

BIRD TRAPPING IN THE BRITISH EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA ON CYPRUS: ANNUAL REPORT 2016



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Cover photo: CABS/SPA members and SBA Police officers investigating trapping site in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area, January 2017 (Photo: CABS)

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SUMMARY

In 2016, Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS), Foundation Pro Biodiversity (Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt (SPA)) and BirdLife Cyprus members investigated trapping activity in the British overseas territory on Cyprus - the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA). Field investigations covered the 3 main trapping seasons: winter, spring and autumn season and were carried out in January, February, April, May, September and October 2016. Investigations revealed 190 active trapping sites within the ESBA. At 73 active trapping sites 232 mist nets and 105 limesticks were found.

Trapping activity was most intensive in autumn, when field investigations revealed trapping activity at 155 out of 190 trapping sites found to be active in 2016. It is estimated that 880,000 birds could have been killed in autumn trapping season of 2016 in the ESBA.

Field investigations included 30 trapping sites where trappers had been arrested for bird trapping before 2016 and 18 of them (60 %) were found active again, indicating that the received fines are not deterring trappers from repeating offences in spite of successful arrest.

The trend in autumn trapping activity for the period 2002–2016 was assessed based on the total length of active net rides found at field investigations made by BirdLife Cyprus. Results show that trapping activity in the ESBA was the highest ever in autumn 2016 in the period 2002-2016.

The Sovereign Base Area (SBA) Police officers arrested 34 people for illegal bird trapping in the SBAs during 2016. 4 arrests were made in winter time, 1 in spring and the majority of them, 29, were made during the autumn trapping season. 12 out of 34 arrests made by SBA Police resulted directly from cases reported by CABS, SPA and BirdLife Cyprus members.

1 INTRODUCTION

This report compiles the results of bird trapping field investigations and enforcement actions taken against bird trapping in British territory on Cyprus - the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) - in 2016. Field investigations were carried out by members of Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS), Foundation Pro Biodiversity (Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt (SPA)) and BirdLife Cyprus and enforcement actions were taken by the Sovereign Base Area (SBA) Police.

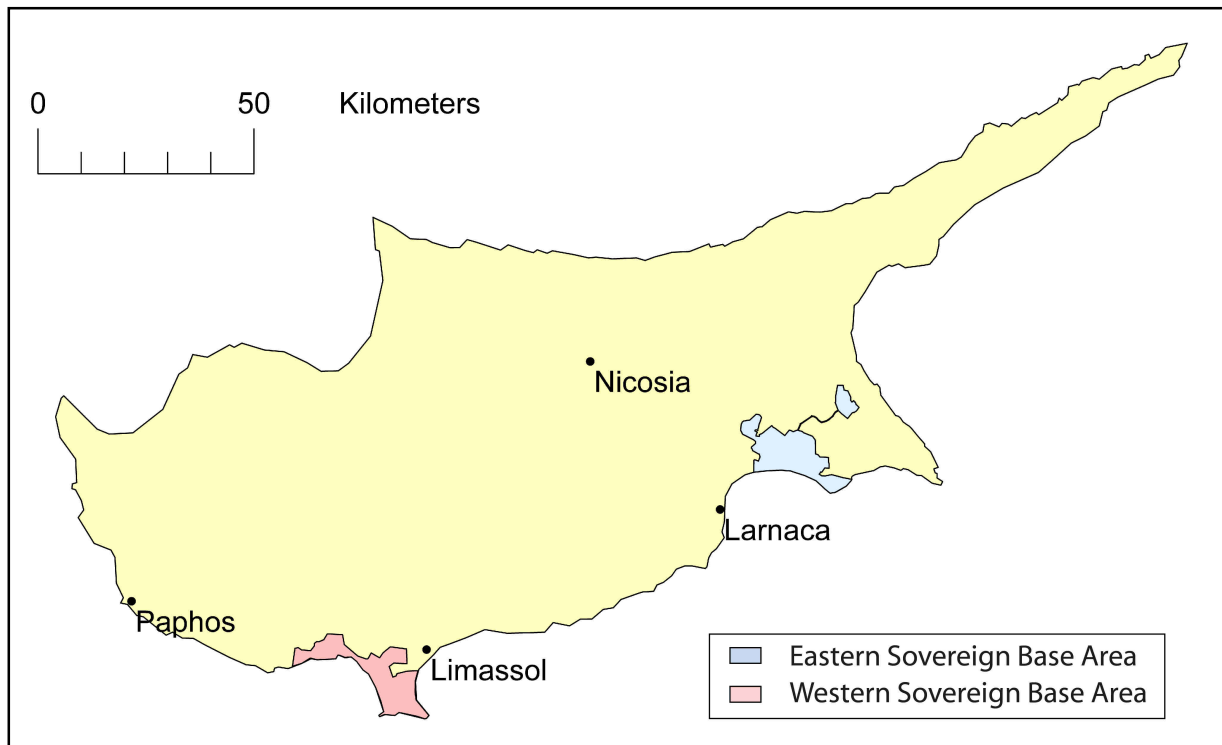
1.1 BRITISH SOVEREIGN BASE AREAS ON CYPRUS

