

Sovereign Base Area Administration of Akrotiri and Dhekelia

A strategic approach to illegal bird killing



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1

The SBAs in Cyprus

2

Illegal Bird Killing in the SBAs

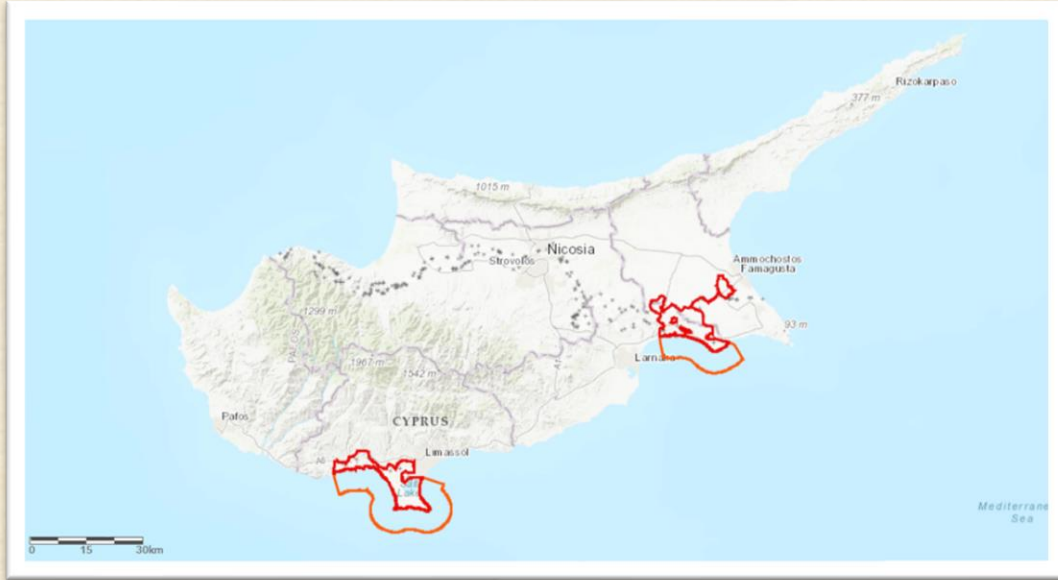
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Our strategic approach

4

Current situation & The future...

SBAA background



About the SBAs

- 397.4km of terrestrial territory
- United Kingdom overseas territory
- SBA Administration – funded by MOD
- A primary function of the SBAA is to ensure that the SBAs can be used in support British Forces Cyprus, including the provision of Military Training Activities.

Our biodiversity

- Very important fly-way and migration route
- Numerous endemic and red list species
- Important habitats & protected species
- Nationally and internationally protected areas



Bird Trapping & Poaching in the SBAs

- Is an island-wide multi-faceted problem extending into SBAs
- 'Ambelopoulia' is an expensive Cyprus delicacy. Birds are lured, illegally captured by non-selective methods, slaughtered and sold for profit by organised groups or consumed by individuals
- Strong links to organised crime



Where did the Strategic approach come from?

- Result of political & media pressure on SBAA and UK government from local and International NGOs
- Identified the activity as a significant risk to the SBAA
- Legal obligations of the SBAA (national & international)

