



LIBYA

REDUCING ILLEGAL KILLING OF BIRDS THROUGH HUNTER ENGAGEMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Libya occupies a strategic position along migratory routes providing vital stopover sites for birds avoiding the Nile or West Africa flyways¹. Yet illegal killing of birds (IKB) has increased significantly in recent years. Despite governmental and institutional challenges, **sustainable funding for hunter awareness and training initiatives offers a resilient pathway to conservation: one that builds capacity from the ground up and empowers local communities in the long term.**

KEY MESSAGES



Libya's strategic location makes it critical for Mediterranean migratory bird conservation, with wetlands & coasts serving as essential stopover sites.

Hunters are potential conservation allies, not adversaries. Education drives behaviour change more effectively than enforcement alone and encourages voluntary compliance.



Sustainable funding for awareness campaigns, backed by expert support, secures long-term impact: continuous outreach, capacity building and technical guidance maintain hunter engagement over time, even where institutional capacity is limited.

Data collection must be strengthened: monitoring remains limited and population estimates are still uncertain, highlighting the need for improved data collection & reporting.



KEY FINDINGS



~503,000
birds killed illegally
each year²



Moderate increase
(25 to 49%) of IKB
in the long term
since 2016³

Despite a limited monitoring effort (23 days of observation over 3 years), the following observations were made during the International Waterbird Census:

350 IKB events opportunistically recorded, including **14** nets found

440 new illegal hunting blinds recorded

6,418 illegal lead cartridges found across **42** wetlands

CONTEXT

Libya's wetlands - desert oases, freshwater springs, salt marshes, lagoons, and reservoirs - provide critical stopover for migratory birds travelling between Eurasia and Africa. Institutional fragility and security challenges limit monitoring and enforcement, while illegal killing of birds has increased. Hunting is an important socio-economic activity for local communities, supporting livelihoods. However, targeted education, awareness, and training can foster **sustainable hunting practices**, reducing IKB while ensuring that local populations continue to benefit from natural resources over the long term.



THE GAP

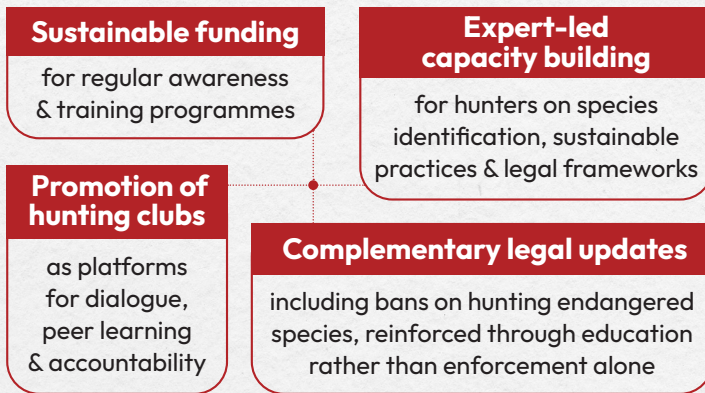
WHAT IS MISSING

- **Weak enforcement**
due to political and institutional situation
- **Limited hunter awareness**
of species status, legal obligations and ecological impacts
- **Insufficient continuity of training initiatives**
often dependent on short-term projects
- **Endangered species still targeted**
including within protected areas

THE SOLUTION

INVEST IN HUNTERS AS CONSERVATION PARTNERS

A pragmatic approach should focus on hunter awareness and especially:



CONCLUSION

Libya's conservation challenge is unique: the institutional situation **makes hunter-centered education programmes even more essential** to tackle IKB.

By **investing sustainably in awareness campaigns, hunter training, and organised hunting clubs**, Libya can reduce IKB, while:



Transforming hunters
from potential threats
to conservation partners



**Building resilient civil
society** capacity that persists
through political transitions



**Protecting Libya's critical
wetlands** and migratory
bird populations



**Creating employment
and community engagement**
opportunities

Beyond institutional stability, education and community engagement can deliver conservation gains today.

Public and private actors must invest in hunter awareness programmes.

Contact

Khaled S. Etayeb | khaledetayeb@yahoo.com

References

- ¹ K. Etayeb. 2025. International waterbird census. Libya report (2019–2023). Medwaterbirds Network, Tour du Valat, 12 p.
- ² Brochet A-L, Van den Bossche W, Jbour S, et al. (2016) Preliminary assessment of the scope and scale of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean. Bird Conservation International. 26(1):1–28. doi:10.1017/S0959270915000416.
- ³ BirdLife International and EuroNatur (2025). Progress assessment on the eradication of illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds in the Mediterranean and Europe.