



IS IT GETTING ANY BETTER?

I write this sitting looking out over my peaceful rural garden. The nut feeders were refilled yesterday and the woodpeckers and tits are flitting in and out. Chaffinches and a robin feed beneath and the blackbirds appear to be becoming territorial and amorous already. The only threat is the regular appearance by one of the pair of resident Sparrowhawk causing panic and mayhem. Sometimes there's a kill and that's sad - but it's nature's way...

What is not nature's way is the indiscriminate shooting and trapping which still goes on in Italy, the country of which we think so much. I visited Parma in November and met the people who spearhead the opposition to the killing of migrant birds. We talked a lot of the problems and I was taken to see the Torrile reserve where much of the work of development has been made possible by LIPU UK.

Later we went to Sala Baganza, the Raptor Recovery Centre not far from Parma. It was here that I met Elena Pesci the dedicated vet and her team of helpers who take in injured birds, treat them, and if possible, release them back to the wild when they become fit. We saw the nine Griffon Vultures awaiting their airline flight to Sicily as the first of the programme to reintroduce this magnificent bird to its former homeland. I saw the large rehabilitation enclosures built with funds from LIPU UK and I saw the Intensive Care Unit. In one cage was a placid Golden Eagle, Elena stroked its head as she explained what had happened to it. Shot and wounded, it was found by a farmer as, desperate and starving, it tried to find a meal in his chicken shed. Beaten almost to death by the farmer it was

brought to Sala Baganza, cared for by Elena and will be back in the wild as you read this.

From another cage she brought the most beautiful female Hobby - SHOT! I found myself feeling angry at this affront as the fine bird stood on my hand, with a splinted wing which would never heal well enough for her to fly again. She will have a place in the education programme which LIPU runs in a steady but uphill battle to convince the next generation that there is a better way...

THIS IS NOT IN CALABRIA

The shocking thing is that this is happening all over Italy, Parma is 690 miles from the Straits of Messina killing grounds. Hundreds of injured birds are brought in every month during the hunting season and somewhat fewer for the rest of the year. How many are killed? How many more are wounded but not found and are just left to die where they fall?

The answer to my headline question is, "Yes, it is getting better.", but slowly and there is still so much to do and such a long way to go. The help of LIPU UK is still as vital as ever.

In this issue I'll explain what we can do to make a difference.

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Looking Back

As you know from the letter which Roger wrote just before his retirement, LIPU UK's support for conservation in Italy was even better than in previous years. The magnificent total of £23000, was sent to LIPU HQ to be divided between the following projects:

- £10000 for further development of the flagship Torrile reserve in its tenth year.
- £4000 to support the anti-trapping campaign in Brescia.
- £3000 for the LIPU recovery and treatment centres.
- £3000 for bird protection in Sicily and
- £3000 for general conservation work.

Support for LIPU was received from:

- ◆ The Anglo-Italian Society for the Protection of Animals continued its long standing support of LIPU by making another substantial and generous donation.
- ◆ The Peter Smith Charitable Trust for Nature donated £500, the A S Butler Charitable Trust £100, the Koan Trust £100 and the Udimore Charitable Trust contributed £50.
- ◆ The Amersham Bird Club donated £25, the Dursley and Manx societies gave £30 and £10 and the SOC Stewartry Branch gave £49.
- ◆ Daniel Turner of British Airways raised £300 and Philip Harwood donated £50, the proceeds of his plant sale.

Thanks to all of you, the 1998 campaign raised a wonderful £8500 and LIPU says a very sincere Thank You.

Looking Forward

Where is LIPU UK going now?

There is no room now to rest on our laurels and there are things I must do and a few ways in which you could help us move forward.

The LIPU UK membership records are now Year 2000 compliant which means we can carry on after December and the infamous Millennium Bug should not cause us any problems.

As membership renewals are being sent out, members are now offered the choice of renewals by bank Standing Order. Although this is convenient and efficient it is entirely optional - renewal by cheque is as welcome as always!

It is hoped to take LIPU UK forward to achieve registration as a charity. This will take time but will help those who like to contribute through the Charities Aid Foundation. Once a small board of trustees has been formed I aim to have see the application filed within the next couple of months and, hopefully, approved by midsummer.

