



**Committe Against
Bird Slaughter - CABS**

Komitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V.

Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt®
Foundation Pro Biodiversity

Field Report:
Spring 2013
Bird Protection Camp
5 April – 5 May 2013



Figure 1: Trapped collared Flycatcher rescued from a limestick, Paralimni, Famagusta. Spring 2013 Bird Protection Camp.

Bonn / Bielefeld, Germany: Monday, 22 July 2013

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1 INTRODUCTION

The *Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS)* – *Komitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V.* in German and *Επιτροπή Ενάντια στη Σφαγή των Πουλιών* in Greek – has conducted bird protection camps in the poaching hotspots of the Mediterranean region for more than 20 years. On Cyprus, CABS has been active on a small scale since 2001; but regular bird protection camps began in spring 2008, in cooperation with the *Foundation Pro Biodiversity (Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt, SPA* in German and *Ίδρυμα για την Προστασία της Βιοποικιλότητας* in Greek). In 2013, the 6th Spring Bird Protection Camp was conducted over a period of four weeks, from 5 April to 5 May, in order to cover a longer period of pre-nuptial migration.

Bird Protection Camps (BPCs – Περιοδείες Προστασίας Πουλιών in Greek) are major field surveys and anti-poaching campaigns organised during the two annual bird migration seasons with two main objectives:

- Collection of data in order to evaluate the true impact of the massive use of non-selective trapping and killing methods (hereinafter referred to as trapping) – such as limesticks, mist nets and electronic decoys – on wild bird populations;
- Locating and reporting as many as possible illegal trapping installations to the responsible law enforcement agencies, in order to arrest poachers red-handed, confiscate trapping paraphernalia and ensure a safe passage on migration for birds.

BPCs are conducted with the full knowledge of, and in close cooperation with, all responsible public authorities and law enforcement agencies. In spring 2013, thanks mostly to the cooperation with the Cyprus Police Headquarters, the Emergency Response Unit (ERU – Μηχανοκίνητη Ομάδα Άμεσης Δράσης, MMAΔ in Greek) and the Anti-Poaching Squad (APS – Κλιμάκιο Πάταξης Λαθροθηρίας in Greek) of the Cyprus Police, as well as the Game Fund (GF – Ταμείο Θήρας in Greek), the British Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) Police and the United Nations Police (UNPOL), CABS was able to monitor 356 trapping sites, included 73 newly found trapping sites. In 148 of them, 3,272 limesticks, 44 mist nets and 16 tape lures were confiscated. In addition, 21 persons were convicted for crimes related with trapping (trapping or possession of wild birds). The camp was planned for four weeks (5 April – 5 May), but after the initial successful operations in the first two weeks of the camp that led to a great decrease in trapping activity, and a number of prosecutions in the main trapping area, trappers began to create political pressure in the form of a relatively small demonstration (some 25-50 persons) in Paralimni, at which local politicians and particularly representatives of the governing party promised to put a stop the joint operations between CABS and the Cyprus Police. As a result the APS was recalled to Nicosia and CABS anti-poaching operations formally ended. Further requests thereafter for assistance by volunteers to the Paralimni Police Station were systematically rejected or ignored.

2 SPRING 2013 BIRD PROTECTION CAMP DATA AND RESULTS

2.1 PARTICIPANTS

A total of 13 volunteers, from Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Greece, Slovenia and Switzerland participated in the camp. Of these, all had previously participated in a CABS camp on Cyprus and had good knowledge of the area. Teams of three to five volunteers were formed enabling two teams per day to be deployed. In addition, CABS worked in close coordination with Migratory Bird Conservation on Cyprus (MBCC) volunteers, whose reports of active trapping were also followed up by the APS during the joint operations.

2.2 WORKING SCHEDULE

This BPC, lasting 27 working days, was the longest field survey and anti-poaching campaign conducted on Cyprus by CABS, in cooperation with SPA, covering a major part of peak spring migration. Volunteers began work at 6.00 a.m. to rendezvous with the officers of the APS and then began searching the known trapping sites. Usually one to two prosecutions were filed each day; the rest was left for the following days. Joint operations ended between 2.00 and 3.00 p.m. In the afternoon volunteers carried out reconnaissance work to provide new information on trapping sites for the police. Some night checks were also scheduled to determine the number of illegal decoy devices in operation.

2.3 SITES CHECKED

Over the past five years CABS located and listed 643 trapping sites (83 new trapping sites were located during the autumn 2012 BPC and 73 during the spring 2013 BPC). During the 27 days of the camp, the teams monitored 356 of these sites (55%). Many particularly important sites were checked more than once on different dates and times of day.

Of the 356 sites checked 148 were found active (42%), the rest had signs of recent trapping or were clearly in use on a random and sporadic basis. On average each team located 1.8 active trapping sites per day. This rate is much lower than in autumn, but could have been higher as delays caused by the APS evidential and prosecution procedures often resulted in the loss of 3 to 4 working hours per day.

2.4 RESULTS

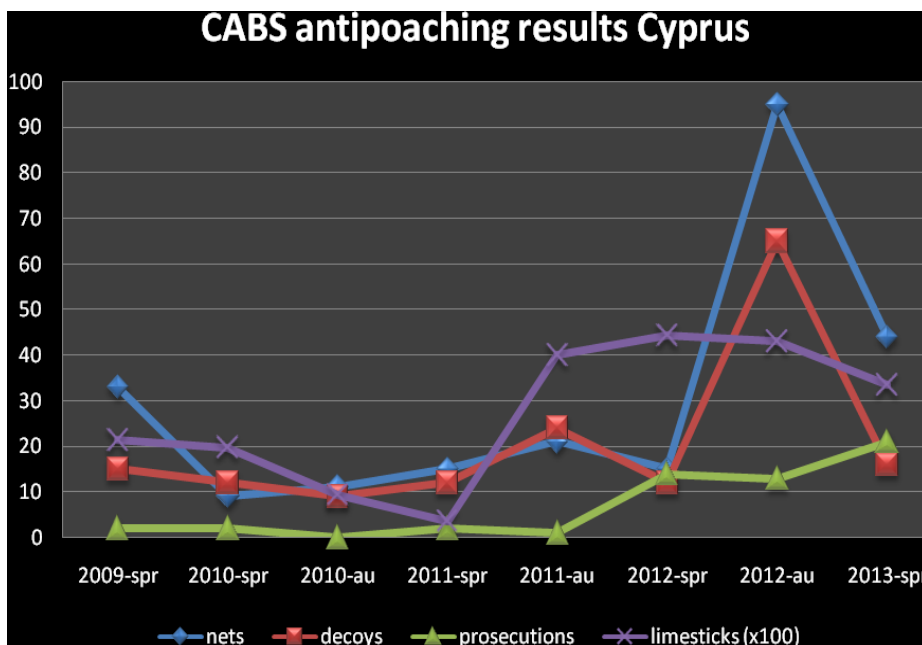


Figure 2: Trend of BPCs' results. Since spring 2012, when the cooperation with the APS started, numbers of prosecutions and of collected trapping paraphernalia have significantly increased.

On the 148 active trapping sites, the responsible law enforcement agencies together with CABS teams were able to dismantle 3,272 limesticks, 44 mist nets and 16 electronic decoys. In addition, 11 aviaries containing protected bird species were detected and 118 wild birds were released. As a result of our joint operations 21 persons were prosecuted for crimes related to trapping.

Regrettably a further 440 limesticks, 3 nets, 6 aviaries with protected bird species and 10 tape lures were detected but left on site. In 21

cases this was because there was no response or the law enforcement agencies experienced operational difficulties (cf. Para 5.1.). In five cases the trapper had removed trapping paraphernalia on his own.

3 SPRING TRAPPING PATTERNS, TIMES AND AREAS



Figure 3: Marsh Harrier found shot in Kokkines. Illegal hunting in spring is widespread in this area.

The pattern of spring trapping is very different to that of autumn trapping. Only a few professional trappers are active in spring; the vast majority are amateurs, who do not need to poach systematically (even if they had done before 2011 when there was no or little disturbance), but trap according to the migration intensity and their personal consumption requirements.

The migrant bird landfall is concentrated on the land strip from Cape Greko to Paralimni, where the nowadays dry, over-built and devastated natural habitat makes every patch of green, garden or orchard an important stopover for millions of migrants. Limestick trapping is therefore extremely easy in this area and in one hour a dozen birds can be

caught on only a few limesticks. Further to the west, the flocks of birds disperse and trapping can be rewarding only with the use of large mist nets and tape lures to attract adequate numbers of birds. In the eastern corner of the island trappers also use fruit trees to increase the catching rate of traps. During April the Loquat tree *Eriobotrya japonica* is the favourite location for limesticks (we recorded 5 among Blackcaps *Sylvia atricapilla* and Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* caught on 20 limesticks within 30 minutes), from the end of April to the end of May trappers use the Mulberry tree *Morus alba* and *nigra* whose fruits are ripe during this period (we observed the first Blackcap caught on a limestick one minute after the trap was set out on this tree). Other trees used for trapping during the spring are the Olive *Olea europaea* and the Mastic, less so the Pomegranate *Punica granatum* and Carob *Ceratonia siliqua*. It is interesting to note that all gardens used for trapping have these plants, thus the name “trapping gardens”. The residents of the area admit that these plants are cultivated and planted for trapping only (“we create the green for the birds, to catch them”), but the normal excuse in front of the police is that limesticks are set on these trees “to scare birds”. In two cases, in spring 2013, we observed that the GF and the Paralimni Police accepted this contradictory justification.

Trapping areas searched:

a) Eastern Famagusta: Located on the major migration flyway, the triangle Cape Greco – Ayia Napa – Sotira – Paralimni is undoubtedly the top trapping hotspot in spring. Trapping with limesticks takes place in virtually every garden. After five years of monitoring we can state that there are only very few individual gardens in this area which are not used for trapping. Most of the trapping sites are now used on a random trapping basis, i.e. limesticks are set out only on certain days. Traps are more easily found between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. daily, but many trappers prefer to set traps randomly at different times of the day, taking advantage of the most favourable location and the available fruit trees. To date we have recorded 319 trapping sites in this area.

b) Liopetri: We have established that trapping sites around Liopetri have a special pattern in spring, a new phenomenon for us. Trapping takes place in plantations with mist nets and tape lures, but in the form of ‘random early morning trapping’. The tape lure calls during the night, the trapper then sets the nets before dawn and catches at first light. After half an hour he can leave the site with the harvested birds. This is the same method used in Cape Pyla – effective and not time-consuming. In Liopetri however a different trapping site is activated every night, i.e. the

trapper traps every third or fourth day. This means that every night two to three tape lures in the area call from different gardens and never from the same garden for two consecutive nights. Prosecution is therefore difficult and can succeed only if continuous night checks are made and there is a prompt response by the police unit on the following morning (cf. Para. 8.2.).

c) Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA): Even if not comparable with autumn, trapping also takes place in the ESBA in spring, mainly in Cape Pyla and Agios Nikolaos (as well as Vrysoules in the Republic of Cyprus). Tape lures are heard during every night patrol, in some cases associated with mist nets, but are usually left running for early morning trapping, probably following the same pattern as in Liopetri. Three trapping sites were located in Agios Nikolaos and three in Cape Pyla – Xylophagou.

d) Other areas: Some searches were conducted in areas which are not known for trapping in spring. Traps were found in huts and premises in Kiti, Avgorou, Frenaros (but almost never set out), and in a few cases in Maroni and Agios Theodoros using both limesticks and mist nets with tape lures. Migration is clearly much less intensive in these areas and trapping here is not very rewarding in spring.



