



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

Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt®
Foundation Pro Biodiversity®

BIRD TRAPPING IN THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS: CABS & SPA ANNUAL REPORT 2017



Boštjan Deberšek, July 2018

Cover photo:CABS & SPA members rescuing trapped bird from mist net in Sotira, April 2017 (Photo: CABS)

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SUMMARY

In 2017, Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) and Foundation Pro Biodiversity (Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt (SPA)) carried out extensive field investigations and actions against bird trapping in two districts located in southeastern part of Republic of Cyprus: Famagusta and Larnaca District. Field investigations covered three main bird trapping seasons: winter, spring and autumn season and were carried out in all months in 2017 except for June and July.

Investigations revealed 253 active trapping sites in the Republic of Cyprus. At 201 sites set traps were found and a total of 5911 limesticks and 145 mist nets were removed from them by Cyprus Police officers, Game & Fauna Service wardens and CABS & SPA members.

Highest trapping activity was detected from end of August until end of October 2017, when field investigations revealed 122 active trapping sites.

Field investigations included investigation of 108 trapping sites where trappers had been arrested for bird trapping in previous years and 43 of them were found active again in 2017, indicating that the received fines in the previous years are not deterring trappers from repeating offences in spite of successful arrest.

Trapping activity trend in the Republic of Cyprus for the period 2014-2017 was assessed based on the percentage of active trapping sites found during CABS & SPA field investigations. Results show a gradual decrease in percentage of active trapping sites found, from 47,6 % found in 2014 to 36,8 % found in 2017.