The Eastern Sovereign Base Area, also known as the Sovereign Base Area of Dhekelia, is one of two British Overseas Territories on the island of Cyprus. As the name suggests, it is situated on the eastern side of the island, while the Western Sovereign Base Area, also known as the Sovereign Base Area of Akrotiri, lies in the west (Picture 1). These areas, which include British military bases and installations, as well as other land, were established in 1960 when Cyprus achieved independence from the British Empire.

Although the SBAs boundaries were drawn to exclude civilian population centers, the coup in 1974 and other developments over the years led to an influx of civilians to SBAs and approximately 10,000 Cypriots now live within them. In addition, 3,800 UK residents, mostly military personnel and their families, work or live on the Base Areas (SBA Administration 2017a).

Both SBAs operate as military bases and they report to the British Ministry of Defense in London, rather than the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Nevertheless they are governed as British Overseas Territories and the leader, who is also the commander of the British Forces Cyprus, has executive and legislative powers comparable to those of a governor in a civilian overseas territory. The commander is the Administrator of the SBAs and leads a civilian administration that manages the SBAs.

The combined size of the SBAs is 254 km² and the size of ESBA alone is 131 km². For comparison, this is similar to the size of Edinburgh (264 km²) and around 6 times smaller than London (1,569 km²). 20 percent of the land is owned by the UK Ministry of Defence, 20 percent by the Crown and 60 percent is privately owned and used for intensive farming.



Picture 1: British Sovereign Base Areas on the island of Cyprus

2 WORKING METHODS

2.1 COMMITTEE AGAINST BIRD SLAUGHTER (CABS) AND FOUNDATION PRO BIODIVERSITY (SPA)

2.1.1 FIELD INVESTIGATION METHODS

CABS and SPA organised 3 Bird Protection Camps in Cyprus in 2016. These were the Winter 2015–2016 Bird Protection Camp (Rutigliano et al. 2016), Spring 2016 Bird Protection Camp (Rutigliano and Debersek 2016) and Autumn 2016 Bird Protection Camp (Rutigliano and Debersek 2017). A total of 51 people participated at the Camps in 2016 and they monitored trapping activity for 105 days (Table 1).

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 ESBA. Detected illegal activities were reported immediately to the authorities to ensure that enforcement actions against trappers were taken.

Table 1: Duration and number of people participating at Bird Protection Camps organised by CABS and SPA in Cyprus in 2016.

Bird Protection Camp	Winter 2015-2016	Spring 2016	Autumn 2016	Total 2016
Period of field investigations	23rd January- 6th February	3rd April- 14th May	8th September- 22nd October	
Duration of field investigations (days)	15	43	47	105
No. of participants	6	17	28	51

Priority was given to the investigation of locations with the highest probability of finding trapping activity at them. This probability is estimated by consulting data collected at the Bird Protection Camps 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. Finally, 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.

2.2 BIRDLIFE CYPRUS

2.2.1 FIELD INVESTIGATION METHODS

BirdLife Cyprus has been monitoring bird trapping activity in Cyprus since 2002 following a systematic surveillance program. Each spring and autumn they visit a sample of randomly selected 1 km² squares during the daytime in the southeastern part of Cyprus, in the Famagusta and Larnaca Districts within the Republic of Cyprus and in the ESBA. These selected squares have been stratified to ensure a representative coverage of areas under SBA administration and those under control of the Republic of Cyprus (Shialis 2016). During winter BirdLife Cyprus undertakes a spot check exercise of

randomly selected trapping sites within the survey areas (instead of a complete field survey as in spring and autumn).

