# FACE Turtle Dove Report 2026

July 2026

FACE - European Federation for Hunting and Conservation

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# Key takeaways

- The yearly update of population trends in both flyways shows a continued increase in the Western flyway, and a continued decrease in the Central/Eastern flyway with some signs of stability in recent years.
- Hunting was reduced by around 90% and now occurs at very low levels in both flyways; about 1% and 3% harvest rates in the Western and Central/Eastern flyways, respectively. The population model developed so far indicates that harvest rates up to 4% are sustainable.
- All countries reported the number of Turtle doves harvested in 2025. This is mandatory in every country, and most are using mobile phone apps.
- Compliance rates are very high, with very few infractions reported by Member States.
- Research on the Turtle Dove continues, notably with studies conducted in Bulgaria showing an increase in breeding densities and good productivity.
- The European Commission has produced a blueprint of habitat restoration measures for the Turtle Dove and other huntable birds, to inspire Member States in the development of their National Restauration Plans.

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# Introduction

Since its start in 2021, the EU Turtle Dove Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) is now in its 6th year of implementation.

At this stage, reflecting back on the achievements highlights significant progress over the years. First, hunting has been reduced by 90% across both European flyways, to a level that is identified as sustainable, thereby virtually eliminating the potential threat posed by harvest.

Second, all Member States are implementing strict hunting quotas and have developed tools to accurately and timely report harvest, in order to follow the progress towards the quota and to close the Turtle Dove hunting season when reached. This represents a significant achievement, paving the way for real-time harvest reporting for other huntable species. This is complimented by extensive data on controls in the field showing very high compliance.

The Turtle Dove is increasing in the Western flyway, and, although still decreasing, signs of stability are visible in the Central/Eastern flyway.

In the Central/Eastern flyway, the absence of increase following the drastic reduction in harvest should serve as a trigger to look for other factors than hunting driving the population decrease. New research shows that breeding densities have increased recently and that a good productivity is achieved in Bulgaria. The situation could be different in other countries, the assessment of national level trends could shed some light in the population dynamics in this flyway.

This report 2026 provides detail on this year's update in the Turtle Dove AHM, its achievements so far, and ongoing progress.

# 1. What is the current population trend?

The Turtle Dove population dataset compiled by the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS) was updated in April 2026 with the breeding season of 2025.

**Continued increase in Western flyway**

In the Western flyway, the 2025 breeding season corresponds to the fourth consecutive year of moratorium, as hunting was reopened in 2025. The 4-year moratorium period is therefore covered by the data.

This update shows a continued increase in the flyway, with an average annual increase rate of 9.6%. The population index in spring 2025 produced by PECBMS is the highest since 2009 (16 years).

**Decrease in Central/Eastern flyway, but signs of stability**

In contrast, the ongoing population decline in the Central/Eastern flyway continues, although the population index has remained somewhat stable since 2021.

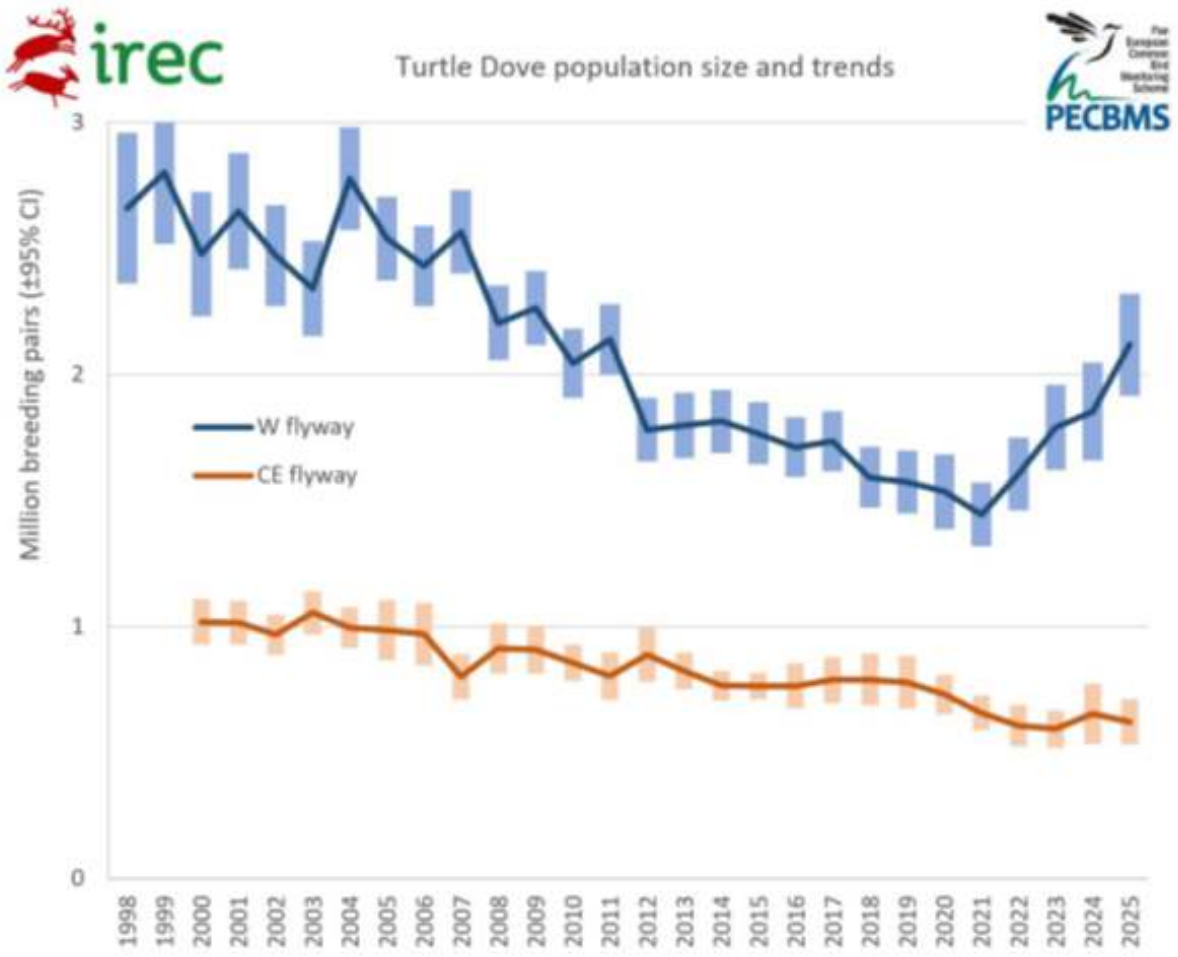



**Figure 1:** Turtle Dove breeding population trends along the European part of the western (W) flyway 1998-2025 (blue) and central-eastern (CE) flyway 2000-2025 (orange). Source: 12th meeting TFRB, 18 May 2026 – Doc 26-05-01.

**Assessment of the flyways' 10-year trends produced by PECBMS**

The compilation of the Turtle Dove 10-year trends available per flyway at each yearly update since the work on the AHM started offers interesting insights.

In the Western flyway, **the yearly updates in 10-year trends show a clear improvement** of the population trends since 2021, noting the trend was assessed as "stable" in 2022 before the moratorium (10-year trend 2010-2020).