I would like to restore our publications to their former glory and, to that end, any written contributions and photographs will be gratefully received. In similar vein, through the wonders of e-mail we aim, in future, to publish the Ali Notizie at the same time as the Italian version instead of being one issue behind.

Further publicity for our cause is now on the Internet; soon I hope to put details of the LIPU reserves on the web site and for those with access to the web the address is: www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk/fernwood For those whose lives work quite well without computers I'll put the same in future copies of the Ali Notizie if you tell me you think it's a good idea...

A visit to Italy?

Would you like to visit Italy, see LIPU reserves and visit projects supported by the UK section? It was suggested at HQ that LIPU staff would host a visit by our members but it could take in other aspects of Italian culture including art and music. No firm plans have been made but if there is sufficient interest we can look into it in more detail. Please let me know if you might be interested; of course this will not commit you to anything at this stage.

What can you do?

An organisation such as ours is only as strong as its members - can you introduce a friend? We need new members, as they make up the future, and all are most welcome. Inevitably we lose a few members each year and we need to gain more than this if we are to grow and remain successful.

Membership matters

Almost incredibly the subscription fee is still the same as it was at the birth of LIPU UK and it will remain unchanged for 1999. The running of the UK section remains financed entirely from the membership fee, 50% of the first year of membership and 25% of each year thereafter. Membership cards and subscription reminders are all dealt with in this country.



Conservation News from Italy

LIPU IN THE YEAR 2000

Danilo Mainardi and Armando Gariboldi

There are only about 365 days left to the year 2000, and although this “threshold” is more psychological than real, it is an important occasion to take stock of the future of our association, or what we would like its future to be. “Consolidation” has been a well-used word in recent months and we continue to work in that direction. What that means, in practical terms, is a real commitment to increase our numbers and to a united working relationship between the professional staff of LIPU and the volunteers.

It is a significant aim, especially when it is achieved in a culture, such as in Italy, where individualism often prevails. There is also work to be done on improving Reserves, Centres and offices so that we can carry out our work more effectively. It is obvious that we can become more effective and united only if we achieve a greater sense of belonging to LIPU and be more ready to volunteer. We must all help the Association to grow and so able to assert itself at national level, while keeping the LIPU we love, practical, above all independent, and always ready for action.

We have an ideal LIPU in our hearts and minds, and we are continually checking how the reality matches the model. You too can do this useful exercise, because it is not enough to travel, we must also know where we are going.

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HUNTING

by Armando Gariboldi

Autumn has arrived and once again we find

Stop The Massacre

ourselves constrained to talk about hunting, although this time in a slightly different way. In addition to our usual methods of surveillance in the field, we are ever more active in formulating new strategies to combat an activity which we neither understand nor share. In particular, I have decided to expose and fight its worst aspects, which include illegal shooting, stocking land with birds specially for shooting and the political lobbies associated with hunting in general.

In spite of fine words and promises by a very small number of the more forward looking in the hunting fraternity, most of the hunting associations still regard wildlife management as a game of political and economic power, of plotting, and without bothering in the least to try to educate hunters in the principles of ecology.

Such is the case with the examinations for hunting licenses, where the selection procedures are absurd, and also with that of Ekoclub, an association connected with Federaccia and which during the fateful Matteoli administration, the Ministry of the Environment, incredibly recognised as an environmental association. It was an error which now allows representatives of Ekoclub to claim that they are nature protectors, not only on various hunting committees but, more seriously, on committees of Parks and Nature Reserves.

It is a dirty game which, along with requests to the EU from French hunters to lengthen the hunting season, demonstrates the ambiguity associated with the hunting world. LIPU intends to fight at every possible level.

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NO! IT'S NOT WORKING

by Umberto Gallo Orsi

In 1992 we welcomed the new law which would allow LIPU to achieve some of its objectives: to limit the number of species which are allowed to be hunted, limit the hunting season to the period from the end of September to the end of January and especially, to allow hunters to shoot only in the

area in which they live.

The great changes envisaged by law 157 would need several years to come fully effective. LIPU, through its Regional Offices and local Branches, has closely followed the promulgation of the regional laws which were necessary to make the new law effective. After six years it is now time to assess 157 and the picture is certainly not a rosy one: much has changed but not always for the better.

