



## UPDATE on illegal bird trapping activity in Cyprus

Covering the winter 2023-24 findings of BirdLife Cyprus' continuing monitoring programme for illegal bird trapping in Cyprus

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# Contents

Περίληψη.....	3
Summary.....	5
1. Overview of bird trapping in Cyprus.....	7
2. BirdLife Cyprus surveillance programme.....	9
3. Results .....	11
4. Conclusions.....	14
Bibliography.....	16
Appendix 1.....	17
Appendix 2.....	18
Appendix 3.....	19

## Περίληψη

Η παρούσα αναφορά παρουσιάζει τα τελευταία ευρήματα του προγράμματος παρακολούθησης της παράνομης παγίδευσης πουλιών του BirdLife Cyprus, για τη χειμερινή περίοδο 2023-24. Επισημαίνεται ότι η αναφορά αυτή αποτείνεται στους υπεύθυνους στα κέντρα λήψης αποφάσεων και τους πολιτικούς, με σκοπό την ενημέρωση, την ευαισθητοποίηση και την κινητοποίηση για πιο αποτελεσματική πάταξη αυτού του χρόνιου οικολογικού προβλήματος.

Σημειώνεται ότι από τη χειμερινή περίοδο παγίδευσης του 2014, το BirdLife Cyprus δεν διενεργεί πλήρη έρευνα πεδίου, σαν αυτή που γίνεται το φθινόπωρο, και όπως περιγράφεται στο πρωτόκολλο του προγράμματος παρακολούθησης της παράνομης παγίδευσης πουλιών. Αντί αυτού, για να έχει μια ξεκάθαρη εικόνα της κατάστασης της χειμερινής παγίδευσης, διενεργεί έλεγχο σε δείγμα σημείων (spot checks) όπου καταγράφηκε παγίδευση σε προηγούμενα χρόνια.

Συνολικά κατά τη χειμερινή περίοδο 2022-23, ελέγχθηκαν 99 σημεία, εκ των οποίων 16 καταγράφηκαν ως ενεργά για παράνομη παγίδευση πουλιών. Η ομάδα πεδίου κατέγραψε 39 ενεργές διαδρομές για δίχτυα (διαδρομές σε περιοχές με ακακίες ή άλλη βλάστηση π.χ. πορτοκαλώνες, ελαιώνες, όπου βρέθηκαν δίχτυα ή ευρήματα ότι γίνεται παγίδευση), με συνολικό μήκος 809 μέτρα.

Παρόλο που δεν είναι δυνατόν να εξαχθούν στατιστικά βάσιμες τάσεις για τα χειμερινά επίπεδα παγίδευσης πουλιών, αφού δεν έγινε πλήρης έρευνα πεδίου όπως περιγράφεται στο πρωτόκολλο του προγράμματος παρακολούθησης του BirdLife Cyprus, τα ευρήματα αυτής της χειμερινής περιόδου υποδεικνύουν ότι η παράνομη παγίδευση με δίχτυα αυξήθηκε σε σύγκριση με την περσινή χειμερινή περίοδο (2022-23). Στην πραγματικότητα, αυτά ήταν τα υψηλότερα επίπεδα παγίδευσης που έχουν καταγραφεί από τη χειμερινή περίοδο 2014-15. Ανεξάρτητα από την αποτελεσματικότητα επιβολής του νόμου από τις αρμόδιες αρχές, είναι επίσης σημαντικό να επισημάνουμε ότι τα επίπεδα χειμερινής παγίδευσης επηρεάζονται πολύ από τους αριθμούς τσιχλών που διαχειμάζουν στο νησί καθώς και από τις καιρικές συνθήκες. Τον χειμώνα 2023-2024, σύμφωνα με τα αρχεία πτηνοπαρατήρησής μας, πέρασαν μεγάλοι αριθμοί τσιχλών από την Κύπρο.

