

**ali**

Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli

Conservation News from Italy



- CAP reform urged
- Winter birdwatching
- Northern Bald Ibis shot
- New Director for LIPU

*Winter 2012*



Photo: Shirley Lingard

### Birds in trouble

Above: Northern Bald Ibis seen in the Po delta during the annual training flight to Tuscany a few years ago, see pages 20 and 25.

Right: a Cream-coloured Courser similar to the bird found near Massa and successfully treated by the vets and volunteers at the Recovery Centre of CRUMA at Livorno. A brief account is on page 9.



Photo: David Lingard

## Changes at LIPU

Editorial

David Lingard

Since the last edition of Ali there have been changes at LIPU Headquarters. Elena d'Andrea has worked for LIPU for over 20 years, initially in the field of publicity and communications but for the last seven she has been the Director General. However, she now feels that it is time to move on and has accepted a post in Milan, her home city.

The LIPU Council has decided to appoint Danilo Selvaggi as Director General in the capacity of a caretaker until June 2013 while the recruitment process is taking place. I understand that Danilo is a candidate for the post and I feel that his proven background of work for LIPU will stand him in good stead. For many years Danilo has had the unenviable task of lobbying, advising and negotiating with officials and politicians at all levels and his work has been extraordinarily effective.

Danilo wrote to all delegates recently and I share a part of that address with you:

“Dear friends,

I am sending this first message as Director to all of you, to the President, Board and Council members, delegates, activists and staff colleagues first of all to thank LIPU for the task given to me and for the trust implied by that, and hoping that I shall be at least equal to the situation.

A serious and stimulating task awaits me even though it will be for a limited time. I am proud to take it

on, because I have been in LIPU for nearly eighteen years and I am aware of the importance which our association holds in the national and international context.

We should value the mission of LIPU, its daily activities throughout Italy, the efforts of volunteers, the activities of the delegations, the work of the staff, relationships with members and donors, the struggles of recuperative centres and oases, the surveillance and legal work, political initiatives, the results of projects, collection of funding, participation in BirdLife International, general management. We should value the fact that from Linosa to Lincoln, UK, LIPU operates every day in a thousand different ways to save wild birds and talk to people, which is a good thing for everyone.

We should value the history and successes of LIPU in order to give a fuller significance to the present and an impetus towards the years which are to come.

Valuing also means changing, correcting errors, confronting problems, introducing innovations. It means visualising doing different things to the ones we do today, or otherwise thinking of how to do and communicate the same things in a different way.

I will do my best. I will need, literally, moral support and help from everyone. Ideas, suggestions, information, criticisms, doubts, availability. Anything, with one plea: that there should be no lack of constructive spirit, the desire to contribute something, to represent a hope. Without these essential things, the more so in an ultra-problematic society like today's, it is futile even to try.

From the  
President of  
LIPU

LIPU celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2015. Half a century of life. As we line up the things we have accomplished, if only we glance over them, the joy of belonging to this dynamic, open family increases. We are only two years away from this anniversary. How do we want to approach it?

Thank you for your attention and my greetings to you all. Danilo.”

Danilo, we wish you well and we send our thanks to Elena for a job well done in the face of sometimes daunting difficulties.

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## **CRISIS OF AGRICULTURE, LAST CALL**

*By Fulvio Mamone Capria, LIPU President*

One and a half million hectares have disappeared in the past 60 years, climate change is upon us and land is abandoned: agriculture is in the middle of a crisis but there is still a chance to save it with a new Common Agriculture Policy that is environmentally friendly.

Our economic system, based on growth and development at all costs, without taking into account the unsustainability of these processes has failed. Inappropriate and wrong political choices based on consumerism have led to the collapse of the entire social structure of Italy, and now those decisions must be reconsidered and transformed into opportunities for real sustainable growth.

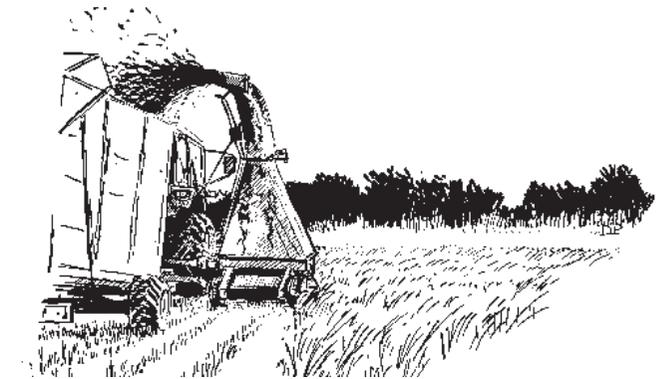
*The situation will only get worse as there are no important political measures in the pipeline to reverse this trend ...*

But is anyone thinking about the environment? Have we left it in a corner, exploited to the limit? European data highlight a widespread biodiversity crisis: 25% of terrestrial species are at risk of extinction and only 17% of habitats and species included in the Nature 2000 network is considered at Least Concern status. The situation will only get worse as there are no important political measures in the pipeline to reverse this trend, on the contrary, there is a tendency to turn a blind eye to the crisis affecting important national assets such as the Italian National Parks.