Change for the better

The main thing is that the number of hunters has halved in the last ten years, now at a figure of considerably less than 1 million. Even the hunters themselves have come to realise that shooting, especially where there is a lack of proper management, is no longer acceptable. Many migratory species are now returning to breed and their numbers are increasing as a result of closing the hunting season in January and the protection of wetlands.

There has also been some progress on the legislative front. In recent years the Italian government has made several decrees and regulations linking law 157 to the Birds Directive, without which changes Italy would have been faced with action from the European Court of Justice and would have had to pay heavy fines. Almost all the Regions have passed new regional laws on hunting, associated with Law 157. Finally, a positive note at the international level: the European Commissioner for the Environment, Madam Bjerregard, has asked BirdLife International in discussions with a view to making modifications in the Birds Directive.

Some things are not so good.

There is still progress to be made on several fronts. In many regions the laws aimed at tying hunters to their own land are not being properly drawn up. There is also bad news regarding the length of the hunting season. So that shooting can begin before the third Sunday in September many regions (last year

more than half) have “invented” a pre-opening, and thereby allowing some species to be shot from the beginning of the month. Moreover, the lack of regulation changes this pre-opening into an early opening for all species.

There is still a lot to do, for example, in getting other species added to the list of those which can not be hunted, and improving surveillance and the repression of illegal activities. In fact, many species which are threatened with extinction or anyway, are falling in numbers in Italy, can still be legally hunted. Poaching, illegal shooting, both during and outside the hunting season, has certainly not been overcome, judging from the number of raptors which come into our Recuperation Centres every year.

LIPU Action

Last year LIPU was involved in various anti-hunting activities. They included:-

- The establishment of a special Legal Office to initiate proceedings against individuals.
- A formal request to the Ministry of the Environment to remove from the hunting list all those species which are in serious decline.
- Surveillance and anti-poaching activities by 80 voluntary rangers, throughout 10 Italian regions, with over 4000 hours spent in the field, and which resulted in a total of 300 illegal incidents, reports to the police and seizures of guns, nets, traps and protected birds.
- Reporting to the Regional Administrative Tribunal on the hunting calendars of those Regions not complying with Law 157.
- Active participation on the Working Group of BirdLife International on the Community Birds Directive, to block proposals from the hunting lobby to extend shooting in spring and to aim for a reduction in the species on the hunting list.

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NETTING: A NATIONAL DISGRACE

by Umberto Gallo Orsi

The EU Birds Directive prohibits the netting of birds throughout Europe, but in Italy the National Government still allows it to be authorised and controlled by Regions. Although prohibited by State Law 157/1992, it also requires Regional authorities to regulate the netting of birds which are to be used as live decoys for the hunters. The State is thus pretending to prohibit something which it is in fact delegating to someone else.

In theory this terrible practice affects over a million birds a year, condemned to live in cages that are too small for them to even open their wings. In reality, catching birds to be live decoys is a massacre, with horrifying figures bordering on 4 million a year. The Law permits trapping of only 7 species (Skylark, Fieldfare, Redwing, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Woodpigeon and Lapwing) and then in limited numbers, expecting other birds to be ringed and then released. But how many of them are properly released? How many of them finish up in the cages, in the kitchen or just killed and thrown away? We do not know for certain but we can imagine that a very large number of them will die! LIPU patrols show this to be the case, such as that of the Foggia Branch which has confiscated many illegally trapped skylarks which were to be used as decoys. It is a pity that it was their fiftieth expedition to North Italy.

We can stop it

A recent decree has been made which affects the rules by which Regions request special dispensation from the Directive concerning bird netting, and this has opened up a very important chink in the battle to stop the use of nets. Before they allow exceptions, the Regions must have the approval of the Ministries of the Environment and of Agricultural Policies, and support from the National Wildlife Institute. However no Region has so far correctly applied this decree and some

Stop The Massacre

have already authorised netting without asking for the necessary permission. They are thus practising this barbarous activity completely illegally.

We have not lost any time in asking the appropriate authorities to take action. The Ministries have never intervened against Regions which have followed the correct procedures, thanks to a tacit and reprehensible agreement to not be hostile on this issue. But this time, if by the end of the year the State has not intervened against the Regions, we will ask the European Union to take proceedings against Italy.

