



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

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

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Field Report:  
**CABS & SPA AUTUMN 2019**  
**BIRD PROTECTION CAMP**  
**CYPRUS**

(24<sup>th</sup> August – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019)



**Photo on the cover:** Mist net with caught barn swallows, found during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp in Cyprus

**Written by:** Boštjan Deberšek, Field Investigations Officer - 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)

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## SUMMARY

Between August and November 2019, the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) and the Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA – Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt) conducted their 9<sup>th</sup> successive autumn bird protection camp in Cyprus. The camp took place from 24<sup>th</sup> August – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

24 activists from 9 countries participated at the camp and monitored illegal bird trapping and hunting activity in the southern and eastern part of the island: in Famagusta and Larnaca Districts within Republic of Cyprus, in the British Overseas Territory on Cyprus, the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) and in the eastern part of North Cyprus.

Field investigations, carried out during the camp, confirmed 196 cases of bird trapping activity on 126 trapping sites in southern and eastern Cyprus. Immediate actions to stop trapping activity were made for 139 trapping cases.

CABS & SPA activists reported 99 cases of bird trapping to the enforcement agencies and 83 of these cases were investigated by enforcement officers. For 24 reported cases, individuals, involved in trapping were caught and prosecuted by enforcement officers. Traps were seized at 67 of reported cases.

A total of 93 mist nets, 1969 limesticks and 51 electronic callers were removed from trapping sites, found to be active in 2019 by CABS & SPA activists. 777 protected wild birds, belonging to 29 different species, were rescued from traps and a further 89 wild birds were found dead in traps in active trapping sites, found by activists during the camp.

Field investigations, carried out during the camp, also confirmed 150 cases of illegal bird hunting activity on 118 hunting sites. Use of electronic callers was detected at 137 investigated cases, shooting of protected bird species at 12 cases and shooting in protected areas, where hunting is prohibited, at 1 case. Immediate actions to stop illegal hunting activity in progress were made at 128 cases of illegal hunting, located during the camp.

CABS & SPA activists reported 47 cases of illegal hunting to the enforcement agencies and 29 of these cases were subsequently investigated by enforcement officers. For 3 reported cases, individuals, involved in illegal hunting were caught and prosecuted by



enforcement officers. A total of 118 electronic callers for hunting were removed from hunting sites during the camp.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

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

Birds passing through Cyprus are in great danger, as the island is one of the main hotspots of illegal bird killings in the Mediterranean (Brochet et al. 2016). In 2018, Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) and Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA- Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt) activists located 224 sites with confirmed bird trapping activity and 62 sites with confirmed illegal bird hunting activity in the south-eastern part of the island. As only part of Cyprus was investigated, it is very likely that more than one thousand or even several thousand bird trapping and illegal hunting sites were active across the island in 2018.

Trapping is affecting at least 150 species of wild birds, of which 78 are threatened and listed on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive or listed in one of SPEC (Species of European Conservation Concern) categories (BirdLife Cyprus).

CABS, with the support of SPA, organises extensive field operations, called 'bird protection camps' to prevent illegal, non-selective and large-scale trapping, killing and trade of migratory birds passing through Cyprus.

## 2 WORKING METHODS

This autumn, the 9th successive Autumn Bird Protection Camp was organised by CABS & SPA in Cyprus. It took place from 24<sup>th</sup> August – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019. A total of 24 activists from Cyprus, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and United States of America participated at the camp. 16 volunteers had previous experience of participation at CABS & SPA bird protection camps in Cyprus, while 8 volunteers participated for the first time.

## 2.1 FIELD INVESTIGATIONS METHODS

Field investigations during the camp were carried out with the intention of locating occurring cases of illegal bird killings and stop them in shortest possible time. Priority was given to the investigations of areas with the highest trapping and illegal hunting activity recorded in previous years, known also as 'illegal bird killing hotspots'. Investigations were mostly carried out during the night and early mornings, when trapping and illegal hunting are in progress and therefore easiest to detect and to stop.

When trapping or illegal hunting activity was confirmed, it was reported immediately to the enforcement officers on duty by phone in order to get their support and attendance in shortest possible time. As each illegal bird killing incident usually lasts only few hours on average, quick response from enforcement officers was needed to stop the killings and to apprehend suspects.

If enforcement officers were not available to attend and investigate the cases, reported by CABS & SPA activists, the activists either left the reported cases behind without taking any action or they made actions on their own to stop illegal bird killing. If no immediate action was taken for a specific case, the activists reported the details about the case by e-mail to the enforcement agency and continued checking the same location until the end of the camp. If the same location was found active again, they called again the enforcement officers on duty.

For some reported cases of confirmed illegal bird killings, for which there was no immediate response from enforcement officers, the activists took actions on their own. Cases, where actions were made by activists, included the cases with high probability of not occurring again on the same location and the cases, for which it was not very likely, that they will be investigated by enforcement officers, even if they occur again on the same location until the end of the camp.

Field investigations were carried out covertly, both to avoid confrontations with poachers and to prevent spoiling of the operations, made by the enforcement officers at the sites, reported by activists.

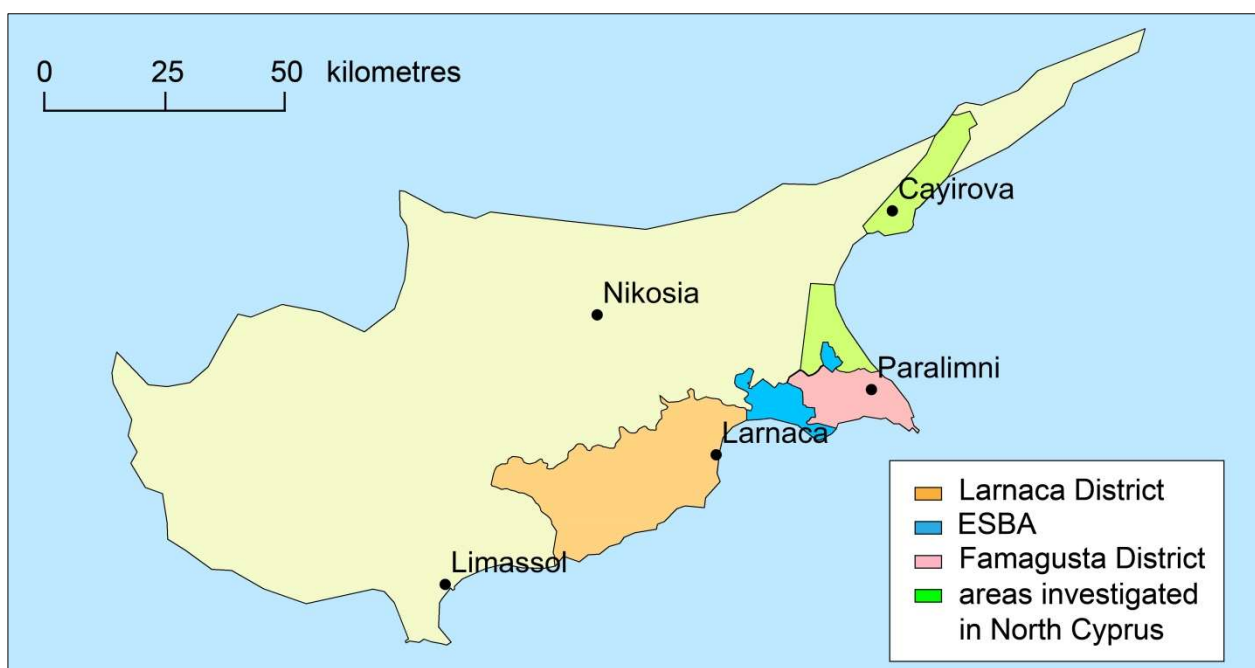
Bird trapping activity is defined as any activity of using traps to catch birds. Cases of bird trapping activity were counted for each individual occasion, when CABS & SPA activists found set traps or evidences of recent, previously unknown trapping activity at the

investigated trapping sites. Signs of recent trapping activity include feathers on the ground at the trapping sites or remnants of glue on branches, as they indicate recent use of traps. Use of electronic bird callers at trapping sites, even if there are no traps set out at the time caller is used, is also recorded as trapping activity. These callers are sometimes used solely in the night to attract birds to the trapping site and the trappers subsequently set their traps in-situ in the early morning.

Illegal hunting activity is any activity that doesn't comply with regulations for bird hunting in Cyprus, defined in the local Cypriot law - Protection and Management of Wild Birds and Game Species (152(I)/2003) and in the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC). The most common method of illegal hunting in Cyprus is hunting with electronic callers, which are used to lure birds within range of the hunters by playbacks of conspecific songs. The shooting of protected bird species without the aid of electronic caller, is also a common practice of illegal hunting in Cyprus.

## 2.2 FIELD INVESTIGATIONS AREA

During the camp activists investigated bird trapping and illegal hunting activity in the southern and the eastern part of Cyprus: in Famagusta and Larnaca Districts within the Republic of Cyprus, in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA), the British Overseas Territory on Cyprus and in the eastern part of self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (figure 1).