In 2016, BirdLife Cyprus members carried out field surveys of bird trapping for a total of 44 days (Table 2).

Table 2: Duration of BirdLife Cyprus bird trapping field investigations in 2016 (Shialis, written communication).

Survey	Winter 2015-2016	Spring 2016	Autumn 2016	Total 2016
Period of field survey	January, February	April, May	September, October	
Duration (days)	6	16	22	44

The survey team, comprised of 2 persons, visits the randomly selected squares and records trapping activity, both with regards to mist netting and limesticks. However, BirdLife Cyprus focuses on mist netting activity, with limesticks recorded only if they are found while searching for mist netting activity. This strategy is adopted due to limited resources available for field investigations.

Mist netting activity levels are measured in terms of the total length of active netrides. Locations included in this total include all those where mist nets are found, or where feathers are found on the ground(Shialis2016).

In addition to active mistnetting sites, sites where pole bases and/or poles for nets are found on the ground between clear netrides are recorded. These sites are classified as 'prepared' netrides sites as they are ready to be set up for bird trapping, but no evidence of recent activity is detected, e.g. fresh feathers or tape lures.

2.2.2 METHODS USED TO ESTIMATE NUMBER OF KILLED BIRDS

The field data gathered from BirdLife Cyprus systematic surveillance program are analysed to produce trends in trapping activity levels for mist netting activity. The field data gathered are also used to estimate the potential death toll of killed birds for the whole territory of ESBA. They record total length of active net rides in the surveyed 1 km²sample squares and extrapolate these numbers to obtain the estimated number of active net rides in the whole ESBA.

To calculate total number of killed birds that could have been killed in the ESBA, BirdLife Cyprus assumes that active net rides were active every day of the trapping

season in which they were recorded. The estimated length of spring and autumn trapping seasons are 60 days. In autumn, 20 birds are caught per 12 meter net per day and 0.5 birds are caught per limestick per day. These estimates are scaled down by 50% for the spring season due to the less intensive bird migrations in this season (Shialis 2017b).

3 RESULTS OF BIRD TRAPPING FIELD INVESTIGATIONS IN THE EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA IN 2016

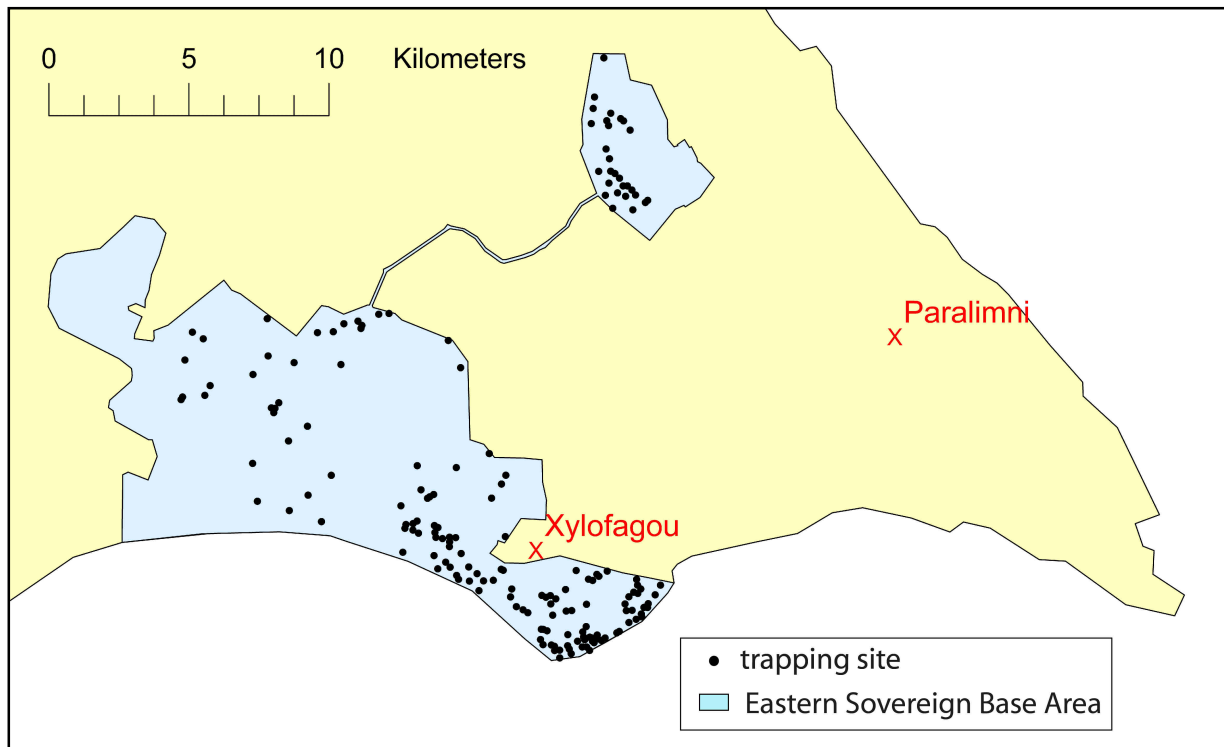
3.1 OVERALL RESULTS OF FIELD INVESTIGATIONS MADE BY CABS, SPA AND BIRDLIFE MEMBERS