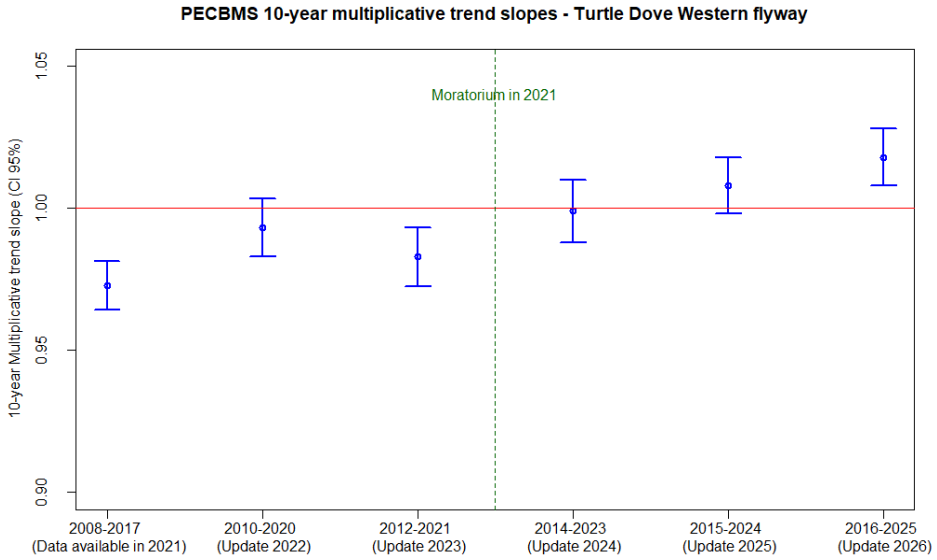



**Figure 2:** Yearly updates of PECBMS 10-year multiplicative trend slopes and their Confidence Intervals, for the Western flyway.

In the Central/Eastern flyway, the assessment of the yearly produced 10-year trends shows **relative stability** for the three updates before and after 2021.

While the 10-year trends before 2021 where assessed as "stable" (as their confidence intervals crossed 1, meaning population growth, as per trend categories terminology by PECBMS), the 10-year trends after 2021 are assessed as "moderate decline". However, the 10-year trends' slope estimates remained similar over the last three updates.

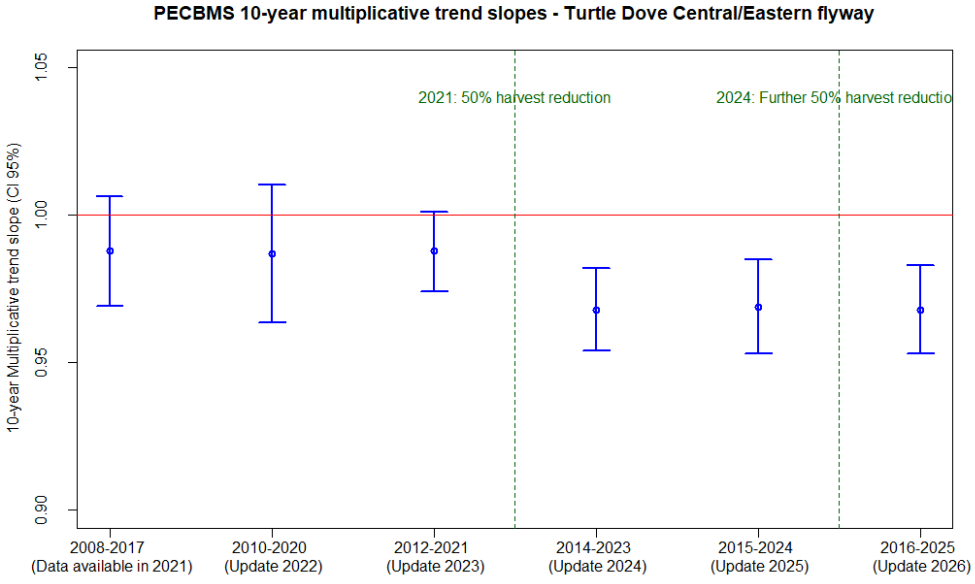



**Figure 3:** Yearly updates of PECBMS 10-year multiplicative trend slopes and their Confidence Intervals, for the Central/Eastern flyway.

# 2. What are the current harvest levels?

## 2.1. Western flyway

After four years of moratorium, hunting was reopened in 2025 with a **very small harvest rate of 1.5%**, which corresponded to a quota of around 130.000 birds.

However, in practice, only 33% of the quota was achieved, with a total of around 43.000 birds shot. This corresponds to a **95% reduction of hunting** compared to the harvest baseline 2019-20.

Various parameters explain this underuse of the quota. For example, in France and Portugal, the news that hunting would be reopened came late in advance of the season, and hunters, after four years of moratorium were not well aware. In Spain, many hunting grounds gave up their quota, which was not redistributed, to avoid the administrative burden deemed too high compared to the very small quota they would have received (e.g., especially for small hunting grounds). And hunting was not opened at all in the Italian regions belonging to the Western flyway.

**Table 1:** History of harvest in the Western flyway since 2021, with the AHM harvest baseline 2019-20.

HARVEST MANAGEMENT

**Harvest baselines and quotas by country**

Baseline (2019–20), quotas & harvest (2021–2025) and 2026 quota

| Country | 2019–20 | 2021–2024 | | 2025 | | | | 2026 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Harvest baseline | Quota | Harvest | Quotas | Harvest | Used quota | Reduction to baseline | Quota |
| ES | 668.107 | 0 | 0 | 106.920 | 27.908 | 26% | -96% | 121.500 |
| FR | 48.327 | 0 | 0 | 10.560 | 7.483 | 71% | -85% | 12.000 |
| PT | 45.072 | 0 | 0 | 13.200 | 7.815 | 59% | -83% | 15.000 |
| IT | 1.450 | 0 | 0 | 924 | 0 | 0% | -100% | 1.050 |
| **TOTAL** | **762.956** | **0** | **0** | **131.604** | **43.206** | **33%** | **-94%** | **149.550** |

**How is the quota calculated?**

Whitin the framework of the EU Task Force on the Recovery of Birds, the harvest quota was calculated by estimating the post-breeding population size based on the breeding population size estimate in 2025.

As detailed in Table 2 below, applying the productivity and survival rate estimates to the 2025 breeding population allows to generate an estimated post-breeding population size (i.e., the population size available for hunting) of around **10 million Turtle Doves in the Western flyway**.

The agreed harvest rate of 1.5% then corresponds to approximately 150.000 birds.

**Table 2:** Quota calculation, based on breeding population size 2025. Source: 12th meeting TFRB, 18 May 2026 – Doc 26-05-03.

POPULATION MODEL

**Post-breeding population estimate**

Breeding population: 2.117.950 pairs

| | 2025 | 2026 | Calculation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Breeding pairs (PECBMS) | 2.117.950 | – | |
| Total breeding adults | 4.235.900 | – | *Pairs × 2* |
| Offspring produced 2025 | 4.892.465 | – | *Pairs × 2.31* |
| 2025 ads surviving to 2026 | – | 2.655.909 | *2025 ads × 0.627* |
| 2025 juvs surviving to 2026 | – | 1.976.556 | *2025 juvs × 0.404* |
| Total breeding adults | – | 4.632.465 | *Surviving ads + juvs* |
| Offspring produced 2026 | – | 5.350.497 | *2026 pairs × 2.31* |
| TOTAL POSTBREEDING 2026 | – | 9.982.962 | ***Breeding ads + offspring*** |

| | |
|---|---|
| Harvest quota | 149.744 |
| Harvest rate | 1,5% |

This harvest rate was agreed upon following the results of the Turtle Dove Integrated Population Model (IPM) developed for the Western flyway over the last few years. The highlighted that **harvest rates up to 4% were associated with population growth** (see FACE Turtle Dove report 2024). As a **precautionary measure**, a 1.5% harvest rate was selected.

