



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

Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt[®]
Foundation Pro Biodiversity

Field Report:
Spring 2016 Bird Protection Camp,
Cyprus
3 April – 15 May 2016



Bonn / Bielefeld, Germany: July 2016

Authors:

Bostjan Debersek, Field Investigations Officer, CABS
Andrea Rutigliano, Field Investigations Officer, CABS

Photo on the cover:

Female blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* on the limestick, Paralimni, May 2016 (Photo: CABS)

Contact Details:



Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS)

Komitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V.

An der Ziegelei 8

D-53127 Bonn

Germany

Telephone: +49 228 665521

Fax: +49 228 665280

Email: info@komitee.de

Website: www.komitee.de/en/homepage

Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA)

Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt

Meisenstrasse 65

D-33607 Bielefeld

Germany

Telephone: +49 521 2997 888

Fax: +49 521 2997 889

Email: team@stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org

Website: www.stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org

CONTENTS

1	SUMMARY.....	1
2	INTRODUCTION.....	1
3	METHODOLOGY	2
3.1	Participants.....	2
3.2	Working methods and areas	2
4	RESULTS OF THE BIRD PROTECTION CAMP	3
4.1	Monitoring of the trapping activity.....	3
4.2	Seized trapping paraphernalia and prosecutions	4
4.3	Cooperation with enforcement agencies: Anti-Poaching Squad (APS) from Cyprus Police ..6	
4.4	Cooperation with enforcement agencies: Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) from Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA).....	8
4.5	Details about illegally caught and killed birds.....	9
5	LEGAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS.....	10
5.1	Political situation regarding bird trapping in the Republic of Cyprus	10
5.2	Political situation regarding bird trapping in the Sovereign Base Areas (SBA)	11
6	CONCLUSIONS.....	11
	REFERENCES	13
	Annex 1: Letter of complaint against the restrictions imposed for the BPC in Spring 2016	14
	Annex 2: List of bird species found in traps, aviaries or being shot	16

1 SUMMARY

In April and May 2016 the *Committee Against Bird Slaughter* (CABS) and the *Foundation Pro Biodiversity* (SPA – Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt) conducted their 9th Spring Bird Protection Camp (BPC) in Cyprus. The Camp started on the 3rd of April and ended on the 15th of May.

During the Camp 395 trapping sites were monitored, out of which 111 were found active. The number of found active sites shows that spring trapping is still very common in Cyprus and **the percentage of active sites (28,1 %) shows a worrying increase after 4 years of decrease with the lowest point reached in 2015.** The increase reflects a lack of political will to deal with bird trapping and is the direct consequence of the reduced presence of law enforcement agencies on the ground during this spring.

Overall, 1828 limesticks, 50 mist nets and 13 electronic bird callers were seized or detected during the Camp. The number of limesticks increased in comparison with number of limesticks seized during spring 2015 BPC, but remained the second lowest after 2011. The number of nets is the highest ever in the last six years, and the number of bird callers increased from 10 seized last spring to 13 seized at this spring Camp.

During the Camp we cooperated with the Cyprus Police Anti-Poaching Squad (APS) and the Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) of the British Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA). On few occasions we asked and got the support of the local police units in Paralimni and Agia Napa. **As a result of the cooperation, 13 poachers were caught and prosecuted for trapping.**

Working hours and days available for joint operations with the APS were greatly reduced this spring and we received only 80 hours of field support. In addition - despite our previous report of very little trapping occurring outside the Famagusta district in spring and our letters asking to focus mainly on this district (see Annex I) - half of the operations were moved outside Famagusta district, the main area of spring with very poor results in terms of confiscations and prosecutions. **Consequently the APS could investigate only 15 trapping sites found by us in the Republic of Cyprus, the vast majority of them being in Famagusta district.** For comparison, during spring 2015 BPC they checked 90 trapping sites reported by us. Despite the reduction, APS officers were very efficient and they prosecuted 10 poachers and made 7 house investigations.

2 INTRODUCTION

Cyprus is a stopping point for migrating birds of major international importance, with millions of birds passing through the island. Each year more than 2 million of these migrating birds gets caught and killed in illegal traps (Shialis 2015). Trapping affects 153 bird species, of which 78 are threatened and listed on Annex 1 of Birds directive or listed in one of SPEC (Species of European Conservation Concern) categories (Birdlife Cyprus, 2016).

CABS&SPA are organising Bird Protection Camps in Cyprus three times per year; in spring, autumn and winter season, to prevent illegal, non-selective and large-scale trapping, killing and trade of migratory birds passing through Cyprus. During the Camps our volunteers detect trapping activity and report it to the competent authorities for immediate intervention.

