



Report from the Wildlife Trafficking Workshop, Lelystad – 27 and 28 February 2020.

|Name of the author(s)|

Elisabete Dias Ramos (IMPEL)

John Visbeen (Expert Team Leader)

In Attendance

The list of participants is on Annex I.

Welcome and adoption of the agenda

Welcome from the hosts, which included a presentation about the Province of Flevoland by John Visbeen. Followed by the adoption of the agenda and a quick *tour de table*.

Presentations by each attending Member State on how the trade in captive bred is implemented in their national law

Each attending Member State (MS) was asked to give a short presentation on how the trade in captive bred is implemented in their national law. A summary of the presentations of each MS is as follows:

→ How was the implementation done?

Portugal: In Portuguese legislation, CITES, trade of wildlife and captive bred is regulated by law and related ministerial ordinance. ICNF is the principal management authority, scientific authority and lead of national enforcement group. Regulated by law is also the Bern Convention, Bonn Convention, Bird and Habitat Directives and additional regulation for the protection of the Iberian Wolf. The detention and prevention of the spread of exotic, alien and invasive species is also regulated by law.

For the keeping and trade of all the specimens which are under the above regulations, it is mandatory to have:

- 1) Legal proof of origin (all CITES listed specimens – annexes A, B and C - need to have EU certificates).
- 2) Reference for related marks of each specimen.
- 3) A registration and an annual update of the collections that need to have the following information:
 - a) Scientific species name and the number of individuals.
 - b) Date and place of acquisition.
 - c) Name, address and country of the provider.
 - d) Country of origin in case it is different from c.
 - e) Number of CITES document upon acquisition.
 - f) Date and place of transfer.

- g) Name, address and country of the receiver.
- h) Number of CITES-document upon delivery.
- i) Date of birth and number of offspring of the animal.
- j) Specifics of the kind and code of markings.
- k) Date of placing the markings.
- l) Date and place of perishing.
- m) Mark of each specimen.
- n) The name of the owner and its address and contacts.

Criminal penalties against nature, such as wildlife trafficking, live keeping, killing and capturing are issued in the Portuguese Penal Code.

Netherlands: It is mandatory to keep an administration for live captive bred species of:

- 1) Habitat Directive Annex IV, Bern Convention Annex II, Bonn Convention Annex I, apart from the species mentioned in article I of the Bird Directive.
- 2) CITES Base Directive Annex A, apart from the ones mentioned in Annex X of the Execution Directive.
- 3) CITES Base Directive Annex B, apart from birds with a seamless closed leg ring and animal species mentioned on a national list of Annex B animals that are very common.

Administration must contain:

- a) Scientific species name and the number of individuals.
- b) Date and place of acquisition.
- c) Name, address and country of the provider.
- d) Country of origin in case it is different from c.
- e) Number of CITES-document upon acquisition.
- f) Date and place of transfer.
- g) Name, address and country of the receiver.
- h) Number of CITES-document upon delivery.
- i) Date of birth and number of offspring of the animal.
- j) Specifics of the kind and code of markings.
- k) Date of placing the markings.
- l) Date and place of perishing.

Furthermore, the name of the owner of the administration is registered, the administration is complete, ordered in a logical sense and numbers of entries are consecutive.

Administration should be presented upon request by inspectors and should be easily clarified to the inspectors.

Administration is kept together with all other documents of proof, regarding transfer of the species in the administration.

Administration should be kept for at least three years after the species are gone.

Croatia: In Croatian legislation, trade and captive bred of species was prescribed in Nature Protection Act. This Act was regulated breeding of alien species (such as lizards and parrots) but also strictly

protected native species (such as goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*). Then came a new law called the Law on Prevention of the Introduction and Spread of Alien and Invasive Alien Species and Management.

Czech Republic: Included in laws and related legislation (Act. No. 114/1992 Coll. - Nature and Landscape Protection Act, Act. No. 100/2004 Coll. - Endangered Species Trade Act (CITES) and related regulations).

Slovakia: Act No. 15/2005 Coll. on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein and Decree of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic No. 110/2005 Coll., implementing certain provisions of the Act on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein.

Proving the source of the specimen: living specimens of mammals, birds and reptiles of Annex A species is done by the certificate of origin issued by District Offices. Choosing between applying for the CITES certificate or certificate of origin (national document). Information about parents and grandparents' certificate of origin accompanies the specimen.

