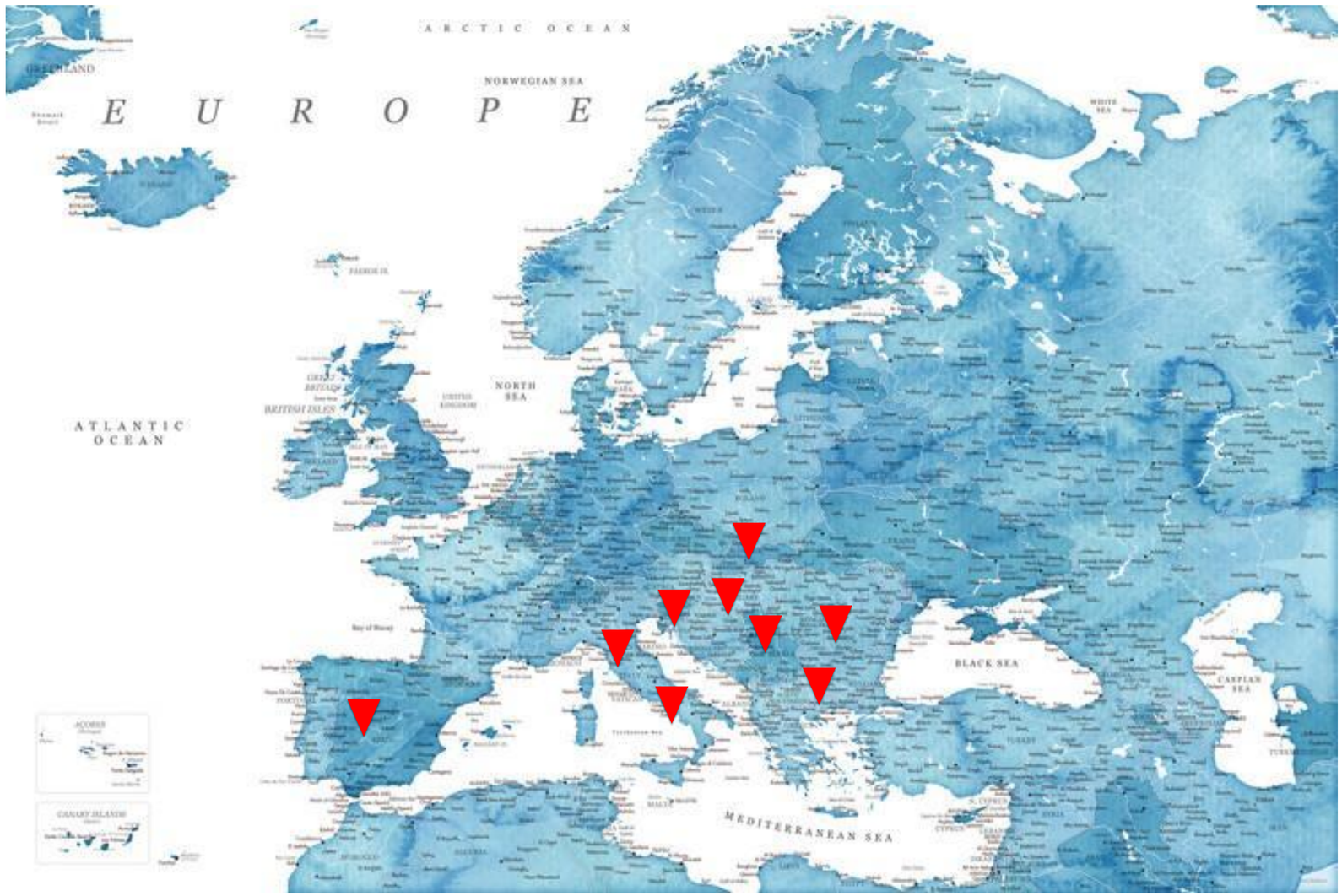
# 3. EU CASE STUDIES




@European posters

**Poaching by mutual agreement by two offenders (Rožňava).**

**One of the offender, who is also a game warden, caught a bear and a lynx, and kept a carcass of a killed lynx at home. He then made trophies and preparates out of the poached animals.**
**Through these actions, he caused damage in the amount of 57,193 EUR.**

**The second offender caught, processed and subsequently sold the ungulate game to third parties in several cases.**

Illegally held weapons and ammunition were found in case of both offenders.

 one of them conditionally sentenced to 24 months' imprisonment and the other to 36 months' imprisonment, with a probationary period 5 years in both cases.
Preparate, skins, skulls as well as illegal weapons and ammunition were confiscated.

They were banned from contacting each other and exercising the right to hunt - one for 7 years, the other (shooter) for 8 years, while this one was also banned from performing management functions in forestry organizations.
The court referred the injured party (District Authority) to claim the damage in a civil trial, however, the District Authority has not claimed the damage

@dailysabah

**Illegal wildlife poisoning depletes Balkan biodiversity yet only 1% of cases reach court**

**The illegal use of poisonous substances in the environment to target 'undesirable' animals depletes biodiversity and threatens public health, yet it continues to go unnoticed and unpunished according to the recent Balkan Vultures Poison Study 2022 conducted within the BalkanDetox LIFE project, funded by the EU's LIFE Programme.**

The illegal use of poison baits is not only a conservation issue

Between 2000 to 2020, 1046 poisoning and presumable wildlife poisoning events have been recorded across Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, the Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia.

The main motive behind poisoning incidents appears to be **conflicts with mammalian predators** for the potential damages they **may cause** to livestock practices, agricultural production and game animals in hunting areas.