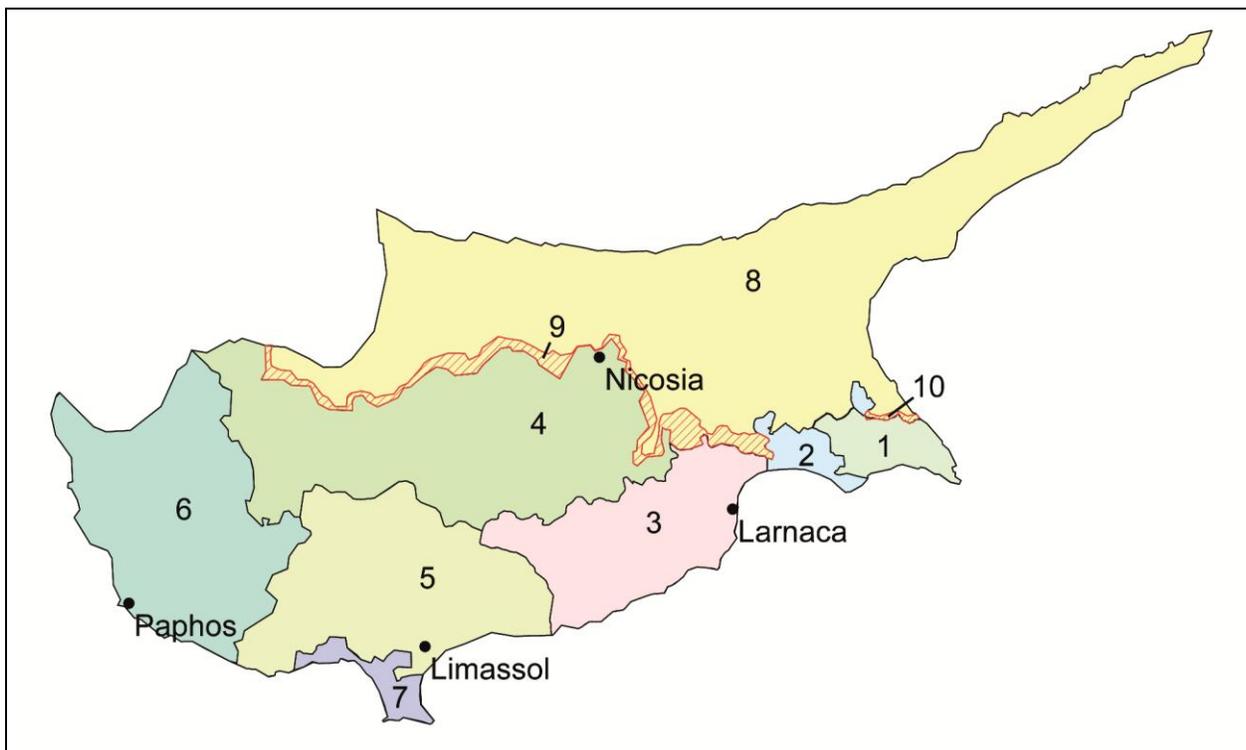
1 INTRODUCTION

This report compiles the results of CABS & SPA field investigations and actions against bird trapping in Republic of Cyprus, in 2017. It also presents the results of enforcement actions against trapping made by Cyprus Police and Game and Fauna Service.

2 GOVERNING BODIES ON THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

Officially Republic of Cyprus encompasses the entire island of Cyprus, except the two Sovereign Base Areas, that belongs to the United Kingdom. Northern part of the country or Northern Cyprus is under control of Turkey since 17974 and was self proclaimed as Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, but this Republic is not recognised internationally, except of Turkey.

To keep the Turkish and Greek Cypriot apart, the UN has set up a buffer zone along the border between Republic of Cyprus and Northern Cyprus.



Picture 1: Island of Cyprus and the distribution of the land among different governing bodies

1- Famagusta District (Republic of Cyprus)

- 2- Eastern Sovereign Base Area (British overseas territories on Cyprus)
- 3- Larnaca District (Republic of Cyprus)
- 4- Nicosia District (Republic of Cyprus)
- 5- Limassol District (Republic of Cyprus)
- 6- Paphos District (Republic of Cyprus)
- 7- Western Sovereign Base Area (British overseas territories on Cyprus)
- 8- North Cyprus (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus)
- 9,10- buffer zone (United Nations)

3 WORKING METHODS

3.1 FIELD INVESTIGATIONS METHODS

CABS and SPA carried out 4 large scale bird trapping investigation and prevention actions called Bird Protection Camps in Cyprus in 2017. They were January, February 2017 Bird Protection Camp, Spring 2017 Bird Protection Camp, Autumn 2017 Bird Protection Camp and November, December 2017 Bird Protection Camp.

Results of these Camps are presented in CABS & SPA Winter 2016-2017 Bird Protection Camp Field Report (Debersek & Rutigliano 2017a), CABS & SPA Spring 2017 Bird Protection Camp (Debersek & Rutigliano 2017b), CABS & SPA Autumn 2017 Bird Protection Camp (Debersek & Rutigliano 2017c) and CABS & SPA Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps Field Report (Debersek & Rutigliano 2018).

A total of 70 people participated at the Camps and they monitored trapping activity for 154 days (Table 1).

Table 1: Duration and number of people participating at Bird Protection Camps organised by CABS and SPA in Cyprus in 2017

Bird Protection Camp	January, February 2017	Spring 2017	Autumn 2017	November, December 2017	Total 2017
Period of field investigations	12.1.- 12.2.	25.3.-7.5.	27.8.-29.10.	30.11.- 17.12.	
Duration of field investigations (days)	32	44	60	18	154
No. of participants	27	12	28	3	70

Participants of the Camps monitored trapping activity in the south-eastern part of the island, where bird trapping is most intense; in Famagusta and Larnaca Districts within the Republic of Cyprus and in the British Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA).

Detected illegal activities were reported immediately to the authorities to ensure that activities were stopped in shortest possible time and that enforcement actions against trappers were taken.

Priority was given to the investigation of locations with the highest probability of finding trapping activity at them. This probability was estimated by consulting data collected in previous years. Trapping sites were visited during the time of day when the traps are most likely to be set and when bird callers are used to attract birds to the trapping sites.

This method is employed in order to maximise the detection of active trapping sites and to carry out immediate actions to stop detected trapping activity with the help of enforcement agencies.

