

GREEN WEEK

Workshop on Sustainable hunting within and around the Natura 2000 network

19th April 2002

1. Hunting and the Birds Directive

Hunting of wild birds is a legitimate activity under the Directive on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive). It is, however, an issue that arouses considerable controversy and emotion. The European Commission has frequently stated that hunting is a management issue at site level, and, *a priori*, is not to be excluded from Natura 2000 areas. However, many hunters continue to be concerned that the classification of Natura 2000 sites will eliminate the possibility to hunt in and around these areas.

The workshop provided a valuable forum for a constructive dialogue between different interests on this subject, using real life examples to learn about success as well as encountered difficulties.

2. Objectives

This workshop is part of a wider initiative of the Commission, the ‘Sustainable Hunting Initiative’. The objective of the workshop is to help identify *key principles* for hunting as a *well-regulated activity* within the management of Natura 2000 sites as well as in the wider countryside. It aimed to promote good (sustainable) hunting management practices (“win-win” situations) in and around those Natura 2000 sites where it takes place.

3. Main issues arising from Workshop

A number of main issues arose in the presentations and subsequent discussion. These included:

- i. Strategic importance of Natura 2000
- ii. Role of hunting (positive and negative)
- iii. Management planning and objective setting
- iv. People
- v. Communication
- vi. Role of science
- vii. Sustainable hunting: good practise elements
- viii. Wider countryside conservation issues

i. Strategic importance of Natura 2000

Natura 2000 sites (Special Protection Areas - SPAs under the Birds Directive and Special Areas of Conservation – SAC under the Habitats Directive) are of very high strategic importance for European nature conservation. They are one of the main means by which the European Union discharges its collective obligations under Community legislation, as well as under broader treaties (such as the Convention the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats – the Bern Convention).

The role of Natura 2000 has been described as being about people and their relationship with nature. Most sites require active management to maintain their conservation interests and generally this means sustaining traditional forms of management undertaken by local communities.

The importance of local communities to the delivery of nature conservation objectives on Natura 2000 sites is not always clearly understood. This is an important communication issue for governments and others to address.

Sites have cultural importance when they are *used* by local people, as indeed are most Natura 2000 sites. Within the objectives of the Directives however, it is clear that such use must be *sustainable* in order to be compatible with nature conservation objectives.

Sustainable use is generally an objective of local users (even if not clearly recognised or articulated in clear terms). This provides both a theoretical and an actual basis for “win-win” situations at local level, between local people and conservation managers.

ii. Role of hunting

Hunting is one of the many uses of Natura 2000 sites alongside other uses such as agriculture, fisheries, recreation *etc.* It is of high economic significance to many rural communities.

Hunters — with their interest in sustaining wildlife habitats and sites of importance for the production of quarry — are another lobby for the countryside: they should be seen as a ‘solution’ and not a ‘problem’.

The key task is how to integrate hunting with other uses/users/stakeholders to give multiple sustainable use within protected sites. That is, how to ensure not only that hunting is undertaken on a sustainable basis, but that it does not jeopardise other interests/conservation objectives.

iii. Management planning and objective setting

The Directives set broad objectives, with ‘on the ground delivery’ worked out locally in response to specific needs and in the light of detailed local conditions.

A fundamental aspect of the delivery of conservation objectives at site level is through site management planning. This provides a tool for co-operation between stakeholders and is a process through which ecological, social and economic issues can be worked out and resolved. Adequate management planning is crucial – indeed, lack of management planning can be highly problematic — leading to a ‘fear of the

unknown'. Unless conservation objectives are clear stated, there can be a tendency to 'fear the worse'. It is important therefore that governments and their agencies are proactive in establishing adequate management planning processes at site level.

It is important that conservation planning is seen as a dynamic *process* – not a static 'one-off' event. There is a need for regular feedback on 'on the ground' activities, whether this be monitoring of the features of conservation interest, or of activities that may potentially impact on those features or species.

Clearly, in order to establish good management regimes on sites, there needs to be clarity as to why sites are of importance for nature conservation: what are the reasons why they have been classified? This will then lead to clear thinking regarding what specific management actions are needed to conserve those interest features. Too often, we are 'woolly' about site conservation objectives, which can lead to unnecessary conflicts with site users.

