

LIFE Nature Guardians

Main motivations in relation to biodiversity crimes

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European Wildlife Crime Workshop

30th June 2022



Nature
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against environmental crime





Aim of the Project

To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of actions to combat environmental crime in Spain and Portugal. Especially those committed against wildlife.

Who we are?

Project coordinated by:



Beneficiary partners:



Funding by:



Arson fires



Illegal waste management



Nest destruction



Illegal killing



Illegal species trafficking



Poisoning

Why are we implementing this Project?

To preserve Nature

Duration

July 2018

December 2022

What are we doing and how?

Act - Denounce - Preserve



Main achievements

- Study on the implementation in Spain and Portugal of [Directive 2008/99/EC protection of the environment through criminal law](#)
- European workshop on police investigation of crimes (broad recommendations produced)
- **Study on the origin and motivations of environmental criminality**
- Legal actions for a better enforcement of environmental law
- Creation of a national database methodology on unnatural wildlife mortality
- Training and awareness-raising for environmental and wildlife enforcement officers, as well as EU officers in environmental crime investigation
- Analysis and implementation of new techniques and practices, and specific operations
- Creation of an Environmental Intelligence Analysis Unit in SEPRONA
- Campaign “Article 45 of the Spanish Constitution”

TOTAL BIRDS ILLEGALLY KILLED

MILLION PER YEAR

12

MIN

25

MEAN

38

MAX

REASON FOR KILLING



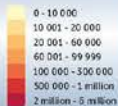
TYPES OF CRIMES



MAP OF ILLEGAL KILLING IN EUROPE, THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE CAUCASUS



ILLEGAL BIRD KILLINGS



BY GROUP



PASSERINES 20.2 MILLION

WATERBIRDS & SEABIRDS 1.8 MILLION

PIGEONS & DOVES 0.7 MILLION

RAPTORS 0.1 MILLION

OTHER BIRDS 1.9 MILLION

UNIT OF MEASURE 0.5 MILLION

MOST AFFECTED SPECIES



HOUSE SPARROW
Passer domesticus
4.7 MILLION



COMMON CHAFFINCH
Fringilla coelebs
2.9 MILLION



EURASIAN BLACKCAP
Sylvia atricapilla
1.9 MILLION



COMMON QUAIL
Coturnix coturnix
1.7 MILLION



SONG THRUSH
Turdus philomelos
1.2 MILLION



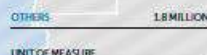
CALANDRA LARK
Melancorypha calandra
0.9 MILLION