Active trapping sites are defined as those with set traps, which can either be limesticks or mist nets. Furthermore, trapping sites without set traps but with signs of recent trapping activity are also considered as active: feathers on the ground at trapping locations or remnants of glue on branches indicate that the location was recently active. Also trapping sites with electronic bird callers playing at them, even if there are no traps set out at the time of visiting, are counted as active. These callers are sometimes used solely in the night to attract birds to the trapping site and the trappers set their traps at them in the early morning.

3.2. METHODS USED TO ESTIMATE NUMBER OF TRAPPED AND KILLED BIRDS ON ACTIVE SITES

To calculate number of birds that have been trapped and killed on trapping sites found active by CABS & SPA members in Republic of Cyprus in 2017, following trapping activity estimations were used:

- length of spring trapping season is 90 days (beginning of March until end of May), length of autumn trapping season is 75 days (middle of August until end of October) and the length of winter trapping season is 120 days (beginning of November until end of February)

- 20 birds are caught per net and 0.5 birds per limestick per day in autumn trapping season. Due to less intensive migration of birds in spring and winter time, we estimate that catch rate in these two seasons is half of the catch rate in autumn season, meaning that estimated 10 birds are caught per net and 0.25 birds per limestick per day

- CABS & SPA field investigations revealed that trapping sites are not active every day in the trapping seasons, even when trapping activity on them is not disturbed by enforcement officers. When actions of enforcements officers (confiscations of traps and trapping paraphernalia, arrests of trappers...) are made at trapping sites, the trapping activity is interrupted, either for short time, longer period or the site is permanently abandoned and not used for trapping anymore. As majority of trapping sites, found to be active in Republic of Cyprus in 2017, were disturbed by actions of enforcement officers and actions of CABS & SPA members, we have considered the effect of disturbance when estimating the average duration of trapping activity on them. Considering the effect of disturbance, the different lengths and different intensity of trapping activity of each trapping season, the estimated average duration of trapping activity on trapping sites, found to be active in Republic, was 10 days for spring season, 20 days for autumn season and 20 days for winter trapping season.

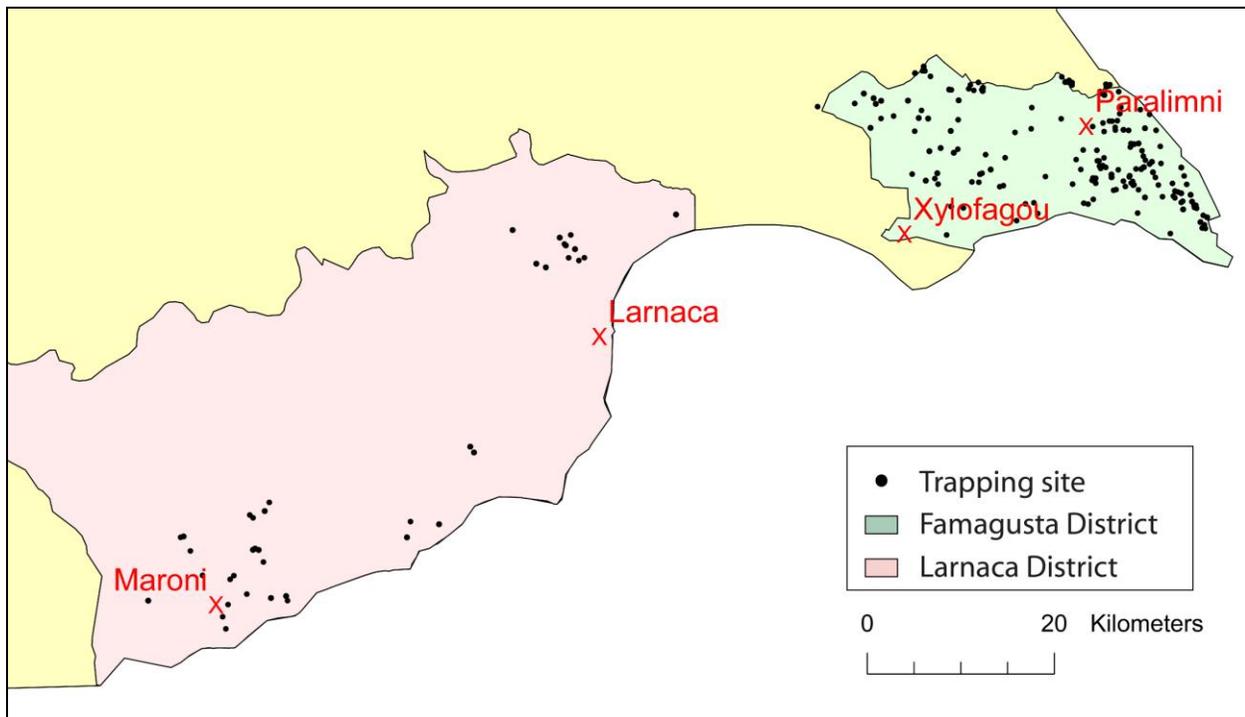
4 RESULTS OF CABS & SPA FIELD INVESTIGATIONS AND ACTIONS AGAINST BIRD TRAPPING IN REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS IN 2017

