



National Illegal Killing of Birds situation and recommendations for Mediterranean countries

Annex 1 | The Killing 3.0

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Albania

Contributors to the review

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Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	265,000
Illegal trapping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class III
Illegal poisoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class III
Illegal trade	<input type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Large reduction (-50 to -74%)
Short-term (since 2020)	Slight reduction (-5 to -24%)
Multi-stakeholder committee	
The National Fauna Council (NFC) was established within the ministry responsible for the protection of fauna as a consultative body to facilitate the implementation of Law “For the Protection of Wildlife” and other related by-laws. Until now, the National Fauna Council has failed to have its regular meetings as foreseen in the law and take any significant step toward regulating hunting activity. In April 2025, Albania adopted its first Action Plan against Poisoning.	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>Positive changes for tackling illegal killing of birds (IKB) were introduced with the 2019 amendments to the Penal Code. It criminalises the killing, destruction, possession, acquisition, or trade of specimens of protected wild flora and fauna without proper authorisation. Despite these changes, proper implementation has been lacking, and the failure to follow through on prosecutions has allowed poachers to continue their illegal activities.</p> <p>Albania has been under a hunting ban since 2014 and there were some improvements in hunting activity during the initial years. That hunting ban blocked the activity of the so-called hunting tourism agencies, which were bringing Italian hunters poachers to Albania especially for hunting the Eurasian Skylark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>), to which several illegalities were tied. However, proper implementation of the ban has been lacking since 2016. As a result, the effectiveness of the hunting ban has diminished, allowing illegal hunting to persist. The extension of the hunting ban until 2025, without any steps taken by the authorities to improve the legislation, has encouraged more poachers to continue their illegal activities.</p> <p>The National Inspectorate of Territory Protection suffered a reformation as an institution by confusing the roles between the institutions. The reform of this institution distributed the staff in the State Police Institution and the Ministry of Tourism and Environment. This situation continued for at least one year, causing the environmental crimes or IKB, which were once the responsibility of the inspectorate, to be neglected and on the second plan. At the end of 2024, the foundation of the Unit Against Environmental Crime within the Albanian State Police was an important achievement, as it allows for direct contact between the NGOs and State Police.</p>
Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creation of a new law for hunting activity.• Drafting and approval of a national action plan for IKB – currently, there is no action plan for tackling all aspects of illegal killing of birds.• Creation of special units for tackling IKB, such as dedicated task forces, is essential. Currently, inspectors within the environmental inspectorate handle various types of environmental crimes, including IKB, without specialised training or focus. Moreover, there is a lack of specialised prosecutors specifically trained to address IKB cases, leading to general oversight and inefficiencies in prosecuting these crimes effectively.• National database for collecting, storing and sharing data – currently, Albania lacks a national database for collecting, storing, and sharing data on IKB cases between stakeholders and authorities.• Increasing capacities of customs staff to engage actively in tackling illegal trafficking of birds.

Algeria

Contributors to the review

Ghoulem Tiar, Environmental Research Center

Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	28,900
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class IV
Illegal poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class IV
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Slight reduction (-5 to -24%)
Short-term (since 2020)	Slight reduction (-5 to -24%)
Multi-stakeholder committee	
<p>To date, no specific multi-stakeholder committee dedicated to combating IKB or to facilitating data exchange has been established. A national action plan specifically involving all stakeholders in the fight against IKB has not yet been established. However, collaboration is well-established among various law enforcement agencies (gendarmerie, customs, and police), conservation authorities (notably the General Directorate of Forests and environmental officers), magistrates, hunter federations and associations, and other environmental organisations, as well as academics and researchers from research centres. These collaborations are primarily based on bilateral agreements. For example, the General Directorate of Forests (DGF) and the National Gendarmerie Command expanded the scope of their 2014 agreement to strengthen their collaboration in combating wildlife poaching. On December 10, 2020, the DGF and the National Gendarmerie formalised a co-operation agreement aimed at protecting the national forest domain. On the ground, joint task forces have been set up to combat offences against wildlife and flora. These task forces bring together foresters, hunters, the national gendarmerie, and customs services, enabling a co-ordinated response to violations. However, no co-operation with international NGOs or other external organisations has been reported regarding the IKB issue.</p>	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>Large numbers of European Goldfinches (<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>), a legally protected species, are being captured from the wild in Morocco and transported to major cities, particularly Casablanca, as well as to the Algerian border. Due to the severe decline of the species in Algeria, nearly all Goldfinches involved in the illegal trade within the country are now sourced from Morocco. These birds are transported over vast distances before reaching Algerian cities, where they are sold. This pattern has been corroborated by survey-based studies conducted in Algeria (Bergin <i>et al.</i> 2019; Razkallah <i>et al.</i> 2019), as well as by analyses of seizures and arrests carried out by law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border (M. Amezian/ GREPOM, unpublished data).</p> <p>Political will to tackle IKB is evident, but stronger national action plans and stakeholder co-ordination are needed. Monitoring and data collection suffer from technical and resource deficits, despite state support. Legislation aligns with international standards but sanctions haven't changed since their enactment in 2004, which has diminished their effectiveness over the past 20 years, necessitating a revision of penalty amounts.</p> <p>Progress in prevention and communication has been promising - with increasing media interest in the topic - but requires enhanced state support and NGO involvement.</p> <p>The most significant changes over the past five years have mainly involved the implementation of new legal and organisational measures, as well as their effective enforcement. Legal hunting was reopened in September 2023, after a total closure since 1994. Notable improvements include also the establishment of the High Council for Hunting and Hunting Heritage in 2021, tasked with organising, supervising, and supporting hunters for better management of hunting heritage. These changes have positively influenced the poaching problem.</p> <p>Nearly 26,000 hunters have received training tailored to their hunting activities and have been sensitised and trained on contributing to the fight against poaching and illegal killing. Additionally training was provided to officers aiming at enforcing the provisions of the CITES convention, focusing on combating poaching and the illegal trade of endangered species of fauna and flora, bringing together people involved in fighting these two scourges, particularly forest officers, veterinarians, gendarmes, police officers, and customs officials.</p>

Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds

International Co-operation and Support:

- Strengthening co-ordination with MIKT member countries and the Bern Convention in the fight against IKB.
- Sharing expertise and capacity building for leaders within the framework of bilateral or multilateral initiatives.
- Requesting technical support and providing modern equipment to aid law enforcement and improve the efficiency of field operations and the reliability of data.

Capacity Building and Training for Stakeholders:

- Ongoing Training on Laws: organise regular training sessions for foresters, law enforcement, and hunting associations on hunting laws, ethics, and the protection of endangered species.
- Technical Training for Field Agents: train foresters, police, gendarmes, and customs officers on advanced techniques for detecting, investigating wildlife crimes, and preventing poaching and illegal trade.
- NGO Capacity Building: offer training in project management, fundraising, and financial management to improve their organisational capacities.
- Use of Technical Resources: grant NGOs access to databases, surveillance tools, and communication platforms to increase their operational efficiency.
- Specific Legal Training: provide legal training for prosecutors and judges to enhance their skills in handling IKB-related cases.

Collaboration and Information Sharing:

- Collaboration Networks: establish networks between NGOs, government administrations, and international institutions to facilitate information sharing, best practices, and co-ordination of efforts.
- Conferences and Workshops: regularly organise events that allow stakeholders to participate and NGOs to share their experiences and expand their professional networks.
- National Data Collection System: develop a reliable system for collecting data on IKB, including accessible databases and periodic reports.
- Optimisation of Field Interventions: improve the co-ordination of mixed teams responsible for monitoring, control, and seizures related to IKB for more effective interventions.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Contributors to the review

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Major IKB issue	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trapping	<input type="checkbox"/>
Illegal poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trade	<input type="checkbox"/>

IKB Severity category	
Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	34,700
Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class IV
Current classification (2024)	Class IV
Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Slight reduction (-5 to -24%)
Short-term (since 2020)	No significant change (trapping & poisoning) Slight reduction (-5 to -24%) (shooting & trafficking)
Multi-stakeholder committee	
There is no multi-stakeholder committee to deal with the problem of IKB.	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>The main problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a very complicated political, social and economic situation in certain parts of the country (e.g. a nature protection and hunting inspector from one part of the country has no authority in another). The laws on hunting and nature protection are still not good (e.g. Important Bird Areas are not hunting-ban areas), and in many cases at court, crimes against nature are still not perceived as “real” crimes. The political will to act on the problem is minimal: ministries, judiciary and inspectorates do not take the IKB issues seriously. The deterioration of the social situation after COVID-19 had a negative impact on poaching, increasing it, because it meant economic profit for individuals to survive. The political situation conditioned the poor work of the judiciary and ministries, and thus other important parts of the chain of poaching control.</p> <p>However, some reduction in IKB is visible, mostly due to the fact that the controls at the state border (between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, EU) became stricter, so trafficking the birds to Italy became more difficult than before. Also, there have been several projects aimed at developing and/or strengthening the nature-based tourism in and around national blackspots, and the presence of visitors discourages poachers. The area that improved the most is the awareness raising - done by NGOs. Thanks to the strenthened public awareness, there have been numerous reports of IKB activities by citizens, and the hunting organisations have showed interest in joining the anti-IKB efforts.</p>
Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organise meetings or conferences with government representatives and other stakeholders to provide insights on the importance of increased government involvement in combating IKB.• Encourage the signing of a document explicitly outlining obligations for roles such as the National CMS Focal Point on IKB and other relevant positions.• Showcase successful examples from the region to inspire and guide future actions.

