

## 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EU Task Force on the Recovery of Birds, 18 May 2026

### MINUTES AND SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

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IREC-CSIC and the scientific consortium for bird recovery

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The twelfth meeting of the EU Task Force on the Recovery of Birds (TFRB) was held online on 18 May 2026. It was organised by the Nature Unit of the European Commission's DG ENV and chaired by its Policy Officer, Ms Sylvia Barova. Fifty-four members of the Task Force attended the meeting, including representatives of the competent authorities in the EU Member States and of stakeholders. The scientific consortium for bird recovery, led by the Spanish *Instituto de Investigación en Recursos Cinegéticos* (IREC-CSIC), acted as scientific advisors to the Task Force.

#### 1. Welcome by Chair. Adoption of the agenda. Adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 12-13/02/2026 (TFRB 26-02-minutes)

The **Chair** introduced the meeting, welcomed all participants and clarified the housekeeping rules. The agenda for this meeting was adopted without objections. The minutes from the 11<sup>th</sup> TFRB meeting, held on 12-13 February 2026, were also adopted.

IE noted that the conclusions from last meeting's minutes were quite general, whereas the document with the meeting conclusions that went to NADEG were quite specific. IE wanted to work out the difference between the minutes and the document that went to NADEG – no issues with the recommendation itself. IREC explained that some serious technical issues had not allowed to record thoroughly the previous TFRB meeting, so it was necessary to reconstruct the discussion based on IREC and Commission officials' notes, which were somewhat partial. This might explain why the minutes were not so detailed, but they tried to make the document for NADEG as detailed as possible. IREC had done the best they could with the notes they had, and the team would make sure it would not happen again.

FR commented on two points on the summary for the NADEG meeting. First, it requested careful use of the term 'expert', which should be understood as the MS representatives when concerning issues specific to MS. Secondly, it stressed that the recommendations going to NADEG should come from the TFRB, not the scientific consortium. The Commission replied that indeed, this should be the case, this is how it is defined in the Terms of Reference for the TFRB but for this to happen all MS should express clearly their positions in relation to the recommendations made by the consortium.

#### 2. Update on the contract "Supporting the recovery of bird species through scientific and technical advice"

The representative of **DG ENV** briefly reviewed the tasks, which were all going according to plan. The deadline for the first deliverable under Task 1 (updated list of huntable birds) had been extended since



the assessment of Article 12 reports submitted by the MS was still being developed, but the Commission had received notice that this was now close to completion. The Commission also explained that it was receiving technical input and planning for the NADEG meeting under Task 7 of the contract.

### **3. Turtle Dove AHMM 2026 iteration – Western flyway.**

#### **Update on population and demography, Summary and Analysis of MS responses on hunting and management, and Technical Recommendations**

The **Scientific Consortium** (IREC) presented an update on the Adaptive Harvest Management Mechanism (AHMM) for the Turtle Dove, starting with the western flyway and covering new information on population trends and demographics, a summary on MS responses related to hunting, habitat management and enforcement, and quota recommendations. The meeting heard that, according to the PECBMS indicator, since 2021 the population in the western flyway had increased by 47 % (673,000 new pairs), which represented an annual growth rate of 9.6 %. The 10-year slope indicator developed by PECBMS was significantly above 1, in clear contrast with the period before the hunting moratorium. An updated analysis of capture-mark-recapture data from sites in France and Spain showed that annual survival had increased during the moratorium period for both age groups: adult annual survival had increased by 10 % (from 57% to 63%) and juvenile survival had increased by 46 % (from around 28% to 40%), although with wider uncertainty. Population modelling indicated that the observed population growth was consistent with the observed survival estimates even without marked changes in productivity values (estimated pre-moratorium), showing that survival increases were the likely driver of the recovery. The Consortium showed that scenarios with 1.5 % and 2 % harvest of the available population at harvest time still predicted continued population growth.

