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AND NATURAL HABITATS

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**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
BERN CONVENTION'S
CODE OF CONDUCT ON HUNTING AND IAS**

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1 WHY THIS REPORT

Following the adoption of the Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS¹ during the 33rd Standing Committee of the Bern Convention in December 2013, FACE together with IAF developed an initiative to report on activities that each of the respective organisations are implementing to combat the threat of Invasive Alien Species and more specifically what was done to meet the requirements mentioned under each of the seven Principles mentioned in the Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS.

With this document we wish to present activities that we are undertaking on this important topic and to show that both organisations and its members are considering this topic of high importance, as invasive alien species no matter if introduced intentionally or unintentionally can pose a risk to the biodiversity and environment in general. However, it is also important to stress the fact that hunting as a pathway of introduction of invasive alien species is decreasing, and that other pathways of introduction.

As this is the first report on this specific Code, broader description is provided for each Principle and activities explained in detail to give a comprehensive description of the situation. It must also be taken into consideration that each Member State has different legislation and slightly different local initiatives, depending on their local situation and requirements.

FACE and FACE Members from Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Slovenia contributed to this report. While for Principle 5, which extensively deals with falconry, a detailed report was provided by IAF.

2 FINLAND

General overview

Finland's National Strategy on Invasive Alien Species was completed in April 2012. The purpose of the strategy is to prevent damages and risks caused by invasive alien species (IAS) in the Finnish nature and to improve the sustainable use of natural resources, livelihoods and well-being of the society and people. The strategy was adopted by a Government Resolution on March 15, 2012. The proposal for Finland's National Strategy on Invasive Alien Species was prepared in a comprehensive working group and additional experts, involving more than 100 people.

THE LIST OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES OCCURRING IN FINLAND:

Mammals (Mammalia)

- North American beaver *Castor canadensis*
- Domestic cat (only when feral) *Felis silvestris catus*
- [American] mink *Mustela vison* (particularly harmful invasive alien species)
- Brown rat *Rattus norvegicus*
- Raccoon dog *Nyctereutes procyonoides*
- European rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Principle 1: Avoid the intentional and unintentional release of new invasive alien game species

Both legal and illegal introductions are covered in Finnish legislation (primarily Hunting Act, Veterinary Diseases Act, Animal Protection Act and The Nature Conservation Act).

In case of huntable alien species or alien mammal or bird species, the permission to import or introduce them is given by the Finnish Wildlife Agency, (evidence is based on assessment). (Hunting Act, Article 42).

1

The Nature Conservation Act prohibits the introduction of non-native animals and plants (those not mentioned in the Hunting Act).

Principle 2: Avoid intentional and unintentional introduction and spread of invasive alien plants for game food and shelter

Mainly native plant species are used for feeding game animals in Finland. When non-native species are used, they are not allowed to be introduced outside built-up areas or fields. (Nature Conservation Act, article 43)

Principle 3: Use alien species for restocking only if non-invasive or introduced in ancient historic times

The Hunting Act allows the restocking of native game species and the introduction or stocking of native and non-native species as long as it is performed in accordance with veterinary and nature conservation legislation.

Principle 5: Practice animal-aided hunting minimizing the risk of escapes and of impacting native species

Not relevant in Finland. Animal-aided hunting (excluding hunting with dogs) is very minimal. Only ferrets are used in small scale for solving the wild rabbit (European rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*) problems in Helsinki metropolitan area, and there is practically no falconry in Finland.

Principle 6: Consider eradication and control as essential management tools to tackle IAS and support their implementation also when targeting game species

It is important to educate hunters so that they are aware of the negative influence and consequences of introducing invasive alien species.

The Finnish Hunters' Association and Finnish Wildlife Agency have spread information on IAS species and their eradication (especially Mink and Raccoon dog) in magazines and on the internet. The Finnish Hunters' Association carried out an educational project (Invasive Alien Predator Project) for hunters a couple of years ago. In Finland, many hunting clubs organize Mink and Raccoon dog eradication competitions for their members and some of the clubs give monetary compensation for every killed mink or Raccoon dog.

Finnish Wildlife Agency co-ordinated an EU- LIFE+ project called "Management of invasive Raccoon Dogs (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) in the north-European countries (MIRDINEC)" in 2010-2013.

Invasive alien species, such as the Raccoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) and the Mink (*Mustela vison*), which have a negative impact on other species, can be removed immediately (of course within the hunting seasons of the species). The Finnish Wildlife Agency created a management plan for the Raccoon dog in 2011.

Finland's National Strategy on Invasive Alien Species calls for the immediate removal of the non-native species, especially invasive ones. According to the strategy, the North American beaver (*Castor canadensis*) should be eradicated from Western Lapland in 2013–2016 and the Raccoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) from Western archipelago (Vaasa region) to prevent them from spreading to Sweden and Norway.

Principle 7: Collaborate in monitoring and surveillance programmes on IAS

Hunters can participate in voluntarily courses and training sessions, and the information they gain ensures a solid knowledge base about the environment, natural processes, as well as the species and their behaviour. The Finnish Hunters' Association and Finnish Wildlife Agency have spread information on IAS species and their eradication (especially Mink and Raccoon dog) in magazines, on the internet, and at their courses and training sessions.