The most recent projected trends based on the population in 2025 (data update 2026) show the significant **population growth associated with harvest rates between 0% and 2%**, see Figure 4.

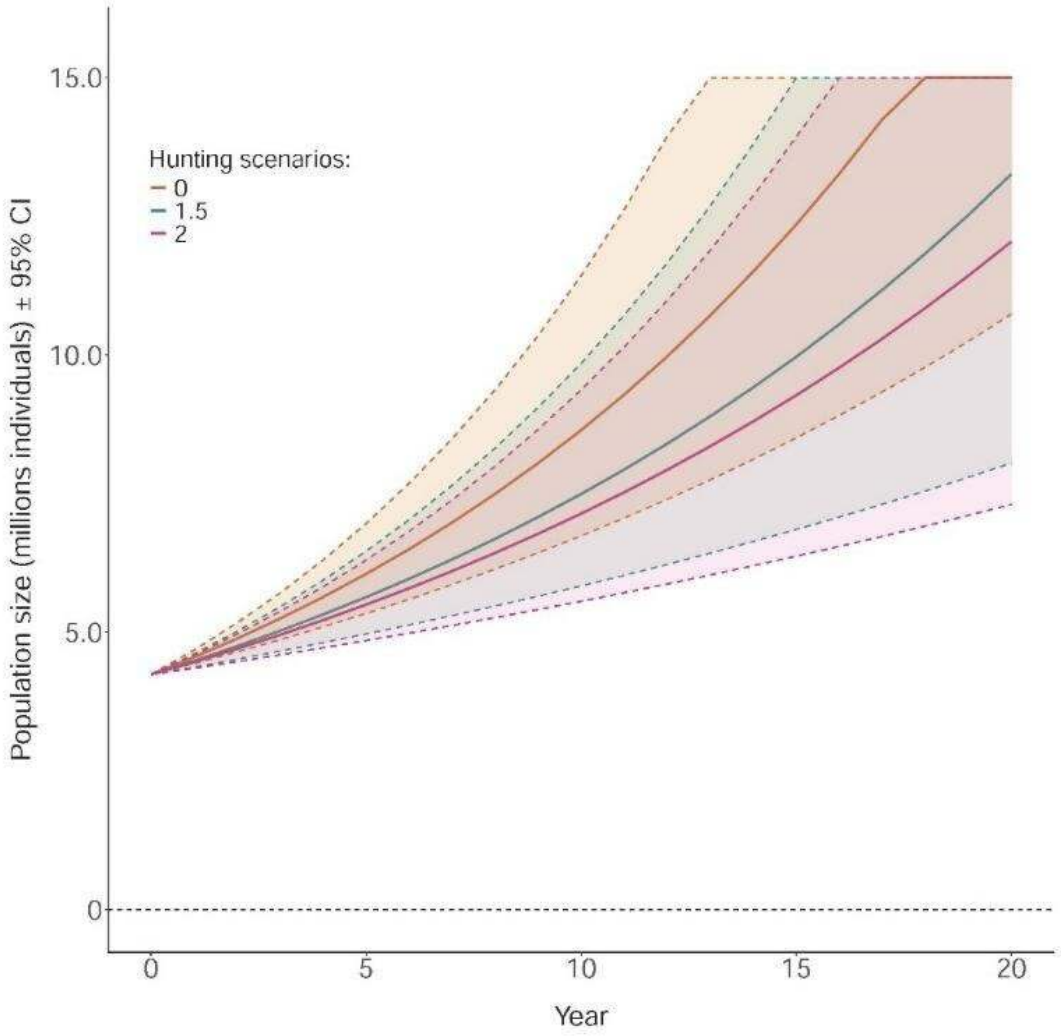



**Figure 4:** Projected Turtle Dove population trajectories in the Western flyway depending on different harvest rate (%) scenarios, estimated by a Population Dynamics P System (PDP) Models. Source: 12th meeting TFRB, 18 May 2026 – Doc 26-05-01.

# 2.2. Central/Eastern flyway

Following the initial recommendations from the European Commission for a 50% harvest reduction in 2021, the harvest was substantially reduced since 2021. With a total ban on hunting in many Italian regions, the goal of a 50% reduction resulted in a 75% total reduction compared to the harvest baseline 2013-18. This level of harvest, set by national quotas, was followed for three consecutive years (2021, 2022, and 2023). In 2024, Member States in the flyway took the initiative to further reduce harvest, leading to an **overall 90% reduction in hunting** compared to the baseline (see Figure 5 and Table 3).

The 2025 harvest in the Central/Eastern flyway was 94.788 birds.