Management planning and conflict resolution at site level is *not* an easy task. It *is* possible however, and there are numerous examples from around the world where it has successfully occurred. We need to learn from these cases and avoid re-invention of wheels'!

There is no *general* presumption against hunting in the Directives. However, there may be specific instances where hunting is incompatible with the conservation objectives of individual sites (or parts of sites). Examples may be where there is the occurrence of rare and disturbance-sensitive species alongside potential quarry species. Such instances can only be determined on a site by site basis.

iv. People (how to deliver?)

The effective management of sites of nature conservation importance is ultimately possible only through local consent. This is sometimes referred to as the co-management of sites through partnership.

In order to assist in the development of trust, the establishment of user-groups at a site level will aid in building engagement and in providing local inputs to the management planning process. The Workshop heard of particularly effective examples of this occurring in the management of SPAs for importance for waterbirds in Denmark.

The process of engaging local communities in the management of sites is well known and there is a considerable volume of guidance available both on this process, and regarding other relevant issues such as means of conflict resolution. The Ramsar Convention in particular has developed considerable technical guidance in this area¹, which is highly relevant to the good management of Natura 2000 sites. Governments and their conservation agencies need to be aware of this guidance and use it in practise.

¹ Ramsar Convention Bureau 2000. *Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands. No. 5. Establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigeous people's participation in the management of wetlands.* Ramsar Convention Bureau, Gland, Switzerland. 92 pp.

Ramsar Convention Bureau 2000. *Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands. No. 8. Frameworks for managing Wetlands of International Importance and other wetlands.* Ramsar Convention Bureau, Gland, Switzerland. 60 pp.

In areas where there is suspicion of motives and where trust needs to be developed further, there is a strong need to confidence-building measures – working with local communities. In this regard, there is a particular role for demonstration projects (perhaps using LIFE funding as a means of initiating actions). On the ground “real life” examples are always likely to be more effective at developing trust and awareness than are theoretical concepts. There is also a need for flexibility in delivery of objectives: there are often more than one way of achieving the same ultimate conservation goals.

We should always be aware that local co-working is aided by higher-level joint working between hunting and conservation representative bodies.

v. Communication of information

Communication is an **essential** area of conservation activity. It is not an option extra! Indeed, communication (clear and frequent) is a priority for all involved in the implementation of the Directives, especially the Member States (at all levels of government).

A lack of communication can, quite unnecessarily, lead to fear and hostility.

Different sectors need to talk *to* each other and not *at* each other. This ‘real communication’ takes time, requires honesty and transparency and is best achieved by working thorough well-respected local leaders. This should be strongly encouraged in all situations.

vi. The role of science: developing the knowledge base

Progress is best based on a sound scientific understanding of the issues at stake and not on subjective opinion which can differ significantly according to viewpoint.

Monitoring is essential at both site and wide (national scales). National scale monitoring is crucial to put site trends into broad contexts.

Local involvement in monitoring is very important – especially to capitalise on traditional knowledge aspects.

There is a need to better understand the impacts of hunting at population scales.

vii Sustainable hunting: some good practise elements

- There is a need for adequate refuges (in size and location) within each site where hunting occurs, with buffer zones around these to give flexibility.
- Lead gunshot should not be used in wetlands.
- High shooting skills should be promoted to reduce crippling rates.
- Good species identification skills need to be promoted within the hunting community.

viii. Wider countryside issues

All protected sites lie within the matrix of the 'wider (unprotected) countryside'. In these areas, land-use changes, especially as a consequence of agriculture, has had and is continuing to have major impacts on quarry species. These negative impacts are of concern to all those interested in wildlife: both from the shooting and traditional conservation communities.

Accordingly, there is significant potential for shared initiatives regarding the urgent need to reform the Common Agricultural Policy. Such shared initiatives will be important as multi-sector, joint lobbying is always stronger than more disparate activity.

In addressing the declines of quarry species, the Commissions Action Plans for Annex II species in unfavourable conservation status will be important once these are finalised and implemented. This is an urgent need to address the declines in these species.

Initiatives to eliminate bad hunting practises (*e.g.* illegal poisoning) and promote good practice (*e.g.* the initiative on the Somme presented to the Workshop), should be undertaken jointly between hunting and conservation bodies.