Figure 4: CABS database with known trapping sites.

4 REACTION OF TRAPPERS TO DISTURBANCE AND/OR PROSECUTION

4.1 TRAPPING PATTERN AND EVOLUTION



Figure 5: A Kestrel found trapped on a limestick. Protaras – Paralimni.

In comparison to 2009, trapping in spring is now conducted on a very different basis.

In 2009 and 2010, when the area of Famagusta was a no-go zone for law enforcement agencies and trapping was widely tolerated, most of the gardens and large areas of maquis had traps set out 24 hours a day and dozens of tape lures calling at night. The usual number of traps set out in a single trapping site was between 30 and 150 limesticks. Only a few gardens were used for trapping on a random basis.

In 2011, after two years of activity by volunteers but still without effective law enforcement, trapping had evolved into a slightly more discreet activity, with a

strong decrease in the number of tape lures calling at night (to avoid gardens being easily targeted by volunteers) and trapping by day in gardens, mainly in the morning. To prevent the loss of the traps most trapping sites were only active when the trapper was present on site to protect his traps from the volunteers. Nonetheless violence and aggression toward volunteers by trappers was a daily occurrence. Traps were left out throughout the day in only a few gardens.

After the APS stepped up CABS and SPA anti-poaching campaign in spring 2012, the pattern of trapping this season has undergone a sea change in all areas and trappers have further reduced their activity, both in terms of time and numbers of traps. No trapping site now has 'continuous trapping' but only 'random trapping', which means that the trappers now set out traps for only a few hours a day, and only on a few days a week, depending on their available free time, the intensity of migration, the location of trapping sites on the main flyway and a high catch rate. The overall number of traps has decreased. In gardens where 100 limesticks were commonly found only 6 to 30 limesticks are now set out, probably to reduce the risk of being fined, or the size of the fine if prosecuted. Trappers have not given up trapping, but practise it over shorter periods of time and at irregular intervals. The result is that signs of trapping are found in every garden during reconnaissance, but it is more and more difficult to catch trappers red-handed. On the other hand far fewer birds are caught as gardens are free of traps for most of the time.

This development was particularly evident in spring 2013 when a number of new gardens were checked and found active. These were all newly-discovered trapping gardens that had not been disturbed previously and therefore still risked 'continuous trapping'.

During the BPC we monitored gardens where there had been prosecutions in previous years. CABS now has a historical, year by year database for each trapping site, which allows us to forecast the reaction of each individual trapper to confiscation / prosecution and act accordingly. If disruption of trapping activity, even when CABS teams are accompanied by the police (official confiscation), does not prevent trappers reactivating their garden sites after one or two weeks, prosecutions have proved so far to be a more effective deterrent. Although our information is at

present still incomplete, and a clearer picture will be available only in one to two years' time, only 6 out of 65 trapping sites have been reactivated to date following prosecution (Points 245, 222, 582, 444, 336 and 508 in CABS database).

4.2 AGGRESSION BY BIRD TRAPPERS AND CRIMINAL GANGS

It was believed that spring 2013 was likely to be one of the most dangerous seasons yet for anti-poaching volunteers because of the anti-European feeling widespread among the Cypriot population due to the recent bank bailout and the political and monetary position adopted by the German government, represented by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel. This was expected to have a collateral effect as CABS and SPA have their head offices in Germany. CABS indeed received an explicit death threat per mail from a Cyprus poacher. Volunteers were extremely careful and the officers of the APS showed extreme concern for their safety. In the event this camp turned out to be the quietest since 2009. There were no confrontations apart from one unpleasant accident in Kokkines, when two CABS volunteers observed from a distance two people (father and son) shooting at turtledoves in the afternoon, and were then chased and attacked by the poacher and another man (finally five pursuers in all). The volunteers hid in the bushes and exfiltrated at dusk. One of them reported being punched on the chest but that was all. There were other contacts between locals and volunteers but the worst to occur was insults and verbal abuse. It is clear that the combination of the APS and CABS has bestowed a degree of respectability on the latter, which protects them from violence on the part of the poachers, even when alone.

4.3 POLITICAL REACTION AND THE FORCED SUSPENSION OF THE CAMP

CABS has thoroughly analysed and repeatedly stated in its reports (cf. Field Report: Autumn 2011 Bird Protection Camp, Para. 8.1. and Annex A) that, before the joint intervention of the APS and CABS, little or no monitoring on trapping in Famagusta area was conducted by the law enforcement agencies – especially the APS – primarily for political reasons. Trapping is practised by a very large number of people in this district, including those with a public role in the local administration. In this context, the eradication of this serious level of illegality is far from easy. In spring 2013 we attempted to cover the peak migration period from the beginning of April to the beginning of May. We were present in the main trapping areas on almost a daily basis resulting in the prosecution of 20 trappers and the raiding of many trapping sites on more than one occasion. This scale of disturbance of trapping activity was clearly effective.

On Wednesday and Thursday, 24-25 April, BirdLife Cyprus and the MAVA Foundation (Fondation Pour La Nature) co-organised a workshop on the *“Development of a Strategic Action Plan for Tackling Illegal Bird Trapping in Cyprus”* in Nicosia. According to the co-organisers, the goal was *“to undertake a coordinated and joint effort by all stakeholders for a more effective and permanent elimination of this phenomenon with the adoption of a Strategic Plan. This effort is also in line with the recommendation of the Council of Europe of the Bern Convention regarding the illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds. The Recommendation No. 155 was adopted on 2nd December 2011 and highlighted as a key element the development and support of national communication strategies at a national level for all the countries that face these problems. Within this context”* the workshop was organised *“with the aim of developing and promoting a Strategic Action Plan in conjunction with all the stakeholders. The workshop will be the starting point for a joint effort in order to reach an agreed Strategic Action Plan, with specific actions and timetables, by the end of August 2013”*. ^[1]

The CABS and SPA Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus attended the workshop, during which he presented the work of our organisations and provided all participants with a position paper. CABS and SPA Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus also highlighted the fact that the establishment of a close cooperation between our organisations and all the competent law enforcement agencies, most importantly the APS, has started reaping its rewards. In addition, both the methodology followed and the recommendations made by CABS and SPA during the workshop were in line with the *“Recommendation No. 155”* and were accepted by all other stakeholders. Moreover, in our

presentation and position paper we stressed the fact that this problem can only be tackled effectively if the responsible authorities adopt and implement a 'zero tolerance policy' against illegal and non-selective bird trapping and killing. This can only succeed through a demonstration of political will, initially embracing the following two steps:

1. Recognition that illegal and non-selective bird trapping and killing have a severe impact on the biological diversity and natural heritage of all Cypriot and European citizens, as well as on the intrinsic value of nature and the inseparable link between environment and society;
2. The provision of consistent and high-profile political support to the responsible law enforcement agencies and to the efforts made by all stakeholders to tackle the problem at every level of the bird crime chain. [2]

This position was also adopted and highlighted by all the competent law enforcement agencies, including the GF, the APS and the ESBA Police. Unfortunately, the events that followed the day after the workshop demonstrated unmistakably that this political will is still lacking on Cyprus.

On Friday the 26 April, people throughout the Famagusta area received a text message on their mobile phones calling for a demonstration to take place the following day. [3] The same day, the Paralimni Police called CABS to inform us that an investigation was to be conducted in respect of criminal offences allegedly committed by our volunteers, involving trespassing on private property, destruction of property and liberating farm animals, on four different occasions. Following this development, and in full cooperation with the Paralimni Police, we arranged to go to the Paralimni Police Station at 9.00 a.m., on Monday 29 April, in order to make statements and as far as possible assist the Paralimni Police in their enquiries into the poachers' complaints.

The following morning, Saturday 27 April, while the joint APS and CABS operations continued, a group of 25-50 trappers gathered in the central square of Paralimni to demonstrate against anti-poaching activists and for the legalisation of limestick trapping. They entered the voting booths, seized the ballot boxes and threw them out into the street. Unfortunately, the Paralimni Police not only ignored this incident, but apparently completely tolerated this clearly illegal and unconstitutional act, presumably for political reasons. In addition, the DISY President, Mr Averof Neophytou, and the candidate for DISY vice-presidency, Mr Lefteris Christoforou, intervened and assured the angry locals that the *"activists would stop their operations, with only the police enforcing the anti-poaching laws from now on"*. [4] Following this declaration CABS was informed the same day by the APS and the ERU that the Minister of Justice and Public Order had suspended the BPC and that the APS would not conduct any more anti-trapping activities this spring. The BPC was officially closed.

On Monday 29 April, four CABS volunteers were called to the Paralimni police station in order to be identified by the four accusers. Only two of the latter turned up.

The first complainant (Point 117 in the CABS database) appeared on TV news on Saturday, 27 April, stating: *"Two activists came to my orchard with photo cameras and started taking pictures of my greenhouses and my trees. They opened my chicken coops and they set free my chickens and pigeons in a humiliating manner. This is unacceptable and we call on the state to deport them. The Italians, Australians and Germans have no right to enter our property just because they think that they can do so"*. [5] The same person was prosecuted by the APS and the GF (in cooperation with CABS) during the previous autumn camp, on Sunday, 7 October 2012, for illegal possession of 30 protected wild birds in two aviaries.

The second complainant (Points 120, 121, 122, 233 and 234 in the CABS database) is the largest professional trapper known to CABS, the APS and the GF in Paralimni. Although he was never arrested previously, since autumn 2011 1,270 limesticks, 3 mist nets and 8 electronic decoys were found in the maquis area near his unfenced property in Ayios Mamas! During the spring 2013 BPC, 280 limesticks, three mist nets and two electronic decoys were confiscated on two occasions by the APS (in cooperation with CABS), in four different sites close to his unfenced private property (Points 120, 121, 122 and 233)! The second complainant who was very aggressive and appeared to spur on the first to testify against the CABS volunteer, was arrested on 11 May by the GF with 70 limesticks on the plot of public land near his unfenced private property, only two weeks after he appeared on TV news behaving aggressively – even towards the DISY politicians – who held discussions with the poachers in the central square of Paralimni. [6]



Figure 6: The trapping site (117) of the first trapper in Ayios Mamas, Paralimni. This site is not a fenced in property and the owner has no chicken coops and/or farm animals grazing on his land! Over the past few years, limesticks have been found at Point 117, and the man was prosecuted by the APS and the GF (in cooperation with CABS) during the Autumn 2012 BPC (on Sunday, 7 October 2012), for illegal possession of 30 protected birds in two aviaries with pigeons (this incident is probably what was referring to in his statement to TV news). At Point 116, also not a fenced in property limesticks, mist nets and electronic decoys were found in the past, while in spring 2012 the other trapper was also prosecuted by the APS and the GF (on Thursday, 19 April 2012, he was arrested red-handed setting-up 169 limesticks).



Figure 7: The trapping sites of the largest professional trapper in Paralimni, behind the church of Ayios Mamas. In total, from autumn 2011 to spring 2013, the APS and the GF confiscated 1,340 limesticks, 3 mist nets and 8 electronic decoys. This large plot of public land, covered mostly by maquis scrub, contains neither a fenced-in property nor grazing farm animals.