**Κοιτάζοντας το 2023 συνολικά, και με βάση τις καταγραφές του BirdLife Cyprus για την άνοιξη, φθινόπωρο και χειμώνα, εκτιμάται, συντηρητικά, ότι για το 2023, μπορεί να θανατώθηκαν συνολικά γύρω στα 603 000 πουλιά εξαιτίας της παράνομης παγίδευσης σε ολόκληρη την Κύπρο, σε σύγκριση με τα 460 000 χιλιάδες πουλιά που εκτιμούμε ότι μπορεί να σκοτώθηκαν το 2022. Αυτή η συνολική αύξηση οφείλεται στην αύξηση της παγίδευσης με δίχτυα που καταγράφηκε το φθινόπωρο του 2023 στις περιοχές των Βρετανικών Βάσεων (SBA). Πριν από την έναρξη της περιόδου παγίδευσης του Φθινοπώρου 2023, η αστυνομική μονάδα κατά της λαθροθηρίας της SBA μειώθηκε σημαντικά σε μέγεθος. Αυτή η περιορισμένη διωκτική δράση και παρουσία στο πεδίο πιθανόν να οδήγησε σε αύξηση της παγίδευσης με δίχτυα εντός των Βρετανικών Βάσεων Δεκέλειας, κάτι που το BirdLife Cyprus είχε προβλέψει. Συνάμα, εντός της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας τα προστίματα για την παγίδευση με δίχτυα είναι αποτελεσματικά, ως ένα βαθμό, στη μείωση των επιπέδων παγίδευσης. Ωστόσο, τα πολύ χαμηλά πρόστιμα για την χρήση ξόβεργων δεν έχουν το ίδιο**

**αποτέλεσμα, όπως είχε προειδοποιήσει το BirdLife Cyprus όταν ψηφίστηκαν οι χαλαρώσεις τον Δεκέμβριο 2020 στην σχετική νομοθεσία «Περί Προστασίας και Διαχείρισης Αγρίων Πτηνών και Θηραμάτων Νόμο». Θεωρούμε ότι αυτό έχει μεταφέρει ένα μήνυμα «αποποινικοποίησης» και ανοχής όσον αφορά την παγίδευση με ξόβεργα, όπου τα επίπεδα παρέμειναν ψηλά για το φθινόπωρο του 2023. Παράλληλα, σημειώθηκε μια αύξηση στον αριθμό των ομάδων οργανωμένων παγιδευτών– ιδιαίτερα στην Επαρχία Λάρνακας.**

Το κόστος της χειμερινής έρευνας 2023-24 καλύφθηκε από τη NABU (BirdLife στη Γερμανία) και την RSPB (BirdLife στο Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο). Αυτοί οι συνεργάτες του BirdLife καθώς και το BirdLife Europe υποστηρίζουν την εκστρατεία μας ενάντια στην παράνομη παγίδευση πουλιών για αρκετά χρόνια, τόσο μέσω ευκαιριών χρηματοδότησης όσο και μέσω της ευαισθητοποίησης του κοινού, διεθνώς, σχετικά με αυτό το θέμα. Το BirdLife Cyprus είναι ευγνώμων για τη συνεχή, μακροχρόνια υποστήριξή τους.

## Summary

This report presents the latest findings of the on-going BirdLife Cyprus surveillance programme on illegal bird trapping, relating to the winter 2023-24 season. This report is mainly aimed at top decision makers and politicians, with the aim of informing, raising awareness and generating momentum for more effective action to tackle this chronic ecological problem.

It is worth noting that since the 2014 winter trapping season, BirdLife has not undertaken a complete survey following the standard survey protocol used in Autumn surveys. Instead, in order to have a reliable insight into the winter trapping situation, a spot check survey is undertaken, whereby a sample of previously recorded trapping sites is checked for bird trapping activity.

