



The Malta Spring-hunting Derogation – 13th to 30th April, 2011

Executive Summary of the Federation for Hunting & Conservation – Malta (FKNK)
Report to the Environment Commission, D.G. Environment

Summary

The Malta Government this spring applied a derogation by means of article 9 from the “Birds” Directive in order to permit hunting of turtle doves and quails on the Maltese Islands for a limited potential duration period of 126 hours, on and between the 13th and the 30th of April 2011.

Out of an eligible 12,300 hunters, 5610 made use of the relative special licence.

The FKNK, an entity whose members are directly affected by such Derogation and its application, has monitored, on a first-hand basis, the situation on the ground, and has prepared a report for the consideration of the Commission. This is the Executive Summary of that Report.

The Report consists of six sections

Section 1.0 deals: with Government’s application of the Derogation through the relative Framework Regulation and the Legal Notices enacted thereafter;

Section 1.1: with the Open Season, and the hours and days when hunting was permitted;

Sections 1.2 to 1.2.2: with Bag Limits, both national and individual, the “Small Numbers” criteria as established by Government, and the Special Licences Fees and Conditions, including the bag-reporting systems of SMS and *Carnet de Chasse*;

Sections 1.3: with the Methods Permitted, i.e. that hunting was permitted by the use of shotguns, however not through the use of traditional live-bird capturing;

Sections 1.4 to 1.4.2: with the strictly supervised conditions and the number of deployed police officers and hunting marshals, both during the open and closed timings.

Section 2.0 explains: the Actual Application of the 2011 Derogation, i.e., that the derogation was applied throughout the hours when hunting was permissible;

Section 2.1: that the reported catches respected the set national Bag Limits;

Section 2.2: the Judicious Use that is eventually made from the harvested birds;

Sections 2.3 to 2.3.2: the effectiveness in ensuring the Strictly Supervised Conditions, through the help of Police numerous spot-checks and preventive and timely action. Police officials Reports regarding Charges and Seizures are also presented in these Sections. More importantly, from the Police Reports, just 50 infringements result from 5,610 hunters which result just makes up 0.9% of the spring hunters, and out of the 1,665 spot checks carried out by the Police, 1,595 investigations found everything in order. Furthermore, the unequivocal fact that was clearly evident during the derogated period is that the presence of over 5,000 law-abiding hunters in the field was the best deterrent against illegal activities.

Section 3.0 reflects: the Migration Passage of the two species over the Maltese Islands during the permitted hours for hunting, and how this resulted in the worst such passage in living memory;

Sections 3.1 to 3.1.1: the FKNK’s involvement in two different Studies. The first regarding the results obtained by FKNK volunteers deployed over the Maltese Islands to record the species’ sightings during

the permitted hunting hours, and the second Study is a government commissioned Study that had been requested by the Commission.

Section 4.0 deals: with BirdLife Malta (BLM) and German based Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) 'Hunter Watch Camps' – aka 'Spring Watch Camps' - and their activities during the derogated period;

Sections 4.1 to 4.1.1: with the FKNK's commissioned security services Company, who surveyed some of the BLM and CABS Camps' groups during their outings, which Company also reported to the FKNK any illegal activities it encountered;

Sections 4.2 to 4.2.5: specifically with BLM and their Camps;

Sections 4.3 to 4.3.2: specifically with CABS' Camps.

Sections 5.0 to 5.2 reflect: Other Points of Interest and Consideration, made very recently by ex-BLM members and officials, and an FKNK symbolic compensatory gesture.

Following every Section the FKNK relates its reactions to that particular Section through reference to the supporting Annexes attached to the Report. The Annexes, except for three, are composed of FKNK media releases and other documentation which relate to the application of the spring 2011 derogation. There are three exceptions: one is a detailed report of happenings noted by the security services Company, another deals with the number of fired shots, shots-to-kill ratio, and the reported harvest, and the third annex is a Police report regarding infringements, spot-checks, seizures, etc., carried out by the Police during the derogated period.

Section 6.0 expresses: the FKNK's satisfaction that the conditions of the derogation were observed, and that the overwhelming majority of the licensed hunters behaved in an exemplary manner.

The Federation is also very pleased that personalities known in ornithological circles have witnessed for themselves the great and tangible improvements in the hunting process during the derogation period, and in particular that the specific and more delicate issue regarding the exercising of 'strict control' were observed.

Inasmuch as they were not required by the "Birds" Directive, the FKNK disagrees with certain impositions of the derogation that unnecessarily hindered the attainment of a complete satisfactory alternative solution to autumn.

The FKNK, through its membership with FACE (The Federation of Associations for Hunting & Conservation in the EU), will accordingly continue to seek redress on those vexatious issues, and also with FACE's support will endeavour to build a stronger position on the successes attained this spring of 2011 as detailed in the Report.

The Report is copied to the Malta Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the European Commission Representative in Malta, the Maltese Permanent Representative in Brussels, the Bureau of the Sustainable Hunting Inter-group of the European Parliament, and FACE.

30th May 2011

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