Croatia

Contributors to the review

Tibor Mikuska, Croatian Society for Birds and Nature Protection (CSBNP),
Bolesław Słociński, Association Biom – BirdLife Croatia

Major IKB issue	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal poisoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trade	<input type="checkbox"/>

IKB Severity category	
Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	510,000
Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class III
Current classification (2024)	Class III
Justification in case of re-classification	Our experts estimate that the trend was c. -12.5 % (2015-2024)

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Slight reduction (-5 to -24%)
Short-term (since 2020)	Slight reduction (-5 to -24%)

Multi-stakeholder committee
Between 2020 and 2024, there has been an unofficial anti-wildlife crime working group, which gathered all relevant stakeholders to communicate regarding current IKB cases. In 2024, the Croatian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition officially formed the National Action Plan committee, which includes all relevant institutions - Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Interior, State inspectorate (hunting inspection, nature protection inspection, veterinary inspection and sanitary inspection), Customs office and the State Attorney's Office and Biom Association. The National Action Plan should be drafted and endorsed in 2025.

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>The situation in Croatia regarding IKB is characterised by a mix of strong laws and significant enforcement challenges. While the Croatian Hunting Act and related legislation align with international directives, in some areas, major loopholes and inconsistencies exist, such as exemptions allowing hunting on fishponds, inadequate enforcement of the leadshot ban at wetlands, and disregard for EU derogation protocols. Enforcement mechanisms are weak, with hunting inspectors focusing more on game quotas than on curbing poaching, and unreliable data collection by officials perpetuates a false narrative, downplaying the issue. Political will to address IKB is low, influenced by systemic corruption and the prevalence of hunters in high-ranking positions. Non-governmental organisations play a critical role in prevention and raising awareness, but enforcement by law enforcement, state inspectors, and gamekeepers remains fragmented and often ineffective, leaving wildlife vulnerable to ongoing exploitation.</p> <p>In 2023 and 2024, political will became a bit stronger thanks to international pressure from the European Commission, which directly asked the Croatian Ministry and Croatian Inspectorate what was done to deal with the IKB. Also, Croatia is a part of EMPACT which made environmental crime a priority for law enforcement, which is respected in Croatia. In 2023, a much stronger initiative from the police was noticeable, which resulted in a big deterrence for the Quail poaching. The decrease in the estimated IKB trend is mainly due to success in decreasing Quail poaching and stopping shooting at some of the fishponds.</p>

Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the quality of the wildlife crime cases management and working more on specialised training and capacity building programmes for prosecutors and judges. There is a need of strong improvement of the Hunting Act – to make it in line with the Birds Directive, closing loopholes, issuing bigger fines, and allowing for hunting bag checks. Strengthening collaboration between law enforcement and prosecution. Training, such as Wildlife Crime Academy, should be organised for on-field law enforcement from IKB hotspots.

Cyprus

Contributors to the review

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Major IKB issue	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal poisoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trade	<input type="checkbox"/>

IKB Severity category	
Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	2,300,000
Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class II
Current classification (2024)	Class III
Justification in case of re-classification	Illegal bird trapping in Cyprus saw a significant decrease in the period of 2015-2019 due to various reasons (high profile awareness of the issue, increased/combined NGO lobbying, enforcement support, higher fines etc.). This huge improvement (c. 90%) to a very large extent took place within the UK controlled Dhekelia Sovereign Base Areas, which was a main trapping hotspot in Cyprus.

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Large reduction (-50 to -74%)
Short-term (since 2020)	Slight increase (5 to 24%)

Multi-stakeholder committee	
<p>Trapping</p> <p>For the Republic of Cyprus, there is no multi-stakeholder committee to assess the situation of illegal bird trapping in Cyprus. A national action plan was adopted by the Cyprus Government in May 2015, but has never been implemented.</p> <p>For the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs), there is a multi-stakeholder committee, the ‘Bird trapping tactical co-ordination group’, chaired by the SBA Police, where environmental NGOs including BirdLife Cyprus are invited to participate. This group meets regularly, three to four times per year, and it reviews the progress of the bird trapping action plan that the SBA has been implementing.</p> <p>Poisoning</p> <p>Regarding poisoning, a National Anti-poison Road Map is currently being drafted as part of the LIFE project “LIFE with Vultures”, which should be adopted by the authority by the end of 2025. The stakeholders involved in the preparation do not form an official committee but do meet to prepare the Road Map.</p>	

Major changes effecting IKB

Trapping

Overall in Cyprus there has been a significant reduction in illegal bird trapping levels since 2015/16, reaching a nearly 90% decrease in recent years within the survey area where BirdLife Cyprus carries out anti-trapping monitoring surveys. However, this significant decrease took place prior to 2020, and to a very large extent it took place within the UK controlled Dhekelia Sovereign Base Areas. With regards to the SBAs, this significant improvement in illegal bird trapping levels, particularly in the period 2015-2019, was because a truly zero tolerance approach was adopted by the SBA Administration and Police. In practice, this meant a much better collaboration on the ground with NGOs, more enforcement resources, use of covert cameras and drones to undertake surveillance operations, adoption of a series of deterrent measures, close involvement of the Prosecutor with the SBA Police to build any court trapping cases and relevant evidence to be incorporated, higher fines by SBA Judges and communication to local communities that a zero tolerance approach was adopted and continued to be implemented by the SBA Police.

To undertake and review all these actions (enforcement, awareness, prosecution, monitoring, and collaboration), the SBA Administration and Police developed their own 'Anti-trapping Action Plan' since 2016/17, which they have been assessing and reviewing every season. NGOs, including BirdLife Cyprus, have been invited to the meetings related to the 'Anti-trapping Action Plan' to provide their own comments and feedback. However, because illegal bird trapping levels within the SBAs have significantly decreased, in the last few years Police resources have been reduced. This has had the effect of increasing bird trapping levels, but still the levels are very low in relation to 2015/16.

Fines for the illegal killing of migratory songbirds within the Republic of Cyprus, either via trapping with the use of limesticks or shooting with a shotgun, have been lowered by the Cyprus Parliament since December 2020. Nowadays, the fines for trapping songbirds with mist nets start from 2,000 Euros, whereas fines relating to limestick use and / or shooting of songbirds start from 200 Euros – a 10-fold difference! This is a huge setback in all the conservation efforts of the last 20 years, and is the reason why limestick use and the illegal shooting of migratory songbirds have remained at high levels (compared to mist netting, which has decreased significantly). Within the SBAs, the fines remained at 2,000 Euros for illegal trapping or shooting of migratory birds and did not mirror the relaxations adopted within the Republic of Cyprus.

Poisoning

Targeted anti-poison efforts based on the EU roadmap only started in 2020 in Cyprus through an EU-funded (LIFE programme) project. Some positive changes in awareness levels are already noticable, but it is still too early to know if the poisoning levels have dropped. However, targeted awareness raising campaigns to hunters and livestock breeders, the operation of two anti-poison dog units and the enhancement of investigation procedures are improving the situation. With two poisoning cases going to court for the first time in Cyprus, experts believe that the situation will further improve.

GPS tags on vultures and Bonelli's Eagles from 2021, as well as the operation of the anti-poison dog units in 2022, revealed the real situation in terms of poisoning levels. Data will continue to be collected and within the next five years will give a better picture on use of poison levels and how these affect key species. A big change has also been the agreement of an Operational Protocol on how enforcement authorities manage and respond to poisoning incidents, while specialised training in Crime Scene Investigation has leveled-up the capacity of authorities.

Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds

Trapping

Legislative: the Cyprus Parliament needs to reverse amendments to the law "Protection and Management of Wild Birds and Game Species" and to restore the fine for the offences of possession and use of limesticks and hunting of 14 protected, non-game species from 200 Euros for up to 50 birds to 2,000 euros for one bird.

Enforcement:

- The Cyprus Police Anti-Poaching Unit must take an active role in the fight against wildlife crime, and especially against large-scale, organised trappers.
- The Cyprus Police Anti-Poaching Unit and the Game and Fauna Service need to establish a close collaboration in order to have effective enforcement action against the large-scale, organised trappers.
- The Cyprus authorities need to undertake increased and consistent enforcement action against law-breaking restaurants serving illegal ambelopoulia "delicacies" (to address demand).
- There needs to be better and stronger collaboration between the Cyprus Republic authorities and the SBA Police.

Co-operation with NGOs: the Cyprus authorities need to strengthen the collaboration with environmental NGOs on the ground, adopting a similar approach to that taken by the SBA Police in the last 8+ years, in order to make enforcement action more effective.

Judiciary: provide training to Judges and Prosecutors in order to develop specialists in wildlife crime offences.

Poisoning

Recommendations include:

- Adoption of preventative measures to alleviate human-wildlife conflict.
- Investigate the origin of legal and illegal toxic substances used in poisoning with poison baits (production and commercialisation).
- Develop a multi-disciplinary unit to tackle wildlife poisoning.
- Capacity building, awareness raising, and training for prosecutors and lawyers.
- Secure funding for conducting toxicological analysis and materials.
- Discouragement of poison baits use from possible perpetrators by imposing strict administrative and criminal sanctions.
- Control the sale of toxic substances likely to be used in poison baits.
- Ensure better understanding among the general public about the risks of illegal poison use.
- Improve co-ordination and liaison between all stakeholders involved in the fight against the use of poison in the countryside.

Egypt

Contributors to the review

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Major IKB issue	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

IKB Severity category	
Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	5,400,000
Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class I
Current classification (2024)	Class I
Justification in case of re-classification	There is no official estimate available on the scale of IKB. Egypt did not submit the scoreboard in 2023.

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	No significant change
Short-term (since 2020)	Slight increase (5 to 24%)

Multi-stakeholder committee
There is no multi-stakeholder group in Egypt officially. However, Nature Conservation Egypt maintain links within the Ministry of Environment, especially on the drafting of an annual ministerial decree on hunting regulations. Discussions are ongoing with Ministry of Environment to form a national committee to handle hunting regulation and management, but it is still at an early stage.

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>In Egypt, the situation surrounding illegal killing of birds over the past five years has been shaped by economic and social factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to increased subsistence hunting due to unemployment, and inflation, which drove demand for hunting as a source of affordable meat.</p> <p>The widespread availability of sound devices has exacerbated bird catching. International hunting tourism still poses a problem, with several pieces of evidence recorded in the past about illegalities connected to low level control and corruption.</p> <p>Despite these challenges, IKB remains largely neglected on the political agenda, with limited budget allocations and enforcement resources. Current international collaboration on IKB issues is minimal, and efforts are sporadic and lack a strategic approach.</p>

Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Capacity building is needed on the managerial and technical sides in all government authorities (from Ministry of Environment to law enforcement agencies) to be able to mainstream IKB (and other related issues of biodiversity and conservation) in all governmental strategies and plans.Wildlife crime control and investigation must be improved through training and collaboration. Laws need to be updated and penalties and fines should be strong and effective.Sustainable use of natural resources should be adopted by the Government. There is a need to reduce poverty, and provide alternative income, especially in the blackspots of hunting (e.g. Lake Burullus and Fayoum).

France

Contributors to the review

Gwenaël Quaintenne, Laurent Couzi, Pascal Orabi, Colette Carichiopulo, FX Couzi; Thierry Micol, Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO)

Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	522,000
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class III
Illegal poisoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class III
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	No significant change
Short-term (since 2020)	No significant change

Multi-stakeholder committee	
There is no such committee in France.	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>The ongoing restructuring of the French Biodiversity Office (OFB) is a major organisational change but has not led to significant improvements. The reform of environmental inspectors, particularly their training, has also had limited impact. Moreover, there has been a regression due to pressure from the agricultural sector, as OFB agents are now placed under the authority of regional prefects (following a government circular issued on November 4, 2024, in response to spring protests). This change has compromised their independence, exposing them to pressure from agricultural unions and government directives to avoid interventions on farms. In reality, administrative inspections of farms remain minimal, with only 1 in 10 farms inspected in 2023, and fewer than 1% of farms checked annually by the OFB. Furthermore, only 13% of OFB inspections relate to agriculture.</p> <p>The establishment of Regional Environmental Units (Pôles Régionaux Environnementaux), following the Law of December 24, 2020, and the Decree of March 16, 2021, has marked a step towards prioritising environmental crime prosecution. These 37 specialised units aim to provide faster, more efficient justice for environmental offences, responding to long-standing demands from environmental law associations and legal professionals. However, three years later, many of these units still operate below capacity due to a lack of resources.</p> <p>In 2024, the LPO launched a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Magistrates and Biodiversity to provide ongoing training for judges on biodiversity issues.</p>
Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<p>Key areas where government should focus are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of networks, inter-agency collaboration between police services, independence from lobbying and local pressures, training of magistrates (schools), and awareness-raising actions targeting specific audiences.• Looking ahead, there is the Wildlife Crime Academy (WCA) training programme: France has not yet participated in the WCA, but it may join the next cohort of countries between 2025 and 2026.

Greece

Contributors to the review

Nadia Sideri-Manoka, Myrto Karydi (Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS)/ BirdLife Greece)

Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	704,000
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class III
Illegal poisoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class III
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Slight reduction (-5 to -24%)
Short-term (since 2020)	Slight reduction (-5 to -24%)
Multi-stakeholder committee	
<p>There is no such group or committee currently operating in Greece and tackling the issue of IKB as a whole. The Government has individual officials as assigned focal points for CMS, the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), and Ramsar but no multi-stakeholder partnerships. That said, there have been temporary or thematic multi-stakeholder initiatives for the implementation of specific Nation Action Plans or IKB-related projects but most often not at the initiative of the Government.</p> <p>IKB hotspots and the situation therein are monitored through the co-operation of HOS, local Forest Departments, Natural Environment & Climate Change Agency (NECCA), and local Hunting Associations, with varying levels of co-operation and success.</p> <p>In terms of specific examples, the 2016 National Action Plan (NAP) for the protection of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser erythropus</i>) foresaw the creation of a working group for the implementation of the NAP. However, the group was never created <i>let alone</i> maintained and the Ministry of the Environment and Energy's Department for Biodiversity has been lagging in implementing the NAP's provisions. More recently, a multi-stakeholder working group has been created by the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MEEN) Focal Point for AEWA to jointly complete and submit the country's due report on national AEWA implementation. However, there is no provision for the group to continue existing and monitoring AEWA implementation past the reporting period.</p>	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>In Greece, the illegal killing of birds (IKB) situation has shown slight improvement, with notable successes driven by the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS) and collaborators. Key achievements include elevating IKB issues on the agenda of competent authorities, such as the issuance of a Joint Ministerial Decision on wildlife poisoning and the development of Local Action Plans (LAPs) for blackspots like the Amvrakikos wetland and Ionian Islands. Public awareness of wildlife crime has increased, and police responsiveness to IKB incidents has significantly improved. However, progress remains fragile and requires sustained efforts.</p> <p>Wildlife poisoning incidents decreased in 2023, but rebounded with six severe cases in 2024, indicating an unstable trend. Illegal spring hunting in the Ionian Islands has declined, but this may be linked to reduced bird populations rather than enforcement. Positive developments include arrests in Zakynthos following LAP implementation, aided by a new, proactive Forest Directorate management. Collaboration between HOS and the Forest Directorate of Zakynthos has proven particularly effective. Despite these advancements, trapping intensity, particularly in Santorini, remains high, with reports of active preparations and no observed reduction in activity in 2023. Continued monitoring, advocacy, and enforcement are essential to sustain and expand progress.</p>

Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds

Strengthen Capacity of Competent Authorities

- Allocate targeted resources to the Forestry and Veterinary Services for tackling wildlife crimes, including well-trained staff, equipment, and consumables for patrols and case preparation.
- Establish and support toxicological labs, especially in regional Veterinary Service directorates.
- Deploy personnel from other regions to support local authorities in high-poaching areas during peak periods (e.g. spring poaching in the Ionian Islands).
- Train judges and prosecutors specifically on environmental crimes to address current gaps in expertise and prioritisation.