Every year, Finnish hunters participate in game counts and game monitoring. During these counts, also species not previously observed are found, which is very important when it comes to invasive alien species. Hunters also spend countless hours walking in the forests and surrounding areas and engage in biodiversity work. So, possible changes are quickly noticeable.

3 FRANCE

Principle 1: Avoid intentional and unintentional releases of new invasive alien game species

Si l'introduction d'espèces de gibier originaires d'autres contrées a eu une certaine vogue après-guerre et les années qui suivirent (Colin de Virginie, Colin de Californie, Sylvilagus...), cela n'est plus du tout le cas aujourd'hui. La Loi interdit d'ailleurs l'introduction dans le milieu naturel d'espèces non indigènes, notamment à des fins cynégétiques (L411-3).

Concernant les appelants vivants utilisés pour la chasse du gibier d'eau ou autre, seules sont autorisées les espèces chassables (donc sont interdites les espèces exotiques). De plus, en cas d'appelants hybrides et pour éviter leur fuite dans le milieu naturel, une obligation d'éjointage de tout appelant est imposée.

Principle 2: Avoid intentional and unintentional introduction and spread of invasive alien plants for game food and shelter

Les plantations de haies, de buissons, de cultures à gibier et jachères faune sauvage etc..., lorsqu'elles sont encadrées par les Fédérations de chasseurs, se font préférentiellement avec des espèces autochtones, mais il peut exister encore çà et là l'emploi de certaines « exotiques » (ex : Phacélie, cotoneaster...). Cela dit, la réglementation sur l'interdiction d'espèces de flore exotiques peut autoriser de telles espèces dans les domaines agricole, forestier et piscicole.

Principle 3: Use alien species for restocking only if non-invasive or introduced in ancient historic times

Cf point 1 ci-dessus

Principle 4: Select sources for restocking from populations with appropriate genetic and disease management

Sauf pour le Lapin et le Grand gibier, dont l'introduction est soumise à autorisation du préfet, le repeuplement à des fins cynégétiques avec des espèces chassables (indigènes) est libre. La plupart des Fédérations de Chasseurs développent auprès des chasseurs une politique visant à encadrer les pratiques de repeuplement par les chasseurs, notamment quant à l'origine et la qualité sanitaire des animaux utilisés : chartes ou conventions de repeuplement conditionnant les aides de la Fédération, fourniture d'animaux de qualité...

Récemment, afin d'éliminer progressivement les gènes Chukar des Perdrix rouges élevées en France pour le repeuplement, gènes issus d'anciens croisement entre Perdrix rouges et Perdrix chukar (exotiques), un consortium d'organismes cynégétiques (ONCFS, FNC, IMPCF), de syndicats d'éleveurs de gibier etc...ont mis au point avec un laboratoire de génétique un test d'évaluation de la présence de ces gènes au niveau individuel. Les éleveurs pourront désormais « apurer » leurs souches de ces gènes Chukar.

Par ailleurs, des études scientifiques sont menées (ONCFS notamment) pour évaluer sur le terrain la diffusion et l'impact des canards colvert lâchés pour la chasse.

Principle 5: Practice animal-aided hunting minimizing the risk of escapes and of impacting native species

La France ne compte que quelques centaines de fauconniers et très peu d'éleveurs de rapaces. La détention et la production de rapaces de chasse est limitée aux seuls fauconniers (hors voleries).

Les progrès et la généralisation de la télémétrie, le baguage ou « puçage » obligatoires des oiseaux de proie limitent les risques de pertes d'oiseaux hybrides ou exotiques.

Un fichier des rapaces de chasse est géré par l'ONCFS (Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage). Un réseau d'alerte, via internet, en cas de perte ou vol de rapaces a été mis en place par l'ANFA (Association Nationale des Fauconniers et Autoursiers). Cette association, membre de l'IAF (Association internationale de fauconnerie) a adopté le code de conduite élaboré par cette dernière en matière d'EEE

Principle 6: Consider eradication and control as essential management tools to tackle IAS and support their implementation also when targeting game species

Les chasseurs français sont effectivement sensibilisés au problème des espèces exotiques. Avec les piégeurs également, ils sont investis sur le terrain, en relation avec leurs fédérations, dans de nombreuses actions de contrôle d'espèces exotiques : de longue date pour ce qui est du ragondin et du rat musqué par exemple. Mais aussi pour le Raton laveur, le Chien viverrin. En Aquitaine, les Fédérations de chasseurs et les associations de piégeurs participent activement au Plan national du Vison d'Europe par la lutte contre le Vison d'Amérique.

Les pièges utilisés sont homologués par les Autorités et l'un des critères d'homologation concerne la souffrance animale.

Nombre de Fédérations de chasseurs engagent leurs chasseurs dans les opérations de contrôle d'espèces végétales exotiques, notamment dans les zones humides (Jussie par exemple).

Récemment, le Ministre de l'Ecologie a classé pour 3 ans comme espèce chassable la Bernache du Canada, afin d'évaluer l'intérêt de la chasse pour éradiquer cette espèce. D'autres EEE comme par exemple l'Ouette d'Egypte sont envisagées.

Principle 7: Collaborate in monitoring and surveillance programmes on IAS

Les organisations de chasseurs (ONCFS, FNC, FDC) développent avec leurs professionnels et leurs chasseurs des programmes de suivi des EEE (Erismature rousse, Bernache du Canada, Ouette d'Egypte, Cygne noir.....) ou contribuent à d'autres programmes de suivi (Vison d'Amérique par ex.)