EURASIAN SKYLARK
Alauda arvensis
0.8 MILLION

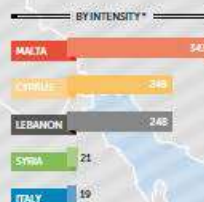
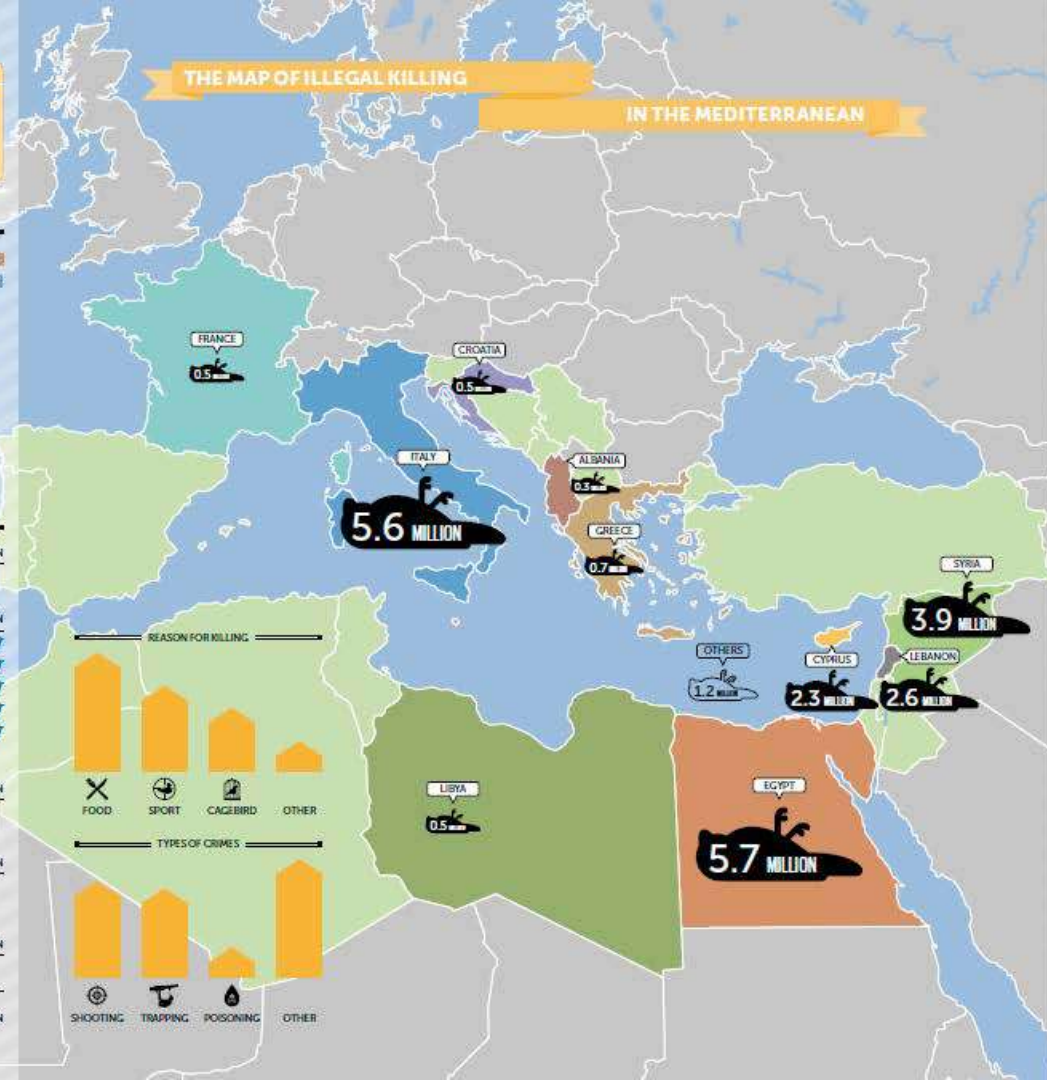
NOTE

All numbers in the maps are rounded, mean averages for each country. Mean numbers and country names are in italics, see the scientific names. Frequency according to the scope and scale of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean (Bouchet et al., 2016) and illegal killing and taking of birds in Europe, outside the Mediterranean, according to the scope and scale of a complex issue (Bouchet et al., in revision).