This spring, the 9th Spring BPC was organised by CABS & SPA in Cyprus. It started on the 3rd of April and ended on the 15th of May, in order to cover most of the spring bird migrating season.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

A total of 17 people from Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Great Britain, Hungary and Slovenia participated at the camp.

3.2 WORKING METHODS AND AREAS

Participants worked in teams, monitoring known trapping areas within Famagusta District, Larnaca District, the eastern part of Nicosia District and the Eastern Sovereign British Area (ESBA) (figure 1). Most of the fieldwork was done in Famagusta District, where most of illegal spring bird trapping occurs in Cyprus.

Fieldwork was done both independently and in cooperation with law enforcement agencies. With APS we conducted 16 joint operations, 9 in Famagusta District, 5 in Larnaca District and 2 in Nicosia District. With APU we cooperated on 7 days, and all operations were conducted in the ESBA.

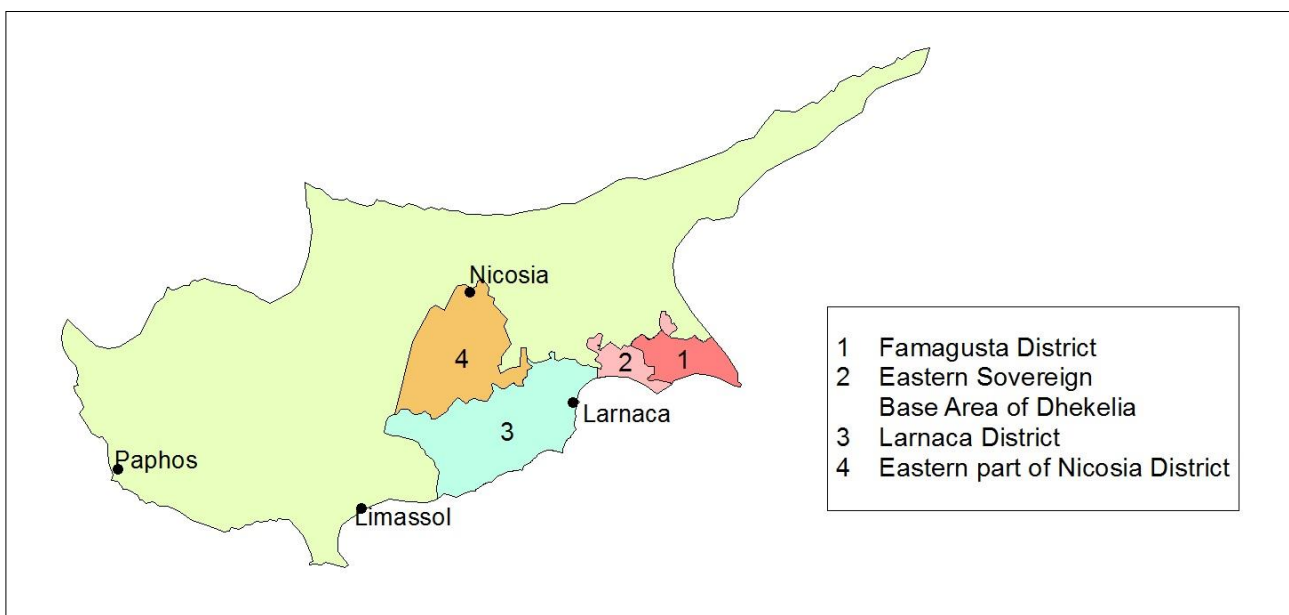


Figure 1: Areas monitored during Spring 2016 BPC

4 RESULTS OF THE BIRD PROTECTION CAMP

4.1 MONITORING OF THE TRAPPING ACTIVITY

This spring we organised the longest spring Camp so far. It lasted 43 days, much more than the previous camps (table 1). During the Camp, CABS&SPA teams monitored 395 trapping sites. Of the 395 sites checked, 111 sites were found active either with set traps or with signs of recent trapping, such as fresh feathers on the ground.

Table 1: Monitoring of trapping activity during the last six BPCs

Spring season	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Duration of Bird Protection Camp (days)	13	25	27	23	29	43
No of sites checked	122	238	267	311	249	395
No. of active trapping sites found	78	120	111	102	51	111
Percentage of active trapping sites	63.9	50.4	41.6	32.8	20.5	28.1

The number of found active trapping sites is the second highest in the last six years. It shows that bird trapping is still widespread in Cyprus, especially in Famagusta District, where most trapping sites were found.

28,1% of all monitored sites was found active, a worrying increase if compared with 2015, when this percentage decreased to 20.5%. The reason of this new revitalisation of spring trapping can be explained with political factors and the minor presence of the APS on the ground (see chapter 4.3).