CyprusMail
FOUNDED 1945

Cyprus

Prince Charles weighs in on bird trapping controversy

By Jean Christou · March 24, 2014 · 80 · 489

Birds 'trapped and killed' on UK soil in Cyprus

24 December 2010

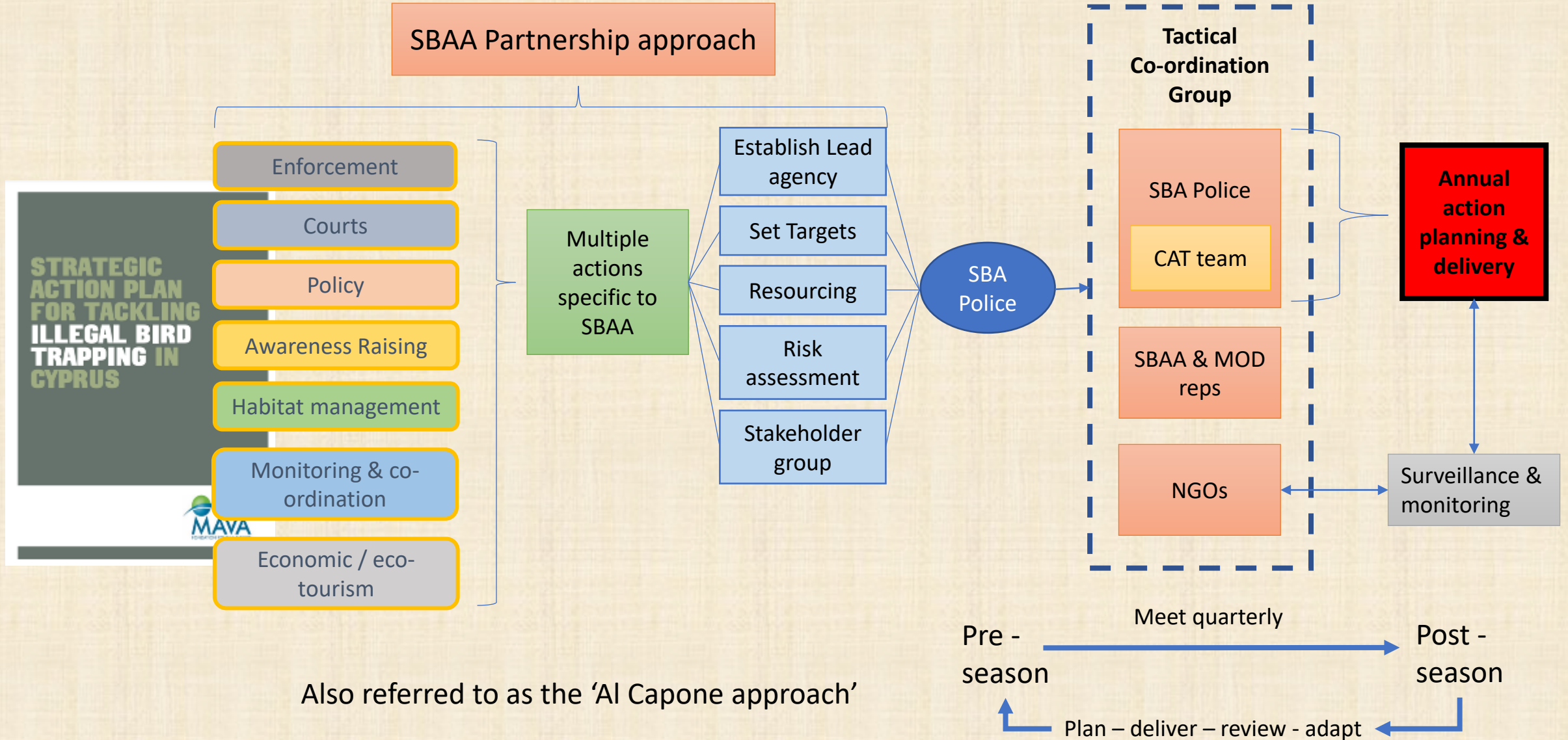
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Songbirds killed on British military base in Cyprus reaches record level

Monday 9 March 2015

Establishing the SBAA approach



The Annual Action Plan

- Delivered by SBA Police Community Action Team(CAT)
- Phased approach
 1. Phase 1 - Pre-season preparations (July-Sept)
 2. Phase 2 – Trapping season(Sept-April)
 3. Phase 3 – Post season activities (May-June)

Objectives of plan:

- To **disrupt and deter** bird trappers
- Intelligence led operations – utilizing **‘Hot net’** list
- Implementation of new **legislation** in line with RoC
- Utilize available **technology** (Drones & covert surveillance cameras)
- Arrest offenders / High investigation standards / Secure best evidence / scene findings for Prosecution / **‘Zero tolerance!’** / Deterrent Court punishments
- **Communicate** SBA Police & partnership work, with successful operational outcomes on Social media



