

Recent kills of Northern Bald Ibises demonstrate urgency for zero tolerance against Wildlife Crime

On October 25, 2022, the General Assembly of European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE) announced a position paper on wildlife crime, which according to their own statement reaffirms their long-standing position of "zero tolerance" for wildlife crime.

FACE POSITION ON COMBATTING WILDLIFE CRIME [Link](#)

The organization was founded in 1977 and represents the interests of Europe's 7 million hunters as an international non-profit, non-governmental organization (INGO). They define themselves as the world's largest democratic interest group for hunters.

The position paper demands a better understanding of the root causes of wildlife crime as a basis for policymakers to draft appropriate policies and laws. An appeal is made to policymakers to work with the hunting community to combat wildlife crime. It also emphasizes the need for effective and efficient enforcement of laws related to wildlife crime.

The Northern Bald Ibis has been chosen by FACE as the flagship species for this subject area. This is a clear indication that the broad and long-standing commitment against illegal bird hunting in Italy within the framework of our European LIFE projects (www.waldrapp.eu) is now also noticed and recognized by hunting associations at the European level.

Johannes Fritz, head of the *Waldrappteam Conservation and Research* company, says: *"We recognizes that FACE renews and reaffirms a "zero tolerance" for wildlife crime. However, the paper is missing concrete and consistent measures to efficiently combat the massive impairment of biodiversity caused by wildlife crime."*

How necessary concrete measures are, is particularly clear in the example of the Northern Bald Ibis, which the association itself chose as flagship species. Even after years of communication and cooperation with Italian hunting associations, around a third of the losses in Italy are still caused by illegal hunting. And unfortunately, the topic has again become sadly topical. Two young ibises from the breeding area of Kuchl in Salzburg were shot down on November 24 on their way to the wintering area near Villafranca southwest of Verona.



The two kills happened in the middle of a region that has long been known as problematic and designated as such in the Italian national action plan against illegal bird hunting (*Prealpi lombardo-venete*).

Johannes Fritz stated: *The "zero tolerance" strategy against wildlife crime could have been implemented effectively and efficiently for years now in such designated regions. The legal framework for this is in place. In fact, however, the situation has hardly improved so far, as evidenced again by the current shootings.*

We hope that the latest FACE position paper will provide a basis for the hunting community to take new concrete and consistent preventive measures against wildlife crime. We will continue to practice "zero tolerance" within our possibilities and further use the Northern Bald Ibis as a flagship species to demonstrate the threat to biodiversity posed by illegal bird hunting. The situation for the ibises and many other affected bird species must finally be improved with united efforts. Migratory birds need safe flyways!

Image texts:

Picture (1): Northern Bald Ibises are threatened with extinction and should become part of the European fauna again within the framework of the European LIFE project.

Picture (2): Juvenile Northern Bald Ibis in flight.

Picture (3): Northern Bald Ibises during autumn migration.

Picture (4): X-ray of one of the two juvenile birds shot down near Villafranca southwest of Verona, the positions of the pellets are marked in red.