Slovenia: These regulations are adopted on the basis of the law The Nature Conservation Act. The Council Regulation 338/97 and Commission Regulation ES 865/2006 have been implemented in Slovenian legal system. Both are implemented in conjunction with regulation on protection of trade in animal and plant species, briefly call it the Trade Regulation (the most important regulation for the trade in captive animals in Slovenian legislation).

Italy: All wild species naturally occurring in Italy are protected (Law No. 157/1992). National legislation allows the capture and use of 6 species as live decoys:

- Song Thrush (*Turdus philomenos*).
- Redwing (*T. iliacus*).
- Fieldfare (*T. pilaris*).
- Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*).
- Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*).
- Wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*).

Any huntable species can be used as decoy if captive bred. Mostly ducks, feral pigeons. There is no clear limit if captive bred. Captures of wild birds are not allowed since 2015. But because there is not limit of numbers of birds kept for live decoy, there is an increase in numbers.

The national Hunting law (157/ 1992) states in article 2 that all species of wildlife (with the exclusion of rats, mice, and voles) are protected. Bird hunting from permanent or temporary hides can be done with the use of Life decoys. 6 species (ranked according to popularity) can be captured.

Until 2015 provinces used to trap with nets and give for free the birds to hunters. Since 2015 the use of nets is forbidden. Before 2015 the use of nets was a derogation, but the justification for derogation were not considered acceptable by the EC. As no alternative to trapping with nets exist, no legal capturing of birds for live decoy happens in Italy.

Any other game species (if captive bred) can be theoretically used as decoy. In practical terms, beyond the six species mentioned above, only ducks (mallards, teals) and feral pigeons are used to attract ducks and woodpigeons.

It is difficult to know how many birds are used as live decoys. The law set some limits to the number of birds each hunter can have and use as a live decoy: 10 individuals of each of the 6 species (to a max of 40 individuals) if wild caught, but no limit are set for captive bred live decoys.

Since no birds are legally captured since 2015, all new birds have to be captive bred. Informal sources tell us that each hunter is now having more birds than in the past as there is no legal limit and is a 'status symbol' to have many birds. Lipu has launched an analysis of the regional legislations and on the numbers of live decoys held by the hunting communities.

Malta: Presented the differences between protected and huntable species. In Malta there are 40 huntable species including 2 species which can be trapped via derogation (Song Trush, Golden Plover). Any other species (although cannot be trapped) can be kept in captivity or used as live decoy. So, it is common to see Turtle Doves, Common Starling, Common Quail, in aviaries, in cages on the ground etc. There is no restriction on numbers, kept, used or any registration. Turtle Doves are classified as 'vulnerable' on IUCN red list.

As scope of the issue the following topics were mentioned:

2014 – 2017 trapping derogation allowing trapping of finches – still ongoing illegally – huge demand on live finches to be used as decoys.

Whole trade of illegally caught wild finches arriving to Malta – at times fitted with closed rings

A whole plethora of new species started appearing in captivity over past years, all fitted with closed rings and somehow imported illegally: Flamingos (various species), Black-winged Stilts, Eurasian Hoopoe, Blue Rock Thrush, White Wagtails, etc. – origins from Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, etc.

→ Is there extra national regulation or not?

Portugal: In Portugal it's not allowed to capture specimens of fauna that occurs in the wild (except in the hunt season). No wild specimen can be included in a private collection. Only irrecoverable specimens that were treated in the rescue centres can be kept in legalized zoological parks for educational purposes.

In Portuguese legislation, CITES, trade of wildlife and captive bred is regulated by law and related ministerial ordinance. ICNF is the principal management authority, scientific authority and lead of national enforcement group. Regulated by law is also the Bern Convention, Bonn Convention, Bird and Habitat Directives and additional regulation for the protection of the Iberian Wolf. The detention and prevention of the spread of exotic, alien and invasive species is also regulated by law.

Netherlands: It is mandatory to keep an administration for live captive bred species of:

- 1) Habitat Directive Annex IV, Bern Convention Annex II, Bonn Convention Annex I, apart from the species mentioned in article I of the Bird Directive.

- 2) CITES Base Directive Annex A, apart from the ones mentioned in Annex X of the Execution Directive.
- 3) CITES Base Directive Annex B, apart from birds with a seamless closed leg ring and animal species mentioned on a national list of Annex B animals that are very common.

