



# LIFE with VULTURES

Recommendations and operational solutions to solve the human-wildlife and human-human conflicts, towards the reduction of poisoning incidents in the Cyprus countryside.

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*LIFE WITH VULTURES: SAVING GRIFFON VULTURES IN CYPRUS  
THROUGH CONCRETE CONSERVATION ACTION  
(LIFE18 NAT/CY/001018)*

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## About the project

LIFE with Vultures is a targeted conservation project for the protection of the Griffon Vulture in Cyprus. In this four-year endeavour (2019-2023), [BirdLife Cyprus](#), the [Game and Fauna Service](#), [Terra Cypria – The Cyprus Conservation Foundation](#) and the [Vulture Conservation Foundation](#) have joined forces to tackle the main threats the remaining Griffon Vulture population is facing and prevent the island’s most threatened bird of prey from becoming extinct. The project has a €1,375,861 budget and is co-funded (60%) by the EU’s LIFE programme. More information for the project can be found at: [www.lifewithVultures.eu](http://www.lifewithVultures.eu).

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>TC</b>	Terra Cypria
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>SPA</b>	Special Protection Area
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>Fig.</b>	Figure
<b>Par.</b>	Paragraph
<b>ApDUs</b>	Anti-poison Dog Units
<b>H-W</b>	Human-Wildlife
<b>H-H</b>	Human-Human
<b>No.</b>	Number
<b>Land users</b>	Livestock breeders, shepherds, hunters, farmers
<b>LGD</b>	Livestock Guardian Dogs
<b>High risk areas</b>	areas where a significant number of poisoning incidents have been recorded in the past
<b>VS</b>	Veterinary Services
<b>GFS</b>	Game and Fauna Service

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## Executive Summary

The illegal use of poisoned baits, which derives from human–wildlife and human-human conflicts, poses a threat for both wildlife and humans. Even though not the primary target, Griffon Vultures are considered extremely vulnerable to poisoning since they are scavengers and feed on carcasses which may be laced with poison (direct poisoning) or may have died from poisoning (secondary poisoning). As a result and taking into consideration the high ecosystemic importance of vultures as well as other protected wildlife species falling victims to poisoning, the urgent need to take action against the placement of poisoned baits in the countryside emerges as an imperative.

This report aims to identify and propose operational solutions and recommendations to alleviate the human-wildlife and human-human conflicts which lead to the illegal use of poisoned baits in Cyprus.

The recommendations in this report were built upon an understanding the main factors that trigger the use of poison-baits and the people’s perceptions about poisoned bait usage, which was gained through action A1.3 (Baseline socioeconomic and awareness level study) of the project.

Added to the results of the Action A 1.3, the recommendations and operational solutions included in this study emerged from face-to-face interviews with stakeholders who imparted important information and experience/insights to assist in the exploration of solutions for these kinds of conflicts, since they are directly or indirectly related with poisoning issue in general.

The main stakeholders interviewed between July 2021 to February 2022, were the following: 1) the Veterinary Services, 2) the Game and Fauna Service, 3) the Department of Forests, 4) Livestock breeders and shepherds, 5) Hunters, 6) local Hunting

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Clubs/regional Hunting Associations, 7) NGOs and environmentally sensitized/aware individuals, 8) the Department of the Environment and 9) the Department of Agriculture.

The most important identified solutions to alleviate both human-human and human-wildlife conflicts include continuous education and training of people (land users and local residents) mostly in key problem areas as well as the whole island, the development of a strong relationship between crucial stakeholders (land users and local residents) and government officers (like veterinary services, the police, the Game and Fauna Service and the Department of Forests), the active involvement of local Hunting Clubs in awareness-raising efforts.

For human-wildlife conflicts, it was identified that the establishment of specialized teams/individuals for the capture/culling (where appropriate) of foxes and stray dogs, when and where predation of these species is proven to cause serious problems to livestock breeders, could be promising solution. At the same time, an in-depth study on foxes will and can provide useful information about their dietary habits and the extent of its impact on livestock. This evidence can then be used as a tool to gradually restore the prevailing bad perceptions and beliefs surrounding the species, as well as its better management.

Regarding human-human conflicts, a possible limitation regarding the maximum number of dogs allowed for each hunter and a ban on posting photos of dead prey on the internet were amongst the most important identified solutions. Moreover, improvement of the current processes for obtaining a hunting license, so that more educated and sensitized individuals respecting biodiversity will emerge, is an extremely important step towards the alleviation of human-human conflicts.

The face-to-face interviews and the information gathered in the framework of the present study, revealed that the effective confrontation of poison usage requires a broader attitude change of people from specific categories as well as the broader public, especially

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those living or spending more time in rural areas. Thus, the focus should be directed towards the people of rural communities (and especially younger people) within the areas used by the Griffon Vulture.

It is finally noted that the specific recommendations and operational solutions included in this study, constitute a vital part of the wider effort to save the species from extinction and improve its conservation status, taking into account that the Griffon Vulture population in Cyprus is unlikely to bounce back without active conservation and protection actions and significant changes in human behaviour.

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## Executive Summary in Greek (Περίληψη)

Η παράνομη τοποθέτηση δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων, που προκύπτει τόσο από τις συγκρούσεις ανθρώπου-άγριας ζωής όσο και ανθρώπου-ανθρώπου, απειλεί έντονα τη βιώσιμη διαχείριση των οικοσυστημάτων/ενδιαιτημάτων και τη διατήρηση της βιοποικιλότητας της Κύπρου. Παρόλο που δεν είναι ο πρωταρχικός στόχος, οι Γύπες θεωρούνται εξαιρετικά ευάλωτοι στη δηλητηρίαση, καθώς, ως πτωμοφάγα ζώα, τρέφονται με νεκρά ζώα τα οποία έχουν εμποτιστεί με δηλητήριο (Πρωτογενής δηλητηρίαση) ή τα οποία μπορεί να έχουν προηγουμένως δηλητηριαστεί (Δευτερογενής δηλητηρίαση). Έτσι, δεδομένης της οικοσυστημικής σημασίας των Γυπών και άλλων προστατευόμενων ειδών άγριας ζωής, η επείγουσα ανάγκη λήψης μέτρων κατά της τοποθέτησης δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων στην ύπαιθρο προκύπτει ως επιτακτική ανάγκη.

Η παρούσα μελέτη στοχεύει στον εντοπισμό και την παράθεση λειτουργικών λύσεων και εισηγήσεων για την άμβλυνση των συγκρούσεων ανθρώπου-άγριας ζωής και ανθρώπου-ανθρώπου στην Κύπρο, που αναμφίβολα οδηγούν στη χρήση δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων.

Η εξεύρεση λύσεων και εισηγήσεων στηρίχθηκε στην κατανόηση των κύριων παραγόντων που οδηγούν στη χρήση δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων και των αντιλήψεων των ανθρώπων για τη χρήση δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων, οι οποίες είχαν ήδη αναγνωριστεί στο πλαίσιο της δράσης A1.3 (Κοινωνικοοικονομική μελέτη και μελέτη επιπέδου ευαισθητοποίησης) του έργου.

Επιπλέον των αποτελεσμάτων της δράσης A1.3, όλες οι προτεινόμενες λύσεις και εισηγήσεις που περιλαμβάνονται σε αυτή τη μελέτη προέκυψαν μετά από κατ' ιδίαν συνεντεύξεις με εμπλεκόμενους φορείς και τμήματα που σχετίζονται είτε άμεσα είτε έμμεσα με την τοποθέτηση δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων στην ύπαιθρο και διαθέτουν

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σημαντικές πληροφορίες, γνώσεις και εμπειρίες σχετικά με την επίλυση τέτοιου είδους συγκρούσεων.