4.1 DISTRIBUTION OF ACTIVE TRAPPING SITES

CABS & SPA members found 253 active trapping sites between 1st January 2017 and 31st December 2017 in the Republic of Cyprus (Table 2, Picture 2). Highest number of active sites, 122, were found during Autumn 2017 Bird Protection Camp.

Table 2: Results of monitoring bird trapping activity during Bird Protection Camps carried out in 2017 in Republic of Cyprus

Bird Protection Camp	January, February 2017	Spring 2017	Autumn 2017	November, December 2017	Total 2017
No. of checked sites	89	277	284	38	688
No. of active sites found	57	58	122	16	253



Picture 2: Distribution of trapping sites found to be active by CABS & SPA members in the Republic of Cyprus in 2017

4.2 TRAPPING ACTIVITY TREND IN PERIOD 2014-2017

In 2017, CABS & SPA members found 253 active trapping sites or more than 100 less as in previous year (Table 3).

Table 3: Results of monitoring bird trapping activity at CABS & SPA Bird Protection Camps in Republic of Cyprus between 2014 and 2017

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total duration of field investigations (days)	77	82	112	154
No. of checked sites	500	535	818	688
No. of active sites found	238	223	360	253
Percentage of active trapping sites found	47.6	41.7	44.0	36.8

As the length of field investigations and the number of checked trapping sites varies over the last 4 years, a direct comparison between number of active sites found per each year is not the best to evaluate trapping activity trend.

To compare trapping activity between years, the proportion between all active sites found and all checked trapping sites can be used. In 2017, this percentage was 36,8 %. This is the lowest in the last 4 years and shows 7,2 % decrease of trapping activity in comparison to year 2016 (Table 3, Figure 1).

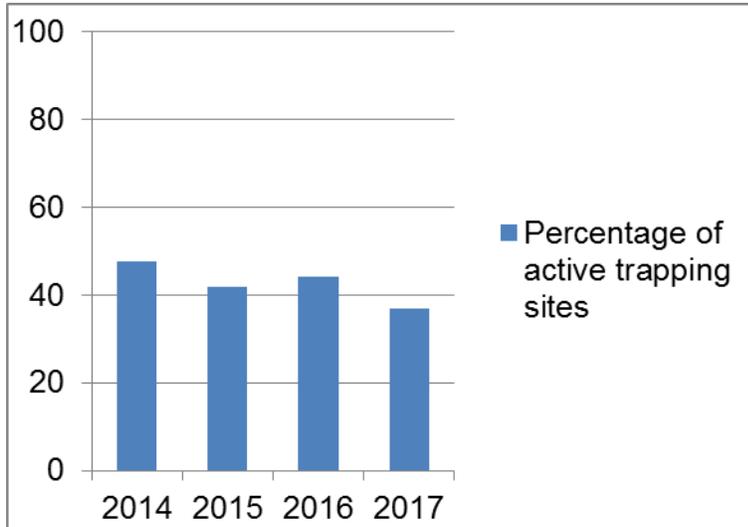


Figure 1: Percentage of active trapping sites detected at CABS & SPA Bird Protection Camps between 2014 and 2017 in Republic of Cyprus

