



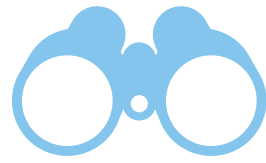
BirdLife  
Cyprus

# ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT 2025





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### **Our vision**

An island with healthy ecosystems, rich in biodiversity, where people actively safeguard nature for a sustainable future.



### **Our mission**

Protecting the wild birds of Cyprus, their habitats, and wider biodiversity, through monitoring, conservation and education actions, and by developing people's appreciation of nature.



We belong to BirdLife International, the global Partnership of nature conservation organisations.

# Contents

Systematic Bird Monitoring	4
Bird Recording	5
Campaign against illegal bird trapping	6
Thkio Mosfilies - Our outdoor learning space	7
Saving the Griffon Vulture population	8
Site Protection	9
Pentakomo court case	10
The LIFE IP Pandoteira Project	11
The Barn Owl Project	12
Education	13
Membership / Communications / Outreach	14
Bird ID Course	15
Summary income & expenditure for 2025	16
Governance	17
Acknowledging our Donors and Supporters	18

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# *Systematic Bird Monitoring*

In 2025, the BirdLife Cyprus Monitoring Team successfully completed the Article 12 project, contracted by the Game and Fauna Service. This project involved reporting on the population status and trends of all breeding birds in Cyprus, as well as key wintering and passage species, within the framework of the EU Birds Directive. Article 12 of the Directive requires Member States to report every six years on the status and trends of their bird species. For the 2019–2024 reporting cycle, this meant compiling and analysing data for 185 species that breed, winter or migrate through Cyprus.

Our team carried out an impressive 1,392 surveys and extensive data analysis to produce robust population estimates, distribution maps and trends, as well as information on threats and pressures affecting birds in Cyprus. Thanks to this monumental effort, Cyprus became the first Member State to submit its report to the European Commission.

The two-year Cyprus Bird Surveys Project, funded by the European Bird Census Council Small Grants Fund, was also completed in 2025. This bicomunal project involved joint monitoring with the Turkish Cypriot bird conservation organization KUŞKOR, aiming to fill knowledge gaps for species largely or entirely restricted to areas north of the dividing line, such as Calandra Lark, Raven and Audouin's Gull.

As part of these efforts, we completed more than 223 breeding season surveys, including surveys for common breeding birds, nocturnal species, and European Roller. During autumn migration, we conducted 25 surveys at the major migration bottleneck of Akrotiri Peninsula.



Throughout the year, our long-standing waterbird monitoring programme continued, with 314 surveys carried out across wetlands islandwide, in collaboration with KUŞKOR.

In 2025, work also began on the preparation of the first Red List of the Birds of Cyprus, undertaken within the LIFE IP Pandoteira project, in collaboration with the Game and Fauna Service and with support from BirdLife International, the Red List Authority for Birds. This assessment will draw on the results of the Article 12 project and all ongoing monitoring programmes to evaluate the extinction risk of all regularly occurring bird species in Cyprus, following the IUCN Red List Criteria.

None of this work would have been possible without our dedicated team of expert volunteers, to whom we extend our sincere thanks. Their contributions enable us to deliver policy-relevant outputs, such as the Common and Farmland Bird Indicators for Cyprus, under contract with the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment. These achievements highlight the crucial policy relevance of our long-term monitoring programmes, which underpin national and EU-level decision-making on bird conservation.

## Bird Recording

Daily data collection, combined with managing two popular WhatsApp groups, kept the bird recorder occupied. These groups have been a true success, fostering a strong sense of community among both local and visiting birdwatchers. With over 400 members, they serve as an excellent platform for enthusiasts of all levels, allowing them to connect, learn, and share their sightings.

In 2025, a total of 49,622 bird records were received, excluding submissions via eBird.

### Notable records

- A Common Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea*) was observed at Pegeia in February, marking the first report since 1992.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> national record of Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*) was documented at Anarita Park in March.
- A Common Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*) was recorded in Troodos in April, making it the 4<sup>th</sup> national record if accepted.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> national record of Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*) was documented at Achna Dam in September.
- A record number of Levant Sparrowhawk (*Tachyspiza brevipes*) passed through Akrotiri, with at least 25 observed during raptor monitoring in September and October.

### New species

- Lesser Moorhen (*Gallinula angulata*)
- Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*)
- Green Warbler (*Phylloscopus nitidus*)

### Other noteworthy species

Scarce and rare species observed include Horned Grebe, Northern Gannet, White-tailed Lapwing, Kittiwake, Crested Honey Buzzard, Oriental Turtle Dove, Rook, Eastern Yellow Wagtail, Buff-bellied Pipit, Rock Sparrow, Common Rosefinch and Crimson-winged Finch.

### Additional highlights

A total of 21,592 waterbirds were counted during the International Waterbird Census in January.

