

Joint meeting of the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds and the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean

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Managing IKB in Spain: Planning and main activities to reduce its impact



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BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

BIRD KILLING HAS BEEN A TRADITIONAL PRACTICE IN SPAIN DURING CENTURIES

Three main reasons:

- FEEDING
- LEISURE
- REDUCE IMPACT OF WILDLIFE

Many trapping techniques



KEY MILESTONE AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

The key moment for reversing impunity was the adoption of European Union's nature protection regulations (1986)

Previous regulations in Spain were launched to protect certain species: birds of prey, threatened species and insectivorous birds. But not so efficiently

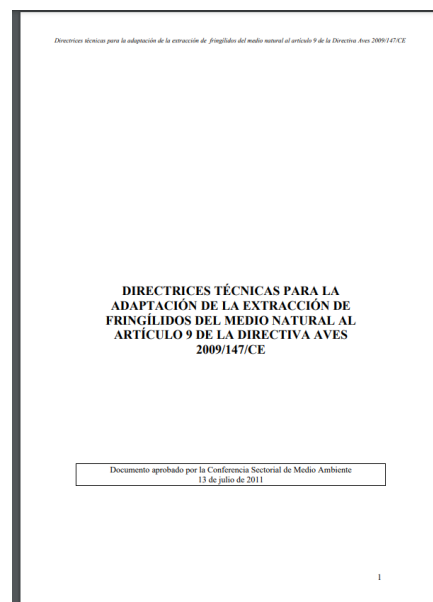
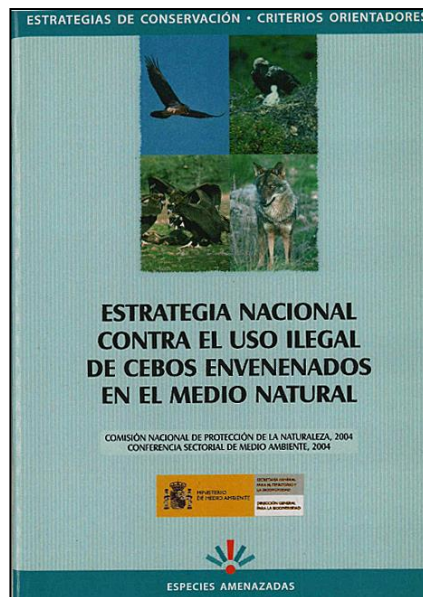
Birds Directive 2009/147/CE is applied in Spain through the Act 42/2007 on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity. Main provisions:

- General prohibition of capture/killing/possession of wild animals
- Exceptions for species subject to hunting regulations (game species)
- Other derogations only for justified reasons and through administrative permits
- Infractions and administrative sanctions
- Establishment of penalties in the Penal Code for killing protected species

OFFICIAL PLANNING DOCUMENTS

To encourage implementation of the regulations and to identify priority activities, different official plans were approved:

- Strategy against the illegal use of poison baits in the wild (2004)
- Technical guidelines to adapt trapping of finch birds in the wild to Birds Directive (2011)
- Plan against illegal trafficking and international poaching on wildlife (TIFIES, 2018)

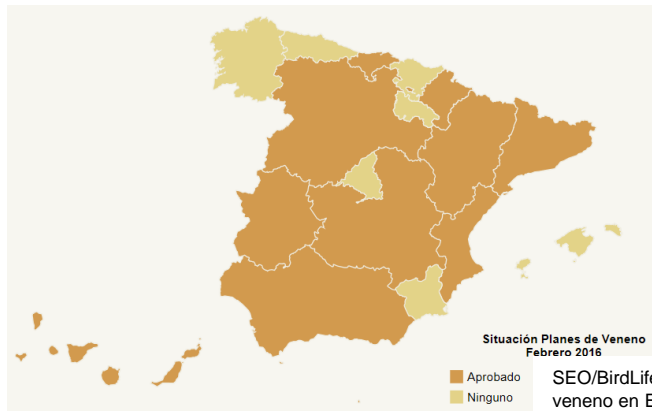


REGIONAL INVOLVEMENT

The Comunidades Autónomas (17) are the authorities managing and protecting terrestrial biodiversity in Spain.

Regarding IKB, they have contributed crucially:

- Adapt national regulations to regional situation (all of them)
- Approval of legally binding action plans (to different matters)
- Wildlife recovery centers: save animals and find out causes of admissions
- Cases registration and statistics collection
- Administrative and legal actions against infringements



SEO/BirdLife & WWF. 2016. El veneno en España 1992-2013.