Croatia: There are some other Regulations from the additional regulations, but they are quite outdated and they are pending amendments.

Czech Republic: Yes, Nature and Landscape Protection Act (prohibition of killing, capturing, keeping etc. of wild birds and specially protected species, exceptions from these prohibitions only by a decision of the Nature Conservation Authority, conditions of keeping and breeding similar to CITES). Endangered Species Trade Act (CITES) – (registration of selected species, conditions of marking specimens, managing of CITES Register). In the presentation, I missed to mention an existence of “risk list of species” (for specimen of the species below, it is necessary to submit a paternity test for an acquisition of an exemption from the ban on commerce): *Amazona brasiliensis*, *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, *Accipiter gentilis*, *Amazona pretrei*, *Amazona rhodocorytha*, *Astrochelys radiata*, *Pyxis arachnoides*, *Pyxis planicauda*, *Malacochersus tornieri*.

Slovakia: Stricter domestic measures:

- Proving the origin (source) of specimen.
- Proving the way of acquisition of specimen.
- Record keeping registration.
- Marking.
- Treatment of selected dead specimens:
 - Selected *Felidae* species.

Slovenia: In addition to the regulation mentioned in the previous point (trade regulation), for wild animals in captivity are also being implemented in national legislation the following:

- Rules on the labelling of captive wild animals.
- Ordinance on zoo and zoo like space.
- Decree on protected wild life species, etc.

These rules specify labelling animals, the appropriate living conditions, the rules of conduct and wildlife protection regime.

Italy: The national hunting law puts the regional governments in charge of ruling on the wildlife breeding centres, however the national government have not given any guidelines. Any bird of European species can be kept in captivity if captive bred (i.e. if it has a closed ring).

Breeding centres are authorised by the Region /Province, but no clear standards exist on size of the center, of the cages, health and sanitary facilities, experience of the breeder, etc. In most cases (but not all!) the BCs need to keep records of birth, death, sales, acquisitions of birds Only in 2 regions the data have to be sent to the Regional authorities.

The closed rings (mostly in aluminium, sometimes with colours) are provided (at a cost) by private associations. Most rings are distributed by one national (FOI) but in several cases by regional associations. There seems no interest in checking if the number of rings bought by a breeder are

congruous with the number of breeding pairs. The sizes are set by the national association (FOI) and available on line.

No regional regulation calls for a stud book or proof of parenthood for the new born, simply a declaration by the breeder.

→ How are the foot rings regulated?

Portugal: Marking is regulated in article 24.º of Law-Decree n.º 121/2017, of 20 September, which reads as follows:

1. Where technically possible, individual marking of specimens of fauna species included in Annexes A, B or C to the Regulation, in particular with microchips, close rings, earrings or tattoos, shall be mandatory and to be carried out under the supervision of the management authority.
2. For the purposes of the preceding paragraph, the marking shall be considered not technically possible where, due to the characteristics or circumstance of the specimen, there is no technology to allow it without the destruction or serious damage of the specimen or in cases where such marking may result in damage to the health or well-being of the specimens alive, in accordance with a document submitted by an expert duly recognised by the management authority.
3. It is for the principal management authority to exempt species from the marking requirement referred to in paragraph 1 where it considers that they are not capable of marking, in accordance with the provisions of the preceding paragraph.
4. The obligation to individually mark specimens referred to in paragraph 1 shall not apply to specimens of species included in Annexes B or C to the Regulation acquired prior to the entry into force of Law-Decree n.º 211/2009, 3 September. However, it is maintained the obligation of any type of marking or documentary record, such as photograph, open ring or other authorised by the territorially competent management authority, for the purposes of registration provided for in Article 17.
5. The marking of specimens shall comply with Articles 64.º to 68.º of the Implementing Regulation, without prejudice to the main management authority being able to determine the adoption of other specific marking methods which best fit the specific case.
6. Individual marking, in an inviolable and easily identifiable manner, must be carried out by marks acquired from entities duly accredited for that purpose by the principal management authority.
7. The marks referred to in the preceding paragraph must contain the information determined, in order, by the principal management authority.