CABS, SPA and BirdLife Cyprus found 190 active trapping sites between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2016 in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA). 29 active sites were found in winter time, 6 in spring and 155 in autumn (Table 3, Picture 2).

Many of these trapping sites were found to be active both during CABS/SPA investigations and BirdLife investigations in the same season, but as the trapping activity was found on the same site, they are counted only once in the total number of sites found to be active in 2016.

Table 3: Number of active trapping sites found by CABS, SPA and BirdLife Cyprus members in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area in 2016.

Season	Winter 2015-2016	Spring 2016	Autumn 2016	Total 2016
Time of field investigations	January, February	April, May	September, October	
No. of active sites found	29	6	155	190



Picture 2: Distribution of trapping sites found active by Committee Against Bird Slaughter, Foundation Pro Biodiversity and BirdLife Cyprus in the British Eastern Sovereign Base Area on Cyprus in 2016.

It has to be noted here that the monitoring methodologies of BirdLife Cyprus and CABS/SPA have different goals and therefore produce different results. While BirdLife Cyprus members select a random sample of 1x1 km squares (or locations in the case of winter surveys) to check in order to determine the overall trapping activity levels for mist nets, CABS/SPA members focus on detecting all or as much as possible trapping activity during the fieldwork.

3.2 RESULTS OF FIELD INVESTIGATIONS MADE BY COMMITTEE AGAINST BIRD SLAUGHTER (CABS) AND FOUNDATION PRO BIODIVERSITY (SPA)

CABS and SPA members checked 209 known trapping sites between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2016 in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) and of those, 174 were found to be active. 21 active sites were found in winter, 6 in spring and 147 in autumn (Table 4).

Table 4: Results of field investigations made by CABS and SPA members in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area in 2016.

Season	Winter 2015-2016	Spring 2016	Autumn 2016	Total 2016
No. of checked sites	28	22	159	209
No. of active sites found	21	6	147	174

3.2.1 COMPARISON OF TRAPPING ACTIVITY IN THE EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA AND THEREPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

CABS and SPA members investigated 797 known trapping sites in the Republic of Cyprus in 2016 and of those, 343 were found to be active (Debersek 2017).

The percentage of active trapping sites found in 2016 was higher in the ESBA (83.3 %) than it was in the Republic of Cyprus (43.0 %, Table 5). Furthermore, the density of trapping sites found active in the ESBA (1.33 sites per km²) was four times higher than in the Republic of Cyprus (0.33 sites per km²).

Table 5: Comparison of trapping activity detected by CABS and SPA members in Republic of Cyprus and Eastern Sovereign Base Area in 2016. (RoC=Republic of Cyprus, ESBA=Eastern Sovereign Base Area)

	RoC	ESBA
No. of checked sites	797	209
No. of active trapping sites found	343	174
Percentage of active sites found (%)	43.0	83.3
Size of investigated area (km ²)	1044.2	131.0
Density of active trapping sites (sites per km ²)	0.33	1.33

3.3 ACTIVITY OF TRAPPING SITES WHERE ARRESTS FOR TRAPPING WERE MADE IN THE PAST

During field investigations in 2016, CABS, SPA and BirdLife Cyprus members checked 30 trapping sites in the ESBA where trappers were caught and arrested in previous years. More than half (60 %) of all sites with previous arrests were found to be reactivated again in 2016. The main trapping season, autumn, was by far the worst season in this regard, with 84.2 % of trapping sites reactivated despite previous arrests (Table 6).