The economic crisis has also hit the agriculture system. Data on the use of agricultural land show that 1.5 million hectares of the most fertile soil in Italy has been lost in the past 60 years. In addition, the remaining land is not safeguarded and abandonment of the countryside, paired with climate change, results in a higher frequency of catastrophic events.

Birds, which are indicators of the health of the planet, are disappearing from our countryside, and some common species, such as the Tree Sparrow and Crested Lark, have declined by more than 50%. We can halt this damage to our biodiversity only if the Common Agriculture Policy rewards farmers that agree to introduce methods of high environmental value and eliminate funding for intensive agriculture methods. What is LIPU doing to obtain a healthy agriculture which can guarantee the survival of millions of animals as well as food security for people? LIPU has started a cooperation with organic and local growers, is lobbying policy makers in the wider world as well as in Italy and is promoting a greener agriculture. LIPU will be, once again, in many city squares to explain to people the

importance of a responsible choice of food to help good agricultural practices of those farmers that love nature. This task is not easy - but is essential if we want to see Swallows in the countryside and listen to the Skylark song for years to come. We ask for the help and support of those farmers that show respect for the environment and we propose a reward for those farms that allocate at least 10% of their land for areas where animals can thrive, like hedgerows, dry stone walls and set-asides to create a link between the farming practice and the surrounding environment. The guarantee that Italy can remain a beautiful agricultural country is not a fantasy and LIPU is working towards transforming this dream into reality.



## HIGHLIGHTS

*by Andrea Mazza, LIPU Press Office Manager*

### **Projects, Actions, Hopes.**

**T**hey could be called “The Untouchables”, like the famous Brian De Palma movie. However, the stronghold of a very fierce group of poachers from Vicenza has recently been taken following a

blitz by four local Forest Guards two of whom were also LIPU volunteers.

This is one of the many actions that Italian Forest Guards volunteers undertake every day to protect the territory from illegal activities linked to hunting and poaching. LIPU has 80 volunteers, from 8 Italian regions, who have up-to-date competencies in different fields such as environment, fishing and hunting. The LIPU volunteers are managed at a national level by Mr Aldo Verner, volunteer and delegate of LIPU Genoa as well as LIPU national advisor. 'We are trying to provide straightforward laws', he tells us, 'but in Italy laws are implemented differently depending on the region or province concerned. We need the support of our partners as well as direct commitment in safeguarding nature'.

### **Hunting waivers at the end of the line?**

As far as hunting is concerned, one can breathe a sigh of relief as the number of species that can be hunted is decreasing. In many regions LIPU has helped reduce the hunting of several species such as Redwings and Song Thrushes and many water birds. Moreover, the hunting schedule for species such as Tufted Duck and Ruff has been suspended.

New safety measures, then, that LIPU approves and wishes to extend in the next few years. With respect to hunting waivers LIPU has taken a new path which has led to great results over the past few months. Indeed, thanks to the legal actions taken by the European Union against Italy, this year Lombardy has finally succeeded in avoiding passing a law on waivers and Veneto too is having difficulties in passing one.

### **Thousands of birds saved by LIPU Centres**

From animal hunting to their rescue: sometimes, it is necessary to follow complex international procedures to free animals after being treated in LIPU centres. This has been the case for the very rare specimen of Cream-coloured Courser that had been found cold shivering in Massa, north of Pisa. It has been treated for months by the LIPU Rehabilitation Centre for Sea and Water Birds (CRUMA) in Livorno then to be freed in the North African desert in Tunisia by the Amis des oiseaux Association (the video is available on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAIUqGRk45Q&feature=share>).

Over the past year, the CRUMA has treated 3,800 birds and over 200 mammals. At a national level, hundreds of workers, vets and volunteers ensure precious treatment for over 15,000 wild animals, despite the current difficult financial situation. The LIPU centre at the Rome Biopark has helped 6,102 wild animals (of which 1,000 were mammals, reptiles and amphibians and 5,000 birds). The wild animals saved at the La Fagiana rehabilitation centre in Milan were 1,000, while those saved in Casacalenda, in the province of Campobasso, were 254.