4. Ways forward

In order to make the best use of the wide range of expertise and perception of the audience, participants were asked to provide the Commission with a couple of key priorities to be developed in the future (see Annex I). Key conclusions from the workshop were that:

1. This workshop should be considered as part of a continuing process (perhaps leading to a Sustainable Hunting Charter?)
2. There is a need to learn from experience of others – with more information exchange (and good stories as well as bad ones....). This might involve the development of information exchange networks, and a range of formal and informal guidance.
3. More demonstration projects showing sustainable uses of Natura 2000 sites would be very useful (LIFE funded?)
4. Further legal interpretation of Article 6 desirable?
5. More communication, consultation, education, enforcement.
6. Improve monitoring and scientific basis.
7. Develop financing and recognition.
8. Participate constructively in CAP reform.
9. Develop guidelines for management plans for different types of sites.
10. Develop Sustainable Hunting charter and label, codes of good conduct.

5. Speakers

See details in Annex II.

6. Participants

There were about 80 participants. The list of registered participants is enclosed (Annex III).

Annex I: A list of problems and proposed solutions identified by Workshop participants

Workshop participants were requested, at the conclusion of the session, to leave a note of their perceived top three problems – and the solutions to these problems. The following represents an overall summary of these responses – arranged in rough priority order in terms of the number of times each was highlighted.

PROBLEM	SOLUTIONS
1. Mistrust (hunters vs. conservationists Conservationists vs. hunters; local Stakeholders vs. governments; hunters vs. governments, etc.)	* Communication – wide ranging, different levels, different media, etc. *Inclusive management planning at site level *Transparency of governmental processes/decision making *Consultation with local stakeholders *Joint working on projects
2. Misunderstanding (countries with worst conflicts have poorest record of communication from government agencies)	*Communication of objectives of Natura 2000 to local stakeholders is essential
3. Uncertainty regarding key concepts and terms used	*Better definitions of concepts and terms to guide management and implementation *Codes of good practice
4. Conflicts between Birds and Habitats Directives and other EU policies/legislation (especially CAP and agricultural regulations)	*Policy reform and coherence (especially CAP) *Engagement of hunters to create synergy with other sectors for CAP reform
5. Illegal activities in and around Natura 2000 sites.	*Better education and awareness rising of stakeholders – more communication *Better law enforcement
6. Uncertainty/lack of knowledge and understanding of species status (numbers/distribution) and of achievement of conservation objectives.	*Some/better/more scientific monitoring of sites *Monitoring linked to management planning *More studies of processes and populations *Action planning needed at species level (especially for Annex II species in unfavourable Conservation status)
7. Poor Management planning/lack of management planning	*Management planning at all Natura 2000 sites *Drafting of « model » management plans (covering a range of habitats/regions) to guide and inform development of management plans at real sites.

Annex II: Chairman, reporter and speakers

Chairman	Mr. Jean-Paul TARIS, Director-General, Station biologique de la Tour-du-Valat (France)
Rapporteur	Mr. David STROUD, Senior Ornithologist, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (UK)
Speakers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natura 2000 areas and hunting • Hunting in Natura 2000 sites: How to ensure that it is sustainable, lessons for the future • Natura 2000 sites: challenge and chance for hunters • The so-called 'Danish model' • Conclusions from the Workshop on 'Communicating about Natura 2000' 	<p><i>Nick HANLEY, Head of Unit, DG ENV.B2</i></p> <p><i>Juan PURROY, Facultad de Ciencias Biológicas y Ambientales Leon, on behalf of BirdLife International</i></p> <p><i>Jorge BERNAD DANZBERGER, on behalf of Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the E.U. (FACE)</i></p> <p><i>Henrik LYKKE SØRENSEN, Forester, Danish Forest & Nature Agency</i></p> <p><i>John Houston, Ecosystems, UK</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good hunting practices in Spain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience from LIFE projects - Discussion • Development of a protocol on hunting in Baie de Somme, France <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion • Conclusions & ways forward • Closing 	<p><i>Cristina ALVAREZ, Director, IPAE, Spain</i></p> <p><i>Juan-Jose SANCHEZ, Black Vulture in Majorca</i></p> <p><i>Yves Butel, MEP, Groupe pour l'Europe des démocraties et des différences (EDD), France</i></p> <p><i>Guillemette ROLLAND, Chargée de Mission Picardie Conservatoire de l'espace littoral, France</i></p> <p><i>David STROUD, Rapporteur</i></p> <p><i>Jean-Paul TARIS, Chairman</i></p>