Table 6: Reactivation of trapping sites in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area in 2016 where arrests were made in the previous years.

Season	Winter 2015-2016	Spring 2016	Autumn 2016	Total 2016
	6	5	19	30
No. of reactivated prosecuted sites	1	1	16	18
Percentage of reactivated prosecuted sites	16.7	20.0	84.2	60.0

The high percentage of reactivated sites found in 2016 shows that SBA Police and SBA Court actions and penalties against bird trapping are inadequate and have little deterrent effect on trapping. Illegal trapping proves to be a highly profitable activity, hence trappers persistently continue trapping at the same sites where they were previously caught and prosecuted.

3.4 TRAPPING PARAPHERNALIA FOUND DURING FIELD INVESTIGATIONS MADE BY CABS, SPA AND BIRDLIFE CYPRUS

At 73 out of 190 sites found to be active by CABS, SPA and BirdLife members in the ESBA in 2016, set traps were found during investigations and the total number of set traps could be determined with complete investigation of the sites. Investigations were made either by CABS, SPA and BirdLife Cyprus members or by police officers, to whom the trapping sites were reported.

At the remaining 127 sites found to be active in the ESBA in 2016, either set traps were observed but the sites were not investigated for various reasons, signs of recent trapping were detected or electronic bird callers were playing at them, but the traps were not set out at the time of investigation.

At the 73 investigated sites with set traps, altogether 232 nets and 105 limesticks were found. Found trapping paraphernalia is presented by seasons in Table 7. Trapping with limesticks was detected only at 3 sites, while at the remaining 70 sites, nets were used. For comparison, field investigations in the Republic of Cyprus in 2016 revealed the opposite as more trapping sites with set limesticks were found (152) than sites with nets (72) (Debersek 2017). At 60 out of 73 trapping investigated sites with set traps (82.2 %), electronic bird callers lures were used to attract birds into the traps.

Table 7: Trapping paraphernalia found in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area in 2016 by CABS, SPA and BirdLife Cyprus.

Season	Winter 2015-2016	Spring 2016	Autumn 2016	Year 2016
No. of sites found active	29	6	155	190
No. of sites found with set traps	16	4	53	73
No. of sites with limesticks	0	1	2	3
No. of sites with nets	16	3	51	70
No. of sites with both LS and nets	0	0	0	0
No. of sites with decoys	14	2	44	60
No. of limesticks found	0	75	30	105
No. of nets found	75	9	148	232
Average number of limesticks used per site	0	75.0	18.5	35.0
Average number of nets per used per site	3.9	2.3	2.6	2.9

3.4.1 COMPARISON OF TRAPPING PARAPHERNALIA FOUND IN THE EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA AND THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Trapping in the ESBA stands out from trapping in the Republic of Cyprus by the predominant use of nets for trapping. At 95.9 % of all trapping sites found with set traps in ESBA in 2016, nets were used for trapping and limesticks at the remaining 4.1 % (Table 8). In Republic of Cyprus was the opposite: percentage of sites where nets were used for trapping in 2016 was only 34.5 % and at the remaining 65.5 % sites limesticks were used for trapping.

Table 8: Trapping paraphernalia used in Republic of Cyprus and Eastern Sovereign Base Area in 2016 (RoC=Republic of Cyprus, ESBA=Eastern Sovereign Base Area).

	RoC ¹	ESBA
No. of active trapping sites found	360	190
No. of sites with set traps found	232	73
No. of sites with limesticks (%)	152 (65.5)	3 (4.1)
Average no. of limesticks used per site	37.1	40.2
No. of sites with nets (%)	76 (34.5)	70 (95.9)
Average no. of nets used per site	2.8	2.9
Estimated number of limesticks used on all sites found to be active in 2016 ²	8461	463
Estimated number of nets used on all sites found to be active in 2016 ²	303	502

¹Debersek 2017

²Number is estimated for all trapping sites found to be active in 2016, including the ones, where only signs of recent trapping were detected during field investigations

3.5 THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF KILLED BIRDS IN THE EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA IN 2016

In 2016, BirdLife Cyprus members surveyed 32 square kilometers in the ESBA to record trapping activity levels for mist nets, as well as to estimate the total number of trapped and killed birds (Shialis 2016, 2017a, 2017b). 12 randomly selected squares, each measuring 1 square kilometer, were surveyed in spring season and 20 randomly selected squares in autumn season (Table 8). Number of active nettraps found during fieldwork were extrapolated to the whole territory of the ESBA to estimate the overall number of killed birds.