Cruelty without limits

Birds condemned to be decoys must live in tiny cages where they can hardly even open their wings. To make them sing in autumn these poor victims are kept in the dark all summer, deliberately to upset their biological clock. When they finally see the light of day - in September - they are convinced that it is still spring and they start to sing, bringing down other birds onto the hunters' guns. But the catchers do not stop there, many blind the birds to make them sing all year, or tie them to poles, which the hunters shake to make them flutter about and attract other birds.

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TO SAVE 4 MILLION BIRDS

On the netting list there are seven species which are more at risk and all of them are migrants. But among the victims of the nets there are also other birds which are officially protected, from the smaller ones, such as sparrows, tits, robins, goldfinches, chaffinches, greenfinches and swallows, to the biggest ones, such as sparrowhawks, owls and woodpeckers.

1. Skylark

Sings from the first sunny days of February, once very common, it is now in decline all over Europe. It breeds in Italy, but migrants

come from northern Europe in autumn.

2. Fieldfare

It has been colonising the Alpine area for some years but it breeds mainly in Northern Central Europe. Arrives in Italy in October, in small flocks, feeding on berries and fruit.

3. Redwing

This lovely thrush comes from Russia and Scandinavia to overwinter in Italy.

4. Song Thrush

In winter it often joins other thrushes and is one of the smallest creatures to use tools: it chooses a flat stone which it uses as an anvil to break open snail shells.

5. Woodpigeon

Hunters tie a line to its feet. When they pull the line it makes the bird flutter about, attracting other pigeons, both locally breeding birds and large numbers of migrants.

6. Blackbird

At the opening of the shooting season, these elegant dark birds with yellow bill become targets for the guns or are kept in very small cages for attracting other blackbirds.

7. Lapwing

The thousand pairs which breed in Italy and all the migrants of this unmistakable wader, with crest on its head and black and white wings, are at risk of being caught up in the hunters' nets.

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A NOBLE GLIDER

The second rarest gull in the world and a symbol of the Mediterranean, Audouin's Gull is threatened with extinction. LIPU is working to save it.

The roaring sea is breaking against the cliffs of a tiny island in the Tuscan archipelago, from our rubber dinghy we can see the continuous circling of the white shapes of gulls which reveals the presence of a colony just a

few metres above the breaking waves. The nests are so close together that it is difficult to count them. Approaching carefully and keeping a proper distance, our suspicions become certainty: it's a colony of the very rare Audouin's Gull. Recognised by its yellow tipped red beak and black tipped light grey wings, this unmistakable and elegant gull is endemic to the Mediterranean.

Of a total population of some 13,000 pairs, about 600 breed in Italy, mainly on small islands near Sardinia and in the Tuscan archipelago. Although 90% of the world population of Audouin's Gulls are concentrated in the Ebro delta (Spain), where for some years they have been nesting on a small sandy peninsula, there are other sizeable colonies on some Spanish islands, on the coast of Morocco, in Corsica and only recently discovered, in the Eastern Mediterranean between Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. It was extremely rare (less than 1000 pairs in 1966) but the population has grown, thanks to protection in the breeding areas and to the fact that it has learned to follow fishing boats to feed from discarded scraps.

Still in danger

Despite the growth in numbers it remains a species under threat because its future depends on protection and conservation in the breeding areas and on proper management of the fisheries. In fact the large colony on the Ebro in Spain has produced very few young in recent years. Having come to rely on scraps thrown from fishing boats they have found themselves, in the full breeding season, to be without food for their young due to fishing being banned to stop over-fishing.

Herring Gulls, whose population has exploded thanks to the availability of rubbish dumps, have often been accused of taking eggs and young of Audouin's Gull, and taking over their nest sites. It is still not clear if this is the case. There remains a lot to be discovered about this species whose distribution

seems to be closely linked to the availability of fish and to cliffs where they can nest undisturbed

Audouin's Gulls are concentrated into only a few areas and for this reason the protection of breeding sites is particularly important.

Spain	12,000 pairs
Italy	600
Greece	600
France	85-100
Turkey	50
Cyprus	10-20

LIPU is working to save it by:

Protecting the colonies

LIPU has located all the colonies in Italy and has had them put onto the IBA list.

Creating protected areas

We are requesting the creation of additional protected areas to the three already in existence.

Publicity

Not many people are aware of this rare gull that is only found in the Mediterranean and is so under threat.