Ensure Strict and Effective Sanctions

- Enforce wildlife crime penalties that are effective, proportionate, and dissuasive.
- Harmonise wildlife-related laws to minimise discrepancies and ensure consistent judicial interpretation.
- Consider extending provisions from the updated animal welfare legislation to include wildlife offences.

Nationwide Awareness Campaigns

- Launch government-led campaigns to raise awareness on the impacts of IKB, leveraging government resources and authority for national reach and credibility.
- Build on existing NGO campaigns, such as HOS initiatives under the LIFE Against Bird Crime project, to increase public understanding and reduce wildlife crime.

Unified Incident Reporting System

- Mandate all competent authorities (Forestry Service, NECCA, Game Service) to report IKB incidents through a centralised and standardised system to ensure accurate data collection and identification of blackspots.
- Avoid double reporting by reconciling data from different authorities and methodologies.
- Develop and maintain an IKB database, potentially hosted by NECCA, with inputs from all relevant stakeholders.

Enhance Training and International Collaboration

- Expand training seminars for enforcement officers, focusing on wildlife crime.
- Prioritise training for judges and prosecutors to improve handling of environmental crime cases.
- Foster collaboration with international organisations, such as EUROPOL and INTERPOL, for sharing expertise and best practices.

Italy

Contributors to the review

Giovanni Albarella (Lipu/BirdLife Italy)

Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	5,600,000
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class I
Illegal poisoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class I
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Slight reduction (-5 to -24%)
Short-term (since 2020)	No significant change
Multi-stakeholder committee	
<p>Since 2017 there has been a National Action Plan (NAP) to tackle IKB. Four reports have been produced (up until 2021) and scoreboards have been regularly created. In practice, the NAP has not been implemented, except for law enforcement actions conducted by the Carabinieri Forestali. Important actions such as toughening penalties and increasing dedicated surveillance personnel have remained on paper.</p> <p>Law enforcement actions conducted by the Carabinieri Forestali have seen a significant reduction in interventions in the seven blackspots identified by the Plan, with surveillance conducted organically in only a few of them (especially in the last year). We understand that SOARDA (the specialised anti-poaching unit of the Carabinieri Forestali) has long been under-staffed compared to the operational needs it is supposed to address.</p> <p>In the NAP, there is a steering committee with the presence of institutional actors (such as regions, various ministries, the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research [ISPRA], etc) and a representative from hunting associations and one from environmental associations. The last meeting was held in 2023.</p> <p>Due to the failure to implement the NAP and the persistence of poaching, the European Commission opened a Pilot Procedure against Italy in 2023. In addition, the Lombardy Region has enacted a series of regional laws that facilitate the possession of live decoys through more permissive regulations on identification rings. This facilitates the illegal trade in decoy birds (especially thrushes).</p>	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>The adoption of Italy's National Action Plan (NAP) in 2017 positively impacted the fight against poaching by formalising it as an institutional issue and identifying critical “blackspots” for targeted action. Thanks to the formal adoption of the NAP, the Pilot procedure against Italy was closed in 2020, although it was then reopened in 2023 because the plan's implementation had been limited. Most anti-poaching efforts have been carried out by the Carabinieri Forestali, whose specialised anti-poaching unit (SOARDA) has faced staff reductions.</p> <p>Legislative measures to impose harsher penalties for poaching have not been enacted, and some recent laws have further enabled illegal activities. While the blackspots account for 45% of the problem, poaching and bird trafficking remain widespread across the country. Illegal trafficking is especially a problem in the whole of Italy, as well as some illegal hunting practices, such as the unlawful use of electronic callers for hunting.</p>
Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide better training and preparation and consequently a high degree of specialisation of the agents involved in the fight against poaching. This should be relatively easy, as the necessary skills already exist within the Carabinieri Forestali, and the training just needs to be put in place.• Key priorities include strengthening laws with higher penalties.• Increasing enforcement capacity, specifically for SOARDA staffing, and expanding territorial controls.• In the longer-term, launching public awareness campaigns about the ecological and health risks of poaching could also support these measures.

Israel

Contributors to the review

Yoav Perlman (Society for the Protection of Birds in Israel/BirdLife Israel)

Major IKB issue	
Illegal shooting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trapping	<input type="checkbox"/>
Illegal poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trade	<input type="checkbox"/>

IKB Severity category	
Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	No birds killed in non-trivial numbers
Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class IV
Current classification (2024)	Class IV
Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	No significant change
Short-term (since 2020)	No significant change
Multi-stakeholder committee	
IKB cases are scarce, and therefore there is no need for a specialised committee or a National Action Plan. The Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) is the primary agency handling IKB, who work together with relevant ministries/agencies and environmental NGOs.	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>While traditional IKB levels in Israel are very low, poisoning poses a serious threat to wildlife, including birds. Populations of several breeding raptors are threatened primarily by poisoning, especially scavengers like the Eurasian Griffon. Animal farmers trying to illegally poison predators unintentionally poison birds and other non-target mammals. While such poisoning cases are not frequent, their impact at population level is significant, because of very small population sizes.</p> <p>Additionally, several hazardous organic phosphorus pesticides that have been banned in the EU and USA are still legally in use in Israel. Lawful application of these hazardous pesticides has caused many wildlife poisoning events, including major cases like the unintentional poisoning of over 1,100 Black Kites in the northern Negev in February 2025, through using Nemacur.</p> <p>Goldfinches and other finches are targeted by trappers in adjacent territories. Many are smuggled into Israel or, through Israel, exported to other countries.</p>
Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<p>Actions to be taken and implemented by relevant authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ban hazardous organic phosphorous pesticides like Nemacur to prevent further poisoning events.• Increase farmer education on alternative solutions for pest control.• Implement a “strict liability” principle where landowners are legally responsible for illegal poisoning occurring on their property, unless they can prove due diligence in preventing it.• Improve enforcement capacity of relevant authorities to search for illegal pesticides.• Improve cross-border co-operation to tackle poaching from neighboring territories.• Improve legislation regarding liability of farmers towards poisons and poisoning cases found on their lands.• Expand existing environmental laws to protect entire ecosystems, not just individual species or designated protected areas.

Lebanon

Contributors to the review

Bassima Khatib, Yara Alchammas (Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon - SPNL)

Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	2,600,000
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class I
Illegal poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class I
Illegal trade	<input type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	No new estimate is available. Lebanon hasn't submitted an official scoreboard since 2018.

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	No significant change
Short-term (since 2020)	No significant change
Multi-stakeholder committee	
In May 2017, a national Committee was established by Ms. Claudine Aoun Roukoz, special adviser of the President, with the Ministry of Environment (MoE), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Industry (MoI), and SPNL, to implement the President peace treaty. SPNL volunteered to develop a roadmap and 5-year action plan against IKB. This action plan was endorsed by the MoE, (Ministry of Tourism) MoT, and Presidential Palace. Currently this committee is not actively functional.	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>In Lebanon, the economic crisis and food insecurity have shifted the dynamics of illegal killing of birds (IKB), requiring further study to understand these changes.</p> <p>The Minister of Environment has not opened the hunting season for the past three years, reflecting a significant regulatory decision amid these challenges. There has been a growing number of ethical hunters who act responsibly, report illegal activities, and encourage others to follow suit.</p> <p>Rising fuel and ammunition costs have restricted hunters' mobility, leading to increased use of alternative, illegal methods such as mist nets, glue traps, and calling machines. These same problems of increased fuel costs also hinder patrolling teams, whose visibility in certain areas used to make a positive impact on poaching. The overall budget available to law enforcement has dramatically decreased due to the decrease in the value of Lebanese currency.</p>
Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training law enforcement officers in identifying bird species to better differentiate between protected and game species.• Providing training in wildlife crime investigation techniques, evidence collection and prosecution procedures.• Fostering collaboration between national agencies like the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Interior, and the customs department to ensure co-ordinated enforcement efforts.• Developing programmes that provide alternative income sources for communities that rely on hunting for subsistence (eco-tourism, sustainable agriculture, or handicraft production).• Developing programmes for alternative hobbies, such as soccer, target shooting with bow & arrow and photography.• Training educators and community leaders to conduct awareness campaigns about the ecological importance of birds and the negative impacts of illegal killing.

Libya

Contributors to the review

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Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	503,000
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class III
Illegal poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class III
Illegal trade	<input type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	There is no official estimate available on the size of IKB. Libya did not submit any of the official scoreboards.