The Consortium also presented an assessment of the information submitted by Member States through the questionnaires. Reporting remained incomplete and not fully comparable across countries. Some MS did not submit data, including e.g., NL and DK. The 2025 hunting recommendations had been followed, but only 27% of the total allocated quota was reportedly used (ES 26%, FR 71%, PT 59%). In terms of inspections and infringements, the Consortium noted that there were significant differences in the information reported by MS. For example, PT reported 9 inspections and 9 infringements, while IT reported over 10,000 inspections and no infringements. The Consortium considered that this likely reflected different interpretations of the questionnaire rather than directly comparable enforcement outcomes.

Habitat management actions were reported by several Member States, but the level of detail and spatial scope varied greatly. Monitoring of the effectiveness of habitat measures for Turtle Dove remained very limited. Research and monitoring activities included common bird monitoring schemes (all MS), capture-recapture programmes (only ES, FR), productivity studies (ES, FR, DE), citizen science initiatives to monitor abundance, genetics and pollution studies (DE), and work on age ratios of observed or hunted birds (DE, FR). FR presented an innovative mobile-app and AI-based approach to estimate age ratios from photos of harvested birds.

The Consortium indicated that the information received was sometimes non-comprehensive and incomplete, especially from non-hunting nations, so there was a need to improve reporting systems and timings. Overall, though, there was growing engagement of MS, an increasing number of actions



regarding hunting (control, enforcement), as well as habitat management and research. The hunting recommendations for the 2025 season had been well implemented, and the control and inspection systems were overall satisfactory (although with scope for improving in the reported actions so that a better assessment can be done). There was good promotion of compliance (information campaigns) in all MS, esp. ES and PT and, in general, there were sufficient habitat interventions completed, but monitoring of their effects remained low.

The Consortium mentioned that the conditions to maintain hunting in the western flyway had not been agreed in the previous meeting, but they suggested three that appeared logical given the previous discussions: population recovery; a population model indicating a harvest rate compatible with continued population growth; credible regulatory and control/enforcement systems. The Consortium mentioned that these were all being met, so it was possible for MS to authorise hunting in 2026. It was important to continue monitoring and to review annually, as well as to discuss and agree on these conditions in future meetings.

The technical recommendation for the 2026 hunting season in the western flyway was to stick with a harvest flyway quota of  $h = 1.5\%$  of the available population, to be reviewed in 2027. The available population at the end of the 2026 breeding season was estimated at nearly 10 million individual birds, which resulted in a flyway quota of approximately 150,000 birds. The allocation of quota among MS was based on the previously agreed criteria (including historical distribution among MS, as well as contribution to population growth). In relation to the former, the 150,000 birds to be hunted in 2026, would be allocated among MS as follows: ES 81 %, FR 8 %, PT 10 %, NW Italy 1 %. In this respect, performance assessments based on responses to the questionnaires indicated that ES ranked highest, followed by FR and BE; PT, DE and IT followed. According to the TFRB rules, IT would thus be penalised with a 30 % reduction of quota for being ranked below average, but it was not expected to authorise hunting in the western flyway in 2026, so the related penalisation would become largely formal.

Management priorities highlighted by the consortium included implementing mechanisms to apply and enforce reduced harvests, to expand habitat management measures specifically targeted to Turtle Doves, and to improve or implement monitoring mechanisms to quantify the effects of habitat management on Turtle Doves. Research priorities included expanding the collection of survival and productivity data, with the addition of new sites to increase representativeness, monitoring the effects of habitat interventions to assess their effectiveness, carrying out national censuses and full surveys of abundance, and incorporating information on uncertainty to harvest statistics.

After the presentation by the Scientific Consortium, the Chair opened the discussion and encouraged TFRB members to take the floor and express their position starting with the MS.

DE noted that, in their case, many habitat measures were being implemented at regional/state level, and they were not necessarily labelled as Turtle Dove specific. DE requested clearer guidance on which measures should be reported as relevant to the Turtle Dove. The Scientific Consortium acknowledged the issue and noted that relevant measures were summarised in the recommendations document, while recognising the need to make this information more accessible and easier to use. DE also remarked having difficulties in compiling data due to the federal administrative structure and stressed that many measures were implemented under broader biodiversity or agri-environment schemes rather than species-specific programmes.