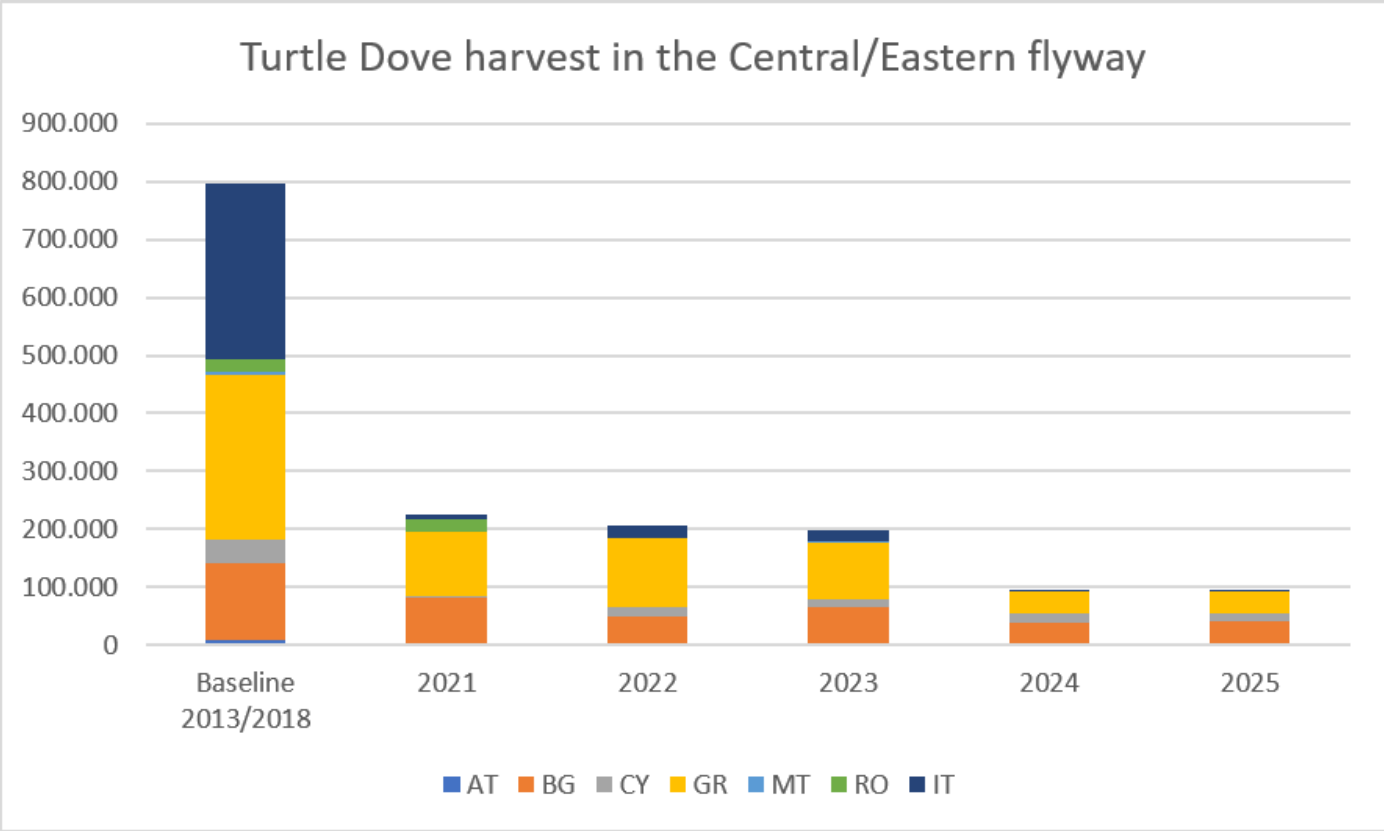



**Figure 5:** History of harvest in the Central/Eastern flyway since 2021, with the AHM harvest baseline 2013-18.

In Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, and Malta, the national quotas are usually reached, or close to be reached. However, there was no Turtle Dove hunting in Austria and Romania, and very limited hunting in Italy, as many Italian regions did not open a Turtle Dove hunting season.

To better understand these harvest numbers, they need to be compared to the population size available for hunting in the Central/Eastern flyway.

Applying the Task Force methodology used for quota calculation in the Western flyway (detailed above) to the Central/Eastern flyway situation generates an estimated post-breeding population size in 2026 of around **3 million birds in the Central/Eastern flyway**.

This indicates that the quota set in 2024 and 2025 of around 95.000 birds would result in an estimated **harvest rate of 3.3% in 2026** (see detail in Table 3 below).

**Table 3:** Calculation of harvest rate estimate in the Central/eastern flyway in 2026, based on the quota calculation methodology used for the Western flyway.

POPULATION MODEL

**Post-breeding population estimate**

Breeding population: 620.000 pairs

| | 2025 | 2026 | Calculation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Breeding pairs (PECBMS) | 620.000 | – | |
| Total breeding adults | 1.240.000 | – | Pairs × 2 |
| Offspring produced 2025 | 1.432.200 | – | Pairs × 2.31 |
| 2025 ads surviving to 2026 | – | 777.480 | 2025 ads × 0.627 |
| 2025 juvs surviving to 2026 | – | 578.609 | 2025 juvs × 0.404 |
| Total breeding adults | – | 1.356.089 | Surviving ads + juvs |
| Offspring produced 2026 | – | 1.566.283 | 2026 pairs × 2.31 |
| TOTAL POSTBREEDING 2026 | – | 2.922.371 | **Breeding ads + offspring** |

| | |
|---|---|
| Harvest quota | 95.000 |
| Harvest rate | 3,3% |

With a **reduction in harvest of almost 90% corresponding to an estimated 3% harvest rate**, hunting of Turtle Doves in the Central/Eastern flyway has been reduced to very low levels, in fact, close to a moratorium (see Figure 5). Although the population has not recovered so far, it has somewhat stabilised since 2021 (see Figure 1).

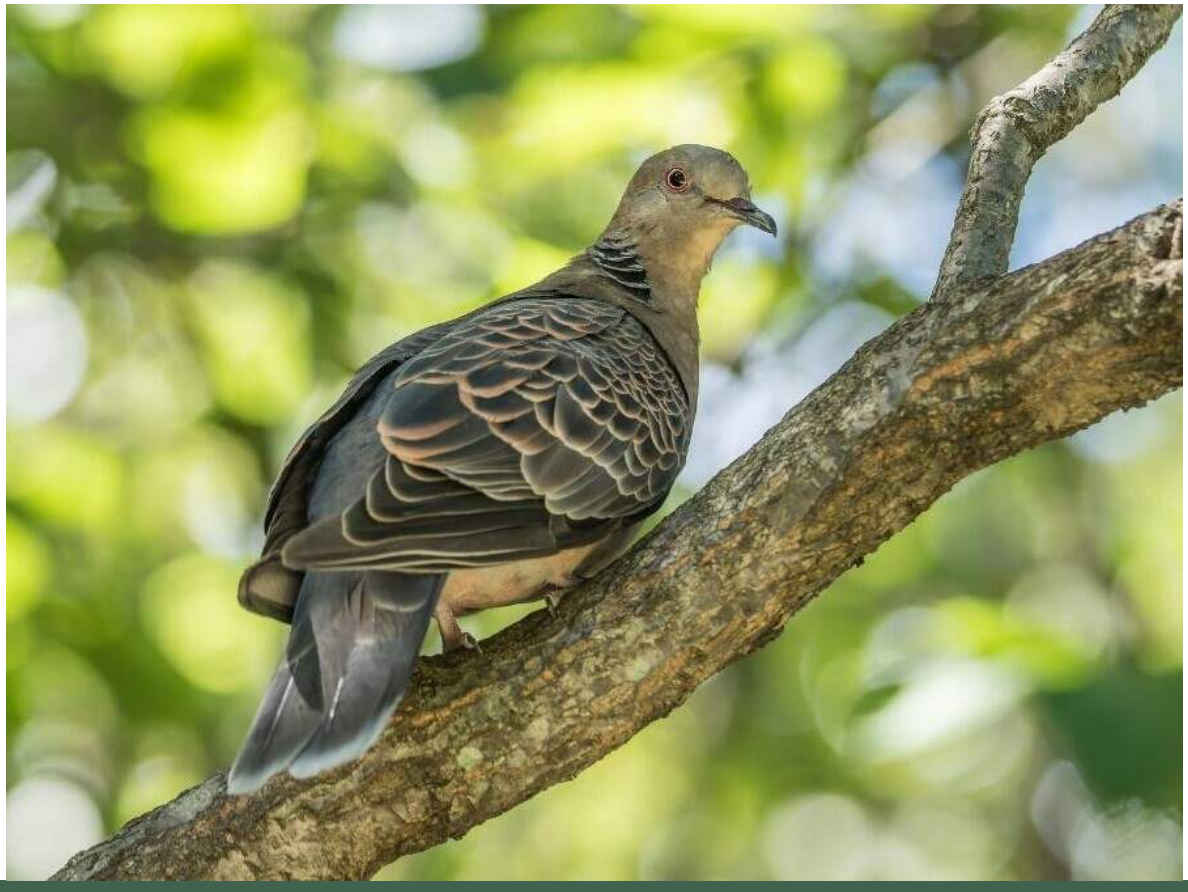
It is worth highlighting that **stable, and even increasing, trends were associated with earlier high harvest levels**. FACE analysed the PECBMS data at national level up to 2017 (see FACE's Turtle Dove report 2025), showing that **the only countries in the Central/Eastern flyway in which the Turtle Dove has been increasing in that period are Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania, which are countries in which the species is huntable**. An update of this data would be extremely useful to assess whether this is still the case.