BirdLife Cyprus estimates that 880,000 birds could have been killed in the ESBA during autumn trapping season alone in 2016 based on its systematic, statistically robust surveillance programme. In winter 2015-2016, BirdLife Cyprus didn't carry out the complete survey to estimate the number of killed birds and in spring 2016 the sample size was not big enough to estimate number of killed birds in the whole SBAs.

Table 9: Results of BirdLife Cyprus bird trapping field surveys and the estimated number of killed birds in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (Shialis 2016, 2017a, 2017b).

Survey	Winter 2015-2016	Spring 2016	Autumn 2016	Total 2016
No. of surveyed squares	0	12	20	32
No. of active netrides found (m)	510 ¹	54	3198	3762
Estimated no. of killed birds	n/a ²	n/a ³	880,000	n/a

¹BirdLife members randomly checked 29 locations (not squares) in the SBA during winter 2015-2016 investigations

²BirdLife Cyprus didnt carry out complete survey in winter 2015-2016 to estimate number of killed birds

³The sample size with 12 surveyed squares in spring was not big enough to make statistically robust estimation of killed birds in the whole SBAs in 2016

4 RESULTS OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS TAKEN AGAINST BIRD TRAPPING IN 2016

4.1 SUMMARY OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS TAKEN BY SBA POLICE IN 2016

The competent authority responsible for enforcement against illegal bird trapping in the British Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus is the Sovereign Base Areas (SBA) Police. They have a special unit dedicated to counter bird trapping and illegal killing of wild birds and other animals: the Anti-Poaching Unit (APU). Police officers on duty at Dhekelia and Ayios Nikolaos police stations also investigate reported illegal bird trapping cases.

SBA police officers investigated 352 cases of bird trapping in 2016 and as a result, 34 individuals were arrested for trapping and a further 25 were reported for trapping (Table 10).

Table 10: SBA Police enforcement results against bird trapping in 2016 (SBA Administration 2017b, SBA Intelligence Analyst, written communication)

	January 2016	February 2016	March 2016	April 2016	May 2016	June 2016	July 2016	August 2016	September 2016	October 2016	November 2016	December 2016	Total 2016
No. of investigated cases (mist netting)	30	24	2	4	2	0	0	11	87	97	74	21	352
Arrested (trapping)				1				2	13	14	3	1	34
Reported (trapping)	1								2	2	20		25
Seized limesticks				60				17	244	34			355
Seized mist nets	108	73	4	9	3			28	126	342	199	59	951

4.1.1 COMPARISON OF SBAPOLICE ENFORCEMENT RESULTS IN THE PERIOD 2011-2016

The enforcement results from 2016 are better than the results from 2015 (Table 11). It is encouraging to see that all results (no. of investigated cases, arrests, no. of seized nets) have improved in one year. Illegal bird trapping was out of control in the past and the results from 2016 can be considered as the first step towards bringing an end to industrial scale of trapping in the ESBA.

Table 11: Results of the SBA Police enforcement actions against trapping for years 2011-2016 (SBA Administration 2017b, SBA Intelligence Analyst, written communication)

	2011 ²	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
No. of investigated cases ¹	233	244	235	289	188	352
No. of arrests for trapping	39	31	31	41	24	34
No. of seized mist nets	628	645	682	634	416	951

¹Cases of illegal killings of other wild animals beside birds are included

²Months January, February and March are not included

4.2 ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS TAKEN BY SBAPOLICEAGAINST TRAPPING CASES REPORTED BY COMMITTEE AGAINST BIRD SLAUGHTER (CABS) AND FOUNDATION PRO BIODIVERSITY (SPA)

In 2016, CABS and SPA members carried out 23 joint operations with the Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) from SBA Police on prearranged dates at all 3 Bird Protection Camps conducted that year. During joint operations CABS and SPA members searched for active trapping sites in the ESBA and met with APU officers to report findings. APU officers investigated reported cases immediately after each meeting.

In total, CABS and SPA members reported 55 cases during joint operations and APU officers investigated 36 or 65.6 % of reported cases (Table 12).

