



Generic Code of Best Practices for Hunters and Hunting Groups¹ for Responsible Hunting and the full protection of Migratory Soaring Birds (See Annex for list of MSBs species)

1. Restrictions on hunting rights

- i. Hunters should recognize that restrictions are necessary for responsible hunting management, (e.g. to ensure that the ecological requirements of species, populations and their habitats are met).
- ii. Only those migratory or resident bird species which can be hunted legally can be considered for hunting. Shooting or trapping of MSBs or other protected species must be completely avoided unless authorised for conservation causes.
- iii. Hunting closed seasons and bag limits need to be respected (maximizing the total number of kills should not be a hunter's objective).
- iv. Only authorised methods of hunting should be employed and non-selective or mass capture methods should never be used (e.g. trapping, snares, mist nets, lime sticks, illegitimate semi-automatic weapons, sound machines and recordings (lures) or poisons).
- v. Hunting should be avoided close to the borders of hunting refuges and protected areas, which are essential for the conservation of many MSBs as well as other migratory bird species and for sound game management. Official hunting boundaries should be respected where they exist.

2. Respect for quarry

- i. Hunters should inform themselves about the ecology behaviour and movements of MSBs and other migrant or resident birds and the threats they face.
- ii. No hunting should be carried out when MSBs and other migratory bird populations or their ability to survive are reduced by natural conditions.

¹ Adapted from the "Code of Practice (CoP) for Responsible Hunting of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean Countries of North Africa and the Middle East" (October 2006) developed under the EU 'LIFE' project "Building capacity for Sustainable Hunting of Migratory Birds in Mediterranean Third Countries (MTC)" – the "Sustainable Hunting Project" (SHP).

- iii. Hunting should be based on sound ecological and behavioural knowledge (e.g. ensuring an appropriate balance in the hunting of male versus female and of juveniles versus adult birds of legally hunted species; not shooting birds which are moulting flight feathers).
- iv. The disturbance due to hunting (particularly shooting) should be limited as far as practical to minimize impacts on non-target species such as MSBs. Hunters should recognize the need for disturbance-free feeding and resting areas for migratory birds including MSBs.
- v. It is not a good practice to shoot into a group of birds hoping to hit one as this can wound several (taking a clear aim at a specific bird is the most likely way of killing it).
- vi. Any unnecessary suffering to birds should be avoided (this includes: minimizing the risk of shooting into areas where falling birds will be hard to retrieve; ensuring that wounded or dead game are found (using trained dogs if available) before more birds are targeted; and hunters having the ability to kill disabled birds promptly and humanely).
- vii. When shooting, the second barrel should be used, wherever applicable, to ensure that a first-barrel bird is dead, not for an attempt on another bird. This attempt risks only wounding and losing the first bird.
- viii. The best possible use should be made of legally hunted species and individuals (game should, whenever possible, be used as food or for other legal and appropriate uses). Hunting should not be reduced to mere target shooting of game.

3. Competent and responsible hunters are a key element in responsible hunting management

- i. Hunters should know the laws and regulations governing hunting and the conservation of MSBs and other migratory birds, including any local rules and restrictions, particularly those operating in or close to a Nature Reserve or other protected areas.
- ii. Hunters should be able to distinguish legally hunted migratory birds from protected species including MSBs. This requires keeping identification skills up-to-date. A responsible hunter should avoid taking shots when the identity of a target is not certain.
- iii. Competent hunters will undertake regular training in range estimation and marksmanship and shoot only at normal distances and in normal shooting conditions.

- iv. Hunters need to be aware of individual aiming and shooting competence and shotgun limitations and able to select the correct gun/cartridge combination for the quarry being hunted.
- v. Hunters should only ever shoot when they have an absolute clear shot.
- vi. Hunting should not be undertaken in poor light and weather conditions (e.g. poor visibility at sunrise, sunset; fog or rain), which can significantly reduce the ability to distinguish and identify species. It also leads to risks of mistakenly killing of MSBs and other protected species and/ or causing accidental injury of other hunters or members of the public.
- vii. Game birds should never be shot at a very close range as this will destroy the meat; edible game birds are quality food and should be treated as such.
- viii. Hunters should always carry their gun certificate, game licence, and (if needed) a local permit.
- ix. Adult hunters should help to educate young hunters by example; e.g. through mentoring in responsible hunting practices and encouraging all hunters to follow the Code of Practice.
- x. Hunters should promote cooperation and agreements between individuals and hunting groups (e.g. on hunting areas and frequency, joint search and collection of dead or wounded game birds, MSBs and other migratory bird habitat management, reporting of illegal hunting, adoption of the Code of Best Practices).