Overall, 99 locations were checked during the winter 2023-24 season and out of these, 16 sites were found to be active with illegal bird trapping. The field team recorded 39 active net rides for mist-netting (cleared “runs” in acacia plantations or other habitats e.g. orchards, olive trees, either holding nets or where there was clear evidence of preparation for the setting and/or use of nets), which summed up to a length of 809 metres.

Although it is not possible to draw reliable conclusions about the long-term trends for winter trapping activity, since the standard monitoring protocol of BirdLife Cyprus is not followed for the winter, the findings from this season’s survey suggest a large increase in trapping levels compared to the 2022-23 season. In fact, these were the highest levels of trapping recorded since the winter 2014-15 season. Regardless of the effectiveness of law enforcement by the relevant authorities, it is also important to point out that winter trapping levels are also heavily affected by the numbers of Song Thrush migrating and wintering on the island as well as weather conditions, and so are not solely dependent on enforcement effectiveness. In winter 2023-24, according to our birdwatching records, there were large numbers of wintering thrush in Cyprus.

**Looking at 2023 as a whole, and based on BirdLife Cyprus field data gathered for spring, autumn and winter seasons, it is estimated that around 603,000 birds could have been killed across the whole island, in comparison to the 2022 estimate of 460,000 birds. This overall increase is due to an increase in mist-netting recorded in Autumn 2023 in the SBA areas. Before the start of the Autumn 2023 trapping season, the SBA police anti-poaching unit was reduced in size substantially. This limited enforcement action on the ground, may have led to an increase in trapping within the Eastern Sovereign Base area, something which BirdLife Cyprus had warned would happen. Regarding the Republic of Cyprus, fines for mist-net trapping are effective, to a degree, in decreasing levels of mist-netting. However, the very low fines for limestick use have the opposite effect, as BirdLife Cyprus had warned when a series of relaxations were passed in December 2020 to the “Protection and Management of Wild Birds and Game Species” law. We believe this has conveyed a message of “decriminalization” and tolerance regarding trapping with limesticks. This likely explains why limestick trapping remained high. As well as this, an increase in small organised trapping groups/gangs was noted – particularly in the Larnaca District.**

The costs for the winter 2023-24 survey were covered by NABU (BirdLife in Germany), and the RSPB (BirdLife in UK). These BirdLife partners as well as BirdLife Europe have been supporting our illegal bird trapping campaign over a number of years, both via funding opportunities and by raising international awareness regarding this issue. BirdLife Cyprus is grateful for their continued, long-term support.

# 1. Overview of bird trapping in Cyprus

Trapping with non-selective methods (mist nets and limesticks) and the trade of wild birds have been prohibited since 1974 under Cyprus legislation, when the 'Protection and Management of Game and Wild Birds Law of 1974 (39/1974)' was introduced<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, in 1988 Cyprus ratified the 1979 Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, adopting a long list of birds as protected, including the Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), hence prohibiting the killing (hunting) and consumption of Blackcaps (Blackcaps are the main target species of illegal bird trapping in autumn in Cyprus, whereas in winter the main target species is the Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*). With Cyprus joining the EU in 2004, the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC, formerly 79/409/EEC) was transposed into Cyprus Law N. 152(I)/2003, prohibiting anew the use of non-selective methods including mist nets, limesticks and calling devices, as well as the possession of trapping equipment, trapped birds and the trading and eating of trapped birds.

Historically, trapped birds – mostly Blackcaps - were a food supplement for what were mostly poor island inhabitants living off the land. The practice of bird trapping in Cyprus has been recorded in historical documents from the Middle Ages and even earlier times. However, trapping as practiced in Cyprus today bears no relation to historical 'tradition'.