Οι κύριοι εμπλεκόμενοι φορείς/τμήματα με τους οποίους πραγματοποιήθηκαν κατ'ιδίαν συνεντεύξεις από τον Ιούλιο του 2021 μέχρι τον Φεβρουάριο του 2022, ήταν οι ακόλουθοι: 1) οι Κτηνιατρικές Υπηρεσίες, 2) η Υπηρεσία Θήρας και Πανίδας, 3) Το Τμήμα Δασών, 4) Κτηνοτρόφοι και βοσκοί, 5) Κυνηγοί, 6) Τοπικοί Κυνηγετικοί Σύλλογοι/περιφερειακές Κυνηγετικές Ενώσεις, 7) ΜΚΟ και περιβαλλοντικά ευαισθητοποιημένα άτομα, 8) το Τμήμα Περιβάλλοντος και 9) το Τμήμα Γεωργίας.

Οι πιο σημαντικές λύσεις για την άμβλυνση των συγκρούσεων ανθρώπου-ανθρώπου και ανθρώπου-άγριας ζωής περιλαμβάνουν τη συνεχή ενημέρωση και εκπαίδευση των ανθρώπων (χρήστες γης και τοπικούς κατοίκους) κυρίως σε σημαντικές περιοχές όπου δραστηριοποιείται ο Γύπας αλλά και σε όλη την Κύπρο, την ανάπτυξη μιας ισχυρής σχέσης μεταξύ σημαντικών ενδιαφερομένων φορέων (χρήστες γης και τοπικοί κάτοικοι) και κυβερνητικών αξιωματούχων (από διάφορες κυβερνητικές υπηρεσίες/τμήματα όπως οι Κτηνιατρικές Υπηρεσίες, η Αστυνομία, η Υπηρεσία Θήρας και Πανίδας και το Τμήμα Δασών) και την ενεργή συμμετοχή των τοπικών κυνηγετικών συλλόγων.

Αποκλειστικά για τις συγκρούσεις ανθρώπου-άγριας ζωής, η σύσταση εξειδικευμένων ομάδων για την αιχμαλώτιση/θανάτωση (ότι ενδείκνυται καλύτερο) αλεπούδων και αδέσποτων σκύλων, όπου και όποτε αποδεικνύεται ότι προκαλούν προβλήματα σε κάποιες περιοχές, κρίνεται ως μια καλή λύση. Επίσης, μια ενδελεχή μελέτη για τις αλεπούδες που θα παρέχει χρήσιμες πληροφορίες για τις διατροφικές τους συνήθειες, μπορεί να χρησιμοποιηθεί ως ένα εργαλείο για να αποκατασταθούν σταδιακά οι κακές αντιλήψεις και πεποιθήσεις που επικρατούν για το είδος. Μια τέτοια μελέτη θα βοηθούσε επίσης στην καλύτερη διαχείριση του είδους.

Όσον αφορά αποκλειστικά τις συγκρούσεις ανθρώπου-ανθρώπου, ένας πιθανός περιορισμός σχετικά με τον μέγιστο επιτρεπόμενο αριθμό σκύλων για κάθε κυνηγό και

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η απαγόρευση δημοσίευσης φωτογραφιών νεκρών θηραμάτων στο διαδίκτυο ήταν από τις πιο σημαντικές λύσεις που προέκυψαν. Επιπλέον, η βελτίωση των υφιστάμενων διαδικασιών για την απόκτηση άδειας κυνηγιού, ώστε να προκύπτουν πιο μορφωμένα και ευαισθητοποιημένα άτομα που σέβονται τη βιοποικιλότητα, θα αποτελέσει ένα εξαιρετικά σημαντικό βήμα προς την άμβλυση των συγκρούσεων ανθρώπου-ανθρώπου.

Οι προσωπικές συνεντεύξεις και οι πληροφορίες που συγκεντρώθηκαν στο πλαίσιο της παρούσας μελέτης, κατέδειξαν ότι η αποτελεσματική αντιμετώπιση της χρήσης δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων απαιτεί μια γενική αλλαγή νοοτροπίας των ανθρώπων στις αγροτικές περιοχές αλλά και σε ολόκληρη την Κύπρο. Ως εκ τούτου, ιδιέταιρη προσοχή ενδείκνυται να επιδειχθεί στην διαπαιδαγώγηση και ενημέρωση των ανθρώπων των αγροτικών κοινοτήτων (και ιδιαίτερα στους νεότερους ανθρώπους) εντός των περιοχών που χρησιμοποιούνται από τον Γύπα.

Καταληκτικά, σημειώνεται ότι η παράθεση λειτουργικών λύσεων και εισηγήσεων για την άμβλυση των συγκρούσεων ανθρώπου-άγριας ζωής και ανθρώπου-ανθρώπου στην Κύπρο, αποτελεί ζωτικό μέρος της ευρύτερης προσπάθειας για τη διάσωση του είδους από την εξαφάνιση και τη βελτίωση της κατάστασης διατήρησής του, λαμβάνοντας υπόψη ότι ο πληθυσμός του Γύπα στην Κύπρο είναι απίθανο να ανακάμψει χωρίς οποιοσδήποτε ενέργειες διατήρησης του και παράλληλα αλλαγή συμπεριφοράς και νοοτροπίας.

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- The Cyprus Hunting Federation, and especially its president Mr. Elias Pekris, the member of the board Mr. Angelos Pitsillides and the executive secretary Mrs. Athena Mavronichi,
- All anonymous hunters, livestock breeders, shepherds, farmers and local residents from local communities of Limassol and Paphos districts who provided important information, comments and recommendations during the meetings and events organized in local communities within the framework of the action E2.3.

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**Athena Mavronichi (Executive Secretary of Cyprus Hunting Federation):** Provision of important information and data during face-to-face meetings.

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## Introduction

The Griffon Vulture population in Cyprus is under the threat of extinction, mainly because of frequent poisoning incidents [1]. The last decades have seen a catastrophic decline of the species' population on the island and the remaining breeding population does not exceed 20 individuals and only 1-3 breeding pairs [1]. These numbers are far from the species' Favourable Reference Value (FRV) for Cyprus, which was set at 65 pairs (or 200 individuals) in 2013, under a government-funded project [2].

Despite the reduced food availability that also caused the decline of the species population, the main current threat for Griffon Vultures in Cyprus has been recognised as the illegal setting of poison in nature. The extensive use of poison-baits is attributed in both human-wildlife and human-human conflicts and it has dramatically increased worldwide within the recent decades [3]. This has caused the eradication of not only the directly targeted species such as specific birds of prey and carnivores, but also non-targeted species which have experienced massive declines (e.g., Griffon Vultures) [4], [5]. More specifically, a high number of Griffon Vulture poisonings occurring in Cyprus and in Europe in general are attributable to accidental or secondary poisoning incidents because of the use of poisoned baits targeting carnivores (foxes and stray dogs) [6].

Poisoned bait is deliberately and illegally used to kill wildlife that is believed to disturb certain human activities. These activities mainly involve livestock husbandry and farming and wild-game management for hunting. Typically, shepherds and livestock breeders may use poisoned baits to prevent their young lambs and goats from being attacked and killed by foxes and stray dogs (human-wildlife conflicts). Conflicts between humans and wildlife species are particularly controversial because of the economic activities/resources affected by humans or wildlife and lead to the use of poison [7]. Generally, the illegal poisoning of protected birds, is broadly identified as a very serious threat to some species

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including the Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) and the Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) [3], [8], [9], [10].

In addition, hunters sometimes use poison to defend the borders of their self-proclaimed hunting territory areas and to keep other "rival" hunters and their dogs away. Farmers and livestock breeders also set illegal poisoned baits to keep hunters and their dogs away from their properties (human-human conflicts). Thus, the reckless, illegal and indiscriminate use of poisoned bait poses a serious risk with detrimental consequences to important wildlife species, hunting and shepherd dogs, pets and occasionally also humans, because of the highly toxic substances used.

Hence, human-human and human-wildlife conflicts leading to illegal human actions such as the use of poisoned baits, are negatively affecting both the sustainable management of ecosystems and biodiversity conservation all over the world. To address the illegal use of poisoned baits against wildlife species in different regions and countries of the EU, there have been several initiatives and projects over the last couple of decades. However, there are still some member states with serious cases of illegal poisoning, especially of bird species [11]. Thus, developing measures and solutions to prevent the decline of the population of species affected by illegal poisoning poses a challenging task.

