



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

**Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt®**  
Foundation Pro Biodiversity®

---

Field Report:  
**CABS & SPA**  
**WINTER 2017-2018**  
**BIRD PROTECTION CAMPS**  
**CYPRUS**



Bonn/Bielefeld, Germany: June 2018

**Authors:**

Boštjan Deberšek, Field Investigations Officer, CABS

Andrea Rutigliano, Field Investigations Officer, CABS

**Photo on the cover:**

CABS & SPA volunteer rescuing blackbird caught in a mist net. Cyprus, January 2018  
(Photo: CABS)

**Contact Details:**



**Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS)**

Komitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V.

An der Ziegelei 8

D-53127 Bonn

Germany

Telephone: +49 228 665521

Fax: +49 228 665280

Email: [info@komitee.de](mailto:info@komitee.de)

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



**Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA)**

Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt

Meisenstrasse 65

D-33607 Bielefeld

Germany

Telephone: +49 521 2997 888

Fax: +49 521 2997 889

Email: [team@stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org](mailto:team@stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org)

Website: [www.stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org](http://www.stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org)

## CONTENTS

SUMMARY .....	5
1 INTRODUCTION .....	6
1.1 Winter bird trapping.....	6
2 WORKING METHODS .....	6
3 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS AND ACTIONS AGAINST BIRD TRAPPING .....	8
3.1 Monitoring of trapping activity .....	8
3.1.1 Trapping activity per jurisdiction .....	9
3.1.2 Comparison of trapping activity detected at CABS & SPA Winter Camps in years 2014-2018 .....	10
3.2 Seized trapping paraphernalia .....	11
3.3 Birds found in traps .....	11
3.3.1 Total number of trapped birds on active trapping sites.....	13
3.4 Results of cooperation with enforcement officers.....	14
3.4.1 Overall results .....	14
3.4.2 Detailed results of cooperation with Cyprus Police, SBA Police and Game and Fauna Service .....	16
4 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS AND ACTIONS AGAINST ILLEGAL BIRD HUNTING 17	
4.1 Monitoring of illegal hunting activity .....	17
4.2 Actions against illegal hunting activity.....	18
5 CONCLUSIONS.....	20
REFERENCES .....	22

## SUMMARY

In late autumn 2017 and in winter 2017-2018, Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) and Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA – Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt) conducted three Bird Protection Camps in Cyprus. They ran from 30th November 2017 – 17th December 2018, 6th January – 11th February 2018 and from 20th February – 28 February 2018.

14 volunteers from 6 countries participated in the Winter Camps and monitored trapping and illegal hunting of birds overwintering in the south-eastern part of Cyprus. They investigated 140 known trapping sites and 89 of them were found to be active. 43 active trapping sites were found in the British Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA), 42 in the Republic of Cyprus, and 5 in the North Cyprus.

In total, 213 mist nets, 636 limesticks and 58 electronic callers were removed from active trapping sites during the Winter Camps. 673 birds belonging to 15 different species were rescued from traps, 8 birds were rescued from aviaries and 35 birds were found dead in the traps. Most of rescued birds were song thrushes. Approximately 37 000 birds was trapped and killed on trapping sites found active by CABS & SPA members from beginning of November 2017 until the end of February 2018.

Participants of the Winter Camps cooperated with police officers of Cyprus Police, Sovereign Base Area (SBA) Police and with wardens from Game and Fauna Service. Enforcement officers investigated 82 out of 92 active trapping sites reported by CABS & SPA teams. All investigations were made within few hours after the sites were reported by our teams and in total 179 mist nets, 459 limesticks and 52 electronic callers were seized from reported sites. At 6 reported sites individuals were caught and prosecuted for bird trapping.

Trapping activity, detected by CABS & SPA members in winter trapping season 2017-2018, was higher in the British ESBA. The density of active trapping sites found within ESBA was 0,33 trapping sites per km<sup>2</sup>, that is eight times more than in the Republic of Cyprus, where 0,04 trapping sites were found per km<sup>2</sup>.