ES supported improving the questionnaire and mentioned difficulties in compiling regional data, especially information relative to control systems and habitat measures. ES explained that the fact the



2025 uptake was lower than the allocated quota was partly due to difficulties with the use of the electronic reporting application, constraints linked to quota redemption systems, and reduced participation by hunters. Beyond that, ES requested an official document recording TFRB recommendations to support regional hunting orders, and it also suggested earlier timing of future Task Force meetings to facilitate internal decision-making, as well as earlier issuance of the questionnaire. The Commission indicated that meeting minutes could play the role of an official TFRB document in the absence of an immediate NADEG meeting. ES also stressed the need for financial support to implement restoration and conservation measures under future National Restoration Plans.

PT clarified that the inspection and infringement data reported through the questionnaire referred only to the two days authorised for hunting, and they were still provisional. PT also explained that only habitat measures with a defined minimum area were reported, which explained the low spatial coverage figures. PT suggested adding metadata or notes fields within future questionnaires to better explain methodologies and assumptions behind national data.

IT explained that, in their case, inspection and infringement data were generally collected for hunting activity overall, not specifically for Turtle Dove. IT stressed the importance of reducing the administrative burden associated with reporting systems, particularly if similar approaches were to be extended to other huntable species. IT also questioned the scientific basis for the final quota calculation, noting that the population models suggested that harvest levels around 2% could remain sustainable, while the final 1.5% proposal appeared precautionary and might look policy driven. IT nevertheless accepted the proposal for the current season and noted that in 2026 hunting may, once again, not be authorised in the Italian regions within the Western Flyway.

FR mentioned continuing difficulties with the questionnaires housed in the DECLARE system. The Chair clarified that the system was being used in other reporting cycles, and it allowed DG ENV to check the reports submitted, as well as those missing. Nevertheless, she promised that the EC team will explore the possibilities that the system sends a confirmation when a questionnaire is submitted and advised against going back to submission of reports by email. The Consortium mentioned that it might be a good idea to start preparing for the spring TFRB meeting already in autumn of each year, to give MS plenty of time to prepare and submit their responses to the questionnaire. Pending discussion, the Consortium plan was to open the reporting period for a much longer time.

Several participants took the floor after the interventions of the MS.

**BirdLife** commented on several aspects. On enforcement and illegal killing, it reminded the TF that MS were already invited to voluntarily respond to CMS MIKT using the IKB Scoreboard for this. The process was ongoing, and it suggested that the Consortium checked this process and tried to align with it. BirdLife also mentioned that one thing missing is population data per country, rather than at flyway level. It said that, despite positive flyway-level trends, strong recovery remained absent in several northern European countries including NL, BE, DE, DK and UK. Although stabilisation had occurred, increases comparable to those observed in southern populations had not yet materialised. The Scientific Consortium highlighted that flyway-level indicators remain the basis for management decisions but acknowledged that regional differences in recovery were likely to exist. Among possible explanations being considered were the fact that the recovery started in core southern populations before spreading northwards, that the rate of recovery was slower in smaller, more depleted northern populations or the possibility of additional local ecological pressures (e.g. higher impacts of habitat



degradation in the north). In any case, the Consortium agreed that further research was needed to better understand these regional dynamics.

It would not be correct to design a flyway-scale approach to policy that was based on single countries. The PECBMS work incorporated data from different countries and weighted these according to the population size in different countries. That was why the growth in Spain was important in the western Flyway given the proportion of the population here.

**BirdLife** also inquired about the productivity value of 2.31 fledglings/female/year used in population models and quota calculations, saying that this was too high for regions north of the Iberian Peninsula. The Scientific Consortium clarified that this was the value that best fitted the population growth observed, combined with the estimated survival rates, and that this represented an average at flyway level, which did not imply that all females reproduced at this rate: this value could theoretically be achieved with productivity being lower in certain areas (e.g. in northern Europe) and higher in others (e.g., productivity estimates recently obtained from western France apparently largely exceed this figure). The Consortium emphasized that improving productivity monitoring remained a research priority.