The most important result of these joint operations are arrests made against illegal trapping. In 2016, 7 out of 55 reported cases ended with arrest for bird trapping. This is only 12.7 % of all reported cases and the percentage is not high enough to have a significant impact on trapping activity. The well-documented audacious levels of illegal bird trapping in the ESBA will only be hindered when trappers are caught and trialed for their illegal activities.

Table 12: Summary of enforcement actions made during joint operations between CABS, SPA and SBA Police in 2016

	Winter 2015- 2016	Spring 2016	Autumn 2016	Total 2016
No. of joint operations with SBA Police (days)	5	7	11	23
No. of cases reported by CABS and SPA	15	9	31	55
No. of cases investigated by SBA Police	11	4	21	36
Percentage of investigated cases	73.3	44.4	67.7	65.5
Arrests for bird trapping	1	1	5	7
Total no. of seized mist nets	42	7	29	78
Total no. of seized limesticks	0	75	23	98

4.3 ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS TAKEN BY SBA POLICE AGAINST TRAPPING CASES REPORTED BY BIRDLIFE CYPRUS

In 2016, BirdLife Cyprus reported 50 cases of illegal bird trapping to the SBA Police (Table 13). These cases were found at the field investigations conducted together between BirdLife members and SBA Police officers and at field investigations made by BirdLife members alone. Cases of illegal trapping found at joint operations between BirdLife members and SBA Police were investigated by police officers immediately, while cases found at field investigations made by BirdLife members alone were reported to the SBA police by phone and e-mails and SBA Police officers investigated them until the end of trapping season. 5 out of 50 reported cases of bird trapping ended with arrest.

Table 13: Summary of enforcement actions for cases reported by BirdLife Cyprus members to SBA Police in 2016 (Shialis 2016, 2017a, 2017b)

	Winter 2015-2016 survey	Spring 2016 survey	Autumn 2016 survey	Total 2016
No. of reported cases	12	4	34	50
No. of investigated cases	0	4	34	38
Arrests	0	0	5	5
Confiscations ¹	6	0	14	20
Clearance / Nothing	6	4	15	25

¹Confiscations of traps and other trapping paraphernalia such as poles and metal bases used for trapping with mist nets

5 DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 AUTUMN BIRD TRAPPING TREND IN THE EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA BETWEEN 2002 AND 2016

BirdLife Cyprus is calculating autumn bird trapping trend in the ESBA by comparing total length of active net rides used across the whole ESBA between 2002 and 2016 (Shialis 2017b).

Autumn bird trapping trend for period 2002-2016 is shown in Table 14 and Figure 1. Presented values are indexed: total length of active netrides used in 2002 is set as value 100 and for the following years changes up and down are shown relative to this value of 100.

For autumn 2016 calculated index is 283, meaning that total length of active netrides used for trapping was 183 % higher as it was in 2002 and highest ever recorded in the period 2002-2016.

Table 14: Index of trapping activity for mist netting between 2002 and 2016 in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (Shialis 2017b).

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Index of trapping activity	100	113	96	30	11	59	46	99
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
Index of trapping activity	225	217	234	241	278	276	283	