Netherlands: A seamless closed leg ring is mandatory for all birds mentioned in article I of the Bird Directive and CITES Base Directive Annex A, apart from the ones mentioned in Annex X of the Execution Directive.

The maximum size of a seamless closed leg ring per species is provided in the law.

Seamless closed leg rings have to fulfil the following requirements:

- a) Rings with an inside diameter of 2.5-2.9 mm are made from metal with an anodized color layer and are provided with a breaking zone, so that they snap when they are stretched.
- b) Rings with an inside diameter smaller than 2.5 mm or larger than 2.9 mm are made from metal with an anodized color layer or are made of colored plastic and are of such quality so that they snap when they are stretched.

As an exception rings for parrots and birds of prey can be made from stainless steel.

The layer of color of a leg rings is different for every year that the ring may be fitted.

The applicant can only fit the ring on a bird that is born and bred in the Netherlands of the species that he applied for a ring for.

An applicant is not permitted to transfer the ring to someone else. A property exemption is required to keep and trade in Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*. This exemption is only provided after the keeper has provided DNA-fingerprints of both the parents and the offspring to prove the offspring is bred in captivity.

A microchip is mandatory for all live captive bred vertebrate species mentioned on CITES Base Directive Annex A other than birds.

Only when it is impossible to put the right size of a seamless closed leg ring on a bird, a keeper can be allowed to use a bigger size ring or mark the bird with a microchip. This can only be done with prior approval of the CITES MA.

It is forbidden to keep primates and cats that are on CITES Base Directive Annex A and several large species on Annex B.

Trade is permitted for all captive-bred CITES Base Directive Annex C and D listed animals and birds, except the ones mentioned in article I of the Bird Directive.

The minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality has allocated six federations to provide seamless closed leg rings on his behalf.

Federation	Based in	Code
Algemene Nederlandse Bond van Vogelhouders	Zutphen	AB
Kleindier Liefhebbers Nederland	Utrecht	(EE) NL-H
Nederlandse Bond van Vogelliefhebbers	Bergen op Zoom	NB
Parkieten Sociëteit	Arnhem	PS
Vereniging Aviornis International Nederland	Wijchen	AO
Vereniging Belangenbehartiging Europese Cultuurvogel	Eindhoven	BEC

These federations only supply rings of which the supplier guarantees in writing that they are according to specifications.

Seamless closed leg rings contain at least the following inscriptions:

- NL.
- The inner diameter in tenths of a mm.
- The last two digits of the year in which it is allowed to be fitted.
- Federation code.

- Breeder number.
- Serial number.

As an exemption rings of Kleindier Liefhebbers Nederland lack the breeder number.

Leg rings have to be applied for by completely filling in and sending back a signed form that is made available by the federations.

The federations decline requests if:

- a) It is not plausible that the applicant breeds the species that he is requesting leg rings for.
- b) If there is a suspicion that the applicant is going to transfer the rings to someone else or is going to use it on birds bred outside of the Netherlands.

The applicant specifies per species how many rings he would like to receive. The number of rings is in proportion to the expected number of offspring.

Croatia: The permit for the breeding of strictly protected species the species must be marked with a seamless ring (if it is a bird) or a microchip in other species.

Strictly protected species remain regulated by the Nature Protection Act, while alien species are regulated by the new law. This law permits the cultivation and trade of alien species.

Czech Republic: Individually labelled seamless closed rings. Rings must be commercially manufactured for this purpose and must be stamped with an indication consisting of the letters CZ and a six-digit serial number assigned by the Ministry of the Environment. Rings must be obtained from a licensed manufacturer or distributor. The licensed manufacturer or distributor is required to maintain a register of manufactured or distributed rings, which includes the identification of the person to whom the ring was assigned. The data from the register shall be made available by the manufacturer or licensed distributor to the Ministry and to the Inspectorate.

Slovakia: Birds foot rings: only from a licensed manufacturer or distributor licensed by the Slovak Ministry of Environment.

On December 2017, the State Nature Conservancy became a licensed distributor (manufacturer from Czech Republic). The distribution / production of foot rings without license implies a penalty from 80 to 16 600 Euros.

Slovenia: Animals may be labelled by authorized persons with at least the professional title of doctor of veterinary medicine, a veterinary license and, on the basis of a decision of the Environmental Agency of the Republic of Slovenia (ARSO), entered in the register of wildlife markers.