Nowadays, bird trapping in Cyprus is widespread and extensive, contributing to the large-scale killing of hundreds of thousands of migratory and wintering birds. Survey records show that 157 bird species have been found trapped in mist nets or on limesticks, of which 90 are listed as conservation priority species under the EU Birds Directive and/or by BirdLife International<sup>2</sup>. This is a clear indication of the non-selective nature of these methods. This illegal activity has become a profitable business controlled to a large extent by the 'big' trappers who are often also involved in organised crime. The Cyprus Game and Fauna Service have recently estimated this illegal business to be valued in the order of 10 million Euros per year<sup>3</sup>.

Apart from the extensive use of non-selective methods for illegal bird trapping in Cyprus, trappers nowadays use illegal electronic calling devices that imitate the calls of migratory birds (song playback). These calling devices are normally operated at night, luring the birds into the trapping sites and hence increasing the illegal catch. An academic study undertaken in Cyprus has shown that the use of electronic calling devices is highly effective in luring birds towards trapping sites (Sebastianelli M. *et al* 2020)<sup>4</sup>. The findings of this study showed that playback not only increased the number of individuals of target species captured by six to eight times, but also significantly increased bycatch. The study authors concluded that: '*Our findings thus show that in contrast to popular belief that tape lures are a selective trapping method, they also lead to increased captures of non-target species, which can include species of*

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<sup>1</sup> The specific articles of Law 39/1974 that prohibited the trapping and trade of wild birds include: Article 10 ('prohibition of hunting etc. of certain bird species', without including the blackcap either in the protected or the game species), Article 14 ('prohibition of offering game or wild birds in restaurants etc.') and Article 15 ('prohibition of the use of light projectors, traps, luring methods, limesticks and flushing of birds).

<sup>2</sup> BirdLife Cyprus 'List of birds recorded trapped in mist nets and on limesticks' found [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Data source: Game and Fauna Service Facebook post (12th July 2023) regarding the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Game and Fauna Service and the Cyprus Police.

<sup>4</sup> The study can be found [here](#).

*conservation concern*'. These calling devices can often be heard from hundreds of metres away from trapping sites at night, highlighting the extensive use of calling devices and their intensity within the trapping areas.

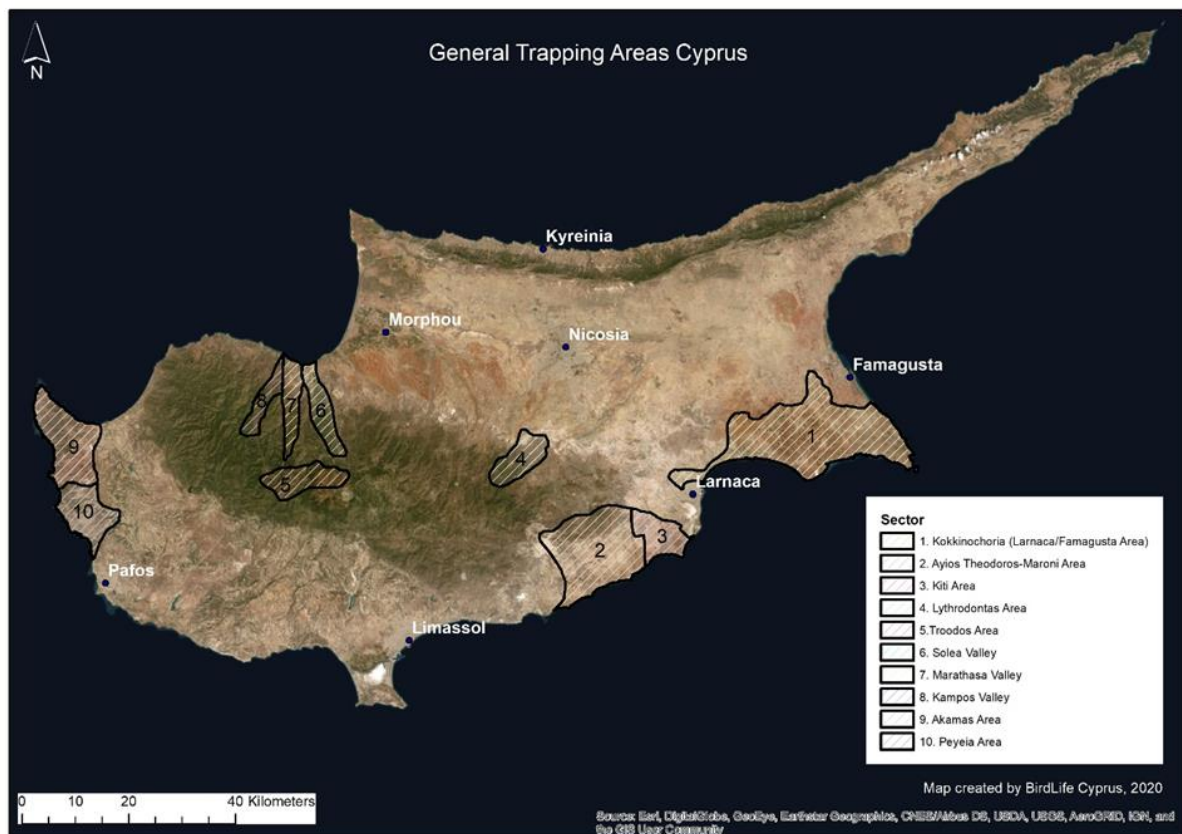
This report presents the results for winter 2023-24 survey. It should be noted that during winter the illegal trappers target mainly wintering Song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*), in contrast to spring and autumn seasons, when the main target species are Blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*) and other migrant songbirds. Trapped birds are either served as expensive 'delicacies' in local restaurants or sold for home consumption.