Two globally endangered White-headed Ducks were found at Famagusta Wetland in December; last recorded in Cyprus in 2019.

The local WhatsApp group introduced in 2024 continued its success with just over 400 members. This continued to enhance real-time sharing of bird sightings among members and local birdwatchers.



White-headed Duck © Aris Kalogirou

## *Campaign against illegal bird trapping*

Overall mist net trapping levels for autumn 2025 showed a slight increase of around 4% compared to autumn 2024. We estimate that a total of 726,000 birds may have been killed within the survey area during autumn 2025.

Within the Republic of Cyprus, mist net trapping decreased by 47% compared to autumn 2024. In September 2025, UK environmental campaigners Chris Packham and Megan McCubbin worked with CABS to expose organised trapping activity at a site in the Larnaca district that has been repeatedly reported to the authorities for many years. Following high-profile media coverage, enforcement action increased. Eight targeted raids were carried out against major organised trapping operations during autumn 2025 by the Cyprus Police and Game and Fauna Service. These actions resulted in fines exceeding €157,000 and represent a significant step in addressing organised trapping activity.

On the other hand, mist net trapping levels within the British Bases increased by 55% compared to autumn 2024. This increase is believed to be linked mainly to a change in enforcement strategy by the SBA Police, from preventative night-time patrols to a more reactive approach involving targeted ambushes. Trappers appeared to take advantage of the reduced police presence at night, even trapping in areas such as Cape Pyla, where mist net trapping had not been recorded since 2019 due to previously effective enforcement.

Our trapping report was published jointly with RSPB on 23 February 2025, receiving good media attention, including an interview on Politis radio. All trapping reports are available on the BirdLife Cyprus website.





## *Thkio Mosfilies – Our outdoor learning space*

Important progress was made in the development of the site, with the installation of security cameras, the planting of various trees and bushes—mainly around the pond to provide shade and act as a windbreak—and continued general habitat management. One area of the site was ploughed and planted with a mix of barley, sunflower and sweet pea to provide food resources for seed-eating birds such as finches. Annual maintenance activities, including pruning and weed strimming, continued as usual throughout the year.

During 2025, we hosted approximately 470 children at the site, carrying out pond dipping and bug hunt activities aimed at encouraging engagement with nature and raising awareness of local biodiversity. We also produced a promotional video presenting the site and highlighting its role as a small nature reserve and outdoor education hub.

We continued our bird ringing activities on site and have now ringed approximately 325 birds from 29 species. Notably, an Olivaceous Warbler was recaptured, having returned to the site for the third consecutive spring to breed.





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## *Saving the Griffon Vulture population*

Building on our flagship LIFE with Vultures project, funded by the LIFE programme and implemented from 2019 to 2025, we reached several major milestones for the conservation of Griffon Vultures in Cyprus in its final year.

We coordinated the preparation of a National Roadmap Against Poisoning, which provides a national strategic framework to combat the illegal use of poisoned baits in the countryside. The Road Map was prepared collaboratively by a working group comprising the Game and Fauna Service, Department of Environment, Department of Forests, Department of Agriculture, Cyprus Police, State General Laboratory, Veterinary Services, British Bases Environment Department, Terra Cypria, and BirdLife Cyprus.

In addition, we developed an After-LIFE Plan outlining the actions and responsibilities of key stakeholders to ensure the continuation of conservation and awareness-raising efforts necessary to support the long-term viability of the Griffon Vulture population in Cyprus.

To further support the population, we continued restocking efforts using our own resources and with support from the A. G. Leventis Foundation and the Cyprus Environment Foundation, with 15 individuals arriving in January 2025. Despite significant losses, mainly due to electrocution, the restocking programme has been largely successful, as the birds imported from Spain have integrated well with the existing population.

The breeding activity of one pair with birds transferred from Spain in 2021 - after four years of unsuccessful breeding - can be interpreted as a very positive indication that these restocking efforts are contributing to the recovery of the species in Cyprus.

The project was completed successfully, receiving positive feedback from the European Commission. BirdLife Cyprus continues to seek ways to build on this success and further implement conservation actions for this iconic species.

## Site Protection

The protection of the Akamas Peninsula remained a top priority throughout 2025. We continued to engage actively with government authorities and parliamentary committees to ensure that conservation commitments are respected and that harmful development pressures are addressed. Equally significant has been our work at the Akrotiri Peninsula, particularly concerning the ongoing deterioration of the Salt Lake and surrounding wetlands. Throughout the year, BirdLife Cyprus raised concerns regarding hydrological alterations and dewatering practices affecting this important wetland. Through a series of formal letters, meetings with authorities and public advocacy, we pushed for corrective action to prevent further degradation. In this context, we also engaged with the Sovereign Base Areas Administration (SBAA) on the Non-Military Developments (NMD) Policy Document, seeking to ensure that nature and biodiversity is properly protected and reflected to planning and rezoning amendments and that development within the SBAA's does not further threaten the Akrotiri wetlands.