Participants of Winter Camps also investigated and acted against illegal hunting. In total they detected 67 cases of illegal hunting. In all but one case, hunters used illegal electronic callers to attract birds in front of guns. They have reported 27 cases to enforcement officers and officers investigated 17 of them. As a result, electronic callers were seized in 7 occasions and on 2 occasions hunters were caught and prosecuted for illegal hunting with callers.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Cyprus lies on one of the key migratory routes that birds use during their journey between Europe and Africa, with around 100-150 million birds visiting the island every spring and autumn (Lederer 2016). Cyprus is also an important wintering place for birds which migrate to Cyprus to avoid harsh winter conditions in Europe.

Large numbers of migratory birds are illegally killed every year in Cyprus. In most cases they are either trapped or illegally shot.

Every year since 2009, CABS and SPA organise events, called Bird Protection Camps, to prevent illegal trapping and hunting of migratory birds passing through Cyprus. Camps can last from a few days up to several months. During the Camps, volunteers from all over Europe and other continents monitor bird trapping and hunting activity in the field, and cooperate closely with enforcement officers to stop detected illegal bird killings in the shortest time possible.

### 1.1 WINTER BIRD TRAPPING

Bird trapping in Cyprus takes place in 3 distinctive seasons: spring, autumn and winter. Winter trapping season lasts approximately from beginning of November until end of February.

Trapping methods and targeted species are different between the main seasons. Out of all seasons, trapping is most intensive in autumn, followed by trapping in winter season. Song thrushes, overwintering in Cyprus, are the main species targeted by trappers in winter.

The most common method used to catch song thrushes and other birds overwintering in Cyprus is with mist nets and electronic callers set in the night time. Some trappers also use limesticks for trapping, but these traps are not as common as they are in spring and autumn season.

## 2 WORKING METHODS

From November 2017 until February 2018 three Winter Bird Protection Camps were organised by CABS and SPA in Cyprus. First Camp ran between 30th November – 17th December 2017, second one between 6th January – 11th February 2018 and third one between 21st -28th February.

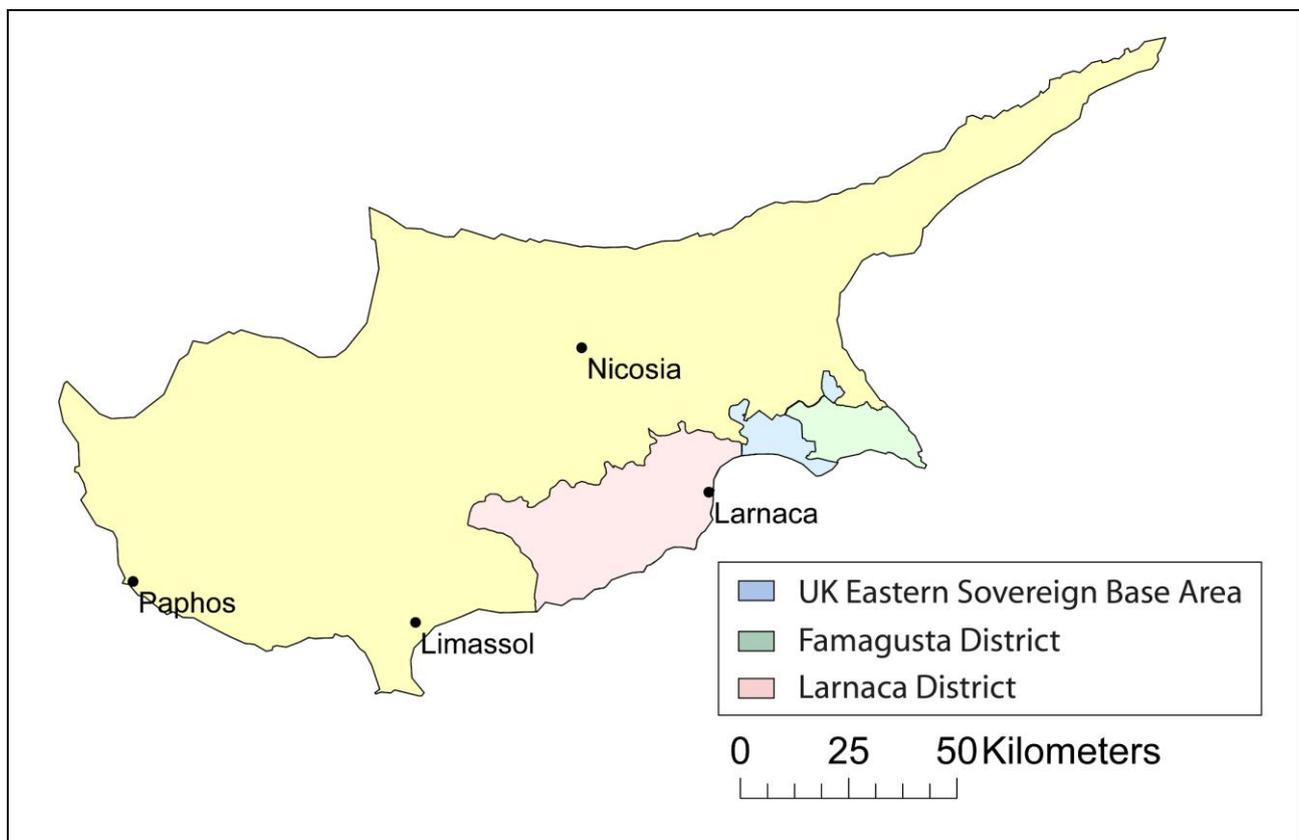
Combined length of all 3 Winter Camps was 63 days. Camps covered a large part of winter trapping season 2017-2018. A total of 14 people from Cyprus, Switzerland, Great Britain, Hungary, Slovenia and Portugal participated at the Camps.

