



**FKNK**

28 September 2011

## **NOTHING is a Satisfactory Alternative Solution to Live-Bird Capturing (Trapping)**

False and inaccurate statements by Geoffrey Saliba, manager of BirdLife Malta (BLM) EU Life+ Project, which was embarked on with the clear aim to eradicate the local socio-cultural tradition of live-bird capturing, in particular finch trapping, do not impress anyone. The Federation for Hunting & Conservation – Malta (FKNK) considers certain malicious declarations aimed to negatively affect the very lives of trappers as very serious, and will be looking into all possibilities of instituting further legal actions against Geoffrey Saliba and BLM.

Since BLM, in partnership with Government, set-off with their Project, they tried all tricks in the book to get trappers involved, since this was one of the conditions imposed for the success of the project that would further ensure hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' Euros directed into BLM's coffers:

- without disclosing the real reason for the requested meeting they met FKNK officials, who immediately saw through BLM's deceit and refused further meetings;
- they sponsored the Malta Cage Bird Association (MCBA), in which are affiliated several trappers, (the other three similar organisations simply refused to be involved), however the MCBA eventually also came to realise BLM's intent, and have severed any association with them;
- they unsuccessfully tried to meet Gozitan trappers through the island's Local Councils;
- BLM's President has said that trappers have been approaching him personally and BLM in general to request information about an alternative to trapping, which declarations has been totally belied by thousands of trappers in an FKNK Petition;
- BLM state that they have dialogued with 411 trappers about these pursuing other interests in replacement of trapping. The FKNK here openly challenges BLM to supply identities of these persons and the FKNK will supply identities of thousands of trappers who are in total disagreement.

Furthermore:

- they prepared incorrect and unchallenged surveys about trapping-sites and trapping and sent them to the EU Commission;
- they instigated, again encouraged by government, a captive-breeding programme which costs several other thousands of Euros, which programme is a total failure and waste of money;
- with pure unilateral conjecture BLM maintain that captive-breeding is an alternative to trapping, another statement disproved by another FKNK Petition again signed by thousands of trappers;

It is completely inconceivable that Government has been party to all this, notwithstanding its several promises and guarantees (a comprehensive list can be found in attached document) regarding the continuance of trapping made to trappers prior to Malta's EU

Membership and in particular the Prime Minister's written guarantee sent personally to each and every trapper.

It is very true that trappers' licenses have decreased from 4,616 to the present 2,643 since government suspended trapping of finches in 2008, however this is no achievement of Geoffrey Saliba or BLM as is being self-proclaimed, but as a direct consequence of the above fact plus the unannounced suspension of new trapping licenses on 1 August 2002, and Government's refusal to issue new licenses following the 5-year moratorium imposed by the same Government through Legal Notice 56 of 2003. Government has also simply ignored another FKNK Petition with over 8,000 signatures which was recently presented to the Maltese Parliament in a manner that gives the impression that it is totally impassive towards the hardship that its people have been suffering and are still enduring even at present.

Both BLM and Government are indifferent to the fact that trappers' family values, passions and dreams have been shattered. BirdLife are more interested in the funds they can acquire, whilst Government is totally insensitive towards the lives of its Maltese trappers, which gives more credibility to FKNK's feeling that, in Government's view, trappers are dispensable.

BLM's ending statement at the Press Conference they addressed yesterday is no more than a complete see-through propaganda.

How can BLM expect to be seen as a credible organisation when they say that they hoped to continue their dialogue with various hunters and trappers and that their doors are open to any organisation, including the FKNK, when on several recent TV and Radio programmes they refused to participate just because of FKNK's participation!

The FKNK has tried on various occasions in the past to open an honest and forward-looking dialogue with BLM, but in one way or another BLM have always managed to curtail any forum that could foresee an acceptable happy-medium. Confrontation seems to be the only way by which BLM can ensure a continuous flow of funds.

The FKNK will still sit down to dialogue with BLM, however, they have to accept:

- the application of a derogation for a satisfactory, limited and controlled spring season for just two species;
- adequate autumn/winter hunting and trapping seasons for *hunnable* species with strict control but no unnecessary restrictions;
- the application of a derogation for an appropriate, limited and controlled autumn season for finch-trapping; and
- that they stop trespassing on private properties and FKNK's Hunting Reserves.

Finally, the FKNK repeats that **NOTHING is a Satisfactory Alternative Solution to Live-Bird Capturing (Trapping)**, and the FKNK will continue on its mission to reinstate legal trapping within a European framework for the Maltese and Gozitan Trappers.

Lino Farrugia  
Secretary General

Attachment: [http://www.huntinginmalta.org.mt/uploads/24/810/Traditional\\_Finch-capturing\\_in\\_Malta -  
A Document for the Malta Ornis Committee Consideration.pdf](http://www.huntinginmalta.org.mt/uploads/24/810/Traditional_Finch-capturing_in_Malta_-_A_Document_for_the_Malta_Ornis_Committee_Consideration.pdf)