BirdLife Cyprus continued its active participation in two key government committees: the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Committee and the ad hoc Committee for projects affecting Natura 2000 sites. Through these committees, we have worked to limit and, in some cases, prevent damaging developments in sensitive areas. Examples of projects that we managed to halt during 2025 include:

- A large-scale development of 69 luxury villas at the entrance of Akamas
- Several PV Parks in Agios Theodoros
- Agro-PV Park in Simou
- PV Park in Lithrodontas, Kataliontas, Mathiatis

At European level, we intensified our advocacy and lobbying to secure the LIFE Programme within the next (2027-2034) EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), working closely with BirdLife Europe and partners to keep biodiversity and nature funding on the EU agenda.





## *Pentakomo court case*

BirdLife Cyprus challenged the environmental and urban approvals granted for the construction of an aquaculture port at Pentakomo coastline, arguing that the works pose significant risks to coastal biodiversity, protected species like the endangered Mediterranean monk seal, and sensitive marine ecosystems.

The court case has not yet been concluded: the main hearing took place in early September, and since then the parties have been awaiting the court's decision. A key milestone during the pre-hearing was the suspension of works for six weeks through the issuing of an Interim Court Order on the basis of environmental concerns, the first ever issued in Cyprus. Sadly, this was withdrawn in late May 2025, and since then the construction of the port has continued.

Beyond the courtroom, the Pentakomo case has become a strong example of public mobilisation for nature protection. BirdLife Cyprus launched targeted public engagement campaigns, issued action alerts, published briefings explaining the environmental risks, and encouraged citizens to stand behind the legal challenge. The campaign generated media attention and visible public backing, with supporters engaging online and within local communities to defend the monk seal habitat and their coastline. Funding for the legal action was strengthened through our public appeal and donor contributions, demonstrating how grassroots financial support can enable strategic environmental litigation.

Regardless of the pending verdict, the case already stands as a significant milestone in Cyprus, showing how coordinated advocacy, scientific evidence, public pressure, and community funding can combine to defend critical habitats and endangered species.

## *LIFE IP Pandoteira Project*

Through this 10-year project, together with the Game and Fauna Service, we continued monitoring the breeding colonies of the Mediterranean Shag on islets and cliff sides, and managed to satellite tag one adult individual with the help of an expert from BirdLife Greece. Three adult individuals are currently being monitored and provide valuable data. We have also continued our initiative of colour ringing Mediterranean Shags and Yellow-Legged Gulls. In addition, we have initiated rat eradication actions on one key breeding islet in late 2025 and envision to continue it throughout 2026.

Furthermore, we successfully completed another round of European Roller surveys, combined with nest box installations and monitoring. A total of 63 nest boxes were monitored, with 23.8% occupied by European Roller, 23.8% by Cyprus Scops Owl, 23.8% by House Sparrow, and 1.5% by Great Tit.

© Zoltán Tölgyesi



©Zoltán Tölgyesi



## *The Barn Owl Project*

Under our Barn Owl project and with funding from the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, we continued our joint monitoring work and related ringing efforts with collaborator Zoltán Tölgyesi.

A total of 200 nest boxes were monitored, with 39% of the boxes found to be occupied by Barn Owls, while 42.5% were occupied by various other species. Moreover, 24 Barn Owl adults were ringed as well as 10 chicks. A 21.6% decrease in rodenticide use across the island was observed for 2025 compared to 2024.

We also hosted Professor Alexandre Roulin from Switzerland, a world expert on Barn Owls, who came to Cyprus to train the working team on the installation of tags on Barn Owls and the methodologies to analyse these data. Through this training we managed to tag three adult individuals and we recovered one tracking device.

Through both the Barn Owl and LIFE IP projects, we also prepared two scientific posters and an oral presentation and participated in international conferences in Greece (Barn Owl International conference) and in Latvia (European Bird Census Council Conference; EBCC), to present key findings and successes of both projects.



## Education

In 2025, our educational programmes reached around 2,500 students, mainly from primary schools, but also from kindergartens and middle schools, exceeding our annual target. This reflects the growing interest of schools in our efforts to connect children with birds and nature and to raise environmental awareness. The programmes include both in-school and outdoor activities, covering topics such as bird migration, illegal bird trapping and other threats, as well as practical ways to help birds at school and at home.

2025 also marked the beginning of our educational programmes for schools at the Thkio Mosfilies nature reserve in Frenaros. We welcomed around 470 students, mainly from Famagusta district, who explored and discovered the richness of the natural world around them, through hands-on and experiential active learning.

With regards to educational material, we designed and published a new guide on mini beasts, a fun and educational book to discover the invertebrates around us and understand the role of biodiversity in the health of habitats.