**FACE** thought it may be premature to change the conditions for reopening hunting. Instead, it suggested keeping those currently in use, and reviewing them in 2028, coinciding with the end of the International Action Plan. The Consortium admitted that the Task Force had not discussed the criteria to *maintain* hunting; instead, rather previous focus had lain on *reopening* hunting and that those conditions were not appropriate to discuss hunting maintenance, as it had become obvious when applying them to make the quota recommendation (e.g., an increase in hunting survival is no longer expected to occur once hunting has reopened). It suggested that a discussion on this topic could be held at the autumn TFRB meeting when there is less pressure.

**FR** noted, on the same point, that the criteria for reopening hunting had previously been discussed and agreed. However, equivalent criteria for maintaining hunting had not yet been formally debated within the Task Force. **FR** suggested maintaining the current quantitative criteria until at least 2028, when the International Action Plan cycle should be reviewed. The Scientific Consortium acknowledged that the current maintenance conditions were proposed as technical recommendations rather than formally agreed criteria and that this issue warrants dedicated future discussion within the Task Force.

**FACE** enquired about the exact sample sizes of juveniles being captured and recaptured during the moratorium and before the moratorium. Given the high uncertainty of the survival estimates obtained for this age group due to the smaller sample size, this information was important to understand population dynamics. The Consortium provided a quick reply that the dataset used to estimate juvenile survival was ca. 55 birds ringed pre-moratorium, and ca 50 birds ringed in-moratorium. These were indeed small numbers, but they were comparable across periods. For comparison, there were several hundred ringed adults in each of the periods.

**FACE-IT** asked whether survival analyses correctly accounted for reduced ring recoveries during no-hunting years. The Scientific Consortium confirmed that the capture-mark-recapture models explicitly incorporated variability on the probability of recapture or recovery. It clarified that live recaptures and dead recoveries were modelled separately, and that the probability of hunting-related recoveries during moratorium years was considered null.



At the request of the Chair, the hunting MS in the western flyway – FR, ES, IT, PT – all agreed with and supported the proposed quotas, as well as the recommendations on management and research.

BirdLife took the floor again with a question on the traffic light system and reopening of hunting in the western flyway. Reading the summary of what MS have in place for enforcement and bag statistics, and taking Quail as example, there are negative assessments of the sufficiency of these. If those are insufficient for quail, surely they will be for other species too. So, why is there a green light in the Turtle Dove assessment rather than amber? Data from FR, for example, showed that out of 900,000 hunters, only 80,000 use the *ChasseAdapt* app to report their take in real time. The Consortium clarified that certain requirements are compulsory for hunting Turtle Dove and not for other species (such as the use of *ChasseAdapt* in France, hunting of Turtle Dove can only occur in certain estates in Spain and under certain conditions, etc). The Consortium had assessed the information submitted by MS on specific controls in place prior to the conditions being determined. For example, annual reporting of hunted birds is not compulsory for all species in FR, but reporting was compulsory for Turtle Dove. By law, it was not possible to impose the use of the app, so they must have the option to have paper reporting. But most hunting federations were fine to use the application.

#### 4. Turtle Dove AHMM 2026 iteration – central-eastern flyway.

##### Update on population and demography, Summary and Analysis of MS responses on hunting and management, and Technical Recommendations

The Scientific Consortium (IREC) presented an update on Turtle Dove status in the central-eastern flyway, covering new data on population trends, habitat management, enforcement, and hunting recommendations. The meeting heard that, unlike the case for the western flyway, the population continued to decline, and no clear recovery was in sight. According to PECBMS flyway indicator, since 2021, the population had been reduced by 36,000 pairs, which represented a 5 % decline. The indicator based on the PECBMS 10-year was statistically below 1 (indicating moderate decline), having declined from stable.