### **Education for the youth and adults**

Educating people on the respect of the environment is a crucial pillar of the LIPU mission and can be found in many projects and activities. In fact, there is a specific branch of the association that is in charge of education. The main focus is educating the groups of teenagers in the LIPU oases as well as educating people on the

interpretation of nature; from education to training. Among the most interesting and successful projects is the government-funded Gogreen Volunteers for Nature that has involved three groups of 20 teenagers in the LIPU Oases of Cesano Maderno (north of Milan), Castel di Guido (Rome) and in the Saline di Priolo natural reserve (Siracusa). Much attention has been given to school education, particularly in nurseries and kindergartens where some projects have given birth to “birdgardens”. These allow children to get close to animals, to discover that numerous birds live in their neighbourhoods and therefore feel more inclined to take care of them. Other projects include Bio Teachers, carried out in the Bosco Negri Reserve (Pavia) and Spring Alive, a project in which over 51,000 migratory birds have been observed especially in schools. These sightings have also been noted on the web.

### **The targeted species**

Who does not know the Bonelli’s Eagle, the Egyptian Vulture, the Cory’s Shearwater or the White Stork? Lately, they have often been mentioned in relation to some specific safeguard projects run by LIPU. These species belong to a list of 18 targeted species which are of major concern and for which LIPU would like to develop some strategic safeguard projects in the months and years to come. This year, LIPU has already launched a project involving Bonelli’s Eagles in Sicily: the association has coordinated 75 volunteers who have followed and protected the nesting process of 26 couples and the birth of 30 young birds that started flying later on. This contribution has been crucial for such an endangered species that only has a few couples present in the national territory.

As far as birds of prey are concerned, LIPU is involved in four projects:

- Migratory Birds of Prey Project has observed and studied the migration patterns, particularly those of Honey Buzzards, in Sicily and in the Strait of Messina.
- Life Project “Parma Plain” has focused on Lesser Grey Shrikes, Lesser Kestrels and Red-footed Falcons.
- Osprey Project has been carried out in the Regional Park of Porto Conte, Sardinia, where artificial platforms have been set up to help this species nest.
- The Bonelli’s Eagle, already described .

### **At Sea: The 154 paths of the Cory’s Shearwater**

Linosola, the Tuscan Archipelago, the Maddalena Archipelago and the Tremiti Islands are the corners of the Mediterranean where LIPU, supported by LIPU-UK, has been studying Cory’s Shearwaters since 2008.

With the aid of a mini GPS-logger, it has been possible to track the Cory’s Shearwaters’ foraging movements over the sea during the breeding season. The 154 paths that have been obtained will be used to safeguard the species and the Important Bird Areas (IBA) in the sea.

There have been many battles fought at a local, national and European level to safeguard Natura 2000 sites. Indeed, over the past year important decisions have been made even on the legal side to protect these sites against human intervention that

threatens to destroy species and habitats but also hinder the attempts to reduce the size of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCIs).

### **Farming: a friend of Nature**

**R**ural habitats are among the most delicate habitats for biodiversity. Indeed, the bird species that breed in this habitat are those decreasing the most. The causes are to be found in decades of intensive farming supported by a Common Agricultural Policy that has paid little attention to the safeguarding of the environment.

However, a reform is on its way: LIPU has presented some amendments to improve the CAP and is in contact with Mr La Via, the Agriculture and Rural Development Commission rapporteur.

In Italy, LIPU continues its cooperation with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: the result is the Mito2000 project, whose aim is to take a census of all the common birds that nest in Italy. The collected data has helped calculate the population trend of many bird species as well as the population indices of those species living in agro-ecosystems, mountain grasslands and forests. Unfortunately, a decline in number has already been recorded especially for the species living in mountain grasslands, steppes and intensive plains, the latter being negatively affected by urbanisation and intensive farming. The volunteers who are willing to be involved in the safeguard of IBAs and the Natura 2000 sites can rely on Local Conservation Groups that are springing not only in Europe but worldwide. In Italy, 32 groups have been created in

a short period of time and, through standardized scientific monitoring, they have been able to monitor already 40 species of nesting birds and 23 species of wintering birds.

### **Going Green in the city**

**M**oving from rural habitats to urban ones is a short step and an increasing shift towards urban areas has been recorded at a global level. Therefore, the importance of the role of associations like LIPU increases in those areas in which biodiversity is present and sometimes surprisingly so. However, among the species present in local neighbourhoods there are some “troublesome” ones, such as gulls, pigeons and starlings. In this regard, LIPU has finalized a project with the authorities of La Spezia in order to manage pigeons better; once the census is done, the authorities will hopefully adopt the guidelines suggested.

