

23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting, 26 November 2024  
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**SUBJECT: Recommendations of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Task Force on the Recovery of Birds**

During the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Task Force, held respectively on 28/06/2024<sup>1</sup> and 08/11/2024<sup>2</sup>, the Institute for Game and Wildlife Research (IREC) presented the scientific consortium recommendations for hunting management practices and for non-hunting actions for 30 migratory species in non-secure conservation status. The recommendations for hunting are based on a rapid assessment of the risk of (un)sustainability of hunting<sup>3</sup> for 30 species according to a methodology<sup>4</sup> endorsed in the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Task Force of 19/04/2024<sup>5</sup>. IREC also presented draft recommendations for non-hunting actions<sup>6</sup>. On the latter, members of the Task Force asked for more time to send additional comments; the recommendation on non-hunting actions will therefore be presented in the NADEG meeting of spring 2025.

The recommendations rely on the application of the precautionary principle and support Member States to comply with Article 7 of the Birds Directive (*Hunting should comply with the principles of wise use and ecologically balanced control of the species of birds concerned. This practice should be compatible as regards the population of these species*). The assessment of the sustainability of hunting is therefore a necessary preliminary step to establish if hunting is sustainable before opening a hunting season. A general approach to implement article 7 was represented in a flowchart and discussed in NADEG in 2021<sup>7</sup>. The comments received showed broad support for the prioritisation criteria. Short term actions include a coordinated approach to sustainable hunting based on the assessment (for example through an Adaptive Harvest Management Mechanism), together with other key actions identified (e.g. habitat management) and substantive efforts in monitoring species abundance and demographic parameters (survival, productivity), as well as harvest. When this is not the case, hunting cannot be considered to be sustainable.

Summary of the Commission's recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> See [minutes](#)

<sup>2</sup> Minutes will be uploaded in due course in [Circabc](#)

<sup>3</sup> See [first](#) and [second](#) batch of assessments

<sup>4</sup> See sustainability [document](#)

<sup>5</sup> See [minutes](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Conclusions](#) of workshop on non-hunting actions

<sup>7</sup> See Document [NADEG 21-12-03](#)

Due to incomplete data on harvest, the assessment carried out by IREC was only possible for 27 of the 30 species considered<sup>8</sup>:

- o for 18 of them (67%) there is no indication that hunting is not sustainable.
- o for 9 species (cf. table below), on the basis of the data available, the current harvest levels of some of their populations are likely unsustainable. The following 4 species should be subject to an Adaptive Harvest Management Mechanism and to a temporary hunting moratorium until the system is in place: Eurasian Wigeon, Common Pochard, Common Quail, Redwing. The following 3 species should be subject to at least 50 % hunting take reduction: Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Common Teal. The following 2 species should be subject to at least 50 % less offtake, taking into account both derogation and hunting: Great Black Backed Gull, European Herring Gull.

The IREC-led consortium and the Commission recommended to extend the adaptive harvest mechanism<sup>9</sup> beyond the Turtle Dove to five other species as indicated in the table, starting in 2025 by the species with the highest priority: Common Pochard, Eurasian Wigeon and Common Quail.

Questions for discussion:

1. Do NADEG members agree with the recommendations that a temporary hunting moratorium should be implemented until the Adaptive Harvest Management Mechanism is in place for Eurasian Wigeon, Common Pochard, Common Quail, Redwing?
2. Do NADEG members agree with the recommendations to apply a 50 % hunting take reduction for Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Common Teal, until a better assessment is possible?
3. Do NADEG members agree to apply a 50 % less offtake, taking into account both hunting and derogations combined, for Great Black Backed Gull and European Herring Gull?