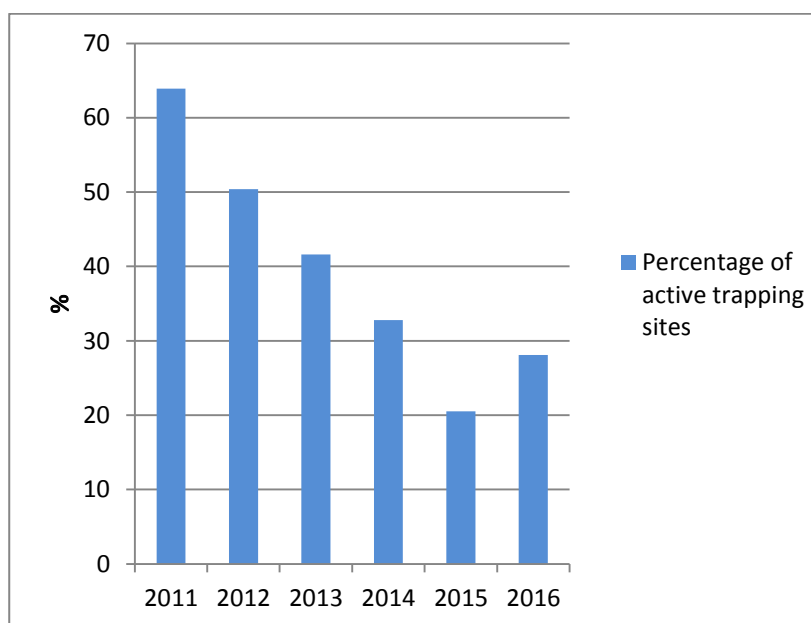


Figure 2: Percentage of active trapping sites recorded at spring BPCs in the last six years

This revitalisation is proved by another index which is the reactivation of prosecuted trapping sites. The most efficient way to stop people from trapping again is to catch them red-handed and prosecute them. But often even a prosecution is not sufficient to hinder people from trapping. Often trappers need to be arrested and prosecuted more than once. This spring we visited 64 trapping sites with known records of prosecution for illegal bird trapping in the past. 16 out of 64 prosecuted sites (25%) were active again. The percentage of reactivated prosecuted sites shows once again the upward trend (table 2), i.e. an increased feeling of impunity among trappers.

Table 2: Reactivated prosecuted sites found during Spring BPCs between 2013 and 2016

Spring season	2013	2014	2015	2016
No. of sites with previous prosecutions checked	19	26	37	64
No. of reactivated prosecuted sites found	5	11	7	16
Percentage of reactivated prosecuted sites	26.3	42.3	18.9	25

4.2 SEIZED TRAPPING PARAPHERNALIA AND PROSECUTIONS

Altogether, 1828 limesticks, 50 mist nets and 13 electronic bird callers were seized or detected during the Camp.



Picture 1: Limesticks found stored on a tree near Paralimni (Photo: CABS)

Table 3: Seized trapping paraphernalia and prosecutions made at spring BPCs in the period 2011-2016

Spring season	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Duration of Bird Protection Camp (days)	13	25	27	23	29	43
No. of limesticks	3892	5461	3371	2256	1470	1828
No. of electronic bird callers	12	17	16	10	10	13
No. of mist nets	33	20	32	27	25	50
No. of prosecutions	1	14	21	15	17	13

The number of limesticks is second lowest for the last six BPCs (table 3). It was less only in 2015, when 1470 limesticks were seized. Also considering the average number of limesticks found per trapping sites, the number of seized limesticks reduced considerably since 2011. In 2011, we found on average 50 limesticks per active trapping site and this year only 17. This reduction reflects the attempt of trappers to escape prosecution since law enforcement units are still uncertain whether to prosecute trappers with small amount of limesticks. This shows that the "zero tolerance policy" is not implemented yet.

To catch birds also with small numbers of limesticks, trappers are increasingly planting and using black mulberry trees (*Morus nigra*) and loquats (*Eriobotrya japonica*), whose berries work as a natural bait for migrating warblers. On the 4th of April we found, on a single, 2 meters high mulberry tree, 24 birds of 3 different species caught in 25 limesticks.