As far as training is concerned, LIPU has organized a workshop in Pisa whose main focus areas involved the management of pigeons and gulls, the Road Ecology and the planning of urban green areas. Furthermore, a new project concerning the Coliseum birds is about to be launched together with the Regional Board of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Environmental Conservation in Rome: a new approach to safeguard nature, culture and history (it will be addressed further in the next Ali issues).



## MIGRATION

by Marco Gustin, head of research LIPU

### Winter Migration

The last season in our journey through a year of bird migration. This is an ideal season for species that winter in central and southern Italy. Ali's top tips for winter bird watching.

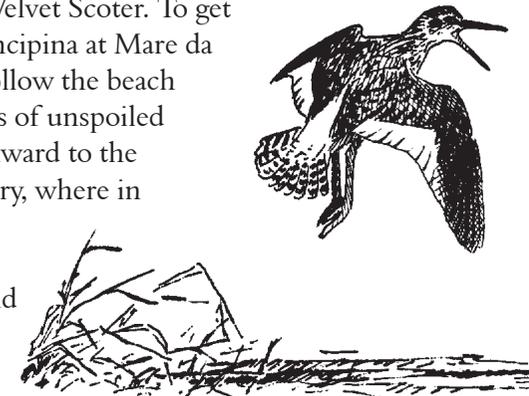
With the cold come the migrants from northern Europe, in search of milder climates. A great period, therefore, as far as bird watching is concerned, but a difficult one too, especially in the north where temperatures often fall below zero. Observing wintering species in such conditions can be an arduous task.

At this time of year bird watching tends to concentrate exclusively on winter visitors, those species that spend the winter in Italy rather than flying as far as north Africa or even further south (like the trans-Saharan species). In any case, since Italy stretches so far from north to south, it's clear that many species (in particular passeriformes) tend to concentrate in the centre and the south of the country, near the Mediterranean, not only due to a more favourable climate but also to food reserves so fundamental for winter visitors. From December to January, for example, Robins, Song Thrush, Blackbirds, Dunnocks, Chaffinches, Willow Warblers and Black Redstarts etc. concentrate in the Mediterranean regions and islands, although there is already some movement towards the breeding areas from the end of January (as is also the case with ducks). The same applies to other species, in

particular to water birds such as ducks and gulls and, to a certain extent, waders. Thousands of waterfowl winter in northern Italy (in areas like the Venetian lagoon and the Po delta) but many can be seen in the wetlands of Lazio, Tuscany, Puglia, Sicily and Sardinia. Amongst these are waders, such as Avocet and Dunlin, and Herring, Yellow-legged, Black-headed and Lesser Black-backed gulls and many species of duck such as the ever-present Mallard, Shoveler, Teal, Wigeon, Pintail, Pochard, Tufted Duck and large concentrations of Coot.

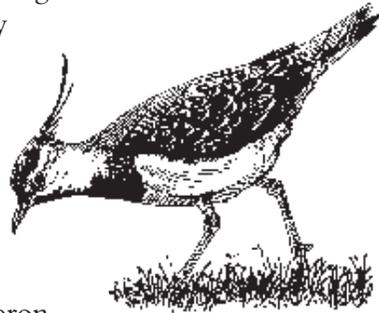
### 1. FOCE DELL'OMBRONE and PALUDE DELLA TRAPPOLA (in Tuscany)

The Tuscan coastal marshland area includes several wetlands, the most important of which is the Ombrone estuary and the Palude della Trappola, in the province of Grosseto. The area is part of the natural park of Maremma and, especially in Winter, home to thousands of ducks that fly back and forth from the sea to the wetlands. Teal, Pintail, Shoveler, Snipe and Redshank, Spotted Redshank and Curlew as well as numerous Marsh Harriers can be seen near the reedbeds, while out to sea it's possible to get a glimpse of sea ducks such as mergansers and Common and Velvet Scoter. To get there, leave Principina at Mare da Grosseto and follow the beach (four kilometres of unspoiled coastline) southward to the Ombrone estuary, where in some years it's possible to see hundreds of wild geese.



## 2. PARCO NAZIONALE DEL CIRCEO (south of Rome)

Although one of the smallest of Italy's national parks, Circeo provides a winter home to thousands of water birds, thanks to the presence of four lakes in the dunes ( Fogliano, Monaci, Caprolace and Sabaudia), swamps (the most interesting of which is the Inferno) and regularly flooded marshland. Its geographical position and mild climate favour not only water fowl (Wigeon, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Coot, Teal, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Great White Heron near the lakes and cormorants and divers along the coast) but also to thousands of small passeriformes that winter in the Mediterranean maquis and the mixed woods.