4.3 COMPARISON OF TRAPPING ACTIVITY IN REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS AND EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA

In 2017, CABS & SPA members found 253 active trapping sites in the south-eastern part of Republic of Cyprus, in Famagusta and Larnaca District, and 220 active trapping sites in the British ESBA (Debersek 2018). To compare trapping activity in both investigated regions, the size of both investigated areas needs to be considered, as the investigated area in the Republic of Cyprus is more than eight times bigger as the whole ESBA. Density of active trapping sites found per square kilometer was 7 times higher in the ESBA as it was in the Republic of Cyprus (Table 4).

Table 4: Comparison of trapping activity detected by CABS and SPA members in Republic of Cyprus and Eastern Sovereign Base Area in 2017. (RoC=Republic of Cyprus, ESBA=Eastern Sovereign Base Area)

	RoC	ESBA
No. of active trapping sites found	253	220
Size of the area (km ²)	1044,2	131
Density of active trapping sites (sites per km ²)	0,24	1,68

4.4 ACTIVITY OF TRAPPING SITES WITH PREVIOUS PROSECUTIONS

During field investigations in 2017, CABS & SPA members checked 108 trapping sites in the Republic of Cyprus, where trappers were caught and arrested in previous years. 43 of them were found active again in 2017 (Table 5).

Table 5: Reactivation of trapping sites with previous prosecutions in the Republic of Cyprus in 2017

Bird protection Camp	January, February 2017	Spring 2017	August-October 2017	November, December 2017	Year 2017
No. of sites with previous prosecutions checked	19	38	43	8	108
No. of reactivated sites with previous prosecutions	13	8	19	3	43

The fact that almost half of checked sites with previous prosecutions have been found active again in 2017, shows that the Police and Court actions, including the penalties, against individuals prosecuted for bird trapping were inadequate and have not deterred them from continuing trapping on the same locations in 2017. Bird trapping proves to be a highly profitable activity, hence trappers persistently continue trapping at the same sites where they were previously caught and prosecuted.

4.5 SEIZED TRAPPING PARAPHERNALIA

At 201 out of 253 trapping sites, found to be active by CABS & SPA members in Republic of Cyprus in 2017, set traps were found during field investigations.

In total, 138 mist nets, 5911 limesticks and 76 electronic callers were removed from them by enforcement officers and CABS & SPA members (Table 6). At the remaining 52 sites the number of set traps was not possible to be determined for various reasons. Either we couldn't approach the sites because of safety reasons, electronic bird callers were playing on them but the traps were not set out at the time of investigation or only signs of recent trapping, like feathers on the ground, were detected.

Table 6: Trapping paraphernalia seized from trapping sites found active by CABS & SPA members in Republic of Cyprus in 2017

No. of all sites with set traps found	201
No. of sites with set limesticks found	139
No. of sites with set nets found	57
No. of sites with set limesticks and set nets found	5
No. of sites with electronic callers found	67
Total no. of limesticks seized	5911
Total no. of nets seized	138
Total no. of electronic callers seized	76

The use of limesticks for trapping is most common in Republic of Cyprus. At 144 out of 201 sites with set traps (71,6 %), limesticks were used for trapping. Electronic callers were used at 67 out of 201 sites (33,3 %). Trapping methods, used in Republic of Cyprus, are in sharp contrast with most common methods used in the ESBA, where mist nets and electronic callers were found at 97,6 % of trapping sites with set traps in 2017 (Debersek 2018).

4.6 BIRDS FOUND IN TRAPS

In total, 379 birds were rescued and 71 birds were found dead in the traps found by CABS & SPA members in Republic of Cyprus in 2017 (Table 7).