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Moderate increase (25 to 49%)
Short-term (since 2020)	Slight increase (5-24%)
Multi-stakeholder committee	
In Libya, there is no official multi-stakeholder committee dedicated to tackling the issue, nor a national IKB action plan. The government has not taken a leadership role in co-ordinating efforts, leaving the burden primarily to NGOs that are working independently to address the problem. This indicates a gap in official commitment, which would be essential for effectively combating IKB in the country.	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>In Libya, increased possibilities for hunting and the noticed increase in the number of hunters (25%+) have led to the increase of illegalities linked to the low-level of control in hunting. The law that regulates hunting has been in place since 1968 and there is an urgent need to updated this obsolete legislation.</p> <p>The Ministry of Environment is responsible for monitoring hunting in Libya, but the country is still unstable politically and economically; it is struggling to establish a unified government.</p> <p>Through communication with hunters, the answers were consistent as to the reason for the decrease in hunting at the previously identified blackspots (at the time of the Brochet assessment), mostly due to increased droughts compelling waterbirds to change their paths, as well as the disappearance of some species, especially in the eastern region of Libya. This has led to the decrease in poaching at some of the traditional blackspot areas as a result of the decrease in the number of birds during the last five years. However, new blackspots have been emerging, putting increased pressure on the remaining population and habitats.</p>
Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First priority is to update the hunting regulation law, because the previous law was passed in 1968.• Issue a national list of threatened species in Libya (currently there is no list of protected species at all).• Benefit from the countries that have experience in this field, to determine the agencies or institutions that will monitor the hunting activities, while ensuring that they receive good training.• The establishment of hunting clubs would mean that there would be a licensing system, with regulations that would be respected by the club membership. The desire to hunt illegally would decrease when the hunter finds himself committed to the club's rules (moral commitment), and the most important point is to know and determine the number of hunters.• Last, but not least, awareness campaigns to hunters should warn about the harm of IKB, and the consequences of the disappearance or extinction of species. It should also include training elements to identify endangered species, urging hunters to respect breeding seasons, and educating them about the guns and tools used in legal hunting.

Malta

Contributors to the review

Nicholas Barbara, Alice Tribe, Marcella Giornetti (BirdLife Malta)

Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	108,000
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class III
Illegal poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class III
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Moderate increase (25 to 49%)
Short-term (since 2020)	No significant change
Multi-stakeholder committee	
<p>The Maltese government reported in the last scoreboard that the Wild Birds Regulation Unit (WBRU) has initiated the process of developing a National Action Plan (NAP) and that efforts are underway to establish an IKB NAP Committee to lead and oversee its development and implementation. However, BirdLife Malta has received no further information on the process, despite multiple requests in past years.</p> <p>Malta has a multi-stakeholder co-ordination mechanism in place through the Ornis Committee. This committee includes representatives from the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA), independent experts, hunting representatives, and BirdLife Malta. It serves as a platform for stakeholder discussions and, while it was designed to be a scientific advisory board, its composition is not currently balanced and therefore it is prone to bias from political interests.</p>	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>Efforts to combat illegal killing of birds in Malta have seen some notable progress in certain areas. Courts have issued strong sentences in cases uncovered by NGOs, ensuring that justice acts as a deterrent. Collaboration among organisations, including BirdLife Malta, the Committee Against Bird Slaughter, and the newly established Malta Rangers Unit, has bolstered pressure against IKB. Additionally, a centralised system for recovering injured or dead wild birds ensures veterinary oversight and facilitates data sharing. Public and media attention has also led to the closure of at least one major illegal hunting hotspot, demonstrating the impact of advocacy and awareness campaigns.</p> <p>However, significant challenges remain. Legal and political changes, including those tied to the 2022 general elections, have undermined progress by weakening enforcement measures and enabling activities such as finch trapping under questionable pretences. Reduced police resources and frequent changes in magistrates have impeded consistent prosecutions, while relaxed rabbit hunting laws have created loopholes for illegal bird hunting. Furthermore, the lifting of the spring hunting moratorium on Turtle-doves and extended trapping seasons have exacerbated threats to migratory species.</p> <p>Overseas hunting trips to Africa by Maltese hunters, possibly fueled by taxidermy concessions, add to the complexity of controlling IKB. There is an evident lack of political will to tackle the IKB issue and the factors that permit it. In turn, the hunting lobby enjoys a strong political influence, making continuous demands for legislative concessions. These include a reduction in fines and penalties, adjustments to spring hunting derogations on Turtle-dove and for the continuation of trapping practices, which if permitted will exacerbate further the IKB situation.</p>

Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds

- Establish a dedicated and well resourced wildlife crime unit that operates unanimously across both islands of Malta and Gozo.
- Change in attitude of enforcement agencies to active policing rather than passive policing and reacting to NGO reports on wildlife crime.
- Training to magistrates, judges and prosecutors on wildlife crime convictions and the role of NGOs in assisting them.
- Closure and tagging of all taxidermy collections that have been left pending or unchecked, resulting in effective wishlists.
- Increase customs checks and train customs personnel to detect IKB trade in and out of the country.
- Establish co-operation with other countries where Maltese citizens practise IKB.
- IKB recognised as an issue by government and ranked highly on the political agenda as a target to reduce – practices such as finch trapping need to be recognised as conflicting with the Birds' Directive and treated accordingly as IKB rather than tolerated. IKB should be separated from the notion of cultural activity within political ranks and jargon.
- Reduce the monopoly of FKNK (Malta's largest hunting organisation) over governance of hunting and trapping licences so as to break bona fide hunters from persistent offenders rather than all grouped up in one big lobby group.
- Hold hunting federations and groups accountable to their so called 'zero-tolerance' policy, and adopt a zero-tolerance policy to IKB at governmental level: by valuing public input in reporting IKB, and tackling IKB effectively with government resources oriented to helping members of the public be confident in reporting illegalities (rather than completely relying on NGOs to take action).
- IKB monitored effectively by government entities, with data on wildlife crime collected and published with all the necessary transparency. Issue yearly statistics on IKB reporting based on active policing strategy of main IKB trends on top of input from NGOs.
- Invest time and resources in comprehending the main drivers of IKB prevalent at any year so as to be on top of reducing actively IKB; and ensure there is synchrony between all government agencies that deal with IKB (police, WBRU, ERA, Customs, Army).
- Education and awareness raised across the hunting community, government entities and general public to address IKB issues.

Montenegro

Contributors to the review

Marija Lekić, Bojan Zeković, Marija Šoškić Popović, Nikola Novović, Jovana Drobňak, Center for Protection and Research of Birds (CZIP)

Major IKB issue	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal poisoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

IKB Severity category	
Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	130,000
Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class III
Current classification (2024)	Class III
Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	No significant change
Short-term (since 2020)	No significant change
Multi-stakeholder committee	
<p>The working group for developing the National Action Plan (NAP) to address IKB in Montenegro was formed in late 2024 by the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, and the Development of the North. It includes 16 institutions: the Ministry of Ecology, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water, the State Prosecutor’s Office, the Public Enterprise for National Park Management, the Agency for Protected Area Management in Podgorica, the Kolasin Municipality, the Montenegrin Hunting Association, the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, the Natural History Museum, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Institute for Education, the Ministry of Justice, the Directorate for Forest and Hunting Grounds Management, and the NGO Center for Protection and Research of Birds. The group is currently drafting the plan, which should be revised and adopted by the Government in 2025. Once the NAP is approved, a co-ordination body for its implementation should be established, consisting of the responsible institutions.</p>	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>The issue of illegal killing of birds in Montenegro is complicated by fragmented responsibilities between the Ministry of Ecology and the Ministry of Agriculture. Political instability, marked by frequent changes in government since 2020, has slowed down progress. A lack of political will is evident, with key initiatives, such as a proposed hunting moratorium and stricter hunting regulations, either ignored or rejected by authorities. Despite these challenges, the Ministry of Ecology is preparing to finalise a NAP to combat IKB, with implementation planned for 2025–2030, signaling a potential step forward.</p> <p>CZIP (Center for Protection and Research of Birds) has been a pivotal force, drafting the NAP and advocating for its adoption, alongside raising public awareness through campaigns and media engagement. These efforts have encouraged citizens to report IKB cases, putting pressure on authorities to take action.</p>

Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds

Legislation:

- The Law on Hunting and Wildlife should be further amended to be in full accordance with EU directives, especially the Birds Directive. Also, the Rulebook on hunting seasons and hunting species should be revised to be aligned with the Birds Directive (the hunting season should be shortened for several bird species, while some either should be removed from the hunting list or a hunting ban introduced).
- A National Action Plan (NAP) for combating IKB should be developed and adopted by the Montenegrin Government (planned until the end of 2025) and jointly implemented and revised by responsible institutions, where CSOs should also give their contribution. To track progress of the NAP implementation, a joint working group composed of responsible institutions and NGOs working on IKB suppression should be formed.
- Reform of the hunting system should be carried out so the hunting organisations change their legal status from being NGOs to other legal forms.