Table 1: Duration and number of volunteers participating at Bird Protection Camps organised by CABS & SPS in winter trapping season 2017-2018

BPC	Winter Camp 1	Winter Camp 2	Winter Camp 3	All Winter Camps <sup>1</sup>
Period	30.11.- 17.12. 2017	6.1.- 11.2. 2018	21.2.- 28.2. 2018	
Duration (days)	19	36	8	63
No. of participants	3	11	2	14

1- volunteers, participating at more than at one Camp in winter trapping season 2017-2018, were counted only once in this column

Participants monitored known trapping areas within Famagusta District, Larnaca District and the British Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) on Cyprus (Picture 1).



Picture 1: Cyprus and the areas monitored during Winter 2017–2018 Bird Protection Camps

Participants of the Camps searched for active trapping sites and illegal hunting locations and reported them to enforcement agencies for immediate actions against illegal bird killings.

Active trapping sites are 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 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS AND ACTIONS AGAINST BIRD TRAPPING

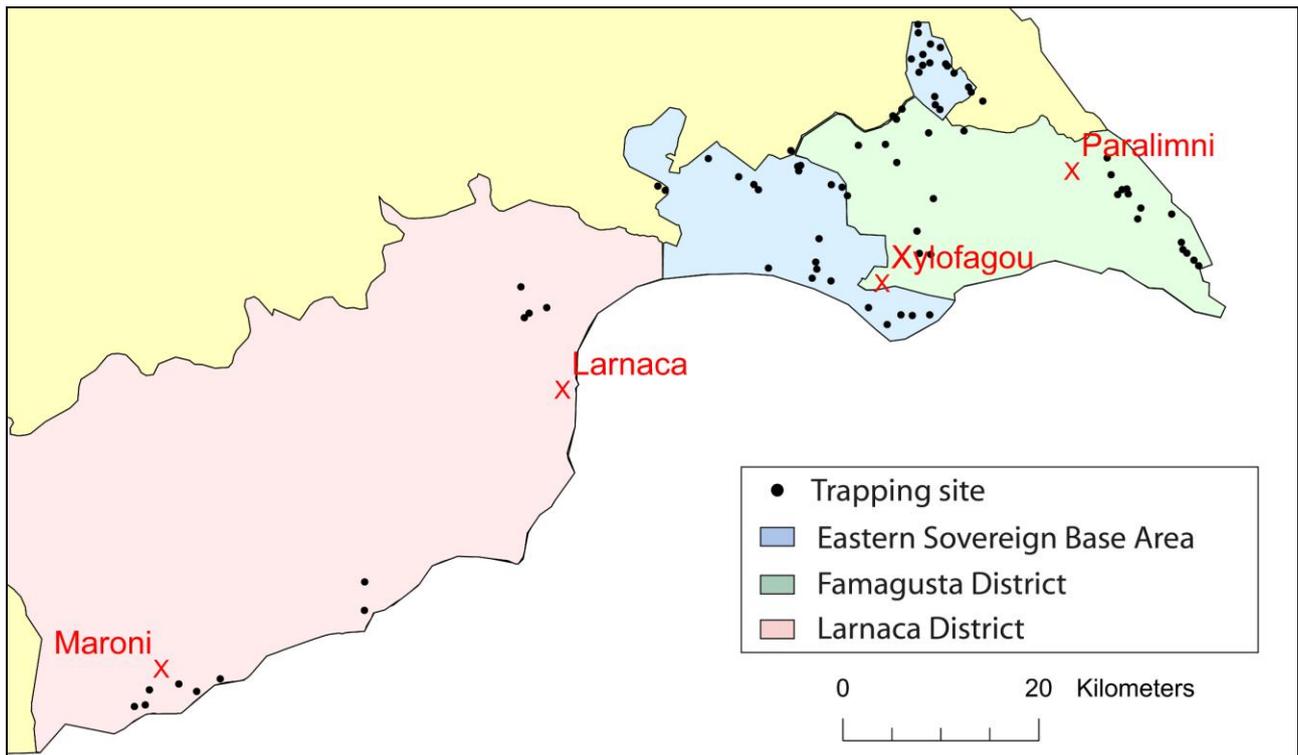
#### 3.1 MONITORING OF TRAPPING ACTIVITY