Table 7: Rescued birds and birds found dead in traps found by CABS & SPA members in Republic of Cyprus in 2017

Bird Protection Camp	January, February 2017	Spring 2017	Autumn 2017	November, December 2017	Total 2017
No. of rescued birds from traps	107	59	188	25	379
No. of dead birds found in traps	37	20	13	1	71
No. of identified bird species	7	23	23	9	40



Picture 3: Limesticks with caught birds (2 lesser whitethroats, 1 blackcap, 1 common redstart) found in Paralimni, March 2017 (Photo: CABS)

4.7 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF TRAPPED AND KILLED BIRDS ON ACTIVE TRAPPING SITES

Considering results of field investigations (columns A,B,C,D,E,F and G in Table 8) and trapping activity estimations used to calculate number of trapped birds (columns H,I and J in Table 8), we estimate that approximately 80 000 birds were trapped and killed in Republic of Cyprus in 2017 on trapping sites found to be active by CABS & SPA members.

Table 8: Trapping activity field results, trapping activity estimations and estimated total number of trapped birds on trapping sites, found to be active by CABS & SPA members in Republic of Cyprus in 2017

	Bird Protection Camp	January, February 2017	Spring 2017	Autumn 2017	November, December 2017	Total 2017
A	No. of active sites found	57	58	122	16	253
B	No. of active trapping sites with limesticks used on them	15	56	97	11	179
C	No. of active trapping sites with mist nets used on them	42	2	25	5	74
D	Average number of limesticks used per trapping site	53.8	33.3	44.7	33.9	
E	Average number of mist nets used per trapping site	2.8	1	1.6	2.8	
F	Total number of limesticks used on all active sites (F=B*D)	807	1865	4336	373	7381
G	Total number of nets used on active sites (G=C*E)	118	2	40	14	174
H	Estimated duration of trapping activity on active sites (days)	10	10	20	10	50
I	Estimated number of birds killed per limestick per day	0.25	0.25	0.5	0.25	
J	Estimated number of birds killed per mist net per day	10	10	20	10	
K	Estimated no. of trapped birds on active trapping sites (K = F*H*I+G*H*J)	13778	4862	59359	2332	80331

5 RESULTS OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS AGAINST BIRD TRAPPING IN REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS IN 2017

5.1 OVERALL RESULTS

The competent authorities, responsible for enforcement actions against bird trapping in Republic of Cyprus are Game and Fauna Service and Cyprus Police. According to the available information, both authorities made xx prosecutions for illegal trapping in 2017. 37 prosecutions were made for cases reported by CABS & SPA members (Table 9).

Table 9: Summary of all enforcement actions taken against bird trapping in Republic of Cyprus in 2017

	Game and Fauna Service	Cyprus Police	All
No. of all prosecutions for bird trapping	65	n/a	n/a
No. of prosecutions for cases reported by CABS & SPA	10	27	37
No. of seized mist nets	n/a	n/a	n/a
No. of seized limesticks	na	n/a	n/a

5.2 CYPRUS POLICE

The Cyprus Police has a special unit dedicated to counter bird trapping and illegal killing of wild birds and other animals: the Anti-Poaching Squad (APS). The unit is investigating and acting against bird trapping and poaching of other animals all across Republic of Cyprus. Occasionally and upon request, police officers on duty at police stations will also investigate reported bird trapping cases if they have available resources for investigation.

Table 10: Results of Cyprus Police enforcement actions against bird trapping in 2017

	January, February 2017	Spring 2017	Autumn 2017	November, December 2017	Total 2017
No. of cases reported by CABS & SPA	10	20	56	10	96
No. of cases, investigated by Cyprus Police, after reported by CABS & SPA	10	9	36	8	63
No. of prosecutions for cases reported by CABS & SPA	9	4	13	1	27
No. of all prosecutions	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
No. of seized mist nets for cases reported by CABS & SPA	39	0	14	11	64
No. of all seized mist nets	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
No. of seized limesticks for cases reported by CABS & SPA	154	371	890	140	1555
No. of all seized limesticks	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

5.3 GAME AND FAUNA SERVICE

Game and Fauna Service, the responsible body for the implementation of the EU Birds Directive, has about 85 game wardens in total across the whole of island (Shialis 2018). The regional office covering Famagusta and Larnaca District, where most of the bird trapping takes place in Cyprus and where all field investigations within Republic of Cyprus were made by CABS & SPA members in 2017, has 20-30 game wardens.

