

# BIRDS OF PREY PROTECTION SOCIETY (BPPS)

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“Less birds stuffed – more birds alive”

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Final report

The project proposal was sent to RSG in November 2003 and was approved for funding in June 2004. The funds were transferred to the beneficent (the BPPS) in August 2004. The project activities have started on 1 October 2004 and continue to 31 March 2006. Total duration of the project is 18 months.

Under the project were visited many public places – restaurants, hotels, pubs etc., and over 170 stuffed birds have been confiscated. The species included Golden Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Osprey, Rough-legged Buzzard, Common Buzzard, Honey Buzzard, Goshawk, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Eagle Owl, Tawny Owl, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, Little Owl, Grey Heron, Purple Heron, Little Egret, Bittern, Little Bittern, Bee-eater, Nutcracker, Hazel Grouse, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Hawfinch and many other species. Skins from Common Otter and Chamois were also confiscated. In one of the actions on the very end of the project, a skin from a Brown bear and live Golden Eagle were confiscated. The eagle was kept in captivity for a long time, probably with falconry purposes. It was sent to rehabilitation centre. If the condition of the bird allow, it will be released in the wild.

Despite not unusual, it become clear in the beginning that nearly nobody is aware that it is illegal to possess and exhibit stuffed specimens from protected species. As result of agreement between BPPS and the Regional inspectorates of environment and waters (RIEW), it was decided that the public places with exposed stuffed protected species will be first visited by BPPS representative. The idea is to explain to the owner of the restaurant etc. the illegal nature of this possession and the law restriction, as well as the very negative impact on the wild nature of course. This way, most of the public places were visited in advance and as a result big number of stuffed birds were removed and destroyed by their owners. We consider this approach as very useful, and its implementation will continue in the future.

In January, both in 2005 and 2006, the traditional festival of folklore mask was visited by the BPPS team – the festival itself, as well as its preparation stage. In 2005 only 5 stuffed birds were recorded, in 2006 only 3. However, in 2006 4 Brown bears' skins were detected. Investigation is under way.

Within the project 26 taxidermists were recorded. None of them had a certificate for none of the protected species found there, and all have been confiscated. However, it became clear that the proposed registering of the taxidermists is difficult to be put in force. The reason is that the taxidermists are obliged to register under the Hunting and Game Act, however no restrictions are provided if this doesn't happen. This turn to a serious obstacle, as there was no reason for the taxidermists to register.

In one of the meeting between BPPS team, the representatives of the RIEW, National Forestry Service and the Hunters' Union, common agreement was reached that it has to be changed. The only option is when there are proposed changes in the Hunting and Game Act. BPPS is ready with the proposal for such a change in the law, and when there is possibility, it will be sent to the relevant institutions.

A special leaflet and a poster focused on the broad public were published and widely distributed not only in the project area, but also in other regions of the country. The public campaign regarding this problem was included in most of the BPPS actions under other projects of the society.

The education campaign among the hunters, with the above-mentioned materials and other publications of BPPS devoted on nature conservation also took place. In the last years it becomes clear that the problem with the poaching is rather caused by single individuals, than it is a widespread practice. The fashion to be a hunter seem to diminish in the last years, however the problem with the law knowledge requirements remains. Despite the relevant institution (National Forestry Service) claim that there are now exceptions and the criteria are equal for everybody, this is not really the true. More efforts are needed in the future to improve this procedure.

Shortly, BPPS consider the implementation of the present project as a successful. Valuable experience was gained, as well as cooperation between the relevant institutions was reached. BPPS is going to continue working on the matter, both under our other activities, as well as a separate project. In the future, we are considering in applying with a project for the whole territory of the country which will allow us to continue and wide the actions against the killing and stuffing of protected species.