Annex III: List of registered participants

<u>First name</u>	<u>Last name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Country</u>
Heidi	Andersson	WWF Finland	Finland
Manuel	Andrade	FACE	Belgium
Luigi	Balacco	Mondimpresa	Belgium
Giovanni	Bana	FEIN	Italy
Chris	Boomaars	BIM	Belgium
Italo	Buzzetti	Azienda Regionale delle Foreste	Italy
Gunay	Can	CERRAHPASA Medical School	Turkey
Gema	Castrillo	European Commission	European Commission (Belgium)
Javier	Celma	Ayuntamiento Zaragoza	Spain
Anne-Sophie	Chaplain		France
Alain	Cordonnier	Ministère de la Région Wallone	Belgium
Peter	Corley	N.A.R.G.C.	Ireland
Nicola	Crockford	RSPB- Birdlife International	United Kingdom
Marie	Dahlström	Ministry of Environment	Sweden
Christian	de Coune	Int. Falconry Association	Belgium
Owe	Fredriksson	Västebuttens-Kuriren	Sweden
Walter Alfons Maria	Galle	Ministry of the Flemish Community	Belgium
Ignat	Gheoghe	BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY	Romania
Alfonso	Gutierrez	MECOMAT/ ATECMA	Spain
Pavel	Hell	Forestry Research Institute	Slovak Republic
Birgit	Hell	DBV	Belgium
Fernando	Hervas Soriano	DG Env. 2	European Commission (Belgium)
John	Houston	Ecosystems Ltd.	Belgium
Julian	Hughes	RSPB	United Kingdom
Sannamari	Kääriäinen	Lapland Regional Environment Centre	Finland
Marita	Karling	Nature Link International G.E.I.E	Belgium
James Andrew	Kelly	Environmental Institute	Ireland
Suzanne	Kolare	Swedish EPA	Sweden
Soren	Korsholm	Danish Forest & Nature Agency	Denmark
Mia	Lähteenmäki	European Commission	European Commission (Belgium)
Yves	Lecocq	FACE	Belgium
Hannu	Lehtonen	Metsahallitus	Finland
Päivi	Lundvall	Lapland Regional Environment Centre	Finland
Maria	Macias Toyos	European Commission	European Commission (Belgium)
Gabor	Magyar	Ministry of Environment	Hungary
Maguy	Malfait	Amis de la Nature	Belgium
Antonios	Mazaris	University of the Aegean	Greece
Michel	Métais	LPO	France
Marcella	Minieri	TECLA	Belgium
Patrick	Morel	IAF	Belgium
Lucinia	Moreno Gomez	Excma.Diputac. Prov; cuenca	Spain
Ulrika	Nygren	DG Env.	European Commission (Belgium)
Aneta	Obara	Eastern Poland Euro-Office	Belgium
Eduard	Osieck	Birdlife/ Vogelbescherming Nederland	Netherlands
Richard	Pain	Rumshott Estate Ltd	United Kingdom
Clairie	Papazoglou	Birdlife International	Belgium
Olivier	Patrimonio	ECOSPHERE	France
Ludger	Pott-Bruening	Landkreir Emrland	Germany
George	Predoiu	ICAS	Romania
Maud	Romanin	European commission	European Commission (Belgium)

Jörg	Roos	WWF Belgium	Belgium
Marcos	Rubio	Madrid's Regional Office	Belgium
Dieter	Schramm	CIC	Belgium
Niels Henrik	Simonsen	Danmarks Jaegerforbund	Denmark
Peter	Symens	Natuurpunt	Belgium
Anne	Teller	European Commission	European Commission (Belgium)
Emmanuel	Thiry	Fédération Régionale Parcs	France
Patrick	Verté	University of Freiburg	Luxembourg
Natacha	Vivier		France
Goddert	von Wülfig	Deutscher Jagdschutz-Verband	Germany
Michela	Zanone Poma	Consorsio Parco Regionale della Valle del Lambro	Italy