CABS & SPA teams checked 140 trapping sites during the Camps conducted from beginning of November 2017 until end of February 2018. Of the 140 sites checked, 89 sites were found active (Table 2, Picture 2). Trapping activity at the trapping sites, found to be active, was detected 136 times or 1,7 times per trapping site.

Table 2: Results of monitoring trapping activity at Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps

BPC	Winter Camp 1	Winter Camp 2	Winter Camp 3	All Winter Camps <sup>1</sup>
No. of checked trapping sites	57	82	31	140
No. of active trapping sites found	33	67	3	89

1- trapping sites, checked or found active at more than one Camp in winter trapping season 2017-2018, were counted only once in this column



Picture 2: Distribution of trapping sites found to be active during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps

### 3.1.1 TRAPPING ACTIVITY PER JURIDISTITION

Table 3: Distribution of trapping sites found to be active during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps per jurisdiction. ROC = Republic of Cyprus; ESBA = Eastern Sovereign Base Area

	ROC	ESBA	North Cyprus <sup>1</sup>	All
No. of active trapping sites found	42	43	5	89

1- field investigations during Winter Camps were limited to Republic of Cyprus and ESBA; all active trapping sites in North Cyprus were found by chance, by hearing electronic callers across border from Republic of Cyprus or from ESBA

Trapping activity, detected during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps, was most concentrated within ESBA, where investigations revealed more than 8 times higher density of active trapping sites per square kilometer as within Republic of Cyprus (Table 4).

Table 4: Density of active trapping sites found during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps in Republic of Cyprus and ESBA. ROC = Republic of Cyprus; ESBA = Eastern Sovereign Base Area

	RoC	ESBA
No. of active trapping sites found	42	43
Size of the area (km <sup>2</sup> )	1044,2	131,0
Density of active trapping sites (sites per km <sup>2</sup> )	0,04	0,33

### 3.1.2 COMPARISON OF TRAPPING ACTIVITY DETECTED AT CABS & SPA WINTER CAMPS IN YEARS 2014-2018

The first Winter Camp, organised by CABS & SPA in Cyprus, ran for 10 days in January and February 2015. Since then, Winter Camps gradually became longer to cover larger part of the winter trapping season (Table 5).

Table 5: Comparison of trapping activity found at CABS & SPA Winter Bird Protection Camps in years 2014-2018

Winter	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Duration of Winter Bird Protection Camps (days)	10	22	35	63
No. of active trapping sites found	44	92	186	89
No. of active sites found per day of the Camps	4,4	4,2	5,3	1,4

Although the duration of field investigations, carried out during Winter Camps in winter trapping season 2017-2018, was almost twice as long as it was during the previous winter trapping season, the number of trapping sites, found to be active this year (89), was substantially lower as one year ago (186). The difference is even more striking, if we compare the number of active sites found active per day of Winter Camps: in the previous winter season more than 5 active trapping sites were found on average per day, while this winter trapping season only 1,4 active trapping sites were found per each day of the Winter Camps.