## 2. BirdLife Cyprus surveillance programme

BirdLife Cyprus is a non-profit NGO working for the protection and conservation of birds, their habitats and wider biodiversity, and is the Partner of BirdLife International in Cyprus. With support from the RSPB (BirdLife in UK), and NABU (BirdLife in Germany), BirdLife Cyprus has undertaken a systematic surveillance programme of illegal bird trapping in Cyprus since autumn 2002, providing a long record of trapping activity and giving the NGO a very good measure of expertise on the issue. The surveillance programme follows a 'Bird Trapping Monitoring Protocol' that was developed by BirdLife Cyprus and the RSPB, in consultation with the Cyprus Game & Fauna Service and the British Sovereign Base Area (SBA) police at the start of the programme. shows the main areas of bird trapping; monitoring is concentrated in the two areas (numbered 1 and 2) where extensive trapping takes place:

1. Kokkinochoria area (Eastern Larnaca/Famagusta area) – this area also includes the Dhekelia Eastern Sovereign Base (ESBA) area), and
2. Ayios Theodoros and Maroni area (Western Larnaca).



**Figure 1. Map of Cyprus showing the main trapping areas**

Although trapping is also an issue in other areas of Cyprus, the survey efforts focus on these two main areas due to resource limitations and because they hold the highest trapping activity.

It is worth noting that BirdLife Cyprus did not undertake a complete field survey for the winter 2023-24 season as described in its monitoring protocol<sup>5</sup>, but rather a 'spot check' survey. This is the tenth consecutive winter season that BirdLife Cyprus has used this simpler survey method, primarily due to limited resources (data from prior field surveys are presented in Appendix 3). This method involves undertaking spot checks at trapping sites, randomly selected and stratified to ensure a representative coverage of areas under the SBA Administration and the Republic of Cyprus, in order to get an overall picture of winter trapping.

The project is undertaken in close co-operation with the Game & Fauna Service and the SBA Police. When trapping paraphernalia is found, the BirdLife Cyprus team contacts and reports them to the relevant enforcement authorities. It should be noted that the BirdLife Cyprus observers never confront suspected trappers and never remove trapping paraphernalia.