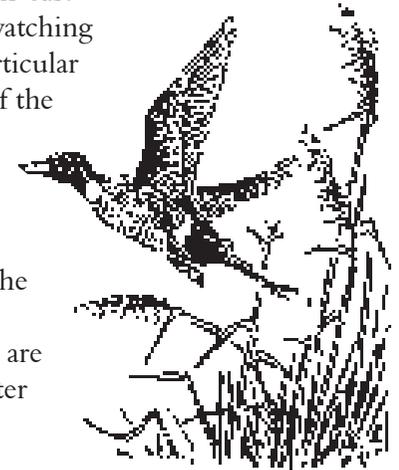
## 3. ISOLA DELLA CONA (south of Udine)

The natural reserve of the Isonzo estuary follows the most northern part of the Adriatic and covers a total of c 2,400 hectares around the 15 kilometre stretch of the river Isonzo. This long strip of land boasts numerous walkways and observation hides. The paths themselves offer various possibilities: from a brief walk to the hide in Marinetta (10 or 15 minutes), to longer ones, to the Biancospino (30 minutes), and Cioss (60 minutes) and to Punta Spigolo (about an hour and forty minutes). From the paths and hides it's possible to observe thousands of wintering Greater White-fronted and Greylag (and occasionally the rare Lesser White-fronted and Red-

necked Geese. Thousands of water birds can be seen in winter, including Coots, herons and Curlew, as well as numerous species of raptors such as Hen and Marsh Harriers.

## 4. COMPLESSO DEGLI STAGNI (in south-east Sicily)

Recently made into a nature reserve this group of shallow lakes in south-east Sicily is ideal for bird watching even in winter. The particular geographical position of the area at the southern most point of the island make it one of the most important wintering grounds on the island. The numerous species visiting the area are well documented. Winter sees the arrival of large concentrations of duck (including dozens of the rare Ferruginous Duck), gulls, waders and herons. The most common species are Shelduck, Wigeon, Pintail, Shoveler, Pochard, Little, Great-crested and Black-necked Grebes with the Coot being the most numerous at this time of year.



LIPU Ragusa volunteers are available for guided tours and excursions. Tel. 349 8236025, or 348 6560924.

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*Climate changes, loss of biodiversity and of natural terrain are the signal that the Earth can no longer be exploited at this rate.*

## CLOSE UP

*By Fulvio Mamone Capria, President of LIPU*

There's a crisis, but Nature is flying away. The economic crisis is threatening to undermine Europe as well as our own country. The real crisis is, however, the one which is striking at nature through green site development and the degradation of habitats. LIPU is not giving up and, thanks to the support of the members, intends to carry on the struggle for the protection of species and the environment.

What is driving our volunteers and activists to work for LIPU is the desire to do something concrete for the safeguarding of birds and the enormous heritage of biodiversity which, all over the world, we are putting in serious danger with projects of unsustainable development. On our planet many species of animal are today in a precarious state of conservation. Changes in the climate, the loss of biodiversity and of undeveloped land are the signals that the Earth can no longer be exploited at this rate. In Italy, the data on nesting birds (Red list 2011) tell us that more than 20% of species are threatened and of these some critically so. Sparrows and larks, which populate the agricultural environment have been reduced by more than 50%. These frightening numbers which, added to the tens of thousands of hectares of agricultural land which each year disappear under concrete, call for us to take action without delay. This is the real crisis to which the environment is subject, this is the cry of alarm for our own lives and for those of future generations.

*It needs the help of the members and of the most sensible citizens: if we grow, the greater the result we can bring to our friends the birds and to a better environment.*

Today LIPU is facing up to a great responsibility! It is to respond to the assault which nature is suffering that the Association is going down to the fields with action on species, above all for those at risk, with lobbying the institutions, with training and education of young people and adults.

First of all, we must intervene, in our role as a partner of Birdlife International, at the highest level of institutional decision making such as the European Union, the Italian Government, the Regions and the Local Authorities, in order to prevent the economic crisis which is assailing the whole of Europe, as elsewhere, from coming up with policies aimed at cutting the programme of nature conservation. The protected areas must be maintained, species at risk must be saved with special intervention, the loss of biodiversity must be stopped. But our magnifying glass is also turned on the new reform of the Common Agricultural Policy which must, with no going back, properly manage the resources through the correct rural development of our country.

To these themes LIPU is entirely committed, from the local level to the centre. A coordination of activities which does not leave out any of our activists. The gratifying results of this give us the strength to keep looking forward. But the challenge is difficult and needs the help of all the members and all sensible citizens. The more we grow in numbers the greater the benefit we shall bring to our friends, the birds, and to a better environment. Our volunteers and activists are the diamond point of LIPU which will not give up facing a scenario of desertification of our biodiversity. We dream of a sky still full of life and the articles we are going to read in the following pages fill the heart with hope.

