

Synthesis Report **3**

BIRD HUNTING MANAGEMENT

In Mediterranean Third Countries of North Africa
and the Middle East



Synthesis Report (III)

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Project partners



1. Hunting Management - Organizations and Responsibilities

Several countries (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt) do not have a structured, coordinated national hunting management system and even in countries which currently have fairly effective systems there are significant weaknesses (see Table 1 and section 4). This is evident particularly in areas such as monitoring of impacts on hunted species which is essential to establishing sustainable hunting programmes. Management responsibilities are often split or duplicated across ministries (e.g. different ministries or sub-divisions issue gun licenses and hunting permits; Ministry of Tourism responsible for tourist hunting and Ministry of Agriculture responsible for all other hunting). Responsibilities are often unclear, not defined in the relevant legislation, or not backed up by resources, manpower and training to enable staff to do the job. Enforcement is very variable and monitoring of hunting activities and especially of the impacts of hunting on migratory bird species is weak or non-existent in all countries. Several countries have Higher Councils or Committees with representation across Ministries which should function to improve national coordination of hunting management (see Table 1). However, these are not necessarily effective: in Lebanon the Higher Hunting Council was established with its set internal governance through two decrees in July 2006, two years after the hunting legislation; but did not meet yet and in Egypt a National Committee established to manage bird hunting has not met for 3 years .

Table 1 :
Hunting Management and Responsibilities

Country	Key ministries, agencies and responsibilities
Syria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Interior Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture share responsibilities for hunting management • Ministry of Interior Affairs and police jointly issue hunting licences • Hunting is banned by law and there are no hunting agencies • Shotguns and ammunition can only be sold by government; sale of guns requires permission from Public Security
Lebanon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Environment (MoE) is the custodian organisation for hunting , linked with the approval from the Higher Hunting Council. While the enforcement would be carried out through agents from the Ministries of Interior, Agriculture and Environment • The Higher Hunting Council (HHC), mandated by the hunting law (law no. 580/2004) was established and its internal governance set by two decrees in July 2006. The HHC will be responsible for proposing decrees and decisions to Council of Ministers and for hunting management of hunting, including designation of seasons, species, and locations. The Minister of Environment has the prerogative to issue the hunting decisions based on the suggestions or approval from the HHC. Responsibilities for enforcement of the decrees lie with the Internal Security; Forest rangers and accredited Protected Area Guards • HHC is representative of hunting stakeholders; MoE will act as President , with stakeholder representation from other Ministries, research bodies, hunting associations, species experts, hunting gear/ ammunition retailers' organizations, and, environmental bodies.

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Country	Key ministries, agencies and responsibilities
Jordan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Agriculture is mandated to establish a Committee for the Protection of Wildlife to identify hunting seasons, bag limits, species and restrictions on locations and times of day • Ministry of Interior Affairs approves issue and renewal of hunting licenses (including temporary ones for non-Jordanians) • An NGO (the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN)) is mandated to manage aspects of hunting and bird conservation including issue and collection of fees for hunting licences and hunting/ wildlife enforcement (jointly with police under a formal agreement) RSCN rangers carry out enforcement with police and also training and awareness-raising (e.g. on biodiversity, protected areas)
Palestine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No national hunting management system exists • Much of legislation still under development as part of Peace Process • Until 2006, no groups existed for management of hunting • In 2006, government and NGOs collaborated in the creation of a Club in the Bethlehem area to regulate hunting and implement hunting policies (once in place). A Hunters' Club was established with participation from at least 50 professional and hobby hunters and input from the police. Deliberations include types of game bird and other animals, use of weapons and ammunition, damage to Palestinian wildlife, strategies for regulating hunting and sale of caught birds
Egypt (continue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA), in Ministry of Environment, has central role: compliance with MEAs (includes setting-up a hunting management and wildlife resource utilization system); species protection; specifying hunting areas; coordinating issue of decrees; defining hunting license requirements, competent authorities etc. • There are many overlapping responsibilities – governmental and NGO. • 2 Ministry of Agriculture agencies have roles: Veterinary Authority issues licences to hunt some protected species and deals with aspects of wildlife trade; (GADFR) - General Authority for Development of Fish Resources issues licenses for water bird hunting and leases hunting wetlands • Ministry of Tourism manages and promotes development of hunting tourism • Ministry of Interior enforces laws on hunting and wildlife protection; issues permits for guns and ammunition and licenses for hunting some protected species • Branches of Police (Water/ Environment; Tourism; Customs/ Ports) have monitoring responsibilities relating to hunting, tourism, trade and import/ export • Ministry of Defense controls security in areas such as North Sinai coast; has authorized migratory bird hunting (bustards) in such areas • In many cases, there are no mechanisms and/ or no funding and resources for specified agencies to carry out responsibilities defined in law and enforcement is non-existent