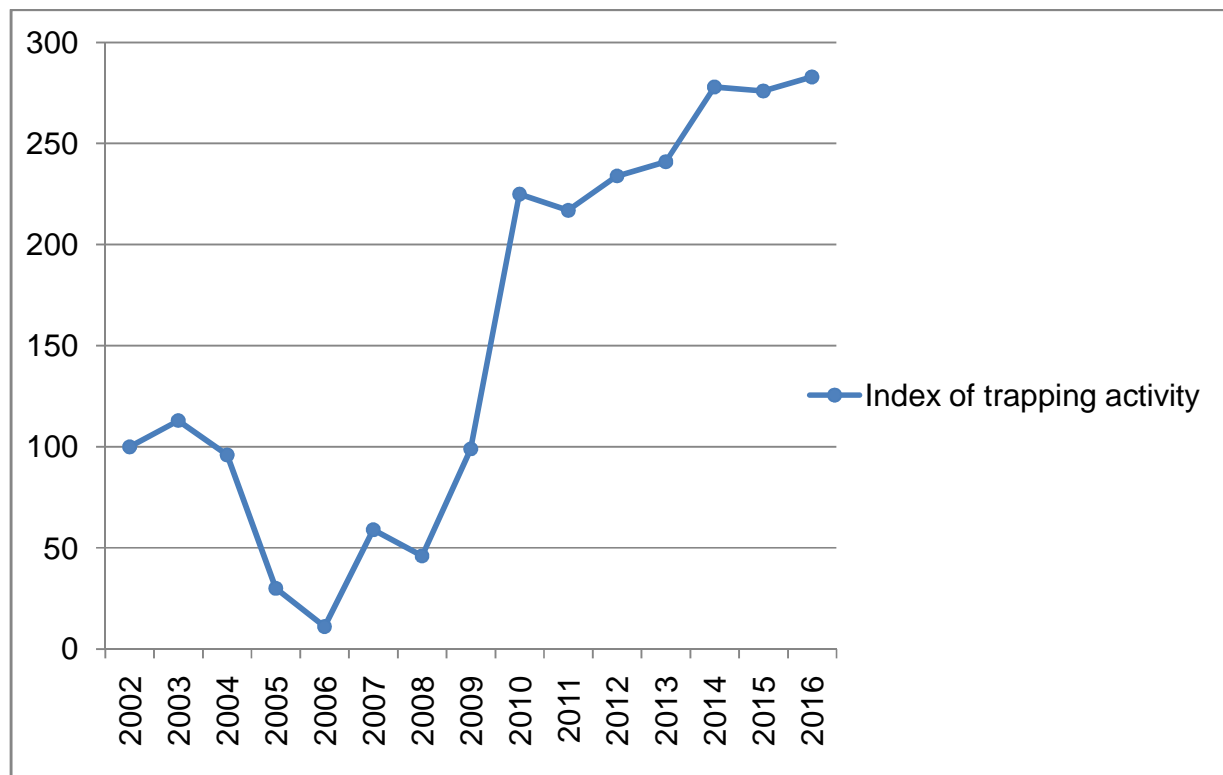


Figure 1: Index of trapping activity for mist netting between 2002 and 2016 in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (Shialis 2017b).

6 CONCLUSIONS

The ESBA remains the single worst location for illegal bird trapping on Cyprus. Field investigations, while limited by a small number of investigators and covering only part of the main trapping seasons, nonetheless revealed 190 active trapping sites on this small British Overseas Territory on Cyprus. The density of active trapping sites found was 4 times higher than observed in the other two main trapping areas on Cyprus, Famagusta and Larnaca Districts of the Republic of Cyprus.

Furthermore, trapping in the ESBA stands out by the extensive use of nets. It is estimated that 502 nets and 463 limesticks were used at the 190 trapping sites that were found active in 2016. For comparison, we estimate that 303 nets and 8,461 limesticks were used at the trapping sites found active in the Republic of Cyprus in 2016. Extensive use of nets and electronic bird callers results in huge number of killed birds. BirdLife Cyprus estimates that 880,000 birds could have been killed in the ESBA just in autumn 2016 (Shialis 2017b).

SBA Police caught and arrested 34 people for illegal bird trapping in 2016. This is more than in 2015, but still relatively low when compared with the number of active trapping sites found by CABS, SPA and BirdLife Cyprus members. Since often 2 or even 3 people are caught for trapping at the same trapping site, it is likely that the 34 arrests that were made resulted from 20-30 trapping sites. Furthermore, in most cases it is not enough to catch and arrest trappers only once to deter them from trapping. This is evident from the reactivation rate of sites with arrests: 60 % of trapping sites, where trappers were arrested for bird trapping before 2016 in the ESBA, were found active again in 2016.

The relatively small number of arrests for trapping is a poor result particularly if we consider the fact that bird trapping in the ESBA is done in audacious and open manner. At 60 out of 73 investigated sites with set traps (82.2 %), loud electronic callers were used to attract birds into traps. Activists could easily and clearly hear these callers every night from main roads during the autumn and winter trapping seasons. Unlike, for example, in northern Italy, where trappers set their traps covertly and in the places difficult to approach in order to avoid detection, most trapping sites in the ESBA are beside roads and therefore SBA Police officers could easily access them.

The number of arrests made against illegal trapping and the fines imposed by the courts against arrested trappers are insufficient to stop or even decrease the intensity of trapping in the ESBA. It is therefore not surprising that the trapping activity with mist

nets in the ESBA this autumn, as presented in the BirdLife Cyprus Autumn 2016 trapping report, was the highest ever in the last 14 years.

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