THE MAP OF ILLEGAL KILLING

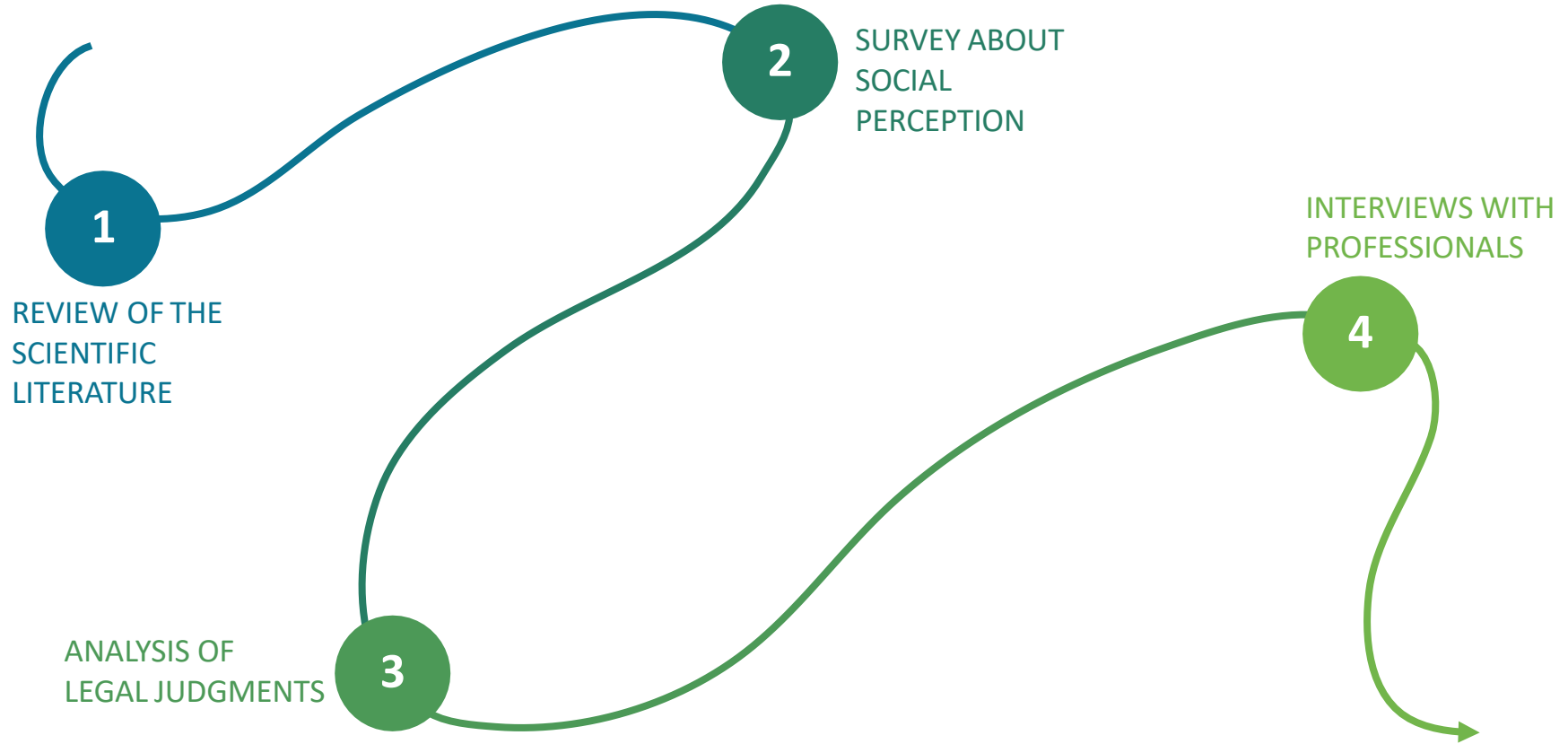
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN



* Mean estimated number of birds illegally killed per km² every year

NOTE All numbers in the map are mean best estimates, for further details and minimum/maximum estimates, see the scientific paper: Preliminary assessment of the scope and scale of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean (Birochis et al., in revision).

PARTS OF THE RESEARCH





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WHICH ARE THE **MOTIVATIONS** FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME?

Environmental crimes can be interlinked. Their motivations are complex and often combine and overlap. It is very important to take this into account in order not to simplify or individualise crimes that are influenced by many other socio-cultural, structural and ideological factors.

PROFIT



Economic motives are behind illegal commercial activities, such as illegal trafficking of waste or endangered species or their parts.

They are also found in illegal hunting for meat supplies or in fires to free up pastures—but not as much as it is thought to be for land or timber speculation.



CORRUPTION

Behind the perpetrator of the crime, there is often a network of corruption. It mainly concerns illegal trade in waste, exotic fauna or their parts or rare woods, but also illegal logging and poaching.



CONFLICTS

The frequenting of insurgent or terrorist movements frequently comes from wildlife trading.

Poaching is often the source of food for armed groups. Social and political instability encourages this type of crime.

