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BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL

It beats one to understand how BirdLife (Malta?) tactics may be the way forward when one reads quotes by none other than BirdLife International.

This extract is being reproduced from none other than Birdlife International website. It clearly acknowledges that the way forward is not through confrontations between environmentalists and hunters. It also clearly highlights that in the countries mentioned and which perchance happen to be our geographical neighbours and with whom we also happen to share a lot culturally, hunting is a distinct social activity! And this report does not regard turtle doves and quail which Birdlife International list of threatened birds justly acknowledges as species of least concern. This dear friends, is the velvet gloved treatment with regards to the capture of threatened species such as birds of prey etc.

Ironically with the help of a project funded by the European Union (Project Ref: LIFE 04 TCY/INT/000054) "Building Capacity for Sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean countries of North Africa and the Middle East", in 2006 BirdLife International commented:

"Hunters kill an estimated 500 million birds as they migrate through the Mediterranean each year, a significant proportion of which are shot or trapped in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East that border the Mediterranean. Most are from species and populations that breed in Europe and winter in Africa and many of those killed are internationally threatened species or listed on Annex 1 of the European Union's 'Birds Directive'. However, hunting is an important socio-economic activity in the region, particularly in rural areas, involving hundreds of thousands of people and hectares, and supporting a variety of groups and the interests of these groups must be considered if conservation measures to address the plight of migratory birds are to succeed. Management of bird hunting in the region is inadequate with often poor legal regulation and law enforcement, lack of resources and capacity among relevant government institutions and NGOs, poor public and hunter awareness of the impact of hunting, a lack of regional agreement on action to better protect migratory birds, and past conflicts between hunters and conservationists."

Has the fact that Malta joined the EU in any way altered our geographical position, extrapolated our regional and cultural distinctions and traditions?

How come that the means factually termed as definitely not the way forwarded in Malta's neighbouring countries, are effectively the means resorted to on this tiny island of ours?

May 19 will see the release of the 2008 IUCN Red List for birds. Occurring every four years, this full update is a global assessment of every bird species on earth: a complete inventory of the conservation status of the world's avifauna.

For birds, the Red List is maintained by BirdLife International for IUCN. Compiling an accurate and fully documented list is time consuming but vital for planning conservation action. But what goes into a Red List update?

BirdLife International personnel have to assimilate and sift through a huge amount of data. They receive input from a huge number of scientists, conservationists and birdwatchers, both in the BirdLife Partnership and a broader network of collaborating organisations and IUCN specialist groups.

One means of collating information is through BirdLife's Globally Threatened Bird Forums (www.birdlifeforums.org). Over 1,500 people are registered contributors to these and they have provided news on several species for which Red List category revisions had been proposed.

But what will this year's changes be? Have any species been brought back from the brink of extinction? How many will have edged even closer to oblivion?

The Red List has thus-far listed both the turtle dove and quail as species of 'least concern.'

Going by the European malicious and unjust plan to abolish the Maltese socio-cultural tradition of spring hunting, does anybody want to bet where turtle doves and quail will end up in this new list of threatened species?

FKNK Council