When reflecting on the absence of population increase in the Central/Eastern flyway, **two hypotheses** were put forward by the European Commission's scientific consortium ; (1) that under-reporting of harvest and/or illegal killing is taking place or (2) that, if harvest reporting is accurate, the current harvest rate is still too high to be sustainable. In practice, **both hypotheses assume that hunting is a key limiting factor** for the population. However, these hypotheses are **not supported by the current knowledge**, as (1) enforcement data reported by Member States shows **very high compliance** (see point 3 on implementation below), in fact so high that infractions needed to be expressed in permille (‰) instead of percentage (%), and (2) the current **88% harvest reduction** would be equivalent to an **harvest rate of about 3%**, which is **identified as sustainable** for the Western flyway. Such harvest rate is in fact very close to a moratorium so that it is **unlikely that stopping the remaining hunting altogether will result in a significant change of population trend**.

This highlights the **lack of consideration for other hypotheses**, e.g., that hunting is not among the main drivers of population change in the Central/Eastern flyway, or that the population trend is not representative (e.g., by missing Turtle Dove core areas).

To better reflect on this, the PECBMS trends (and related sample sites) should be assessed at national level as they could yield significant information.

**FACE would recommend exploring other hypotheses as regards the lack of change in population trend, including by assessing the national PECBMS trends.**



# 2.3. Case study: Are rapid assessments of hunting sustainability accurate?

In 2024, the European Commission performed a **rapid assessment of hunting sustainability** for 30 migratory bird species of Annex II, which are not in a secure EU status (2013-18). As the Turtle Dove AHM process was already ongoing, the Turtle Dove was not included in this assessment.

However, we can **apply this assessment retrospectively to the Turtle Dove** to test it reliably. This is a useful test for future application of the method.

## 2.3.1. The methodology

The approach used to perform the assessment is the **Prescribed Take Level method** (PTL, Runge et al., 2009). This **complex methodology has been made easily accessible** to a broad range of stakeholders, wildlife managers and decision-makers through the recently designed R-package Popharvest (Eraud et al, 2021). This package was specially designed to provide a first assessment of the sustainability of bird harvest, using only sparse or incomplete data.

As it requires few parameters, it provides a useful starting point for assessing allowable take within a bird population with limited demographic information.

In this application of the PTL approach, the parameters required are population size estimates, harvest estimates, as well as a few demographic parameters to estimate the population growth rate (age at first reproduction, living rate and adult body mass).

Briefly summarized, **the PTL approach derives a Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY, equivalent to half the population excess growth)**, which can be compared to current hunting bags to assess whether they are sustainable with regard to a predefined management objective. This is done by generating a **Sustainable Harvest Index (SHI)** through a high number of simulations, which indicates the **probability of harvest being unsustainable** (with regard to the chosen management objective).

The possibility to formulate management objectives is an important aspect of the PTL approach as it allows to assess whether current harvest levels are sustainable with regards to ecological, economical, or cultural requirements.

**The management objective is a value judgement**, it is a priori (arbitrarily) specified within the formulation of the PTL as a scaling factor representing the take level relative to MSY, on a 0 to 1 scale. Setting it to 1 means that harvesting the MSY (half the population growth) is deemed sustainable.

In other words, setting the management objective to 0.5 means the users' value judgment is that harvest should not be higher than half of the MSY, or than half the population growth. In this case, the harvest is deemed unsustainable if it is higher than a quarter of the population growth. If the management objective is set at 0.25, the harvest is deemed unsustainable if it is higher than 12.5% (1/8) of the population growth.

Importantly, the bird **population trends are not taken into account when using popharvest**, the management objective can therefore be used as a safety by being set lower for decreasing populations, or, on the contrary, can be set higher for increasing populations that are well able to sustain harvest.

In any case, it is crucial to note that this exercise provides a first assessment of the sustainability of bird harvest, which forms a useful starting point for assessing harvest levels but requires a second stage assessment for ground-truthing the results. As per the authors' own words, "*while popharvest provides a useful platform for rapid assessments of sustainability, it cannot substitute for sufficient expertise and experience in harvest theory and management"* (Johnson et al., 2024).

In their application of this methodology (TFRB 26-02-05), the European Commission used the following traffic-light thresholds to classify harvest sustainability for each species/population:

- **Green:** when the probability of harvest to be unsustainable is lower than 50% with the management objective set at 0.25 (*i.e.,* harvest is deemed sustainable only when lower than 25% of the Maximum Sustainable Yield, i.e., lower than 12.5% of the population growth).
- **Red:** when the probability of harvest to be unsustainable is higher than 50% with the management objective set at 0.75 (*i.e.,* harvest is deemed unsustainable when higher than 75% of the Maximum Sustainable Yield, i.e., higher than 37.5% of the population growth).
- **Amber:** for any other situation.

This means that **the European Commission's management objective is to harvest less than a quarter of the Maximum Sustainable Yield**.

In other words, a quarter of the MSY is where the European Commission draws the line between sustainability and unsustainability of harvest.

This is a **precautionary approach**, especially as it does not take population trends into account. While this approach can make sense when the trend is decreasing, it would be too restrictive when the trend is increasing, as sustainable harvest levels risks be labelled as "red" (i.e., unsustainable") using these thresholds.

Note that this methodology has been developed for **huntable species in unsecure status, but that many have increasing wintering trends**, the relevant trends to assess when discussing hunting sustainability.

## 2.3.2. Application for the Turtle Dove current levels of harvest

**Applying this methodology to the current Turtle Dove** situation regarding harvest (in 2025), results in a **green light for the Western flyway**, while the **Central/Eastern flyway is just at the limit between green and amber** with the SHI being around 50% with the management objective set at 0.25.