A key aspect of the current "LIFE with Vultures CY" (LIFE18 NAT/CY/001018) project is the identification and proposal of operational solutions and recommendations to alleviate human-wildlife and human-human conflicts, towards the reduction of the poisoning incidents occurring in the Cypriot countryside. This would be best achieved after gaining an understanding of the main factors that trigger the use of poison-baits and the people's perceptions about poisoned bait use. This was already recognized through the baseline study to understand the users of poisoned baits, their motivations and beliefs (action A1.3 of "LIFE with Vultures" (LIFE18 NAT/CY/001018) project).

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The main target of the “LIFE with Vultures CY” project is to prevent the extinction of the Griffon Vulture in Cyprus and improve the conservation status of its population by tackling the main threads for vultures. Towards this end, taking advantage of operational solutions, recommendations and policy that will come out through the project, is considered of utmost importance.

Consequently, this study provides recommendations and operational solutions to solve human-wildlife and human-human conflicts around poisoned bait use in Cyprus. To achieve this task, several face-to-face interviews took place with stakeholders who hold important information and suggestions for these kinds of conflicts, since they are directly or indirectly related with the poisoning issue in general. This is a vital part of the wider effort to save the species from extinction and improve its conservation status, considering that the Griffon Vulture population in Cyprus is unlikely to bounce back without active conservation actions and changes in human behaviours.

Moreover, the results of this study will help to identify the intentions and willingness of various key stakeholders to set the foundation and work together to restore the Griffon Vulture population in Cyprus.



**Figure 1.** The Griffon Vulture, *Rajja Howard* [12].

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## Area of Interest

All recommendations and operational solutions provided within this report intend to solve human-wildlife and human-human conflicts in Cyprus and especially in the main breeding and foraging areas for the Griffon Vulture, extending from the south (Limassol district) to the southwest (Paphos district) part of Cyprus, including the westernmost end of the island.

All recommendations and operational solutions aim to resolve conflicts and by expansion to prevent the extinction of the Griffon Vultures in Cyprus and improve the conservation status of the species, with a focus on the following Natura 2000 sites (Map 2.1–Annex II):

- 1) Diarizos Valley (CY4000020)
- 2) Episkopi Cliffs (SPA Area within the Sovereign Base Areas)
- 3) Ha Potami (CY5000010)
- 4) Akamas Peninsula (CY4000023)
- 5) Limnatis Valley (CY5000011)
- 6) Xeros River (CY4000007)
- 7) Hanoutaris Cliffs (CY4000017)
- 8) Ezousa Valley (CY4000021)
- 9) Paramali River (CY5000009)

Most of the study areas include remote rural regions with villages with an ageing population. The main human activities focus on agriculture and livestock breeding. Tourism and recreation activities along with renewable energy developments are also found within the selected sites of interest.

The intensification of livestock breeding practices and agricultural activities and practices caused degradation to the nesting and foraging habitats for Griffon Vultures in Cyprus [45]. Examples of this include conversion of grasslands to arable fields, overgrazing and construction of houses on agricultural land. In some specific areas/villages, the abandonment of farming and livestock breeding occurred at a very fast pace, especially

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after 1974, because of the lack of young and willing people to be engaged with non-intensive agricultural and livestock activities [13], [45].

The vulture population began to decline rapidly during the 1950s and 1960s, mainly due to changes in livestock keeping, which meant a reduction of food availability for the vultures. Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, the illegal use of poisoned baits caused mass poisonings that dealt a major blow to the population. The use of poisoned baits, targeting primarily foxes and dogs, continues to pose a key threat for the species in Cyprus [1]. In addition, the population of vultures in Cyprus was negatively affected by the lack of food due to the shift to intensified stall-feeding of livestock and the enforcement of the legislation which prohibits the disposal of offal and carcasses in the countryside (Law 109(I)/2001 which was formed according to the EU regulations 1069/2009 and 142/2011) [1], [14].

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## Methodology

Aiming at a holistic approach towards recognizing valuable and feasible recommendations and operational solutions to solve the human-wildlife and human-human conflict in Cyprus, it was vital to seek feedback and organize interviews/meetings with all stakeholders who hold important information, either directly or indirectly related with the issue of poisoned bait placement in Cyprus. One of the purposes of the interviews was to identify alternatives solutions to the use of poison, through a collaborative procedure involving all relevant stakeholders.

A set of relevant questions was prepared and used by the interviewers to facilitate the discussion and ensure its smooth progress (Annex II). It is noted that the preparation of the questions was mainly based on the results and the feedback gained from action A1.3 of the project, along with an extended literature review on the measures and solutions that other countries are successfully implementing. The experience from successful practices that other countries adopted in a human-wildlife and human-human conflicts, was deemed very useful for this action.

All relevant stakeholders were induced to offer important information to help solving the conflicts through a standardized procedure. Each interview begun by briefly presenting the results of the baseline study to understand the users of poisoned baits, motivations and beliefs (action A1.3 of “LIFE with Vultures” (LIFE18 NAT/CY/001018) project), to introduce and prepare interviewees for the subsequent discussion. Some general solutions for the human-human and the human-wildlife conflicts, which derived from action A1.3, were also presented to the interviewees to trigger the discussion.

The discussion with each group of stakeholders was focused on the broader spectrum of the poisoning issue, having in mind where they could actively contribute, aiming to secure valuable information and feasible solutions to combat this specific issue. In cases where the discussion was derailed, the previously mentioned set of questions (Annex II) were

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used to guide the interviewees towards finding solutions for the human-human and human-wildlife conflicts.

All interviews/meetings took place at places that were most convenient for each stakeholder. Meetings with more than one stakeholder were arranged upon agreement of the more convenient place between among stakeholders.

### **Identification of the main stakeholders that hold information, experience or insight to assist in the exploration of solutions to human-wildlife and human-human conflicts behind illegal poison use.**

Based on the interviews conducted to several social groups under the framework of the baseline study to understand the users of poisoned baits, motivations and beliefs (action A1.3 of “LIFE with Vultures” (LIFE18 NAT/CY/001018) project), we were able to better understand of the problem with poisoned bait usage in Cyprus, the reasons why users place baits, their attitudes, beliefs and the level of environmental awareness of the targeted areas, namely the villages within the nine Natura 2000 sites where the project is focused.

Thus, we managed to identify several key stakeholders who hold information, experience, or insight to assist in the exploration of solutions to human-wildlife and human-human conflicts behind illegal poison use.

The main stakeholders identified and interviewed were directly related and active within the nine Natura 2000 sites.

The identified stakeholders are the following:

**1) The Veterinary Services (VS):** VS are in continuous contact with Livestock Breeders and shepherds, which is among the key social groups involved in the use of poisoned baits. VS can propose solutions on how to influence the actions and way of thinking of people in

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rural areas (and especially livestock breeders) and thus minimise the conflicts that lead to the use of poison.

**2) Game and Fauna Service (GFS):** The GFS is the competent authority dealing with such issues, and has the necessary experience and know-how to propose operational solutions to reduce H-H and H-W conflicts, or even to reject some possible solutions that will not be considered feasible in the case of Cyprus.

**3) Department of Forests:** The Department of Forests can provide crucial insights, practices and knowledge towards the proposal of recommendations and solutions to solve H-H and H-W conflicts and against the use of poisoned baits in general.

**4) Livestock breeders and shepherds:** This group is directly affected by the use of poisoned baits since their dogs often fall victims of this practice. In addition, shepherds are involved in the human-human conflict. Moreover, based on the results of the baseline study to understand the users of poisoned baits, motivations and beliefs (action A1.3), it emerged that the extensive use of poisoned baits is mainly attributed to individuals from this social group.

**5) Hunters:** As per the case of livestock breeders, the results of the baseline study to understand the users of poisoned baits, motivations and beliefs (action A1.3), showed that the extensive use of poisoned baits is attributed to hunters as well. Nevertheless, the majority of hunters are actively looking for solutions against the use of poison. This is also because their dogs often fall victims of this practice

**6) Local Hunting Clubs/regional Hunting Associations:** These social groups are composed of people who hold important information about human-human and human-wildlife conflicts and their contribution was considered essential for the development of potential solutions. They could also be actively involved in minimising conflicts.

