



Statement by the International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey on the use of Glyphosate.

In the discussion on re-registration of the effective herbicide, glyphosate, one significant effect has not, according to our opinion, been adequately considered: Glyphosate destroys all plant species, the basis of our insect world and all organisms that are dependent on the food chains of these organisms. We are on the way to a silent spring because the richness of species that have developed along-side agriculture for millennia risks being widely destroyed by increasing use of this herbicide. Until the 1950's, there were hundreds of accompanying floral species in cereal fields, other crops, meadows and pastures. If one considers that each plant can serve, on average, at least five insect groups as a food source (living on roots, stems, leaf, flower, seed), and then multiply this by the hundreds of food crops which were previously grown, it can be concluded that an astronomically large number of insects are missing today from our open landscapes. Their biomass has demonstrably shrunk in recent decades, to less than 20%, and in maize fields to zero. In this way many bird species have almost disappeared due to lack of food.

Falconers are affected directly by this development because the game that they have been hunting, for over a thousand years, is disappearing or has actually disappeared. As observers of nature, falconers have seen this loss of biodiversity which is associated with degraded soil and deteriorating water quality. This reduces resilience to changing climate and ultimately leads to a deterioration all the ecosystem services on which our human wellbeing depends. The unrestricted use of Glyphosate will compound this situation. Thus, we, the International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF), would like to recommend that the use of the product Glyphosate be limited in the cultivated open landscape to only when absolutely necessary, and replaced wherever possible by more selective approaches including biological controls.

The richness of biodiversity in the cultivated countryside of Europe is the result of previous sustainable agricultural practices; it is suffering now because of modern agricultural methods and improvement in the future will depend on agriculture rediscovering benefits of resilience as well as productivity.

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