## Figure 1: Cyprus and the areas investigated during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp

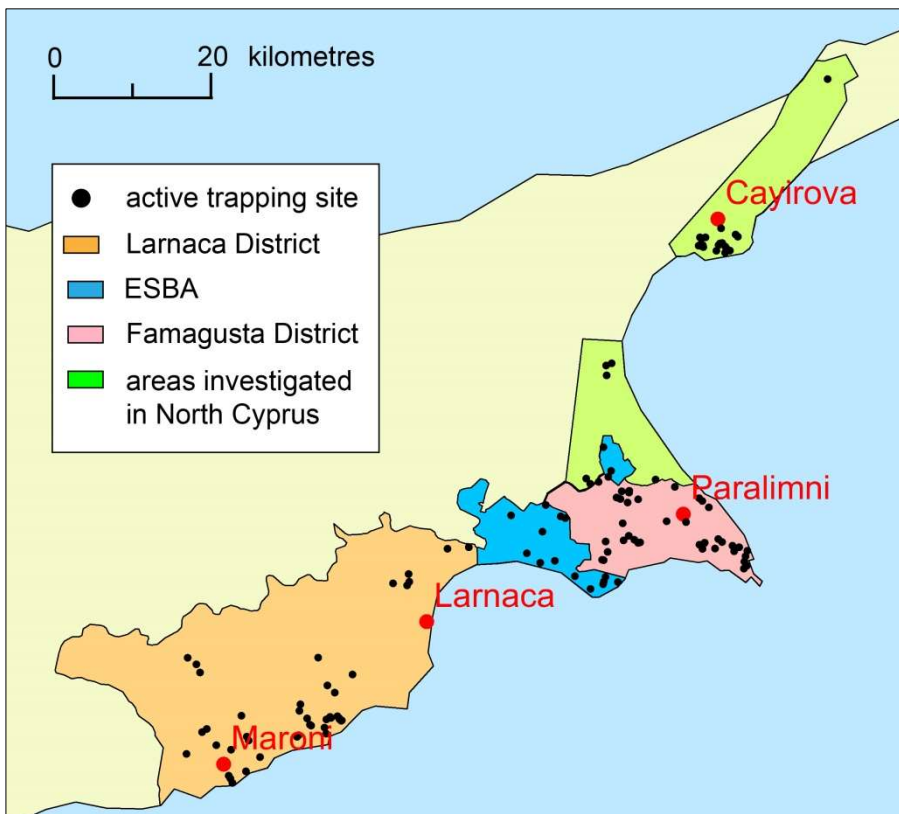
### 3 RESULTS OF BIRD TRAPPING FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

#### 3.1 BIRD TRAPPING ACTIVITY

Field investigations, carried out during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp, confirmed 196 cases of bird trapping activity across 126 trapping sites in southern and eastern Cyprus (table 1, figure 2).

**Table 1: Results of bird trapping field investigations, made by activists during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp in Cyprus**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Duration of field investigations (days)   | 84  |
| Total no. of activists conducting field investigations  | 24  |
| No. of trapping sites checked   | 283 |
| No. of trapping sites found to be active  | 126 |
| No. of occasions, trapping sites were found to be active (confirmed cases of trapping activity) | 196 |





**Figure 2: Distribution of trapping sites, found to be active during CABS & SPA  
Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

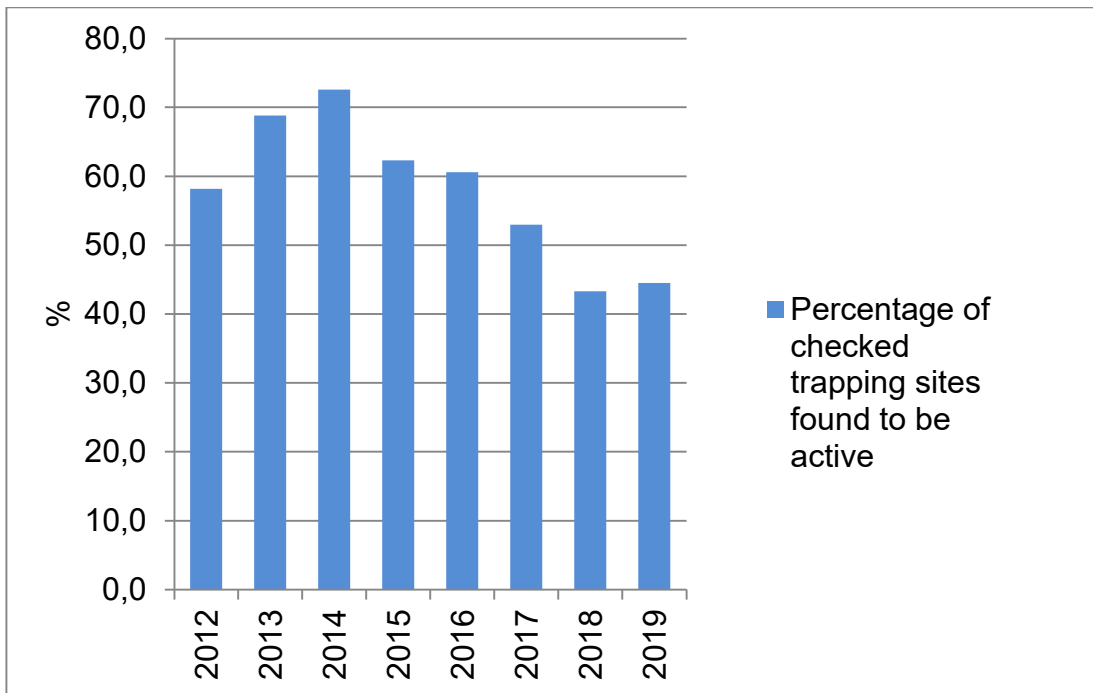
**3.1.1 TREND OF AUTUMN TRAPPING ACTIVITY IN SOUTH-EASTERN  
CYPRUS FOR PERIOD 2012-2019**

**Table 2: Comparison of results of field investigations, carried out at CABS & SPA  
Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2019**

| Autumn Bird Protection Camp                             | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Duration of field investigations (days)                 | 17   | 24   | 28   | 40   | 47   | 60   | 75   | 84   |
| Total no. of activists conducting field investigations  | 13   | 15   | 14   | 22   | 28   | 28   | 29   | 24   |
| No of trapping sites checked                            | 227  | 247  | 186  | 260  | 519  | 355  | 305  | 283  |
| No. of trapping sites found to be active                | 132  | 170  | 135  | 162  | 315  | 188  | 132  | 126  |
| Percentage of checked trapping sites found to be active | 58.1 | 68.8 | 72.6 | 62.3 | 60.6 | 53.0 | 43.3 | 44.5 |

As autumn bird protection camps vary in duration and in number of participants, a direct comparison between numbers of active sites found per year is not an effective method to determine overall trends of autumn trapping activity in south-eastern Cyprus in the period 2012-2019. It is more effective to compare the proportions between number of trapping sites found to be active (net) and total number of checked trapping sites (gross).

This autumn, the percentage of trapping sites, found to be active out of all checked sites was 44.5 %. This is 1.2 % higher than in autumn 2018 and second lowest rate in the last nine years (figure 3).



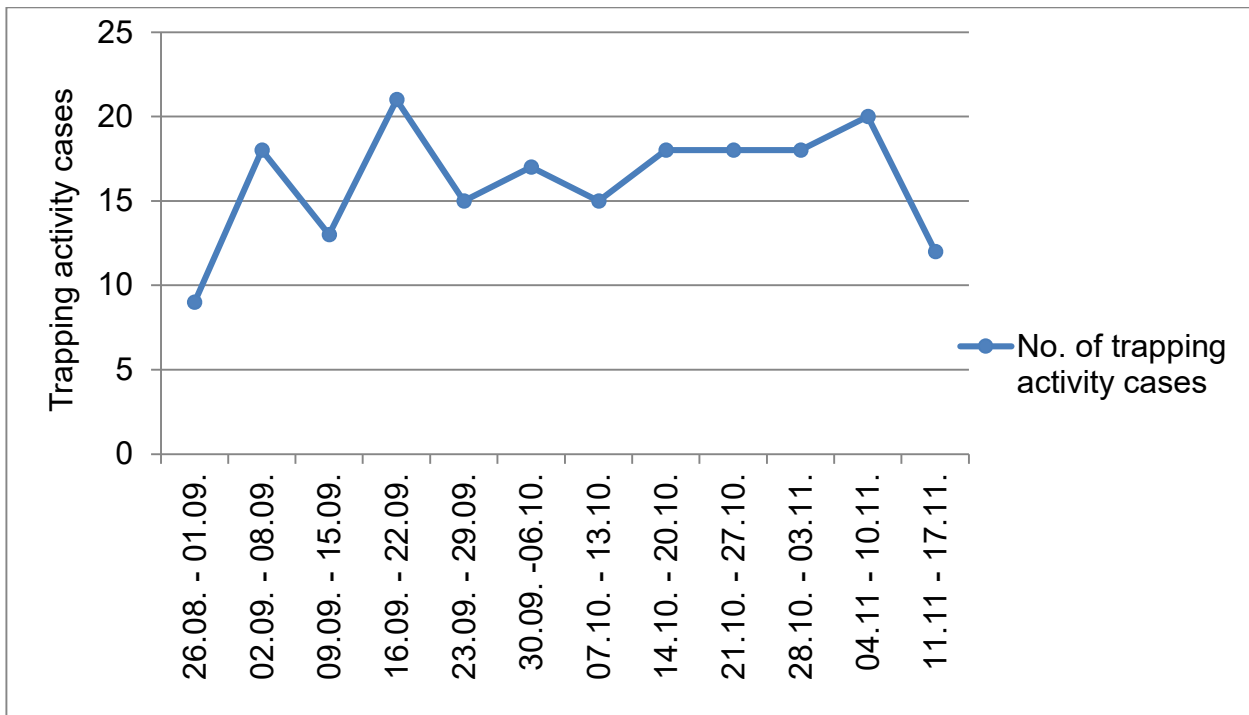
**Figure 3: Percentages of checked trapping sites, found to be active during CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2019**

### 3.1.2 TRAPPING ACTIVITY OVER THE DURATION OF THE CAMP

Trapping activity across 126 individual trapping sites, found to be active this autumn, was confirmed 196 times, meaning that on average, each site was found to be active 1.56 times. Table 3 and figure 4 present number of confirmed cases of trapping activity for each week of the camp.

**Table 3: Number of confirmed cases of trapping activity recorded per week of CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

|                                |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Week                           | 26.08. -<br>01.09. | 02.09. -<br>08.09. | 09.09. -<br>15.09. | 16.09. -<br>22.09. | 23.09. -<br>29.09. | 30.09. -<br>06.10. |
| No. of trapping activity cases | 9                  | 18                 | 13                 | 21                 | 15                 | 17                 |
| Week                           | 07.10. -<br>13.10. | 14.10. -<br>20.10. | 21.10. -<br>27.10. | 28.10. -<br>03.11. | 04.11. -<br>10.11. | 11.11. -<br>17.11. |
| No. of trapping activity cases | 15                 | 18                 | 18                 | 18                 | 20                 | 12                 |



**Figure 4: Number of confirmed cases of trapping activity recorded per week of CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

Number of confirmed cases of trapping activity, detected by activists per week, fluctuated between 9 and 21 over the duration of the camp. This indicates that the autumn bird trapping season extended over 3 months in 2019 and was similarly intensive from the beginning of September until the middle of November.

