

CABS – Committee against bird slaughter

Komitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V.



Auf dem Dransdorfer Berg 98
D-53121 Bonn / Germany
Tel.: +49 228 665521
Fax :+49 228 665280
e-Mail: komitee@komitee.de
Internet: www.komitee.de/en

Provisional analysis of bird crime related incidents 5 - 28 September 2008

(Based on CABS online diary entries, control room operational records, team debriefings and reports from members of the public to CABS)

1. Protected birds shot down or injured: **45** (see details in Para 5 below)
2. Failed attempts to shoot at protected birds (actually witnessed - not the number of shots fired, this is considerably higher): **97**
3. Shots heard after 15:00 hrs curfew (13:00 Sundays/holidays): **83** (in comparison - in one week in autumn 2007 there were 65 shots recorded by CABS teams after curfew)
4. **32** other offences relating to trapping or hunting:
 - 1 seizure of 75 protected wader and song bird species by police after CABS` tippoff. Bahrija, 16.09.
 - 1 Illegal trapping net, live quail-decoys, Birzebugga, 24.09.
 - 30 electronic bird lures (on different dates and locations). Map will be provided to ALE soon.
5. **Details of bird shootings:**
 - 9 Birds of prey, shot dead within 20 min., Birzebugga, 05.09. (Source: members of public)
 - 2 Kestrels, dead, Ghain Zhuber, 13.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 2 (at least) Barn Swallows, dead, near Manikata, 13.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 Night Heron, lost from sight after being hit in Buskett, 16.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 Marsh Harrier, shot but flew on, Mizieb, 16.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 Ringed Plover, dead, Victoria Lines, 16.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 Marsh Harrier, delivered with gunshot wound to IAR, Mgarr, 17.09. (Source: IAR)
 - 1 Kestrel, dead, Blue Grotto, 19.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 Marsh Harrier, shot but flew on, Blue Grotto, 19.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 Honey Buzzard, shot and fell to ground, Buskett, 19.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 2 Marsh Harriers, dead, Rabat, 19.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 Honey Buzzard, delivered with gunshot wound to IAR, Buskett, 19.09. (Source: IAR)
 - 6 Marsh Harriers, dead, Mizieb, 20.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 3 Marsh Harriers, dead, Rabat, 20.09 (flock of 30 arrived in the evening and next morning only 10 birds left the roost - 17 birds missing believed killed). (Source: CABS)
 - 1 Honey Buzzard, delivered with gunshot wound to IAR, Buskett, 20.09. (Source: IAR)
 - 1 Roller, shot but flew on, Laferla Cross, 21.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 falcon ssp., dead, Birzebugga, 21.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 sandpiper ssp., dead, Mistra Bay, 22.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 falcon ssp., flew injured into private property and could not be recovered by ALE, Dingli, 22.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 Black Stork, dead, Mgarr, 22.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 Black Stork, dead, Mizieb, 24.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 2 Black Storks, dead, Mdina + Zebugga, 24.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 Marsh Harrier, flew injured into trees and could not be recovered by ALE, Girgenti, 25.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 2 Lesser Kestrels, 1 Eleonara`s Falcon, shot down, Ghar Lapsi, 25.09. (Source: CABS)
 - 1 Marsh Harrier, dead, Luqa Airport, 28.09. (Source: CABS)

Conclusions

At any one time CABS had a maximum of 6 operational teams deployed, each of which could reasonably cover well an area of 1-2 km². Birds shot down, injured or being chased at outside this area cannot be included in confirmed figures as they were either too distant, behind walls, on private property or were obscured by buildings or scrub. This amounts to some 10 km² operational area per period. Malta covers an area of 316 km², 60 % of which is used or suitable for hunting - say 200 km² in total. Teams were on operations on average for at least 10 hours a day.

CABS monitored intensively only some 5% of this area at any one time and recorded a total of 257 violations of bird protection and hunting regulations. A mathematical projection gives therefore a number of birds shot illegally across the whole area well into 4 figures.

Compared to the data collected by CABS in autumn 2007 the numbers of illegal electronic bird lures and shots heard after the afternnonn curfew decreased significantly.

Our data do not include informations gathered during the Birdlife (BLM) raptor camp or by the Maltese authorities. We are convinced that our presence (as well as the presence of the A.L.E. and other birdwatchers from BLM Raptor camp) deterred numerous hunters from shooting at protected species and thus many birds were saved during the period we were on Malta.

Readers of this report can draw their own conclusions about the number of birds shot and killed or injured during the whole autumn migration period.

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Dipl.-Biol. Axel Hirschfeld
(CABS Press Officer)