Poisoned Egyptian Vulture in the Republic of North Macedonia © Metodija Velevski/ MES

Poisoned Griffon Vulture in Bulgaria © Hristo Peshev/ FWFF

Avian scavengers typically suffer the most from illegal wildlife poisoning, non-more so than vultures, which are recorded as casualties in every fourth incident.
A total of **465 vultures** perished in the Balkan Peninsula, including 47 Egyptian Vultures, 17 Cinereous Vultures and one Bearded Vulture **between 2000 and 2020**.
The region's Griffon Vulture population suffered the worst, with **400 individuals** perishing within 233 separate poisoning or presumable poisoning incidents.

The Common Buzzard and Red Fox closely follow, with 392 individuals within 190 separate incidents and 389 individuals within 141 separate incidents, respectively (Pantovic et al., 2022)

Poisoned Golden Eagle in Greece © Lavrentis Sidiropoulos

**Date shells (Lithophaga lithophaga)** are a strictly protected seashell species in Croatia and are thus on the CITES list.

The County Court in **Rijeka** convicted **6 perpetrators of illegally harvesting date shells** as part of an organized criminal group, namely in the Pula coastal area and the Lim Bay in Istria, in the period from June to September 2015, and of taking **at least 560 kilograms of date shells** across the border multiple times for the purpose of selling them.
They were selling a kilogram of date shells for approximately **34 EUR per kg** on the black market.

Date shells can be found on seashore rocks, and they can be removed with hammers and pliers, as well as using other equipment that can **break elements of the seashore** and the seabed.

By doing that, one **destroys far-reaching marine habitats** and biodiversity.

The first and the second defendant were sentenced to **4.5 years of unconditional imprisonment** for organizing and running a criminal association (Art. 328 of the CC).

The third and the fourth defendant were sentenced to 3 years and 2 years of unconditional imprisonment respectively, and the others were given suspended prison sentences for using a criminal association to illicitly kill and possess specimens of strictly protected wild animal species, as well as to illicitly trade in, export and transport dead specimens of strictly protected animal species, which caused significant damage (Art. 200 and Art. 202 of the CC).


Lithophaga lithophaga
@researchgate


@Alamy

**Date shells (Lithophaga lithophaga)**

**During summer 2022 (25.07.2022), a man was filmed while destroying a rock with a hammer to remove seashells near Napoli.**

**The video was sent to the local police, that charged the man with the offences of aggravated damage and illegal fishing**


In 2021, 21 people were sent to trail with the offences of criminal conspiracy aimed at extracting date shells from the sea near Napoli

Six of them are currently in prison while seven are under house arrest (they were arrested by the Guardia di Finanza last March);

The defendants also include a 41-year-old man, a soldier serving at the Portici Coast Guard, who allegedly revealed to the other suspects the execution of planned operations against poaching.

# Hermit ibis (*Geronticus eremita*)

The hermit ibis (*Geronticus eremita*) is a migratory bird once widespread in central and southern Europe, native to central Europe until the 17th century when it became extinct due to **excessive hunting pressure**.

Today, the hermit ibis is **one of the most globally endangered** bird species.

Italy is involved in a reintroduction project called "Waldrappteam", financed by the EU LIFE programme.

Despite the number of deaths caused by illegal culling has decreased in the years since the LIFE project began, these animals are still **frequent targets of poachers**.

Near the Litorale Romano State Nature Reserve and the LIPU Oasis of Castel di Guido, the carcass of a Hermit Ibis was found in February 2022.

Subsequent analysis it was confirmed that the animal had died as a result of numerous pellets exploded at close range from a hunting rifle.


In November 2021, another specimen was wounded by gunshots near Sabaudia (Circeo National Park) and previously several carcasses of specimens shot by hunting pellets have been found mainly in **Tuscany**.

This species is of **vital importance not only for the ecosystem** in which it lives but also brings also a **substantial benefit to the tourism** and nature-based tourism industry

## 28 BIRD TRAFFICKERS NETTING EUR 1 MILLION PER YEAR ARRESTED IN SPAIN

The investigation initiated in 2019 uncovered how this criminal group would sell these endangered species to North African buyers using forged documents. The criminals would then arrange for the birds to be smuggled out of Spain hidden in buses heading to the African continent. The traffickers were supported by a Moroccan citizen who worked in a travel agency and arranged the logistics. They also developed their illegal business online, where they would sell birds but never deliver them, despite the buyers having paid for them. In addition, over 400 marijuana plants were discovered during the house searches, indicating that this group of traffickers was involved in a variety of criminal activities.

It is believed that parrot smuggling worldwide is on the rise. Some species can reach several hundreds of thousands of euros on the black market. The demand driving this illicit trade comes from collectors and breeders, but also citizens who want them as pets. However, this desire to own such exotic birds is killing them off.

A number of parrot species are threatened with extinction due in part to pressures from collecting for the pet trade. There is however legal protection in place. All but two parrot species are protected under CITES, as a result of which their commercial trade is either prohibited or strictly regulated with export permits.

Source: https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/28-bird-traffickers-netting-%E2%82%AC1-million-year-arrested-in-spain

Date: 19 July 2020

# Illegal logging


Another illegal clear-cutting took place in a protected state forest area near Tiszaug in August 2020. There was **no serious prosecution after the first incident in January 2020**.

According to WWF-Hungary, the current sad example also proves that if **flood control and river basin management methods of are not reviewed**, similar habitat destruction may occur in the future.

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