

EuroNatur, Konstanzer Str. 22, D-78315 Radolfzell

**H.E.
Minister Sredoje Nović
Ministarstvo Civilnih Poslova
Ministry for Civil Affairs
TRG BiH 1
71000 Sarajevo
BOSNA I HERCEGOVINA**

Gabriel Schwaderer
Executive Director

tel.: +387 33 221 073
fax: +387 33 221 074
e-mail: kabinet.ministra@mcp.gov.ba

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Bird Hunting in Bosnia-Herzegovina
A call for urgent improvement

Dear Sir,

Bosnia-Herzegovina is a globally important country for bird preservation. Migrating birds follow the Adriatic Flyway across the East Adriatic Coast towards the Dinarids and need resting and feeding sites during spring and autumn while migrating. Bosnia-Herzegovina offers several valuable resting and feedings sites, e.g. the huge and flooded Karst Poljes, the Lower Neretva and the plains of the Sava River.

The country is also an important wintering area. Other birds, for example Cranes, especially in the course of the recent climate changes, tend to stay in Europe rather than migrating to Africa. Consequently, they need rescue areas in case of cold snaps. Bosnia-Herzegovina also offers several of such places in the Neretva Delta and the Karst Poljes.

Unfortunately though, within our analysis of the current situation concerning bird hunting along the Adriatic Flyway, Bosnia-Herzegovina was ranked poor.

In our opinion, your country has failed to implement even the minimum European standards in bird preservation and hunting due to many reasons (see below).

EuroNatur
Konstanzer Str. 22
D-78315 Radolfzell

Fon +49 (0)7732/92 72 0
Fax +49 (0)7732/92 72 22
info@euronatur.org
www.euronatur.org

Spendenkonto 818 2005
BLZ 370 205 00
Bank für Sozialwirtschaft Köln



As the current situation in your country is impacting bird populations especially from Central, Northern and Eastern Europe, as well as the breeding populations of numerous species in your country, we urgently ask you to implement the following measures to improve the situation. Bird species such as the Slender-billed Curlew are near to extinction worldwide and therefore in need of urgent changes in hunting laws and nature conservation policies in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Hunting during the rearing season and the various stages of reproduction

According to the EU Birds Directive, hunting during the rearing season and the various stages of reproduction as still practised in Bosnia-Herzegovina is not allowed.

Therefore, please stop bird hunting in August and September.

Hunting during the return to the rearing grounds

Birds start to migrate back to their breeding areas early in the year. According to the Birds Directive, hunting during the birds' return to their breeding grounds is not allowed.

Therefore, please stop bird hunting after January 15th at latest.

Number of Birds Species open for Hunting

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the new (!) hunting laws of the two entities of the country, 120 birds are listed in law of the Federation and 158 in the law of the Srpska Republika as target species. This is an unbelievable record in Europe as many of these species are endangered and protected on European level and by international conventions as the Bern and Bonn Convention. It is important to change these laws according to European and international standards.

With 42 species in the Federation and 37 in the Serb Republic, the list of birds which are not protected all year is long. Even several bird species are hunted which are already close to extinction in your country. The list of birds in both hunting laws has to be reviewed and scientific species names added.

Specifically, please stop hunting of all species of waders (Charadriiformes) as Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*) and Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) immediately. Not only the fate of the Slender-billed Curlew depends on your



country's action, but also the destiny of other wader species such as Black-tailed Godwit (*L. limosa*).

Number of Birds Hunted

There are no figures on how many birds are hunted each year in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

An annual report will help to prove that hunting in your country does not endanger any bird species in their survival.

Therefore, please publish the data and improve the monitoring of bird hunting.

Hunting Ban Areas

Although Bosnia-Herzegovina has established few Hunting Ban Areas such as the Nature Park Hutovo Blato, the number of secure stop over sites and resting sites is insufficient in Bosnia-Herzegovina due to a lack of supervision and promotion. Other countries are much more advanced in this respect. Switzerland, for example, has protected 18 bird areas of national and 10 of international importance

Please follow this positive example. In addition, please stop bird hunting in all important bird areas and resting sites of national and international importance.

Illegal Hunting

Illegal bird hunting is a huge problem in your country! The implementation of the existing hunting law is poor as there are hardly any inspections whether the law is actually being followed. Many hunters ignore any regulations related to bird hunting and even inside natural reserves and strict protected core areas hunters are shooting regularly.

One of the worst examples we are aware of in Europe concerning bird crime is the Nature Park Hutovo Blato.

The situation needs urgent improvement! Therefore, please initiate a broad campaign in your country addressing hunters, police, all kinds of inspection agencies and NGOs to inform them about the high conservation status of many bird species.



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Bosnia-Herzegovina is an important country to hold the worldwide loss of biodiversity. We therefore urgently ask you to base your decisions concerning laws and regulations for hunting and protection of birds on the European environmental policy and the agreed standards of bird conservation in Europe to help to preserve the biodiversity in your country and in Europe.

EuroNatur is monitoring the improvements of bird hunting in different countries along the Adriatic Flyway, including Bosnia-Herzegovina. We would be pleased to support you in the improvement of the current situation and in the implementation of all measures necessary for the improvement of bird hunting.

Yours sincerely,

