the German Society for the Protection of Animals, the North Rhine-Westphalian Ornithological Society (NWO), the Ornithological Working Group Helgoland, the Institute for Bird Research – Vogelwarte Helgoland, the German Council for the Protection of Birds (DRV), the Working Group for the Protection of Peregrine Falcons (AGW), the Association of Saxon Ornithologists (VSO), the Working Group of Berlin-Brandenburg Ornithologists (ABBO), the Association Aquila e.V., the journalists' collective "Flugbegleiter", the Bergische Greifvogelhilfe, the Paasmühle bird care station, the Düren, Euskirchen and Bonn/Rhein-Erft Biological Stations, the municipality of Schwentental, the district of Euskirchen, the Rhine-Erft district, the Schwentental nature conservation group and, of course, all our members, supporters and activists.

**Komitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V.**  
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