ENFORCEMENT

1. Environmental rangers of comunidades autónomas and Ministry (approx. 6,000 agents):

- Wildlife monitoring, specialized teams (canine patrols)
- Infringements detection and reporting

2. SEPRONA (Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza) of the Guardia Civil (approx. 2,000):

- Since 1988, police body specialized in environmental protection
- Important intelligence service (Oficina Central Nacional)
- Increasing training and logistics
- International relationships (LIFE+Satec)
- >150.000 total interventions (2019).
On IKB 419 persons investigated ;
7433 administrative infringements & 332 criminal infringements

3. GENERAL PROSECUTOR OFFICE; Unit on Environment

- In 2019, 953 legal proceedings initiated (flora and fauna in general):
- 290 convictions and 54 acquittals



TRAINING

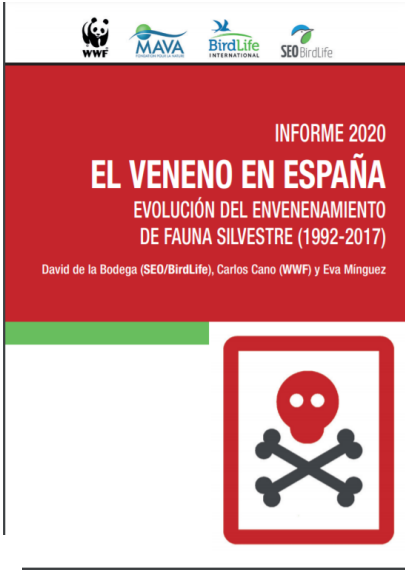
In the last 10 years, the number of courses and training sessions on IKB has increased, at different levels:

- **Training from Ministry to SEPRONA: protocol of collaboration signed:**
 - More than 30 courses (estimated 900 attendees): identification of illegal practices, operating procedures for investigation and traceability of samples, preparation of files
 - International courses: collaboration with environmental police from Latin America, Africa and Europe
- **Comunidades autónomas: continuous training for environmental agents, learning of official protocols**
- **Training within recent LIFE+ projects:**
 - Prosecutors and judges (so important)
 - Environmental agents and SEPRONA
 - Investigation and prosecution of crimes (Wildlife Crime Academy)



NGO'S KEY ROLE

- Awareness (media campaigns)
- Conservation initiatives: ANTIDOTO Program
- Complaints of cases and private accusation in trials
- Pushing on administrations in:
 - poisoning cases
 - approval regional plans
- LIFE+ projects (VENENO, Guardians, SWIPE, Balkan Detox)
- Reports and statistics



CURRENT SITUATION

ON IKB IMPACT

- Very hard to monitor trends of IKB numbers:
 - Estimated 8,522 birds illegally trapped/killed in 2019 (Scoreboard 2020)
 - Different activities and species affected not comparable with same procedures (likelihood of detection/registration): shooting, live trapping, poisoning, nest robbery, wildlife conflicts, etc.
 - Lack of official long data series at national level (but regions)
 - BirdLife International estimate (2016): 103,000-405,000, but including formerly authorized finches trapping -silvestrismo-.
 - Differences between incidental (IKB) and accidental deaths (collisions, electrocutions)



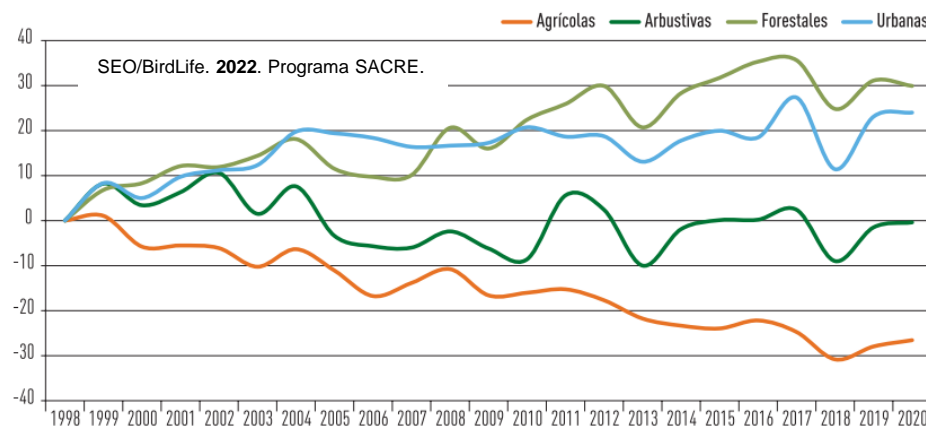
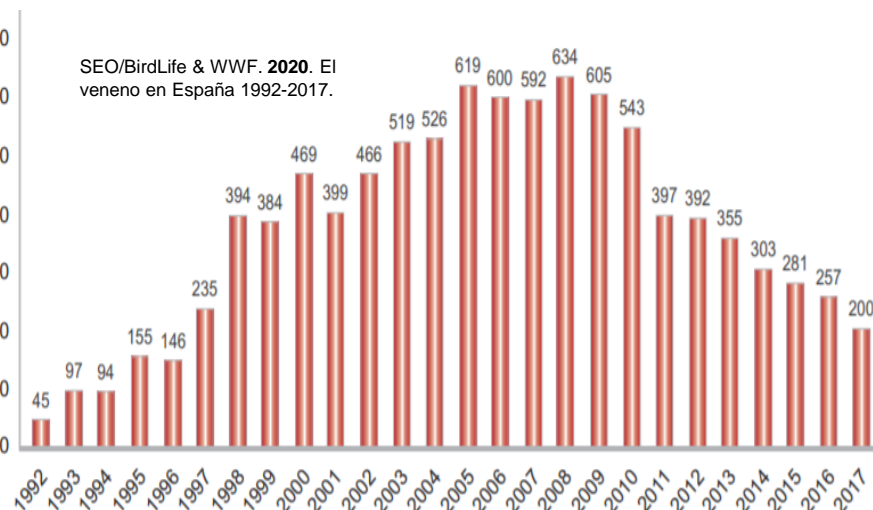
CURRENT SITUATION