BELIEFS

Superstition is central to the trade of parts of endangered species (pangolin scales, rhino horn, vulture's brain...). The belief that some types of meat are healthier can motivate illegal hunting, while some forest fires are associated with Satanism and the release of—often invasive—species is part of some religious rites.

TRADITIONS

Tradition itself motivates several types of wildlife crimes, due to their non-selective or massive nature, or catches that are harmful to the species. It also encourages the use of fire as a means of eliminating brushwood.



ELITISM

It takes a lot of purchasing power to consume food products from endangered species (pangolin meat, sturgeon caviar), to possess some of their parts (ivory, leathers, scents) or to keep them as pets (parrots, felines). The search of luxury and social prestige is one of the motives for committing these infringements.

DETACHMENT



It was identified that the perpetrator is sometimes emotionally or utilitarianly detached from the natural resources that are affected by his or her action. For example, an incendiary may perceive that the vegetation cover means no benefit to him, or an illegal hunter or fisherman has no adherence to the environment if he is not from the area.



SOCIAL COHESION

Maintaining social ties is an important factor in illegal logging in a number of countries. Poaching is sometimes justified as a way to keep youth away from drugs or as a family activity.

NONCONFORMITY

Disagreeing with rules, regarding them as unfair or perceiving them as restrictive are ideas linked to many types of crime.

Releasing animals from fur farms, poaching in a protected area, chasing predators or setting fires in protest are some of these offences.



Despite all these motivations, the most recurrent factors are **lack of awareness** and **lack of understanding of the real impact of actions**.


Repression alone is not enough.

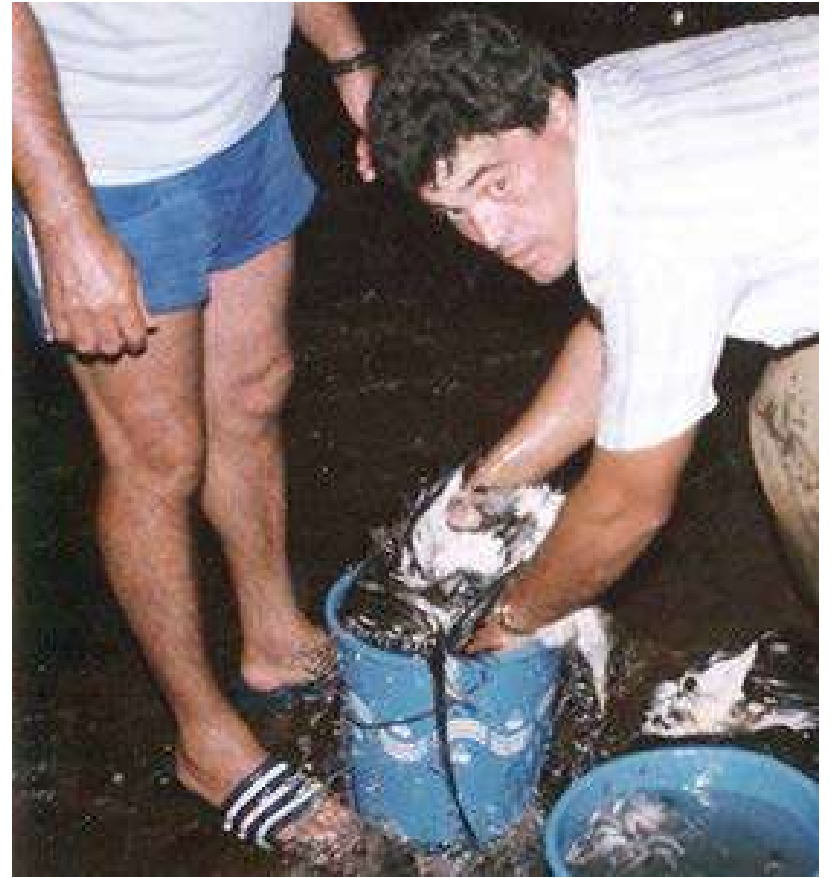
It must be accompanied by awareness-raising, the search for economic alternatives and, in many cases, the participation of the involved actors in the search for solutions.







