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MONTENEGRO**

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Bird Hunting in Montenegro
A call for urgent improvement

Dear Sir,

Montenegro 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 when migrating. Montenegro offers several valuable resting and feedings sites, e.g., the Solana Ulcinj, Buljarica, Solila Tivat as well as Lake Skadar and Zeta plain.

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 during cold snaps at the warm Adriatic coast. Montenegro also offers several of such places, e.g. the Bojana-Buna Delta or places around Podgorica.

Unfortunately though, within our analysis of the current situation concerning bird hunting along the Adriatic Flyway, Montenegro was ranked insufficient. 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).

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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 world wide and therefore in need of urgent changes in hunting laws and nature conservation policies in Montenegro.

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 Montenegro 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 Montenegro, several bird species are hunted, which are already close to extinction in your country. Please remove birds such as Gadwal (*A. strepera*) and Teal (*A. crecca*) from the list of species open for hunting.

In addition, 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 Montenegro'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 Montenegro.

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 Montenegro has established Hunting Ban Areas at Lake Skadar, Solana Ulcinj and Solila Tivat, the number of secure stop over sites and resting sites is insufficient in Montenegro 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.

We are very pleased about the decision taken in the new Hunting Law of Montenegro that the whole coastal estate (morsko dobro) is not considered hunting ground any more. This is good news which needs to be promoted on European scale.

Additionally, please stop 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 National Park Skadar Lake, natural reserves and strict protected core areas hunters are shooting regularly.

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.

Montenegro 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, also including Montenegro. 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,