BirdLife Cyprus would like to express its particular thanks to RSPB (BirdLife in UK) for supporting the project financially since the beginning in 2002. Furthermore, BirdLife Cyprus would like to thank NABU (BirdLife in Germany) for their financial support since 2013 onwards, as well as BirdLife Europe for their continued support towards our anti-trapping campaign. Finally, BirdLife Cyprus would like to thank the volunteer that helped in the monitoring survey and the gathering of the field data.

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<sup>5</sup> For more information regarding the surveillance programme of BirdLife Cyprus, read the latest autumn 2023 trapping report [here](#).

### 3. Results

- Field survey: the winter 2023-24 spot check survey of trapping sites was carried out from the middle to the end of January, with nine days of field work in total. As already stated, a spot check survey was undertaken, checking a percentage of trapping sites where mist-netting activity had been detected in the past<sup>6</sup>, as well as some sites which the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) had found activity in the previous winter season. The sites were randomly selected for the field survey in order to cover both the Republic of Cyprus (covering both Ayios Theodoros & Maroni and East Larnaca & Famagusta areas) and the Dhekelia Sovereign Base Area - SBA. In order to utilise resources more efficiently, the survey effort for the 2023-24 trapping season was reduced. However, in order to maintain an overall picture of the winter trapping status, locations which have been found active year on year were selected and surveyed, while also making sure that there was representative coverage of locations across both jurisdictions. All active trapping locations were reported to the relevant enforcement authorities, either the SBA Police Anti-poaching unit or the Cyprus Game & Fauna Service, depending on the location of the finds.
- Summary of field findings: In total, 99 locations were checked, 69 within the Republic of Cyprus and 30 within the Dhekelia Sovereign Base Area (SBA). **16 active mist-netting sites** were detected. Within these active sites, the field team recorded **39 active net rides** for mist-netting (cleared “runs” in acacia plantations or other habitats e.g. orchards, olive trees, either holding nets or where there was clear evidence of preparation for the setting and/or use of nets), which summed up to a **length of 809 metres** (seven of the active netrides were classified as ‘Prepared’<sup>7</sup>, while the other 32 netrides were classified as Active No Net netrides<sup>8</sup>).
- Winter trapping activity: While it is not possible to use the field data to draw any statistically reliable long-term trends for winter trapping activity (since the standard monitoring protocol has not been carried out for the last ten winter seasons i.e. since 2013) – the field data suggest a largely increase of trapping activity recorded this winter season compared to the previous winter. In fact, this winter had the highest recorded trapping levels since 2014-15.

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<sup>6</sup> Because limestick use during the autumn 2023 season remained at high levels, we also included several limestick trapping sites in our survey for this winter season. In the past limestick trapping sites were not included in the survey, as trapping with limesticks mainly happens during the autumn and spring seasons.

<sup>7</sup> Prepared: A net ride that is clearly ready to be used but there is no evidence e.g. bird feathers, blood stains, thrown pebbles, to suggest illegal activity was taking place the previous night / morning.

<sup>8</sup> Active No Net: A net ride that from the evidence found e.g. bird feathers, blood stains, thrown pebbles, indicates that illegal activity was taking place the previous night / morning but no net is present.

- Table 1 summarizes the field data for the winter surveys that BirdLife Cyprus has undertaken since 2013-14, when a transition to the spot-check survey methodology began. For data on Winter trapping activity prior to 2013-14 please see Appendix 3. Trapping levels for the 2023-24 season are higher compared to the 2022-23 season and are the highest recorded since the 2014-15 season.

**Table 1. Summary of winter field data of mist-netting activity from 2013-14 onwards**

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
<b>Total locations/points checked</b>	87	90	73	108	100	126	180	150	136	90	99
<b>Total active net rides (m)</b>	1067	1415	627	765	183	617	302	280	276	126	809
<b>Mist nets <i>in situ</i> (no)</b>	53	48	15	15	0	5	1	0	0	0	0

- Trapping under different jurisdictions for winter 2023-24:
  - For Republic areas, 15 Active net rides, and 7 Prepared net rides for mist-netting were detected after checking 69 locations, summing up to a length of 399 meters.
  - For the SBA areas, 17 Active net rides for mist-netting were detected after checking 30 locations, summing up to a length of 410 meters<sup>9</sup>.
- Enforcement:

BirdLife Cyprus reported the active trapping sites detected during the survey to the relevant competent authorities.