### 3.1.3 ACTIVITY OF THE TRAPPING SITES WITH PREVIOUS PROSECUTIONS

CABS & SPA activists often confirm trapping activity at the sites, where trappers have been caught and prosecuted in the past. This autumn activists checked 55 trapping sites with previous prosecutions for trapping and 24 of them were found to be active (table 4).

**Table 4: Activity of trapping sites with previous prosecutions, checked during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

|  |      |
|--|------|
| No. of sites with known previous prosecutions for trapping checked   | 55   |
| No. of sites with known previous prosecutions for trapping found to be active (reactivated prosecuted sites) | 24   |
| Percentage of reactivated prosecuted sites   | 43.6 |

**Table 5: Comparison of activity of the trapping sites with known previous prosecutions for trapping at CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2013-2019**

| Autumn Bird Protection Camp   | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| No. of sites with known previous prosecutions for trapping checked                        | 22   | 30   | 42   | 62   | 48   | 56   | 55   |
| No. of sites with known previous prosecutions for trapping (reactivated prosecuted sites) | 15   | 19   | 35   | 35   | 24   | 27   | 24   |
| Percentage of reactivated prosecuted sites  | 68.2 | 63.3 | 83.3 | 56.5 | 50.0 | 48.2 | 43.6 |

The percentage of previously prosecuted sites that were found to be active again this autumn, was the lowest for the last seven autumn camps with 43.6 %, however it remains high.

### 3.1.4 TRAPPING ACTIVITY PER REGIONS

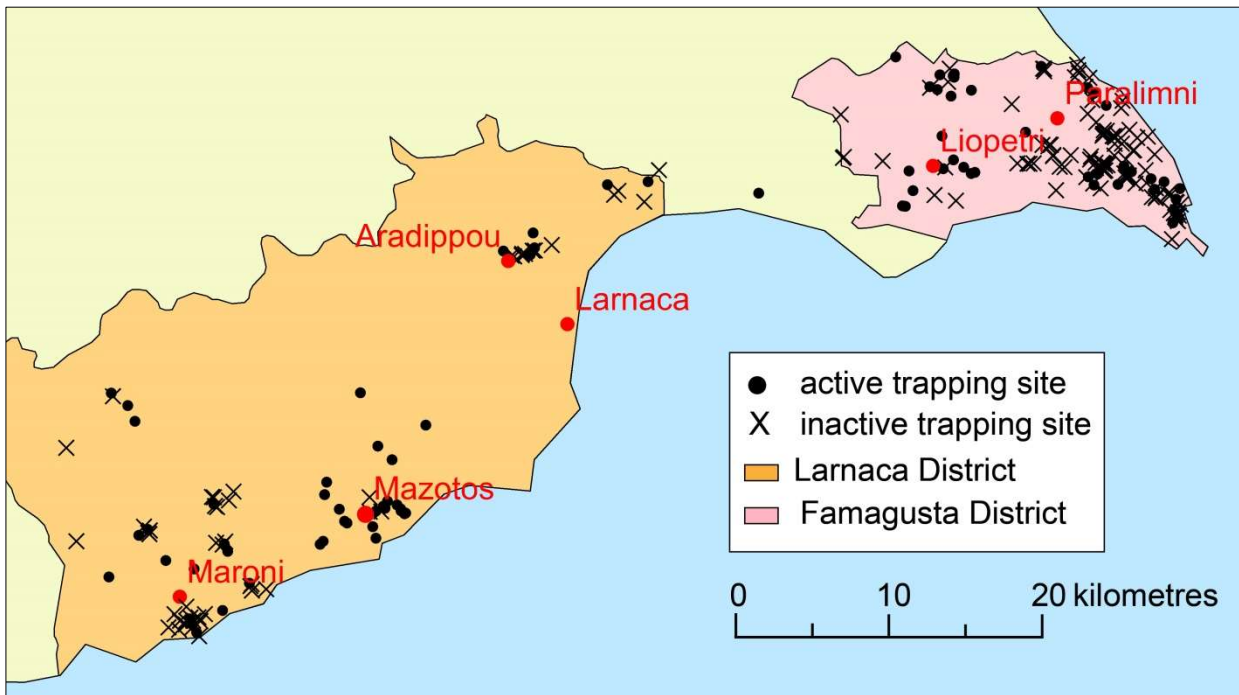
The areas monitored during the camp are part of three separate jurisdictions: Famagusta District and Larnaca District are part of Republic of Cyprus, Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) is one of two British overseas territories on Cyprus; and some of the areas investigated are within the self-proclaimed Turkish republic of North Cyprus or shortly North Cyprus.

#### 3.1.4.1 Trapping activity in the Republic of Cyprus

Out of 283 trapping sites checked during the camp, majority of them, 234, were checked in Famagusta and Larnaca Districts, two of the six districts within the Republic of Cyprus. 84 of checked sites were found to be active (table 6, figure 5).

**Table 6: Results of bird trapping field investigations in Republic of Cyprus during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| No. of all trapping sites checked  | 234 |
| No. of active trapping sites found | 84  |



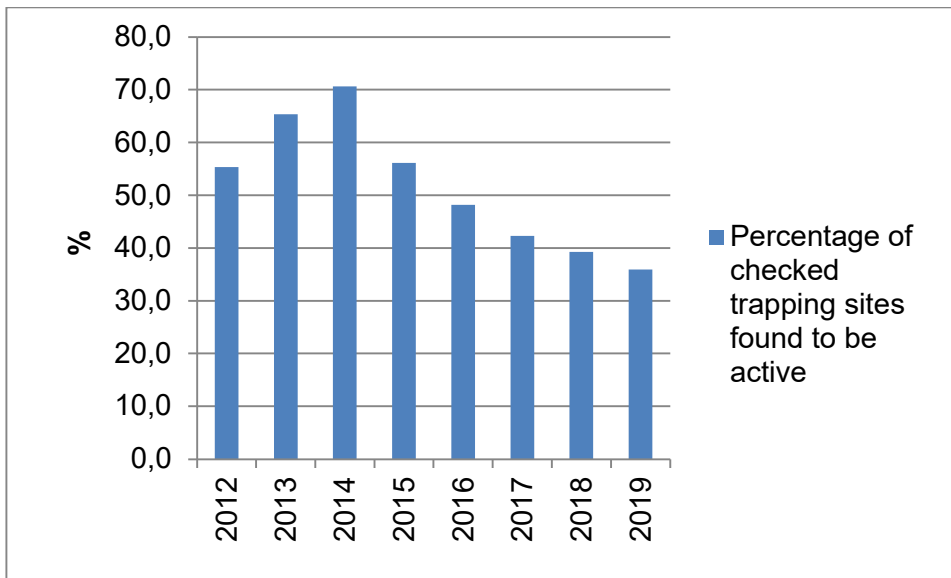
**Figure 5: Distribution and activity of trapping sites checked in Republic Of Cyprus during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

The highest concentrations of trapping sites, found to be active in Republic of Cyprus during the camp, were located in area southeast of Paralimni and areas around Liopetri, Mazotos and Maroni.

**Table 7: Comparison of results of bird trapping field investigations in Republic of Cyprus, carried out during CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2019**

| Autumn Bird Protection Camp                        | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| No. of all trapping sites checked                  | 197  | 225  | 177  | 221  | 357  | 279  | 275  | 234  |
| No. of trapping sites found to be active           | 109  | 147  | 125  | 124  | 172  | 118  | 108  | 84   |
| Percentage of checked tr. sites found to be active | 55.3 | 65.3 | 70.6 | 56.1 | 48.2 | 42.3 | 39.3 | 35.9 |





**Figure 6: Percentage of checked trapping sites found to be active at CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2019 in Republic of Cyprus**

Comparison of numbers of trapping sites, found to be active in the Republic of Cyprus during autumn bird protection camps 2012-2019, shows a slow but steady decrease of trapping activity since 2016, when the highest number of active trapping sites was found. As a more accurate measure to compare trapping activity between years, the percentage of trapping sites inspected and found to be active, shows that trapping activity has significantly decreased since 2014 in Republic of Cyprus.

