

TOWARD A COMMON MONITORING SCHEME OF HUNTING BAG IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Sustainable Hunting Initiative

Technical Workshop, Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat, 16 – 17 March 2005

Final discussion paper and agenda (11 March 2005)

Background

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC) provides the common framework for the conservation of naturally occurring species of wild birds throughout the European Union. The Birds Directive fully recognises the legitimacy of hunting of wild birds and list the species for which hunting (Annex II) owing “to their population level, geographical distribution level and reproduction rate throughout the Community” can take place under national legislation. A guidance document on hunting was recently published by the Commission that provides clarification of the requirements of the Directive relating to hunting. Another report was also published that defines the reproduction and pre-nuptial periods for huntable species throughout the EU.

At present no European-wide monitoring scheme exists to gather information on numbers of huntable birds shot annually. Since bag statistics is of immense importance when managing species efforts should be made to collect this information. An urgent need for reliable hunting bag data from all Member States has been expressed by many organisations, including The Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE). Most recently, the need for collection of reliable hunting bag data was stressed in the final note from The Conference celebrating the 25 years of the Birds Directive in Bergen op Zoom in the Netherlands.

This workshop aims at bringing together representatives from all major stakeholders to discuss the premises for a common system for collecting hunting bag data in the EU. The number of participants will be limited to app. 20 persons, in an attempt to make it as productive as possible. Experts in charge of hunting bags collection from EU 25 Member States (northern and southern MS), representatives from key NGOs and other experts who can provide relevant information on methods or experiences in the field of hunting and statistics are invited at this workshop. The number of presentations will also be limited, in order to give the audience enough time for discussion.

If successful, the outcome of the workshop will initially be presented for the Ornis Committee for further discussions. Subsequently it will also be presented at the Hanover conference of International Union of Game Biologists (IUGB), during the session “Sustainable use, population assessment and biomonitoring”.

Final programme

Scene setting

Why collect bag statistics and current state of progress of bag collection in the European Union.

Marc LUTZ and Flemming Pagh JENSEN, EC consultants

As an introduction the first presentation will briefly address the following key questions:

- *Why is it important to collect information on the number of birds hunted?*
- *What kind of data should be collected?*
- *What should this information be used for?*

A second presentation based on the report issued from the questionnaire sent to MS 25 by the consultants will provide an overview of the situation concerning the collection of hunting bags in EU 25.

Almost all MS collect bags statistics, some of them in an exhaustive way for all huntable species, some other only for certain species that are popular quarry species or species with important conservation concerns. However there is a lot of material collected, but data seem to be rather heterogeneous. Moreover, there is no coordination between all institutes, and information provided is not shared between MS, neither in a pan-European geographic system, nor at the same time frame.

The assessment of national bag statistics in the EU clearly shows that there is a difference in the collect of bags statistics between some MS where there is a long tradition for collection (with very often binding legislation), and some others where bags collection is sparser. This discussion aims at identifying the root causes of the lack of bags collections in Member States. The presentation and the subsequent debate will try to answer to the following questions:

- Is there an intrinsic “cultural reluctance” from hunters to provide their bags? Or a “response” to the application of the Birds Directive?
- Is it a problem of method in the collection and can a common and simplified “carnet de chasse” be a useful tool?

From the result outlined during the presentation and the following discussion, actions to be undertaken in terms of communication will rise, especially targeted at the hunters and at national authorities in charge of bag statistics issues.

In this general configuration, the main issue of this workshop could be stated as following: Can we implement an EU system for the collection of bags statistics, which can provide bags trends on an annual basis, for all huntable species listed under Annex II of the Birds Directive?

Session 1

From hunters to statisticians:

What kind of bags data is collected? What type of data should be collected?

This session is based on experiences from MS, with a focus on the different collection schemes that are actually used in MS. The session will outline forces and weaknesses of different schemes.

Presentation:

Jarl KRAUSING (Danish Ministry of Environment)

Reinhard LENTNER (Austria)

Michel VALLANCE (France)

Nicolaos KASSINIS (Cyprus)

Theofanis KARAMPATZAKIS, Christos THOMAIDES or Alexandros GIAPIS (Greece)

Dziugas ANUSKEVICIUS (Lithuania)

Mathieu Boos (CNRS, France)

How do we fully quantify the extent of the current hunting bag in the EU – points of view from the NGOs.