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**7) NGOs and environmentally sensitized/aware individuals:** NGOs and sensitized individuals are also considered important regarding their expertise and experience on practices that could be applied in Cyprus to alleviate the human-human and human-wildlife conflicts. NGO's can also contribute towards a mentality change of people in rural areas, which should be primarily focused to younger people and the upcoming generations.

**8) Environmental/Education centres:** As per the case of NGOs and sensitized individuals, Environmental centres around Cyprus (and especially those within the range of Griffon Vultures) hold important knowledge and experience for developing solutions and recommendations to alleviate the human-human and human-wildlife conflicts. In addition, their contribution towards a mentality change of people in rural areas can be extremely important.

**9) Department of the Environment:** The Department of the Environment can provide crucial insights, practices and knowledge towards the proposal of recommendations and solutions to solve H-H and H-W conflicts and against the use of poisoned baits in general.

**10) Department of Agriculture:** The Department of Agriculture can provide crucial insights, practices and knowledge towards the proposal of recommendations and solutions to solve H-H and H-W conflicts and against the use of poisoned baits in general.

**11) Cyprus Agricultural Payments Organisation (CAPO):** The Department of the Environment can provide crucial insights and knowledge (especially of the legal framework of Cyprus) towards the proposal of recommendations and solutions to solve H-H and H-W conflicts and against the use of poisoned baits in general.

As already mentioned, the results of the baseline study to understand the users of poisoned baits, motivations and beliefs (action A1.3), revealed that the extensive use of poisoned baits is mainly attributed to individuals from the social groups of livestock

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breeders and hunters. Thus, it was considered necessary to seek information and potential solutions from the organised groups representing those groups and people, for both human-human and human-wildlife conflicts. Moreover, education and sensitization of these groups as well as several other groups about the “poisoning practice” and its impact on biodiversity and broader consequences, emerges as an imperative for this project.

As shown in the Table 1 below, the staff of Terra Cypria Foundation carried out 11 face-to-face interviews in total.

**Table 1.** The interviews carried out by the staff of Terra Cypria.

No.	Stakeholder	No. of meetings
1	Veterinary Services	3
2	Game and Fauna Service	2
3	Department of Forests	1
4	Birdlife Cyprus	2
5	Department of the Environment	1
6	Department of Agriculture	1
7	Cyprus Hunting Federation	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>

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## Results and Discussion for Recommendations & Operational solutions to solve the human-wildlife and human-human conflicts in Cyprus

The results of the interviews provided valuable information to develop best approaches to address human-human and human-wildlife conflicts, since it is widely admitted that such conflicts lead to the use of poisoned baits.

The recommendations and operational solutions below, emerged during the face-to-face interviews with relevant stakeholders who are directly or indirectly linked with human-wildlife and human-human conflicts in Cyprus. It is also noted that some of the recommendations came from anonymous hunters/livestock breeders/shepherds/farmers/local residents during meetings and events organized in local communities of Limassol and Paphos under the action E2.3.

Within this chapter, the recommendations and solutions are also analysed in more depth. More specific, the feasibility of each recommendation/solution is being investigated with a glimpse of critical thinking. For the evaluation of each recommendation/solution, various factors were taken into account, such as the current situation in Cyprus, the prevailing legislation, the particularities of the island and especially the areas for which the solutions are intended to be applied, ethical issues that may arise, the biology of the species that cause problems et al.

### **In-depth study on foxes focused in Cyprus.**

Given that the majority of land users consider the fox as a species that causes several problems, an in-depth analysis of its broader behaviour biology with specific emphasis to its dietary habits, could provide useful information for the species and its management (if needed). Amongst other things, this study could provide evidence for the dietary habits of foxes in Cyprus that could change the negative attitudes towards the species, which include the widespread perception that foxes cause serious damage to the hunting

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species of the island. Especially in the case that it is proved that foxes' dietary habits include lots of different sources of food, the study could enhance the efforts to reverse the beliefs and perceptions of hunters and other people. In addition, human-wildlife conflicts related with hunters that blame foxes for the reduced game numbers will be minimised if it can be shown that foxes do not feed on game species to the extent that it has a significant impact on game species populations. Thus, the placement of poisoned baits in the countryside for their extermination will be reduced and the motive will be removed.

It is also noted that such a study requires the collaboration of all relevant stakeholders that hold information on the species (Game and Fauna Service, Department of the Environment, Department of Agriculture et al.).

#### **Targeted and localised control of foxes.**

Regarding wildlife species, foxes and corvids were reported as the two species causing the most problems to livestock breeders. The believed overpopulation of foxes in specific areas from time to time, leads local people and other stakeholders to use of poisoned baits to protect their properties and prevent any damages (in addition to the reduction of available game species).

Confirmed problems caused by foxes in certain areas, could be managed through controlled culling. As the situation stands today, the Game and Fauna Service (GFS) is responsible to carry out and supervise culling, especially in areas of Limassol and Paphos, where there are regular complains about fox overpopulation. The procedure is for complains about increasing number of foxes at a specific area to be confirmed and verified by GFS officers. However, this confirmation could be done on a more systematic basis to avoid any unwanted fox raids/damages and it must be better organized to achieve better results. In addition, controlled and targeted culling could be considered in other

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areas/cities as well, beyond the areas of vultures, given that poisoned baits are placed all over Cyprus aiming primarily foxes.

Smaller-scale culling campaigns are already taking place in the district of Limassol and Paphos, with very encouraging results, based on the testimonies of locals.

Thus, a more systematic controlled-culling scheme, when needed, could contribute towards the significant reduction of the poisoned baits' placement. This is because through such a scheme, locals will have the chance to contact competent persons who will act in case overpopulation of foxes is verified at a specific area. As a result, this human-wildlife conflict will have an alternative solution and poisoned bait usage will be reduced/stopped.

Another option is that foxes could be trapped and transferred to areas where conflicts do not arise and so foxes are not expected to cause problems/damages.

#### **Subsidies for fencing improvement for farmers and livestock breeders.**

It is widely admitted that foxes can relatively easily enter into most livestock units, pens and arable land (farms) because of the inadequate fencing. The development of adequate/essential fencing will prevent foxes and stray dogs from entering livestock units, pens and farms. Thus, the provision of subsidies for the improvement of the fencing for both livestock breeders and farmers, could alleviate human-wildlife conflicts. With such subsidies, foxes will be kept out of livestock units and farms, and the damages caused will be significantly reduced. Hence, potential users of poisons will not place poisoned baits to kill foxes.

Fencing improvement could be achieved either through a government subsidy program or subsidies under a European project, or both. However, for the provision of subsidies to livestock breeders, shepherds, and farmers through a government's scheme, it must be secured that the plot of land is licensed to be used for the specific purpose as stated by the applicant (e.g., pen, livestock unit, farm etc.).

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It should be also noted that since foxes are attacking new-born lambs and goats which are sometimes born outside the livestock unit/pen, it could be stated that the development of fencing may not be efficient, and the placement of poisoned baits will continue at areas where predation of livestock by foxes occurs.

**Permanent staff in the areas where the vulture lives and operates to inform and raise public awareness.**

Based on the feedback gained from interviews to local communities in the framework of the action A1.3, there is a prevailing sense in the majority of the communities of neglect and of being cut off from the rest of the society, with little support from the authorities. Thus, a crucial aspect to build trust, would be the appointment of officers from the Veterinary Services, the Game and Fauna Service, the Department of Agriculture and even the Police, who will be responsible to visit regularly those villages/communities that fall under the areas where the presence of vultures is more frequent, so as to keep the people there informed and updated, in the context of a broader educational and communicational campaign. Aiming primarily at creating a sense of trust and support but also at changing the mentality of the local peoples and the engaged stakeholders as well as the entire population of Cyprus, it is very important to establish a continuous contact and communication with them, embrace their concerns and help them when needed.

In this way their awareness will be increased and at the same time they will better understand the negative effects from the placement of poisoned baits all over the countryside. Conflicts will also be decreased over time.