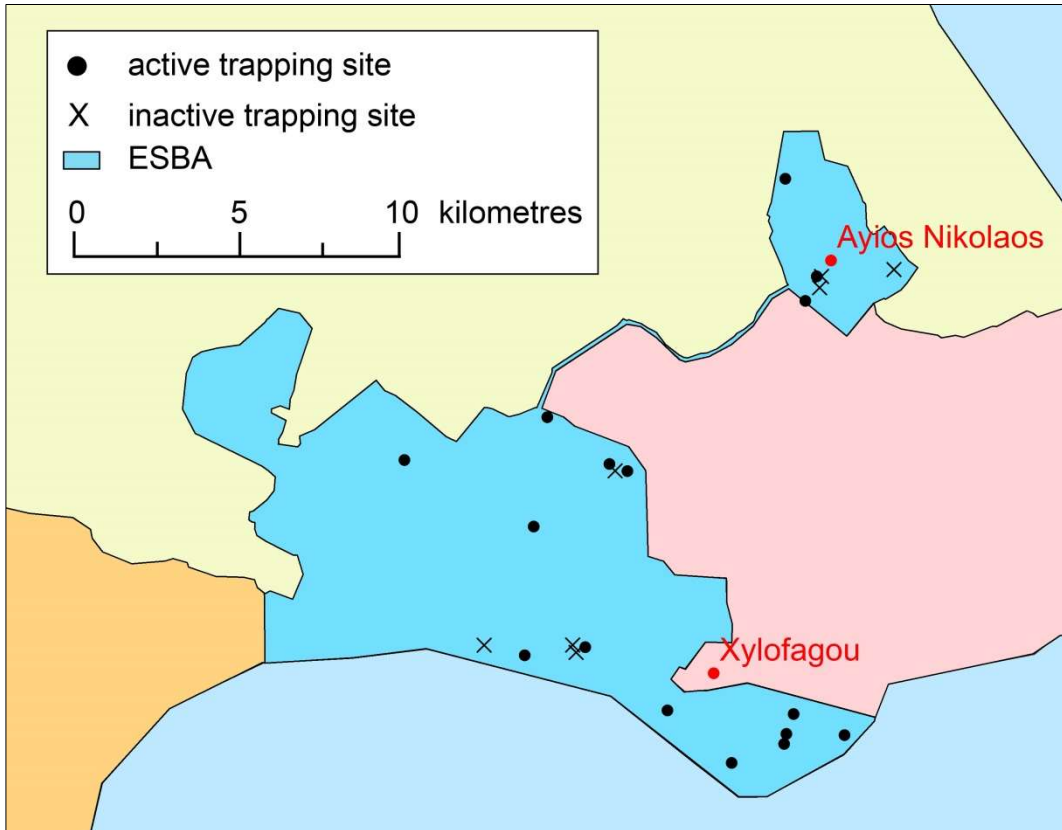
### 3.1.4.2 Trapping activity in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area on Cyprus

The British Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) or Sovereign Base Area of Dhekelia, as it is also known, is one of two territories on the island of Cyprus under British jurisdiction. The other British territory in Cyprus is the Western Sovereign Base Area. The Bases were retained by Great Britain primarily for military purposes, but they are also home to more than 10 000 Cypriots. The ESBA is well known for the historic massive levels of illegal bird trapping in the past, especially in the southern part of the base, Cape Pyla, which is the most notorious trapping area in whole of Cyprus.

This autumn we investigated 23 trapping sites in the ESBA and 16 of them were found to be active (table 8, figure 7).

**Table 8: Results of bird trapping field investigations in the British Eastern Sovereign Base Area on Cyprus (ESBA) during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| No. of all trapping sites checked  | 23 |
| No. of active trapping sites found | 16 |



**Figure 7: Distribution and activity of trapping sites checked in the British Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

**Table 9: Comparison of results of bird trapping field investigations in the ESBA, carried out during CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2019**

| Autumn Bird Protection Camp              | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| No. of all trapping sites checked        | 30   | 17   | 10   | 38   | 160  | 75   | 26   | 23   |
| No. of trapping sites found to be active | 28   | 16   | 9    | 37   | 143  | 69   | 22   | 16   |

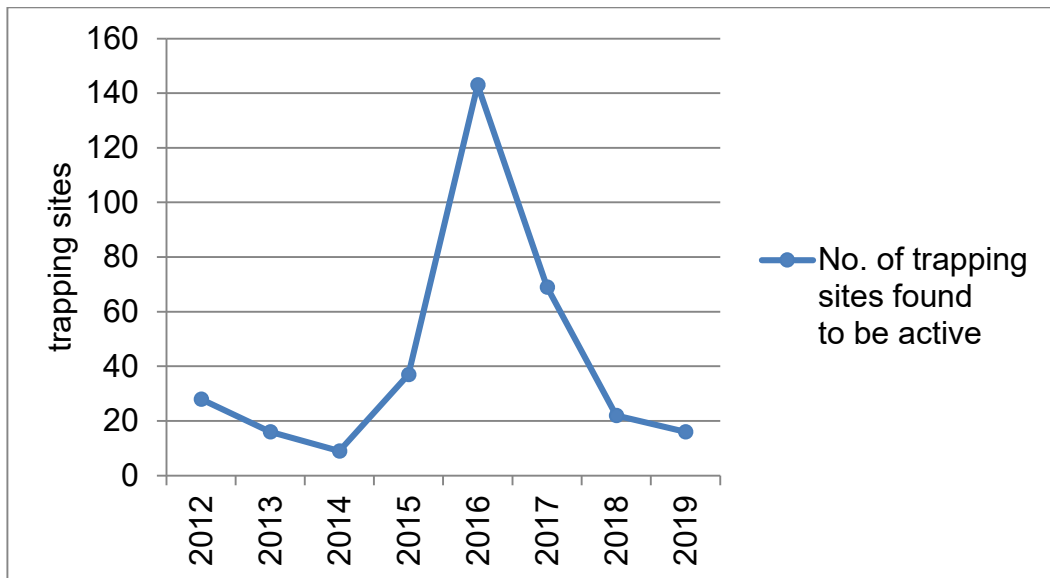


Figure 8: Number of trapping sites, found to be active at CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2019 in Republic of Cyprus

Conversely to the evaluation for the Republic of Cyprus, trapping activity trend for ESBA must be evaluated directly from the number of trapping sites, found to be active and not from the ratio between inspected sites and sites found to be active. This is because field investigations during bird protection camps in the ESBA are mainly done during the night to monitor use of electronic callers for trapping and very little in the day due to safety reasons. Thus, very few trapping sites were checked during the day.

Figure 8 does not accurately reflect the trapping trend in the ESBA for the period 2012-2015. Before 2016, CABS & SPA trapping investigations in the ESBA were done only on a small scale and only occasionally. It was very dangerous for activists to be out in the ESBA alone during that period, as trapping was still largely tolerated by the police and trappers were very aggressive and threatening towards activists. Therefore, the number of trapping sites, found to be active by CABS & SPA activists during the period 2012-2015, presented only a small percentage of the true scale of active sites. Trapping was extremely intensive during that period and the true number of active trapping sites in the ESBA was probably measured in the hundreds.

Extensive and systematic field investigations of trapping activity in the ESBA were made for the first-time during autumn 2016. In 2016 and 2017, the changes made within the SBA Police, resulted in improved police work against trapping, better cooperation between police officers and activists and consequently, field investigations in the ESBA become significantly safer.

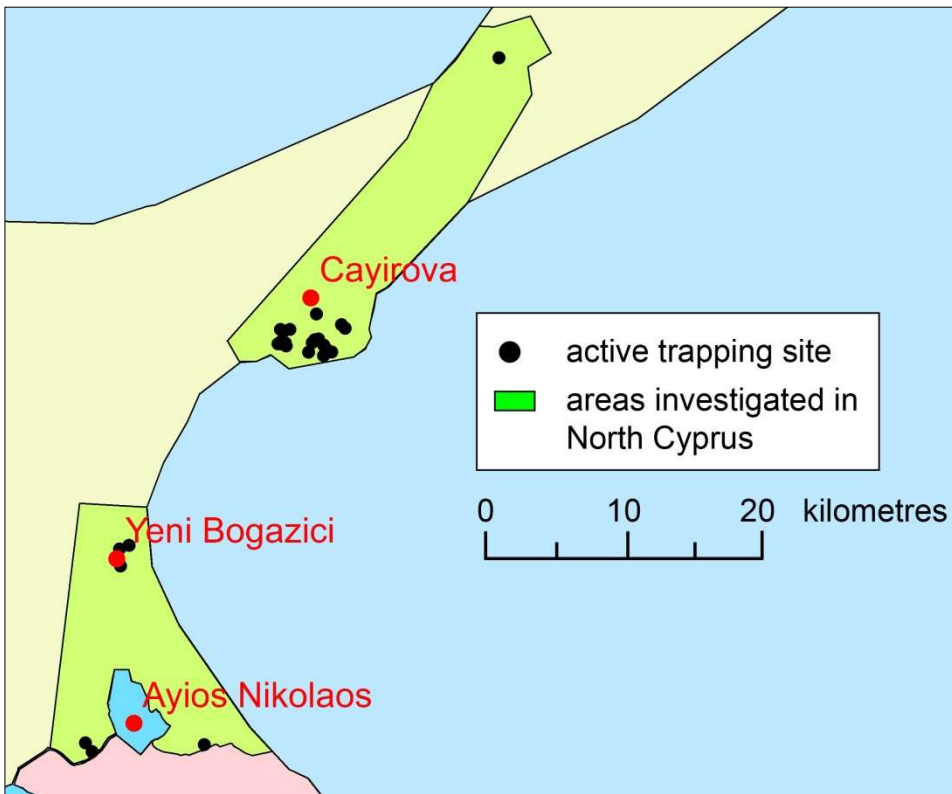
In autumn 2016, we got the real picture of the massive extent of bird trapping occurring within the ESBA. Only with investigations carried out during the night, we located 143 active trapping sites. The massive extent of trapping in the ESBA was halved by autumn 2017, primarily as a direct result of the good cooperative work between the SBA Police and CABS & SPA activists. In autumn 2018, we observed another strong reduction in the number of trapping sites, found to be active in the ESBA and this autumn the level of trapping was further reduced.

### 3.1.4.3 Trapping activity in the North Cyprus

In previous years, CABS & SPA activists made only a few random investigations of trapping sites in North Cyprus and these investigations revealed a relatively low density of trapping activity in the investigated areas. However, this autumn, activists detected a high density of trapping activity in the eastern part of North Cyprus, especially in the area south of Cayirova village. In total, CABS & SPA activists visited North Cyprus 12 times this autumn and found 26 trapping sites to be active (table 10, figure 9).

