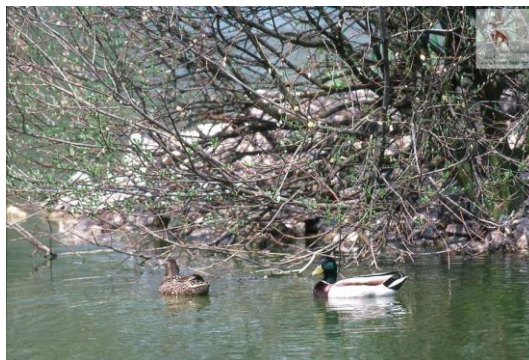




SPECIAL SESSION



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Ensuring sustainable waterbird harvest

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Abstract

Waterbird hunting is a long established and accepted tradition in Europe, e.g. provisional estimates suggest in excess of 5 million ducks are harvested annually across the continent. Equally well established and accepted is the concept of wise use and sustainability. This is enshrined in a number of relevant directives and agreements, most notably the EU Birds Directive and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). Despite this, some European countries lack a robust system for estimating harvest rates, and there is no centralised flyway-scale management system for collating harvest and other population data and ensuring sustainability of harvests.

During recent decades, the increasing population trends of most huntable waterbirds have provided a proxy confirmation of sustainability. However, more recently, the trends of a number of huntable waterbirds have deteriorated, some to the point that they have been listed as globally threatened by IUCN, e.g. Common Pochard. For such species, there is a legal requirement to set up Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) systems in order for hunting to continue. Nevertheless, unquantified levels of hunting continue and no attempts to assess sustainability are being made.

The reasons for this are complex. However, the *AEWA Guidelines on Sustainable Harvest of Migratory Waterbirds* demonstrate that the requirements of AHM systems are not technically complicated and can be readily implemented. This is demonstrated by the significant progress made with managing goose harvests by AEWA's European Goose Management Platform. The main barriers to progress are predominantly political, arising partly from insufficient trust and cooperation between stakeholders.

The aim of this workshop is to bring together these stakeholders to appraise the current status of huntable waterbirds and the state of harvest management, in order to determine what collaborative steps can now be taken to improve flyway-scale assessments of harvest sustainability, such that harvests can continue without posing a threat to the conservation of waterbirds.

Who should attend this special session / workshop?

Scientists/biologists, politicians, hunting representatives, etc.

How many participants?

Fifty to Eighty persons

Organisation

The session will be organised around 6 invited presentations, followed by a roundtable. The invited talks will comprise the Keynote talk by Jesper Madsen (Getting started with adaptive management of migratory waterbirds in Europe: the challenge of multifaceted interests) then speeches by major players in the scientific, administrative and management spheres involved in the implementation of waterbird harvest, essentially in Europe.

By the end of the session it is hoped that a consensus may arise on the benefits that could be expected from more harmonized and collaborative data collection and harvest management within the waterbird flyways, and momentum towards the setting up of such schemes.

- *Jesper Madsen* “Getting started with adaptive management of migratory waterbirds in Europe: the challenge of multifaceted interests” 30’
- Legal requirements 15’ (*speaker to be confirmed*)
- How AEWA supports sustainable management 15’ (*speaker to be confirmed*)
- *Fred Johnson (USGS)* “Harvest Management of Taiga Bean Geese in the Face of Demographic Uncertainty” 20’
- *David Scalan (FACE) & Szabolcs Nagy (Wetlands International)* on the status of Annex II species, the type of data available and what we still need (couple slides provided by Matthieu Guillemain on duck bag collection schemes) 20’
- *James H. Williams (Aarhus University)* on managing geese and the influence of different hunter typologies: hunting behaviour and motivations of Danish goose hunters 20’

Round table

Length of time

3 hours