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Country	Key ministries, agencies and responsibilities
Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two National Committees formed by decree to manage bird hunting and wildlife trade: Game Bird Hunting Management Committee (to advise EEAA on bird hunting mainly in relation to tourism and sport hunting - has not met for 3 years) and CITES Management Committee and Authority (together with a number of scientific committees) – deal with all aspects of trade not just CITES. Legal and operational frameworks for implementing directives from these two National Committees not known. • Local Government agencies and Governors have powers to regulate hunting, e.g. through Governorate Decrees, issue of hunting licenses and designation of areas for hunting • There are no government managed hunting reserves in Egypt. Private hunting lakes are operated under permit by shooting clubs or individuals for their own use or for tourism hunting. Some regulations exist but there is little or no enforcement and management is largely at the discretion of the club or individual permit holder • NGOs include sport hunting shooting clubs and associations (which may rent reserves, especially lakes for duck hunting) and environmental NGOs including a conservation society currently applying for registration which proposes to promote migratory bird conservation
Tunisia (continue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (Forestry Division and regional agricultural development administrations) is the main institution responsible for organization and control of hunting and related wildlife conservation issues, including hunting practices, licensing, tourism hunting, wildlife trade, protected areas and fauna/ flora conservation. It issues annual decrees to define hunting seasons, working days and allowed hours, game species, protected species, fees and hunting reserves. • A collaboration of the National Federation of Hunters' Associations, local Hunters' Associations and regional agricultural development administrations issues hunting licenses; carries out management of certain hunting grounds; fauna protection and game studies. • The National Federation and local Hunters' Associations are also responsible for raising awareness and building capacity for hunting management among hunters • The Consultative Commission for Hunting and Conservation of Game has representatives from various Ministries (Agriculture, Interior, Defense, Tourism, etc.), agricultural, veterinary and hunting unions / associations, research bodies, tourism operators, and environmental NGOs. Its functions include advising on legal texts relating to hunting and protection of fauna; drafting of the annual hunting decree; hunting and game conservation enhancement and coordination of stakeholder activities.

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Country	Key ministries, agencies and responsibilities
Tunisia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement and control of hunting is carried out by government agents, officers of the police and customs services. • Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development coordinates environmental awareness, sustainable tourism, biodiversity conservation research • Ministry of Interior and Local Development authorizes permits for hunting, as well as for possession and purchase of hunting weapons and ammunition • The National Tourism Office in the Ministry of Tourism and the Forestry Division in the Ministry of Agriculture must both authorize hotels and other providers of hunting tourism; hunting tourists are only permitted to use authorized establishments and must be accompanied by authorized hunting guides. Tourist licenses are valid for 7 days for defined game species and seasons only • Conservation NGOs, like Association “Les Amis des Oiseaux” intervene in the hunting management by indicating legal infractions to the authorities and control bodies. Within the limit of their possibilities they also provide training and technical support to hunting control bodies and hunters organizations.
Algeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has overall responsibility for hunting through the Higher Council for Hunting and development Wild Fauna which has representation from various Ministries (including Defense, Finance, Interior and Local Authorities, Education and others) and the President of the National Hunting Federation. • Hunting management is based on division of the country into hunting regions, following the administrative regions. The National Hunting Map details for all game species, their distributions, habitats and carrying capacities (resident and migratory populations). Regional hunting management plans for each region list permitted bag sizes per species and necessary measures for repopulation and other action for species of conservation concern • The National Hunting Heritage Development Plan covers inventory and planning for management of the hunting heritage, including species rehabilitation and enhancement, specific measures for protection of threatened species, habitat protection and rehabilitation • Government institutions and hunters' associations are responsible for issue of hunting permits and licences. Tourism hunting is only permitted under the control of the authorities (forest administration) through approved tourism agencies and the participation of hunting associations which are required to ensure that the hunters follow legislation and regulations.

