

L.N. 80 of 2026

**ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACT
(CAP. 549)**

**Conservation of Wild Birds (Declaration on a Derogation for a
2026 Spring Hunting Season for Quail) Regulations, 2026**

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred by articles 54 and 55 of the Environment Protection Act, the Minister responsible for the environment in conjunction with the Minister for Gozo and Planning and after consultation with the Environment and Resources Authority, and after taking into consideration the recommendations of the Ornithological Committee, has made the following regulations:-

Citation and
scope.

S.L. 549.57.

1. (1) The title of these regulations is the Conservation of Wild Birds (Declaration on a Derogation for a 2026 Spring Hunting Season for Quail) Regulations, 2026 and these regulations shall be read in conjunction with the Framework for Allowing a Derogation Opening a Spring Hunting Season for Turtle Dove and Quail Regulations.

(2) These regulations are being issued in line with Article 9 of Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds, hereinafter referred to as the "Birds Directive".

(3) For the purposes of these regulations and within the meaning of Article 9 of the Birds Directive, the Minister took into consideration the conservation status of Malta's reference population of the Quail*.

Interpretation.

S.L. 549.42.

S.L. 549.57.

2. Unless the context otherwise requires, the terms and expressions used in these regulations, shall have the same meaning as assigned to them in the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations, hereinafter referred to as the "Wild Birds Regulations" and in the Framework for Allowing a Derogation Opening a Spring Hunting Season for Turtle Dove and Quail Regulations.

Determination
of reference
population and
small numbers.

3. For the purposes of these regulations, the Quail is classified as a huntable species under Part B of Annex II of the Birds Directive. In this context, the "small numbers" requirement within the meaning of

* As detailed in the report dated March 2026 on the conservation status of the Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) which is available on the website: <https://wbru.gov.mt/en/resources/reports-and-statistics/other-reports/>.

Article 9(1)(c) of the Birds Directive shall be understood as "a sample in the order of one percent (1%) of the total annual mortality of the population in question". For the purposes of these regulations, "population in question" shall be understood with regard to these migratory species, as the population of those regions within the territory of the European Union from which come the main contingents passing through the region to which the derogation applies during its period of application.

4. The one percent (1%) of the total annual mortality of Malta's reference population of Quail shall be calculated as follows:

Calculation of 1% of the total annual mortality of the reference population.

Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*)

Minimum breeding success: 4 chicks per pair $(30,900 \times 4) = 123,600$

Minimum clutches per year: 2

Mortality rate of first year birds: $(247,200 \times 80\%) = 197,760$

Mortality rate of adult birds: $(61,800 \times 71\%) = 43,878$

Total annual mortality: $(197,760 + 43,878) = 241,638$

1% of total annual mortality: $(241,638 \times 1\%) = \mathbf{2,416}$

5. For the purposes of the fourth proviso to regulation 10(6) of the Wild Birds Regulations and for the purposes of these regulations, the period for the hunting of Quail in Spring 2026 shall be from the 13th April until the 3rd of May 2026, both dates included, from two (2) hours before sunrise until noon:

Establishment of spring hunting season. S.L. 549.42.

Provided that the provisions of these regulations shall cease to have effect and no hunting activity shall be permitted in the event that the Minister orders, by notice in the Gazette or any other notice, that the Spring hunting season shall terminate immediately or at a date as specified by the Minister.

6. For the purposes of these regulations, the Spring hunting season shall be in accordance with the provisions of the framework established by the Framework for Allowing a Derogation Opening a Spring Hunting Season for Turtle Dove and Quail Regulations and subject to all the conditions as stipulated in the Spring Hunting Licence.

Hunting according to set framework. S.L. 549.57.

B 596

Special licence
and quotas.

7. (1) The Spring Hunting Licence shall establish the overall bag limit for the Spring hunting season at two thousand and four hundred (2,400) Quails, as the total number of birds which may be hunted under the authority of all issued licences taken together.

(2) The Spring Hunting Licence shall cease to have effect in the event that the Minister orders, by notice in the Gazette or any other notice, that the Spring hunting season shall terminate immediately or at a date as specified by the Minister.