**CECINA, TUSCANY: AN EXTREMELY RARE  
NORTHERN BALD IBIS IS SERIOUSLY  
WOUNDED BY GUNSHOT,**

**LIPU: A Savage and barbaric act**

**F**ractured legs and wings caused by a burst of pellets. The X-Ray carried out yesterday at the LIPU Centre for marine and aquatic birds at Livorno has confirmed this without a shadow of doubt: the extremely rare specimen of Bald Ibis which yesterday reached Livorno from Cecina, where it was picked up by the State Forestry Corps, had been hit by pellets fired from a hunting shotgun.

This is a particularly serious attack against a species that has been extinct in Europe for 400 years and is the subject of a project of reintroduction by the Waldrappteam of Vienna.

During the day, the animal, which was fitted with GPS and ringed, will undergo a surgical operation which will try and cure the problem of the fractured tibia of the right leg and the radial joint of the left wing.

“We don’t know yet whether we will be able to heal the animal,” explained Renato Ceccerelli, Director of Health of LIPU at Cruma. “The Ibis has lost a lot of blood following the wounding and is very weak. In addition, some of the seven pellets visible by X-Ray could have damaged the functioning of the soft tissues in the leg and the affected wing.”

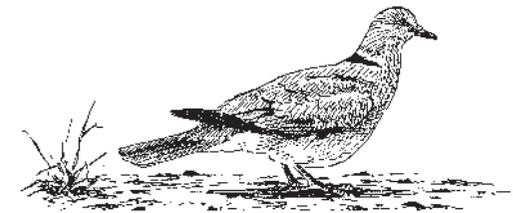
“We strongly condemn this exceptionally serious act and thank the Forestry Corps for its timely recovery,” said Fulvio Mamone Capria, President of LIPU. “It

was barbaric behaviour carried out with contempt for the efforts to reintroduce this species, and, one for which we hope that those who were responsible will be discovered as soon as possible.”

The Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*) is a species that has been extinct in Europe for 400 years. In ages past, it used to live in certain areas of Europe where it had founded colonies: in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Istrian cliffs, and it seems, also in Italy.

Today, the last natural existing colony of Bald Ibis is found in Morocco and consist of about 150 birds on the river Drâa, apart from a few individuals present in the Middle East and discovered in 2002 by a team of experts in the field as part of a project with BirdLife International. In 1989 the colony in Birecik, Turkey became extinct, which at the turn of the century had counted a thousand breeding pairs.

The Bald Ibis is part of a research project set up by Waldappteam of Vienna (a group of biologists and pilots), which from 2002 has been involved in the protection and rehabilitation of the Bald Ibis. The project has gained an international reputation particularly through flight with the birds from the mountains of Austria to southern Tuscany: man has taken on the duties of an adoptive parent and taught the young ibises, born in captivity, the correct route, making them fly following a microflight.



## BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL

*By Giovanni Albarella, LIPU Office for International Cooperation*

### **An Unsustainable Development**

**A**land of natural wonders and biodiversity, New Zealand today is suffering from the excessive exploitation of its resources which is resulting in the decline and the extinction of species. BirdLife partner, Forest and Bird, explains what is being done to address the situation.

Mountain ranges, active volcanoes, forests, lakes, rivers, and of course the sea. These are the elements which characterise the geography of New Zealand, which is composed basically of two large islands, the North and the South, together with a myriad of subsidiary archipelagos, presenting a notable diversity of environments and a biology unique in the world.

Ali talked to David Brooks, from the communications department of Forest and Bird.

*David, what is the situation for nature conservation in New Zealand?*

For millions of years, New Zealand existed in complete isolation from any other landmass. Then the arrival first of the Maori, in around 1250, followed by the Europeans at the end of the eighteenth century, brought about profound environmental changes which resulted in a massive loss of biodiversity. It is thought that 85% of New Zealand was once covered by forests, whereas now it is only 23%. And around 32% of its terrestrial fauna,

including 51 species of birds, have become extinct. Neither are things going well for our marine birds: we have 88 species nesting here, including 22 of Albatross, but many populations are in sharp decline.

*By what in particular are birds threatened?*

The introduction by the Europeans of various allothonous species, that is to say those species that were not originally present in a specific area but which arrived through the activity of man and therefore termed “alien”, represents the greatest danger for native New Zealand birds. In particular, the introduction of various alien predators, such as the ferret, the opossum and the rat is a serious menace to flightless species. In the case of seabirds, threats come not only from these predators, but from intensive fishing as well. Then there is industrial pollution, urbanisation, intensive agriculture, and the excessive abstraction of water for irrigation and hydro-electric power.