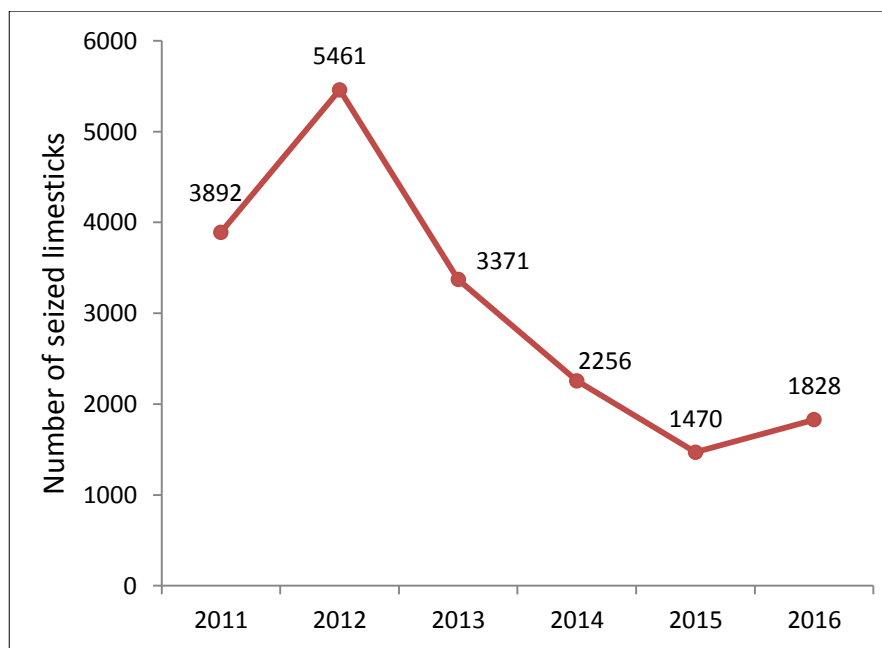


Figure 3: Seized limesticks during spring BPCs in the period 2011-2016

The number of electronic callers has increased in 2016, in comparison with both 2015 and 2014.

The number of mist nets is the highest ever, but it has to be noted that only 15 nets out of the 50 found were set. 35 nets were stored in the house of one poacher and were seized during the investigation conducted by the police.

4.3 COOPERATION WITH ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES: ANTI-POACHING SQUAD (APS) FROM CYPRUS POLICE

This spring we worked 16 days together with the APS from Cyprus Police. The results of cooperation are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Detailed results of the joint CABS& SPA / APS operations

Monitoring of trapping sites	
Number of days working together with APS	15
No. of active trapping sites found by CABS & SPA members	20
No. of active trapping sites visited by APS	15
Sites with prosecution of trappers	10
Sites with confiscation of trapping paraphernalia only	2
Sites where nothing was found by APS	3
Sites without investigation	5
No. of cases with house investigation	7
Seized trapping paraphernalia	
Limesticks	559
Mist nets	41
Electronic bird callers	7



Picture 2: APS officers with seized limesticks (Photo: CABS)

This spring APS checked 15 trapping sites, which is considerably less than in 2015, when they investigated 90 trapping sites reported by volunteers during the joint operations (table 5). The main reason for that is the reduction of working hours dedicated for cooperation in 2016. In 2015 we worked with APS 8 hours per day for 23 days, which sums in 184 hours in total. This spring we received support by the APS only for 5 hours per day and only for 16 days (80 hours in total) out of the 43 days of the BPC.

Table 5: Working hours and results of joint field operations with APS in the last two spring BPCs

	2015	2016
No. of working hours with police	184	80
No. of all sites checked	90	15
No. of active sites found	34	12
No. of sites with prosecution	15	10

We regret the decision of Cyprus Police Headquarters to reduce the extent of cooperation between us and APS this spring. As result of this, only 15 out of 108 active trapping sites found in Republic of Cyprus could be investigated by APS this spring.

Additionally, despite our two formal letters to the Minister of Justice and Public Order requesting almost all operational days to be spent in Famagusta District, 7 out of the 16 days of joint cooperation were conducted in Nikosia District, where no trapping takes place in spring and in Larnaka District, with very limited and isolated spring trapping. Figure 4 shows that even if Famagusta accounted for 94 %of all found trapping sites, it received only 56% of the operational time.