**Subsidies for guardian dogs or other animals.**

Taking into account that it is a common practice in other countries, the appropriate livestock guardian dogs (LGD) could also be used by livestock breeders/shepherds in Cyprus, as a fox repellent, to prevent livestock losses and general damages caused by foxes and stray dogs. Breeds such as Anatolian shepherds and Maremma sheepdogs have

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been tested for their effectiveness with impressive results in terms of reducing predation by foxes [41], [42]. LGDs could be acquired through governmental subsidies to livestock breeders, shepherds and farmers. An “LGDs support scheme” could be introduced to areas within the territory of vultures through a funded project.

However, unlike to what is practically happening in other countries, such dog breeds (i.e., Anatolian shepherds, Maremma sheepdogs), could create problems and exhibit aggressive behaviours to walkers, cyclists etc., due to small size of the island that proximity of roads and paths to livestock units. Also, the close distances between the livestock units and pens in Cyprus could create aggressive behaviours between guardian dogs between different units.

Another promising practice is the use of the so-called “Guardian Animals” such as Alpacas and Donkeys. Adding a few of these animals (which have strong herding instincts) along with lambs, goats, poultry, and even cows, can significantly reduce damages from foxes as the Guardian Animals chase them away. The use of donkeys is more appropriate in the case of Cyprus. However, the use of “Guardian Animals” such as Alpacas and Donkeys may sound promising but more research and scientific study on their effectiveness at the national level is needed. Towards this perspective, a pilot scale trial using donkeys in selected livestock units/pens/farms should be considered, prior to any implementation of this measure at a larger scale.

#### **Better enforcement of the Law on dogs (184(I)/2002).**

According to the Law on dogs (Ο περί Σκύλων Νόμος) (184(I)/2002), the Municipal Authorities and the Local Community Councils are responsible for issuing licenses for dogs and in general for supervision of the number of dogs held by each person. It is also worth mentioning that local authorities must ensure the insertion of chips for dogs held within their area of jurisdiction.

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Despite the recent amendment of the legislation, obliging hunters to have their dogs listed on their license, it is widely admitted that the Law is not adequately enforced, especially in rural areas. As a result, a disproportionate number of dogs per owner is frequently observed. Almost all of these dogs are trained to become hunting dogs, with the least “skillful” dogs often abandoned in the countryside, ending up as feral/stray dogs. As in the case of foxes, feral/stray dogs can cause damages to local communities apart from livestock units, triggering the use of poisoned baits to exterminate them.

Thus, the increased enforcement of the Law on dogs is a crucial measure towards alleviating both human-wildlife and human-human conflicts. Law-enforcement could be achieved through greater political pressure to the relevant government officials from organized groups and NGOs, to better overview and control the local communities.

Another option is the development of an independent authority/department for the comprehensive control of all the issues related to dogs. Such a department will be sustained from the annual revenues from dogs’ registration. Hence, better control will be achieved resulting to the reduction of the numbers of stray/feral dogs as well as the number of dogs possessed by individuals.

#### **Establishment of a service/department for the control of dogs.**

In the same perspective with Law enforcement, the establishment of a service/department for the control of both the chips in dogs and the acquisition of the required licences, would even further facilitate the reduction of stray/feral dogs and the reduction of poisoning incidents by expansion.

Such a department could be formed internally within the police, the veterinary services and/or the game and fauna service, but it could also be a newly formed and autonomous department funded by the dog licence fees.

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### **Awareness levels about Griffon Vulture.**

As also shown in the baseline study prepared under the Action A1.3 of this project, the majority of people knew about the declining trend of the vulture population and that poison-baits are the main threat. It was also depicted through the interviews to land users and officers from various agencies that the effective confrontation of the poisoned baits' placement requires a mentality change, especially of the people living in rural areas.

In addition, a lot of people did not know what vultures eat and other important information of the specie's behaviour and status in Cyprus. Most importantly, many people were not aware about secondary poisoning incidents and how dangerous this is to the threatened vulture population of the island [46].

Thus, the increase of people's awareness level in local communities (all over Cyprus) regarding the Griffon Vulture, is crucial to trigger behavioural changes of people and to effectively deal with the placement of poison-baits in the Cypriot countryside. This will be achieved through long-term communicational and educational actions (especially in communities within the vulture's territory).

Moreover, the increase of awareness level in local communities (and all over Cyprus) regarding the Griffon Vulture as well as other raptors and the broader biodiversity, will also increase the social pressure towards the users of poisons while it may work repressively for someone who is probably thinking of using poison for any reason. It is worth noting that social outcry is a very important weapon to affect a poison user to abandon this dangerous and illegal practice.

### **Involvement of Local Hunting clubs.**

The involvement of local hunting clubs is seen as essential for dealing mainly with human-wildlife conflicts and the use of poison in general.

Based on our contacts during this study, it appears that local hunting clubs are usually constituted by better-educated, more well informed, more sensitized and also more

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locally influential individuals, who could contribute to the education and sensitization of local communities towards the benefits arising from the existence of vultures at their area and at the same time the catastrophic consequences arising through the illegal use of poisoned baits.

In addition, the organised local hunting groups can notify the Game and Fauna service and especially the developed culling teams, when they notice that fox population is increased.

Another important aspect is that members of local hunting clubs could act to start exerting social pressure on those found out to be using poison and to actively provoke a social outcry to such an extent that it forces them to re-think the poisoned baits usage.

#### **Development of a compensation scheme for damages caused by foxes.**

It is widely admitted that foxes are considered the most targeted species poisoned baits are used for because they cause damages/losses especially to livestock breeders. Hence, a development of a compensation scheme for damages attributed to foxes, could reduce human-wildlife conflicts and the placement of poisoned baits by expansion.

Such compensation schemes are applied in Greece for example, regarding damages to livestock breeders and farmers from Brown Bears (*Ursus arctos*) or/and Wolves (*Canis lupus*), which are included in Annex II of the Habitats directive (92/43/EEC, on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) and they are considered endangered and vulnerable species respectively [43], [44]. More specific, damages from bears and other wild animals are covered at 90% of the value of the losses in livestock and they are fully covered in the case of crop production. Regarding the agricultural sector, after recognizing the need to fully cover (100%) the damage caused by bears and other protected species, EU revised its state aid policy in November 2018. EU now allows and recommends that EU Member States provide full compensation for damages caused by protected species such as wolves and bears. In the livestock sector, EU member States

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are also allowed to cover 100% of so-called indirect costs, such as veterinary costs arising from the treatment of wounded animals and labor costs associated with the search missing animals after an attack by a protected species [43], [44].

The provisions of such a scheme for Cyprus must be clear while a fox raid will be validated based on specific scientific and forensic evidence like the bites on the dead animal/s, the occurrence of foxes around the problematic area etc.

However, in the case of Cyprus, because the Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) is not included in Annex II of the Habitats directive, and it is listed as a “least concern” species in the IUCN Red List [40], it would be very difficult for such a scheme to be developed and receive funding.

#### **Trainings and educational schemes for Livestock Breeders and Hunters.**

Apart from educational events to local communities, distinct educational and training schemes must take place exclusively for livestock breeders/shepherds and hunters. Given that these two social groups (Livestock Breeders and Hunters) tend to spend a lot of time in the countryside, they should be adequately trained educated and sensitised, with specific emphasis to the issue of poisoned baits placement, highlighting the detrimental consequences for other fauna species and the human health as well.

Training sessions could be organized by the Game and Fauna service at specified periods throughout the year in key villages all around Cyprus and especially in Limassol and Paphos.

Given that personal communication with these groups is very important, these kinds of educational and training events will facilitate the building of a strong relationship between local land users and the authorities and enhance the trust towards the latter.

#### **Limitation on the number of dogs allowed during hunting period.**

Until 2017, the Law on dogs provided that the maximum number of dogs allowed per hunter was 2. However, an amendment of the legislation in 2017, which was voted in

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favor by the vast majority of parliament, increased the number of dogs allowed per hunter to 4.

As things stand today, there are many hunters all over Cyprus who take advantage of several loopholes in the legislation and/or the lack of adequate patrolling, and hunt accompanied with herds of dogs. It is also a common phenomenon that many of those dogs which are deemed as least “skillful” for hunting purposes, are abandoned in the countryside, ending-up as feral/stray dogs.

