

RESOLUTION AGAINST POISON BAITS

The 8th Congress of the Hellenic Ecological Society adopted the following resolution on the effective action against illegal use of poison baits

Taking into consideration the huge extent of the illegal use of poison baits in Greek nature that seriously affects wild fauna, especially species threatened with extinction, the 8th Congress of the Hellenic Ecological Society:

Calls on the Ministries of Environment and Energy, Agricultural Development and Food and the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction to promptly act upon the adoption of a National Strategy against the illegal use of poison baits.

Proposes that this strategy must be accompanied by a National Action Plan that will include, among others, targeted measures for the prevention and management of this issue, the elimination of the causes and the clarification of responsibilities and role of competent services and institutions.

It also proposes the implementation of a nationwide awareness campaign for the effects of the illegal use of poison baits to biodiversity and the risk to public health. This campaign must encourage local communities to develop a culture of zero tolerance against poison baits.

The aforementioned measures are proposed mainly because:

- The illegal use of poison baits is the most serious cause of population declines of the four vulture species, the large eagle species and other scavenger birds in Greece, most of which are threatened with extinction.
- The European Committee has initiated a preliminary ruling procedure against Greece, sending a warning letter in September 2013, following the mass poisoning of scavenger birds of prey in Nestos Gorge, in February 2012, resulting in the elimination of the largest Griffon Vulture colony of the mainland.
- Greek authorities have done so far very little to prevent poisoning incidents. On September 30, 2016, the European Committee has send a reasoned opinion, on the continuation of the infringement procedure against Greece, in September 2013, warning that *“if Greek authorities do not take measures within two months, this case may be brought before the European Court of Justice”*.
- The absence of a targeted legal framework and the confusion of responsibilities regarding the actions against the illegal use of poison baits hamper the effective address of the issue.

Given the seriousness of the situation of the illegal use of poison baits, the imminent risk of extinction of threatened species and the danger to public health, we call on the competent ministries to immediately convene a meeting in order to clarify the responsibilities of the services until the implementation of the National Strategy and the National Action Plan.

Expecting that all the above proposals will be taken into serious consideration, we are at the disposal of competent authorities for further cooperation against this issue.