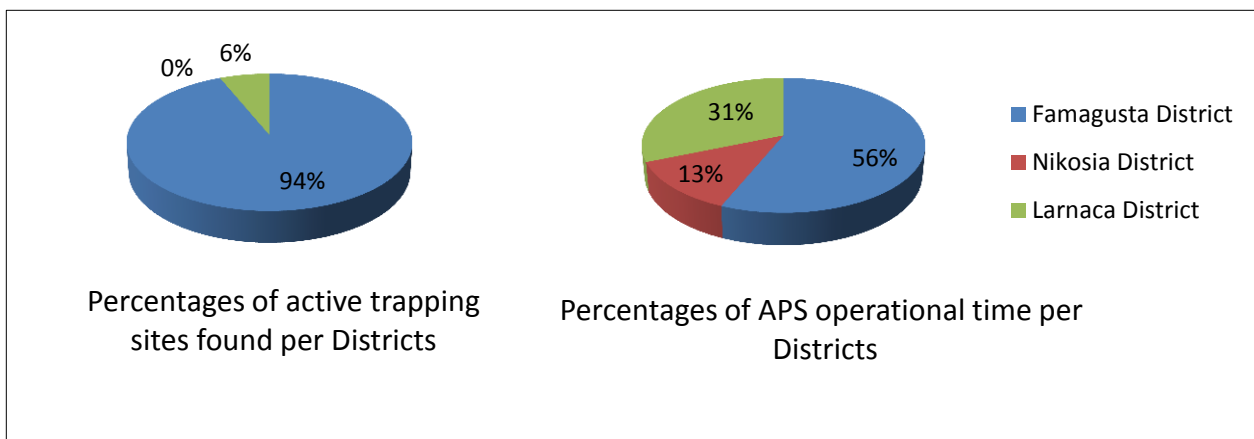


Figure 4: Comparison between percentages of found active trapping sites and APS operational time per Districts

On the other hand, we are pleased with dedicated work of APS officers. Even if they had time to check only 15 sites, they managed to catch and prosecute trappers at 10 sites. They are also the only enforcement unit that carried out house investigations at the premises of the prosecuted poachers (table 6).

Table 6: Cases with house investigations made by APS

Date and location of trapping site	Traps found set at the site	Traps found during house investigation	No. of dead birds found
4.4. 2016, Vrysoulles	1 net and decoy	34 nets	61
6.4. 2016, Protaras	138 LS and decoy	1 net, 100 limesticks	154
14.4. 2016, Protaras	21 limesticks	/	103
18.4. 2016, Oroklini	1 unset net	33 limesticks	0
18.4. 2016, Trolloui	/	55 limesticks, 7 steel traps	0
26.4. 2016, Paralimni	80 limesticks and decoy	/	805
8.5.2016, Deryneia	1 net and 2 limesticks	39 limesticks	78

To manage the high amount of trapping active sites this spring, we reported 5 cases of illegal bird trapping to the officers of local police stations. 4 cases were reported to the Paralimni police station and 1 to the Ayia Napa police station. Police officers on duty responded immediately to our report and sent patrol to investigate our findings. Two cases ended with prosecution as the traps were observed inside fenced gardens and police filed complaints for illegal trapping against owners. A total of 56 limesticks were seized.

4.4 COOPERATION WITH ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES: ANTI-POACHING UNIT (APU) FROM EASTERN SOVEREIGN BASE AREA (ESBA)

Bird trapping in spring, unlike autumn, is not as intensive in the ESBA as it is in the Republic. This spring we located only 7 active trapping sites and 4 could be checked by APU in the working hours dedicated for our cooperation.

Table 7: Detailed results of the joint CABS&SPA / APU operations

Monitoring of trapping sites	
Number of days working together with the APU	7
No. of active trapping sites found by CABS/SPA members	7
No. of active trapping sites visited by APU	4
Sites with prosecution of trappers	1
Sites with confiscation of trapping paraphernalia only	2
Sites where nothing was found by the APU	1
Sites without investigation	3
No. of cases with house investigation	0
Seized trapping paraphernalia	
Limesticks	75
Mist nets	7
Electronic bird callers	1

At all 4 sites, which were checked by the APU officers, traps were observed inside fenced properties. Consequently, owners of these 4 sites should be prosecuted for illegal trapping, but this was not the case. Only one owner was prosecuted, 2 cases ended only with confiscation of trapping paraphernalia and one fenced property was not investigated by the APU officers, even if electronic bird caller was heard inside.

Table 8: Working hours and results of joint field operations with APU in the last two spring BPCs

	2015	2016
No. of working hours with police	56	42
No. of all sites checked	15	4
No. of active sites found	5	4
No. of sites with prosecution	2	1

APU officers didn't investigate premises of the prosecuted poacher. House investigations should be made as they lead to confiscations of large quantities of trapping paraphernalia and killed birds in the possession of poachers. This will require a better cooperation of the APU with the Cyprus police, as most houses of the trappers falls within the Republic of Cyprus.

4.5 DETAILS ABOUT ILLEGALLY CAUGHT AND KILLED BIRDS

During the Camp **1401 illegally caught and killed birds** were found. They were either caught in traps, held in aviaries, found shot or found dead in possession of trappers (table 9). Birds found in traps, aviaries or found shot belonged to **26 different bird species**. The list of species is in Annex 2.