In terms of harvest, the Consortium noted that the total reported take was 94,778 birds in 2025, although the proposal for 2025 was a hunting ban. The recommended ban was fully followed in Austria and Romania, as well as in most of Italy (hunting in IT was only authorised in Sicily). Regarding control systems, MS reporting of control effort showed improvement in relation to 2024, but there was variation across MS in how data were reported, as well as in the rate of infringements vs inspections, which was lowest in IT. Habitat management by MS had continued, but most interventions were generic for farmland birds, and not directly targeted at the Turtle Dove. The Consortium remarked that few non-hunting MS had shown active promotion of habitat management for the species. Like in the western flyway, there was no effort in monitoring evidence of their impact. Among research activities, all MS monitored abundance through the common bird schemes (PECBMS), some national censuses carried out or planned (CY, HU), one capture-mark-recapture scheme to monitor survival recently initiated (EL), monitoring of productivity (CY, DE, EL), analysis of young/adult ratios in flocks (GR) and other additional studies (spatial behaviour, migration, diet, genetics, toxicity). 4 MS reported having a National IKB Action Plan (BG, CY, CZ, IT) but the Turtle Dove was not listed as a priority in CY or IT.



The Consortium concluded that MS had reported a much-reduced hunting effort across the flyway, but this had not translated into a positive population response; instead, the population data showed a continuing decline. It highlighted the lack of national censuses as well as insufficient efforts to improve data on survival or productivity. There were habitat management measures, but they were non-targeted and many lacked detail on their implementation or success.

The assessment of the conditions initially defined to reopen hunting after a moratorium, carried out by the Consortium, showed that none were being met satisfactorily: a population increase was non-existent, survival values compatible with population growth seemed unlikely (no data were available specifically for the CE flyway) and, in terms of credible regulatory and control/enforcement systems, there was a mixed bag.

Therefore, the technical recommendations for the 2026 hunting season were maintained: to implement a flyway-level full hunting ban, which should be reviewed only when population recovery became noticeable. The management priorities were to implement mechanisms for applying and enforcing recommendations, to apply habitat management measures specifically targeted for the Turtle Dove, and to improve/implement monitoring mechanisms. In terms of research, the priorities were to collect survival and productivity data that would allow to develop a population model with flyway-specific data, and to carry out national censuses and full surveys of abundance.

**The Chair** highlighted the results presented by the contractor and stressed that the previous year's recommendation of a hunting ban had not been implemented fully. She acknowledged the substantive reduction in take reported by the MS, in spite of which the population was continuing to decline. She opened the discussion and encouraged the MS representatives, in particular, to give their views and to express their position on the technical recommendations made by the Consortium.

**AT** noted that the Turtle Dove is no longer hunted in Austria, for which reason the bag number featured in the background document should be 0 (not 'unknown'). There was no open season in any of AT's federal states, and AT should now be considered a non-hunting country as regards Turtle Dove. It added that information was difficult to compile from all the federal states, and so AT would support a suitable questionnaire approach for countries with a federal structure.

**HU** intervened to express two ideas. First, to correct the response in the background document that HU was implementing agri-environment schemes (the table in the document wrongly mentioned 'supplementary feeding'). Secondly, that HU supported the recommendations, congratulated AT on implementing a hunting ban, and encouraged others to adopt similar measures to follow the recommendations. It wondered whether it would be interesting to look at the migratory routes and the wintering sites of two flyway populations. Given that the reported data indicated that the western flyway had responded quickly, perhaps there was a significant difference between the wintering areas and the conditions experienced there. The Consortium agreed that it could be interesting to test whether those differences existed, but it stressed that information on survival was essential to establish any differences, because that could give the clue. It had taken up to 10 years to work out the species' migration routes, mostly through tracking studies in the western flyway, whereas studying survival could be done with fewer resources and more efficiently on the breeding grounds, that is why they encouraged such studies.

**SE** took the floor to say that the country does not have breeding Turtle Doves, but it noted the supportive actions from countries and that they were more active in hunting countries. It would be interested to know why and where supportive actions happened, what the motivations were. The



Consortium replied that in several European countries that culture of supportive actions existed, and hunting activities were associated with management of the habitat. When there was motivation of hunting, there was motivation of management.