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<sup>8</sup> See footnote 3

<sup>9</sup> See [TFRB document](#) for the selection of 3 species for AHMM



Species	Context information <i>LC = least concern, VU=Vulnerable, NT=Near Threatened Case 1=survival is a critical/important factor for the population dynamics and hunting plays a critical/important role Case 2 = survival is a critical/important factor for the population dynamics and hunting does not plays a critical/important role Case 3= survival (and hunting) is not a critical/important factor for the population dynamics Case 5= survival (and hunting) is a critical/important factor but the role of hunting is impossible to assess</i>	Suggested Commission's recommendation <i>AHMM= Adaptive Harvest Management Mechanism</i>	EU countries where hutable
<b>Eurasian Wigeon</b> (2 populations: Western Siberia & NE Europe/NW Europe and W Siberia & NE Europe/Black Sea & Mediterranean)	Case 3 IUCN Global: LC IUCN Europe: LC Breeding pop. – 50% decrease in 3 generations (12 y) AND Wintering pop. – 17% decrease in 12 years Degradation of population structure (age + sex ratios) – population model needed to discern role of vital rates (fecundity vs survival) in population growth	→ <b>AHMM in place in 2025; no hunting until then</b> (based on precautionary principle to comply with article 7 of the Birds Directive)	AT, BE, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LV, MT, PT (& PTAC), RO, SE
<b>Common Pochard</b> (2 populations: North-east Europe/North-west Europe and Central & NE Europe/Black Sea & Mediterranean )	Case 3 IUCN Global: VU IUCN Europe: VU Breeding pop. – 30% decrease in 3 generations (16 y) AND Wintering pop. – moderate decrease / stable (Wetlands Int.) Degradation of population structure (age + sex ratios)	→ <b>AHMM in place in 2025; no hunting until then</b> (based on precautionary principle to comply with article 7 of the Birds Directive)	AT, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SK
<b>Common Quail</b> (2 populations: Western and Central Flyway) –	Case 3 IUCN Global: LC IUCN Europe: NT Breeding pop—25% in 3 generations (10 years) AND Substantial offtake outside EU. Lack of accuracy of population estimates.	→ <b>AHMM in place in 2025; no hunting until then</b> (based on precautionary principle to comply with article 7 of the Birds Directive)	GR, FR, HR, IT, MT, PT, ESIC, RO, PTAC, AT, BG, CY, ES

		Need to agree on standardized survey and monitoring methods across the range, and the implementation of a synchronized census across the flyway.	
<b>Redwing</b> (N Europe/S Europe population)	Case 3 IUCN Global: NT IUCN Europe: LC Breeding pop. – 19% decrease in 3 generations (10 y) AND Breeding mostly outside EU, so unable to influence productivity No consensus on conservation state	→ <b>AHMM in place in 2026/2027; no hunting until then</b> (based on precautionary principle to comply with article 7 of the Birds Directive)	GR, FR, MT, PT, CY, ES, RO
<b>Northern Shoveler</b> (2 populations : North-west & Central Europe and W Siberia, NE & E Europe / S Europe & West Africa)	Case 3 IUCN Global: LC IUCN Europe: LC Breeding pop. – 19% decrease in 3 generations (14 y) BUT Wintering pop. – moderate increase (Wetlands Int.) Poor estimation of bag size, and population estimate	→ <b>at least 50 % less hunting</b> until a better assessment is possible. Build knowledge and <b>research programmes</b> (including comprehensive population census winter 2025/2026)	AT, CY, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LV, MT, PT, RO
<b>Northern Pintail</b> (North West population)	Case 5 (could be moved to Case 2 or 3) IUCN Global: LC IUCN Europe: VU Breeding pop. – 38% decrease in 3 generations (17 y) BUT Wintering pop. – moderate increase (Wetlands Int.) Poor estimation of bag size, and population estimate (No knowledge if fecundity or survival is most critical)	→ <b>at least 50 % less hunting</b> for NW population until a better assessment is possible.) Build knowledge and <b>research programmes</b> (including comprehensive population census winter 2025/2026)	AT, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LV, MT, PT, RO
<b>Common Teal</b> (2 populations: North West and Siberia & NE)	Case 3 IUCN Global: LC IUCN Europe: LC	→ <b>at least 50 % less hunting</b> for both populations until a better	GR, FI, FR, HR, IE, UK, RO, DE, DK, EE, ES, AT,

Europe/Black Sea & Mediterranean )	Breeding pop. – 21% decrease in 3 generations (13 year) BUT Wintering pop. – moderate increase Population size poorly estimated	assessment is possible. Reassess population size	BE, BG, CY, PT, SE, PL, PTAC, IT, LT, LV, MT
<b>Great Black backed Gull</b> (North West populations)	Case 2 (previously considered case 5) IUCN Global: LC IUCN Europe: LC Long lived species Significant role of killing through derogations	→ <b>at least 50 % less offtake (hunting and derogations combined). Monitor derogation offtake closely</b> , and assess the combined population effects with hunting on a regular basis to ensure sustainable management of the species.	DE, EE, FI EU countries with derogations: BE, DE, DK, ES, FI, IE, PT, SE
<b>European Herring Gull</b> (North and North West Europe)	Case 1 (previously considered case 5) IUCN Global: LC IUCN Europe: LC Breeding pop. - Overall decline (– 25% decrease in 3 generations; 37 y) but “argentatus” subspecies uncertain. Population largely expanded and increased over 20 <sup>th</sup> century, so baseline unclear (deviation from flowchart requiring no hunting may be justified) Significant role of killing through derogations Colonial and very long lived, large impact of adult mortality	→ <b>AHMM in place in 2026/2027; until then, reduce total off-take (hunting and derogations combined) by at least 50 %</b> and assess the combined population effects with hunting on a regular basis to ensure sustainable management of the species.	FI, SE, DE, EE EU countries with derogations : CZ, DE, FI, HR, LT, SE, BE, IE, NL, PT