



SYMPOSIUM 'REINTRODUCING MIGRATORY BIRDS'

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REASON FOR HOPE
LIFE+ Biodiversity

Innovative approaches against illegal bird hunting: The Northern Bald Ibis as a flagship species

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The Northern Bald Ibis is one of the rarest bird species globally. Our LIFE+ project (www.waldrapp.eu) aims to reintroduce a migratory population in Europe by establishing a new migratory tradition. Currently, our population consists of about 110 birds. These are the only wild living Northern Bald Ibises, which perform the species-specific migratory lifestyle. Our population adds essentially to the global conservation of the NBI and the implementation of the international Single Species Action Plan.

Illegal bird hunting is known as a significant factor driving the recent biodiversity loss, particularly in migratory bird species. This is also the case for the Northern Bald Ibis. Currently, about 23% of annual losses of NBI are caused by illegal hunting in Italy. This rate should be sustainably reduced by an ongoing campaign, which includes various public awareness measures, an improvement of the national legal framework, criminal and civil procedures, strategic collaborations and fieldwork. The final aim is an overall reduction of illegal bird hunting in Italy.

Identifying offenders is crucial for the success of such a campaign. Therefore, we aim to develop and implement a so-called "Instant Poaching Alert System" (IPAS). Key element is a device attached to each bird, which immediately alarms us in case of a poaching incident. This instant alarm should significantly increase the probability to identify offenders after an illegal hunting incident. To ensure a reliable and versatile application of the system, three target species will be involved in the technical development: The Northern Bald Ibis, a further migratory bird species and a mammal species. The campaign should also serve as an example for other regions and other flagship species.