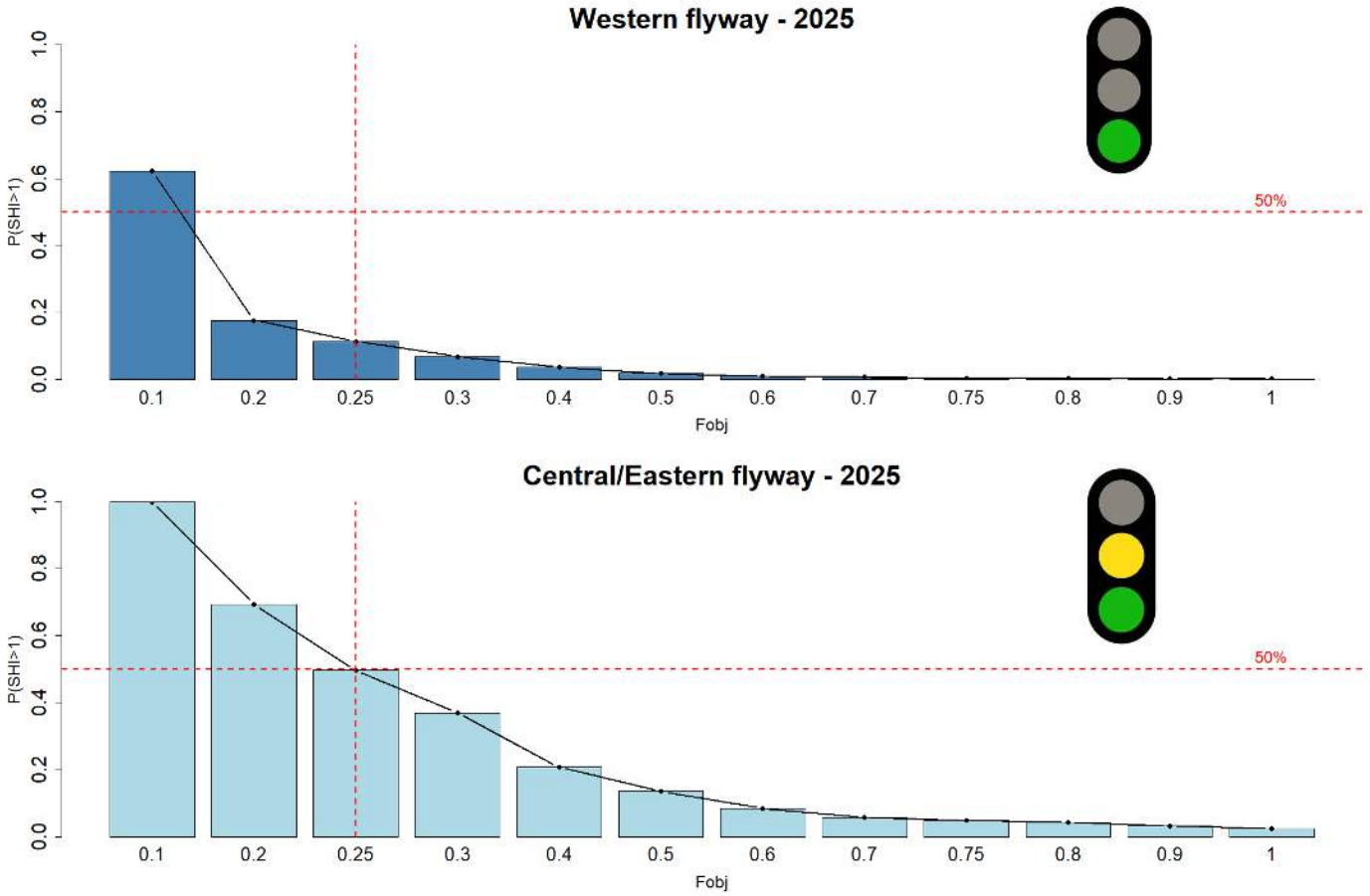



**Figure 6:** The PTL approached applied to the Turtle Dove Western and Central Eastern flyway, with highlighted management objectives as thresholds set by the European Commission (red dotted line). The European Commission assesses harvest levels as green if the probability that the sustainable harvest index shows unsustainability (P(SHI>1)) is lower than 50% with the management objective (Fobj) set at 0.25.

This means that, according to popharvest, the current harvest levels in the Central/Eastern flyway, of about 95.000 birds, is equal to the Prescribed Take Level (PTL) at the management objective (Fobj) set at 0.25. In other words, if the management objective (i.e., the goal) was to allow harvest of only a quarter of the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), which corresponds to 12.5% of the population growth as the MSY is half of the population growth, the goal would be met. Therefore, **this meets the European Commission's threshold**.

For the Western flyway, this means that, again according to popharvest, **the current quota is much lower than the European Commission's threshold for assessing harvest levels as green**.

## 2.3.3. Comparison with the EU Task Force work

As seen above, work within the EU Task Force showed very low current harvest levels with 1.5% maximum in the Western flyway for the season 2026, and extending to 2025 and the Central/eastern flyway, in the order of 1% and 3% in the Western and Central/Eastern flyways, respectively (see Table 2 and 3).

The rapid assessment of harvest sustainability using popharvest allows for an **interesting comparison between this quick and easy approach and the results of the Integrated Population Model (IPM)** developed over the last few years, a more demanding approach.

The **Turtle Dove IPM** developed in the Task Force produced a **sustainable harvest rate of up to 4%** for the Western flyway.

Using popharvest and the European Commission thresholds of the rapid assessment of harvest sustainability, a Prescribed Take Level (PTL) of about 330.000 Turtle Doves is produced for the management objective threshold (0.25) for a "green" classification. This **PTL is equivalent to a 4.8% harvest rate** (based on popharvest's predicted population growth rate and the Western flyway population size).

Further, the **1.5% quota for the Western flyway** was estimated to represent 150.000 Turtle Doves by the European Commission (Table 2). When using popharvest, the harvest of 150.000 Turtle Doves is estimated to be equivalent to a **2.1% harvest rate**, using the same logic as above.

**In this case study, these two very different approaches, one quick and easy to implement (popharvest), the other more demanding in time and resource (IPM) yielded very similar resutls.**

This is an encouraging sign that **management is on the righ path**, but could also mean that very **straighforward tools could gain more importance in harvest mangement** in the future.

For example, **an IPM is still lacking for the Central/Eastern flwyay**, pending new productivity and survival estimates within the flyway. **Popharvest could potentially provide an informative basis** in the meantime.

# 3. What about implementation and control in the field?

## 3.1. Harvest reporting systems

### Western flyway

All countries hunting the Turtle Dove in 2025 in the Western flyway had a mandatory bag data reporting system consisting in a smart phone application reporting system complemented in some cases by website online reporting and/or via paper forms, although less used.

**Spain:** Spain's national quota was distributed to hunting estates following the completion of a set of requirements: reporting harvest in years prior to the moratorium, implementing habitat measures (maintenance of crops/sowing, etc.), surveying breeding numbers, specifically mentioning the Turtle Dove in the management plans of the individual estates, and a commitment to use digital tags to record harvest. From 1.864 hunting estates that expressed initial interest, 1.351 obtained the authorisation and 828 used that authorisation during the season. Many did not use it as the allocated quotas were very small in some cases, so their managers gave up the idea of hunting the species this season.

**France:** In France, a phone application (ChassAdapt) provided real-time reporting allowing to close the season when the national quota was reached. The application also allowed hunters to submit pictures of Turtle Dove's wing, for research on age-ratio.

**Portugal:** In Portugal, Turtle Dove hunting was open only for two days with the obligation to register each Turtle Dove with a tamper-proof seal and the restriction to only hunt in estates with active management and monitoring in place. Once all those conditions were verified and the compliant hunting estates received authorisation, the national hunting quota was shared equally among them.

**Italy:** The part of Italy belonging to the Western flyway is made of the three west-northern regions, which did not hunt the Turtle Dove in 2025.

### Central/Eastern flyway

All countries have a **mandatory bag data reporting system.**

In **Bulgaria**, a webpage is available for harvest reporting at the end of the hunting season as well as paper forms reported by hunting ground managers. Bulgaria is currently testing an electronic system that will enable real-time harvest reporting. The daily quota was set at 3 birds per hunter (reduced from 8 birds until 2023).

In **Cyprus**, **Greece** and **Malta**, a smart phone app reporting system is in place. In addition, a daily quota 6 birds per hunter (with a maximum of 12 birds per season) and of 4 birds per hunter are in place in Cyprus and Greece, respectively.

In **Italy**, harvest reporting is carried out through a webpage at the end of the hunting day, and a daily quota 5 Turtle Doves per hunter (with a maximum of 15 birds per season).

**Austria** and **Romania** did not hunt the Turtle Dove in 2025.

# 3.2. Turtle Dove inspection data 2024 and 2025

The European Commission services requested information from Member State about activities carried out in the year 2024 and 2025 for the Turtle dove via questionnaires. This included a request for information on control and implementation.

Inspection data reported by Member States for the years 2024 and 2025 are quite similar, highlighting a large number of inspections and very low number of infractions detected. Globally, infractions account for less than 1% of inspections, except in Cyprus where a higher rate is found, see Tables 5 and 6.

