



FKNK Council Officials Acquitted

The Federation for Hunting & Conservation – Malta (FKNK) officials were last week acquitted in a Court Case wherein the Police, on a BirdLife Malta report, arraigned them for releasing several birds back into the wild on 29.11.08, alleging that they had breached bird-ringing regulations because they had marked the birds with split-rings before their release.

During the FKNK's Secretary testimony, besides other, reference was also made to the Prime Minister's reply of the very previous Monday to two supplementary questions in Parliament, when on two instances the Prime Minister had linked traditional bird-capturing with bird-ringing.

The presentation to the Prime Minister and to the Leader of the Opposition of a Dossier regarding the continuance of the traditional socio-cultural Maltese passion of wild birds capturing with nets for the purpose of keeping any caught birds in captivity, was announced at a Press Conference held at Buskett Gardens by the Federation for Hunting and Conservation – Malta (FKNK) on the 29th November 2008.

Since part of the Dossier was based on compensatory measures, after the Press Conference the FKNK symbolically put back into the wild over 100 marked linnets, 3 marked song thrushes, 4 marked turtle doves and a marked golden plover. The FKNK also made a symbolic donation of a further 28 marked linnets and 2 marked serins to the Government Għammieri Captive Breeding Project a week later.

The FKNK of their own free will had collected wild birds that had been legally caught by several trappers from all over the islands of Malta and Gozo. The trappers, who had every right to keep the birds as their possession in captivity, gave the birds of their own free will and against no payment to the FKNK in the full knowledge that after being marked the birds would be released into the wild. The FKNK wanted to put some form of identification on the birds before release. They might as well have been marked with some paint, however the most adequate, practical and convenient manner was to put rings on the birds' legs. The appropriate iodized split rings were ordered and bought from a reputable company in Scotland that also supplies licensed bird-ringers around the world with same. The proper tools to put on the rings were also ordered from a similar reputable company in the UK.

BirdLife Malta had found objection to this gesture claiming that this action was illegal and sought legal redress against the FKNK Council Members.

Lino Farrugia Secretary - FKNK