The large numbers of hunting dogs in specific areas has been shown to be one of the reasons other land users illegally place poisoned baits at their areas as an effort to repel these hunters with the large numbers of dogs. Farmers and livestock breeders place poisoned baits to keep those hunters away from their properties while local hunters want to maintain dominance in their area.

Hence, the reduction on the number of the dogs allowed per hunter will reduce the arguments and disputes in the countryside since the dogs will be controlled easier and they will not be entering/disturbing livestock units, farms or arable land. Potential arguments with other hunters regarding the game availability will also gradually cease.

Finally, human-human, and human-wildlife conflicts which are related with the herds of dogs accompanying some hunters during hunting period (and all year round) will be reduced.

### **Ban on posting photos of dead prey on the internet.**

It is widely admitted that there is an informal feud between hunters in social media, regarding the amount of game species that they shoot. This fact indirectly motivates hunters to hunt more game species by any means, and as a result, it generates disputes between hunters and conflicts at a human-human level. At the same time other hunters may feel disturbed since the exhibition of large numbers of prey can mean limitation of the available prey for them.

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Thus, a ban on posting photos of dead prey on the internet, and especially on social media, will alleviate the existing conflicts among hunters and their disputes that sometime may cause the vengeful placement of poison to harm each other's dogs etc.

### **Upgrade and remodelling the process of obtaining a hunting license.**

Obtaining a hunting license in Cyprus is not a very difficult process without demanding tasks and education/sensitisation acquirement. Thus, contrary to the current 2-day process, obtaining a hunting license should be transformed into a longer process and the training sessions could include procedures like recognizing birds and other wildlife species, along with providing general information and especially the ecosystemic value of these species. The trainings must also have specific focus on environmental education and learning how to respect the rural areas on multiple ways. It is expected that this transformation will reduce the human-human conflicts and at the same will increase respect towards the broader biodiversity and consequently discourage the use of illegal poisoning as well as other illegal practices.

Towards the effective control, and eventually the termination of poisoned baits placement, the revocation of hunting license should be applied in case of conviction for illegal poison use. Such a measure requests the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders (police, game and fauna service, department of forests).

### **Existing Literature**

Added to the recommendations above, as derived from the face-to-face interviews, the following recommendations and operational solutions emerged from a literature review on what measures are applied in other countries and/or projects to alleviate such kind of conflicts (H-H/H-W):

- Creation of publicity materials such as general and educational brochures, souvenirs, and documentaries to raise public awareness [22], [23]. Based on the measures and operational solutions that were already applied in other countries

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- and/or projects to alleviate H-H/H-W conflicts, the organization of educational campaigns, accompanied with publicity materials, is significantly contributing towards the sensitization and raising awareness among local people within the range of vultures, aiming to reduce the use of poison and alleviate conflicts.
- The offer of Livestock Guardian Dogs (LGDs) to livestock breeders to reduce the impact of human-wildlife conflicts in the long term, along with the establishment of a network to provide guardian dogs to stockbreeders [26], [27].
  - Provision of subsidies for the installation of electric fences or other predator deterrent mechanisms in livestock units to provide an alternative from the use of poisoned bait against wildlife species [29], [30], [31].
  - Development of a strong network and relations between the various stakeholders, partners and organizations that are directly, or indirectly related with the placement of poisoned baits [32], [33]. Moreover, the creation of a strong national and trans-national network between all of the stakeholders involved in combating wildlife poisoning, is considered crucial for the quick and effective confrontation of such crimes (i.e. the placement of poisoned baits).
  - Use of special tools/equipment such as “Foxlights” which are automatic searchlights mimicking real-life human patrols. Such equipment is currently used at an international scale to combat livestock depredation from larger carnivores such as wolves, coyotes, and other predators [34], [35]. However this kind of equipment aiming to deter foxes or other predators (e.g. foxlights) seemed to be very effective when used for the first time but their effectiveness is decreased over time. As shown through recent studies, this is because foxes (or other predators) are getting more familiar to the equipment in use and they are no longer afraid of it [35].
  - Reduce various misperceptions about the ecosystem services and effects of specific species. This change of minds is a key issue in conservation, particularly

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for endangered species providing services linked to human activities. (Such misperceptions may lead to wildlife–human conflicts with the risk of the degradation or even disappearance of the species involved) [36], [37], [38], [39].

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## Conclusions

The illegal use of poisoned baits is a well-known practice amongst rural residents and land users. Poisoned baits are deliberately and illegally used in Cyprus to resolve conflicts at a human-wildlife level (e.g., to kill foxes and stray dogs) and human-human level (e.g., disputes between livestock breeders-hunters, and/or farmers-hunters, and/or hunters-hunters). Given that the use of poison is the immediate result of such conflicts, recommendations and operational solutions included in this report are oriented towards resolving human-human and human-wildlife conflicts, a fact that will significantly reduce the placement of poisoned baits.

In general, it is depicted that a major mentality change is needed in the case of Cyprus, something that will result from the continuous education of people, and especially young people and children all over the island. Additionally, a long-term contact with people in rural and remote areas will create a strong relationship and will raise the public awareness about Griffon Vulture and the devastating consequences from the use of poisoned baits.

The better enforcement of the Law on dogs is also of utmost importance since it will reduce the constantly increasing numbers of feral/stray dogs that are causing several damages to rural communities and livestock units.

The involvement of local hunting clubs is also crucial for both human-wildlife and human-human conflicts solution through the cooperation with competent authorities, and the education and sensitization of local residents and people at their areas. The organization of trainings and educational seminars, aiming exclusively at livestock breeders and hunters will also be very helpful.

To deal with the problems caused by the outbreaks of overpopulation of foxes in specific areas, and especially in areas falling within the territory of the vultures, a promising solution is the more organized and extensive fox culling campaigns.

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Moreover, an in-depth study on foxes that will provide useful information about their dietary habits and will be used as a weapon to gradually restore the prevailing bad perceptions and beliefs for the species.

A possible limitation regarding the maximum number of dogs allowed for each hunter and a potential ban on posting photos of dead prey on the internet will also alleviate the conflicts between hunters. In the same context, the improvement of the current processes for obtaining a hunting license is an extremely important step towards the gradual mitigation of conflicts associated with hunters at a human-human level.

Based on the existing literature on measures and solutions that other countries have successfully implemented to alleviate these human-wildlife and human-human conflicts, include the development of a strong national and trans-national network between the stakeholders, that are directly or indirectly related with the use of poisoned baits, so that potential conflicts are resolved. Such a big and broad network requires the establishment of smaller anti-poison networks and coalitions involving local people/stakeholders.

Table 2 below, constitutes a brief evaluation of the recommendations/solutions included or emerged from this study for the resolving of human-human and human-wildlife conflicts. The recommendations/solutions are evaluated regarding their feasibility in Cyprus, the stakeholders/social groups which are directly concerned by the proposed recommendation/solution and their importance in terms of efficiency to resolve human-wildlife and human-human conflicts and to subsequently minimize the use of poisoned baits. The timeframe for their execution is also examined, despite that for most of the solutions, a continuous implementation is required. The table also includes potential bodies that will be in-charge/responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the proposed recommendations/solutions. As shown in Table 2 below, some of the emerging recommendations/solutions ended up being not feasible/efficient.

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**Table 2.** Evaluation of the recommendations/solutions emerged for the resolving of human-human and human-wildlife conflicts.