It must be noted that infractions are not limited to Turtle Dove illegal killing, but to the full range of possible infractions to the hunting regulations, including, for example, being late in renewing its license.

The conclusion drawn from such dataset is that hunters abide by the law, and compliance is not an issue. It would therefore be very unlikely that significant numbers of Turtle Doves are shot illegally.

**Table 5:** Summary of inspections and detected infractions reported by Member States for 2024 and 2025, in the Central/Eastern flyway. Sources: Year 2024: Central/Eastern flyway - TFRB 25-03-03-02, Year 2025: Central/Eastern flyway - TFRB 26-05-04. Additional data on number of inspections in Bulgaria provided by FACE.

ENFORCEMENT

**Inspections and infringements**

In season · outside season · total — BG · CY · GR · IT · MT

| 2024 | In season | | | Outside season | | | Total 2024 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Inspections | Infringements | % | Inspections | Infringements | % | Inspections | Infringements | % |
| BG | 38.053 | 83 | 0,2% | 65 | - | - | 38.118 | 83 | 0,2% |
| CY | 425 | 29 | 6,8% | 1.200 | 250 | - | 1.625 | 279 | 17,2% |
| GR | 51.000 | 60 | 0,1% | 61.000 | - | - | 112.000 | 60 | 0,1% |
| IT – Marche | 1.073 | 3 | 0,3% | - | - | - | 1.073 | 3 | 0,3% |
| MT | 1.624 | - | - | 2.728 | 2 | - | 4.352 | 2 | 0,0% |
| **Total** | **92.175** | **175** | **0,19%** | **64.993** | **252** | **0,39%** | **157.168** | **427** | **0,27%** |

| 2025 | In season | | | Outside season | | | Total 2025 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Inspections | Infringements | % | Inspections | Infringements | % | Inspections | Infringements | % |
| BG | 42.264 | 88 | 0,2% | 32.133 | - | - | 74.397 | - | - |
| CY | 350 | 35 | 10,0% | 2.300 | 300 | 13,0% | 2.650 | 335 | 12,6% |
| GR | 53.000 | 57 | 0,1% | 57.000 | 75 | 0,1% | 110.000 | 132 | 0,1% |
| IT | 6.040 | 0 | 0,0% | 4.482 | 0 | 0,0% | 10.522 | 0 | 0,0% |
| MT | 1.334 | 19 | 1,4% | 5.854 | 61 | 1,0% | 7.188 | 80 | 1,1% |
| **Total** | **102.988** | **199** | **0,19%** | **101.769** | **436** | **0,43%** | **204.757** | **547** | **0,27%** |

**Table 6:** Summary of inspections and detected infractions reported by Member States for 2024 and 2025, in the Western flyway. **Sources:** Year 2024: Western flyway - TFRB 25-03-03-01, Year 2025: Western flyway - TFRB 26-05-02.

ENFORCEMENT

### Inspections and infringements

In season · outside season · total — ES · FR · IT · PT

| 2024 | In season | | | Outside season | | | Total 2024 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Inspections | Infringements | % | Inspections | Infringements | % | Inspections | Infringements | % |
| ES | 3.232 | 34 | 1,1% | 3.340 | 90 | – | 6.572 | 124 | 1,9% |
| FR | 4.000 | 3 | 0,1% | 4.000 | – | – | 8.000 | 3 | 0,0% |
| IT – Valle d'Aosta | c.950 | 0 | – | – | – | – | – | 0 | – |
| PT | – | 1 | – | – | 7 | – | 0 | 8 | – |
| Total | 7.232 | 38 | 0,53% | 7.340 | 97 | 1,32% | 14.572 | 135 | 0,93% |

| 2025 | In season | | | Outside season | | | Total 2025 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Inspections | Infringements | % | Inspections | Infringements | % | Inspections | Infringements | % |
| BE | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ES | 2.375 | 45 | 1,9% | 7.281 | 51 | 0,7% | 9.656 | 96 | 1,0% |
| FR | 378 | 3 | 0,8% | 0 | 0 | – | 378 | 3 | 0,8% |
| IT | 6.040 | 0 | 0,0% | 4.482 | 0 | 0,0% | – | 0 | – |
| PT | 9 | 9 | 100,0% | – | – | – | 9 | 9 | – |
| Total | 8.802 | 57 | 0,65% | 11.763 | 51 | 0,43% | 10.043 | 108 | 1,08% |

# 4. What about new research?

## 4.1. New studies in Bulgaria

A significant step forward in improving knowledge specific the Central/Eastern flyway was achieved by Bulgaria, where studies were conducted showing a 50% increase in nesting densities; from a stable 10.2 to 10.9 nesting pairs per 100 ha between 2022 and 2024, to an increase to 16.3 nesting pairs per 100 ha in 2025. They also found an average productivity of 3.24 fledged juveniles per nest over the breeding season 2025.

**This new productivity data should now be used to update the population model under development for the Central/Eastern flyway, a longstanding request from the European Commission's consortium.**

## 4.2. The collection of wing data continues

The collection of wing data continues in several countries, such as Spain, France, Greece, Italy, and Portugal.

The main novelty is that the phone application used in France to register harvest (ChassAdapt) now provides a state-of-the art tool to collect Turtle Dove wing data, as well as AI reading of the wings with very good accuracy.

A total of 1.826 usable wing pictures were collected, which analysis showed a total age-ratio of 3.14 juveniles per adult (CI 95% 2.82-3.5), so that juveniles represented 76% of the harvest.

It is commonly accepted that good age-ratio in the harvest, used as an index for the real age-ratio in the population, reflects a good population productivity. Hence, these numbers are a good sign regarding the health of the Turtle Dove population in the Western flyway.

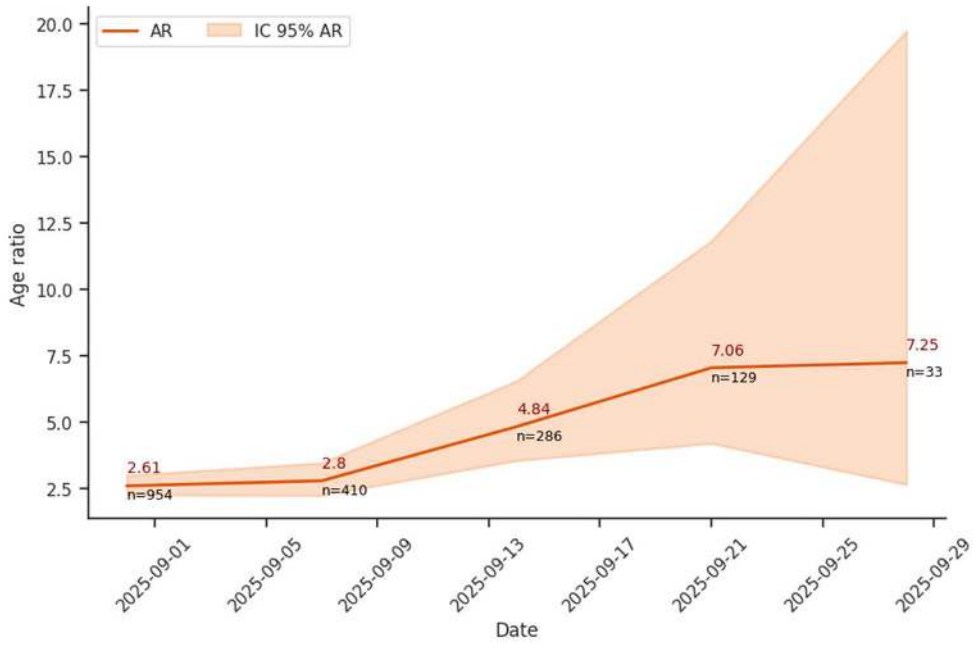



**Figure 7:** Harvested Turtle Dove age-ratio through the hunting season 2025 in France. Source data : French National Hunters Federation (FNC). Source document : OFB, Rapport sur les prélèvements de tourterelles des bois et respect du quota cynégétique durant la saison de chasse 2025-26).