Neither accuser had fenced-in properties, nor farm animals grazing on their trapping sites. Both claimed to recognise a single CABS volunteer and accused him of trespassing and destroying their private property. The volunteer denied outright all charges and voluntarily offered to have his fingerprints taken by the investigating officers to check if they matched those at the so-called “*crime scenes*”. The police officers declined as no fingerprints had been found on the wooden chicken coops or anywhere else.

It also has to be noted that, as the TV news reported on the day of the protest in Paralimni central square, “*according to the protesters, they burst out after a new raid of the Cyprus Police on the house of a family with young children, due to information received relating to the illegal possession of wild birds*”. [7] Unfortunately, the Press Office of the Cyprus Police Headquarters failed to publicly reject these ill-founded and ludicrous arguments raised by the poachers, even though no raid was conducted by the Cyprus Police or the GF in the wider Famagusta district the previous night, or on any other night during the spring 2013 BPC. On Monday, 29 April, while the four CABS volunteers were making statements at the Paralimni Police Station, the CABS and SPA Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus confirmed with the Cyprus Police Assistant Chief of Support that we had already been informed on Saturday, 27 April, by the APS and the ERU, that BPC had been suspended and that the APS would not conduct any more anti-trapping activities this spring with our organisations. The CABS and SPA Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus tried without success to contact the Chief of Cyprus Police and the Minister of Justice and Public Order directly on Monday and Tuesday, 29 and 30 April. He was only informed on Tuesday 30 April, initially by the Office of the Minister of Justice and Public Order and subsequently by the Office of the Chief of the Cyprus Police, that if our organisations wished for an explanation as to why this decision had been taken, they should address an official written request to the Minister of Justice and Public Order. This was the final proof that the spring 2013 BPC had come to an end due to the political capitulation to the poachers’ demands.

The charges and accusations made against CABS volunteers in the third week of the camp was undoubtedly a drummed-up tactic by Paralimni trappers to discredit activists and to isolate them from the police. This regrettably succeeded because of the political support provided to the poachers by local politicians of the governing party.

During the last five days of the camp, after its official closure, two volunteers carried out random checks of a number of gardens and located two fenced-in properties with limesticks and decoys. They tried for three days to enlist the support of the Paralimni police, but the officers consistently refused to intervene (cf. Para. 5.5.).

At this point, it is also important to note that on Monday, 29 October 2012, CABS and SPA sent a letter to the Chief and Assistant Chief of Support of the Cyprus Police, the Commander of the ERU and the Head of the APS, expressing their gratitude for the continuing support provided by the Cyprus Police to our spring and autumn 2012 BPCs. In the letter, CABS and SPA also asked for the consent of the Cyprus Police Headquarters to the presentation of operational equipment to the APS, the procurement of which would overstrain their budget. [8] On Friday, 8 February, the Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus of CABS and SPA attended meeting at the Cyprus Police Headquarters with representatives of the ERU and the APS, in the course of which he submitted a letter to the Chief and Assistant Chief of Support of the Cyprus Police, the Commander of the ERU and the Head of the APS, informing them of the operational details of the spring 2013 BPC and requesting once again the support of the Cyprus Police and in particular the APS. At the same meeting, as a token of our gratitude to the Cyprus Police for their support, we repeated our proposal to present operational equipment to the APS. [9] On Monday, 25 February, the Assistant Chief of Support officially replied to our request for the provision of operational support, stating that the ERU and the APS would provide us with daily escorts throughout the spring 2013 BPC. [10] In addition, on Wednesday, 10 April 2013, the Cyprus Police Headquarters and the Commander of the ERU accepted our request to present operational equipment to the APS. We then began, in cooperation with the APS and the Cyprus Police Headquarters, to identify appropriate types of operational equipment, in particular night vision binoculars. [11] CABS and SPA have however, as a consequence of the unacceptable and abrupt political termination of support from APS and the Cyprus Police, without any official explanation, has temporarily suspended the procurement process.

4.4 POLITICAL SUPPORT AND UNDERPINNING OF THE POACHERS' LOBBY

In its reports (cf. Field report: Autumn 2012 Bird Protection Camp, Para. 2) CABS has repeatedly stated that illegal song bird poaching attracts support from some elements of the population in the trapping hotspot areas, as well as from a small number of politicians, mainly Mayors and Members of Parliament (MPs) from the Famagusta and Larnaca districts and representatives of the Cyprus Hunting Federation (again mostly from the Famagusta and Larnaca districts). In addition, there is a registered but non-recognised pressure group (the so-called “*Friends of Limesticks*”, now renamed the “*Group for Reclamation the Traditional Hunting with Limesticks*”) that supports the legalisation of non-selective bird trapping and killing methods, in particular the use of limesticks and electronic decoys. [12] This support encourages the trappers and lends them a sense of security. They therefore do not hesitate to set their traps not only on private property, but also on public land. They maintain that they have a traditional right to trap wild birds, and behave very aggressively towards anyone who tries to prevent them doing so. The current level of fines imposed is no real deterrent, because of the huge profits to be made from the sale of the birds to restaurants and butchers’ shops. As a result, trappers in Famagusta and Larnaca districts are now organised on mafia-like lines. [13] The suspension by the Minister of Justice and Public Order of our spring 2013 BPC and the cooperation with the APS of the Cyprus Police was followed by a series of developments that clearly demonstrate the validity of this analysis.



Figure 8: CABS activists and the APS of the police removed limesticks and sound machine in an open carob plantation in Paralimni. The trapper was caught red-handed one month later by the GF with again limesticks and soud machine. He was one of the two trappers who filed a complaint against activists for trespassing his privat property.

On Sunday, 28 April, the Green Party of Cyprus – the Movement of Ecologists and Environmentalists – and the Environment Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus released two press statements condemning the decision to suspend the spring 2013 BPC. [14]

On Tuesday 30 April, two of the largest environmental non-governmental organisations in Cyprus, BirdLife Cyprus and Friends of the Earth Cyprus, also released a joint press statement urging the government to implement a ‘zero tolerance policy’ against illegal bird trapping. [15]

On Thursday 2 May, CABS and SPA released another joint press statement demanding the strict implementation of the declared ‘zero tolerance policy’ of the Cyprus Government against the illegal and non-selective trapping and killing of protected wild birds. [16]

Despite the media and public outcry against the high-level political decision to suspend the spring 2013 BPC, neither the Cyprus Police nor the Ministry of Justice and Public Order issued a single press release or public statement explaining the reason/s behind this development.

Only after a meeting between the Minister of Justice and Public Order and representatives of the Cyprus Green Party – the Movement of Ecologists and Environmentalists – on Thursday 9 May, an official statement was made concerning the withdrawal of the APS and the way in which the competent authorities handled the issue. According to the Minister of Justice and Public Order himself, *“the Ministry of Justice and Cyprus Police, will continue to conduct anti-poaching operations and their cooperation with (CABS) activists or any other environmental organization with a common goal of protecting wildlife and fighting poaching”*. The Minister of Justice and Public Order also stated that *“the assurance we have given is that this effort will continue, but within the context of legality because we want all those who act in this way to always remain within the law, to demonstrate this and be respectful to the residents of an area, their properties, and above all the right to privacy and the integrity of private residences and property”*. [17]

On the same day, 9 May, the Cyprus Conservation Foundation Terra Cypria sent a letter to the Minister of Justice and Public Order stating that *“a political party has actually interfered in the state’s power and stated their agreement with the protesters [poachers] position that the Cyprus Police will continue its work without the activists”*. Terra Cypria also stressed that *“the cooperation between CABS and the Cyprus Police was agreed at the highest level and it was considered not only effective, but also completely legal, because the activists were solely providing the police with information on where illegal activity was taking place; the implementation of the law was conducted by the law enforcement agencies”*. As Terra Cypria rightly noted, in this way *“either intentionally or not, two wrong messages were passed: a) that the severe backlash of the poachers can influence the law enforcement efforts of the state and b) the partisan intervention of DISY can immediately change governmental policies”*. Terra Cypria also mentioned that *“the fact that there would be a severe backlash from the poachers’ side was expected, as the joint operations [by the APS and CABS] were a heavy blow to the illegal bird trapping industry. Apart from the large-scale ecological disaster, this illegal activity provides huge untaxed profits to the persons engaged to it, and at the same time the tourist image of Cyprus is tarnished. Any sign of tolerance and withdrawal by the state is a challenge for ordinary taxpayers, especially during a period when the state is trying to end the financial crisis, by reducing salaries and increasing taxes”*. The letter sent by Terra Cypria ended by stating: *“As you are aware, Mr Minister, the institution that you serve requires your full accountability and legality. Cyprus, as well as the whole of Europe, regards the massive slaughter of birds as illegal. Based on a statement made by your predecessor, our country adopted in 2011 the principle of ‘zero tolerance’ towards the illegal killing of birds. We do not believe that all this should be negated by the intervention of a political party. Consequently, we would deeply appreciate it, if we could have your official commitment that the cooperation between the APS and CABS will be continued as soon as possible, in the context of what has been agreed between the Cyprus Police Headquarters and CABS”*. [18]

On Thursday, 23 May, the Minister of Justice and Public Order replied to Terra Cypria in a letter stating that *“the cooperation of the Cyprus Police and particularly the APS with the activists, as well as any other organisation that aims to tackle poaching, should not and will not stop, and this was not my intention. Nevertheless, this cooperation should fully respect and be fully compatible with the laws of the Republic of Cyprus. The action undertaken by activists, such as entering the backyards of resident, without their own consent and during early morning hours, is a clear violation of*

recognised individual rights that the Cyprus Police is obliged to protect and ensure for every citizen". The Minister of Justice and Public Order also stated that *"the continuance of the cooperation between the activists and the APS, as well as with any other organisation, is considered as necessary and effective, but only if it is compatible with the laws of the Republic of Cyprus. The safeguarding of the public interest, derived from the need to stamp out poaching, should not negate and / or violate the recognised constitutional individual rights of neither the area's residents, nor their right to privacy and the integrity of their property"*. [19]

As already stated above (see Paragraph 4.3.), we reject out of hand the ill-founded and ludicrous accusations raised in respect of the efforts made by conservationists and environmentalists to monitor and report poaching activities by poachers and trappers. The results of the Paralimni Police investigations confirm that there is no foundation for these wild accusations.

We also believe that the above analysis of the problem by the Minister of Justice and Public Order not only ignores the results of the Paralimni Police investigations, but is also at least a misinterpretation, not to say a negation, of the 'zero tolerance' policy towards illegal and non-selective bird trapping and killing, officially adopted by the Republic of Cyprus during the *"European Conference on Illegal Killing of Birds"*, organised in Larnaca by the Council of Europe and the Secretariat of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the GF, in July 2011. [20] This is clearly demonstrated by the support for and underpinning of the poachers' lobby following the ministerial decision to suspend the spring 2013 BPC.