The decrease in number of active trapping sites was particularly strong in the ESBA. In the previous winter trapping season we found 126 active trapping sites and this season 43 (76 % less; Table 6).

Table 6: Trapping sites found to be active at CABS & SPA Winter Bird Protection Camps in winter trapping seasons 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 per jurisdiction. ESBA = Eastern Sovereign Base Area

	Republic of Cyprus		ESBA	
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2016-2017	2017-2018
Winter trapping season				
No. of active trapping sites found	61	42	125	43
Trend		- 31 %		- 76 %

### 3.2 SEIZED TRAPPING PARAPHERNALIA

Trapping activity was detected 136 times on 89 trapping sites during Winter Camps. Set traps were found 79 times on 61 trapping sites. Altogether, 213 nets, 636 limesticks and 58 electronic callers were found and seized from them by enforcement officers and CABS & SPA members (Table 7).

Table 7: Trapping paraphernalia seized during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps

No. of sites with set traps found	61
No. of sites with set limesticks	11
No. of sites with set nets	50
No. of sites with electronic callers	50
Total number of seized limesticks	636
Total number of seized nets	213
Total number of seized electronic callers	58

Table 8: Trapping paraphernalia seized at CABS & SPA Winter Bird Protection Camps in years 2014-2018

Winter Camps	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Duration of Winter Camps (days)	10	22	35	63
No. of active sites found	44	92	186	89
No. of seized limesticks	0	451	901	636
No. of seized mist nets	124	222	523	213
No. of seized electronic callers	33	60	73	58

### 3.3 BIRDS FOUND IN TRAPS

In total, 673 birds were rescued and 35 birds were found dead in traps during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps (Table 9). Most of the birds found in traps were song thrushes. This is no surprise as most trapping sites, found to be active, used electronic

callers imitating calls of song thrushes to attract them to traps. Beside song thrushes, 18 other species were found in traps.

Table 9: Bird species found during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps

		No. of birds rescued from traps	No. of dead birds found in traps
1	Song thrush ( <i>Turdus philomelos</i> )	417	18
2	Blackcap ( <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> )	12	5
3	Blackbird ( <i>Turdus merula</i> )	11	0
4	Robin ( <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> )	2	1
5	Chaffinch ( <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> )	0	2
6	Redwing ( <i>Turdus iliacus</i> )	1	1
7	Long-Eared Owl ( <i>Asio otus</i> )	1	0
8	House sparrow ( <i>Passer domesticus</i> )	1	0
9	Spanish sparrow ( <i>Passer hispaniolensis</i> )	0	2
10	Collared dove ( <i>Streptopelia decaocta</i> )	1	0
11	Common redstart ( <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> )	0	1
12	Black redstart ( <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> )	3	0
13	Sardinian warbler ( <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i> )	2	0
14	Spectacled warbler ( <i>Sylvia conspicillata</i> )	2	0
15	Starling ( <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> )	1	0
16	Willow warbler ( <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> )	1	0
17	Chiffchaff ( <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> )	2	1
18	Stonechat ( <i>Saxicola rubicola</i> )	1	0
19	Meadow pipit ( <i>Anthus pratensis</i> )	0	2
	Unidentified	215	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>35</b>



Picture 3: Long-eared owl rescued from a net during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps (Photo: CABS)

### 3.3.1 TOTAL NUMBER OF TRAPPED BIRDS ON ACTIVE TRAPPING SITES

To calculate total number of trapped birds in winter trapping season 2017-2018 at the sites, found to be active during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps, we used the following trapping activity estimations:

- length of winter trapping season is 120 days (from beginning of November until end of February)
- trapping sites, found to be active during Winter Camps, were active on average 15 days in winter trapping season . This estimation is based on observations of trapping activity during Winter Camps. Trapping sites were not regularly active. Activity of trapping sites was, among others, affected by the confiscations of traps and arrests made on them. More than half of trapping sites, from which trapping paraphernalia was removed by CABS & SPA members and enforcement officers during Winter Camps, was not found active anymore after the raid.
- estimated 10 birds are caught per net and 0,25 birds per limestick per day in winter trapping season

Considering the results of field investigations (columns A,B,C,D,E,F and G in Table 10) and trapping activity estimations (columns H,I and J in Table 10), we estimate that

approximately 37 000 birds were trapped and killed from beginning of November until end of February on trapping sites, found to be active during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps.