**Table 10: Results of bird trapping field investigations in North Cyprus during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| No. of all trapping sites checked  | 26 |
| No. of active trapping sites found | 26 |



**Figure 9: Distribution of trapping sites found to be active in North Cyprus during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**



**Picture 1: CABS & SPA activist rescuing a blackcap from a net found in North Cyprus during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp (Photo: CABS)**



### 3.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAPPING SITES, FOUND TO BE ACTIVE DURING THE CAMP

**Table 11: Characteristics of trapping sites, found to be active during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

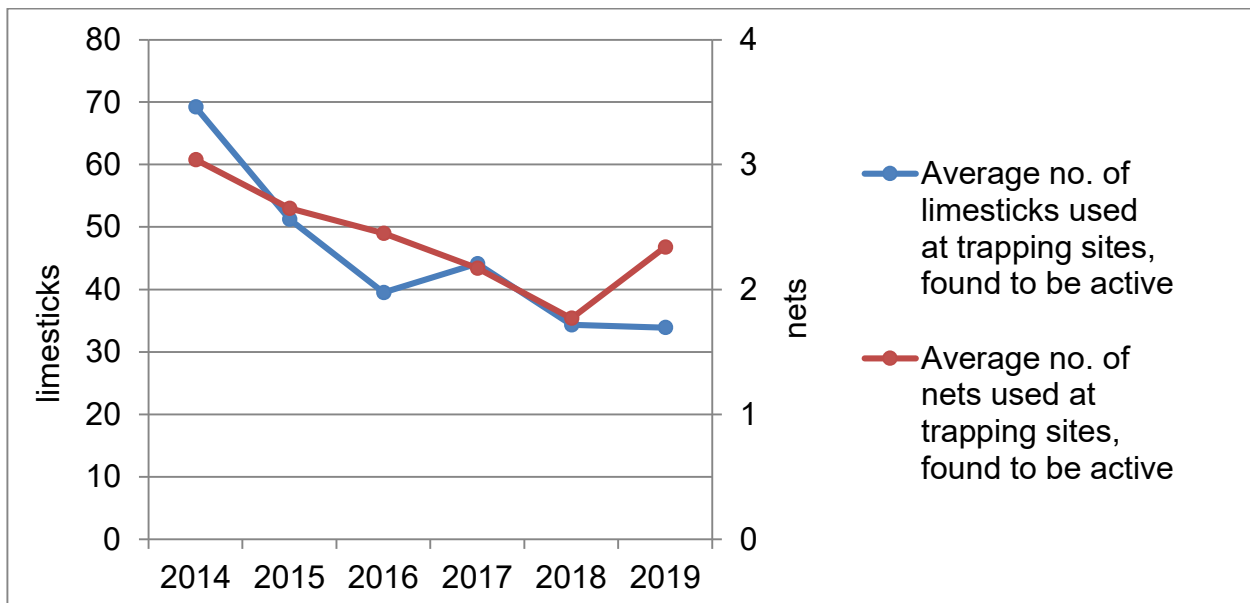
|  | Republic of<br>Cyprus | ESBA | North<br>Cyprus | All<br>regions |
|--|-----------------------|------|-----------------|----------------|
| No. of active trapping sites found   | 84                    | 16   | 26              | 126            |
| No. of active trapping sites with limesticks used for trapping, found              | 59                    | 2    | 0               | 61             |
| No. of active trapping sites with mist nets used for trapping, found               | 19                    | 10   | 26              | 55             |
| No. of other active trapping sites found (unknown type or both type of traps used) | 6                     | 4    | 0               | 10             |
| Average no. of limesticks used at trapping sites, found to be active               | 33.78                 | 41   | 0               | 33.91          |
| Average no. of nets used at trapping sites found to be active                      | 2.56                  | 1.83 | 2.3             | 2.34           |
| No. of all trapping sites with electronic callers used for trapping, found         | 44                    | 12   | 25              | 81             |
| Percentage of limestick trapping sites with caller used for trapping               | 0.39                  | 0.00 | 0               | 0.38           |
| Percentage of mist-net trapping sites with caller used for trapping                | 0.79                  | 0.80 | 0.96            | 0.87           |

Characteristics of trapping sites, found to be active during the camp, were different among the investigated regions. In Republic of Cyprus, the dominant method of trapping was limesticks. At 75.6 % of all trapping sites, found to be active in Republic of Cyprus, limesticks were used for trapping and at the remaining 24.4 %, mist nets were used. In ESBA and in North Cyprus, trapping at the sites, found to be active, was done almost exclusively with mist nets.

Electronic callers for trapping were much more commonly used together with nets than with limesticks: callers were used at 87 % of mist-netting trapping sites and only at 38 % of limestick trapping sites, found to be active this autumn.

**Table 12: Comparison of characteristics of trapping sites, found to be active during CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps in the period 2014-2019**

| Autumn Bird Protection Camp   | 2014  | 2015  | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| No. of active trapping sites found  | 135   | 161   | 302   | 188   | 132   | 126   |
| Average no. of times trapping sites were found active                               | 1.16  | 1.40  | 1.49  | 1.81  | 1.82  | 1.48  |
| No. of active trapping sites with limesticks used for trapping, found               | 71    | 64    | 98    | 87    | 70    | 61    |
| No. of active trapping sites with mist nets used for trapping, found                | 41    | 76    | 181   | 78    | 45    | 55    |
| No. of other active trapping sites found (both type of traps or unknown traps used) | 23    | 21    | 23    | 23    | 17    | 10    |
| Average no. of limesticks used at trapping sites, found to be active                | 69.23 | 51.25 | 39.53 | 44.13 | 34.33 | 33.91 |
| Average no. of nets used at trapping sites, found to be active                      | 3.04  | 2.65  | 2.45  | 2.17  | 1.77  | 2.34  |
| No. of trapping sites with electronic callers used for trapping, found              | 86    | 113   | 215   | 120   | 82    | 80    |



**Figure 10: Average number of limesticks and nets used at trapping sites, found to be active during CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2014-2019**

The number of limesticks, used at trapping sites, found to be active during autumn bird protection camps, has steadily declined since 2014. In 2014, an average of almost 70

limesticks was found set per trapping site, while in 2019, trappers used less than 34 limesticks on average per trapping site. The average number of nets found set on active trapping site this autumn was with 2.34 slightly higher as in previous two autumns, but lower than in autumns 2014-2016.

## 4 RESULTS OF ACTIONS MADE AT THE TRAPPING SITES FOUND TO BE ACTIVE DURING THE CAMP

### 4.1 OVERALL RESULTS

During the camp, CABS & SPA activists confirmed 196 cases of trapping activity on 126 individual trapping sites. Immediate actions to stop trapping activity were carried out at 139 cases of trapping activity. Actions were carried out either by enforcement officers to whom the activists reported the cases or directly by CABS & SPA activists on their own.

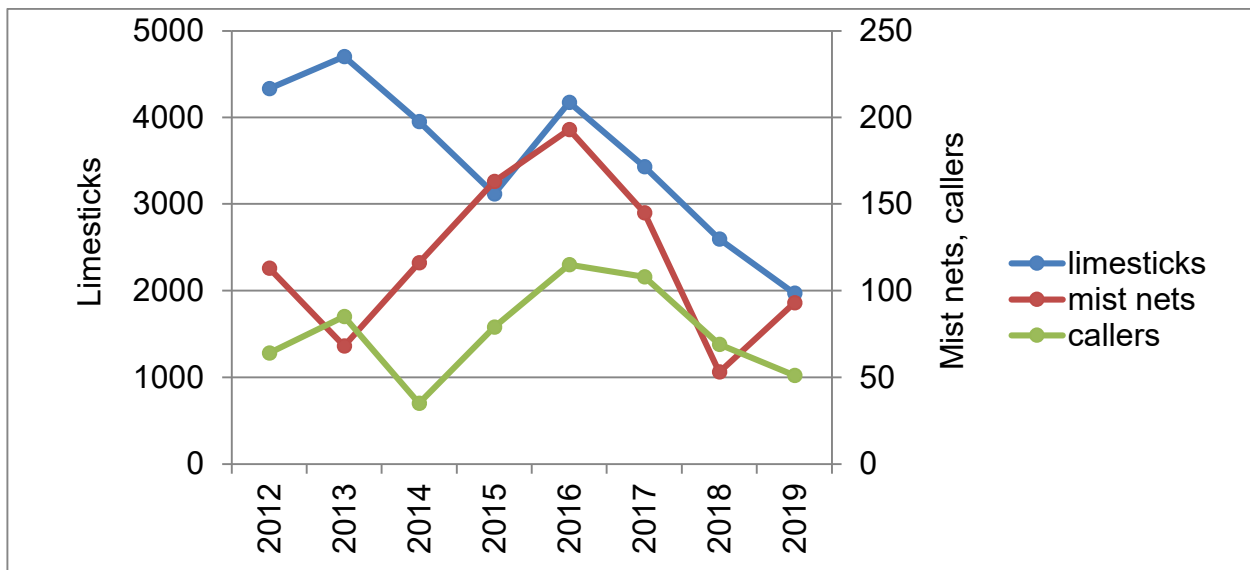
Altogether, 1969 limesticks, 93 nets and 51 electronic callers were found and seized from trapping sites, found to be active by CABS & SPA activists during the camp. At 24 trapping cases, reported by CABS & SPA activists, individuals involved in trapping, were caught and prosecuted by enforcement officers (table 13).

**Table 13: Overall results of actions, made at trapping sites found to be active during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

|   |      |
|---|------|
| No. of all trapping activity cases confirmed  | 196  |
| No. of trapping activity cases, where actions against trapping activity were made                         | 139  |
| No. of trapping activity cases, where actions against trapping activity were made by enforcement officers | 83   |
| No. of trapping activity cases, where actions against trapping activity were made by CABS & SPA activists | 56   |
| No. of seized limesticks  | 1969 |
| No. of seized nets  | 93   |
| No. of seized electronic callers  | 51   |
| No. of prosecutions for trapping  | 24   |

**Table 14: Comparison of results of actions, made at trapping sites, found to be active during CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2019**

| Autumn Bird Protection Camp  | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| No. of trapping cases confirmed                                    | 145  | 211  | 157  | 225  | 450  | 327  | 240  | 196  |
| No. of trapping cases with immediate actions against trapping made | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 260  | 229  | 168  | 139  |
| No. of seized limesticks   | 4331 | 4703 | 3950 | 3115 | 4172 | 3432 | 2596 | 1969 |
| No. of seized mist nets  | 113  | 68   | 116  | 163  | 193  | 145  | 53   | 93   |
| No. of seized el. callers  | 64   | 85   | 35   | 79   | 115  | 108  | 69   | 51   |
| No. of prosecutions  | 13   | 1    | 27   | 37   | 26   | 19   | 14   | 24   |



**Figure 11: Seized limesticks, mist nets and electronic callers during CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2012-2019**

The total numbers of limesticks, mist-nets and callers, seized at autumn bird protection camps, has declined since autumn 2016. The decline in the number of seized traps coincides with the intensity of trapping activity, recorded during autumn camps, which is also declining since autumn 2016.