Following the presentations from a number of governmental authorities and hunters associations on collection of bag data, this session will give the invited NGOs a possibility to express their views on how we quantify bag data within the EU.

Other possible contributions of hunters to bird monitoring and research

Besides the collection of bag data, birds, which are collected through hunting, can provide a lot of information for scientific research. In that sense, the protocol elaborated within the frame of the Teal project (ONCFS) involves hunters a lot in the research project, and provides interesting feed-back to them. Other information collected (biometry, wings, gizzard...) could then be an added value in the launching of a European program on bags statistics.

Presentation:

Jean-Yves MONDAIN MONVAL and Mathieu GUILLEMAIN, (France)

Session 2

Developing an European project for bags statistics

This second session will be based on the lessons-learned from the previous session and will aim at setting a very first draft of a common scheme for Europe (hunters → regional hunting authorities → national research institutes → EC), including the type of information needed, the minimal sample, etc..

The consultants will initially attempt to summarise the conclusions from session 1.

As a very interesting and diversified panel of experts will be present at the workshop, this session will be organized in 4 working groups. Each of them will have general guidelines and questions about the possible development of a common bags collection system for EU 25, and will propose a scenario.

Results of the different groups will then be discussed.

Working Groups are the following:

| Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 |
|--|---|--|---|
| Yves Lecocq Reinhard Lentner Ian Burfield Mathieu Guillemain Alexandre Cjaïkovsky Anne Teller | John Harradine Dziugas Anuskevicius Konstantin Kreiser Guy-Noël Olivier Mathieu Boos Marc Lutz | Manuel de Tillesse Jarl Krausing Jean-Yves Mondain Monval GREECE 1 GREECE 2 Walburga Lutz | Jim Casaer Nicolas Kassinis Claire Papazoglou Michel Vallance FP Jensen Gilles Deplanque |

The subsequent debate should than look into how to promote national data collection in the Member States and the how the data could also be analysed at a EU level. Among the issues to be discussed in that context is which instructions could store and analyse the bag data at a EU level. Would a way forward be to initially launch a pilot project that focus on a limited number of huntable species in a sample of Member States?

Consolidated List of participants

Anne TELLER, (European Commission/DG Environment)
Yves LECOCQ, (FACE)
Manuel de TILLESSE, (FACE)
John HARRADINE, (BASC, UK)
Jim CASAER (IUCN/WISPER)
Nicolas KASSINIS (The Game Fund, Interior Ministry, Cyprus)
Christos THOMAIDES or Dr. Alexandros GIAPIS (Hellenic Hunters Confederation)
Theofanis KARAMPATZAKIS (Hellenic Hunters Confederation)
Gilles DEPLANQUE, (Wetlands International Harvest Specialist Group)
Alexandre CJAĪKOVSKY, Migratory Birds of the Western Palaearctic (O.M.P.O.)
Guy Noël OLIVIER, (on behalf of the AEWa Secretariat)
Claire PAPAZOGLU (Birdlife International – ECO)
Ian BURFIELD (Birdlife International – ECO)
Konstantin KREISER (Birdlife International – ECO)
Matthieu BOOS (CNRS)
Dziugas ANUSKEVICIUS (Protected Areas Strategy Division, Nature Protection Department, Lithuania)
Jean-Yves MONDAIN-MONVAL (ONCFS)
Matthieu GUILLEMAIN (ONCFS)
Jarl KRAUSING (Danish Ministry of Environment – the central hunting administration)
Reinhard LENTNER (Wetlands International Harvest Specialists Group/Nature protection administration Tyrol, Austria)
Michel VALLANCE (ONCFS, France)

Marc LUTZ (EC Consultant, Tour du Valat, France)
Flemming Pagh JENSEN (EC Consultant, DDH Consult A/S, Denmark)

Marie Antoinette DIAZ (Tour du Valat, logistics and secretariat)

Final program

Wednesday, March 16th

Afternoon: Arrival of participants

Express Train (TGV) from Paris/Brussels/London is possible (about 3 hours from Paris to Arles, + 1.30 from Brussels to Paris). Airplane connections possible to Marseille, Nîmes or Montpellier airport (Timetable in separate file).