4 GERMANY

General overview:

In Germany 44 alien vertebrates are assessed to be established, 11 species of them are categorized as invasive and 18 species as potentially invasive (<http://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/MDB/documents/service/skript340.pdf>).

With respect to non-native and invasive species national and federal authorities in Germany are obliged to start immediately suitable measurements for removing those species or prevent their distribution (federal law on nature protection). Generally a species is defined as invasive if it is a threat to the autochthonous biodiversity.

Principle 1: Avoid intentional and unintentional releases of new invasive alien game species

In Germany the releasing of native and alien species is regulated by the hunting law (BJagdG §28) and the federal law on nature protection (BNatschG § 40). The content of the federal law on nature protection regarding alien species mainly reflects the package of measures expressed in the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In point of view to a possible outbreak of fenced animals game reserves are legally managed by the protection of animals act (TSchG §2) and further on by the federal codes and guidelines. These guidelines are positioned in the federal laws on nature protection.

Keeping and breeding of vertebrates is also controlled by the federal law on species conservation (BArtSchV § 7).

Principle 2: Avoid intentional and unintentional introduction and spread of invasive alien plants for game food and shelter

After the federal law on nature protection (BNatschG, § 40) yielding of alien plants needs a permission of the responsible authority and in total is forbidden, if an endangering of native ecosystems, habitats or species could be expected. Planting in agriculture and forestry is excluded from this permission procedure.

Although there are recommendations to use native plants for habitat improvement for game species and species living in agricultural areas, various seed compositions which are offered for this purpose, contain alien plant species, for example Sunchoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*) and Phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*).

Principle 3: Use alien species for restocking only if non-invasive or introduced in ancient historic times

According to the German hunting law, restocking or settlement of Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) and Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) is prohibited (BJagdG § 28 (2)). For settlement of alien species a written permission of the responsible authority is needed (BJagdG § 28 (3)). The federal states are authorised to permit or prohibit settlement and restocking of further animal species (BJagdG § 28 (4)).

Principle 6: Consider eradication and control as essential management tools to tackle IAS and support their implementation also when targeting game species

In Germany the catalogue of game species includes alien species which are not spread all over the country, such as Mouflon (*Ovis orientalis musimon*), Fallow deer (*Dama dama*) and Sika deer (*Cervus nippon*). Other alien species which are listed for hunting are prevalent in Germany, but in different population densities: Raccoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*), Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) and American mink (*Neovison vison*). In the last years especially a rapid population increase of Raccoon is proved by hunting bags. The last-mentioned species are considered to be invasive, because they are carnivorous and intensify the predation effect particularly on ground nesting birds and relict populations of prey species. Nearly in all federal states Raccoon dog, Raccoon and American mink can be hunted year-round, except adult individuals rising pups. Particularly in areas, where trapping is common, mainly in nature conservation projects, an intensified reduction on these alien species as other mammal predators can be observed.

Nearly the whole area of Germany can be used for hunting and only hunters are authorised for trapping and killing the invasive species Raccoon dog, Raccoon and American mink. These circumstances offer crucial preconditions for both control or eradication programs and monitoring systems.

Principle 7: Collaborate in monitoring and surveillance programmes on IAS

Based on their solid education hunters are convenient for gathering information on IAS distribution and abundance. To obtain hunting license training with defined lessons and an examination in theory and practice, handling with weapons and an examination in shooting must be graduated successfully. Within the federal states the contents of lessons are rather similar, but the number of lessons, which are needed to get the permit for the examination, differs. The lessons imply knowledge on the biology of game species, main features of ecology, legislation and animal health.

WILD – wildlife information system, an initiative of the German Hunting Association (Deutscher Jagdverband, DJV) is a monitoring system to record data on the distribution and the abundance of Raccoon dog, Raccoon and American mink amongst other species. In reference areas, which are

distributed all over Germany, hunters record these species in regular intervals with standardised methods. Many hunters participate for years in WILD- monitoring system and have a lot of experience in recording of animal indicator species.

5 ITALY

General overview:

For a general introduction to the IAS phenomenon in Italy is necessary to have an idea of the number of species involved. For this purpose the DAISIE website (www.europe-aliens.org) was consulted. It was developed as part of the Delivering Alien Invasive Species In Europe (DAISIE) project funded by the sixth framework program of the European Commission. It provides a 'one-stop-shop' for information on biological invasions in Europe, delivered via an international team of leading experts in the field of biological invasions, latest technological developments in database design and display, and an extensive network of European collaborators and stakeholders.

Reliable, detailed information on the most invasive alien species in Europe is an essential tool for preventing their spread and impact, and for applying effective and appropriate control strategies.

In total, 20 Mammals and 44 Birds IAS are reported for Italy. Among them, most of the Mammals (n=12) are regionally or nationally established, few (n=3) are not established, and the others are extinct (n=2) or unknown (n=2). Bird species reported in DAISIE are mostly not established (n=17), even though the number of established species is quite relevant (n=16); the rest of the species (n=11) are extinct. Below are the two IAS lists.