In detail: on Tuesday, 30 April, only three days after the protest in the central square of Paralimni and the suspension of the spring 2013 BPC, the so-called pressure group *"Friends of Limesticks"* organized a meeting at the Famagusta Shooting Club in Paralimni, which was attended by approximately 80 persons. The purpose was to form a new committee comprising of members of the Paralimni Hunting Association and the group *"Friends of the Limesticks"*. A total of 12 persons were elected to the committee of the newly formed *"Association for the Reclamation of the Traditional Methods of Hunting"*. For the responsible law enforcement agencies (APS, GF and the ESBA Police who are informed of and with whom we have discussed the matter) this development was very clearly an effort to legitimise illegal bird trapping methods, in particular the use of limesticks. According to the information received by us and cross-checked with the responsible law enforcement agencies, after the new group was formed they met with local politicians (mostly MPs) and officials of the governing party who, in the course of their meeting three days before in the Paralimni central square, promised to resolve any on-going problems in respect of limestick trapping. At the first meeting of the so-called *"Association for the Reclaiming the Traditional Methods of Hunting"*, it was also mentioned that about 30 local people had been charged by the responsible law enforcement agencies over the last month for trapping with limesticks, and officials of the governing party promised that these charges would be dropped. [21]

On Tuesday, 21 May, the day before the Minister of Justice and Public Order replied to Terra Cypria, the elected committee of the newly formed *"Association for the Reclamation of the Traditional Methods of Hunting"* officially announced the establishment of the group. In the announcement, the stated aim of the provisional committee was to proceed with the preparation of the statutes in cooperation with a team of lawyers', as well as with the registration of members within 45 days, in order to convene the constituent assembly of the group. It is also important to note that during the meeting it was decided that the provisional headquarters of the group would be the Famagusta Shooting Club, which clearly demonstrates the collaboration between the Paralimni and Famagusta Hunting Associations and the so-called *"Friends of Limesticks"*. [22]

On Wednesday, 26 June, the constituent assembly of *"Friends of Limesticks"* was held at the Famagusta Shooting Club in Paralimni, and was attended by some 60-80 people. During this meeting it was decided that the name of the group would be the *"Association for the Reclamation of the Traditional and Sustainable Methods of Hunting"*! [23] The meeting was attended regrettably by two local MPs, Mr Kyriakos Hadjiyiannis of DISY and Mr Christakis Tziouvannis of AKEL. Both MPs have attended meetings of *"Friends of Limesticks"* in the past and are known for their extreme views on the legalisation of limesticks and electronic decoys. [24] Mr Hadjiyiannis in particular has even gone so far in the past to claim repeatedly that *"the activists of CABS are paid by the secret services of Turkey to blacken the tourist image of Cyprus abroad"*. On that occasion letters of protest were sent twice to the former DISY Environment Commissioner and the MP from the Famagusta District, Mr Kyriakos Hadjiyiannis, as well as to the former President of DISY and

newly elected President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Nicos Anastasiades, asking for evidence to substantiate these grave accusations. No answer was however received by CABS or any other environmental organisation. [25]

Once again, this political support provided by local MPs encouraged the trappers, lent them a sense of security and emboldened them to claim that they have a traditional right to trap wild birds and to falsely accuse bird conservationists and environmental activists, taking legal, peaceful and non-violent direct action to tackle the problem. This is evident in the statements made by Mr Stavros Neophytou, the so-called “President” of the “Friends of Limesticks” on Friday, 28 June, claiming that *“the central aim of the group is the protection of the private properties of its members, mostly from the illegal trespassing of foreign activists, who are self-declared bird savers. Through their actions they insult Cypriots, blackening the image of Cyprus abroad and destroying equipment in the orchards where they illegally trespass”*. He added that the activists *“are now at the stage of assaulting old men in their own orchards and destroying their Syrian Plum trees”* (from the juice of which limestick glue of is made). *“Our aim”*, he added, *“is the uncompromising demand for the legalisation of limestick as a popular hobby and part of the daily life of Cypriots, who like this hobby. This will be achieved through diplomatic steps both at home and abroad, but principally through the institutions of the European Union and the European Parliament. We have now arrived at the stage where an 80-year-old man, who sets out 10 limesticks to catch 15-20 small birds for his frugal meal, is being prosecuted and branded as a common criminal on a par with drug dealers”*. [26]

In our previous report (cf. Field Report: Autumn 2012 Bird Protection Camp, Para. 12.), we made several policy recommendations based on the official pre-electoral position of the newly elected President of the Republic of Cyprus on illegal and non-selective bird trapping and killing. We noted in particular that on Thursday, 17 January, the three largest environmental NGOs on Cyprus (BirdLife Cyprus, Cyprus Conservation Foundation Terra Cypria and Friends of the Earth Cyprus) took the initiative to contact the three major presidential candidates of the Republic of Cyprus, in order to determine their positions on the major environmental issues that the new President and his Ministers would face. The presidential candidates had the opportunity to express their positions and commitment to actions under seven modules relating to environmental protection and sustainable development, one of which concerned the problem of illegal and non-selective bird trapping and killing. [27] Specifically, the fourth out of seven questions raised by the three national environmental NGOs was: *“To what extent are you willing to tackle the problem of illegal bird trapping and illegal trade of wild birds in the Republic of Cyprus, which impacts on the biodiversity of our island?”* [28] The newly elected President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Nicos Anastasiades, stated in his letter on Wednesday, 13 February: *“We recognize that the illegal trapping of protected wild birds has a negative impact on the biodiversity of our island, especially due to the use of equipment for mass catching of birds that it is not selective with regard to the species of the wild birds trapped (and as a result they are killed indiscriminately), as well as the widespread use of illegal electronic sound machines. In order to reduce this problem, we will strictly implement the relative legislation through more frequent investigations and by strengthening the responsible anti-poaching law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, we will promote environmental education and public awareness projects to inform and sensitise the public on the impact of illegal bird trapping, with the aim of reducing the demand for the consumption of wild birds”*. [29]

CABS and SPA also noted in their previous report that the above position of the newly elected President of the Republic of Cyprus is in line with the core recommendations of the *“European Conference on Illegal Killing of Birds”* and specifically the *“Larnaca Declaration”*, according to which a zero tolerance policy towards illegal and non-selective bird trapping and killing includes, inter alia: *“i) The need to strengthen enforcement at each stage of the bird crime chain through appropriate targeting, scientific and technical support and cooperation; ii) The need to recognize the significance of the illegal taking and trade of birds as a risk to the achievement and maintenance of favourable status of bird populations and a damage to the conservations actions undertaken by the Parties with adverse impacts on the conservation, legal hunting, agriculture and tourism sectors; and iii) The need to develop, finance and support national communication strategies promoting dialogue between relevant stakeholders and the wider public”*. [30] Our policy recommendations were based on the *“Larnaca Declaration”* and the *“Recommendation No.155 (2011) on the Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade of Wild Birds”*, [31] which were submitted and adopted during the *“31st Meeting of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention”* held in Strasburg, from 29 November – 2 December 2011. Regrettably, these policy recommendations have been neglected by the responsible political authorities and in particular by the

Ministry of Justice and Public Order. Even worse, the position taken by the official representatives of both the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, as well as the governing party of DISY, are now in direct contradiction with both the “Larnaca Declaration” and the pre-electoral position of the newly elected President of the Republic of Cyprus, resulting in the reinforcement of the poachers’ lobby.

5 CRITICAL ASPECTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW

During the spring 2013 BPC some critical aspects emerged, some of which have already been highlighted in previous reports (cf. Field Reports Autumn 2011, Spring 2012 and Autumn 2012). In our experience, the APS is the most dedicated, committed, independent and consistent anti-poaching unit in Cyprus. The APS was able to deal with all cases provided by CABS in regard to offences committed on private property. Nevertheless, the unit is still too inflexible in its methods. They need to adopt tactics unusual for a police unit, but very appropriate for wildlife crime investigations. More operational flexibility would greatly increase the impact on trapping. The GF approach in the field matches more closely the goal of catching trappers in agricultural or uncultivated areas; nonetheless, this service still has some problems with the full implementation of a zero tolerance policy. A completely different approach to the problem is urgently required by the local police (cf. Para. 5.5).

5.1 EFFICIENCY OF POLICE PROSECUTION (APS)

The current police procedure is still very time-consuming. The CABS teams had targeted between two to five cases per day for investigation but the APS were only able to cope with two at the most, and these often involved working overtime. It became obvious that, even in a relatively quiet situation as in spring, a single APS patrol is unable, under current legal and operational restraints, to deal effectively with a large workload of prosecutions. In spring 2013, the APS were unable to deal with 21 cases targeted by CABS teams. A total of 16 were not investigated due either to lack of time (mostly due to the premature end to police support for the camp a week before the scheduled end date) or lack of operational flexibility in the investigations (even when there were two patrols with four officers in the field, they all moved together escorting another two cars with six to eight CABS volunteers). A further five cases were not prosecuted because trappers had removed their paraphernalia before the arrival of the police.

5.2 AMBUSHES (APS)

Another impediment to prosecuting bird trappers is that many of them trap on open land and in unfenced orchards. As a result, unless they are caught red-handed setting the traps or harvesting the birds, they can easily claim that someone else has set the traps thereby avoiding prosecution. In order to optimize APS results, the recommended strategy is to schedule shift duties to permit close observation of such trapping sites. This involves identifying an active trapping site and keeping it under constant observation until the trapper arrives in order to catch him red-handed. This tactic would guarantee prosecution and have a more lasting effect on trapping than simply the confiscation of trapping paraphernalia. Unfortunately, this practice – which is successfully used by the GF in Cyprus and by other anti-poaching units in the EU – has not yet been implemented by the APS. This method can however be successfully conducted by a three man patrol – a driver who conceals and guards the vehicle and two officers who lie in wait for the trapper. Employment of this close observation or ambush tactic would facilitate the arrest of professional trappers, who set out large numbers of limesticks and mist nets in open areas and unfenced orchards.

In this context and despite the increasing efforts made by the responsible law enforcement agencies in 2012 and 2013 (especially by the Cyprus Police Headquarters, the APS and the GF), CABS and SPA repeat their appeal to the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and the Ministry of Interior to improve the effectiveness of the responsible law enforcement agencies, by increasing their operational capacity and providing them with consistent and high-profile

political support for their anti-poaching operations. The APS of the Cyprus Police has only 6 officers and is responsible for the whole territory of the Republic of Cyprus. The GF has some 90 permanent and seasonal officers in all 4 of its regional offices (Nicosia / Limassol / Paphos / Larnaca & Famagusta), 17 of whom are located in the GF Larnaca & Famagusta Regional Office. This infers that the APS has only one patrol on duty at any one time for the whole of the Republic of Cyprus, and the GF has only two patrols on each shift in Larnaca and Famagusta districts. At the same time, the APS officers and GF wardens are responsible for handling all hunting and poaching activities, from the protection of habitats and the management of wildlife to the illegal killing of and trade in game and protected wildlife species. CABS and SPA consider the reinforcement of the APS and the GF as the most important step to be taken in order to strengthen law enforcement at each stage of the bird crime chain, as well as appropriate targeting, scientific and technical support and cooperation to the responsible law enforcement agencies. Especially in relation to the APS, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and the Cyprus Police Headquarters should at least double its personnel from early-September to late October. This would allow to the APS to implement the practices of close observation of trapping sites and ambushes, in order to maximise the arrest numbers of trappers by catching them red-handed in the early morning hours.

5.3 FENCED IN PROPERTIES (LOCAL POLICE STATIONS)

The effectiveness of prosecutions is also hindered by the problem of fenced-in properties (see: Cyprus Field Report Autumn 2012, 11.1.). Again, in spring 2013, the prosecution of offenders in private properties was extremely time consuming and in one case the police had to drop the case, because the local police never turned up to find the owner, even after the APS officers and CABS volunteers were waiting four hours outside of the fenced in garden.