- 14:30 Welcome by M. Jean Jalbert, DG of Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat.
- 14:45 – 15:30 Scene setting
- Introduction *ML & FPJ*
 - Why is it important to collect information on hunting bag? *FPJ*
 - The state of progress of bags collection in the European Union *ML*
 - Discussion: Identify the root causes of the lack of bags statistics?
- 15:30 – 16:30 Session 1: What kind of bags data is collected? What type of data should be collected? Examples and lessons-learnt from the European Union
- 60 years with a national bag statistics system: *Jarl Krausing, Denmark.*
 - Are bag statistics helpful to get information about population trends of huntable species? *Reinhard Lentner, province Tyrol, Austria.*
 - Collecting bags statistics in Cyprus, *Nicolaos KASSINIS*
 - Development of a national scheme for Bags collection in France, *Michel Vallance*
 - The Artemis Program in Greece. *Speaker from Hellenic Hunters Confederation*
 - Bags statistics in Lithuania, *Dziugas Anuskevicius*
- 16:30 – 17:00 Coffee break
- 17:00 – 18:30 Session 1 (continued): How do we fully quantify the extent of the current hunting bag in the EU – points of view.
- The Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE)
 - BirdLife International
 - Representative for central administration in Member State
 - Migratory Birds of the Western Palaearctic (O.M.P.O.)
 - The AEWa Secretariat

Thursday, March 17th

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|---------------|---|
| 08:30 – 09:00 | Findings of session 1 (FP Jensen & M. Lutz) |
| 09:00 – 10:00 | Other possible contributions of hunters to bird monitoring and research <i>Presentation by M. Guillemain and JY Mondain Monval (ONCFS, France)</i> Discussion |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | Coffee break |
| 10:30 – 12:15 | <u>Session 2: developing a European project for bag statistics</u> Session in 4 working groups |
| 12:15 – 13:30 | Lunch break (canteen Tour du Valat) |
| 13:30 – 15:00 | Analysis of the results |
| 15:00 – 16:00 | <u>Debate on how to promote national data collection and the develop of a common system</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to encourage all Member States to develop national system?• A common European system: who should care for it and where should it be based?• What should be the first steps to take?• |
| 16:00 – 16:30 | Coffee break |
| 16:30 – 17:30 | <u>Conclusions of the workshop</u> |

Friday, March 18th

08:00 – 12:00 Excursion in Tour du Valat or other sites in the Camargue

Possibility to have lunch at Tour du Valat canteen (see Ms Diaz)

For any details regarding logistics, please contact
Ms. Marie-Antoinette DIAZ (Tour du Valat)
tel: 00.33.4.90.97.20.13. fax: 00.33.4.90.97.20.19. e-mail: diaz@tourduvalat.org

Presentations summaries

Are bag statistics helpful to get information about population trends of huntable species?

Reinhard Lentner, nature conservation administration
province Tyrol, Austria

As an introduction a short overview about nature conservation and hunting provisions in Austria should be given. As a concrete example those Tyrolian provisions will be explained, which are connected to hunting policies and to the EU's policies concerning the Birds Directive and especially to the bag statistics.

In Austria there exist – in slightly different forms – bag statistics for all huntable species. Concerning the suitability of those surveys as a basis for answers about population trends there were interviewed several Austrian experts.

Some species will serve as examples in the discussion about bag statistics and population trends. In the group of the geese for instance a high correspondence between independent bird counts and bag statistics can be seen. By looking at sedentary species like Capercaillie and Black Grouse, again conclusions from bag statistics to the density of populations can be drawn.

Regional differences influence the reliability of bag statistics; they might depend on the varying importance of the single species for hunters. While outside the Alps hunting on migratory birds like geese is important, in mountainous regions hunting on the Capercaillie and Black Grouse stands in the centre of interest.

With some restrictions bag statistics can be an essential supplementation to population density in order to gain long term-population trends and favourable conservation status.

Collecting bags statistics in Cyprus

Nicolas KASSINIS, Senior Game and Wildlife Officer
The Game Fund, Interior Ministry

Hunting is a very popular sport among Cypriot men. Twenty – five percent of men over 18 (the legal age to own a shotgun in Cyprus) is a registered hunter. Hunters almost doubled during the last 30 years. This combined with the loss of 36% of the land due to the Turkish invasion and occupation increased the pressure even more on game species.