*Let us talk about the main actions that Forest and Birds have undertaken for the conservation of nature.*

We generally work in close contact with the Department of Conservation, the government body, with the aim of improving actions for the control of alien species, the protection of habitats, environmental restoration, and reducing the impact on bird populations of unsustainable fishing practices, agricultural intensification and urbanisation. We also have campaigns to save individual species such as the Kiwi and the Kakapo, the world's only flightless parrot. In addition we advocate environmentally sustainable political economies and the protection of urban green spaces.

At the local level we have 49 regional delegations, through which we can put forward our requests for the protection of nature to the local administrations too.

*How do you alert the public to environmental issues?*

Our campaigns are communicated both via the media and the social networks on defined conservation themes. Thanks to this way of working we have avoided the construction of a dam in the South Island, which would have destroyed an entire river system in a wilderness area. We are currently working to prevent opencast coal mining on a plateau, again in the South Island, which is unique both in terms of its landscape and biology.

*Do you cooperate with other organisations?*

Yes. We are certain that our lobbying carries more weight when undertaken alongside our sister organisations. Naturally we often share a common viewpoint and so collaborate both with international bodies such as Greenpeace and the WWF, with national associations, and down to the smallest local groups. Another reason for working with other organisations than ours is that we may have other shared objectives. Recently, for example, we have cooperated with the agricultural communities in the control of alien species in certain forest areas.

*Forest and Bird has a number of reserves. How are they managed?*

We currently have around 40 reserves, responsibility for which is devolved to the local branches, albeit with support from the national staff. The main

management objectives are the control of alien species and the restoration of habitats, attempting, if possible, to bring back these areas as closely as possible to their natural state.

## Identity Card

### FOREST AND BIRD

Year founded: 1923

President: Andrew Cutler

Members: 40,000

IBAs in New Zealand: 55

Globally-threatened species in New Zealand: 70

Website: [www.forestandbird.org.nz](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz)



## FROM THE WORLD OF LIPU

*edited by Andrea Mazza, head of LIPU Press Office*

### **Three birds shot in Tuscany are treated in LIPU hospital: Northern Bald Ibis shot on migration**

**I**n Tuscany a Northern Bald Ibis has been shot dead and two seriously injured, a serious blow to the ibis reintroduction plan run by the Waldrappteam of Vienna. The injured birds were on migration from Austria to southern Tuscany when they were rescued

by the State Forestry Corps and taken to the LIPU Recovery Centre, CRUMA, at Livorno. One had serious multiple fractures, and underwent a difficult operation.

It took the police and Forestry Corps only a few days to find the culprit, a hunter from Camaiole (Lucca) who held a valid hunting licence. Because of the seriousness of the crime LIPU is bringing a civil action, and is also calling on Parliament to increase the penalties for poaching.

### **Results of Euro Birdwatch 2012, Sixty five thousand turn out on Migration Watch**

**G**uided tours: 2,55; Participants: 65,000 and a count of 6 million birds. These are the figures from Euro Birdwatch 2012, held in 41 European and Central Asian countries on the 6 and 7 October.

In Italy the event was organized by LIPU with the help of the State Forestry Corps. Seventy five thousand birds were counted in oases, reserves and other areas for a total of 175 species. Some rare birds were recorded, including a Lesser-spotted Eagle, six Ruddy Shelduck, three Rock Sparrow and 13 Caspian Tern.

Euro Birdwatch was launched on 6 October by LIPU president Fulvio Mamone Capria at Tornavento, between Genoa and Turin. A bicycle ride was also held to protest against the expansion of Milan Malpensa airport, which would damage the heath where Nightjar and Red-backed Shrike nest. (Video on [www.lipu.it](http://www.lipu.it))

### **Ragusa police award: Police for nature**

**L**IPU has presented the provincial police in Ragusa, in south-eastern Sicily, with an award for their excellent work against illegal shooting and poaching. On 20 October, the Chief Constable and Special Commissioner for the province gave a press conference to highlight the important work that LIPU does at a national level, and to underline the good working relationship between the police and LIPU volunteer guards. “This is a well-deserved award” said Egle Gambino, LIPU delegate for Ragusa, “both for the support given to our field centre, and for briefing on changes to hunting legislation and case law”.