July 3, 2017

Bird trappers caught ‘in action’ on camera in SBAs sentenced



The Al Capone approach

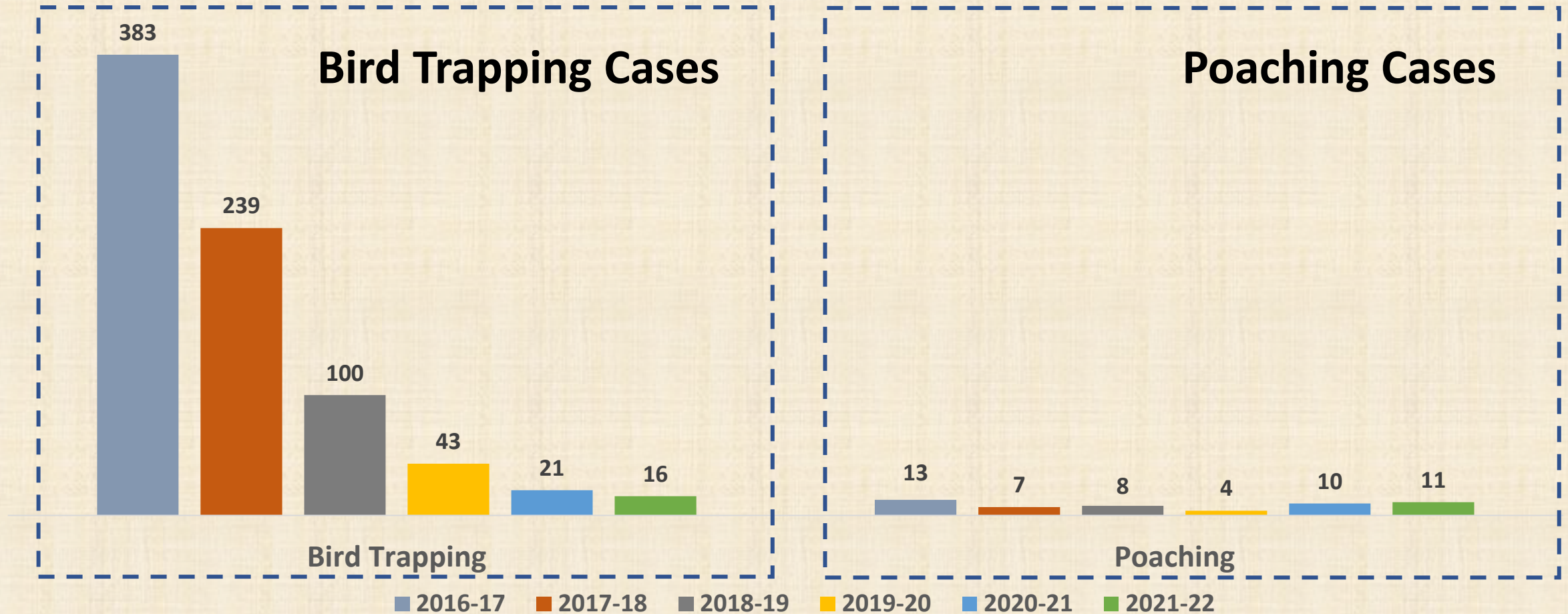


- Illegal use of water supplies & boreholes
- Vehicle checks (tax/ insurance/ MOTs)
- Increasing fines
- Removal of 90km irrigation
- Seizure of trapping paraphernalia
- Removal of Acacia trees