DE asked about the implications for countries whose territory extends to more than one flyway, and whether there were any ways of preventing double counting. DE wondered if perhaps having a federal system could help in this regard. The Consortium replied that DE and IT were the only two countries extending over two flyways. In the case of DE, the best information suggested a 50/50 split, and said that further guidance on this could be provided. In an ensuing question, DE wanted to know if the fact of being in two flyways might affect the measures, and whether it would be useful to have a discussion to identify if there were flyway-specific measures, given that there could be different ecological factors at play in different flyways. The Consortium answered that all the non-hunting measures should be the same across every country and in both flyways, and the main differences lay in the hunting regimes. The Consortium offered to work together with DE and IT authorities to identify specificities and engage with research teams in those countries.

BG had problems with their microphone and submitted a written note. It said that, according to the opinion of some experts, the discrepancy in the data concerning the Turtle Dove population is more likely due to the fact that the Common Breeding Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS) was not specifically designed to monitor Turtle Dove populations. For this reason, since 2022, a targeted national Turtle Dove monitoring scheme was being implemented in order to assess nesting densities. It was funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and carried out by the University of Forestry – Sofia in cooperation with experts from the State Forestry Enterprises. The ultimate objective of the national monitoring programme was to determine the size of the breeding population and the current annual growth rate. Data from this monitoring, conducted across 14 regions of the country and covering more than 450 survey points, showed that nesting density remained stable between 2022 and 2024, ranging from 10.2 to 10.9 nesting pairs per 100 ha. In 2025, however, monitoring at the same survey points recorded an increase to 16.3 nesting pairs per 100 ha. The results obtained through this targeted monitoring in suitable Turtle Dove habitats contradicted the data and trends reported by the PECBMS and indicated a positive population response following the reduction of the hunting bag in BG over recent years. BG therefore considered that these national efforts to assess Turtle Dove population trends in Bulgaria, together with the data collected in recent years, should be duly taken into account.

The Technical Update also omitted the fact that scientific studies had been conducted in BG to assess the productivity of the species during the periods 2017–2022 and 2023–2025. In particular, the most recent study, carried out in 2025 and based on the monitoring of 16 nests, found an average productivity of 3.24 fledged juveniles per nest over the entire breeding season. BG concluded that considerable efforts had therefore been made along the central-eastern flyway to assess productivity, and the BG authorities could provide these specific national data should the scientific consortium wish to examine them. In light of the apparent discrepancy between the targeted national monitoring results and those obtained under the Common Bird Species Monitoring Scheme, BG suggested that further discussion was needed at the level of the respective scientific teams. The Consortium commented briefly that the agreed approach was at the flyway level, and that local data from different areas should be representative of the variation that was known to occur across the range. For example, the productivity of 3.24 fledged juveniles/female/year was the highest ever recorded in the literature by some margin, and it was unlikely that such values could be found on a larger scale, given



the overall decline in population observed at the flyway level. The Consortium was nevertheless interested in this information provided by BG, and said that it would contact them to find out more about those studies.

IT stated that the TFRB recommendations were generally forwarded to regions, who hold the competence, and in 2025 only one region hunted (Sicily), so this should be seen as largely successful. It reminded the TF that the number of Turtle Dove hunted used to be close to 300,000, and now they were only around 1,500.

**BirdLife** complained that four years since the zero-take recommendation was first made, we were still witnessing a continuation of hunting activity and the recommendation not being applied across the flyway. This fact undermined the work of the TFRB so BirdLife hoped that the EC would take appropriate action. The current take in the CE flyway amounted to twice as many birds now as the quota allocated for the western flyway, which was inconceivable. Then, there was also the case of Malta that continued to authorise (illegally) some hunting during the spring migration.