 Gobierno
de Navar





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Lesson learn:

Despite all these motivations, the most recurrent factors are **lack of awareness and lack of understanding of the real impact of actions** .

It must be accompanied by awareness-raising, the search for economic alternatives and, in many cases, the participation of the involved actors in the search for solutions.

DESPITE THESE DIFFICULTIES, AWARENESS SEEMS TO BE INCREASING:



4 out of 5 people believe that environmental issues are not given enough importance especially by the media.



Almost 90% of the population believes that environmental crime is as or more important than other types of crime.



Percentage of the Spanish population who thinks that **starting a forest fire is a crime.**



Percentage of the Spanish population who thinks that **releasing alien species is a crime.**

There is a need to inform and raise awareness about the environmental and legal consequences of lesser-known crimes.



Almost 100% of the population recognises the seriousness of killing Iberian lynx.

But killing a species of snake, butterfly or lizard, even if it is also protected, is not considered as important.

There is also a need to raise awareness of less charismatic species.



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WHICH IS THE **PROFILE** OF A **WILDLIFE OFFENDER**?

Knowing some demographic, psychological and socio-cultural characteristics of the people who commit environmental crimes can guide prevention, investigation and action against environmental crime.
In our analysis, we approach the profile of those who carry out criminal actions against wildlife.

WHO?



Infractions committed
by a **single perpetrator**.



Infractions committed
by **men**.

His average age is **42 years-old**.

WHERE?



Infractions committed
in **small municipalities**
suffering from **depopulation**.



Infractions committed
on **hunting grounds**, but
72% is acquitted.



Infractions committed
on **private properties**, and
61% is convicted.



BIRDS

are the species that suffer most from wildlife infringements.

They appear in **71%** of the sentences analysed.



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WHAT

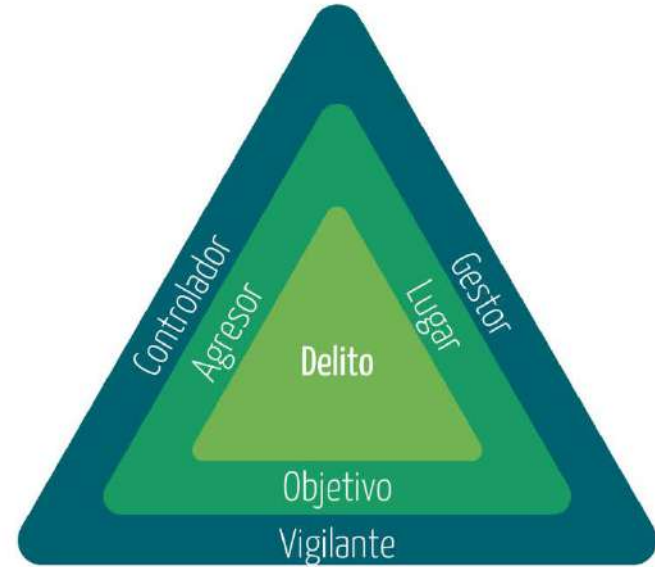
Interview by means of an online questionnaire designed with three main blocks:

1. Sample data: place of work, province, experience...
2. Opinion on prototypical offender (profile, legal aspects, motivations, law and sanctions) of:
 - a. Illegal hunting.
 - b. Illegal buying and selling of animal species or derivatives.
 - c. Destruction of nests of protected species.
3. Opinion on the usefulness of the profiles.

HOW

The sample was contacted by e-mail through their agencies and coordinators.

Quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated, combining statistical analysis with IBM SPSS Statistics and content analysis.



Proposals for action

To reduce the opportunity for offending

To more targeted lines of investigation

To more efficient reporting, investigation and prosecution system

To the implementation of intervention projects with primary and secondary populations

To the development of various strategies for awareness raising and engagement of the general population.



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THANK YOU!