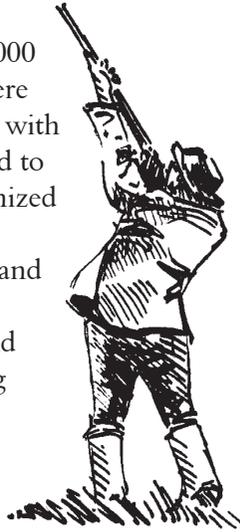
### **Win on appeal in Lazio – Coast saved on the Tremiti islands**

**T**here will be no drilling off the coast of the Tremiti islands in the southern Adriatic. LIPU, WWF, Legambiente and FAI (Italian National Trust) have won a joint appeal lodged in the Lazio TAR tribunal against the Minister for the Environment and Culture and Petroceltic Italia. The tribunal has annulled two ministerial decrees which would have paved the way for oil exploration on the sea bed in an area off the Tremiti islands, the Abruzzo and Molise coasts. The decision was motivated by the need to protect the marine ecosystem and marine migratory fauna.

### **“Feats” of Italian hunters abroad – deadly tourism**

**I**talian hunters have carried out yet more slaughter abroad. Their latest “feat” comes from Romania

where police have arrested 20 Italian hunters for violations of arms and poaching law. Thirty shotguns, 9,000 cartridges and 1,200 dead birds were confiscated from the group, along with illegal electromagnetic decoys used to attract animals. The trip was organized by three Italian and six Romanian citizens who handed out 18 thousand cartridges in just a few days. The organisers are being held in jail and face heavy sentences. The hunting received strong condemnation from associations such as CABS (Committee Against Bird Slaughter) ENPA, LAC, LIPU and WWF Italy.



### **Bianello and Celestina incorporated into Natura 2000, Europe welcomes two LIPU Oases**

The Oases of LIPU Bianello and Celestina, in the province of Reggio Emilia, have been integrated into Natura 2000, a network of European sites with rich biodiversity. This important recognition was the result of proposals by the province of Reggio Emilia, the two councils of Quattrocappelle (for Bianello) and Campagnola Emilia (for Celestina), and applications from the region of Emilia-Romagna.

The Oasis of Celestina (11 hectares) was joined to the pre-existing SIC-ZPS “Novellara Valleys”. The Oasis of Bianello (196 hectares) was recognised as a SIC (Site of Community Importance) because of the presence of important species, including orchids and invertebrates.

## **BIRDLIFE: THE ROAD TO RECOVERY**

**R**oad to Recovery is a report by Birdlife on the progress of the EU strategies to halt the decline in biodiversity by 2020. While Italy has designated sites on land for protection they are not being effectively managed.

What progress has been made in Europe towards halting the loss of species and habitats by 2020? The report, produced by Birdlife in co-operation with its European partners, tells of delays in making reforms but also of some progress achieved.

In the case of the Natura 2000 network, for example, some 20% of EU territory is included but the majority of member states are very slow to introduce measures to protect, manage, and monitor these sites and species they support.

The report also deplores the way the politicians who control the funds of the Common Agricultural and Fisheries policies block any attempt to make their activities more sustainable. Every year farmers receive 50 billion Euros in subsidies for activities that are largely damaging to the environment while fish stocks have fallen by 75% with consequent damage to the marine ecosystem, its birds and animals.

And what about Italy? The report recognises that the number of sites on land designated as protected is good but points to insufficient and ineffective management and even the management plans are weak. The funds available to the regions are not well used or - sometimes - not used at all. Also, too few marine reserves have been created

We do still have time to save our natural heritage but time is running out. The decisions in the next months will be crucial.

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### TAIL FEATHERS

This edition of the Ali would not have been possible without the skill and help of our translators who, for this issue, were: Barbara Avery, Joanna Bazen, Daria Dadam, Giuseppina Fazzina, Tony Harris, Gill Hood, Caterina Paone, Peter Rafferty and John Walder.

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### Acknowledgements.

Line drawings in this issue are by kind permission of the RSPB and the excellent photograph of Corncrake on the cover is by LIPU Council Member, Michele Mendi.

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The Annual Draw was carried out by Miss Hannah Burbanks, aged 2, who drew the following tickets:

First Prize, £500, Mrs T Sims of Berkshire  
Second Prize, £200, Mrs D Lincoln of Reading and  
Third Prize, £100, Mr G W Green of Wiltshire

Congratulations to the winners and many thanks to all who took part, the draw raised over £2200 for campaign funds.

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Above: Education is everything - Alessia de Loreziis, the warden of Castel di Guido reserve, is telling visitors of her work before releasing another "mended" bird.

Left: It's that time of the year! LIPU volunteer Paolo Baldi, a journalist in Brescia is seen carrying a heavy load of traps he has just found and confiscated in the hills to the north of his home town.

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Dramatic release of a seabird, nursed back to health at a LIPU Recovery Centre

*photo: Marco de Silvi*