



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère du Développement durable
et des Infrastructures

Administration de la nature et des forêts

Conclusions of the 8th Meeting of EU Hunting Directors

Urspelt (Luxembourg), 18-20 June 2018

Participating member states: Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden

Observers: CIC, FACE

The EU Hunting Directors,

Regarding the Management of Mesocarnivores and Wolves

- **Strongly underline** that a clear distinction has to be made between native species (e.g. the widely present red fox and returning wolf populations), invasive alien species (IAS) (e.g. raccoon dog) and species that are naturally expanding their geographic range (e.g. golden jackal) due to partly unknown reasons that require further research and adaptive management approaches.
- **Note** that the populations of golden jackal, red fox and wolf have increased and expanded their geographic range.
- **Recognize** that high populations of golden jackal, red fox and wolf can lead to human-wildlife conflicts, especially in and around urban areas.
- **Underline** that hunting permits for wolves listed presently under Annex IV of the Habitats Directive should be issued according to the criteria set out in this directive.
- **Take note** that in Luxembourg red fox hunting was banned on 1st April 2015 and that until now, 3 years after this hunting ban came into effect, no major problems have been encountered.
- **Acknowledge** the high importance not only of regularly updated and adapted population-level management plans, but also of participatory decision-making, information campaigns and an open dialog between all stakeholders.

Regarding Invasive Alien Species (IAS)

- **Acknowledge** that IAS are a serious problem worldwide and pose a threat to biodiversity.
- **Note** that increases in the breeding success of several bird species were observed shortly after the beginning of the raccoon dog removal programme in parts of Finland. The raccoon dog removal programme in Finland has been a success so far, but further commitment and resources are needed to guarantee its long-term success.

- **Underline** that local hunters can play an important role in IAS monitoring and early warning systems, which allow for a fast response from local hunters and other stakeholders.
- **Recognise** that hunters can play an important positive role in the management of certain IAS (e.g. Raccoon dog, North American mink, Grey squirrel).
- **Stress** that continued cooperation with hunters, as well as information activities are important in order to ensure an effective large-scale management approach to IAS.
- **Encourage** hunters, conservationists and all other relevant actors to continue to work together in the fight against IAS.
- **Stress** that the IAS Regulation brings extra costs to Member States/EU budget and should be implemented in a manner which includes hunters within their regular management to maximize efficiency.

Regarding African Swine Fever (ASF)

- **Acknowledge** that ASF remains a high threat to wild boar and the pig industry across Europe.
- **Underline** that surveillance, monitoring and management, which are appropriately financed by public and private sectors as well as the European Commission, are key elements in early detection of ASF, facilitating an immediate response. In addition, enforcement of strict biosecurity measures within and around domestic pig holdings, intensive searching and the removal of carcasses as well as awareness-raising are important elements.
- **Stress** that upon known contamination, zones must be designated. Involvement of all relevant stakeholders (which might include veterinarians, hunters, police, the army, farmers, scientific bodies and the media) is needed in part on a transboundary level for effective eradication and management purposes. Strong legislative measures to facilitate effective management with immediate effect should be put in place.

Regarding Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

- **Acknowledge** the importance of the Common Agricultural Policy as a crucial support mechanism for agriculture and the rural environment in Europe.
- **Underline** that the next CAP (post 2020) should play a better role in improving farmland biodiversity, including the status of small game species.
- **Recognize** the potential of the proposed new Eco-schemes under Pillar I and agri-environmental measures under Pillar II to improve biodiversity conservation by creating natural habitats for wide range of species.
- **Stress** that Member States' CAP Strategic Plans should be designed and implemented in a way that delivers a diversity of new ecological features at the landscape scale.
- **Encourage** Member States to create, where possible, win-win situations for farming, climate change mitigation, as well as the conservation of biodiversity, for example, through the creation of wild flower crop mixtures for bio-energy purposes instead of maize.

Regarding flyway management of migratory birds

- ***Stress*** that the conservation and management of migratory waterbirds should be carried out on the flyway scale and thus cannot be solved at country level. Cross-border flyway management plans, which use adaptive harvest management through cooperation between countries are of high importance.
- ***Acknowledge*** that knowledge gaps need to be filled in order to better understand population dynamics and the sustainable use of birds. A strong knowledge base, i.e. monitoring and harvest data, is the basis for effective conservation and management strategies.
- ***Emphasize*** that the key factors to have healthy waterbird populations are not only harvest management plans, but also include broader conservation issues such as habitat improvement and sometimes also predator management, especially IAS.
- ***Underline*** that the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) provides a legal framework to enable flyway management; however, more funding is needed.
- ***Encourage*** Member States to provide harvest and monitoring data for huntable birds.

Regarding Wildlife Management tools

- ***Inform*** about a possible EU-wide restriction on lead shot over wetlands and a proposal of the Swedish Chemical Agency to identify lead as a Substance of Very High Concern under the REACH Regulation.
- ***Point out*** that most Member States have not yet implemented the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS) in their national laws.
- ***Inform*** that bow hunting is increasing across Europe, especially among youth, and may be an effective management tool for conflict-causing urban wildlife populations and IAS.

Regarding the Atlas of European Mammals (2nd edition)

- ***Take note*** that the project is moving along nicely and good progress has been made.
- ***Agree*** to continue contributing to the Atlas of European Mammals by submitting data to their respective national coordinators. Further information, including a list of national coordinators, is available on www.european-mammals.org/.

Regarding One with Nature

- ***Inform*** that in 2021 the World Hunting Expo will be held in Budapest with the objective to reposition the sustainable use of natural resources as a means of nature conservation.

Regarding next meeting

- ***Take note*** that Finland has agreed to host the Hunting Directors' meeting in 2019 and Austria in 2020.
 - ***Thank*** those two countries for kindly offering to host the next meetings.
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