Recommendation/Solution	Possible body in charge	Main recipient	Feasibility	Importance	Execution Deadline
<b>Face-to-face interviews and discussions with relevant stakeholders</b>					
In-depth study on foxes	The Game and Fauna Service, NGOs	Land users and local residents in rural areas of Cyprus	High	High	Long term
Targeted and localised control of foxes	The Game and Fauna Service, the Veterinary Services	Land users and local residents in rural areas of Cyprus	High	High	Continuous
Subsidies for fencing improvement for farmers and livestock breeders	The Game and Fauna Service, the Department of Agriculture	Farmers and Livestock breeders	Low	Moderate	Long term
Permanent staff in the areas where the vulture lives and operates to inform and raise public awareness	Local Hunting clubs/regional hunting associations, NGOs, the Police, the Game and Fauna Service, the Veterinary Services, the Department of Forests, the Department of Agriculture	Land users and local residents in rural areas of Cyprus	High	High	Continuous
Subsidies for guardian dogs or other animals	The Game and Fauna Service, the Department of Agriculture	Farmers and Livestock breeders/shepherds	Low	Low	Continuous
Better enforcement of the Law on dogs (184(I)/2002)	Local Authorities, the Police and the Game and Fauna Service	The entire population of Cyprus	Moderate	High	Continuous
Establishment of a service/department for the control of dogs	Local Authorities, the Police and the Game and Fauna Service	The entire population of Cyprus	Moderate	High	Continuous
Awareness level about Griffon Vulture	Local Hunting clubs/regional hunting associations, NGOs, the Police, the Game and Fauna Service, the Veterinary Services, the Department of Forests, the Department of Agriculture	Land users and local residents in rural areas of Cyprus	High	High	Continuous
Involvement of Local Hunting clubs	Local Hunting clubs/regional hunting associations	Members of Local Hunting Clubs in rural areas of Cyprus	High	High	Continuous
Development of a compensation scheme for damages caused by foxes	Local Authorities, the Police and the Game and Fauna Service	Farmers and Livestock breeders/shepherds	Low	Moderate	Continuous

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Trainings and educational schemes for Livestock Breeders and Hunters	Local Authorities, the Veterinary Services, the Department of Forests and the Game and Fauna Service	Livestock breeders/shepherds and hunters	High	High	Continuous
Limitation on the number of dogs allowed during hunting period	Local Authorities, the Police and the Game and Fauna Service	Hunters	Moderate	High	Continuous
Ban on posting photos of dead prey on the internet	The Police and the Game and Fauna Service	The entire population of Cyprus	High	High	Continuous
Upgrade and remodelling the process of obtaining a hunting license	The Game and Fauna Service	Hunters	Moderate	High	Continuous
<b>Existing literature on measures and solutions that other countries have successfully implemented</b>					
Continuous seminars, trainings and awareness-raising/educational campaigns	Local Hunting clubs/regional hunting associations, NGOs, the Police, the Game and Fauna Service, the Veterinary Services, the Department of Forests, the Department of Agriculture	Land users and local residents in rural areas of Cyprus	High	High	Continuous
Creation of publicity materials (souvenirs, brochures, documentaries etc.)	Local Hunting clubs/regional hunting associations, NGOs, the Police, the Game and Fauna Service, the Veterinary Services, the Department of Forests, the Department of Agriculture	Land users and local residents in rural areas of Cyprus	Moderate	Moderate	Continuous
The use of Livestock Guardian Dogs (LGDs)	The Game and Fauna Service and the Department of Agriculture	Livestock breeders/shepherds	Moderate	Moderate	Continuous
Fencing improvement of livestock units	The Game and Fauna Service, the Department of Agriculture and the Veterinary Services	Livestock breeders/shepherds	Low	Moderate	Continuous
Development of a strong network between the stakeholders, partners and organizations that are directly, or indirectly related with the placement of poisoned baits	Local Hunting clubs/regional hunting associations, NGOs, the Police, the Game and Fauna Service, the Veterinary Services, the Department	Land users in rural areas of Cyprus, Local Hunting clubs/regional hunting associations, NGOs, the Police, the Game and Fauna	Moderate	High	Continuous

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	of Forests, the Department of Agriculture	Service, the Veterinary Services, the Department of Forests, the Department of Agriculture, the State General Laboratory, Inspectors, lawyers, prosecutors, and judges			
Use of special tools/equipment (e.g., "Foxlights")	Game and Fauna Service, land users and local residents in rural areas of Cyprus	Farmers and Livestock breeders/shepherds	Moderate	Moderate	Continuous
Development of national and trans-national anti-poison networks and coalitions involving local people such as shepherds, hunters, farmers and local residents	Local Hunting clubs/regional hunting associations, NGOs, the Police, the Game and Fauna Service, the Veterinary Services, the Department of Forests, the Department of Agriculture	Land users and local residents in rural areas of Cyprus	High	High	Continuous

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**Disclaimer:**

This report has been prepared for the purpose of providing information about the issue of poisoned baits usage in Cyprus under the Action A2 of the EU LIFE project “LIFE with Vultures CY” (LIFE18 NAT/CY/001018).

In no case do we adopt or support all the illegal activities mentioned during the interviews conducted in the framework of the Action A2. The material and information received from the interviews will be used for the better understanding and management of the poisoning issue in Cyprus while all the material/information given by the interviewees are highly confidential.

We also note that the various suggestions and information gained by the interviewees will help the design of actions to combat the illegal use of poisoned baits.

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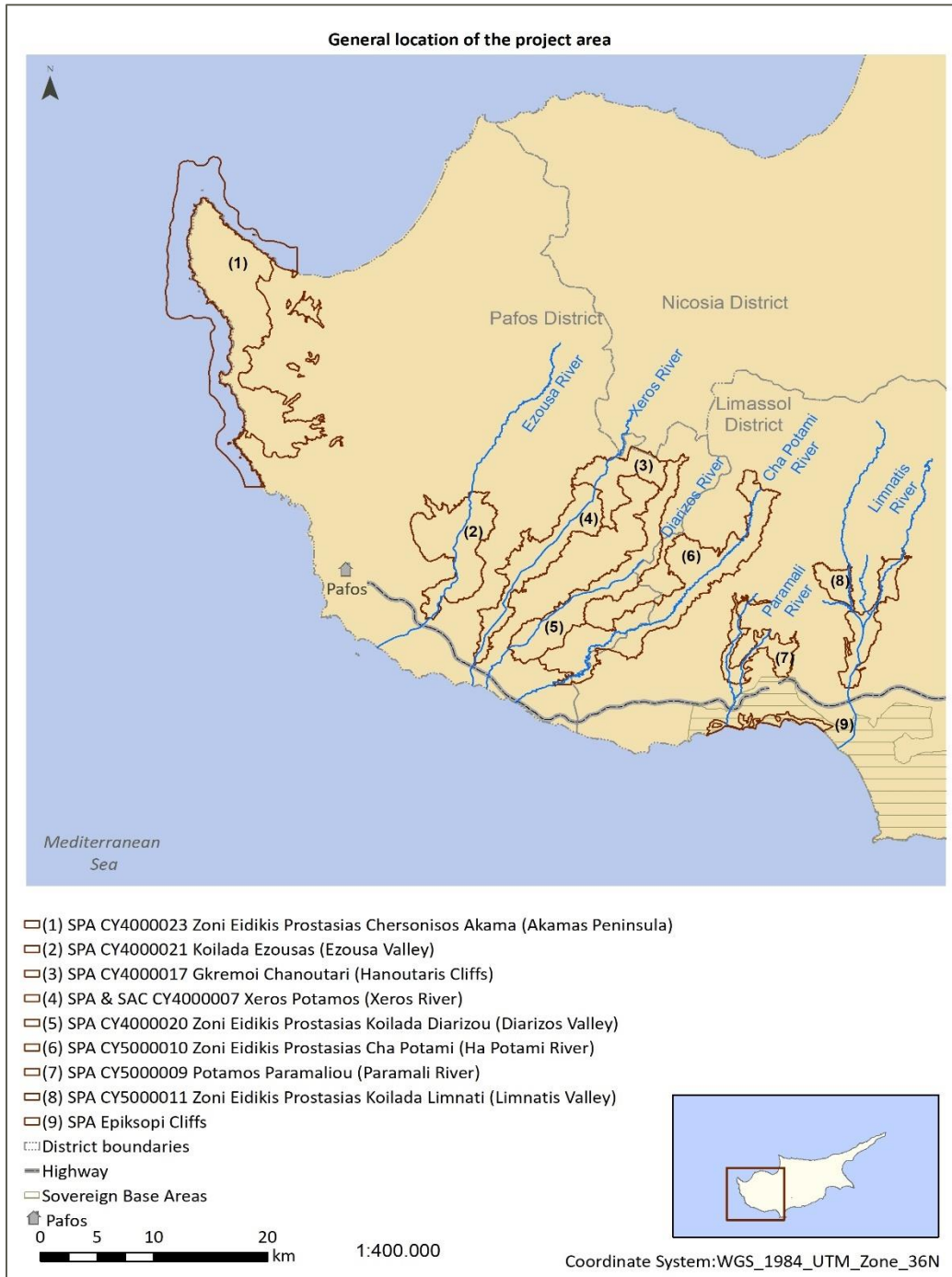
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## Annex I