4. Effective hunting management and environmental protection

- i. Hunters should maintain contacts with authorities and associations responsible for hunting and support measures to combat poaching and achieve responsible hunting.
- ii. Hunters should participate in actions to promote the conservation of MSBs and other migratory birds and their habitats with rural communities, in particular sites of national and international importance for migrating birds (e.g. Important Birds Areas, Ramsar sites, Bottleneck sites).
- iii. Hunters should keep records of hunting activities (numbers and kills), fill out game bird statistics reports, contribute to ring collection efforts (where they exist), send rings found on shot or trapped birds to the relevant authority, and to assist with club or hunting agency monitoring programmes and scientific research into migratory bird species.

iv. Hunters should avoid causing any pollution. The use of lead shot should be avoided, especially within 200m of wetlands; spent cartridges should be collected; entrails, feathers or unusable game buried and all refuse removed from the hunting area.

5. Respect for others

- i. The owner's permission should be sought before entering private land to hunt.
- ii. All damage should be avoided, to farms, wetlands, woodland etc. (e.g. through trampling vegetation, disturbance of domestic animals, leaving gates open, inconsiderate parking of vehicles, driving over ecologically sensitive habitats, etc.). Hunters should accept liability and provide compensation for any damage caused.
- iii. Public property should not be damaged (signs, sign-posts, telephone wires, power lines).
- iv. Hunters should be courteous and helpful to others in the vicinity, show consideration for other users of the countryside, and remember that other people may not be familiar with weapons.
- v. Hunters should carry third party legal liability insurance cover.

6. Safety

i. When not hunting:

- Any firearms should be safely stored (gun unloaded and dismantled) out of reach of children and other adults; the same precautions apply to ammunition;
- Guns should be kept in good working order;
- Guns should be dismantled or kept in a case when driving (including use of special compartments in vehicles).

ii. While hunting:

- The most suitable weapons and ammunition should be used to carry out shooting properly and effectively in each situation;
- Instructions from the leader of the hunting party should be followed;
- Firearms should only be loaded when a hunter is ready to shoot. Hunters should not move from one place to another with a loaded gun during the hunt (guns should be carried unloaded in the open or drawn position and with the barrels vertical);



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- Firearms should always be pointed in a safe direction (including when reloading and waiting for a shot); shooters should always be sure of the final destination of a projectile;
- All hunters should locate neighbours, anyone taking part in the hunt, walkers and other members of the public, and make sure that they know their own location;
- Hunters should not shoot in the vicinity of houses and should be aware of public tracks, paths, other public areas and features;
- Hunters should maintain a reasonable distance between themselves and other shooting companions both to ensure safety and to allow for concentration on effective shooting. Two people should never shoot from the same hide, butt or punt;
- Alcohol should never be consumed before or during a shoot;
- A hunter should never shoot from a moving vehicle: taking aim is difficult, birds are more likely to be wounded than killed and it is potentially dangerous to other people in the area.

Annex: Rift Valley/ Red Sea Flyway MSBs (Migratory Soaring Birds) Species List

English name [MSB list (brochure)]	Scientific name [MSB list (brochure)]	CMS-AEWA Annex 3 Species List*	CMS - Raptors MoU Species List**	CITES Appendices I & II***
Northern Bald Ibis	<i>Geronticus eremita</i>	☐		I
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>		☐	II
Greater Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila clanga</i>		☐	II
Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>		☐	I
Saker Falcon	<i>Falco cherrug</i>		☐	II
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>		☐	II
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>		☐	II
Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>		☐	II
Sooty Falcon	<i>Falco concolor</i>		☐	II
White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	☐		
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	☐		II
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	☐		
European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>		☐	II
Crested Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhyncus</i>		☐	II
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>		☐	II
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>		☐	I
Eurasian Griffon	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>		☐	II
Short-toed Snake-eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>		☐	II
Western Marsh-harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		☐	II
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>		☐	II

Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>		☐	II
Levant Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>		☐	II
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		☐	II
Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>		☐	II
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		☐	II
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>		☐	II
Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila pomarina</i>		☐	II
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>		☐	II
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>		☐	II
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		☐	II
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>		☐	II
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		☐	II
Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>		☐	II
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>		☐	II
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>		☐	II
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		☐	I
Eurasian Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	☐		II

* **CMS-AEWA Annex 3 Species List** 'Waterbird Species to which the Agreement applies' <http://www.unep-aewa.org/>

** **CMS - Raptors MoU Species List** 'African-Eurasian Birds of Prey' <http://www.cms.int/species/raptors>

*** **CITES** (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) subjects international trade in specimens of named species to certain controls: import, export, re-export and introduction are authorized through a licensing system. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction (trade in specimens of these species is permitted only under exceptional circumstances). Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival. <http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/how.php>