Enforcement:

- Better control of hunting associations and the appliance of law regulation during the hunting season and hunting ban should be done by the Inspection for Hunting, Forestry and Plant Protection.
- More inspectors should be hired to properly cover the whole territory of the country.
- The current practice of the Inspection where all inspectors are in charge for supervision of all environmental laws is unsustainable. The inspectors are covering not only laws tackling IKB but also other environmental laws (ecological inspection supervises 17 environmental laws and many bylaws, while the inspection for hunting, forestry and plant protection supervises four laws and their bylaws). At least a few inspectors should be specialised only for the supervision laws regarding the IKB issue.
- Specialised units against environmental crimes should be formed within the Police department on the national level.
- The ecological inspectors, hunting inspectors, and members of the specialised unit against environmental crime from the Police should be trained to detect and investigate IKB cases. Besides this, Customs officers should receive additional training in how to detect the trafficking of wild animals on border crossings.
- People who keep wild birds in captivity should be better controlled, since this area is not well-regulated in Montenegro. Many keepers of wild birds tend to get new birds from the wild without obtaining permits from the Environmental Protection Agency and the conditions prescribed for bird keeping should be further improved.
- The selling and usage of pesticides for crop protection should be better controlled. Additional trainings should be organised for agricultural producers regarding the proper usage and waste disposal of pesticides and also negative impact that improper usage has on the environment, especially bird species.
- The inspection and police unit should be better equipped technically in order to ease the process of detection, investigation and prosecution of IKB and other environmental crimes.

Prosecution:

- Prosecutors and judges should specialise in environmental law in order to increase the rate of prosecuted IKB cases on a local and national level. Stricter sentencing and penalties should be applied to the perpetrators of IKB for deterrent effect. For this, additional training is needed regarding environmental law for prosecutors and judges to perceive the IKB cases as real crimes.

Morocco

Contributors to the review

Mohamed Amezian, Khadija Bourass (GREPOM/BirdLife Morocco)

Major IKB issue	
Illegal shooting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

IKB Severity category	
Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	74,400
Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class IV
Current classification (2024)	Class IV
Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Moderate reduction (-25 to -49%)
Short-term (since 2020)	Slight reduction (-5 to -24%)

Multi-stakeholder committee
<p>There is no functioning multi-stakeholder committee (formal or informal). There is an initiative to create an informal group, but currently it is not yet in existence.</p> <p>There is no National Action Plan on IKB, although the administration considers the existing legal framework (Law No. 29-05 and its implementing decrees) sufficient to combat IKB.</p> <p>GREPOM recognises that laws and action plans serve different purposes, and it remains possible that authorities may reconsider the need for a National Action Plan on IKB in the future if needed.</p>

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>In Morocco, the national legislation has provisions for the fight against any act of illegal killing or taking of birds (IKB). The main legislation includee the law on hunting and law No 29-05 on the protection of species of wild flora and fauna and the control of their trade. The application of Morocco's recently adopted legislative texts, particularly Law No. 29-05, has significantly influenced the fight against illegal killing of birds in the country.</p> <p>The law has introduced stricter regulations and enforcement mechanisms, providing a legal framework to combat wildlife crime more effectively. It has also aligned Morocco with international commitments under conventions like CITES, ensuring better control of trade in endangered species. These laws provide for very heavy fines and jail sentences, which vary depending on the protection status of the species concerned by the offence. However, the sentences given by court are often below those requested by the control agents (National Agency for Water and Forests (ANEF), National Police, Royal Moroccan Gendarmerie, and Customs officials).</p> <p>The “Wildlife Monitoring and Control Units” of the National Agency for Water and Forests (ANEF) were established in 2016 (right after promulgation of the first implementation decree of law no. 29-05 in 2015). The name of these units has since been changed to “Wildlife Units” (Unités de la Faune Sauvage) in 2023. The establishment of these units has contributed to reducing the number of offences linked to IKB. Despite the efforts, illegal capture and trade of birds (European Goldfinch in particular) is still worrying in some regions.</p>

Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen control and surveillance to combat the illegal capture and trade of birds (particularly the European Goldfinch) by providing human and logistical resources.• Strengthen the capacities of control authorities in the areas of species identification, inspection methods and enforcement.• Increase awareness among the public, as well as those engaged in IKB (both trappers and traders in wild birds).• Increase the involvement of the civil society even more in the fight against IKB.

Palestinian National Authority

Contributors to the review

Imad Atrash, Palestine Wildlife Society (PWS)

Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	89,700
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class IV
Illegal poisoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class IV
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Slight increase (5 to 24%)
Short-term (since 2020)	Slight increase (5 to 24%)

Multi-stakeholder committee	
The Palestinian national strategy for protecting biodiversity includes some general guidance on combating poaching, but it lacks specific practical or legal guidelines for implementation.	

Major changes effecting IKB	
<p>In Palestine, the issue of illegal killing and smuggling of birds has received limited attention, largely due to political challenges and a lack of co-ordinated direction. While efforts to address poaching and bird smuggling are sporadic, there have been occasional attempts to tackle cases, such as the cross-border smuggling of Goldfinches and Ospreys between Jericho and Jordan. Additionally, certain songbirds are marketed locally as ornamental birds captured from the wild, and some birds of prey are smuggled into areas like the Jenin Governorate, highlighting the ongoing challenges in controlling IKB in the region.</p> <p>Due to the war in the region, IKB and nature conservation in general is not a political priority. However, in the most recent years the Palestinian government and its relevant insitutions have started to co-operate with NGOs, such as the Palestine Wildlife Society to tackle the issue.</p>	

Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin studying environmental executive laws and adopting them at the national level, especially those concerned with the issue of bird and animal species and their trade at the national and cross-border levels.• Follow up on signing international agreements to protect biodiversity, develop a list of those agreements and give them priority at the international, regional and national levels (including CITES and biological diversity conventions such as CBD, CMS...)• Increase environmental awareness among decision-makers and the Palestinian public alike through media advocacy campaigns on all social media outlets available to the Palestinian public.• Provide training for the environmental police, the environmental quality authority, civil defence, customs police, crossing management, and institutions working in this field at the national level.• Enhance regional and cross-border co-operation with neighbouring countries.	

Serbia

Contributors to the review

Davor Marković; Sandra Jovanović, Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia (BPSSS)

Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	133,000
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class III
Illegal poisoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class III
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Slight reduction (-5 to -24%)
Short-term (since 2020)	Slight reduction (-5 to -24%)
Multi-stakeholder committee	
No such committee exists. Serbia does not have a National Action Plan for IKB, and is not currently in the process of devising one. Despite being a stakeholder in IKB and considered a peri-Mediterranean country, Serbia is neither a member of MIKT, nor an observer.	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>The situation regarding illegal killing of birds in Serbia has seen notable improvements in recent years, alongside persistent challenges. Positive changes include four consecutive years of a closed season for turtle doves and grey partridges (2020-24), a shortened hunting season for common quail, and the establishment of a specialized environmental crime police unit in 2021. NGOs have supported patrols during hunting seasons, and Serbia has benefited from graduates trained at the Wildlife Crime Academy. Media coverage and public awareness efforts have increased, fostering better communication and co-operation between NGOs, prosecutors, and law enforcement.</p> <p>On the other hand, Serbia lacks a formal national IKB strategy, and political motivation to address the issue is limited. Forensics, evidence collection, and police response remain inconsistent, and the prosecution process is often slow and costly. Corruption within hunting organisations and weak institutional knowledge of IKB-related laws hinder effective enforcement. While the environmental crime unit has bolstered human resources, other inspectorates face a decline in staff due to ageing and low wages. The absence of a dedicated IKB budget and frequent financial constraints further limit progress. Moreover, public awareness, despite media efforts, remains low, and court outcomes are not publicly accessible without specific requests.</p> <p>There are discrepancies concerning the EU Environmental Crime Directive, particularly in relation to the illegal possession and trade of strictly protected and protected species. The gamekeeping service in Serbia is still employed by the Hunting Societies (often perpetrators of IKB), rather than the state. Currently, there is no official national database for illegal killing of birds; only a database of reported incidents exists, which covers only a small fraction of IKB incidents. Furthermore, the civil database is primarily utilised for statistical purposes rather than for generating actionable intelligence.</p> <p>In rare cases where the conviction is reached, the bylaw known as ‘Regulation on the damage price list for calculating compensation for damage resulting from unauthorized actions affecting strictly protected and protected wild species’ (“Official gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, no. 37/2010) is not applied. This bylaw essentially provides a price list for damage reimbursement (not to be confused with a fine) to the state regarding individual species. Diligent appliance of the damage reimbursement could be a major stimulating factor for the state, as damages range from 60-4,200 Euros per individual bird affected. Simultaneously, this would impose an additional financial burden on the convicted individuals, potentially surpassing the monetary fines imposed for felonies or misdemeanors, thus acting as a deterrent.</p> <p>Moreover, hunting tourism, one of the major revenue-generating aspects related to IKB, is experiencing a surge. It is also evident that the national list of strictly protected and protected species needs to be updated to reflect the latest avian trends, populations and conservation status of the National Red Book of Birds.</p>

Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds

Enforcement and convictions:

- Prosecution/police needs to apply advanced and case-relevant criminalistics methods pertaining to discovery and evidence collection.
- Half-measures and dismissals are to be limited; harsher convictions are required to deter future perpetrators.
- Lobbying the Supreme Prosecution Office for a ban on the opportunity principle - a prosecution mechanism that enables perpetrators to evade serious consequences, often resulting in minimal penalties instead of facing prosecution for IKB, while allowing prosecutors to quickly close cases.
- Following-up, obtaining and publishing information of public importance regarding the reported incidents needs to be maintained on a regular basis.
- There needs to be diligent use of 'Regulation on the damage price list for calculating compensation for damage resulting from unauthorised actions affecting strictly protected and protected wild species' ("Official gazette of the Republic of Serbia", no. 37/2010) in addition to convictions.
- Undercover investigations and investigative journalism targeting known hunting tourism agencies that promote illegal hunting could serve as a significant deterrent for future offenders.

Policymaking and lobbying:

- Clearly defined protocol (or a National Action Plan) for intersectoral collaboration is paramount. An intersectoral task force could be the best solution.
- A policy change (and political lobbying) is needed to better align Serbia's Criminal Code with the EU Environmental Crime Directive.
- A policy change (and political lobbying) is needed concerning poaching equipment, which is currently legal for ownership and trade.
- A policy change (and political lobbying) is needed concerning the gamekeeping service, as the current model employs gamekeepers not via the state, but via the Hunting Societies, whose members perpetuate illegal killing of birds.
- Lobbying the Supreme Prosecution Office for a ban on the opportunity principle in IKB cases - a prosecution mechanism that enables perpetrators to evade serious consequences, often resulting in minimal penalties instead of facing prosecution for IKB, while allowing prosecutors to quickly close cases.
- Revision of the list of strictly protected and protected species in Serbia.
- Continuation of the moratorium on the Turtle-dove and Grey Partridge, as well as the moratorium on the Common Quail.

Capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and socio-economic factors:

- Professional development of knowledge and capacity building pertaining to the specific issue of IKB (both NGO and governmental).
- Better understanding of the socio-economic motivators behind the IKB and prevention of the motivators at the root.
- Collaboration with the experts is a key factor. Better co-operation (currently incidental) is needed between government and the civil society / experts in various fields relevant to IKB (agriculture, biology, ecology, law, hunting, etc).
- A comprehensive mapping of stakeholders is lacking. Once all stakeholders are identified, enhanced and continuous co-operation between stakeholders and the civil sector is essential.
- Each stakeholder needs to have a clear understanding of the issue, and possess the necessary skillset regarding data and evidence collection, as well as data analysis.
- Membership in MIKT, or at least observer status, would likely enhance the chances of achieving the goals of the Rome Strategic Plan.

Monitoring:

- Ad hoc monitoring should be minimised. An improved and standardised method for online and field monitoring of IKB is necessary, applicable to both the government and the civil sector.

Slovenia

Contributors to the review

Tilen Basle, Urša Očko (DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia)

Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	8,000
Illegal trapping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class IV
Illegal poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class IV
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	No significant change
Short-term (since 2020)	No significant change
Multi-stakeholder committee	
No such group exists in Slovenia (yet), but at a conference in March 2025 (Slovenia’s role in preventing illegal killing of birds), DOPPS successfully connected all relevant stakeholders with the ambition of better co-operation and improving the prosecution and detection of IKB in Slovenia in the future.	

Major changes effecting IKB
A major problem in Slovenia is the trafficking of birds illegally caught elsewhere (especially Balkan countries and Romania) through the country to Italy and beyond. IKB cases in Slovenia are relatively scarce, as they are largely considered unacceptable to the public. When an IKB case is exposed in the country, media attention is high. The trafficking of birds is not taken seriously enough by the law and legal authorities, reflected in the low fines the criminals that are caught must pay. The detected trafficking of birds has decreased since Slovenia (2007) and Croatia (2023) entered the Schengen area, although the actual trafficking has probably increased.
Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific training of law enforcement and prosecution: Inspectors, police, customs and prosecutors would benefit from training on the consequences of nature-related crimes and the importance of tackling them. They would also benefit from training on the effective handling of IKB cases (according to appropriate protocols) in collaboration with other law enforcement and persecution bodies in Slovenia and abroad.• Improvement of the evidence collection process (national IKB database).• Legislative improvement: more deterrent fines.• Improvement of international cooperation of law enforcement agencies.

Spain

Contributors to the review

David de la Bodega Zugasti (SEO/BirdLife)

Major IKB issue	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trapping	<input type="checkbox"/>
Illegal poisoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

IKB Severity category	
Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	254,000
Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class III
Current classification (2024)	Class IV
Justification in case of re-classification	“SEO/BirdLife. 2023. Informe sobre las causas de mortalidad no natural deavifauna en España” and Report on the evolution of wildlife mortality due to illegal acts during implementation of LIFE Guardians of Nature 2018-2021 (to be published). LIFE Nature Guardians’ analysis of data from Public Wildlife Recovery Centres from 2008 to 2021, provided by 17 Spanish regions

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Very large reduction (-75 to -100%)
Short-term (since 2020)	Large reduction (-50 to -74%)

Multi-stakeholder committee
Spain does not have a specific multi-stakeholder committee on IKB. It does have other participatory forums on aspects of this crime, such as the Ecotoxicology Group, which focuses on the fight against the illegal use of poison, with the participation of public administrations (State and regional), Law Enforcement Officers and NGOs. Also, in the framework of the Spanish Action Plan against illegal trafficking and international poaching of wildlife species (Plan TIFIES), SEO/BirdLife is a collaborating entity of the plan and some rules are foreseen to facilitate participation.

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>In recent years, Spain has made significant strides in combating illegal killing of birds. A major milestone was the definitive ban in 2018 on the capture of finches for “silvestrismo”, capturing male birds for their song and breeding hybrids with canaries, which has drastically reduced bird captures by hundreds of thousands annually. Collective efforts against practices like poisoning and illegal hunting methods (parany, pardeleo) have been bolstered by increased law enforcement specialisation, stronger prosecution, and successful convictions. Projects such as LIFE Veneno NO and LIFE Nature Guardians have been instrumental in implementing innovative strategies and fostering collaboration among public and private actors. Thanks to these efforts, illegal poisoning has also significantly decreased since 2010.</p> <p>However, “silvestrismo” still legally persists in certain regions under the guise of scientific research. International trafficking continues to pose a significant issue in Spain for birds from Latin America for distribution throughout Europe and from here to export to other countries outside the EU (e.g. raptors to the Middle East). Problems such as the destruction of nests of protected migratory species and occasional poisoning cases still require attention. Budgetary limitations since 2020 have impacted essential activities like toxicological analyses and wildlife recovery centres, with resource disparities between autonomous communities further complicating the situation. Despite these obstacles, Spain remains an international leader in the fight against IKB, actively collaborating with global organisations and neighbouring countries to tackle cross-border issues. Continued investment in training, enforcement, and public awareness will be critical to sustaining progress in the coming years.</p>

Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds

- It is necessary to improve the awareness of judges and prosecutors by creating technical support units for the former or specialised courts.
- Progress must continue in strengthening Environmental Intelligence Police Units (such as the National Central Office created in the Guardia Civil) as a tool for prevention and increased effectiveness in combating environmental crime.
- At the regulatory level, it is important to have a unified wildlife assessment system for all the autonomous communities in Spain (and preferably at the EU level) that allows for the establishment of sanctions and compensation for civil liability in a manner that is fair to the damage caused.
- It is necessary that illegal activities (such as “parany” or “silvestrismo”), which are prohibited by current legislation and numerous court rulings, be removed from the political debate. Certain political parties have made certain “traditional” and illegal hunting practices a subject of political debate, with a discourse aimed at attracting voters by promising to revive these old forms of IKB.