Table 10: Trapping activity and estimated total number of trapped birds in winter trapping season 2017-2018 at the trapping sites, found to be active during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps

A	No. of all active trapping sites found	89
B	No. of active trapping sites with limesticks used on them	16
C	No. of active trapping sites with mist nets used on them	73
D	Average number of limesticks used on trapping sites with set traps	45,3
E	Average number of mist nets used on trapping sites with set traps	3,1
F	Total number of limesticks used on all active trapping sites per day (F=B*D)	727
G	Total number of nets used on active trapping sites per day (G=C*E)	226
H	Estimated duration of trapping activity on active trapping sites in winter trapping season (days)	15
I	Estimated number of birds killed per limestick per day	0,25
J	Estimated number of birds killed per mist net per day	10
K	Estimated no. of trapped birds on active trapping sites (K = F*H*I+G*H*J)	36 648

### 3.4 RESULTS OF COOPERATION WITH ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

#### 3.4.1 OVERALL RESULTS

During Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps we cooperated with regular and anti-poaching police units from Cyprus Police, regular and anti-poaching police units from Sovereign Base Areas (SBA) Police and with game wardens from Game and Fauna Service. Altogether we reported 92 active trapping sites and 82 of them were investigated by enforcement officers. All reported sites were investigated within a few hours after being reported by CABS & SPA teams. In total, 179 mist nets, 459 limesticks and 52 electronic

callers were seized by officers from reported sites and prosecutions for bird trapping were made at 6 reported sites (Table 11).

Table 11: Overall results of cooperation between CABS & SPA and enforcement agencies during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps

	Cyprus Police	Game and Fauna Service	SBA Police	All agencies
No. of cases reported by CABS & SPA members	16	19	57	92
No. of investigated cases	13	15	54	82
No. of seized mist nets	21	14	144	179
No. of seized limesticks	140	319	0	459
No. of seized callers	10	5	37	52
No. of prosecutions	1	4	1	6

Number of prosecutions made for bird trapping was low when compared to the number of investigated cases. Only at 6 out of 82 investigated cases (7,3 %) officers and wardens managed to catch and prosecute individuals responsible for trapping. The enforcement results regarding prosecutions were particularly bad for SBA Police as they only caught and prosecuted trappers at 1 out 54 investigated sites (1,9 %).

When compared to previous Winter Camps, Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps stand out by the highest number of reported and investigated cases by CABS & SPA members and also by the lowest percentage of prosecutions made by enforcement officers (Table 12).

Table 12: Comparison of enforcement results for cases reported by CABS & SPA members at Winter Bird Protection Camps in years 2014-2018

Winter Bird Protection Camps	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Duration of Camp (days)	10	22	35	63
No. of reported cases	24	60	30	92
No. of investigated cases	16	46	29	82
No. of prosecutions	3	5	17	6
Percentage of prosecutions (for investigated cases)	18,8	10,9	58,6	7,3

### 3.4.2 DETAILED RESULTS OF COOPERATION WITH CYPRUS POLICE, SBA POLICE AND GAME AND FAUNA SERVICE

Table 13: Detailed results of actions made by Cyprus Police police officers for trapping sites reported by CABS & SPA members during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps

<b>Monitoring of trapping sites</b>	
No. of active trapping sites reported by CABS & SPA members	16
No. of active trapping sites visited by Cyprus Police	13
No. of sites with prosecution of trappers	1
No. of sites with confiscation of trapping paraphernalia only	11
No. of sites where nothing was found by Cyprus Police	1
<b>Seized trapping paraphernalia</b>	
Limesticks	140
Mist nets	21
Electronic bird callers	10

Table 14: Detailed results of actions made by Game & Fauna Service wardens for trapping sites reported by CABS & SPA members during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps

<b>Monitoring of trapping sites</b>	
No. of active trapping sites reported by CABS & SPA members	19
No. of trapping sites visited by game wardens	15
No. of sites with prosecution of trappers	4
No. of sites with confiscation of trapping paraphernalia only	7
No. of sites where nothing was found by wardens	4
<b>Seized trapping paraphernalia</b>	
Limesticks	319
Mist nets	14
Electronic bird callers	5

Table 15: Detailed results of actions made by SBA Police officers for trapping sites reported by CABS & SPA members during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps

<b>Monitoring of trapping sites</b>	
No. of active trapping sites reported by CABS & SPA members	57
No. of active trapping sites visited by SBA Police	54
No. of sites with prosecution of trappers	1
No. of sites with confiscation of trapping paraphernalia only	41
No. of sites where nothing was found by SBA Police	12
<b>Seized trapping paraphernalia</b>	

Limesticks	0
Mist nets	144
Electronic bird callers	37



Picture 4: SBA Police officer beside mist net reported by CABS & SPA members in January 2018 (Photo: CABS)

## 4 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS AND ACTIONS AGAINST ILLEGAL BIRD HUNTING

### 4.1 MONITORING OF ILLEGAL HUNTING ACTIVITY

Investigations and actions against bird trapping were given priority among activities of the Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps. Other activities, including investigations and actions against illegal bird hunting, were carried only occasionally and at the times when trapping activity was not very high and time could be spent for other activities.

Investigations were carried out mostly in the mornings, when illegal hunting activity was the highest. Illegal hunting investigations were either made by purpose or by chance, when volunteers, who were investigating bird trapping activity, came across illegal hunting.

In total we detected 67 cases of illegal hunting during Winter Camps (Table 16).

Table 16: Number of illegal hunting detections during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps

BPC	Winter Camp 1	Winter Camp 2	Winter Camp 3	All Winter Camps <sup>1</sup>
No. of illegal hunting sites found	33	34	0	67

In all cases, except one, hunters used illegal electronic callers to attract birds in front of the guns (Table 17).

Table 17: Types of illegal hunting offences detected during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps

Type of illegal hunting activity	No. of cases
Use of electronic bird caller	66
Hunting in protected area	1

It has to be pointed out that 67 cases of illegal hunting, detected during Winter Camps, were discovered during a few short investigations. Much more illegal hunting cases would be detected if participants of Winter Camps would spent more time to investigate illegal hunting.

## 4.2 ACTIONS AGAINST ILLEGAL HUNTING ACTIVITY

In total CABS & SPA members reported 27 cases of illegal hunting to the enforcement officers during the Camps. Officers investigated 17 reported cases. As a result, 7 electronic callers were confiscated and at 2 locations hunters were caught and prosecuted for the use of electronic caller (Table 18).

Table 18: Results of enforcement actions for the cases of illegal hunting reported by CABS & SPA members during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps

	Cyprus Police	Game & Fauna Service	SBA Police	All agencies
No. of reported illegal hunting cases	3	22	2	27
No. of investigated illegal hunting cases	1	14	2	17
No. of seized electronic callers	1	6	0	7
No. of prosecutions for illegal hunting	0	2	0	2



Picture 5: Hunter observed shooting at birds in wildlife conservation area near Frenaros, December 2017. Photo: CABS

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

CABS & SPA field investigations revealed 89 active trapping sites during winter trapping season 2017-2018. Trapping activity was significantly lower as it was previous winter, when 186 active trapping sites were discovered by CABS & SPA members. The decline was particularly strong in the ESBA, where CABS & SPA members found 126 active trapping sites previous winter and 43 active trapping sites this winter.

Among the main reasons for strong decline of trapping in the ESBA are substantially increased extent of anti-poaching field investigations and actions made by CABS & SPA members and improved cooperation between CABS & SPA and SBA Police in winter 2017-2018 trapping season when compared to previous winter trapping seasons. This winter trapping season the field investigations lasted for a record high total of 63 days. Previous record was a total of 35 days for field investigations made during winter 2016-2017 trapping season. Improved cooperation between CABS & SPA and SBA Police is easily visible from increased number of reported trapping sites. During Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps CABS & SPA members reported record high 54 cases to the SBA Police while previous record was 15 cases reported at Winter 2016-2017 Bird Protection Camp.

Although we detected a sharp decrease of bird trapping in the ESBA this winter trapping season, bird trapping activity remains to be much higher in this British territory as it is in Republic of Cyprus. The density of active trapping sites per square kilometer, detected during Winter Camps, was more than 8 times higher in the ESBA as it was the density of active sites detected in the Republic of Cyprus.