MAMMALS

Ammotragus lervia (Not established)
Boselaphus tragocamelus (Extinct)
Callosciurus finlaysonii (Established)
Callosciurus sp. (Established)
Cervus canadensis (Unknown)
Genetta genetta (Not established)
Herpestes edwardsii (Extinct)
Lepus californicus (Extinct)
Mus musculus (Established)
Myocastor coypus (Established)
Neovison vison (Established)
Nyctereutes procyonoides (Not established)
Ondatra zibethicus (Unknown)
Oryctolagus cuniculus (Established)
Ovis aries (Established)
Procyon lotor (Not established)
Rattus norvegicus (Established)
Rattus rattus (Established)
Sciurus carolinensis (Established)
Sylvilagus floridanus (Established)
Tamias sibiricus (Established)

BIRDS

Acrida therestrictis (Not established)
Aix galericulata (Not established)
Aix sponsa (Extinct)
Alectoris chukar (Established)

Alopochen aegyptiacus (Not established)
Amandava amandava(Established)
Amazon aestiva (Established)
Anser indicus (Not established)
Bambusicola thoracica (Extinct)
Branta canadensis (Not established)
Callipepla californica (Extinct)
Colinus virginianus (Established)
Coturnix coromandelica (Extinct)
Coturnix japonica (Established)
Cygnus atratus (Established)
Cygnus olor (Established)
Egretta gularis (Not established)
Estrilda astrild (Not established)
Estrilda troglodytes (Not established)
Euplectes afer (Not established)
Euplectes nigroventris (Not established)
Euplectes orix (Not established)
Francolinus clappertoni (Extinct)
Francolinus herckelii (Established)
Lagonosticta senegala (Not established)
Leiothrix lutea (Established)
Meleagris gallopavo (Extinct)
Myiopsitta monachus (Established)
Numida meleagris (Extinct)
Oxyura jamaicensis (Not established)
Paradoxornis alphonsianus (Established)
Paradoxornis webbianus (Established)
Paroaria coronata (Not established)
Perdicula asiatica (Extinct)
Perdix dauurica (Extinct)
Phasianus versicolor (Not established)
Phoenicopterus chilensis (Not established)
Ploceus cucullatus (Established)
Ploceus subaureus (Not established)
Psittacula eupatria (Established)
Psittacula krameri(Established)
Pterocles exustus (Extinct)
Pycnonotus jocosus (Not established)
Threskiornis aethiopicus (Established)

An updated version of the list has been recently published on-line by the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA), within the framework of the National Biodiversity Network database (<http://www.naturaitalia.it/nnb/>).

Principle 1: Avoid intentional and unintentional releases of new invasive alien game species

The Italian framework law on the protection of homoeothermic wild fauna and hunting, bans the importation of alien species from abroad. In particular, Art. 20 (Introduction of wildlife from abroad), literally cites:

- 1 The introduction of wildlife from abroad, provided that it belongs to native species, can be made only for restocking and genetic improvement purposes.

- 2 The import permit may be issued only to companies that have adequate facilities and equipment for each species of wild animals, in order to have the appropriate legal guarantees for general controls, quarantines and any relevant health checks.
- 3 The authorizations for the activities referred to in paragraph 1 shall be issued by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry on the advice of the National Institute for Wildlife, in compliance with the international conventions.

Article 19 of the same law regulates the control of species that cause damage, after positive advice from ISPRA (the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research - wildlife department - previously called National Institute for Wildlife); many Provinces have entered into a technical protocol with ISPRA to perform control actions on these and other invasive alien species (Cottontail rabbit, Coypu, Eurasian collared dove).

By law, the control of invasive alien species is carried out by trained hunters.

Training takes place through specific courses organized by the Provinces administrations on an annual basis (some contents are, e.g.: the biology of the species to be controlled, its distribution, specific legislation, use of weapons, different methods of wildlife control).

Principle 2: Avoid intentional and unintentional introduction and spread of invasive alien plants for game food and shelter

Plant species used for environmental improvements (reforestation, fences, crops for wildlife, etc..)are usually native or referable to species normally found in fields as crops.

Principle 3: Use alien species for restocking only if non-invasive or introduced in ancient historic times

Restocking is made, in accordance with the law, only reintroducing native species (or naturalized in historical times, like the Pheasant). The regional and provincial hunting wildlife plans contemplate the use of native species, to be released in both the territory open to hunting and in private estates.

Principle 4: Select sources for restocking from populations with appropriate genetic and disease management

The framework law on the protection of homoeothermic wild fauna and hunting (Article 10), the regional laws and regulations take into account management plans aimed at encouraging the natural reproduction of wild animals as well as plans for introduction of wildlife, also through the capture of population surpluses in national and regional parks and other wildlife areas, after having assessed the genetic compatibility of captured individuals (to be carried out by ISPRA) and with the positive advice of the professional Agricultural Organisations that are part of the national technical Committee for hunting, through their regional structures.

In addition, Article 10, paragraph 7, letter c) allows the provinces to establish public centres for the reproduction of wildlife, for the purpose of reconstitution of autochthonous populations.

Principle 6: Consider eradication and control as essential management tools to tackle IAS and support their implementation also when targeting game species

Prevention can reduce new introductions, but when an alien invasive species is established in an area, it may be necessary to carry out active measures aimed at the eradication and / or control. When eradication is considered impracticable, control - in order to reduce the spread, abundance and density of the IAS to an acceptable level in the long term - may become necessary.