Syria

Contributors to the review

Nabegh Ghazal Asswad, Syrian Society for the Conservation of Wildlife (SSCW)

Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	3,900,000
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class I
Illegal poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class I
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	No significant change
Short-term (since 2020)	Slight increase (5 to 24%)
Multi-stakeholder committee	
<p>The Hunting council was established and updated back in 2014. Since then, SSCW was part of it. However, recent update to the membership of this Hunting Council (a multistakeholder committee to oversee the rules and regulation as per the law with the relevant authorities has updated the membership and the NGOs were removed, leaving only the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Local Administration and Environment, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Defence, Syndicate of Farmers. This issue needs following to instate the NGOs and hunters Reps within.</p>	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>During the past 5 years, the situation of IKB was greatly influenced by the current situation of the security issues which made the implementation of laws that governs the protection of wildlife and environment of a lower priority to the governmental entities and police. The situation further deteriorated due to the severe economical crisis that predominated and caused an exponential inflation and caused hardship of daily life due to sanctions. Other sources of income were sought after including deforestation, using natural resources like wildlife and wild birds at their natural habitats and on migration.</p> <p>After the removal of the past regime in December 2024, the new officers have declared that a full revision for laws that were changed lately will be in place as of the lack of trust of the previous regime. This includes the Hunting Law No. 14 issued in 2023 by the old administration (which happened after a wide consultations with SSCW, CMS etc.). A follow-up is needed to ensure that either the current law is activated again, or a new revised version is as good if not better that the 2023 law.</p> <p>Meanwhile and while laws are in limbo and awaiting to bring the hunting regulation back to the agenda to try to tackle any problem and responsibly regulate all activities, poachers feel the new freedom in the current hunting season with malpractices including irregularated and indiscriminate killing, shooting, and trading in birds.</p> <p>SSCW is exerting efforts to follow up the needed process to restore the law once favourable conditions are met. A process that will need some time to be completed.</p>

Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds

During the coming years, the governmental institutions would need to focus on several practical issues to deal with unstable situation of IKB which was greatly influenced by the current situation in the country. The focus would be on the following:

- Building the capacity for law enforcement agencies, rangers, and police to tackle such issue at different locations will deter poachers and violators from committing such crimes of illegally taking and killing birds.
- Building capacity of relevant judiciary and prosecutors to deal with those caught committing IKB along with other violators to prosecute those individuals through the legal system.
- Building capacity to carry out monitoring effectively in collaboration with local stakeholders according to the protocol developed by SSCW for this regard.
- The awareness campaign to reach the public at different focus groups with more focus on the youth and the education system to reach out to those targeted audiences so there will be a change in the future behaviour.
- Enhancing other income generating activities and practices to deter individuals from committing such crimes of IKB and promote bird and biodiversity conservation at those black spots for IKB.
- Facilitation of activities and policies to confiscate those involved in such activities whether on the local, national, and regional (beyond the national borders) levels.
- Collaboration with other countries with support from international bodies to deliver policies and transborder activities to tackle the IKB issue in the region

Tunisia

Contributors to the review

Claudia Feltrup-Azafzaf, Hichem Azafzaf, Mohamed Hedi Aissa, Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux" (AAO/BirdLife in Tunisia)

Major IKB issue	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illegal poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

IKB Severity category	
Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	139,000
Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class III
Current classification (2024)	Class III
Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	No significant change
Short-term (since 2020)	No significant change
Multi-stakeholder committee	
<p>There is no National Action Plan or similar strategic framework to address IKB. In 2021, the National Forestry Authority indicated its willingness to develop and adopt a national strategy against the illegal killing of birds. It seems that since then, there has been no further discussion or development. A multistakeholder national consultative committee for hunting and conservation of game is discussing and proposing changes to the annual hunting decree issued by the Minister of Agriculture, Water resources and Fisheries (mainly specially protected and huntable species, hunting periods and days, hunting methods, quotas for game species, game reserves, etc.). Only two conservation NGOs are represented in this committee mainly composed by ministries, state agencies and hunters associations.</p>	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>Due to the drought that has persisted in Tunisia for several years now, bird populations are dwindling. This also affects the number of illegally harvested animals and the impact these harvests have on populations and ecosystems. The country's persistently difficult economic situation is probably contributing to the increase in (economically induced) poaching. The authority staff responsible for IKB has been further reduced and lacks resources and opportunities for skills development.</p> <p>On the other hand, phenomena such as the online sale of illegally acquired wild birds and bird trapping during spring holidays by children and young people have decreased. This is probably due to educational work with online selling platforms and because children and young people now have access to other, often digital, pastimes.</p> <p>The number of wildlife crime reports made by citizens is increasing, which shows that more people are aware and recognize that they can play a role in the fight against poaching. Overall, there are more NGOs and influencers interested/engaged in the topic and they generally contribute to awareness raising.</p>
Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national IKB action plan and implement it with all relevant stakeholders. • Strengthen/upgrade the hunting brigades (anti-poaching units), train them, equip them better and provide them with institutional backing so that they can take confident action against wildlife crime. • Training and equipment related to investigation and forensic & networking opportunities with other law enforcement agencies • Training and networking opportunities for prosecutors and judges as well as standard guidelines on IKB handling • Focus control and action on blackspots, carry out regular checks in the known markets and on the Cap Bon and prosecute and severely punish violations of hunting rights. • Raise awareness and train prosecutors and judges and provide them with specific guidelines for dealing with wildlife crime. • Inform and train the other law enforcement agencies (police, national guard, customs officers, etc.) about IKB and create enabling conditions for their participation in the fight against wildlife crime and cooperation with the hunting brigades (anti-poaching units).

Türkiye

Contributors to the review

Şafak Arslan, Serdar Özuslu (Doğa Derneği / BirdLife in Türkiye)

Major IKB issue		IKB Severity category	
Illegal shooting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Estimated mean (rounded) IKB as in (Brochet <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	71,200
Illegal trapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Classification as per Brochet <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Class IV
Illegal poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Current classification (2024)	Class IV
Illegal trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Justification in case of re-classification	–

IKB trend	
Long-term (since Brochet)	Slight increase (5 to 24%)
Short-term (since 2020)	Slight increase (5 to 24%)
Multi-stakeholder committee	
In Türkiye, there is no official multi-stakeholder committee dedicated specifically to tackling IKB. There is currently no National Action Plan in place either, although there is an intention to develop one.	

Major changes effecting IKB
<p>Illegal Killing of Birds (IKB) remains a growing threat in Türkiye, making awareness-raising efforts crucial for its prevention. Doğa Derneği (DD /BirdLife in Türkiye) has brought IKB into the national agenda in the country, ensuring that it becomes a recognized environmental issue alongside other pressing topics. Through various platforms, DD has highlighted the severity of this threat and its impact on biodiversity.</p> <p>A major milestone in these efforts was the 21st Türkiye Bird Conference, held in 2024, where wildlife crimes were the central theme. The increased awareness from this event has led to a rise in inspections by law enforcement agencies and relevant institutions. During the migration period, targeted operations were successfully conducted in different provinces against individuals illegally capturing of birds of prey.</p> <p>Given Türkiye's vast geography, implementing a comprehensive national IKB mitigation strategy presents significant challenges. Instead, regional mitigation efforts have proven to be more effective. For the first time, DD conducted a spatial analysis of IKB threats across Türkiye, identifying key priority areas for intervention.</p> <p>One of the most critical areas for conservation in the Mediterranean Basin is the Gediz Delta, a vital wetland ecosystem. Here, we implemented IKB mitigation measures in collaboration with the relevant authorities. As part of these efforts, illegal hunting blinds were destroyed, and patrols were significantly increased (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVtT7ebo7z4&t=9s). These actions have provided valuable insights into effective strategies for tackling IKB across the country.</p>
Recommendation to tackle the illegal killing and taking of birds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most importantly the penalties in the legislation are insufficient and the number of patrols is low. Focusing on these two issues would help to reduce the IKB levels in the coming years. Penalties should be increased, and not only fines but also sanctions should be applied. Increasing inspections, particularly in blackspot areas during migration periods, and increasing the number of personnel are of vital importance.• Relevant personnels would highly benefit from exchanging best practices and presenting legislation recommendations and know-how.• Türkiye has not yet signed the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), meaning it is not a member of the Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT). Joining the CMS and MIKT would help to strengthen Türkiye's international cooperation in combating the illegal killing of birds and align national policies with global best practices. Additionally, it would demonstrate Türkiye's commitment to biodiversity conservation and improve collaboration with neighboring countries to address transboundary challenges.