**FACE-IT** suggested it was important to record which countries had not provided information by not responding to the questionnaires. For FACE-IT, it was also important to get national population trends from individual countries, to show the results of the habitat measures carried out. It also asked about the data for Serbia and North Macedonia, because they were important breeding countries for the flyway, and wanted to know when they would be included in the assessments. Finally, it remarked that all factors, not only hunting, should be considered to account for changes in demographic trends. The Scientific Consortium, in its reply, insisted on the flyway approach. On monitoring data, the Consortium answered that monitoring data from Serbia and North Macedonia were becoming available, and the PECBMS team were working on how to integrate those data into the system.

**BirdLife** asked for some clarification about the process. Even though the flyway approach was favoured, there were differences between what happened at the small scale and the larger scale, and one was not representative of the other. It insisted on the absence of evidence of recovery at the national level, and thought that it was not correct to reward some countries with hunting rights when not all countries were doing enough to bring recovery. The Consortium explained that their work as scientific advisors was not to judge performance. The point was that the agreed rules for quota allocation could penalise those MS that were investing below average by removing some rights to hunt, but in their work they did not use the language of 'rewarding' MS with hunting rights.

## **5. Non-hunting Key Actions – Habitat restoration interventions and proposal for integration into National Restoration Plans**

The Scientific Consortium (RSPB) introduced the background document on habitat restoration interventions and proposals for integration into National Restoration Plans (NRP). The presenter highlighted the opportunity offered by the preparation of NRPs and provided several examples of interventions identified in the list of Key Actions developed by the Consortium that could be incorporated into the NRPs. This would benefit the species in question across their distribution range, by increasing their productivity and/or survival, and therefore improving their conservation prospects.

In the discussion that ensued, **ES** welcomed the guidance materials and confirmed that public consultations on NRPs were underway. It reminded the TFRB that this was a highly complex exercise at national level, with a lot of consultation with different regions, authorities, public consultation and



stakeholders, but ES would do their best to include Key Action proposals in the time available. It stressed that the implementation of restoration commitments would require substantial financial resources, additional support from the EU, and realistic implementation frameworks.

The Chair acknowledged the challenges involved in developing NRPs and said that, if there is time for integration, the Commission services could help facilitate the work of the MS.

IE wanted to know if the Key Actions were season-specific or perhaps broken down by the relevant season (e.g., breeding, non-breeding). The Consortium replied that they were not broken down by season in the spreadsheets provided in order to avoid excessive complexity. However, the spreadsheet should direct the user to the Key Actions report which had sufficient detail on the pertinent season as well as other relevant information.

FACE-IT agreed that NRPs represented an important opportunity for integrating species conservation measures into broader habitat restoration policies. It could be useful for EC to communicate this need directly to MS so that they can integrate these measures into their plans. The Commission replied that the implementation of the Nature Directives and the NRR were obligations of the MS. There were regular meetings with MS working on NRPs through the parallel NRP Expert Group. The next meeting would take place on 1st July, and the Commission would present there the work done under TFRB on Key Actions and their integration into NRPs. However, the Commission recommended that Task Force members reach out to those teams within their own MS as well. The Commission will assess whether measures for Annex II species had been considered in NRPs during the review period following MS submission of their proposals in September.

## **6. Closure of the Meeting**

The Chair summarized the key points discussed and reiterated the importance of continued collaboration. She reiterated the scientific recommendations – for the western flyway the possibility to allow harvest up to 1.5% of the available population and for the Central and Eastern flyway a full ban on hunting in order to allow for the recovery of the species. She also insisted that MS should take equal efforts on implementing the habitat and non-habitat key actions. The Commission and Scientific Consortium would work on improving the questionnaire and the guidance provided, on aligning reporting systems with other existing international mechanisms where possible, on simplifying reporting requirements while maintaining comparability, on improving guidance on habitat measures and enforcement indicators, and on reviewing the future timing of Task Force meetings. The Chair informed about the considerations to update the Terms of Reference for the Task Force to ensure that all MS participate and allow for concluding TF recommendations to NADEG.

The Chair also highlighted that further discussions would continue regarding the criteria for maintaining hunting, the observed differences in population trends, the need to monitor the effectiveness of habitat interventions, and the integration of Key Actions into National Restoration Plans.

With this, the Chair thanked all participants for their contributions and closed the meeting.