Alien ungulates species are regulated through hunting selective plans for the limitation or the eradication of the populations. In Italy, species such as European mouflon *Ovis aries* and Fallow deer *Dama dama* are preferably managed in areas not suitable for native species and through culling plans that

maintain the population density acceptable for that territory. Translocations are only permitted after the approval of ISPRA, which normally does not issue licenses to release non-native fauna. If these occur in fenced areas, it is vital that they are robust enough to avoid escapes.

Following the framework law on the protection of homoeothermic wild fauna and hunting, the Coypu *Myocastor coypus* is subject to population control. This aspect has been also described by specific ministerial guidelines and is included in the regional and provincial hunting plans.

The management of the grey squirrel is made according to the provisions set forth in the Action Plans (ISPRA and Ministry of Environment). The Cottontail rabbit *Silvylagus floridanus* is directly managed by the Provinces, once acquired the positive opinion of ISPRA.

Principle 7: Collaborate in monitoring and surveillance programmes on IAS

Hunters actively collaborate in the management of the environment, both in natural areas where hunting is not permitted and in areas where hunting is allowed. They play also a relevant role in the official monitoring operations carried out at the regional and local level. In these areas the reporting and spatial identification of IAS species becomes an integral part of the monitoring programs, even wildlife health ones.

For example, one of the few effective tools in stemming the virus diseases transmitted by vectors is the early detection of a virus in a defined territory, in order to allow the activation of all early warning procedures available to the National Health System (NHS). This aim, pursued also by the National Surveillance Plan for WND, is based on the detection of the virus in the two main actors in the epidemiological cycle: mosquitoes and birds. The former are captured with special traps by experts entomologists or NHS operators. As for the birds, the virus must be sought in sedentary species, and in particular, the sampling is carried out by taking some samples from target species: Magpie (*Pica pica*), Hooded Crow (*Corvus corone cornix*), Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*). The monitoring of these species is a multidisciplinary activity that involves the collaboration of various professionals and agencies so that it can really be an effective tool for early detection. In fact, the Departments of Veterinary Prevention, in accordance with the Provinces, the local hunting districts and Alpine areas for hunting, ensure that the carcasses of the species being monitored (captured or hunted) are conferred on the competent health authorities for laboratory analysis.

Hunters play an active role in the wildlife monitoring system. That allows obtaining relevant data, not only for research, but also in terms of prevention to human health and, last but not least, in the early warning of IAS presence. On a broader point of view, even pathogen IAS invertebrate species needs to be monitored, and even in this case hunters can give an important help.

6 NETHERLANDS

General overview:

In the Netherlands there is a national governmental Team Invasive Species. This team is an independent Agency in the Ministry of Economic Affairs. www.vwa.nl/onderwerpen/ongewenste-uitheemse-planten/dossier/invasieve-exoten/team-invasieve-exoten. This Agency develops risk assessments on IAS and measures are based on these assessments. Hunters are collaborating with this Agency.

Principle 1: Avoid intentional and unintentional releases of new invasive alien game species

Introduction of invasive alien species is illegal and covered in the national Dutch legislation (National Flora and Fauna Act).

Under the National Flora and Fauna Act sometimes introduction of native animals and plant species is allowed, but it needs a proper assessment. In the case of hunting species no introduction of native and non-native species is allowed.

Hunters are educated about the negative influence and consequence of introduction of invasive alien species as part of their hunting exam. The Royal Dutch Hunting Association also educates members writing articles in the magazine about alien species and encourages members to monitor the presence and distribution of species.

Principle 2: Avoid intentional and unintentional introduction and spread of invasive alien plants for game food and shelter

In the Netherlands feeding of game is restricted. Feeding for breeding purposes under natural circumstances is prohibited. Feeding red deer, fallow deer and wild boar is allowed with some non-invasive agricultural crops during limited periods of the year. As part of the hunting exam there is a chapter about habitat management on biotope development in which hunters are encouraged to use native species and put a focus on biodiversity

Habitat restoration and nature development is stimulated and subsidized by the national and regional government. There are guidelines published for habitat restoration as part of this nature restoration program.

There are national and regional programmes to monitor the distribution of plant species and data is available in the National Database Flora and Fauna (NDFF) with a resolution of 1x1 km.

There is a lot of education on habitat restoration. The National Forest Service breeds and sells trees and shrubs with native genetic sources and stimulates to use these species in plantations.

www.staatsbosbeheer.nl/Nieuws%20en%20achtergronden/Themas/Zaad%20en%20Plantsoen/Inheemse%20vegetatie.aspx

Principle 3: Use alien species for restocking only if non-invasive or introduced in ancient historic times

Introduction and restocking of native and non-native game species is not allowed under the national Flora and Fauna Act. If introduction of native species is considered, there are strict conditions according to the national legislation and guidelines of the IUCN. In that case a monitoring program is part of restocking and introduction. Both introduction and restocking is a very rare activity.

Principle 4: Select sources for restocking from populations with appropriate genetic and disease management

In hunting practice there is no restocking of populations right now.

Principle 6: Consider eradication and control as essential management tools to tackle IAS and support their implementation also when targeting game species

In the hunting course each hunter is educated in biodiversity, the impact of invasive species and the role of hunters to protect biodiversity and the prevent damage on ecosystems.

For some species like *Oxyura jamaicensis* measures are taken to minimize this population. Regional projects are now scaled up to the national level in cooperation with the national organisation of bird preservation SOVON (NGO). Waterfowl monitoring is used to detect important sites.