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Country	Key ministries, agencies and responsibilities
Morocco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Waters and Forests - DoWF) is the regulatory authority for hunting management and control of trade in wild animals (CITES regulations). DoWF issues annual decrees to define hunting seasons, working days and allowed hours, bag sizes, game bird species, protected species, fees, defined reserves and hunting zones • A collaboration of the Royal Moroccan Hunting Federation (RMHF) and DoWF administers hunting licenses; trains federal guards; carries out anti-poaching operations and management (e.g. game enhancement, restocking) of certain hunting grounds; fauna protection, studies and establishment of a database • The Higher Council for Hunting is an advisory body composed of 28 members • The RMHF is responsible for raising awareness, building capacity for hunting management and enforcement in the field. • Enforcement and supervision of hunters in the field is carried out by officers of the police, government agents, civil servants (e.g. customs officers) and Federal guards nominated by the RMHF under overall supervision of the DoWF • Hunting rights belong to the State which can lease rights to either hunters' associations or individuals for an annual fee or hunting license. Private land owners can ban hunting on their land by approval of the local authority. Under the Hunting Management Plan, reserves can be permanent, triennial, leased, or allocated as tourism hunting reserves. Non-hunting zones cover all ecosystems and include all protected areas and Important Bird Areas • Hunting associations which lease sites for hunting are responsible for taking care of management of the leased plot and providing trained guards to supervise their members

2. Management gaps

The effectiveness of current hunting management varies between countries but no country has a system which fully meets the requirements for establishing and managing a sustainable hunting programme for migratory birds. Gaps common to many countries across the region include :

■ National Gaps

- No clear overall framework or objectives for sustainable hunting management nationally and no single government authority with overall responsibility .
- Roles and responsibilities are often not sufficiently clear and in some cases overlap, with no mechanisms for coordination e.g. between different Ministries with overlapping responsibilities .
- Institutional weaknesses – for example, no national hunting association representative of all hunters; no functioning higher national Council to integrate roles of different ministries; lack of consultation and stakeholder involvement in hunting management.
- Lack of capacity and resources to implement responsibilities (this includes management weaknesses, lack of funding, inadequately qualified staff, lack of training, equipment and resources etc.) .
- Permit systems may be lacking (not yet implemented in law) or poorly administered with inadequate coordination (for example between authorization of guns and hunting licenses) and monitoring .
- Penalties and sanctions are often too low to be effective and applied inconsistently (e.g. through corruption or political pressure and lack of monitoring)
- Lack of understanding/ awareness and inappropriate behavior by hunters. There is a need in many countries to increase levels of awareness (e.g. of migratory bird declines, threatened species, what sustainability means) and to instill responsible hunting attitudes and behaviour .
- Lack of an effective "watchdog" to carry out independent monitoring and remind governments of their national and international responsibilities .
- Research/ monitoring/ data gathering are often lacking or carried out by different institutions, using different methods, with no coordinated national programme and priorities and no mechanism for integrating results. No country has an adequate monitoring system to establish and manage a sustainable hunting programme; this is a regional issue as well as national (see below) .

■ Regional gaps

Transboundary/ tourist hunting: it appears that transboundary hunting does not exist between Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia and their direct neighbor countries. Non of the project countries has adequate mechanisms to control or monitor its own citizens when they travel abroad (for example to neighboring MTCs) for tourism hunting and there are no regional mechanisms to standardize hunting licenses and permits nor for exchange of information about tourist hunting between countries. Tourism hunting often circumvents national hunting policy, legislation and management systems as a result .

Research/ monitoring/ data gathering are weak, patchy or non-existent; all countries need information and regional analysis on one or more of the following topics in order to establish sustainable hunting systems :

- Population sizes, conservation status and migration routes/ behavior/ habitats of hunted species (especially globally-threatened species which are hunted) .
- Status of hunting: numbers of hunters, types of hunting, species and numbers caught; hunter nationalities; sales of gear/ ammunition
- Impacts on hunted species (including globally-threatened species which are hunted)
- Numbers and distribution of over-wintering species (especially water birds)
- Taxonomic/ molecular research to resolve sub-species status and identification

Institutional mechanisms for data sharing and exchange are lacking. At the regional level, there is a need for coordinated regional data gathering (e.g. through bird ringing and survey) and a regional database covering all regional flyways, on which to base decisions on sustainable hunting levels and as a baseline for future monitoring .

Regional and international collaboration, development and training are also lacking and are needed to improve levels of national competency, to improve and standardize regional data collection and to share ideas and good practice within the region and with European countries .

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