



AEWA Non-toxic Shot Workshop

25-26.10.2001
Bucharest, Romania



Workshop Report

1. Introduction

As the debate on the phasing out of lead shot and the shift to non-toxic alternatives is in Western Europe very advanced, it is now time to focus on the respective development in Central and Eastern Europe. Most of these countries did sign the *African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement* (AEWA) under the *Bonn Convention on Migratory Species*, which especially calls its parties to endeavour to "*phase out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands*" (Annex 3: Action Plan, 4.1.4). In meeting the needs of these countries for exchange of information, know-how and experiences, the Workshop was jointly organised by FACE and AEWA to provide guidance and assistance for the way ahead.

2. Objectives

In order to ensure that the given information on all aspects relating Non-toxic Shot (impact on waterfowl and the environment, legal aspects, market situation, etc.) will be spread amongst the national hunter's communities as widely as possible, it was considered important that the invited participants have to act as "multiplicators" or "focal points" in their own country.

3. Presentations and outcome

Mr. B. LENTEN, Executive Secretary AEWA opened the workshop and highlighted the chance for all stakeholders to work closely together on the phasing-out of lead shot.

Ambassador S. CELAC, General Association of Hunters and Anglers of Romania, read a message of Prime Minister NASTASE, who particularly stressed the importance of this meeting with regard to ethical and economical development of hunting in Romania.

Special thanks were given to those The Government of Switzerland, who provided the AEWA Secretariat with the necessary funds to cover the travel and subsistence costs of funded delegates. Further more thanks were given to the organisations that made this workshop happen, in particular the *Association of European Manufacturers of Sporting Ammunition* (AFEMS) and the *European Institute for Hunting and Sporting Firearms* (IEACS), and significantly contributed to the practical part of this event by providing shotguns and ammunition.

Ms. N. BEINTEMA, *Wetlands International*, gave an overview on the recently published "International Update Report on Lead Poisoning in Waterbirds" This report describes the background to the issue, its scale, biological consequences, possible solutions as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the use of non-toxic shot. It furthermore reviews the major international conventions and agreements addressing the lead issue and the developments, which have been achieved. However, the main part of the report deals with the current situation and developments in individual countries. N. BEINTEMA summarised the main obstacles for the phasing out of lead shot and presented a set of recommendations for governments, NGO's, convention secretariats, hunters' organisations and individual hunters.

The obvious long-term solution for the lead poisoning issue is switching from lead to non-toxic alternatives, either through voluntary or statutory measures. There are high-quality, non-toxic alternatives to lead, for example steel shot, which is most widely available and least costly. Steel shot is in many countries slightly more expensive than lead shot, although prices are currently decreasing with increasing demand. It is mentioned that steel shot is not available in all countries. Steel shot does have a few safety risks, which become insignificant with familiarity and practice: the use of steel shot entails an increased risk of ricochet and barrel pressures are higher. The majority of currently used guns seem to be proofed for pressures amply suitable for the use of steel shot. Steel shot has ballistic properties which differ from those of lead shot; however, when shooting from reasonable distances (generally accepted regardless of shot type) and after some practice with shooting with steel shot, crippling rates are no higher than when using lead shot. On the contrary, the hardness of steel shot ensures deeper penetration when hitting the target.

In the following, the other speakers focused on:

- ▶ Internal and external ballistics, safety, efficiency, cost factors, availability and future development (Dr. M. TULP, NL);
- ▶ Problems related to the use of lead shot and its alternatives - the French experience (Mr. F. LAMARQUE, F);
- ▶ Experiences with the phasing-out of lead shot - the Danish example (Mr. N. KANSTRUP, DK);
- ▶ Practical use of non-toxic shot alternatives - the UK and USA situation (Dr. J. HARRADINE, UK).

Presented material is to be found attached.