The only exception is the number of nets seized this autumn. The main reason, why we seized more nets this autumn in comparison with autumn 2018, was determined by the actions made in North Cyprus. This autumn we made extensive investigations in the

eastern part of North Cyprus for the first-time during autumn bird protection camps and as a result of these investigations, a large number of nets were seized. Without including these nets in the grand total, the number of seized nets this autumn would be less than in autumn 2018.

#### 4.2 RESULTS OF ACTIONS MADE BY ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES FOR THE TRAPPING CASES REPORTED BY CABS & SPA ACTIVISTS

During the camp, CABS & SPA activists reported trapping activity cases to the enforcement agencies, responsible with regulation and enforcement against illegal bird killing in Republic of Cyprus, in British Eastern Sovereign Base Area and in North Cyprus. These agencies are Game and Fauna Service and Cyprus Police in Republic of Cyprus, Sovereign Base Area (SBA) Police for ESBA and North Cyprus Police plus North Cyprus Army for North Cyprus.

In total we reported 99 cases of trapping activity to the enforcement officers and 83 cases were investigated by enforcement officers. Investigations for 24 reported cases ended with catching and prosecuting individuals involved in illegal bird trapping (table 15).

**Table 15: Results of actions made by enforcement agencies for the trapping cases reported by activists during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp (APS= Anti-Poaching Squad)**

|   | Game and Fauna Service | Cyprus Police APS | Cyprus Police regular units | SBA Police | North Cyprus Police/ Army | All |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-----|
| No. of trapping cases reported by CABS & SPA activists        | 58                     | 8                 | 2                           | 13         | 18                        | 99  |
| No. of reported trapping cases investigated by officers       | 47                     | 5                 | 2                           | 12         | 17                        | 83  |
| No. of cases with prosecution of trappers                     | 16                     | 2                 | 1                           | 3          | 2                         | 24  |
| No. of cases with confiscation of trapping paraphernalia only | 24                     | 0                 | 0                           | 6          | 13                        | 43  |
| No. of cases where nothing was found by enforcement officers  | 7                      | 3                 | 1                           | 3          | 2                         | 16  |



**Table 16: Comparison of results, made by enforcement agencies for the trapping cases reported by activists during CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2015-2019 (APS= Anti-Poaching Squad)**

| Autumn Bird Protection Camp                               | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| No. of trapping cases confirmed by CABS & SPA activists   | 225  | 450  | 327  | 240  | 196  |
| No. of trapping cases reported to the enf. agencies       | 142  | 111  | 188  | 140  | 99   |
| <b>INVESTIGATIONS</b>                                     |      |      |      |      |      |
| No. of reported cases investigated by enf. officers       | 110  | 65   | 157  | 102  | 83   |
| Percentage of investigated sites (for all reported sites) | 77.5 | 58.6 | 83.5 | 72.9 | 83.8 |
| No. of cases investigated by Cyprus Police APS            | 74   | 37   | 32   | 9    | 5    |
| No. of cases investigated by Cyprus Police reg. units     | 0    | 4    | 5    | 4    | 2    |
| No. of cases investigated by Game and Fauna Service       | 0    | 3    | 17   | 62   | 47   |
| No. of cases investigated by SBA Police                   | 36   | 21   | 103  | 27   | 14   |
| No. of cases investigated by North Cyprus Police/Army     | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 17   |
| <b>PROSECUTIONS</b>                                       |      |      |      |      |      |
| No. of all prosecutions made at reported sites            | 38   | 27   | 19   | 14   | 24   |
| Percentage of prosecutions (for all reported sites)       | 26.8 | 24.3 | 10.1 | 10.0 | 24.2 |
| No. of prosecutions made by Cyprus Police APS             | 26   | 20   | 11   | 3    | 2    |
| No. of prosecutions made by Cyprus Police reg. units      | 0    | 1    | 2    | 1    | 1    |
| No. of prosecutions made by Game & Fauna Service          | 0    | 1    | 4    | 6    | 16   |
| No. of prosecutions made by SBA Police                    | 12   | 5    | 2    | 4    | 3    |
| No. of prosecutions made by North Police/Army             | 0    | 0    | 0    | 3    | 2    |

The number of trapping cases reported to the enforcement agencies this autumn is with 99 reported cases lowest for the last five autumn bird protection camps. This coincides with the number of trapping activity cases, found by CABS & SPA activists this autumn, which is also lowest in the last five autumns.

Enforcement agencies investigated 83.8 % of all cases reported this autumn. This is the highest percentage for reported cases in last five autumns. Furthermore, the percentage of

cases investigated, that have resulted in prosecution of trappers, was among the highest in last five autumns with 24.2 %.



**Picture 2: Game and Fauna Service officer with limesticks, seized at one of the trapping sites, found to be active during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp (Photo: CABS)**

#### 4.3 RESCUED BIRDS AND BIRDS FOUND DEAD IN TRAPS

In total, 777 protected wild birds, belonging to 29 different species, were rescued from traps, found by CABS & SPA activists during the camp (table 17). Birds were rescued by activists and by enforcement officers.

Rescued birds were released immediately or were released after short rehabilitation period, if they needed it. For a further 89 wild birds our help came too late and were found dead in traps.

**Table 17: Rescued birds and birds found dead during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019  
Bird Protection Camp**

|    |   | No. of<br>birds<br>rescued<br>from traps | No. of<br>birds found<br>dead in<br>traps |
|----|---|--|---|
| 1  | Blackcap ( <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> )                  | 257                                      | 20  |
| 2  | Robin ( <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> )                     | 21                                       | 2   |
| 3  | Song thrush ( <i>Turdus philomelos</i> )                | 12                                       | 2   |
| 4  | Red-backed shrike ( <i>Lanius collurio</i> )            | 4  | 0   |
| 5  | Masked shrike ( <i>Lanius nubicus</i> )                 | 3  | 0   |
| 6  | Reed warbler ( <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i> )         | 6  | 2   |
| 7  | Chiffchaff ( <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> )            | 14                                       | 2   |
| 8  | Willow warbler ( <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> )        | 5  | 0   |
| 9  | Lesser whitethroat ( <i>Sylvia curruca</i> )            | 11                                       | 0   |
| 10 | Black redstart ( <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> )          | 1  | 0   |
| 11 | House sparrow ( <i>Passer domesticus</i> )              | 3  | 2   |
| 12 | Sardinian warbler ( <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i> )       | 7  | 2   |
| 13 | Chaffinch ( <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> )                  | 1  | 0   |
| 14 | Stonechat ( <i>Saxicola rubicola</i> )                  | 1  | 1   |
| 15 | Wryneck ( <i>Jynx torquilla</i> )                       | 1  | 0   |
| 16 | Little owl ( <i>Athene noctua</i> )                     | 2  | 0   |
| 17 | Olivaceous warbler ( <i>Hippolais pallida</i> )         | 3  | 0   |
| 18 | Eastern Orphean warbler ( <i>Sylvia crassirostris</i> ) | 1  | 0   |
| 19 | Olive tree warbler ( <i>Hippolais olivetorum</i> )      | 1  | 0   |
| 20 | Sedge warbler ( <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i> )     | 2  | 0   |
| 21 | Common kestrel ( <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> )             | 1  | 0   |
| 22 | Barn swallow ( <i>Hirundo rustica</i> )                 | 11                                       | 0   |
| 23 | Sand martin ( <i>Riparia riparia</i> )                  | 1  | 0   |
| 24 | Cettis warbler ( <i>Cettia cetti</i> )                  | 1  | 0   |
| 25 | Quail ( <i>Coturnix coturnix</i> )                      | 2  | 0   |
| 26 | Garden warbler ( <i>Sylvia borin</i> )                  | 1  | 0   |
| 27 | Nightjar ( <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> )               | 3  | 0   |
| 28 | Turtle dove ( <i>Streptopelia turtur</i> )              | 1  | 0   |
| 29 | Scops owl ( <i>Otus scops</i> )                         | 1  | 0   |
|    | Unidentified  | 399                                      | 56  |
|    | <b>Total</b>  | <b>777</b>                               | <b>89</b>                                 |





**Picture 3: Cyprus scops owl, bird species endemic to Cyprus, rescued from net by activist during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp (Photo: CABS)**



**Picture 4: Blackcap and Wryneck, found caught on a limestick during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp (Photo: CABS)**