We also organized and participated in 20 events in communities, cities or in important bird sites that attracted nearly 1,200 participants, with a focus on family events. As always, our aim has been to offer alternative, experiential ways for people to connect with birds and nature.



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## Membership / Communications / Outreach

One of the year's most exciting achievements was the launch of a social media fundraising campaign to support the legal battle against the proposed port development in Pentakomo. The campaign generated media attention and visible public backing, with supporters engaging online and within local communities to defend the monk seal habitat and their coastline. The campaign successfully raised over €14,000 through contributions from citizens, which will contribute towards the relevant legal fees.

Media outreach remained strong, with a total of ten press releases being issued, addressing key issues including bird trapping, wildlife poisoning, Akrotiri Peninsula, and the controversial Pentakomo case. This resulted in more than 200 mentions of BirdLife Cyprus in the media and over 35 interviews on radio and television. Social media communication continued on an ongoing basis, maintaining consistent engagement with supporters and the wider public.

In addition, support was provided to BirdLife Europe's #BanLead campaign, advocating for the prohibition of lead in hunting, shooting, and fishing across the European Union.

With regards to merchandise, several new products were developed, led by our new Admin Officer, Sotiroulla Zitti, the latest addition to our team.

Maintaining a presence at the Global BirdFair has once again proven to be highly successful. In July 2025, we participated at the Global Birdfair and took the opportunity to educate visitors about the significance of Cyprus and the various projects we are currently involved in, while also promoting our bird tours and sharing why Cyprus is a must-visit destination. This was an opportunity to connect with fellow BirdLife partners, as well as a diverse array of interesting individuals, including artists, wildlife presenters and bird tour operators.



## *Statement of income and expenses for 2025*

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2025 (€)</b>
Contribution by A. P. Leventis	173.698
Income from projects	315.475
Contribution by Abacus Trustees Ltd	13.750
Income from services rendered	11.671
Subscriptions from members	12.143
Subsidies and contributions	2.320
Fair value gains on shares	3.026
Sundry income	
	<b>571.298</b>
<b>Total revenue</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Payroll cost	319.493
Cost of services rendered	5.671
Finance cost	3.533
Project cost	93.474
Third party services	17.994
Office administration expenses	57.080
Printing and publication	3.364
Transportation and travelling expenses	6.004
Cost of obsolete and free stock	192
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>506.806</b>
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>64.493</b>

# — Governance

Every three years, the BirdLife Cyprus members meet to elect a Council of up to nine members to govern the Society. The elected Council, which can also co-opt up to two additional members, must always have a minimum of five elected members. The Council – whose members are all volunteers – hires a Director and staff to execute the affairs of the Society in accordance with the policy formulated by the Council. It is the role of the Council and Director to ensure BirdLife Cyprus operates as a non-profit-making, politically non-aligned and independent environmental organisation (NGO), dedicated to the protection of wild birds and nature.

**President** A. P. Leventis

## **BIRDLIFE CYPRUS COUNCIL**

**Chairman** Melis Charalambides

**Vice Chairman** Peter Bromley

**Secretary** Stavros Christodoulides

**Treasurer** Chris Charalambides

**Social Secretary** Alexandra Panayi

**Fundraising Officer** Constantinos Konis

**Animal Welfare** Constantinos Antoniou

## **BIRDLIFE CYPRUS OFFICE TEAM**

**Director** Melpo Apostolidou

**Financial Manager** Myria Achilleos

**Monitoring & Research Coordinator** Christina Ieronymidou

**Campaigns Coordinator** Tassos Shialis

**Communications Coordinator** Elena Markitani

**Nature Policy Officer** Christos Nikiforou

**Education & Development Officer** Christia Alexandrou

**Conservation Projects Officer** Antaia Christou

**Campaigns & Monitoring Officer** Markos Charalambides

**Administration & Membership officer** Romina Constantinou (until February 2025)

**Admin Officer** Sotiroulla Zitti (from October 2025)

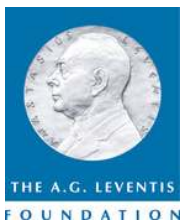
**Project Monitoring & Research Assistant** Stalo Leontiou

**Field Monitoring & Volunteers Assistant** Anders Gray

## *Main donors for 2025*

The work carried out during 2025, could not have been possible without the valuable and fundamental support from our donors, the main ones being mentioned here below:

- The Tasso Leventis Conservation Foundation
- The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- BirdLife International
- The EU's LIFE Programme
- NABU (BirdLife Germany)
- The Darwin Plus Fund
- The Oak Foundation
- BirdLife in Switzerland
- The A.G. Leventis Foundation
- The Republic of Cyprus
- The Cyprus Environment Foundation
- John Ellerman Foundation
- Abacus Trustees Ltd



John Ellerman  
Foundation





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