



The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

Defra Lead Shot Regulations 1999 Compliance: Steering Group Meeting 1

Lecture Theatre, WWT Slimbridge

Thursday 15th January 2009, 11am-1pm

Minutes

Attendees:

[redacted] Defra
[redacted] Defra
[redacted] Defra
John Harradine- BASC
Alison Loram- BASC

Ian Carter- Natural England
Ruth Cromie- WWT
Michelle O'Brien- WWT
Pippa Hardman- WWT

1. Apologies: none

2. The Steering Group: membership and operation.

- All agreed that SG meetings are to be held every 6 months or as and when needed to coincide with milestones. All agreed RSPB need not join the SG per se but act as a corresponding member with minutes from SG meetings being copied to Dave Hoccom/Jeff Knott. Action: [redacted]

3. Defra – contractual issues.

- [redacted] raised issues of invoicing and payment and suggested an invoice at end of every milestone. [redacted] agreed and suggested a brief update (side A4) to accompany each invoice. Action: [redacted]

4. Milestones- overview of timing

- [redacted] provided SG members with a summary of the time scale for the milestones (attached).
- [redacted] raised a point from inception meeting about the tight time constraint for the winter 2 game dealer survey - more time may be needed for post mortem and lead analyses. [redacted] acknowledged the point and advised to raise this if necessary nearer the time.

5. Milestones 1- progress and planned work

Database of game dealers & purchase of game and sample size

- [redacted] asked about the number of birds per region being sampled. [redacted] said ~40 per region were being purchased with the hope of getting 30 birds which had shot in them (previous game dealer survey found shot in ~70% of bought birds). [redacted] noted that it will be good to get X-ray results soon to confirm the appropriateness of this sample size. Should Defra require a larger sample for winter 2 timing could be an issue with the current end of contract scheduled for 31 March 2010. Sample size would be reviewed for winter 2 after results from winter 1.
- [redacted] asked if it was three ducks per game dealer. [redacted] stated it was more like five due to number of dealers available and need to get 30 birds per region with shot in them. [redacted] + [redacted] confirmed purchases had been made from about 55-60 outlets so far (although many 100s had been contacted).
- [redacted] raised the possibility that birds might be 'shot to order' (it is estimated that 15-20% of birds may fall into this category) although this appears to represent the normal consumer/market practices.
- [redacted] asked about being able to detect the shot. [redacted] mentioned most ducks come ready prepared. [redacted] stressed the need for being sure which shot were fatal – important given that these may have been removed during the preparation e.g. shot in the head and neck regions. This would be an obvious limitation to the study.
- [redacted] raised issue of birds being shipped a long way. [redacted] gave example of eastern England region duck may come from Yorkshire area. [redacted] thought not to be a problem as long as not from other countries, e.g. Scotland. [redacted] added it was realistic representation of the consumer/market in wild game.

- [redacted] requested to record origin of duck to compare commercial game dealer with local butcher due to probable difference in source and possible awareness levels. [redacted] and [redacted] confirmed that these data are recorded.
- [redacted] raised the issue of the London region i.e. not locally sourced duck. [redacted] asked if everyone would be happy with eight regions not nine. All agreed. [redacted] asked about nine duck already obtained from London area (known to be shot locally) to be added as extra data for the South East region and not to be discarded. All agreed.
- [redacted] summarised about 80% duck purchased for winter 1 so far and raised point of putting suppliers on a generalised map. [redacted] said that personal data should not be published; no list of names released just a map with general markers within the regions.
- Game dealer issues: [redacted] asked if there will be a bias due to the buying times of winter 1 vs winter 2. [redacted] thought not. BASC had previously responded to [redacted] on this point - by January in terms of commercial shoots, organised days are likely to be largely pheasant-orientated with one duck drive rather than a whole day of duck shooting. In this situation, shooters are likely to be carrying lead ammunition for the pheasant and *may* be more likely to use it for shooting duck as it's only a one-off drive. If the purchasing for the 2 winters was a comparison between purchasing in early winter e.g. October vs late winter i.e. January there might be a difference - however a comparison between December/January purchasing is unlikely to show much difference.

Shoot provider data base

- BASC confirmed that they would conduct the shoot provider survey in addition to the BASC member survey as this was likely to get a higher response rate than WWT conducting the work.
- To date, [redacted] confirmed that the data so far consisted of a BASC internal list. The next step was to contact the Country Land and Business Association and Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust.

6. Milestone 2 - Progress and planned work

BASC members' questionnaire.