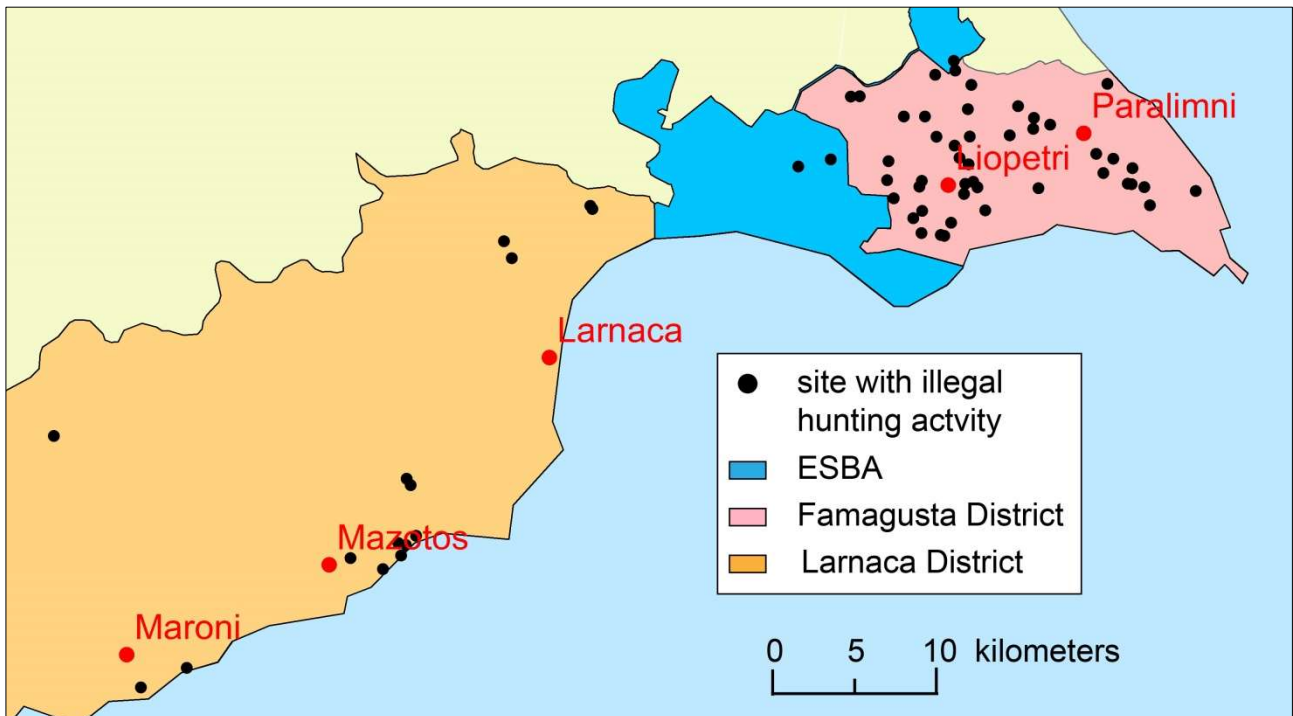
## 5 RESULTS OF ILLEGAL BIRD HUNTING FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

CABS & SPA field investigations in autumn 2019 confirmed 150 cases of illegal hunting activity, recorded on 118 individual hunting sites in southern and eastern Cyprus (table 18, figure 12).

**Table 18: Results of illegal bird hunting field investigations made by activists during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| No. of hunting sites with illegal hunting activity found                                | 118 |
| No. of all cases of illegal hunting confirmed on investigated hunting sites             | 150 |
| No. of confirmed cases of hunting with electronic caller used to attract quails         | 107 |
| No. of confirmed cases of hunting with electronic caller used to attract skylarks       | 13  |
| No. of confirmed cases of hunting with electronic caller used to attract song thrushes  | 5   |
| No. of confirmed cases of hunting with electronic caller used to attract blackcaps      | 12  |
| No. of confirmed cases shooting protected bird species without caller                   | 12  |
| No. of confirmed cases of shooting within a protected area, where hunting is prohibited | 1   |





**Figure 12: Distribution of the hunting sites with illegal hunting activity, found during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp. (63 out of 118 sites, where illegal hunting activity was found and investigated during the camp, are shown on the map. The remaining 55 sites are not displayed as their exact coordinates are not known).**

In autumn 2019, CABS & SPA activists made the most extensive investigations of illegal hunting ever conducted at CABS & SPA bird protection camps. Our investigations revealed widespread use of electronic callers for hunting.

The use of electronic callers, imitating quail calls, in the nights was especially significant. These callers are used to attract migrating quails to land in the fields at night in order to be easily shot in close proximity during the morning. In total we investigated 107 cases of hunting with quail callers, but these cases don't include all the callers we have heard during the night patrols; they include only the callers we had time to precisely locate and to take actions against their use. We estimate that beside the located callers, additional several hundred quail callers were used this autumn in south-eastern Cyprus, but CABS & SPA activists were too few and busy with other duties, to locate and investigate them.



**Table 19: Results of illegal bird hunting field investigations, made by activists during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp, sorted per regions**

|   | Famagusta District | Larnaca District | ESBA |
|---|--------------------|------------------|------|
| No. of all confirmed cases of illegal hunting   | 107                | 33               | 10   |
| No. of confirmed cases of hunting with electronic caller used to attract quails         | 93                 | 4                | 10   |
| No. of confirmed cases of hunting with electronic caller used to attract skylarks       | 4                  | 9                | 0    |
| No. of confirmed cases of hunting with electronic caller used to attract song thrushes  | 4                  | 1                | 0    |
| No. of confirmed cases of hunting with electronic caller used to attract blackcaps      | 4                  | 8                | 0    |
| No. of confirmed cases of shooting protected bird species without caller                | 2                  | 10               | 0    |
| No. of confirmed cases of shooting within a protected area, where hunting is prohibited | 0                  | 1                | 0    |

Most of the illegal hunting cases, confirmed during the camp, were located in Famagusta District. Especially the use of quail callers was prominently confined to this district.

Other forms of illegal bird hunting, beside the use of quail callers, were most commonly found in Larnaca District. The shooting of protected spanish sparrows in the coastal area of Larnaca district was particularly prevalent. One of the hunting sites was located directly on the migration route of spanish sparrows, with large flocks of sparrows passing the site every few minutes. This allowed the hunters to easily kill the passing sparrows and on few occasions, we observed shooting of several hundred spanish sparrows in a single morning at the site.



**Picture 5: The aftermath of illegal shooting of spanish sparrows. Tens of shot sparrows and the remainings of several hundred shot sparrows were found by CABS & SPA activists at one hunting site in the coastal region of Larnaca District, October 2019 (Photo: CABS)**

Another illegal hunting activity, commonly observed in Larnaca District, was hunting of skylarks with the use of electronic callers. On several occasions during the camp, CABS & SPA activists counted 20-30 callers, loudly playing skylark calls in the coastal area between Perivolia and Mazotos.

**Table 20: Comparison of results of illegal bird hunting field investigations, made by activists during CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2017-2019**

| Autumn Bird Protection Camp   | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|------|------|------|
| No. of hunting sites with illegal hunting activity found                        | 50   | 49   | 118  |
| No. of all cases of illegal hunting activity confirmed on hunting sites         | 60   | 51   | 150  |
| No. of confirmed cases of hunting with electronic caller used to attract quails | 50   | 43   | 107  |
| No. of other confirmed cases of illegal hunting cases                           | 10   | 8    | 43   |

Table 20 shows a steep rise in the number of illegal hunting cases confirmed by activists this autumn, in comparison with previous two autumns. The rise is not the result of increase of illegal hunting activity in south-eastern Cyprus over the last few years, as illegal hunting was more or less equally massive in that period, it is the result of increase in the extent of illegal hunting investigations, made by CABS & SPA activists this autumn in comparison with previous two autumns.

## 6 RESULTS OF ACTIONS MADE AT THE HUNTING SITES WITH ILLEGAL HUNTING ACTIVITY

### 6.1 OVERALL RESULTS

Out of 150 cases of illegal hunting activity, confirmed by CABS & SPA activists this autumn, immediate actions to stop illegal hunting were carried out at 128 cases. Actions were carried out either by enforcement officers, to whom the activists directly reported the cases or by CABS & SPA activists on their own.

Altogether, 118 electronic callers, used for hunting, were found and seized from hunting sites during the camp. For 3 reported cases of illegal hunting activity, hunters were caught and prosecuted (table 21).

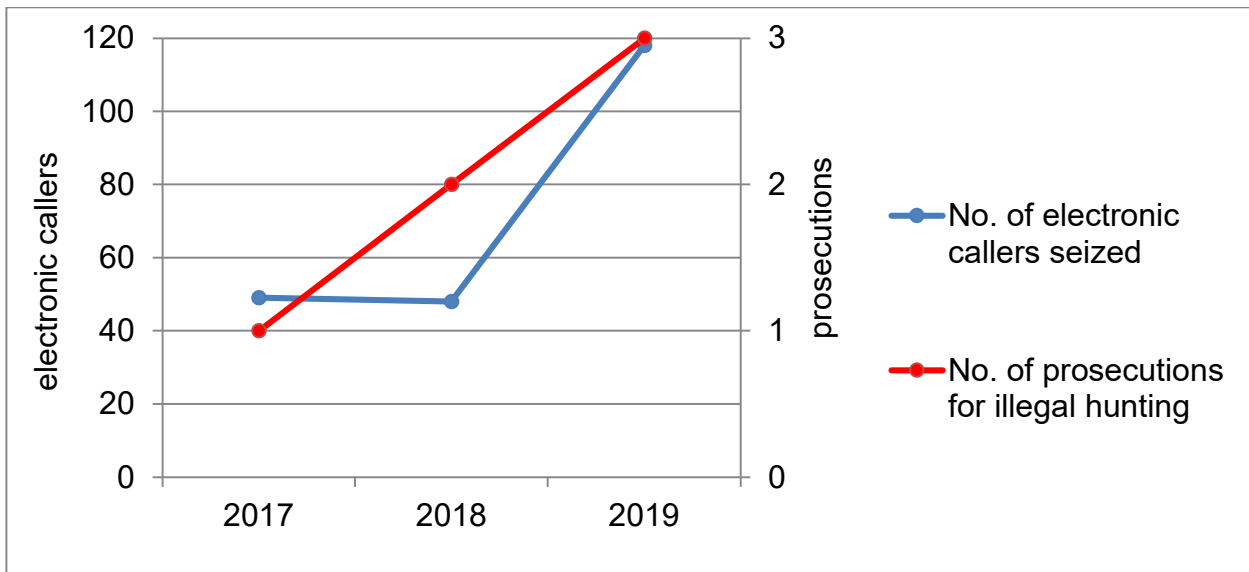
**Table 21: Overall results of actions made at hunting sites with illegal hunting activity, found during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| No. of all illegal hunting cases, confirmed by CABS & SPA activists  | 150 |
| No. of all illegal hunting cases, where actions against illegal hunting activity were made                     | 128 |
| No. of illegal hunting cases, where actions against illegal hunting activity were made by enforcement officers | 27  |
| No. of illegal hunting cases, where actions against illegal hunting activity were made by CABS & SPA activists | 99  |
| No. of electronic callers, used to attract quails, seized  | 113 |
| No. of electronic callers, used to attract other blackcaps, skylarks and song thrushes, seized                 | 5   |
| No. of prosecutions for illegal hunting  | 3   |

**Table 22: Comparison of results of actions, made against illegal hunting activity during CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2017-2019**

| Autumn Bird Protection Camp  | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|------|------|------|
| No. of all illegal hunting cases confirmed by CABS & SPA activists                     | 60   | 52   | 150  |
| No. of illegal hunting cases, where actions against illegal hunting activity were made | 53   | 50   | 128  |
| No. of electronic callers, used to attract quails, seized                              | 49   | 45   | 113  |
| No. of electronic callers, used to attract other birds, seized                         | 0    | 3    | 5    |
| No. of prosecutions for illegal hunting  | 1    | 2    | 3    |





**Figure 13: Number of seized electronic callers and number of prosecutions, made for illegal hunting during CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2017-2019**

As a result of the increase in the extent of illegal hunting investigations, carried out this autumn, number of seized electronic callers for hunting, seized during the camp, increased in comparison with previous two autumn camps. Number of prosecutions for illegal hunting, made this autumn, also increased, but only minimally in comparison with previous autumn.

