

# euRONATUR STIFTUNG

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Bird Hunting in Serbia  
A Call for urgent improvement

Dear Sir,

Serbia 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. Serbia offers several valuable resting and feedings sites, e.g. the Danube Wetlands, fishpond areas and a large scale cultural landscape.

Unfortunately though, within our analysis of the current situation concerning bird hunting along the Adriatic Flyway, Serbia 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).

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

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and therefore in need of urgent changes in hunting laws and nature conservation policies in Serbia.

### 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 practised in Serbia 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 Bird 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 Serbia, several bird species are hunted which are already decreasing in your country.

Please remove birds such as Teal (*Anas crecca*) or Garganey (*Anas querquedula*) as well as Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) 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 Serbia's action, but also the destiny of other wader species such as Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*).

Please also protect all birds of prey from prosecution. The hunting season for Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) is threatening many other rare birds of prey. The same principle applies for Grey Heron (*Ardea cinera*). Herons are not allowed to be hunted for example in the EU.

### Number of Birds Hunted

There are no figures on how many birds are hunted each year in Serbia, but some dates as the number as Quails shot per year indicate a huge pressure both on landscape and bird species.



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

The number of secure stop over sites and resting sites is insufficient in Serbia. There are only very few areas such as Slano Kopovo and Craska Bara known to us. Other important areas are threatened by hunting activities. Other countries are much more advanced in this respect. Switzerland, for example, has protected 18 bird areas of national and 10 of international importance for bird protection.

Please also note that in Croatia fish farms as well as public traffic corridors such as the Sava River are no hunting ground. Please follow these positive examples and stop hunting in all important bird areas of national and international importance including the Danube River and fish farms.

### 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. Killing of protected species is even published on promotion DVDs for bird hunting in your country!

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.

Serbia 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. 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,