5.4 GAME FUND AND THE ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

Cooperation with the GF was once again established during the BPC and thanks to them an old outstanding case was solved. A trapper, who had falsely accused us of illegal trespassing and whose traps (280 limesticks, three mist nets and two electronic decoys) had been already confiscated twice by the APS during the BPC, was caught with 70 limesticks by the GF in an ambush on his usual trapping site. This demonstrates once again the importance of using ambushes to deal with trappers who trap on public land. We were however disappointed to observe that the GF has still not fully implemented a 'zero tolerance' policy. On 8 April, the GF and the UN police contingent joined CABS to investigate a garden in the Buffer Zone (Point 57) where large-scale trapping activity had been recorded in the past season (tape lure, net and up to 295 limesticks). During the check only 20 limesticks were found and the GF officer decided to drop the case on the grounds of scale although he had been informed of the trapper's previous record.

5.5 BOYCOTT BY LOCAL POLICE IN PARALIMNI

Thanks to the positive feedback experienced the previous autumn and during the first two weeks of the spring BPC with local police officers (even if this came about due to the good offices of the APS), we considered that the time was now ripe to extend our operations beyond cooperation with the APS alone. We conducted two rewarding operations with the Kiti and Paralimni Police leading to two prosecutions. On 25 April the first unpleasant experience with the Paralimni Police took place and over the next ten days the situation deteriorated rapidly to the point where the volunteers were boycotted by the entire police station. This behaviour on the part of the Paralimni police officers merits a public complaint to the Ombudsman of the Republic of Cyprus and the European Commission. It should be noted that two of the three cases described below occurred after the APS was recalled to Nicosia, following which the camp was officially closed and, according to the declaration of the DISY candidate: "*only the police will enforce anti-*

poaching enforcement from now on". The following three cases show how environmental law is commonly dealt with by the Paralimni Police:

Case 1: On 25th April, at 6.20 p.m., while checking an open backyard in the centre of Paralimni town, we observed a man entering a fenced-in olive plantation (Point 629) with a bunch of 20-25 limesticks. He was obviously setting them out in the middle of the garden as we were able to observe him moving through the bushes and trees and placing the limesticks on the inner branches of the trees. After 10 minutes he left and no limesticks were visible from the outside. At 6.45 p.m., we drove to Paralimni Police Station to report the case. The duty desk officer asked us to wait until after the shift change. At 7.15 p.m., one of our team escorted the police officer to the fenced plantation and explained that even though the limesticks were not visible we were sure that there were at least 20 limesticks within the garden. The policeman took our volunteer back to the police station and left again to find the owner of the plantation. At 9 p.m., we called the police officer who stated that he had found the owner and entered the plantation with him, but only four limesticks (!) were found set out on a loquat tree. On this basis he refused to prosecute the trapper.

Case 2: On 30 April, at about 6.30 p.m., in a fenced garden with limesticks in Paralimni (point 637), we heard a tape lure calling. We arrived at the police station around 7.00 p.m. at shift changeover. The officers asked us to point out the location of the garden on the map and then told us to leave. They promised to call us to inform us of the result of the operation. They never did. At 8.30 p.m., just before dark, the limesticks were still there and visible from outside the fence, but the decoy device was switched off. On the next day, 1 May, we checked the garden at 7.30 a.m. and the tape lure was again calling and the limesticks were still present. We went again to the police station where we were informed that they had been unable to find anything the previous evening. We again pointed out the location of the site on the map and the officer on duty stated that he would send his colleagues there as soon as they returned from another case. At 9.30 a.m., we again checked the site where limesticks were still set and visible from outside, but the decoy device had been turned off. We called the police to ask if action had been taken but they stated that they had not yet had time to deal with the matter. At 1.00 p.m. the limesticks had been removed. We again called the police to ask if this was the result of their actions or if the owner removed them himself. Again, we received no information; the female officer on duty stated that the other officers were out and she had not been informed about the matter. We called again at about 5.00 p.m. and were told that we should contact the case investigator who would be available after 7.00 p.m. the following day.

We called on 2 May and the officer explained that they had searched without success in the adjacent fields - although we had clearly informed them on a number of occasions exactly where they had to look to see the limesticks in the garden.

On 3 May, at about 10.00 a.m., we again observed limesticks set out and called the police station. We were again fobbed off with the excuse that all officers were out and that the police would call us back. We received no call. On 4 May, at 5.00 p.m., we again checked the garden and the limesticks were still there. We went directly to the police station where we explained that nothing appeared to have been done since we reported the matter five days previously and on several occasions thereafter. The officer on duty stated that he was aware of the matter and again asked for the precise location of the garden. He then stated that he and another officer would investigate in about half an hour's time. We asked permission to accompany them, but oddly they refused. We informed them that we would call in one hour to check the case. When we called back they stated that they had walked around the garden with the owner, but no limesticks were found. After the phone call we visited the garden again and the limesticks had vanished.

Case 3: The police were called in the first instance at about 9.00 a.m. on 2 May to report a garden with limesticks set out (Point 643). This time the team did not visit the police station but remained in the vicinity of the trapping site in order to force the police to react. The police asked for our location and they were informed of the precise address. They stated that they would check the site, but we insisted that it would be better if our volunteers pointed out the location personally as it was difficult to find. The officer on duty said that all officers were responding to other incidents; we replied that we would remain at the location until a patrol arrived. We called again at 1.00 p.m. and asked for progress and the desk officer explained that only three officers were available at the station and they were all busy. We asked them politely to call again when they had someone available. We made the third call at about 6.00 p.m., which was answered by a policewoman. We had to explain the matter again as she appeared to be ignorant of the matter. After

some time she called back and said that she can despatch an officer. We finally met up with a police officer in the street nearby. We drove past the house and showed the officer the tree with limesticks and informed him that there were at least two more olive trees with limesticks behind the house. We turned at the end of the street and again drove past the house. We asked the officer if he was certain that he could find the house again in order to prosecute, which he confirmed. He began to explain that he would need time to wait for the owner to be observed personally setting limesticks on the trees in order to be able to prosecute him. We were surprised by his reaction and said that it was a simple case as the limesticks are in a closed, fenced-in garden and that the APS always prosecutes the owner in such cases. He then said that the owner could claim that the limesticks do not belong to him! The officer was clearly trying to find any excuse not to prosecute the trapper. We told him that he should deal with this case immediately and should not feel sorry for the owner. He said that he would work on the case but not today, maybe tomorrow or perhaps in two days' time! We then returned to our vehicle. We did not check the garden again, but we very much doubt if the case was dealt with.

5.6 FINES AND PENALTIES IMPOSED BY THE COURTS

The investigation and prosecution work of the APS and GF is unfortunately seriously undermined by the courts, which tend to impose very low penalties on poachers, often only the minimum permissible fine. The perception by many Cypriots in regard to illegal and non-selective trapping and killing of protected wild birds is not that it represents a severe environmental crime and ecological atrocity, but is a so-called “*traditional and even sustainable [sic] hunting practice*” that is unjustly persecuted (cf. Cyprus Field Report: Autumn 2012, Para. 11.3.). We do not have yet a clear perception of how many prosecuted offenders are potential repeat offenders, but there are some alarming signs. On 9 April, a man caught with 26 limesticks was prosecuted by the APS (he also had a tape lure that was not found on the day of the prosecution). On 2 May, he was again observed on his property with at least three limesticks. On 24 April, a man was prosecuted by APS for possessing an aviary containing 39 wild birds. On the 30 April, he had a new bird in the aviary and also 41 limesticks set out.

As we noted in our previous report (cf. Field Report: Autumn 2012 Bird Protection Camp, Para. 11.3. and 12.2.), the penalties can in theory be severe. According to the “*Law on the Protection and Management of Wild Birds and Game Species of 2003*”, offences related to the illegal trapping, killing, possessing of and / or trading in of wild birds can be punished with very strict penalties of up to 17,000 Euros fine and / or 3 years imprisonment. However, according to data gathered by the GF and presented recently during the “*European Conference on Illegal Killing of Birds*”, the average fines imposed by the courts in the Republic of Cyprus do not exceed 100-600 Euros for a single offence and the penalty of imprisonment, particularly in relation to big professional trappers with criminal records, who are making thousands of Euros per year by supplying the black market of restaurants and butchers, is never imposed (see Fig. 9 below). [³²]

Furthermore, the fines imposed on restaurants serving ambelopoulia comes nowhere near the profits they make through the illegal trade in protected wild birds. For example, the highest fine imposed until now on a restaurant owner who illegally served ambelopoulia was €10,000. [³³] Although this may seem a severe fine, if we take into account the fact that the APS found 2,515 ambelopoulia in the refrigerators of this restaurant in October 2010, and calculate that the selling price of this quantity approaches €12,575 (2,515 ambelopoulia divided in dozens per plate multiplied by €60 which is the lowest price per plate), then it is more than obvious that even the highest fines imposed for illegal trade in ambelopoulia are far from being a deterrent. We also have to note that to this date no restaurant licence has been revoked from a restaurateur convicted for illegally offering trapped birds, even if he was convicted more than two times and although that the GF has estimated that the illegal bird trapping ‘business’ is of the order of 15 million Euros per year! Untaxed of course. [³⁴]

Typical trapping / poaching case

The legislation is very strict (Probably the stricter in Europe).

		Legislation	Fine
1st Accusation	Pursuing of wildlife	Up to 17,000	100 - 600
2nd Accusation	Trapping / killing	Up to 17,000	100 - 600
3rd Accusation	Possession	Up to 17,000	100 - 600
4th Accusation	Use of Illegal methods	Up to 17,000	100 - 600
5th Accusation	Use of sound-device	Up to 17,000	100 - 600
6th Accusation	Protected Species	Up to 17,000	100 - 600
7th Accusation	Game reserve area	Up to 17,000	100 - 600
		119,000 euros and / or 3 years of prison	

Figure 9: Typical Trapping / Poaching Case: Accusations, Legislation and Fines (€).

Source: Game Fund, Wednesday, 06/07/2011, *Illegal Killing of Birds in Cyprus: A National Perspective*, Presentation at the "European Conference on Illegal Killing of Birds". Larnaca, Cyprus: 6-8 July 2011, pp.19

According to data gathered by the GF and presented during the recent workshop on the "Development of a Strategic Action Plan for Tackling Illegal Bird Trapping in Cyprus", since 2010 and particularly after the official adoption of a 'zero tolerance policy' against illegal and non-selective trapping and killing of protected wild birds by the Republic of Cyprus in July 2011, it seems that the average fine for a single offence has increased marginally from 567 Euros to 833 Euros (see Fig. 10).

A more detailed analysis of the fines imposed in each district reveals one of the major discrepancies in tackling the problem in the Famagusta area. Based again on the data presented recently by the GF, it is more than clear that the number of bird trapping and killing cases with a prosecution which are taken to courts has significantly increased from 564 in 2010 to 833 in 2012. This development is undoubtedly a result of the (partial) adoption and implementation of a 'zero tolerance policy', as well as the determined efforts made by the competent law enforcement agencies, the GF and the APS. Nevertheless, while the average fine for bird trapping and killing cases in Larnaca district has almost tripled during the past two years, from 458 Euros in 2010 to 1210 Euros in 2012, the exact opposite is happening in the Famagusta District (see Fig. 11).