The main reason for much higher trapping activity within the ESBA is the well known soft approach of the SBA Police towards bird trapping. Instead of making efforts to catch and arrest trappers, SBA Police officers in most cases only confiscate traps at investigated trapping sites. That was also the case with the trapping sites reported to SBA Police during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps. Out of 54 cases reported by CABS & SPA members, SBA Police officers made only 1 arrest and even that arrest was made by a chance as police officers found a car parked at the site reported by our teams and the evidences of trapping were found inside the car.

SBA Police has shown great improvement this winter regarding the cooperation with CABS & SPA members. They responded swiftly every time we called them to report active trapping site and investigated reported site in very short time, mostly within an hour. We hope that SBA Police will also improve their performance in regard to the efforts to catch and prosecute trappers and will increase the number of arrests in the next trapping seasons.

Estimated 37 000 birds were trapped and killed on trapping sites found to be active during Winter Camps. As CABS & SPA field investigations were limited by covering only trapping areas in Cyprus, located in the south-eastern part of the island and as they were limited to 63 days of winter trapping season that lasts approximately 120 days, we estimate that many more trapping sites were active in whole Cyprus in winter trapping season 2017-2018.

We roughly estimate the number of all trapping sites active across the whole Cyprus in winter trapping season 2017-2018 to be 2-4 times higher as the number of sites found to be active during Winter Camps. Consequently, the estimated number of trapped birds is also 2-4 times higher as the estimated number of birds killed at trapping sites found to be active during Winter Camps, meaning that approximately 80 000-160 000 birds were trapped and killed across Cyprus in winter trapping season 2017-2018.

Field investigations during Winter 2017-2018 Bird Protection Camps also revealed massive levels of illegal winter hunting. In short time and within small investigated area, Winter Camps participants detected 66 cases of hunting with use of electronic caller and 1 case of hunting in wildlife protected area, where hunting is prohibited. Based on results of these investigations, we estimate that electronic callers were used frequently at more than 1000 locations across Cyprus this winter.

Use of electronic callers greatly increases the chances for hunters to shot them as callers attract 3 to 13 time more birds as usual to the location where the caller is used (Schaub et al. 1999).

Considering greatly increased chances for hunters to kill birds with use of callers and considering the widespread use of callers, we estimate that at least several hundred thousand birds were illegally shot from beginning of November 2017 until end of February 2018 across Cyprus. Illegal hunting is most likely a even bigger threat for wintering birds as it is bird trapping.

## REFERENCES

Lederer, R. J. (2016): *Beaks, Bones & Bird Songs: How the Struggle for Survival Has Shaped Birds and their Behavior*. Portland, Timber Press.

Rutigliano, A., Debersek, B., Papastylianou, K. (2015): Field report: Winter 2014/2015 Bird Protection Camp, Cyprus. Committee Against Bird Slaughter & Foundation Pro Biodiversity, accessed June 1, 2018

[http://www.komitee.de/sites/www.komitee.de/files/wiki/2016/02/Cyprus%20Field%20Report%20Winter%202014-15%20\(en\).pdf](http://www.komitee.de/sites/www.komitee.de/files/wiki/2016/02/Cyprus%20Field%20Report%20Winter%202014-15%20(en).pdf)

Rutigliano, A., Debersek, B., Papastylianou, K. (2016): Field report: Winter 2015/2016 Bird Protection Camp. Committee Against Bird Slaughter & Foundation Pro Biodiversity, accessed June 1, 2018

[http://www.komitee.de/sites/www.komitee.de/files/wiki/2016/02/Cyprus%20Field%20Report%20Winter%202015-16%20\(en\).pdf](http://www.komitee.de/sites/www.komitee.de/files/wiki/2016/02/Cyprus%20Field%20Report%20Winter%202015-16%20(en).pdf)

Debersek, B., Rutigliano, A. (2017): Field report: Winter 2016/2017 Bird Protection Camp. Committee Against Bird Slaughter & Foundation Pro Biodiversity, accessed June 1, 2018

<http://www.komitee.de/sites/www.komitee.de/files/wiki/2016/02/Cyprus%20Field%20Report%20Winter%202016-17.pdf>

Schaub M., Schwilch R., Jenni L. (1999): Does tape-luring of migrating Eurasian reed warblers increase number of recruits or capture probability? *The Auk* 116(4), accessed June 3, 2018

<http://www.avibirds.com/pdf/R/Rietzanger3.pdf>