For some species like *Ondatra zibethicus* there is a national eradication program in which hunters participate. They play a role in sharing information about the distribution. In the Netherlands reduction of the population is important to reduce the risk of flooding in polder areas.

The national workgroup IAS from the ministry of Economic Affairs is coordinating the risk assessment of alien species.

Principle 7: Collaborate in monitoring and surveillance programmes on IAS

Hunters in the Netherlands do have their own monitoring program for hunting species and collaborate in national monitoring programmes on breeding and migrating birds and mammals. Invasive alien species are part of the monitoring. The open access database www.waarnemingen.nl is used for occasional observations of (non)-alien species. National monitoring of alien species e.g. is the responsibility of different NGO and hunters contribute to these databases.

Hunting magazines are publishing about IAS, both with ecological information as trend analysis and maps to explain the status, distribution and population development. Education and information will contribute that hunters get more involved in monitoring and taking measures to reduce the impact of IAS on biodiversity.

7 SLOVENIA**General overview:**

It is important to first stress the difference between alien species and invasive alien species, as these are treated differently in the context of hunting in Slovenia.

Principle 1: Avoid intentional and unintentional releases of new invasive alien game species

Introductions being legal or illegal are covered in Slovenian legislation (mainly in Law for Hunting and Game and The Nature Conservation Act).

The Law on Hunting and Game prohibits keeping in fenced animals, animals which in case of escape can influence the genetic fond of native animals (Article 50(5)).

Under the Nature Conservation Act, it is prohibited to introduce non-native animals and plants, without a proper assessment. In case of huntable animals the permission is given by the minister, with evidence based on assessment (Article 17). The same law also foresees chares in cases of illegal introduction of non-native species, or a person is breeding native or non-native species without permission (Article 160).

Education of hunters is also important, so hunters are educated about the negative influence and consequence of introduction of invasive alien species, already when they are taking a hunting exam, as part of the book covering hunting is also addressing the release of IAS (page 246 of Divjad in Lovstvo).

Principle 2: Avoid intentional and unintentional introduction and spread of invasive alien plants for game food and shelter

Plant species used for food are native. In cases where non-native species was used it can be seen from current hunting plans, this is not allowed anymore or its use is being phased out (http://www.mko.gov.si/fileadmin/mko.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocja/Lovstvo/Primorsko_LUO_2014.pdf)

Principle 3: Use alien species for restocking only if non-invasive or introduced in ancient historic times

The Law on Hunting and Game allows restocking of native game species and introduction or stocking of native and non-native species, if it is done under the hunting plans, and having regard to veterinary and nature conservation legislation (Article 40).

Restocking with animals must be monitored and controlled (Art 18, The Nature Conservation Act)

Hunting plans are addressing the introduction and restocking, very briefly, as it is not a common activity in Slovenia to use restocking (only in rare cases) and in those native species are used. In case of Pheasants, restocking is only allowed in cases that they are meant for revitalisation of the population.

Principle 6: Consider eradication and control as essential management tools to tackle IAS and support their implementation also when targeting game species

From hunting management plans, it is clearly seen, that Alien species, such as *Dama dama* and *Ovis aamon musimon* appear in Slovenia, but in few areas, where there are kept and their spreading is monitored and regulated. They are not allowed to spread in other areas. Other alien species such as *Marmota marmot*, *Myocastor coypus* and *Ondatra zibethicus* are spreading, but measures are in place to stop the spread and to try to remove the species.

Invasive alien species, such as *Nyctereutes procyonoides* (which is appearing sporadically), which have a negative impact on other species, can be removed immediately (but still considering the hunting seasons for the species).

Hunting management plans addresses the non-native species, especially invasive ones with immediate removal.

Principle 7: Collaborate in monitoring and surveillance programmes on IAS

In scope of citizen-science, hunters are systematically educated and knowledge that they obtain with these courses and trainings, gives them a solid knowledge about the environment, natural processes, species and their behaviour.

To get the hunting licence in Slovenia, the interested person first obtains the status of apprentice. As apprentice you have to pass one year long training with the goal to obtain practical knowledge. Each apprentice is also assigned a mentor, who educates a candidate in the ethics, manners, nature and environment and hunting practices. Each candidate also has to attend 60 hours of theoretical classes, to be allowed to take in the final exam. A hunter can also obtain a title of “Hunting warden”, if he has 5 years’ experience and passes additional 100 hours of thorough theoretical classes. Currently there are around 15% of all Slovenian hunters having the title of “Hunting warden”.

Hunters are occasionally involved in the counts of some species in some areas. During this counts also species, not observed previously are found, which is in case of Invasive alien species very important. Hunters are also spending many hours walking in the forests and surrounding areas and doing biodiversity work, so any changes are quickly noticeable. (Observations of Raccoon dog specimen in the past).

8 IAF AND REPORT ON PRINCIPLE 5

Report by: Adrian Lombard, President of International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey.

The International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) is an international non-profit organization registered in Belgium. It is the globally representative organization for Falconry which it defines as “the traditional sport of taking quarry in its natural state and habitat by means of trained birds of prey. It is a hunting art”. The IAF represents falconers from 90 member organizations and 67 countries, worldwide. The IAF has the right to send a representative to meetings of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention.