Average fine / case: trapping and non-trapping cases 2003-2012



Figure 10: Average Fine / Case: Trapping and Non-Trapping Cases 2003-2012.

Source: Game Fund, Wednesday, 24/04/2013, Strategy on the Illegal Trapping / Killing of Birds: Main Points of Concern, Presentation at the Workshop for the “Development of a Strategic Action Plan for Tackling Illegal Bird Trapping in Cyprus”. Nicosia, Cyprus: 24-25 April 2013, pp. 5.

Average trapping fines imposed / case (Total, Larnaca and Ammochostos).



Figure 11: Average Trapping Fines Imposed (€) / Case (Total, Larnaca and Ammochostos).

Source: Game Fund, Wednesday, 24/04/2013, Strategy on the Illegal Trapping / Killing of Birds: Main Points of Concern, Presentation at the Workshop for the “Development of a Strategic Action Plan for Tackling Illegal Bird Trapping in Cyprus”. Nicosia, Cyprus: 24-25 April 2013, pp. 6.

The trend in the Famagusta district demonstrates that, in comparison with the period of the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU, the current average fine is almost three times lower. For instance, the average fine for a single offence decreased from 1417 Euros in 2005 in 337 Euros in 2011 and subsequently increased slightly to 508 Euros in 2012 (see Fig. 12), after the adoption and implementation of the ‘zero tolerance policy’. Nevertheless, this is still less than half of the corresponding fine imposed by the courts in Larnaca district.

Average trapping fines imposed / case (Ammochostos).

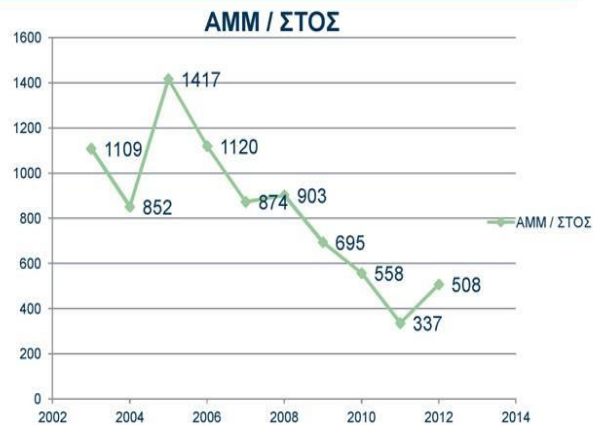


Figure 12: Average Trapping Fines Imposed (€) / Case (Ammochostos).

Source: Game Fund, Wednesday, 24/04/2013, *Strategy on the Illegal Trapping / Killing of Birds: Main Points of Concern*, Presentation at the Workshop for the “Development of a Strategic Action Plan for Tackling Illegal Bird Trapping in Cyprus”. Nicosia, Cyprus: 24-25 April 2013, pp. 7.

CABS and SPA urge the judicial authorities to critically review the scale of penalties imposed for poaching, and to implement existing national legislation more rigidly, to assist in stamping out this serious environmental criminal activity and ensure that environmental justice is meted out. This could be promoted through training seminars for judges, co-organised by the Ornithological Committee of the Directorate General (DG) for Environment of the European Commission, the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), the European Centre for Judges and Lawyers (ECJL) and the European Union Forum of Judges for the Environment (EUFJE), in cooperation with the Law Office of the Republic of Cyprus, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, as well as the Ministry of Interior. In line with the recommendations of the responsible law enforcement agencies and other environmental NGOs, CABS and SPA also recommend that the responsible judicial authorities ensure that the Cypriot courts significantly increase the penalties imposed for bird trapping in order to effectively and sustainably eradicate the serious environmental crime of illegal and non-selective bird trapping and killing on Cyprus. Although Republic of Cyprus legislation foresees sufficiently strict penalties, the responsible ministerial and judicial authorities must undertake all necessary initiatives to sensitise judges on the severe impact illegal and non-selective bird trapping and killing has on bird fauna and biological diversity, in order to facilitate the imposition of higher fines and deterrent penalties. As the “*Recommendation No.155 (2011) on the Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade of Wild Birds*” states in relation to the institutional aspects of the problem, the competent authorities should: “*strengthen the capacity, human resources, competencies and the level of cooperation between the relevant enforcement and judicial authorities, as well as to make the best use of available budgetary resources to effectively prevent and punish wildlife / bird crimes where internal judicial processes allow, and encourage the creation of special units of judges and prosecutors, provided with specialist training on combating wildlife / bird crime, and ensure all relevant cases are assigned to them*”. [35]

5.7 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES



Figure 13: Juvenile Goldfinch trapped in a limestick.

Changing attitudes to the consumption of ambelopoulia could go a long way towards curbing illegal bird trapping. However, there are currently no (and never have been) national communication strategies, public awareness campaigns and environmental education projects aiming at changing attitudes on this issue. Apart from the efforts of environmental NGOs (CABS and SPA, BirdLife Cyprus, Friends of the Earth Cyprus, Cyprus Conservation Foundation Terra Cypria and MBCC), the loudest ‘voices’ heard in the public debate on the problem are poachers and politicians from the major trapping areas (Larnaca and Famagusta), speaking out in support of this serious criminal activity and environmental

atrocities. All relevant state authorities – including the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, and the Ministry of Interior – generally display no interest in the prospect of changing public attitudes to ambelopoulia eating, and do little or nothing to promote all necessary public communication, awareness and education strategies needed to tackle the problem at its roots. Although the mass media in Cyprus extensively and positively covered our spring 2013 BPC, and a public outcry followed the political decision to suspend our cooperation with the APS, the responsible ministerial authorities did not provide any political support to anti-poaching operations conducted by the law enforcement agencies and / or anti-trapping campaigns launched by environmental NGOs, in order to counterbalance the ill-founded arguments raised by the proponents of songbird poaching.

At the national level, the only communication initiatives on illegal bird trapping were once again only undertaken by national and international environmental NGOs. BirdLife Cyprus continued to conduct its successful public awareness campaign, in which highway billboards display the message “*Ambelopoulia: Just Say No*”, [36] and at the same time has released an advertisement with the message “*The Whole Truth on Bird Trapping*”. [37] In addition, the Cyprus Conservation Foundation Terra Cypria launched another public awareness campaign, called “*Bio For Life: Cyprus Biodiversity*”, including the release of press articles on the need to protect biodiversity and tackle illegal bird trapping. [38] CABS and SPA Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus has also given interviews to the in Cyprus mass media to raise public awareness and promote environmental education on illegal bird poaching. [39]

At the international level, CABS has succeeded in focusing media attention on the problem of songbird slaughter in the Mediterranean region, including the trapping and killing of ambelopoulia in Cyprus. Based on Jonathan Franzen’s essay “*Emptying the Skies*”, which was firstly published in *The New Yorker* in July 2010, and then republished by the *Daily Telegraph Magazine* and the German (and in other EU states) edition of *GEO*, in November 2010 and March 2011 respectively, [40] CABS contributed to the production of a powerful new documentary about the secret war against rampant migratory songbird poaching in the Mediterranean region, including a report from the Republic of Cyprus. The scenario of the documentary, which is also named “*Emptying the Skies*”, is based on both *The New Yorker’s* essay (now also included in Franzen’s book of essays “*Farther Away*”, published in 2012 as “*The Ugly Mediterranean*”) [41] and another thirty-page article by the bestselling author Jonathan Franzen, entitled “*Last Song for Migrating Birds*”, which this time was published in the international issue of the *National Geographic*, in July 2013, with an explanatory map (see Fig. 14) and images of the well-known war photographer David Guttenfelder (see Figs.

15 and 16). [42] The documentary had its world premiere at the *Sheffield Docs Film Festival* on Saturday, 15 June. [43] This development was also positively covered by the mass media in Cyprus and contributed to the sensitisation of the public on tackling illegal and non-selective trapping and killing of wild birds. [44]

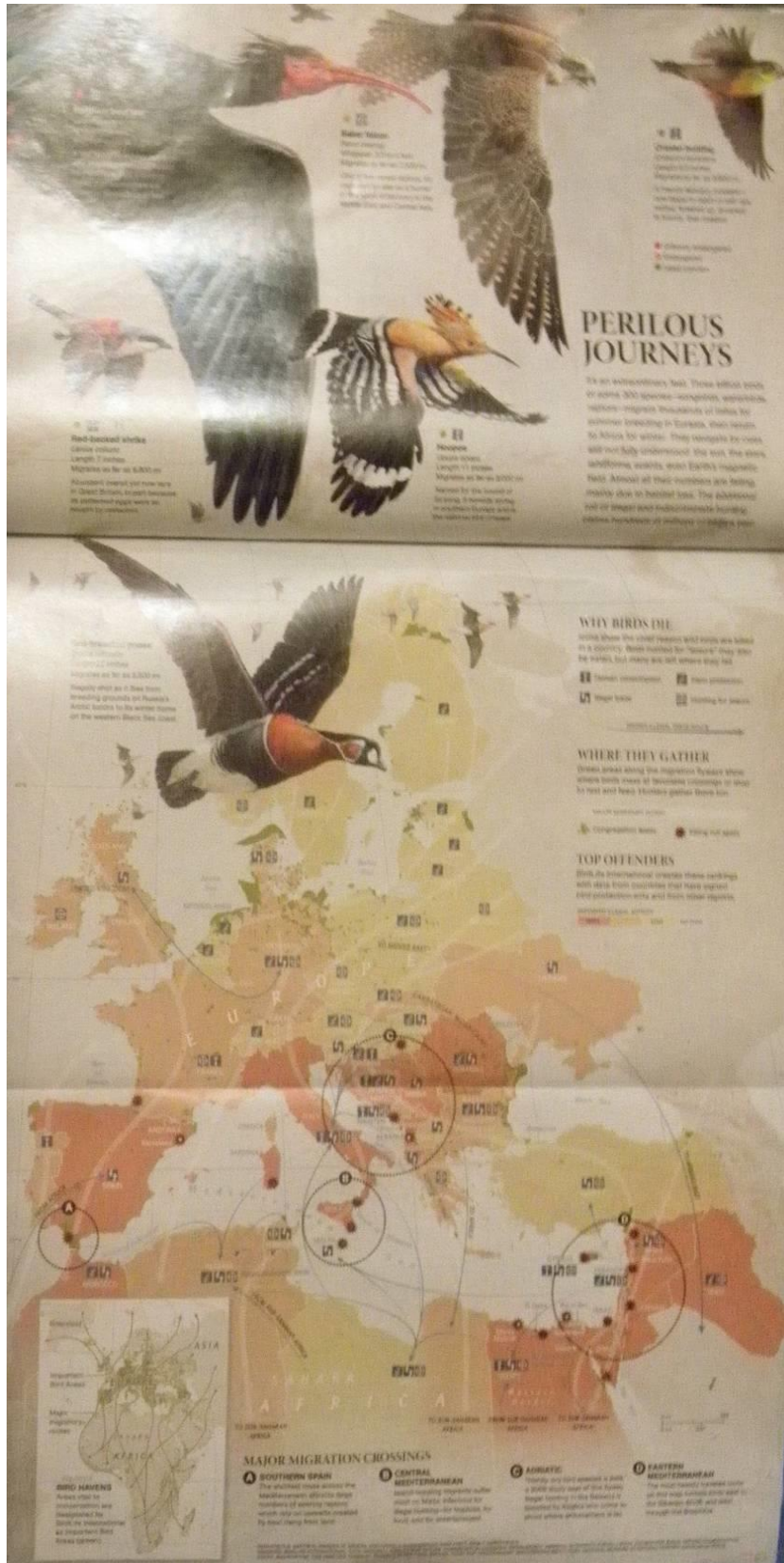


Figure 14

Perilous Journeys: It's an extraordinary feat. Three billion birds of some 300 species – songbirds, water birds, raptors – migrate thousands of miles for summer breeding in Eurasia, then return to Africa for winter. They navigate by cues still not fully understood: the sun, the stars, landforms, scents, even the Earth's magnetic field. Almost all their numbers are falling, mainly due to habitat loss. The additional tool of illegal and indiscriminate hunting claims hundreds of millions of birds per year.