  - SBA Police anti-poaching unit feedback:
    - All locations were placed under observation; however, nothing further was detected by the SBA police.
  - Game & Fauna Service:
    - No official feedback was received from the Game and Fauna Service.

<sup>9</sup> Joint monitoring was carried out on 23/1/2024 with the SBA police checking all 30 locations.

Death toll estimate for the whole of 2023:

- During spring 2023, from the limesticks that were found during the survey, it was estimated that **165** birds could have been killed. However this does not accurately represent the number of birds killed, as the majority of sites which our field team located recorded evidence of glue and feathers but did not have set limesticks (BirdLife Cyprus, Spring 2023 [report](#)).
- During autumn 2023, it was estimated that just under **580,410** birds could have been killed across the whole of Cyprus (BirdLife Cyprus, Autumn 2023 [report](#)).
- The levels of winter 2023-24 mist-netting activity recorded by BirdLife Cyprus (see above) suggest that trapping increased significantly compared to last year. As the methodology we use for the winter survey is different to that of the Autumn survey we use a slightly different equation to calculate the death estimate (see appendix 1) We have estimated, based on a number of assumptions, that 22,600 birds could have been killed at the active sites that were detected during the winter 2023-24 season (see Appendix 1).
- **Therefore, it is conservatively estimated that during the whole of 2023, just over 603,000 birds could have been illegally trapped and killed across Cyprus.**

## 4. Conclusions

BirdLife Cyprus undertook a spot check survey in January 2024 for a period of nine days in total, checking 99 locations in total. These locations were randomly selected from the complete list of trapping sites where mist-netting activity has been detected in the past during our full survey programme, as well as other locations found by CABS members in previous seasons. Out of these 90 locations, 16 active mist-netting sites were recorded. The findings included 39 active net rides for mist netting, which summed up to a length of 809 metres.

**Despite the fact that statistically reliable trends cannot be drawn from the winter survey data, the field data indicate that mist-netting levels for this winter season were considerably increased compared to the 2022-23 winter season, the highest levels of trapping activity since the winter 2014-15 season. This overall increase was mainly due to a substantial increase in trapping within the SBA areas. Prior to the Autumn trapping season, the SBA police Anti-poaching unit was reduced in size substantially. The SBA Police Anti-Poaching Unit was significantly reduced in**

**resources at the start of the autumn 2023 trapping season. This limited enforcement action on the ground subsequently led to an increase in bird trapping within the ESBA, particularly in the Ayios Nikolaos Garrison area, and the Xylofagou area. Having recorded this worrisome increase in bird trapping levels within the ESBA during the first weeks of the autumn trapping period in September, both BirdLife Cyprus and RSPB expressed concerns to the SBA Police. Fortunately, the SBA Police acted to address the increased bird trapping activity by re-enforcing the Anti-Poaching Unit. The ESBA area had the most active site found in regards to winter trapping with mistnets. This is likely due to the lack of enforcement in Autumn 2023, something that the trappers would have most definitely taken advantage of in winter too. Limestick trapping levels in the Republic of Cyprus remained at similarly high levels as Autumn 2022. While fines for mist net trapping are high and effective, fines for limestick trapping and shooting of protected species are non-punitive and non-deterrent, which is why we believe that limestick use remained high. While there was a reduction in mist net trapping levels, both ourselves and CABS had noted an increase in organised trappers in Autumn 2023. Various small gangs of trappers appeared to have taken on trapping as a quick and easy source of income, particularly in the Larnaca district.**