Picture 3: Icterine warbler *Hippolais icterina* caught on a limestick (Photo: CABS)

Table 9: Details about birds found during the Camp

No. of birds rescued from traps	103
No. of birds found dead in traps	58
No. of birds freed from aviaries	38
No. of birds found shot	1
No. of killed birds found by police	1201
Total no. of individuals	1401
Total no. of bird species	26*

*data is only for birds found in traps, aviaries or being shot

5 LEGAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

5.1 POLITICAL SITUATION REGARDING BIRD TRAPPING IN THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Even though all Cyprus Enforcement Agencies and Authorities (Cyprus Police, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, Game and Fauna Service, Cyprus Police Headquarters) have adopted the ‘Larnaca Declaration’, which declared a “zero tolerance policy against illegal bird trapping, killing and trade”, still a very weak political will is demonstrated toward implementing this goal (see also CABS and SPA Bird Protection Camp Reports of Autumn 2015 and Spring 2015 regarding this matter). During the last 8 months we have witnessed an attempt to water down our efforts in tackling bird trapping both on political and law enforcement level.

Apart from proposal to legalise shooting of blackcaps, that was included in the Strategic Action Plan (STAP) of the Cyprus Government, the Game and Fauna Service is now promoting some new amendments to the Game and Hunting law, which aim at the de-penalization of all poaching offences by making them payable on spot. In our view, if this amendment is approved, it will pass the wrong message to trappers, i.e. that poaching offenses are minor offenses. A similar amendment was approved in 2014 (Article 80 of the Law) for the use of tape lures, which aimed at increasing the number of cases by making the procedure of reporting and fining offenders faster. However, it eventually resulted in a sharp decrease of reported cases, as agents simply stopped fining hunters for the use of electronic callers.

Our joint operations with APS, have suffered several constrictions. The APS' operational schedule for Spring 2016 BPC, following orders given by the authorities, has changed as follows:

- 1) the hours of joint cooperation changed from 4:00 – 13:00 to 4:00 – 9:00. In this way, trappers active after the first morning hours, could not be targeted.
- 2) the cooperation decreased from daily support to every second day support. This also happened during the last winter BPC. This spring almost half of the working days were spent in Larnaca and Nikosia Districts, where no or very little spring trapping takes place

In addition, the most experienced officers of the APS were transferred to other duties, with the unit losing a significant capital in skills and specific experiences in anti-poaching. Some of these decisions were taken at Ministerial level, as evident by the communication CABS and SPA had with the Minister of Justice and Public Order of the Cyprus Republic (Annex 1).

5.2 POLITICAL SITUATION REGARDING BIRD TRAPPING IN THE SOVEREIGN BASE AREAS (SBA)

For some years now the SBA Administration has been criticised for its soft approach to the problem of bird trapping. In fact, the number of prosecutions has been comparatively low in the ESBA and with a decreasing trend, whereas trapping density has remained stable and at the highest levels in the last decade (CABS and SPA Bird Protection Autumn 2015 Report, BirdLife Cyprus 2015: Update on illegal bird trapping activity in Cyprus).

CABS and SPA had two meetings with the SBA Administration and Police during this spring; one held on the 11th of April to discuss the 'SBA plan for combating bird trapping in Autumn 2016' with representatives from SBA Administration, SBA Police, SBA Army, SBA Environment Department and BirdLife Cyprus and one held on the 22nd of April with the Air-Vice Marshal (Commander of the SBAs in Cyprus) and the Policy and Plans officer of the SBAs.

During both of those meetings, CABS and SPA offered their full operational support to the SBA Police for combating bird crime within their administration, meaning an everyday support of two CABS&SPA teams to detect bird trapping activity, and training and support to the army patrols that will be operating in Cape Pyla during autumn. Moreover, CABS&SPA have sent a proposal to the SBA Administration regarding the areas to be cleared from the invasive alien species of Acacia in Cape Pyla. This proposal was necessary since the areas cleared in 2015 did not target any trapping site (see CABS & SPA Bird Protection Winter 2015/16 Report).

CABS&SPA strongly hope that the ESBA Administration and Police will be able to make the difference during the next Autumn trapping season, when all professional trapping sites will be active and strong enforcement will have to be implemented in the field.

6 CONCLUSIONS

From 2011, and mainly thanks to the joint operations with the APS, spring trapping - which is the non-professional trapping season - was slowly decreasing until 2015. This spring we witnessed a change in the trend with a higher percentage of active trapping sites, higher activation of prosecuted sites, more electronic callers and more limesticks. This sudden increase was not unexpected: the alternative plan to legalise blackcap hunting, along with the recent reduction of the hours and days of operational presence of the APS sent a message of "laissez faire" to the trapping groups.

Since the beginning of our cooperation with the them in 2011, APS had never spent so little time on the ground as this spring, with less visibility in the trapping area. As a result, only 15% of all bird trapping cases could be investigated, much less than in spring 2015. Despite these unfavourable circumstances, trapping increase was not massive with the percentage of active trapping sites found being second lowest in the last 6 springs, which is a positive outcome. Nevertheless, if levels of cooperation with law enforcement units from previous years are not restored, more trappers, who have been deterred in the past years, could start again their criminal activity and the positive results achieved in the past spring will be jeopardised.