# 5. Last but not least: Restoring habitats

Loss of habitats is the first driver of decreasing bird populations and biodiversity loss. Restoring habitats in the EU is therefore a priority for the recovery of birds, including Turtle Dove.

The EU Task Force on the Recovery of Birds produced a set of habitat actions to support Member States in the development of their National Restauration Plans (NRPs), as required by the Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR).

The following sub-set of measures were advised for the Turtle Dove, as well as other species.

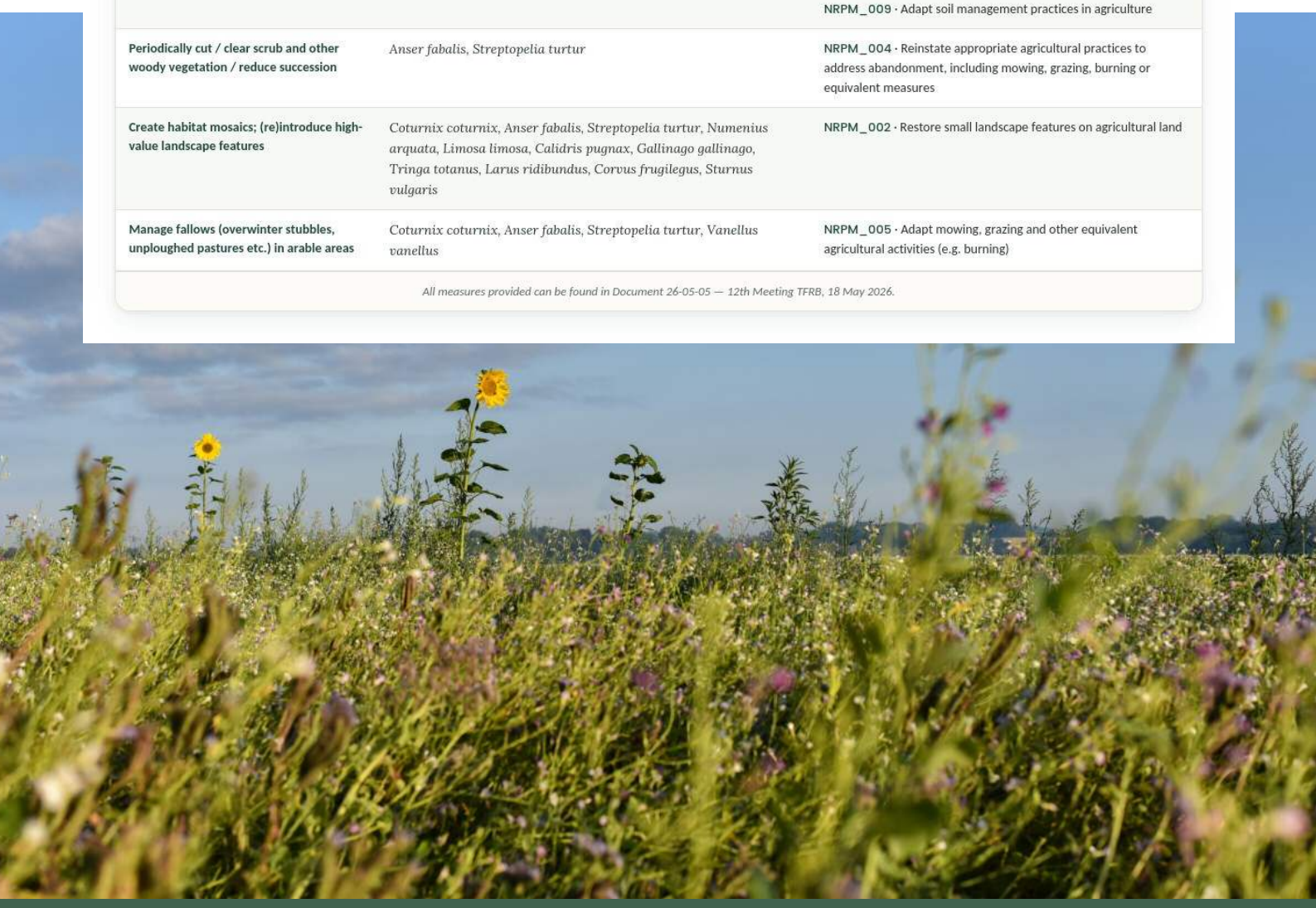
CONSERVATION MEASURES

**Actions, benefitting species and measures**

Agricultural actions and the Annex II species they support

| Actions | Species of Annex II benefitting *(many other non-huntable species benefit as well)* | Measures |
|---|---|---|
| **Increase organic farming / reduce chemical inputs** | *Coturnix coturnix, Anser fabalis, Aythya ferina, Streptopelia turtur, Rallus aquaticus, Fulica atra, Vanellus vanellus, Limosa limosa, Tringa totanus, Larus ridibundus, Corvus frugilegus, Sturnus vulgaris* | NRPM_010 · Manage the use of natural and synthetic fertilisers as well as chemicals in agriculture for plant and animal production |
| **Diversify plant species mixes (incl. reseeding with native plant species)** | *Anser fabalis, Streptopelia turtur, Larus ridibundus, Corvus frugilegus* | NRPM_007 · Re-establishment of Annex I agricultural habitats<br>NRPM_008 · Re-establishment of other (not agricultural) habitats on former agricultural land<br>NRPM_009 · Adapt soil management practices in agriculture |
| **Periodically cut / clear scrub and other woody vegetation / reduce succession** | *Anser fabalis, Streptopelia turtur* | NRPM_004 · Reinstate appropriate agricultural practices to address abandonment, including mowing, grazing, burning or equivalent measures |
| **Create habitat mosaics; (re)introduce high-value landscape features** | *Coturnix coturnix, Anser fabalis, Streptopelia turtur, Numenius arquata, Limosa limosa, Calidris pugnax, Gallinago gallinago, Tringa totanus, Larus ridibundus, Corvus frugilegus, Sturnus vulgaris* | NRPM_002 · Restore small landscape features on agricultural land |
| **Manage fallows (overwinter stubbles, unploughed pastures etc.) in arable areas** | *Coturnix coturnix, Anser fabalis, Streptopelia turtur, Vanellus vanellus* | NRPM_005 · Adapt mowing, grazing and other equivalent agricultural activities (e.g. burning) |

*All measures provided can be found in Document 26-05-05 — 12th Meeting TFRB, 18 May 2026.*



# Literature

Eraud, C., Devaux, T., Villers, A., Johnson, F. A., & Francesiaz, C. (2021). popharvest: An R package to assess the sustainability of harvesting regimes of bird populations. *Ecology and Evolution*, *11*(23), 16562-16571.

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