Why Birds Die: Icons show the chief reason wild birds are killed in a country. Birds hunted for "leisure" may also be eaten, but many are left where they fall (Note: *In Cyprus the chief reasons are human consumption, illegal trade and hunting for leisure*).

Top Offenders: BirdLife International creates these rankings with data from countries that have signed bird-protection acts and from other reports (Note: *Based on reported illegal activity, the Republic of Cyprus is listed as a "High Offender"*).

Source: National Geographic, July 2013 (from the printed edition),
"Last Song for Migrating Birds: Across the Mediterranean millions are killed for food, profit and cruel amusement"



Figure 16: Cyprus: A Whitethroat, en route to winter grounds in Africa, is caught on a limestick.



Figure 15: Cyprus: After prying this Blackcap from a limestick, the songbird's rescuer uses his saliva to remove sticky plum tree sap from its feathers and feet so that it can safely fly when released.

Photographs by David Guttenfelder

Source: National Geographic, July 2013 (from the digital edition),
"Last Song for Migrating Birds: Across the Mediterranean millions are killed for food, profit and cruel amusement"

CABS and SPA urge the President of the Republic of Cyprus to demonstrate the necessary political will, by transforming his pre-electoral position on illegal bird trapping (as stated to the three largest environmental NGOs in Cyprus) into a real, consistent and effective zero-tolerance policy against song bird poaching. From their side, CABS and SPA are ready and able, in terms of both knowledge and experience, to take on well-targeted national communication strategies, public awareness campaigns and environmental education projects (including the publication of press releases, leaflets, posters and handbooks, as well as the production of advertisements, documentaries and other audio-vision material), in order to change public attitudes on this issue and contribute, as far as they can, towards the elimination of the demand for protected wild birds for consumption, in cooperation with the responsible ministries and competent authorities of the Republic of Cyprus.

6 THE BRITISH EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA

The pattern of trapping in the ESBA has already been analysed in Para. 3. c. above. CABS conducted only two operations in the Cape Pyla area and in Agios Nikolaos in cooperation with the ESBA police. Over the years the SBA Administration and police have been the subject of considerable criticism from various quarters and the situation in the ESBA shows little sign of improvement with consistent and effective enforcement. In autumn, when trapping with nets is rife on Cape Pyla, there does not appear to be an attempt to establish a regular police presence for enforcement and as a deterrent. CABS volunteers are committed to assisting the ESBA police in anti-poaching operations as they do with police forces in other areas and member states of the EU. Our aim is to optimise police time and manpower in order to intensify the combination of disruption and prosecution factors. We believe that CABS professional knowledge of trapping times, patterns and sites, combined with SBA police the powers of prosecution, can be very effective in combating illegal bird killing.

To evaluate the way in which the ESBA police conduct operations, and how cooperation between police and CABS volunteers could be organised, we arranged a joint night operation on 27 April. The knowledge of the territory and the way the officers moved on the ground (unseen and in the dark) was impressive. More flexibility in the length of the night operations is however desirable. The SBA police regrettably declined participation in a second joint night operation during the spring BPC, due to overload work and the need to carry out other operational needs, especially during the Eastern week.

For the planned autumn 2013 BPC, when netting activity is likely to be seasonally high, CABS will be sending a request to the SBA Administration for the conduct of joint operations every second night from 01.00 a.m. to 09.00 a.m.

7 THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY OF NORTHERN CYPRUS

Based on information gathered over the past few years on limestick trapping in North Cyprus, a CABS team for the first time spent three and a half days in the occupied territory of Northern Cyprus to determine the presence and scale of trapping in spring. The main area to be checked was the Karpas Peninsula, but we had also received information that other potential trapping areas were Agios Amvrosios (Esentepe) and Agios Sergios (Yeni Bogazici), north of Famagusta (Gazimagusa / Varosi). We started from Agios Amvrosios (Esentepe) on the morning of 17 April in sunny weather and at the peak of migration. The area was suitable for trapping on public land (maquis with juniper bushes and olive trees), but not for trapping gardens in the village. We searched around and in the village for three hours and found not a single piece of evidence of trapping.

In the afternoon we moved to the Karpas Peninsula, where we first checked Rona Bay, the two valleys at the rear of the bay (where according to KUSKOR limesticks were found in autumn), [⁴⁵] and then moved to Rizokarpaso (Dipkarpaz) where we searched in and on two sides of the village. In the village we noted the presence of few Syrian Plum trees and a couple of gardens suitable for trapping. Outside the village the cultivated and uncultivated areas with wild vegetation are ideal for trapping but, because of scale and the likely dispersion of the birds on passage, probably unrewarding to trappers. There were indeed few birds present (noticeably less than in the Paralimni area – we only saw a couple of Blackcaps in two days of walking) and kilometres of pristine wild bird habitats. The latter might present a problem for trappers when compared with the ‘island effect’ of the isolated maquis area and olive, mulberry, fig, pomegranate and apple plantations in the environmentally degraded south-eastern region of the Republic of Cyprus.

At night we went out to locate decoy devices in the Rizokarpaso (Dipkarpas) area with no success (here tape lures could be of considerable advantage to trappers as the uncultivated areas are vast and there are few birds).

The following day, at 6 a.m., we first searched the area around Yialousa (Yeni Erenkoy) and Ayia Trias (Sipahi) and then moved to Ayios Simeon (Avtepe), Komi (Buyukkonuk) and the cape north of Gastria Bay (Kalecik Bay). In all locations we searched in the villages, on their fringes and in the surrounding open areas. We found nothing apart from a probable net ride south of Agios Theodoros (Cayirova). The absence or rarity of Syrian Plum trees and 'trapping gardens' as in Paralimni and Agia Napa was striking. In the afternoon and on the following morning we checked the huge acacia grove on the coast north of Famagusta (Gazimagusa / Varosi) and some suitable gardens just to the north of the border. Here we found some Syrian Plum trees and the well-known trapping gardens but no sign of trapping.

The following are our impressions following this brief survey in the north:

- 1) In spring, birds concentrate in the south-eastern corner of the Republic of Cyprus and disperse to the north. Spring trapping makes more sense in the south-eastern landfall and hinterland, but less and less towards the north and west.
- 2) The resident Turkish Cypriot and Turkish population do not seem to share the same passion for trapping as the Greek Cypriots. No gardens with structures, platforms or ladders have been specifically created for trapping. If the population of Paralimni create green 'oases' and shape their gardens and plantations to trap birds, the Turkish Cypriots (who undoubtedly trap birds) have a much lower trapping profile. Immediately after crossing the border at Deryneia the same trapping gardens, which would be full of limesticks in the south are empty in the north.

We believe that trapping for Blackcaps takes place only in autumn in the north, when the hunting season is open, more birds are moving on a broader front and trapping is rewarding even in vast uncultivated areas.

8 FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AUTUMN 2013 AND SPRING 2014

8.1 COOPERATION WITH THE APS IN AUTUMN 2013

The cooperation with the APS has provided the best results so far for CABS. Our primary goal is to maintain and strengthen this cooperation. Nonetheless we believe that it would be of mutual benefit if the APS would demonstrate more flexibility in their operations. We recommend the following:

- a) At least two independent patrols should be deployed every day (a total of six officers) working on separate cases but in the same general area, so that reinforcement can be carried out quickly if necessary.
- b) Selective ambushes should be planned to target trappers who use public areas to set limesticks. The APS should adopt tactics that are more representative of game wardens than of a police unit, i.e. moving in on foot in maquis areas or concealing the vehicle so as to approach trapping sites unseen.
- c) The daily rendezvous with APS patrols should never be later than 4.45 a.m. - earlier at 4.00 a.m. when ambushes are planned.
- d) The task of the volunteers is to carry out reconnaissance before, during and after APS operations, based on their knowledge of the area and the location of trapping sites. Volunteers should monitor a site at dawn until the trapper arrives and then call in the police to carry out an arrest. At night the volunteers search for active trapping sites to provide targets for morning operations.



Figure 17: Joint operation with GM and the UN in the buffer zone.

8.2 COOPERATION WITH THE APS IN SPRING 2014

The same recommendations are also valid for spring 2014. It is important to understand that in spring amateur trappers in Eastern Famagusta start trapping with limesticks at 7.00 to 7.30 a.m., whereas those in the Liopetri area employing with mist nets and tape lures begin before dawn (5 a.m.). The rendezvous with the APS should be alternated between 5.00 and 7.00 a.m. in order to target both patterns of trapping.

8.3 COOPERATION WITH THE ESBA POLICE IN AUTUMN 2013

In contrast with the responsible law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Cyprus (the GF and the APS), the ESBA Police, beginning in the second half of 2011, organises a policy meeting with all relevant stakeholders (*"Game and Wild Birds Meeting"*) every six months and sends the data of anti-poaching operations conducted in the territory of the ESBA to the participants on a monthly basis. CABS/SPA Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus attends these meetings. CABS and SPA welcome these initiatives undertaken by the ESBA Administration and Police and consider them to be a major step forward towards the improvement of the cooperation between the competent authorities and environmental NGOs. Unfortunately, the Cyprus Police and the GF have not published any systematic data in relation to anti-poaching operations conducted during the first half of 2013. The publishing of systematic data on anti-poaching operations conducted by the law enforcement agencies is considered to be the first and most important step towards developing and encouraging national communication efforts and strategies to promote dialogue and foster debate between relevant stakeholders – most importantly law enforcement agencies and environmental NGOs – and the wider public. In this context, CABS and SPA recommend that the APS and the GF establish systematic monitoring and reporting systems for illegal activities using standardised methods for data collection, on a common

reporting format. The publication of data on anti-poaching operations by the APS and the GF will also support a shift of culture towards shared values respectful of nature and promote active stewardship. At the same time, they will streamline law enforcement and raise public awareness on song bird poaching. [⁴⁶]

As stated in Para. 6 above, CABS will be sending an official request to the SBA Administration for closer and mutual operational support between the ESBA Police anti-poaching patrol and CABS teams in autumn 2013, specifically for joint patrols every second night (from 01.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m.). The aim of this cooperation is to combine confiscations of trapping paraphernalia at night and selection of a target for a morning ambush with prosecution at 5 a.m. We believe that in this way 3 to 5 sites can be raided every night (CABS has been monitoring 111 sites in the ESBA). Special operations in dangerous areas must be organised in advance with increased SBA police manpower.