ON IKB IMPACT

- But some positive evidences on reduction on IKB:
 - Poisoning reducing its impact (good databases)
 - Ban and absence of traditional trapping/killing activities affecting hundreds of thousands (parany since 2003 -200,000 birds/year-, finches trapping - silvestrismo since 2018 400,000 birds/year-)
 - Most threatened species by IKB improving conservation status

Poisoning events detected

SEO/BirdLife & WWF. 2020. El veneno en España 1992-2017.



CURRENT SITUATION

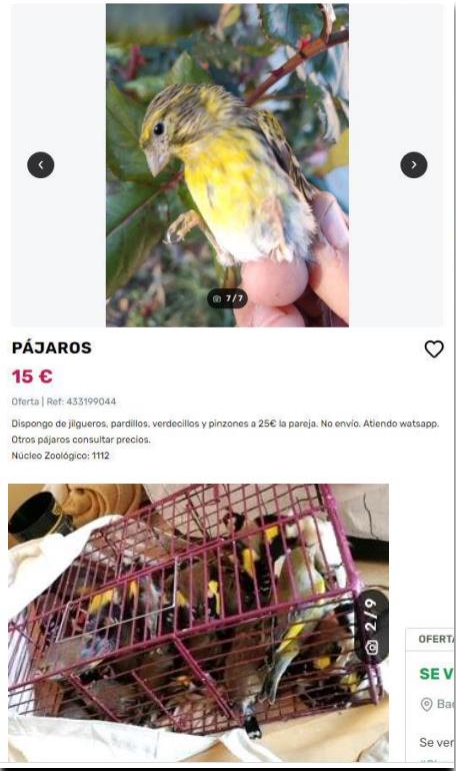
ON EFFORTS TO REVERSE ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

- **Positive increase of efforts of all involved units:**
 - **Regional plans against poisoning (13 out of 17)**
 - **Investment in monitoring/investigation/toxicological analyses**
 - **New sectorial plans but not a national IKB plan**
- **Improvement in number of training events and in information/education quality**
- **Increase of awareness of most part of authorities. But still room for improvement at judiciary level and regarding the accuracy of judiciary procedures**
- **Establishment of SICMA: National information system on non-natural mortality and captures of wildlife**
- **Spanish NGOs very proactive**

CHALLENGES

BIRD TRAFFICKING AND SALES (for leisure/pets):

- Worrying situation of Spain at international scale
- Accesibility to purchase of, at least, 750 bird species:
 - 94 native species; 78 hybrids; 15 species declared invasive ; 250 species in CITES Appendix II
- Hard difficulties in control/deterrence/enforcement due to:
 - CITES requirements and interactions with other nature protection legislation (captive-bred specimens)
 - Different protection framework for non-native species
 - Public lack of knowledge on risks and legal possibilities
 - Inability for controlling such magnitude of movements
- Online shops > announcement platforms > social networks > conventional stores
- More studies ongoing (numbers and other species groups)



CHALLENGES

- Ensure stability in financial resources
- Awareness of the whole society: risk of political instrumentalization
- A few conflict activities remain in some regions:
 - Poaching on thrushes and other passerines in southern Spain (birdcalls and mistnets)
 - Shooting protected wildfowl, affecting endangered species in southern and eastern Spain
 - Finches poaching (nests and mistnetting) for song and beauty contests
 - Scarce conflicts with economic uses: beekeeping, racing pigeons, rice paddies...



A silhouette of an owl perched on a tree branch against a sunset sky. The owl is facing right, and the tree branches are dark and intricate. The sky is a warm, orange-pink color.

Thank you!!



GOBIERNO
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO
PARA LA TRANSICIÓN ECOLÓGICA
Y EL RETO DEMOGRÁFICO