



The Federation for Hunting & Conservation – Malta

(FKNK)

Over the years –

In the early seventies hunters and trappers, not just in Malta but all over the world were under heavy fire from so called 'protectionists'. It seemed as if the world's population was being awoken from a deep coma to realise how generations over the years had destroyed the world's natural environment. Hunters and trappers were being blamed for part of this destruction.

Over most of Europe, in fact, hunting and trapping laws had already been introduced and these with the vivid participation of the various countries' hunting and trapping representatives, who were quick to realise the importance of having typical bodies to defend their passions.

It was therefore with the same intentions that on the 17th September, 1973, the National Association of Hunters and Trappers, as it was called at the time, was formed.

In May 1982, the Association was reformed, its statute amended and renamed The Hunters' Association. This English version of the Association's title did not in any manner suggest that, then, or still even to-day, the Association would not also defend the local traditional passions of trapping, or better still live-bird-capturing with nets. Very simply, trapping constitutes another form of hunting, similar to various other country recreations such as falconry, hunting with hounds, etc.

In July 1984 the Association again changed its name by adding the word conservation, since this important role was becoming more and more part and parcel of the passions.

On the 22nd June 1998 the Association's statute was reconstructed so as to form The Federation for Hunting & Conservation - Malta (FKNK) which incorporates 23 Associations from as many districts and specific committees.

Over the years some of these specific committees have included:

- The Commission for Public Relations and Education
- A Sea-Hunting Committee
- A Rabbit Hunting & Ferreting Committee
- Youth Section
- Children Section
- Mizieb Organisation Committee
- Limits of Mellieħa Organisation Committee
- Maltese Hunting-Dog Club

Lands Administered and Managed by the FKNK -

These latter two Committees were set up since the Maltese Islands limit the amount of land available for the practices. Therefore the Federation has always insisted on being granted land where its' members, besides being organised in the practice, can also maintain the natural habitat of the land, and where also the public in general can enjoy other recreations.

In 1983, seventeen plots of land were identified which could gradually be handed over to be administered by the Federation for such organisation, and in fact in 1984, the first pilot project started in the Limits of Mellieħa, with the second project, that of Mizieb which began in 1986.

At these two localities, the practicing Members, under the direction of the above mentioned Committees, maintain the place through cleaning, pruning of trees, planting of trees, restoration of rubble walls, etc., throughout the year. Picnic Areas for use by the general public outside the hunting and trapping seasons, have also been set up at both localities.

It is a real pity that no more lands have been allocated for this type of exercise, which enable the hunters and trappers to be responsible for the conservation of the surrounding natural habitats where hunting and trapping are also practiced. Hunters and Trappers are the foremost Managers of Nature, and amongst other things, this occurs when hunters and trappers are allowed to maintain the land.

Annual Activities and Events -

During the course of each year the FKNK organises and participates at several activities and events and its' annual calendar usually includes:

- Children Outings and Visits to cultural and historical places, and courtesy visits to personalities
- Fairs and similar events participation
- The biggest clay pigeon shooting competition for teams held in Malta (during the first organisation of this competition by the FKNK in 1992, the now popular mission statement "**Better Shots Make Better Conservationists**" was launched)
- Environment Day participation at specified events
- Artistic taxidermy show
- Ducks' village pilot project
- Mnarja Maltese hunting-dogs and rabbit-hunting dogs competition
- Maltese folklore nights

- Finches show
- Gun-dogs field trial

The Federation first received recognition from foreign hunting circles in June 1982. On the 11th September 1987, the Federation joined FACE (The Federation of Association for Hunting & Conservation in the EU), and as such is represented at FACE Board level. FACE represents the interests of over 7,000,000 hunters throughout Europe, and as such incorporates Member Associations from 36 countries and 4 hunting related Associate Members. The Secretary of the FKNK is FACE's ambassador to Malta regarding NATURA 2000 sites on the Maltese Islands. On the 26th May 1989, the Federation was also accepted as a member of CIC (The International Council for Game & Wildlife Conservation) and on the 6th July, 1995, the Maltese Federation was one of the founder members of AECT (The Association of Traditional Hunting in Europe). In the year 2000 the FKNK was also one of the founder members of the Communications Group within FACE, InterFACE. In 2008 the FKNK formed part of FACE Members within the Mediterranean basin to set up FACE MED and also became a member of ELO (European Landowners Organisation). In 2010 the FKNK enrolled as an NGO with the Malta Commission of Voluntary Organisations.

The FKNK is by far the largest NGO in the Maltese Islands with over 10,000 adult paid-up members in 2009, with a potential of over 14,000.

The Maltese hunters and trappers are all experts in wild birds' field recognition having been trained from a very early age. Hunters and particularly the odd 4,000 trappers have kept wild caught birds in captivity mostly for use as live-decoys, call-birds, for their song and also for captive breeding, which in turn renders Maltese hunters and trappers very well experienced in all aspects that concern migratory wild birds' species over the Maltese islands.

Maltese hunters and trappers, and hunting and trapping related activities contribute €82,000,000 towards Malta's Gross Domestic Product per annum (2007) or 0.60%.