In the British ESBA most trapping takes place in autumn and winter seasons, while it is rare in spring. This was also the case this spring, as we detected only few active trapping sites. But even if police officers had to deal with just few cases reported by us, it is obvious that not enough efforts were made to end them with prosecution of trappers. This spring we located traps in 4 fenced gardens, which should result in prosecution of each owner of these gardens. However, only one owner was prosecuted and other three got away without punishment. We witnessed this soft approach already in the previous years and it allows illegal trapping to remain at very high levels in the ESBA. Not only that, trapping activity is even increasing and during last autumn highest levels of bird trapping in the last years were observed in the ESBA (Shialis 2015). CABS and SPA hope that the much needed change toward a more resolute approach in stopping bird trapping will be implemented this autumn, both in the law enforcement and in the eradication of acacias in Cape Pyla.

REFERENCES

Birdlife Cyprus (2016): List of birds recorded in mist nets and on limesticks (http://www.birdlifecyprus.org/upload/Trapping%20Docs/Consolidatedlistoftrappedbirds_FINAL_153.pdf)

Shialis, T. (2015): Update on illegal trapping activity in Cyprus, Autumn 2015. Birdlife Cyprus (http://birdlifecyprus.org/upload/BirdLifeCyprus_Autumn2015trappingreport_March2016_Final_forpublicuse.pdf)

Rutigliano, A. et al. (2015): Field report: Spring 2015 Bird Protection Camp ([http://www.komitee.de/sites/www.komitee.de/files/wiki/2016/02/Cyprus%20Field%20Report%20Spring%202015%20\(en\).pdf](http://www.komitee.de/sites/www.komitee.de/files/wiki/2016/02/Cyprus%20Field%20Report%20Spring%202015%20(en).pdf))

Rutigliano, A. et al. (2016): Field report: Winter 2015/2016 Bird Protection Camp ([http://www.komitee.de/sites/www.komitee.de/files/wiki/2016/02/Cyprus%20Field%20Report%20Winter%202015-16%20\(en\).pdf](http://www.komitee.de/sites/www.komitee.de/files/wiki/2016/02/Cyprus%20Field%20Report%20Winter%202015-16%20(en).pdf))

European Conference on Illegal Killing of Birds, Larnaca (Cyprus), 6-8 July 2011 – Meeting Report (<https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=1952977&SecMode=1&DocId=1776916&Usage=2>)

The Larnaca Declaration – Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 1979), was held in Larnaca, Cyprus from 6 to 8 July 2011 (<https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=2765488&SecMode=1&DocId=1806244&Usage=2>)

SBA Annual Report 2012/13 & Police Strategic Plan 2013/16 - Objective 1.5 To contribute towards the protection and development of the environment in deterring illegal bird trapping and poaching within the SBA's by increasing our enforcement operations and our overall detection rate by up to 5% (<http://www.sbaadministration.org/images/police/docs/strategicAnnual12-13.pdf>)

Annex 1: Letter of complaint against the restrictions imposed for the BPC in Spring 2016



Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS)

Komitee gegen den Vogelmord e.V.
An der Ziegelei 8
D-53127 Bonn
Germany
Tel.: +49 228 665521
Fax: +49 228 665280
Email: info@komitee.de
Website: www.komitee.de/en/homepage

Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA)

Stiftung Pro Artenvielfalt
Meisenstrasse 65
D-33607 Bielefeld
Germany
Tel.: +49 521 2997 888
Fax: +49 521 2997 889
Email: team@stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org
Website: www.stiftung-pro-artenvielfalt.org

By fax – Urgent:

Ministry of Justice and Public Order
+357 22 518358 +357 22 805986

Cyprus Police Headquarters
+357 22 334004

To:

- **Minister of Justice and Public Order of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Ionas Nicolaou**

Cc:

- **Director General of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, Mr Andreas Louka**
- **Chief of Cyprus Police, Mr Zacharias Chrysostomou**
- **Assistant Chief of Cyprus Police, Mr Lambros Themistocleous**
- **Commander of the Cyprus Police Emergency Response Unit, Mr Panicos Antoniou**
- **Head of the Cyprus Police Anti-Poaching Squad, Mr Petros Koromias**

Wednesday, 30th of March 2016

Rules of cooperation with Anti-Poaching Squad during CABS Spring Camp 2016

Dear Mr. Nikolaou,

We would like to thank you for the support of the Cyprus Police Anti-Poaching Squad for our upcoming Spring Camp 2016, as expressed in your letter on the 30th March 2016 (Y.Δ.Δ.T.2.10.002.02(3)). However, we would like to express our disappointment regarding the details of this cooperation as they were stated in the letter and as was expressed to us from the Head of the Cyprus Police Anti-Poaching Squad (APS) in an oral response (telephone contact).