The participants, at the end of the theoretical session, agreed on noting the following recommendations as main outcomes in order to assist the involved stakeholders in further developing the phasing out of lead shot:

In order to avoid unnecessary deaths of waterbirds because of poisoning through the ingestion of spent lead shot, and the resulting contamination of the environment, the participants recommended that the phasing out of lead shot over wetlands, in accordance with the international commitments under AEWA, should be speeded up by:

- ▶ *Increasing international co-operation (with AEWA, FACE, CIC, CIP, manufacturers, etc.) to achieve the objective*
- ▶ *Collecting existing information and disseminating it through appropriate networks (AEWA, FACE, CIC) to those countries yet to phase out lead shot*
- ▶ *Encouraging investigations, where appropriate, to assess the scale of ingested lead shot poisoning at the national level*
- ▶ *Developing guidelines, based on existing experience, to address the specific requirements of developing countries and those with economies in transition*
- ▶ *Raising awareness about the problem and possible solutions among user groups and decision makers, through*
 - *material for grassroots-level in appropriate languages (leaflets/hand-outs, etc.)*
 - *special issues of AEWA/FACE/CIC newsletters*
 - *hunting magazines, etc.*
- ▶ *Educating and training of hunters in the effective use of non-toxic alternatives*
- ▶ *Facilitating and encouraging improvement of shooting through practising at shooting ranges, etc.*
- ▶ *Standardising product description by cartridge manufacturers*
- ▶ *Encouraging the local manufacture of non-toxic cartridges*
- ▶ *Creating incentives for introducing alternatives*
- ▶ *Encouraging further development of effective non-toxic shot*
- ▶ *Finally, participants recommended that hunting interests are fully involved in all debates and developments concerning the future use of lead shot in east European and other countries.*

4. Follow-up

A first overview on the outcomes of this exercise was presented by FACE on the occasion of the *Second Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee*, held on 5-7. November 2001 in the Carmargue. Under the agenda item "Report on the Non-toxic Shot Workshop", *Wetlands International* first presented a brief overview on its recently published update report, followed by a presentation on the Romania-Workshop, given by FACE. The AEWA secretariat and the participants welcomed very much both the initiatives taken by AEWA and FACE and also the improved co-operation between these two organisations.

The AEWA secretariat suggested to the Technical Committee to organise another workshop targeting the Southern European Countries (possible venue: Italy) in due time.

The following document, in line with the recommendations of the Bucharest Workshop, was presented by a small working group to and approved by the Technical Committee members:

Phasing out of lead shot Steps to be taken up to the next AEWA MOP

At the second AEWA Technical Committee meeting in Tour du Valat 5-7 November 2001, the issue of lead shot was discussed. Lead poisoning in waterbirds through the ingestion of lead shot pellets is a very serious and large-scale environmental problem, which affects wetlands and their species world-wide. Recently evidence has become available that also shows an impact on human health by lead contamination through the diet. Phasing out of lead shot is now widely recognised as the only long-term solution to this problem.

Two major steps were recently made: The first one was the publication of the 2000 update report on Lead Poisoning in Waterbirds by Wetlands International. The second was the International Non-toxic shot Workshop that took place in Bucharest at the end of October 2001 organised by FACE and AEWA.

Both produced clear and concrete recommendations.

The TC recognised the need for concrete steps to be taken in the period leading up to MOP2 and resulting in a recommendation at the MOP2 for follow-up after that.

The following steps are proposed to be taken:

In the period leading up to the MOP2

- ▶ Establish a body under the AEWA umbrella, to secure international co-operation to achieve the objective of phasing out lead shot. In this body the main stakeholders should be represented: FACE, CIC, Wetlands International, BirdLife International, CIP, manufacturers, etc.
- ▶ Collection of information in countries where the scale of incidence of lead poisoning is still unknown. This can be done by using the extensive network built up by Wetlands International to gather the data for the 2000 update report. FACE and CIC can address their hunter's network.
- ▶ Developing guidelines, based on existing experience, to address the steps that can be taken towards the phasing out of lead shot, in particular of developing countries and those with economies in transition