- The 9 Natura 2000 sites of the project's study area:

**Map 1.1:** The 9 Natura 2000 sites of the project's study area.



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## Annex II

- The list of questions that facilitated the interviews with relevant stakeholders:

**Ερωτήσεις για συζήτηση με όλους τους εμπλεκόμενους φορείς που σχετίζονται με την εξεύρεση λύσεων για τις συγκρούσεις ανθρώπου-φύσης ή/και ανθρώπου-ανθρώπου, αποτρέποντας σημαντικά τη χρήση δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων:**

- 1) Πιστεύετε ότι ο πληθυσμός της αλεπούς στην Κύπρο αυξάνεται τα τελευταία 5 χρόνια?
- 2) Λαμβάνετε παράπονα για αύξηση του πληθυσμού της αλεπούς από συγκεκριμένες περιοχές?
- 3) Γιατί νομίζετε ότι ο πληθυσμός της αλεπούς αυξάνεται? (Αν είπαν ότι αυξάνεται)
- 4) Πιστεύετε ότι τοποθετούνται Δ.Δ. στην ύπαιθρο?
- 5) Πιστεύετε ότι η χρήση δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων αποτελεί τον κυριότερο παράγοντα που οδήγησε στην δραματική μείωση του πληθυσμού του Γύπα στην Κύπρο? (Αν δεν το αντιλαμβάνονται θα τους παραθέσουμε στοιχεία και τα αποτελέσματα της μελέτης για να περάσουμε το μήνυμα ότι η κύρια απειλή για τους γύπες είναι η χρήση Δ.Δ.)
- 6) Πιστεύετε ότι η χρήση δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων εμποτεύεται επαρκώς σήμερα στην Κύπρο?
- 7) Γνωρίζετε αν η τοποθέτηση τους γίνεται σε συγκεκριμένες περιόδους το χρόνο? Αν «ναι» από ποια κοινωνικά σύνολα?
- 8) Η χρήση δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων αποδίδεται σε κάποιο βαθμό και στην αύξηση του αριθμού των αδέσποτων σκύλων?

### Λύσεις κατά της χρήσης Δ.Δ.:

- 9) Τι λύσεις θα προτείνατε για την επίλυση των συγκρούσεων ανθρώπου-φύσης και ανθρώπου-ανθρώπου? (Τι λύσεις μπορείτε να προτείνετε για να αντιμετωπιστούν οι διαμάχες μεταξύ κτηνοτρόφων, κυνηγών και αγροτών με τις αλεπούδες?)
- 10) Μια πρόσφατη έρευνα έδειξε ότι στην Αγγλία απελευθερώνουν φασιανούς από τους οποίους αυτοί που δεν σκοτώνονται στο κυνήγι, αποτελούν μετέπειτα τροφή για τις αλεπούδες. Μπορεί μια τέτοια πρακτική να εφαρμοστεί και στην Κύπρο χρησιμοποιώντας πέρδικες?
- 11) Πρακτικές όπως τα «Foxlights» που χρησιμοποίησε ο μη κερδοσκοπικός οργανισμός Project Coyote θα μπορούσε να εφαρμοστεί στην Κύπρο? (σύντομη επεξήγηση στο τί είναι και να αναφέρω επίσης και άλλα best practices που εφαρμόζονται στο εξωτερικό για συζήτηση).
- 12) Ηλεκτροφόρες περιφράξεις (οι οποίες θα μπορούσαν να είναι μερικώς επιδοτούμενες ή και 100%) θα μπορούσαν να εφαρμοστούν στην Κύπρο?
- 13) Η παροχή εκπαιδευμένων σκύλων στους κτηνοτρόφους/βοσκούς θα μπορούσε να εφαρμοστεί στην Κύπρο?
- 14) Με ποιους τρόπους θα μπορούσε να ελεγχθεί η αύξηση του πληθυσμού των αλεπούδων σε περιοχές όπου παρατηρείται σημαντική αύξηση? Πιστεύετε πως κάτι τέτοιο θα βοηθούσε στην μείωση της χρήσης Δ.Δ. στην ύπαιθρο?
- 15) Μπορούν να γίνονται πιο εντατικοί έλεγχοι σε τοπικό επίπεδο και σε περιοχές που συνδέονται με τον γύπα?
- 16) Με ποιους τρόπους θα μπορούσε να ελεγχθεί η αύξηση του πληθυσμού των αδέσποτων σκύλων?
- 17) Πιστεύετε πως θα βοηθούσε η κατασκευή μιας ευκολόχρηστης και απλής βάσης δεδομένων όπου ο κάθε πολίτης θα μπορούσε να καταχωρεί άμεσα περιστατικά χρήσης και τοποθέτησης δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων?
- 18) Ποιες ενέργειες πρέπει να γίνονται για να εμποτεύεται επαρκώς η τοποθέτηση δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων?

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- 19) Με ποιο τρόπο πιστεύετε ότι θα μπορούσαν να εξοικονομηθούν κονδύλια (ή πως θα μπορούσαν να βρεθούν τα χρήματα) για εφαρμογή μέτρων κατά των δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων?
- 20) Θα μπορούσαμε να προτείνουμε ένα πρόγραμμα αποζημίωσης για ζημιές που προκαλούνται από αλεπούδες σε κτηνοτρόφους, αγρότες κ.λπ. (παρά το ότι η αλεπού δεν περιλαμβάνεται στο Παράρτημα II προστατευόμενων ειδών)?
- 21) Μπορούμε να διερευνήσουμε εάν είναι δυνατόν να δημιουργηθεί ένα πρόγραμμα χρηματοδότησης για την εγκατάσταση ήδη εφαρμοσμένων μέτρων αποτροπής αλεπούδων όπως κατάλληλη περίφραξη κ.λπ. Αυτά τα μέτρα θα μπορούσαν να εφαρμοστούν σε ορισμένες περιοχές (με υψηλή πυκνότητα πληθυσμού αλεπούδων) σε πιλοτική κλίμακα, προκειμένου να διερευνηθεί εάν είναι αποτελεσματικά και να χρησιμοποιήσουν τα αποτελέσματα για να επιδιώξουν την ευρύτερη εφαρμογή του συστήματος χρηματοδότησης?
- 22) Μπορούμε να εξετάσουμε την παροχή κατάλληλων σκύλων (Anatolian shepherds & Maremma sheperdogs) ή ακόμα και γαϊδουριών στους κτηνοτρόφους (LGD) ως μέτρο αναχαίτησης των αλεπούδων?
- 23) Μπορεί να εφαρμοστεί η διοργάνωση δημόσιων εκδηλώσεων όπου θα βραβεύονται κυνηγοί/κυνηγετικοί σύλλογοι, αγρότες ή/και κτηνοτρόφοι για την λήψη μέτρων σχετικά με την προστασία αρπαχτικών πουλιών (σε συλλογικό επίπεδο μπορεί να βραβεύονται ακόμα και κοινότητες)?
- 24) Δύναται όταν εξετάζετε η παροχή χορηγιών για το κυνήγι ή την κτηνοτροφία, να δίνεται προτεραιότητα σε περιοχές όπου δεν καταγράφονται περιστατικά τοποθέτησης δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων?
- 25) Μπορούν αν πραγματοποιούνται τακτικά σεμινάρια και εκπαιδευτικές εκδηλώσεις σε χωριά και περιοχές όπου παρατηρούνται αυξημένα περιστατικά τοποθέτησης δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων στις οποίες θα συμμετέχουν εκπρόσωποι κρατικών τμημάτων και άλλοι αρμόδιοι φορείς?
- 26) Θα μπορούσε να δημιουργηθούν τοπικά δίκτια/συστήματα μεταξύ αγροτών και κυνηγών ή κυνηγετικών συλλόγων με κοινό στόχο την προστασία της φύσης?

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