- [redacted] informed the SG that the survey must be approved by the Defra Surveys Unit which usually takes four weeks. It was noted that this had not been built into the schedule.
- [redacted] went through the questions. [redacted] felt the language sounded too confrontational and should be designed to get the reader to think not to interrogate - using the questionnaire as an educational tool in itself. Moreover [redacted] felt the structure with many boxes needed changing. [redacted] and [redacted] thought the questionnaire should attempt to estimate the level of compliance and awareness in the shooting/BASC community and not act as an educational awareness tool. [redacted] agreed. [redacted] added the results of the questionnaire alone are a small part of the whole project.
- [redacted] explained that BASC have previously used the type of layout of the questionnaire for their members and have shown 50%+ response rates (up to 70%) after follow ups. [redacted] pointed out that confidentiality issues mean that Defra is unlikely to allow follow up requests but agreed to check this during her liaison with the surveys unit. [redacted] said response rate therefore will not be so good (20-25%). Action [redacted].
- [redacted] would amend the questionnaire and circulate a revised draft to SG members. [redacted] added any other feedback to go to [redacted]. Action All and [redacted].
- [redacted] asked if a four week delay getting the questionnaire approved by Defra would affect the results. [redacted] thought not a problem if done before the end of March.
- [redacted] confirmed the questionnaire would be a postal survey.
- [redacted] would engage one of the Defra social scientists in the surveys. Action [redacted]
- Final questionnaire - time and extent of circulation. [redacted] suggested a teleconference within a month to agree on final version. All agreed. Defra has facilities to host teleconference. Action [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted]
- [redacted] thanked [redacted] for the presentation and putting the questionnaire together at short notice.

Shoot provider questionnaire (production and analysis)

- [redacted] suggested landowner awareness would need a more sensitive approach.

- [redacted] queried the time scale for the shoot provider questionnaire. [redacted] stated it was intended to be the same as BASC member's questionnaire i.e. ready for March.

Winter 1 x-raying, post mortem examinations and shot analysis.

- [redacted] informed the SG that the systems are in place for the X-raying and post mortem examinations will begin once all the duck have been purchased.
- [redacted] asked if each individual pellet will be analysed. [redacted] confirmed that they will... [redacted] made SG aware that there are a few Teflon-coated lead products on the market which are illegal in the shooting of wildfowl in England; those carrying out the post mortem analysis may need to bear this in mind.
- [redacted] asked how sensitive the test for lead is. [redacted] would determine the sensitivity of the test i.e. upper and lower limits. Action: [redacted].
- [redacted] asked about previously shot-in non lethal pellets from outside England. [redacted] described the pathology associated with recently shot-in pellets vs pellets older than e.g. 1 week. Birds from the continent with pellets are likely to be less of a problem than e.g. birds possibly shot legally in Scotland just prior to being killed in England.
- [redacted] made SG aware that the presentation of the data for the report needs to be considered now. [redacted] added the take home message must be clear i.e. the number of birds shot illegally with lead. [redacted] added report needs to be careful not to cause an adverse reaction and results should be assigned just to the regions not named dealers. [redacted] commented that, given that BASC is part of this study, non-compliance must not be casually associated with BASC members i.e. there's a need for very careful reporting and language used in outputs broader than the final report itself.
- [redacted] asked about the protocol for post mortem examinations appreciating that there may be discrepancies between different veterinary pathologists. [redacted] will be working with [redacted] at WWT (who has conducted wildfowl pathology for >35 years). Together they would formulate a post mortem protocol. Action [redacted].

7. Further Ahead

Milestone 3 – Ongoing consideration of winter 2 sample size

- [redacted] suggested at the end of July winter 1 analysis will indicate sample size needed for winter 2, all agreed. Also if a bigger sample size was needed it may cause further problems with the end date not allowing sufficient time for analysis as previously mentioned. [redacted] again said to raise the time constraint issue when winter 1 results are available to steer winter 2 plans..

8. AOB

- [redacted] raised the need for a risk assessment addressing various issues such as:
 - Cold weather hunting restrictions affecting shooting & buying of duck
 - Availability of ducks being affected by this research in itself
 - Delays in analysis with number of pellets to examine
 - Time limit with the last milestone
 - Confidentiality of data
 - Lack of response to questionnaires
 - Obtaining land owner addresses
 - Notifiable disease outbreaks affecting hunting activities or even work at WWT Slimbridge in the event of an avian influenza outbreak.

Action RC.

- [redacted] told the group that following a previous game dealer survey, concerns were raised that the information gathered could lead to criminal proceedings. There was general consensus that given that no individual should be traceable this was not an issue. Every care should be taken to prevent traceability of respondents and game dealers. Data protection (and the compliance with both DPA and Defra policies) will be born in mind throughout the life of the project. [redacted] raised the issue of taking care to ensure that the project could not be criticised for obtaining ducks by deceit.

9. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 3rd July, Location and time TBC (Slimbridge or Defra, Bristol).
With a questionnaire teleconference within a month.