



Finch-capturing in Europe

For the first time in the history of the Maltese islands, the Maltese traditional socio-cultural passion of finch-capturing practised by thousands of aficionados was not permitted this autumn. The present government took this step, notwithstanding the fact that even the EU Accession Treaty specifies that finch-capturing (chaffinch, goldfinch, greenfinch, hawfinch, linnet, serin, and siskin) may continue in a limited form after 31st December 2008. Notwithstanding also the several promises and guarantees, political but also official, made by government in writing to every individual trapper.

Ironically the Lombardy Region of Italy approved by a majority the law on hunting for 2009 – 2010 and permitted by means of a derogation the shooting and killing for the pot of the chaffinch, greenfinch, hawfinch, brambling and meadow-pipit. The open season for these species commenced in the third week of September and extends up to the 31st of December. Additionally, in the Provinces of Brescia, Bergamo, Lecco-Sondrio, Como and Mantua, trappers are permitted to capture, by the use of nets, skylarks, fieldfares, blackbirds, song-thrushes and redwings, which birds are eventually distributed to hunters for use as live decoys and call-birds. In Malta, however, with the exception of the song-thrush, not one of these species may be taken alive by the use of nets, although they may all be legally taken by the use of shotguns.

The Federation for Hunting & Conservation – Malta (FKNK) believes that Maltese trappers should enjoy the same rights as their European counterparts.

Lino Farrugia Secretary - FKNK

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Finch-Capturing in Malta - A local traditional socio-cultural passion, finch capturing is carried out on a small scale, with selective clap-nets, for the purpose of keeping the caught birds alive in captivity (no finch is ever killed), where they outlive by several years the birds in the wild. The kept birds are eventually used as live-decoys, call-birds, show-birds, for their song and for captive breeding. The birds in question are the linnet, serin, siskin, hawfinch, chaffinch, goldfinch and greenfinch. All these birds enjoy a very healthy conservation status in the wild and are classified by the IUCN under the taxon of 'least concern'.