Working together

LIPU is part of the BirdLife International working group on Audouin's Gull. Major world experts on the species exchange information, identify problems and formulate the best conservation strategies.

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SUCCESS STORY

The Booted Eagle, now fully recovered after 10 months of confinement at the Recuperation Centre in Rome, has at last flown off to Africa. It was shot near Rome by a poacher last winter and taken to the Centre to begin a long period of care, therapy and rehabilitation. Its progress was followed on television and it responded so well to

treatment that it became well enough to be released into the wild. It was taken to Sicily to be set free, saving it a flight of hundreds of kilometres and the risk, at the start of the hunting season, of another unpleasant experience. The splendid scenery of Ficuzza, with its majestic cliffs, and an enthusiastic public saluted the flight of 'our' Eagle, with the hope that no-one will disturb it again.

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THANKS TO YOU

Thanks to the participation of so many volunteers and gifts from members, we are focusing attention on two big projects, the fight against hunting and poaching and the protection of swallows.

007 in action

In only the first fortnight of action, members of the LIPU Anti-poaching Group, coordinated by Piergiorgio Candela, seized 6400 traps and 60 nets. The illegal catching of small insectivorous birds for the table does not seem to be declining in some of the valleys in Brescia. Some nets were 80 metres long, and hundreds of birds were found, many already dead, and many of the others could not be released as they had suffered broken legs. Five poachers were caught and reported to the police.

Goldfinches blinded

Two hundred goldfinches in tiny cages, piled up in a warehouse in Pozzuoli, many of them blinded to make them sing better, many of them already dead. That was the horrifying sight which met LIPU investigators and Finance Guards from Naples. The birds had been unlawfully taken from the wild and after many had died from heat, lack of air and maltreatment, the remainder were to be sold at high prices for their singing qualities. The healthy goldfinches were released and the rest put into LIPU's care. The owner has been charged and the reports printed in the newspapers.

Advance opening

This year again, many Regions have authorised hunting before the proper opening of the season for migrating species such as Turtle Doves and Quail. The chronic lack of control, and the fact that the hunters are incapable of self-control, have had serious consequences. Already many wounded birds have started to arrive at LIPU Recuperation Centres.

Appeal won

The Regional Tribunal of Emilia Romagna has upheld an appeal from LIPU Parma against the decision by the Province to authorise competitions, shooting birds released during the months before the opening of the shooting season. It is the first time that the Province has lost an appeal of this kind in the last 15 years, a success and an important national precedent.

LIPU on the BBC

At the end of September a BBC film crew visited the Recuperation Centres at Sala Baganza and Rome, the Reserves at Montepulciano and Torrile, the Tolfa Mountains for the Red Kite project, and the valleys in Brescia for the problem of bird snaring using archetti. The film material will be part of one of the six BBC/RSPB programmes to be broadcast in the UK in early 1999. The first part of the shooting was in Wales, and included David Lingard, the new representative of LIPU UK. It is an opportunity for LIPU to get itself known outside Italy.

THE GREAT RETURN

We celebrate the return of the Lammergeier, Sparrowhawk, Audouin's Gull and Spoonbill. These concrete results are due to the sustained work of LIPU projects and the support of members.

There is a significant return to the list of species breeding in Italy. A pair of Lammergeiers, liberated a few years ago during the international reintroduction project in the

Alps, have bred in the Stelvio National Park. The young birds, kept under observation at a distance by park rangers and project members, are growing well and, when you read these lines, will already have flown.

There is also a very welcome return to the Vesuvio National Park. After being absent for 25 years Sparrowhawks have returned to breed. At the end of June, beginning of July, three young flew, an event which was greeted with great satisfaction by the Park authorities, a reward for their efforts to protect the woods and combat poaching.

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NATIONAL PARKS

Gulls and Spoonbills

Here are a couple of items of good news. At Capraia, in the Tuscan Archipelago Park about 41 pairs of Audouin's Gulls have been reported. It is the only colony in the area. In the Po Delta, a colony of Spoonbills, the only one in Italy, has once more increase slightly, now reaching about 38 pairs.

White-headed Duck Project

Good progress is being made by the LIPU project for the reintroduction of the White-headed Duck. The feasibility study has been completed, analysing the causes for its extinction in Puglia, the ecological situation in the wetlands of the Gargano National Park and the duck's reproductive biology. The Lago Salso has been identified as the best place to make the re-introductions. We are now planning the next phase of the operation.