8.4 COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS POLICE IN AUTUMN 2013

United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP) have been stationed on the island since 1964 and have secured the Buffer Zone (BZ) between the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish occupied North since 1974. In autumn 2012, CABS initiated contacts with the UNFICYP, responsible for surveillance in the UNBZ. The spring 2013 BPC was the big first for our operations in the UNBZ. A CABS team, together with officers from the United Nations Police (UNPOL), carried out anti-poaching searches in the UNBZ on the border to the Turkish occupied area of the Famagusta district. The Republic of Cyprus police have no jurisdiction here and poaching is therefore rife and practically uncontrolled. In cooperation with the UNPOL and the GF, 63 limesticks seized and destroyed, while one poacher could be prosecuted but the GF officer decided to drop the case on the grounds of scale of trapping equipment (see Paragraph 5.4.).

Since our spring 2013 BPC, CABS and SPA have developed a close cooperation with the UNPOL, in the context of which CABS and SPA Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus participates in the training seminars of the newly arrived UNPOL officers every two months and helps them to understand the nature and the extent of the problem. [⁴⁷] In parallel, the UNPOL is also providing us with data on anti-poaching operations in the UNBZ.

As with the ESBA Police, CABS will be sending an official request to the UNFICYP Administration for closer and mutual operational support between the UNPOL and CABS teams in autumn 2013, specifically for joint patrols twice a week (from 01.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m.) in the UNBZ on the border to the Turkish occupied area of the Famagusta district. The aim of this cooperation is to combine confiscations of trapping paraphernalia at night and selection of a target for a morning ambush with prosecution at 5 a.m. We believe that in this way 1 to 2 sites can be raided every night (CABS has been monitoring 11 sites in the UNBZ). The operations will be organised in advance in cooperation with the GF.

9 ABBREVIATIONS

APS	Anti-Poaching Squad of the Cyprus Police / Κλιμάκιο Πάταξης Λαθροθηρίας (ΚΠΛ) της Αστυνομίας Κύπρου
BPC	Bird Protection Camp / Περιοδεία Προστασίας Πουλιών
CABS	Committee Against Bird Slaughter / Komitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V. / Επιτροπή Ενάντια στη Σφαγή των Πουλιών
ECJL	European Centre for Judges and Lawyers
EIPA	European Institute of Public Administration
ERU	Emergency Response Unit of the Cyprus Police / Μηχανοκίνητη Ομάδα Άμεσης Δράσης (ΜΜΑΔ) της Αστυνομίας Κύπρου
ESBA	Eastern Sovereign Base Area in Dhekelia
EU	European Union
EUFJE	European Union Forum of Judges for the Environment
GF	Game Fund / Ταμείο Θήρας
MBCC	Migratory Birds Conservation in Cyprus
MP	Member of the Parliament
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
SBA s	Sovereign Base Areas in Dhekelia and Akrotiri
SPA	Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt / Foundation Pro Biodiversity / Ίδρυμα για την Προστασία της Βιοποικιλότητας
UN	United Nations
UNBZ	United Nations Buffer Zone
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNPOL	United Nations Police

10 NOTES AND REFERENCES

[¹] BirdLife Cyprus, Thursday, 21/03/2013, “*Press Release – BirdLife Cyprus Pushes for a Strategic Action Plan on Illegal Bird Trapping*” / Πτηνολογικός Σύνδεσμος Κύπρου, Πέμπτη, 21/03/2013, «*Δελτίο Τύπου – Ο Πτηνολογικός Πιέζει για Στρατηγικό Σχέδιο Δράσης Κατά της Παράνομης Παγίδευσης Πουλιών*»

MAVA Foundation (Fondation Pour La Nature) and BirdLife Cyprus, Tuesday, 09/04/2013, Letter to all the Participants – Subject: “*Invitation for the Workshop with title ‘Development of a Strategic Action Plan for Tackling Illegal Bird Trapping in Cyprus’ & ‘Presentation of the Methodology of the Surveillance Programme’*” / MAVA Foundation (Fondation Pour La Nature) και Πτηνολογικός Σύνδεσμος Κύπρου, Τρίτη, 09/04/2013, Επιστολή προς όλους τους Συμμετέχοντες – Θέμα: «*Πρόσκληση για το εργαστήριο με τίτλο ‘Εκπόνηση Στρατηγικού Σχεδίου Δράσης για την αντιμετώπιση της παράνομης παγίδευσης πουλιών στην Κύπρο’ και ‘Παρουσίαση της Μεθοδολογίας του Προγράμματος Παρακολούθησης’*»

[²] Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) and Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), Wednesday, 24/04/2013, *Presentation – BirdLife Cyprus and MAVA Foundation Workshop on the “Development of a Strategic Action Plan for Tackling Illegal Bird Trapping in Cyprus”*

Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) and Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA), Wednesday, 24/04/2013, *Position Paper – BirdLife Cyprus and MAVA Foundation Workshop on the “Development of a Strategic Action Plan for Tackling Illegal Bird Trapping in Cyprus”*

[³] The message was sent from an unknown number that was not visible and it stated in capitals: “*PROTEST BY THE CITIZENS’ GROUP AGAINST THE ACTIVISTS. WE ARE GATHERING OUTSIDE OF THE PEK OFFICES IN PARALIMNI AT 08:45. THE BALLOT BOXES OF DISY SHOULD NOT OPEN*”. («*ΕΚΔΗΛΩΣΗ ΔΙΑΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΑΣ ΚΙΝΗΣΗΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ ΕΝΑΝΤΙΟΝ ΑΚΤΙΒΙΣΤΩΝ. ΟΛΟΙ ΕΞΩ ΑΠΟ ΤΟ ΟΙΚΗΜΑ ΠΕΚ ΠΑΡΑΛΙΜΝΙΟΥ ΣΤΙΣ 08:45. ΟΙ ΚΑΛΠΕΣ ΓΙΑ ΕΚΛΟΓΕΣ ΔΗΣΥ ΔΕΝ ΠΡΕΠΕΙ ΝΑ ΑΝΟΙΞΟΥΝ*»).

The message was sent by CABS supporters that are living in Famagusta District, to CABS and SPA Policy Advisor on Bird Poaching in Cyprus, who immediately forwarded it to the Head of the APS, on Saturday, 28/04/2013, at 10:05 a.m.

[⁴] Cyprus Mail, Sunday, 28/04/2013, page 3, “*DISY vote marred by protest over bird activists*”

Η Σημερινή, Μ. Κυριακή, 28/04/2013, σελ. 4, «*Ένταση λόγω ... αμπελοπουλιών*»

Η Χαραυγή, Μ. Κυριακή, 28/04/2013, σελ. 15, «*Ευτράπελα στις εκλογές του ΔΗΣΥ: Άρπαξαν τις κάλπες και έριξαν τα ψηφοδέλτια στο δρόμο στο Παραλίμνι*»

Ο Φιλελεύθερος, Μ. Κυριακή, 28/04/2013, σελ. 16, «*Εκλογές στον ΔΗΣΥ*»

Η Σημερινή, Μ. Τετάρτη, 01/05/2013, σελ. 8, «*Φίλοι των Αμπελοπουλιών!*»

Η Γνώμη, Μ. Παρασκευή, 03/05/2013, σελ. 32, «*Τα αμπελοπούλια του ΔΗΣΥ*»

[⁵] ΡΙΚ1, Σάββατο, 27/04/2013, Μεσημεριανό Δελτίο Ειδήσεων στις 14:00, Από 01:41 μέχρι 04:12, «*Τα αμπελοπούλια ... ‘σφήνα’ στις κάλπες*»

ΡΙΚ1, Σάββατο, 27/04/2013, Νυκτερινό Δελτίο Ειδήσεων στις 20:00, Από 05:37 μέχρι 08:33, «*Παρατράγουδα στην Ελεύθερη Αμμόχωστο με φόντο τα αμπελοπούλια: Έκρυψαν τις κάλπες σε ένδειξη διαμαρτυρίας*»

ΑΝΤ1, Σάββατο, 27/04/2013, Νυκτερινό Δελτίο Ειδήσεων στις 20:15, «*Νέα ηγεσία στον Δημοκρατικό Συναγερμό: Με καθυστέρηση άνοιξαν οι κάλπες στο Παραλίμνι*»

- [⁶] PIK1, Σάββατο, 27/04/2013, Μεσημεριανό Δελτίο Ειδήσεων στις 14:00, Από 01:41 μέχρι 04:12, «Τα αμπελοπούλια ... 'σφήνα' στις κάλπες»
PIK1, Σάββατο, 27/04/2013, Νυκτερινό Δελτίο Ειδήσεων στις 20:00, Από 05:37 μέχρι 08:33, «Παρατράγουδα στην Ελεύθερη Αμμόχωστο με φόντο τα αμπελοπούλια: Έκρυψαν τις κάλπες σε ένδειξη διαμαρτυρίας»
ANT1, Σάββατο, 27/04/2013, Νυκτερινό Δελτίο Ειδήσεων στις 20:15, «Νέα ηγεσία στον Δημοκρατικό Συναγερμό: Με καθυστέρηση άνοιξαν οι κάλπες στο Παραλίμνι»
- [⁷] PIK1, Σάββατο, 27/04/2013, Μεσημεριανό Δελτίο Ειδήσεων στις 14:00, Από 01:41 μέχρι 04:12, «Τα αμπελοπούλια ... 'σφήνα' στις κάλπες»
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[²⁶] Ο Φιλελεύθερος, Σάββατο, 29/06/2013, σελ. 24, «Δυναμικά θα διεκδικήσουν νομιμοποίηση των ξόβεργων: Μαζική προσέλευση στη Συνέλευση του Συνδέσμου Αειφόρων Παραδοσιακών Μεθόδων Θήρευσης»

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**Committee Against
Bird Slaughter**

The *Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS)* – *Comitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V* in German and *Επιτροπή Ενάντια στη Σφαγή των Πουλιών* in Greek – is an international activist and operational bird protection society, with its head office in Bonn in the Federal Republic of Germany. The society was founded in 1975 in Berlin and since then intervenes in particular where bird trappers, poachers and animal traders commit offences against current nature protection legislation in the European Union. The society is always concerned to harmonise closely its activities with the responsible police, forest or customs authorities. In addition, through initiatives at the parliamentary or judicial level, CABS attempt to achieve improvements in the policy and legal guidelines for wildlife, nature and species protection. Currently, the society has 485 members and 11,300 donors throughout the European Union.

CABS is a registered “*Society*” (Registration Number: VR 7095 – Date of Recognition as a Nature Protection Organization: 03.03.1989) by the authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany. Registration as a charity in the United Kingdom under new EU legislation is currently in progress.

CABS is also a “*Full Member*” of *Deutscher Naturschutzring* (German Nature Conservation Organisation, DNR: www.dnr.de), *Deutscher Tierschutzbund* (German Animal Protection Association, DTB: www.tierschutzbund.de) and the *European Federation Against Hunting* (EFAH: www.efah.net).

Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS): www.komitee.de/en/homepage

Extending Our Frontiers – Birds Have No Boundaries!



The *Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA)* – *Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt* in German and *Ίδρυμα για την Προστασία της Βιοποικιλότητας* in Greek – concerns itself with the conservation of endangered wildlife species and species diversity. It defines its role as patrons of wildlife, with the statutory obligation to care for all aspects of the natural world in Germany and Europe.

SPA is an officially recognized “*Foundation*” (Date of Recognition: 26.11.2008) under the German civil law code and is registered with the German Tax authorities (Tax Registration Number: 305/5981/1222) and the Foundation Council of the State of North Rhine Westphalia, Germany.

Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA): www.stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org