## 6.2 RESULTS OF ACTIONS MADE BY ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES FOR THE ILLEGAL HUNTING CASES REPORTED BY CABS & SPA ACTIVISTS

Illegal hunting activity cases, confirmed during the camp, were reported to the enforcement agencies, responsible to investigate and act against illegal bird killings in Republic of Cyprus and in the British Eastern Sovereign Base Area.

In total, we reported 47 cases of illegal hunting activity to the enforcement officers and 29 incidents were investigated by them. Investigations of 3 reported cases resulted in prosecution of individuals involved in illegal hunting (table 23).

**Table 23: Results of actions made by enforcement agencies for the illegal hunting cases reported by activists during CABS & SPA Autumn 2019 Bird Protection Camp**

|   | Game<br>and<br>Fauna<br>Service | Cyprus<br>Police | SBA<br>Police | All  |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------|------|
| No. of illegal hunting cases reported to enforcement officers           | 35                              | 2                | 10            | 47   |
| No. of illegal hunting cases investigated by officers                   | 17                              | 2                | 10            | 29   |
| Percentage of reported sites being investigated                         | 48.6                            | 100.0            | 100.0         | 61.7 |
| No. of sites with prosecutions of hunters                               | 3                               | 0                | 0             | 3    |
| No. of sites with confiscation of electronic callers for hunting only   | 1                               | 0                | 10            | 11   |
| No. of sites with warning given to hunters for illegal hunting activity | 3                               | 0                | 0             | 3    |
| No. of sites where nothing was found by enforcement officers            | 7                               | 2                | 0             | 9    |
| Seized electronic callers   | 4                               | 0                | 10            | 14   |

Only 47 out of 150 cases of illegal hunting, confirmed during the camp, were reported to the enforcement agencies. Activists would report more cases to the agencies, but in most cases, enforcement officers were not available to make investigations at the time, when illegal hunting cases were located and confirmed.

Most of the unreported cases were the cases of electronic callers, emitting quail calls during the night within Famagusta District. Between 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m., when we located the majority of these callers, enforcement officers were usually either not working or they were not available to make the investigations. After 6:00 a.m., when it was easier to get the support of the officers, the callers were already switched off, making it practically impossible to persecute the hunters shooting at the quails, attracted with callers.



**Table 24: Comparison of actions, made by enforcement agencies for illegal hunting cases, reported by activists during CABS & SPA Autumn Bird Protection Camps 2017-2019**

| Autumn Bird Protection Camp                                       | 2017 | 2018  | 2019 |
|---|------|-------|------|
| No. of illegal hunting cases reported to enforcement officers     | 6    | 6     | 47   |
| No. of illegal hunting cases investigated by enforcement officers | 5    | 6     | 29   |
| Percentage of reported cases being investigated                   | 83.3 | 100.0 | 61.7 |
| No. of cases with prosecution of hunters                          | 1    | 2     | 3    |
| No. of cases with warning given for illegal hunting               | 1    | 4     | 3    |
| Seized electronic callers   | 2    | 4     | 18   |

A big step forward was made this autumn in regards of reporting illegal hunting cases to the authorities as much more cases were reported this autumn in comparison with previous two autumns. But on the other hand, even if we have reported a large number of cases, only 6.3 % (3 out of 47) of reported cases ended with prosecution of hunters for illegal hunting.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

The steady decrease in the number of trapping sites, found to be active at CABS & SPA autumn bird protection camps over last few years, continued this autumn. This autumn activists confirmed trapping activity on 126 trapping sites, 6 less than the previous autumn camp in 2018.

In the ESBA, low trapping levels, recorded during previous autumn camp, when CABS & SPA activists located 22 active trapping sites, were reduced further with just 16 trapping sites found to be active this autumn. To put the sharp decline of trapping activity in the ESBA into perspective, we must compare results of this autumn with results from autumn 2016, when trapping activity in the ESBA was at the highest level. During autumn 2016 CABS & SPA activists located 143 active trapping sites in the ESBA and this autumn just 16. That is 88 % decrease of trapping in only 3 years.

The great fall of bird trapping in the ESBA in such a short period shows how much is possible to achieve with the right attitude and the approach. Until 2017, bird trapping in the ESBA was greatly tolerated by the authorities. In autumn 2016, CABS & SPA activists invited British Naturalist and TV presenter Chris Packham to join them in Cyprus and to witness the industrial scale of bird trapping in the ESBA. Chris, accompanied by activists, visited Cape Pyla, the hotspot of bird trapping in the ESBA, during one night in October 2016. In few hours they located 30-40 active trapping sites by pinpointing loud electronic callers playing from them. A few months later, in January 2017, CABS & SPA organised an operation called “Long Night Raid” in the ESBA. Over the course of two nights, 18 activists located 130 active trapping sites and removed 274 mist nets. Over 500 birds were rescued from the nets. After the operation, CABS & SPA issued a press release to expose the massive level of trapping in the ESBA.

CABS & SPA field operations, lobbying and publicity efforts made together with BirdLife Cyprus and the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB) lead to significant changes in the policy of the SBA Administration and SBA Police towards bird trapping. In 2017, a programme of restructuring took place to tackle bird trapping and series of progressive measures was used to ratchet up the pressure on the trappers. This included exclusion orders to keep convicted trappers away from their trapping plots, vehicle seizures, and revoking leases and EU subsidies from convicted farmers. A high specification surveillance drone has been deployed to support their enforcement work. Acacia patches, used to hide mist nets for trapping and irrigation systems, used to water these patches were regularly removed during the last few years.

CABS & SPA activists also played an important role in the decline of trapping in the ESBA. After several years of poor cooperation between activists and SBA Police officers in the field, an important change was made in 2017, when SBA Police chiefs promised that their officers will respond and investigate all cases of trapping activity, reported by CABS & SPA activists in shortest possible time. They kept their promise and in autumn 2017 alone, police officers investigated 97 cases of trapping activity immediately after they have been reported by our teams.

This autumn our teams reported 13 cases of trapping activity to the SBA Police and they investigated 12 of reported cases. Even if the number of reported cases was much smaller than in previous years, police officers managed to catch and prosecute 3 trappers as a result of reported cases.

And how is the situation within Republic of Cyprus?

In the Republic of Cyprus, the decline of trapping over the last 4 years was not as dramatic as it was in the ESBA, according to the results of CABS & SPA bird protection camps, but nevertheless, it has declined. In autumn 2016, CABS & SPA activists confirmed trapping activity on 172 trapping sites in the Republic of Cyprus and on 84 trapping sites this autumn. Last year, the number of trapping sites, found to be active in the Republic, dropped by 24, from 108, found in autumn 2018.

Although we have observed a slight decrease of trapping activity in Republic of Cyprus this autumn, it is evident that more could and should be done to eradicate trapping in Republic of Cyprus. This autumn, as in previous years, we have struggled in vain to stop probably the largest and most notorious trapper in Cyprus, who was left almost undisturbed by authorities to trap in the hills above Maroni for the whole autumn, despite dozens of reports about his activity, we have sent to the authorities together with BirdLife Cyprus.

Further evidence for lack of political will to stop bird trapping in Republic of Cyprus is the dissolution of Cyprus Police Anti-Poaching Squad (APS) in November 2019. APS was a specialised police unit, dedicated to fight against poaching in Republic of Cyprus. In recent years, CABS & SPA teams cooperated closely with this unit and together we have achieved great results. These results were not accepted well by the trappers and the hunters, resulting in protests by hunting and pro-trapping lobby groups against the enforcement actions of the APS in autumn 2017. The government reacted in favour of the trappers and hunters by immediately reducing APS unit in size from 7 officers to 4 slap-bang in the middle of the autumn trapping season in year 2017. Since then, the unit has

generally remained undermanned with around four officers working for the unit. In practice, this made it nearly impossible for the unit to have an effective presence on the ground, hence the relatively poor results in the last few years. In November 2019, the unit was completely dismantled.

While bird trapping is slowly but steadily decreasing in Cyprus over the last few years, this is not true for illegal bird hunting. Illegal bird hunting in south-eastern Cyprus was massive and out of control this autumn.

Hundreds of electronic callers, imitating quail calls, heard in the nights and large-scale, illegal massacres of spanish sparrows and skylarks, observed in the mornings, were only the most obvious displays of sheer scale of illegal hunting in southern and eastern part of Republic of Cyprus and the lack of enforcement actions against it.

Due to lack of will by authorities to take actions, CABS & SPA activists have stepped up in their efforts to stop illegal bird hunting in Cyprus. For the first time, the number of cases, where actions were made against illegal hunting was higher than one hundred cases per individual CABS & SPA bird protection camp. In total, CABS & SPA activists made actions at 128 cases of illegal hunting activity confirmed during the camp. Actions were made either by enforcement officers, to whom the activists reported illegal hunting activity or often by activists alone, if enforcement officers were not available to investigate reported cases.

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