The hare *Lepus europeus* is the most highly valued game species pursued by the almost 50 thousand Cypriot hunters. Along with the chukar partridge *Alectoris chukar* and the black francolin *Francolinus francolinus* the hare defines the local hunting tradition. Other important species are the resident woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, the passage migrant and (to a lesser extent) migrant breeder, turtle dove *Streptopelia turtur*, the winter visitors skylark *Alauda arvensis* and thrush species (mainly *Turdus philomelos*, *T. merula*).

Hunter harvest records have been recorded by the Game Fund since 1986. It was recognized that national bag records can be useful in monitoring game population trends. At the beginning this was done via field check stations while later it evolved to hunter questionnaires at the end of the season where Game Wardens visited urban and rural hunters and asked questions relevant to the year's harvest.

Since 1998 this changed to a randomly selected telephone survey covering $\geq 1\%$ of registered hunters from all districts (450-500 hunters / year). A more sophisticated questionnaire was produced asking questions ranging from hours / field day, harvest on opening day vs. total harvest, other game species bagged, satisfaction ratings, hunting dog ownership, etc. Nowadays, the Game Fund conducts regular field check stations during hunting days, telephone surveys at the end of each season and a written questionnaire on the back of the hunting permit that each hunter must complete before the issuance of a new license each year.

The Game Fund combines harvest records with annual population counts for resident game species to monitor population levels and safeguard the species' sustainable harvest. Migratory species and especially thrushes that are the most popular among hunters are monitored via harvest records only since their annual abundance on the island varies due to mainly exogenous reasons.

Hunting bag statistics in France: from nationwide surveys to local ones with special reference to the Camargue case.

Jean-Yves Mondain Monval and Mathieu Guillemain (ONCFS)

The Camargue (Rhône river delta) is at national level an area of outstanding importance both for wintering/migrating waterbirds as well as for shooting, and especially wildfowling. A part of the Camargue land (about 2/3) belongs to a Natural Regional Park (NRP) and about 70% of the area is privately owned. Hunting is an important economic activity in the delta, and

implies an active management of wetlands. In the NRP's 1998 Charter, the development of a monitoring procedure of hunting activities is set out as an objective. ONCFS has therefore recently launched a specific monitoring programme on voluntary basis and the main results and problems will be briefly discussed.

60 years with a national bag statistics system (Denmark)

Jarl Krausing, Desk Officer,
Department for Outdoor Creativity and Wildlife Management

The Danish system for collection of bag statistics dates back to 1941. During this period the system has undergone several administrative revisions in light of changes in the Act of hunting and wildlife management and in accommodating opportunities revealed by modern technology.

As of today approximately 60% of the 160.000 active hunters are reporting correctly and timely, down from more than 80% just a few years ago. This decrease is very much explained by the mentioned changes in the legal and administrative frameworks, and the Danish hunting authorities are faced with a need to restore levels of reporting by hunters. A work in this regard is currently under way in collaboration with relevant actors, among others the Danish Hunters Association and the National Environmental Research Institute (NERI).

The close collaboration with the Danish hunters (and conservation groups) has been crucial in not only developing and maintaining the current reporting system, but also in forming the current Hunting and Wildlife Management Act.

Throughout the years, the Danish Forest and Nature Agency and the Danish Hunters Association have jointly underlined the rationale for the collection of bag statistics: The *management* of Danish Wildlife is an obligation shared by authorities and hunters, and it is the responsibility of all relevant stakeholders to ensure a sustainable harvest of the species hunted. The collection of bag statistics constitutes in this regard a key-mechanism in assessing population sizes of species hunted.

As such the bag collection constitutes a very important *dialogue* between the individual hunter and hunting authorities as well as with the NERI. Reporting is not just to be seen – or “sold” - as a technical duty by the hunter.

Development of a National Survey of hunting bags in France

By Michel Vallance, Scientific Director,
Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage

Hunting bags collection in Greece: The ARTEMIS program

By Christos THOMAIDES or (delegate) Dr. Alexandros GIAPIS and
Theofanis KARAMPATZAKIS
Hellenic Hunters Confederation

The Hellenic Hunters Confederation is collecting hunting bag statistics data, through a monitoring program called ARTEMIS for more than ten years now. This program has been evaluated very positively by many international organizations and has been presented in a number of hunting and biological conferences arising very complimentary comments.

Collecting hunting bags in Lithuania

Dziugas Anuskevicius
Chief Desk Officer of Protected Areas Strategy Division