- ▶ In addition, raising awareness about the problem and possible solutions among user groups and decision makers, through
 - material for grassroots-level in appropriate languages (leaflets/hand-outs, etc.)
 - material to influence decision makers through the national reference centres
 - special issues of AEWA/FACE/CIC newsletters
 - hunting magazines, etc.
- ▶ Educating and training of hunters in practice in the effective use of non-toxic alternatives
- ▶ Standardising product description, including safety features, by cartridge manufacturers
- ▶ Creating incentives for introducing non-toxic shot alternatives; Encouraging the local manufacture and encouraging the further development of effective non-toxic shot

As a basis for a recommendation to the MOP2:

- ▶ In addition to legally based measures it is recognised that voluntary steps taken by stakeholders make a very important contribution towards reaching the overall objective. The countries are urged to launch campaigns targeting at voluntary phasing out of lead shot by hunters.
- ▶ Legislation is not powerful without effective enforcement. Therefore, governments should consider law enforcement as an important part of the solution to the lead poisoning issue. More logistics and finances should be allocated to this end.
- ▶ Countries which already have legislation concerning the use of lead shot should assist countries without legislation in addressing the issue legally, since experience (legal, organisational, political) could be an important factor which drives the development of legislation. Conservation NGO's, hunting organisations and convention secretariats should be an intermediate factor in this process.
- ▶ Encouraging investigations, where appropriate, to assess the scale of ingested lead shot poisoning at the national level to act as a convincing argument within the own country.

5. Assessment of the Workshop

Participation

Only half of the countries that were invited to send representatives were actually present in Bucharest, namely the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (see attached list of participants). Additionally, two participants from the Ukraine, a country which was not foreseen to be invited in the beginning, participated, after having received a late invitation from AEWA.

Guest-speakers

In general, the guest-speakers did excellent work and showed that they were really dedicated to the topic.

Feed-back of participants

During the discussions on the first day namely the participants from Hungary, Romania and the Ukraine tabled a lot of questions, gave insights into the particular situation in their respective countries and came up with suggestions for further development.

The participants welcomed the initiative taken by FACE and AEWA and expressed their wishes to be also included in this process in the future.

Feed-back of guest-speakers

The guest-speakers agreed that it was worth to have this opportunity to initiate an awareness-raising campaign in these particular Central and Eastern European States. Furthermore, they valued the chance to directly assess the state of the awareness and to discover the weaknesses but also the needs of these countries. They felt the need for stronger co-operation on both expert- and institutional level.

Theoretical session

It was good to start the theoretical part with an overview on the "lead shot situation" in Europe, given by N. BEINTEMA, and then to proceed with a very detailed and well-prepared presentation of M. TULP. The following speakers (N. KANSTRUP, F. LAMARQUE, and J. HARRADINE) were able to build on the information given before in order to provide a comprehensive overview.

Also F. PAVAT, General Manager of Browning Europe, was of great help in answering questions and informing the participants of the current market situation.

Practical session (clay shooting)

Problems with the shotguns and ammunition arose on the Thursday evening, when the Romanian Association claimed they have to pay a large unforeseen sum of money to the custom service as the shotguns were not declared properly by the Austrian exporter. Fortunately, it was possible to confront them with the copy of the export document FACE had received as fax, which clearly showed the correct way of declaration.

The practical session was opened by a short demonstration of the function of a shooting range to the participants, followed by the opportunity for everybody to practice trap with the provided shotguns. Later on, the panels were used to demonstrate various patterns of lead and steel shot in various distances. Explanations were given by the guest speakers.

The guest-speakers mentioned during the de-briefing that at the next time the practical part should be structured in advance by keeping always in mind the level of awareness and education and by calling the experts together to arrange matters like "who should teach what" and also by trying to table questions in advance to think about the suitable way to answer them.

Meeting the objectives

Due to the small number of target-countries represented in the Workshop, the initial aim to spread the information many of the eastern accession countries was not met. Nevertheless, the chance for building up networks for future co-operation in this process was highly valued.