

**On 11 October 2003, BirdLife called a press conference as a follow-up to an open letter it sent the Prime Minister on 26 September 2003. BirdLife said that while it disagrees outright with all the concessions that the government won for hunters in its EU negotiations, the Society expects the government at least to implement what it negotiated, namely:**

- 1. to allow hunting in spring of turtle dove and quail ONLY**
- 2. to protect adequately all its nature reserves**
- 3. to ensure adequate administrative capacity and sufficient legal instruments to curb illegal hunting**
- 4. to afford protection to birds in need of special protection**

**None of this has happened yet. All we have in practice is hunters still free to hunt whatever they like in spring. BirdLife also noted that several points of the current legislation are not in line with the common position negotiated with the EU, including**

- 1. trapping of species other than those agreed**
- 2. trapping of finches in spring**
- 3. hunting at sea in spring**
- 4. hunting with sea-craft far exceeding 18 knots**

**Moreover, Malta has the shortest close season in Europe, which also coincides with the time when very few birds are migrating. The hunting season opens on 1 Sep, just as migration starts picking up, and on 1 Oct hunters at sea join the carnage. BirdLife asked: What chance do ANY birds have of making a safe trip across Malta?**

**In Gozo, hunting goes totally unchecked. The police there are slow to react. Illegal equipment like vertical nets and birdcallers are common throughout the countryside. BirdLife asked: Has the government given up on Gozo?**

**Trapping sites should be registered, but the government has not done this yet. BirdLife asked: How many trapping sites are on public land? How many enforcement notices have been served on illegal trapping site?**

**There are illegal trapping sites near and even right on top of megaliths and archaeological sites. Trappers damage the sites irreparably. BirdLife asked: How come such people are tolerated?**

**Surveys show that over 60% of the Maltese want tougher action against hunters. BirdLife asked: Whose interests is the government protecting?**

**Public land leased by the Lands Department for agricultural purposes is being rented out for hunting and trapping. BirdLife asked: What is Lands doing about this?**

**The government is not willing to make a move. There is no co-ordination between departments, ministries and sections. There are police officers willing to take up the challenge, but the authorities' standard moan is that you can't put a policeman with every hunter. If the government has made regulations that are unenforceable, it has only itself to blame, and it isn't as though BirdLife didn't forewarn the authorities of this.**

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**The Federation for Hunting & Conservation – Malta (FKNK) Comments today 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008:**

**Prior to Malta's EU Membership, the society of Birdlife (Malta) lobbied and strongly promoted Membership with the full knowledge of all the concessions that the Malta government won for hunters in its EU negotiations.**

**Since the Birdlife (Malta) press conference of 11 October 2003, the Malta Government has accommodated Birdlife (Malta) on ALL REQUESTS! **ALL!!****

- 1. allowed hunting in spring of turtle dove and quail ONLY**
- 2. all the Maltese Islands nature reserves are adequately protected, not just the two nature reserves that the same Government allocated to Birdlife (Malta)**
- 3. enforcement and legal instruments to curb illegal hunting have NEVER been so adequate, with results that speak for themselves. This has had the desired effect even more so on GOZO**
- 4. birds in need of special protection have been guaranteed such protection even by enactment of Legal Notices**

**ALL points of the current legislation ARE IN LINE with the common position negotiated with the EU, especially by enactment of Legal Notice 79 of 2006 that ensures:**

1. the trapping of species is carried out on none-other than on those agreed
2. trapping of finches in spring is not permissible
3. hunting at sea in spring is not permissible
4. hunting with sea-craft far exceeding 18 kilometres per hour is not permissible

Moreover Malta has the LONGEST closed season in Europe, in fact even contrary to what is directed by EU's Directive 79/409/EEC in that it is the responsibility of the individual EU Member States to establish their open and closed seasons, again by enactment of the same Legal Notice 79 of 2006, Malta is the ONLY EU Member State with NO ESTABLISHED OPEN SEASON. CLOSED SEASON ALL YEAR. Any season is ONLY opened *ad hoc* at the Minister's discretion.

Trapping sites have been duly registered – Legal Notice of 2007.

No proof can be supplied to substantiate Birdlife's claim that public land leased by the Lands Department for agricultural purposes is being rented out for hunting and trapping.

**WHY IS IT THAN, THAT TODAY BIRDLIFE (MALTA) AND OTHERS ARE OPPOSING THE HUNTING OF ONLY THE TURTLE DOVE AND QUAIL FOR A SHORT PART OF THE PRE-NUPTIAL PERIOD, IN SMALL NUMBERS AND UNDER STRICTLY SUPERVISED CONDITIONS WHEN THEY HAD PRIMARILY CONSENTED TO THIS NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE MALTA GOVERNMENT AND THE EU!**

**FURTHERMORE, AND EVEN MORE DISTURBING, WHY IS IT THAT TODAY THE EU COMMISSION IS ATTEMPTING TO NULLIFY THIS SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT THAT WAS CONSENTED TO BY ALL EU MEMBERS STATES IN THE COMMON POSITIONS PAPER WITH THE EU, BY TAKING MALTA TO THE EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE OVER THIS SPRING HUNTING WITH EVIDENCE THAT IS BASED ON GROSS MISREPRESENTATION AND MISINTERPRETATION OF MATERIAL FACTS!**

**FKNK COUNCIL**