In particular, the details that were mentioned are:

- 1) APS will support our camp only every second day
- 2) We will be escorted only during the working hours of the Head of the Cyprus Police Anti-Poaching Squad, ending the operation on the field in the early morning (09:30 a.m.)
- 3) The areas of the operations will be decided by the APS with short notice in order not to focus only on Famagusta district
- 4) To focus only on net trapping.

We believe that these restrictions are not productive and do not demonstrate the 'zero tolerance' policy of the police. Under these circumstances our joint operation will be extremely unfruitful for the following reasons:

According to our 10 years long observations, trapping in spring takes place mainly with limesticks in the eastern Famagusta district, and the same outcome has been observed by the Game Fund in the recent years. In spring 2015 for example, during our common operation, 1,312 limesticks and only 13 mist nets were seized. All trapping sites we found active were located in Famagusta district and the days we spent in Larnaca district resulted in the detection of no active trapping sites. To search for professional trappers outside Famagusta in spring is underproductive and means turning the eyes from the only place where trapping takes place.

Also, most of the trapping sites are activated when farmers go to their orchards at around 8:00-8:30 a.m., therefore traps are detectable in the course of the morning until midday. The sheer presence of the APS patrol in the morning hours was in previous years a good deterrent and prevented many trappers from setting their traps.

To avoid trapping sites with limesticks and to end up joint operations at the time when trappers usually go to the trapping sites, means making it impossible to achieve any prosecution and/or confiscation on the ground, as Police officers need time to go to the local police station and absolve all paper work for the prosecution. And this is not the purpose of our cooperation.

We share your opinion that we will have to focus on big professional trappers, but for the Spring season we will need to focus in Famagusta district. As a second choice we will investigate non-professional trappers with limesticks, since, as you write, no means of trapping are tolerated by your Government. Our associations are taking volunteers to Cyprus with the purpose of assisting law enforcement agencies during the main migration time. We have asked the APS to support us during the presence of our volunteers and this has always been the case. We do not understand why the APS should not be available every day during this migratory season, and we do not consider fair to ask our volunteers to stay home every time the APS would not be active.

In the last years we have managed to achieve our common goal, namely to reduce spring trapping without causing any big social outcry. Our volunteers kept a low profile, the police APS did a professional job and the phenomenon of spring trapping started decreasing, as we have stated in our last reports. These new restrictions with the consequent drop in police enforcement, presence on the ground and number of confiscations and prosecutions would mean to reverse this positive process and move back to a laissez faire politics, which we hope is not your wish.

For these reasons, we kindly ask you to withdraw these constraints and restore the previous rules of engagement, namely:

1. Everyday presence of the APS squad on the ground enforcing the law
2. Working hours of the APS at least until noon (13:00)
3. Focusing on both net and limestick trapping
4. Focusing where trapping is taking place (Famagusta district for Spring trapping)

We are looking forward to your positive response, as well as the improvement and strengthening of our cooperation with the Cyprus Police Anti-Poaching Squad.

Yours sincerely,

Alexander Heyd
General Secretary
Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS)



Roland Tischbier
Chairman of the Board
Foundation Pro Biodiversity (SPA)

Annex 2: List of bird species found in traps, aviaries or being shot

1	Blackcap (<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>)	traps, aviary
2	Cuckoo (<i>Cuculu canorus</i>)	traps
3	Hoopoe (<i>Upupa epops</i>)	traps, found shot
4	Chaffinch (<i>Fringila coelebs</i>)	traps, aviary
5	Lesser whitethroat (<i>Sylvia curruca</i>)	traps
6	Orphean warbler (<i>Sylvia crassirostris</i>)	traps
7	Reed warbler (<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>)	traps
8	Wood warbler (<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>)	traps
9	Pied flycatcher (<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>)	traps
10	Common nightingale (<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>)	traps
11	Thrush nightingale (<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>)	traps
12	Common redstart (<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>)	traps
13	Chiffchaff (<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>)	traps
14	Willow warbler (<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>)	traps
15	House sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	traps
16	Great tit (<i>Parus major</i>)	traps
17	Collared dove (<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>)	traps, aviary
18	Wryneck (<i>Jynx torquilla</i>)	traps
19	Golden oriole (<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>)	traps
20	Garden warbler (<i>Sylvia borin</i>)	traps
21	Song thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>)	aviary
22	Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	aviary
23	Icterine warbler (<i>Hippolais icterina</i>)	traps
24	Goldfinch (<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>)	aviary
25	Robin (<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>)	aviary
26	Whitethroat (<i>Sylvia communis</i>)	traps