Griffon Project

After the excellent experience in Sardinia a LIPU Project for the Reintroduction of Griffon Vultures will begin in the Nebrodi and Madonie parks in Sicily. Agreement between the park authorities and LIPU was signed last July. After this formal but necessary step, the first 9 Griffon Vultures were kept in an aviary which had already been prepared for

them. They had a settling-in period before being finally released.

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THE FLIGHT OF THE SWALLOWS

Basing our conservation activities, as always, on solid scientific information, LIPU is collaborating with the National Institute for Wildlife in their ringing project at autumn roosts. Over a period of two weeks at Colfiorito in Perugia more than 3000 swallows were ringed. The autumn concentration at Colfiorito, when swallows gather and fatten up before flying south, brings together birds from all over central Italy and it is thus becomes one of the most important areas in the country for this purpose.

In Tuscany the Swallows Project is planning various activities, from the study of the causes of the decline in numbers to working with arable and livestock farms. It is also very important to make the public aware of the problems and the regional office of LIPU in Tuscany, with contributions from the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, has made information materials and an illustrated panel for public parks and school gardens. Within elementary and middle schools in Tuscany a very important phase of the project has been initiated: the meeting together of LIPU workers with the young people, on whose sensitivity and determination rest many of our hopes for a successful future in the conservation of swallows.

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TOGETHER AT THE STRAITS

Volunteers from LIPU and the RSPB united in joint action, to further consolidate the activities of the camp at the Straits of Messina.

by Rino Esposito

This year, to help LIPU protect the passage

of Honey Buzzards and other migrating birds at the Straits of Messina, the RSPB came too, in the person of the extremely pleasant Jane Devitt, Manager of the Membership Office of our English sister organisation. Jane stayed at the camp for a fortnight in an “official capacity”, as an international observer to gather information on the illegal activities of the poachers and on actions taken by the Italian authorities to tackle them.

Although already generally aware of what happens, she was still smitten by the explosive firepower directed against Honey Buzzards by poachers who were shooting from the housetops in many villages along the hill-sides of the Calabrian side of the Strait. After several meetings with officers of the Forest Guards and the Police, from whom she came to appreciate their commitment, our guest has planned a strategy which will see the RSPB working at LIPU’s side.

Also from the houses

This year again the Chief of Police in Reggio Calabria has implemented plans to control the activities of the poachers, and several poachers were arrested. The Forest Guards, using helicopters, managed to stop others who were shooting from houses.

Of prime importance was the use of data from METEOSAT, which the students from GUFO consulted every day via the Internet. It provided weather information and therefore they could patrol areas where the raptors were likely to arrive. As in previous years, there was some intimidation, which was reported to the police: on two occasions, for example, our volunteers found Honey Buzzards which had been shot and then hung up in trees next to observation posts.

The Forest Guards

There has been an improvement in the professionalism and commitment of the Anti-poaching Unit of the Forest Guards, but we must emphasise that, for economic reasons, the Ministry for Agricultural Policy has

reduced the period when they are active in Calabria, with an immediate worsening of the situation. After the Forest Guards had left there was no more prevention and observation in the area by means of continuous patrols. The poachers could, therefore, carry on slaughtering young Honey Buzzards, which come through at the end of May and beginning of June. Moreover, police officers were sent out to work alone, which was very tiring and frustrating.

In 1998 the LIPU camp was supported by GUFO (University Bird Club), the Minister of the Environment, the Minister for Agricultural Policy, the University of the Studi “Frederico 11” of Naples, volunteers and the Catania branch of LIPU.

We observed:

10,737 Honey Buzzards
58 Hen Harriers and Montagu’s Harriers
44 Black Kites
24 Marsh Harriers
24 Red-footed Falcons
20 White storks
10 Black Storks
7 Egyptian Vultures
5 Booted Eagles

We were successful in reporting 15 poachers to the police and the resulting seizure of numerous guns, decoys and nets.