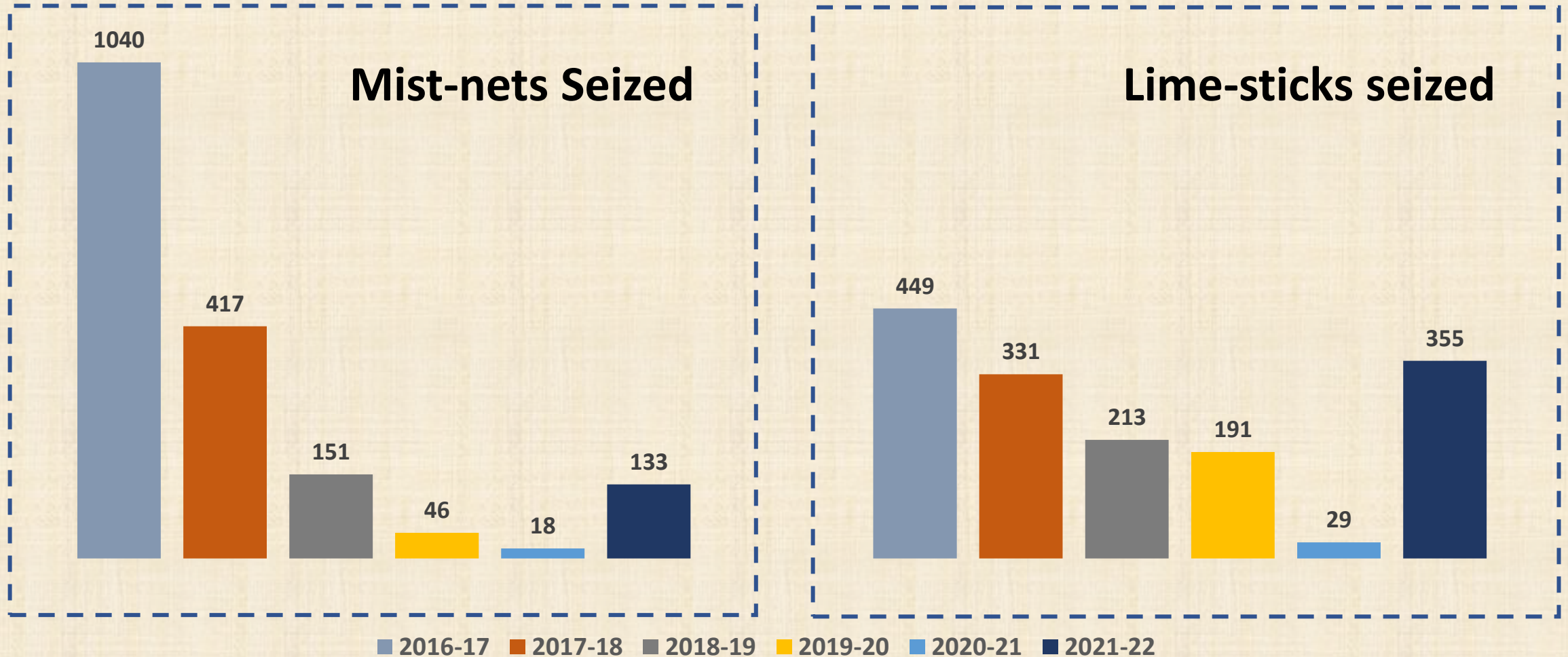
What has been achieved...?

Illegal Bird Killing cases in the SBAs (2016 to 2022)



What has been achieved...?

Statistics for bird-trapping in the SBAs (2016 to 2022)



Recognition and publicity....

Not just one award, but two!

The Sanctuary award 'Best Environmental Project' & 'Silver Otter Trophy'



Current situation

- Understanding the affect of the pandemic
- Acacia management (£3m spent annually by MOD)
- Funding - significant ongoing annual SBA Police resource
- Protected site management – plans/actions to further reduce bird-trapping & poaching
- Successful community engagement - increasing support for Acacia management & habitat restoration
- Requirement to maintain technological and tactical advantages (skills and knowledge)



Looking forward: Next steps & challenges

- Maintain approach:
 - tactical co-ordination partnership
 - update legislation and legal powers
- Justifying resources for further reductions (against other risk/threats to SBAA)
- Habitat management to support further reduction;
 - legacy of *Acacia saligna*
 - Access to sites
- Shift focus to preventative measures & deterrents;
 - Education and awareness
 - Pro-active habitat management
 - Access management
 - Eco-tourism potential

**Thank You
&
questions please?**