The IAF contributed to the formulation of Principle 5 of the Code of Conduct for Hunting and Invasive Alien Species, the final draft of which was released by the Bern Convention in August 2013. Since the release of this document, the IAF has taken steps to inform falconers of the content of this document and to implement the proposals contained there-in. As President of the IAF, I presented the Code of Conduct and, specifically, Principle 5 of this Code to my Advisory Committee and then to the Council of Delegates at our Annual General Meeting, held in Doha, Qatar, in January 2014. At this meeting, I gained the acceptance and support for Principle 5 from our member organizations. To further publicize this Code, we have included an article on this topic in our annual flagship publication, The International Journal of Falconry.

Let us now consider the elements of Principle 5:

Principle 5. Practice animal-aided hunting minimizing the risks of escapes and of impacting native species

Text from Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS

The unintentional introductions (escapes) of species used in animal-aided hunting (e.g. falconry, ferreting, drive hunting with dogs) can cause impacts on native species. Domestic forms and feral animals of domestic species use in hunting (dogs, ferrets, etc.) in fact represent alien species that in some cases can cause severe impacts on biodiversity²

Falconry is a traditional hunting technique, recently stated as Living Human Heritage by UNESCO. Falconry is practiced throughout Europe and often use is made of non-native birds of prey, some of which are hybrids with native birds. The chances of a hybrid falcon hybridising further with a native wild species are very limited but the risk of introduction of non-native genes through falconry should be carefully taken into account.

The IAF is closely monitoring any evidence of such introgression and will welcome and assist with any scientific research in this area. We include an expert on this topic, Prof. Matthew Gage, on our Advisory Committee and he has been invaluable in collating and assessing the available information. With the assistance of Prof. Gage, we provided comment on this issue to the Saker Task Force of the CMS Raptors MoU in the development of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan. We also provided extensive comment to the proposed Strategic Plan for Raptor Conservation in the European Union which was developed for the Raptors MoU.

Text from Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS

Most of the threats arising from falconry are due to a bad practice of this traditional hunting technique. It is therefore important that falconers take measures to minimize any possible risk caused by the introduction of non-native genes through falconry, and to apply appropriate raining methods for hunting. In order to ensure a safe and sustainable practice of falconry, it is also important to encourage the adoption of voluntary self-regulations (e.g. codes of conduct as recently proposed by the International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey - IAF).

The IAF has developed its own Code of Conduct with respect to falconry and IAS. This has been presented by Prof. Gage to the Council of Delegates in January 2014 and has been circulated to falconers, internationally, in the form of an eNewsletter. Furthermore, it has been placed on our website, www.iaf.org. This Code is attached below as an appendix.

Text from Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS

Falconers should also negotiate the adoption of appropriate national/regional regulatory measures (e.g. regulation adopted by the Government of Canary Islands in 2011), with national or regional authorities, taking into account the scientific evidence for risk of gene introgression or the establishment of invasive populations of raptors.

As part of the process of informing falconers on this subject, we have advised them to engage with their authorities on this topic. The information on our website as well as the article awaiting publication in our Journal provide resource material for national falconry organizations and the IAF will provide further assistance as requested.

² Dogs are known to cause impacts on biodiversity, for example by preying native species or hybridising with the wolf. However, considering there are no evidences that escaped hunting dogs have formed self-sustaining populations in the wild in Europe, the present Code of Conduct does not cover this specific topic.

Text from Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS

In terms of self-regulation, falconers should as a starting point adopt the recommendations included in the position statement of the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of birds of prey on falcon hybrids:

- *hybrids be fostered if possible by a parent that does not occur locally in the wild;*
- *hybrids only be hacked³ in large conditioning pens;*
- *hybrids only be flown with reliable telemetry equipment;*
- *maximum efforts be made to recover any hybrid that is lost;*
- *hybrids should never be deliberately released.*

This advice is derived from the IAF statement on Hybrid and Exotic Falcons which was accepted at the Council of Delegates AGM, held in Amarillo, Texas, in 2000. This is largely superseded by our Code of Conduct for Falconry with respect to IAS.

Text from Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS

Responsible falconers should adopt all possible measures to prevent escapes of birds of prey, in particular of hybrids or non-native birds. Furthermore, a registration scheme, aimed at identifying the origin of each bird (pure-bred or hybrid), should be adopted and, consequently, any bird should be registered and individually marked by a ring and/or a microchip.

All legitimate falconry raptors within the European Union are required by law to wear official tamper-proof rings and to be registered with the national conservation authorities ((EC) Regulation Nr. 338/97). The IAF proposed a system of “Mark and Bank” registration at the Council of Delegates AGM in Abu Dhabi in 2004. This registration scheme proposes the combination of tamper-proof rings with banking of DNA material to ensure the accurate identification of any falconry raptor. There is early discussion regarding the proposal to combine this scheme with a central multinational registry or “Stud-book”

Text from Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS

Also the establishment of a web-based monitoring system for lost/escaped hybrid or exotic raptors should be considered.

This is currently established and is accessible on our website www.iaf.org

Text from Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS

Finally, within the context of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), falconers should be encouraged to reduce the use of hybrids and, specifically, to avoid the use of hybrids with any species which exists only in North America.