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ROME CENTRE...2 YEARS

On 21 June there was a birthday party to celebrate a second year of activity for the Wildlife Recuperation Centre in Rome. Hundreds of people came along to enjoy the various activities, music, painting, mimes, environmental education, and a splendid release of buzzards, kestrels, owls and small birds. Thanks to the contribution from Pfizer-Animal Health (which has borne the veterinary costs for the last two years) the Rome Centre is continuing its work. In 24 months

700 animals have been brought in and almost half of them have been restored to health and released back into the wild.

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WHAT OF THE FUTURE IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION?

by *Elvira Pallone*

On the threshold of the new millennium, LIPU is ever more aware of the need to question its own educational role in general and to take stock of its strategies for environmental education. A working group has opened up the debate and its first report was presented last May.

By means of a series of activities LIPU is aiming to get individuals to be more conscious of the value of biodiversity. Having accepted it emotionally and intellectually there will follow a desire to take responsibility and work towards its preservation.

As we know more about the links between different components of the environment we may become more respectful of diversity, not ravaging the earth but keeping it and ourselves in harmonious balance. Wherever and whenever, there is a message in nature for people of all ages. Schools are worthy of separate consideration, making it possible for teachers to use our proposals in their teaching programmes. We aim to create a group of LIPU trainers and through them spread environmental education more widely.

The Education Section of LIPU is working in various ways to develop in children and young people a love and respect for nature. In schools it will involve teaching workshops, nature trips, holidays for whole classes and refresher courses, as well as out of school activities such as summer courses for children, events at LIPU reserves and day trips for whole families. There will also be festivals, shows, competitions and games.

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A return to News from LIPU UK

The last few pages have been a composite of articles taken from the last two LIPU publications in Italy.

They show very clearly two sides of the conservation coin, much is being done by the dedicated members of LIPU and Head Office continues in its struggle for improvement in the face of indifference and outright opposition from some quarters. The hunting lobby is strong and determined to continue its indiscriminate killing and torture.

Italy is not a nation of bandits but it still has terrible problems and it deserves our support now as much as ever.

LIPU UK has always had a policy of launching only one appeal per year and for 1999 we are raising funds to support the following projects in Italy:

- ♦ The building of a new aviary for birds recuperating after their treatment at the Sala Baganza Raptor Recovery Centre near Parma (see p1).
- ♦ Support of the campaign against trapping and torture of birds, such as the Goldfinch, in the Naples area (see p8).
- ♦ Management funding for the Volta Scirocco reserve in the Po delta, a 25 ha. wetland located in the southern portion of Valli di Comacchio.
- ♦ Financial backing for the Latina Education Centre - working for future generations (see this page).

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STOP THE MASSACRE

APPEAL 1999

This year LIPU UK will be supporting four major conservation and education projects in Italy for the benefit of birds and future human generations .

1. The Raptor Recovery Centre is located in Sala Baganza, 15 km from LIPU Headquarters, within the Regional Park "Boschi di Carrega". The Centre is an old farmhouse, donated by AISPA (Anglo Italian Society for the Protection of Animals) in the late 80s and completely restructured and reorganised as an hospital for birds of prey. It requires a new aviary for birds recovering after treatment and prior to their release.

2. The Volta Scirocco reserve is a 25 ha. wetland located in the southern portion of Valli di Comacchio, the greatest brackish lagoon in the Po Delta. The results of the first two years as a reserve include: Little Bittern, Purple Heron, Water Rail, Reed and Great Reed Warbler, Gadwall, Shelduck and Garganey are breeding species and this winter were such highlights as Great-spotted Eagle, Crane, hundreds of Avocet, and many waders, gulls and terns.

3. The trapping and sale of finches has been identified in the Naples area and LIPU is committed to fighting this trade and torture. LIPU UK will assist in the funding of the campaign to eliminate this cruel and illegal practice.

4. Education of the next generation is a long term but absolutely essential effort if attitudes are to be changed and the macho hunting mentality is to be challenged. The Latina Education Centre is one of the leading centres working to help the children of the area see that there is a better way of living with nature.

Please help us

I wish to join LIPU UK (membership £13 pa)

I wish to contribute to the LIPU 1999 Appeal

Please make cheques payable to LIPU UK - thank you.

Name.....

Address.....

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Please send cheque to:

LIPU UK, Fernwood, Doddington Road, Whisby, Lincs. LN6 9BX

Tel: 01522 689030

e-mail: lipu-uk@fernwood.prestel.co.uk