The intensity of the winter trapping season tends to fluctuate each year depending on the number of Song Thrushes, the target species for winter trapping, which migrate to Cyprus to overwinter. This winter there were a large number of migrating song thrush passing through and wintering in Cyprus, as is evident from BirdLife Cyprus birdwatching records for January/February 2024. The increase noted this winter season may also be linked with the reduction in size of the SBA police Anti-poaching unit in the autumn of 2023. The unit was still not fully re-enforced in time for the winter trapping season, and trappers most likely took advantage of that. Enforcement actions, both in the SBA areas and the Cyprus Republic, need to increase and be maintained, in order to tackle the large-scale trappers, and to be ready if and when there is a strong song thrush migration, as that will most likely lead to increase levels of trapping for that year.

Looking at 2023 as a whole, and based on the field data gathered by BirdLife Cyprus during spring 2023, autumn 2023 and the winter 2023-24 seasons, it is conservatively estimated that just over 603,000 birds could have been killed across the whole of Cyprus in 2023. Unfortunately, this is an increase compared to last year's estimate of approximately 460,000 birds. This setback is mainly due to an increase in mist-net trapping in autumn 2023, particularly within the SBA areas.

The increase noted in 2023 is discouraging, and something we hope will not continue into 2024. The increase noted in the SBA areas, was a good case study of what can happen when resources are diverted/removed from illegal trapping enforcement and deterrence action. We hope to see the SBA police increase resources for the Autumn 2024 trapping season. The Cyprus Republic needs to address the increasing number of organised trappers, especially now that the Cyprus Police Anti-poaching unit has been re-instated. As well as this, limestick trapping remains an issue, mainly due to law relaxations – something that the Cyprus Government need to address.

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## Appendix 1

The following key assumptions are applied for the estimation of the birds killed:

- 12 metres is the assumed average length for a mist net.
- 20 birds are caught per 12-m net per day (Magnin, 1986).
- 0.5 birds are caught per limestick per day.
- 40 days is the duration of the trapping period for winter seasons.
- 50% scaling down factor – applied for spring and winter seasons to account for a lower number of migrating birds passing via Cyprus compared to the autumn
- Net ride categories 'ANN' (Active No Nets), 'ASN' (Active Set Nets) and 'AUN' (Active Unset Nets) nets are assumed that they are active every day during the trapping season (read Appendix 1 for details on net ride classification).
  - **Note: Net ride category 'P' (Prepared) is not considered for the estimation of numbers of birds killed anymore, following the recommendation of BTO science experts (BTO report, July 2015) to revise slightly the equation.**

Using the above assumptions, the bird death toll is estimated as follows for winter:

For nets = [(Total length of ANN+AUN+ASN rides)] / (average length of a net) x (20 birds per net per day) x (length of trapping season in days) x (50% scaling down factor)  
=  $678/12 \times 20 \times 40 = 45,200 \times 50\%$   
= 22,600 (see note just above)

For limesticks = (Total number of limesticks found) x (0.5 birds per limestick per day) x (length of trapping season in days) x (50% scaling factor)  
=  $0 \times 0.5 \times 40 = 0 \times 50\%$   
= 0

**Estimated number of birds killed in both nets/netrides and on limesticks found during our winter 2023-24 survey = 22,600**

## Appendix 2

Survey data for winter 2023-24

Details of the active trapping sites detected during the winter 2023-24 survey

**Confidential Information. Only provided upon approval of request**

Note 1: P – Prepared; ANN – Active No Net; AUN – Active Unset Net; ASN – Active Set Net

## Appendix 3

Summary of winter field data of mist-netting activity from 2007-08 to 2012-13.

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Total squares surveyed	44	44	81	53	39	38
Total active net rides (m)	497	804	3830	936	616	384
Mist nets <i>in situ</i> (no)	22	3	31	11	34	14