Hybrid falcons enjoy limited popularity amongst falconers in European Union countries. They have been banned in Germany. Research has shown that the use of hybrids is significantly reduced in those countries where a limited sustainable harvest of wild raptors is accessible to falconers^{4 5}. It is the strategy of the IAF to actively encourage the establishment of such a harvest, where possible, noting that this is permissible in terms of Article 9 of the Wild Birds Directive. A sustainable wild harvest would have the

³ Method of “soft release” to learn flying skills

⁴ Kenward, R.E. 2004. Management tools for raptors. Pp. 329-339 in Chancellor, R.D. & B.-U. Meyburg (eds). Raptors Worldwide. World Working Group on Birds of Prey and Owls, Berlin, Germany.

⁵ Kenward, R.E. 2009. Conservation values from falconry. Pp. 181-196 in Adams, W., Dixon, B. and Hutton, J. (eds.) Recreational Hunting, Conservation and Rural Livelihoods: Science and Practice. Zoological Society of London & IUCN SSC/Sustainable Use Specialist Group & Blackwell Publishing.

dual benefit of encouraging falconers to reduce their use of hybrid raptors and would, at the same time, encourage their further active engagement in the conservation effort.

Conclusion:

This report demonstrates the engagement of falconers, as represented by the IAF, in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Hunting and IAS. Whilst appreciating that this will be an ongoing effort, we wish it noted that the requirements of Principle 5 have been implemented or are in process.

9 FACE AND ITS ACTIVITIES

FACE activities under Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS

FACE is working on developing the Best Practice Guidelines for Trapping of Mammals in Europe. Although not developed with primary focus on invasive alien species, they are an important way to spread the information of IAS and possible means to effectively manage their spread or eradication, while considering selectivity of species caught and high welfare standards.

Best Practice Guidelines (BPG) are targeted at trappers, authorities, NGOs and other parties interested in trapping mammals. The first part of BPG provides information about international legislation and underlines the need to check the national legislation, health and security while using traps. The second part of the BPG covers species description, their distribution and ecology, foraging behaviour, reproduction, etc. The last part covers possible trap models and types, how to set them, how to ensure selectivity and ensure welfare of trapped animals.

*Nyctereutes procyonoides*⁶ – Raccoon dog and *Ondatra zibethicus*⁷ – Muskrat are the two invasive alien species, for which the BPG were developed.

What is FACE?

FACE is the European Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation.

Established in 1977, it represents in the interests of Europe's 7 million hunters as an international non-profit-making non-governmental organisation (INGO). This makes FACE the largest democratically representative body for hunters in the world and is probably one of the largest European civil society organisations.

FACE is made up of its Members; national hunters' associations from 38 European countries including all EU-28 Member States. FACE also has 3 Associate Members.

FACE upholds the principle of sustainable use, has been a member of IUCN since 1987, and more recently Wetlands International. FACE works with its partners on a range of hunting related issues, from international conservation agreements to local implementations with the aim of sustaining hunting across Europe.

FACE is recognised by the European Commission as the representative body for Europe's hunters. It is consulted by the relevant Commission Directorates-General and Units during the preparation, elaboration and monitoring of EU legislation dealing with hunting, wildlife management, nature conservation, firearms, trapping, wild animal health, game meat hygiene, etc.

Multi-national dimension

The FACE office is based in Brussels and comprises of ten staff of six nationalities, competent in seven languages. Through its member associations FACE has a widespread and well connected network.

⁶ http://www.face.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/trapping_guidelines_-_nyctereutes_procyonoides_0.pdf

⁷ http://www.face.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/trapping_guidelines_-_ondatra_zibethicus.pdf

To strengthen this network certain FACE staff act as focal points for Member State groups (e.g. Baltic, Central Europe, Mediterranean). This has proved effective means to better the understanding of national issues and raise awareness of EU policy at national level.

10 APPENDIX 1: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FALCONERS WHEN FLYING HYBRIDS AND EXOTICS: AN IAF CODE OF CONDUCT

Despite studies so far demonstrating no evidence for an IAS issue from falconry, it's important that falconers take responsibility to minimise bad publicity that could arise as a result of misunderstanding surrounding IAS issues, and also to ensure that no ex-falconry species ever does become established. On top of these, is the responsibility arising from a primary duty of care by falconers to their birds through the prevention of loss (and subsequently high risk of mortality). Responsibility has been taken by some elements where previous risks of bird loss existed: free-hacking is now conducted in large, enclosed conditioning pens; telemetry technology and investment has risen to high levels and reached new bounds as a major industry within falconry; the tradition for hacking back by some falconry cultures such as Arabia has ceased for non-indigenous species. Despite all this, the success of captive breeding occasionally allows falconry birds to get into irresponsible hands, and these can be subsequently lost because they are flown in inappropriate places by irresponsible people. The responsible falconry community will not tolerate these incidents because they are (1) failures of the duty of care we have to our birds, and (2) create bad (albeit anecdotal) publicity that falconry could be relevant to an IAS issue.

Therefore, to even further minimise any risk that exotic species or hybrids could potentially pose to the name of responsible falconry through the Invasive Alien Species issue, IAF requires that affiliated falconry Clubs should formally adopt this code of conduct when their members fly exotic species or hybrids:

1. No hybrids or exotics should ever be deliberately released to the wild
2. Modern functioning telemetry should be used when any hybrid or exotic species is flown
3. IAF will manage an online reporting scheme so that any incidents of ex-falconry hybrids or exotics can be recorded attempting to establish or breed in the wild

This code should allow falconers to monitor the IAS issue effectively and transparently, while further minimising any poor publicity created by lost falconry birds.