Table 11: Results of Game and Fauna Service enforcement actions against bird trapping in 2017

	January, February 2017	Spring 2017	Autumn 2017	November, December 2017	Total 2017
No. of cases reported by CABS & SPA	3	3	22	5	33
No. of cases, investigated by Cyprus Police, after reported by CABS & SPA	3	1	17	2	23
No. of prosecutions for cases reported by CABS & SPA	3	1	4	2	10
No. of all prosecutions	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
No. of seized mist nets for cases reported by CABS & SPA	7	0	5	0	12
No. of all seized mist nets	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
No. of seized limesticks for cases reported by CABS & SPA	0	48	629	108	785
No. of all seized limesticks	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a



Picture 4: CABS & SPA members and game wardens with limesticks removed from trapping site in Vrysoulles, September 2017 (Photo: CABS)

6 CONCLUSIONS

Altogether 253 trapping sites were found active by CABS & SPA members in Republic of Cyprus in 2017. This is more than 100 trapping sites less as in 2016, when field investigations revealed 360 active trapping sites. It is a big improvement but it has to be taken into account that CABS & SPA checked less trapping sites in 2017 as in 2016.

If we compare the ratio between all checked trapping sites and number of active sites found by CABS & SPA members in Republic of Cyprus, this ratio is 0,36 for year 2017 and it is 7,2 % lower as the ratio for year 2016, indicating that bird trapping in Famagusta and Larnaca District has declined slightly in the last year. The main reason are most likely the new, on-the-spot fines that are imposed for bird trapping since autumn 2017. New fines are substantially higher as were the fines imposed by Court in the previous years for bird trapping. For example, trapper that was using 4 nets and electronic caller in December 2017 in Famagusta District and was caught by Cyprus Police APS after being reported by us, was issued a 7000 € fine.

Trapping with limesticks and without electronic caller is the most common method of trapping in Republic of Cyprus. At 71,6 % trapping sites, found to be active in 2017, limesticks were used for trapping and at 66,6 % of trapping was done without using electronic caller. Trapping with limesticks and without the aid of caller is not as efficient as it is the combination of trapping with mist nets and electronic callers, which is most common method used in the ESBA. On the other hand, the combination of trapping with limesticks without using a caller is hardest to detect in the field and allows trappers to use this method continuously without being detected by enforcement officers or CABS & SPA teams.

As limesticks are hard to detect, especially when they are used without a caller, CABS & SPA members have probably overlooked many active trapping sites during the field investigations. If we also consider that we haven't covered the whole Famagusta and Larnaca districts due to small number of participants of the Camps, we estimate that there were 2-4 times more trapping sites active across these two districts than the number of sites found to be active by CABS & SPA members.

On the trapping sites, found to be active by CABS & SPA members in Republic of Cyprus, estimated 80 000 birds were trapped and killed in 2017. As there were estimated 2-4 times more trapping sites active across these two districts as the number of active sites found by CABS & SPA members, we estimate that a total of 160 000 - 320 000 birds were trapped and killed in these two districts in 2017. As approximately

70 % of all trapping in Republic of Cyprus occurs in Famagusta and Larnaca District, estimated 218 000 - 416 000 birds were trapped and killed in the whole Republic of Cyprus in 2017.

CABS & SPA reported 126 incidents of bird trapping to Cyprus Police and Game and Fauna Service in 2017. Enforcement officers have investigated 86 reported cases and caught and prosecuted trappers at 27 reported sites.

As a result of continuous efforts by CABS & SPA to stop illegal trapping in Republic of Cyprus since 2009, good cooperation between CABS & SPA and enforcement agencies and the introduction of high, on-the-spot fines for trapping in autumn 2017, detected trapping activity in south-eastern part of Republic of Cyprus was lower in 2017 as it was in previous year.

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