Birds that are marked with closed rings with the society identification number and the breeder's mark may also be affixed to the breeder by a permanent mark. The breeder is obliged to notify the marker within ten working days of the tag being affixed, and the breeder shall enter the animals on the record.

The tagger may only use tags provided by its authorized supplier, or bird breeders may only supply closed rings with the association's registration number and the breeder's mark only to the supplier registered with the ARSO.

In captivity, hatching birds are marked with closed rings. Open rings indicate birds that cannot be identified with closed rings or microchips.

Mammals, reptiles and birds not marked with closed rings are marked with microchips. However, microchips are not marked: birds marked with closed rings; animals weighing less than 200 grams or not yet grown to that weight; turtles having a lower straight shell (plastron) shorter than 100 millimetres. If microchip tagging is not possible and open ring tagging is appropriate, mammals and reptiles can also be tagged. The part of the body that wears the ring must be intact, otherwise it is considered that the animal is not marked.

If none of the forms of marking described above is appropriate, the animal may also be labelled descriptively by documenting those characteristics by which the animal is identifiable.

The Ministry (ARSO) keeps a record of markings, markers and suppliers. The records shall include information on:

- The marking (type of animals, marks awarded, description of the characteristics of the animals where appropriate, date of marking, date of entry in the register, marker, number of the certificate of identification).
- Re-marking (reason for re-marking, authorization number for re-marking, re-marking granted, date of re-marking, date of entry in the register, marker).
- The marker (name, address, date and number of the decision on entry in the register).
- Suppliers and supply of labels (name and surname of the natural person, name of the legal entity, address, date and number of the decision for entry in the records, labels supplied to the markers and breeders).

Italy: Use of DNA analysis alongside closed rings. In most cases (but not all) the breeding centres need to keep records of birth, death, sales, acquisitions of birds, but only in 2 regions the data has to be sent to the Regional authorities.

→ Which competent authority / agency does the inspections?

Portugal: The Institute for Nature Conservation and Forestry (ICNF) is the competent authority in these matters.

Netherlands: The federations keep an administration by using an automated system provided by the minister. Data that is administrated are:

- a) The species of birds which leg rings are applied for.
- b) For captive bred CITES Base Directive Annex A species, the number of provided seamless closed leg rings, the ring size, the unique numbers on the leg ring and the number of parent couples.
- c) For other species, the number of provided seamless closed leg rings, the ring size, the unique numbers on the leg rings.
- d) The date the rings were allotted to the applicant.
- e) The necessary data to identify the applicant.

The administration is kept for a minimum of 5 years.

The federations provide the minister with all the necessary data upon request in a format decided by the minister.

Croatia: The inspection body is the State Inspectorate for Nature Protection.

Czech Republic: The Czech Environmental Inspectorate: (inspections, controls, imposing fines and measures, seizing and confiscating specimens), Customs Authorities: (supervision over goods, performing checks of the specimens at the time of import, export, re-export and transit, seizing specimens), The Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection of the Czech Republic: (Scientific Authority, providing expert assistance, co-operating with other Authorities).

Slovakia: The Slovak Environmental Inspectorate is the competent authority.

Slovenia: The Environmental and Nature inspection supervise compliance with the provisions of the regulations. The observance of certain regulations regarding the labelling of animals and the living conditions are also monitored by veterinary inspectors and environmental supervisors.

The control of compliance with the provisions of certain regulations relating to the work areas of other ministries is supervised by the inspectors responsible for supervising these work areas (market inspectors, agricultural inspectors, forestry inspectors, customs, etc.).

The implementation of legal procedures is the responsibility of the Environmental Agency of the Republic of Slovenia.

The sanctions for most violations of the mentioned regulations are provided in the Nature Conservation Act and Trade regulation.

Italy: The regional government / province.

Breakout groups Session I - Best practice and loopholes in implementation based on the previous presentations

The key points of this breakout session were the following:

- Legal framework:
 - Complicated legislation.
 - Strict rules vs. very soft rules.
 - Different implementation of some directives.
 - Different regulations regarding seizures and punishment.
 - Different levels of protection of species that are not listed in.
 - The annexes of a convention or directive are MS ratify.
- Organisational matters:
 - Different responsibilities and different authorities in charge.
 - Different levels of training and experience.
 - Transmission of information.
 - Make it easier to know who to contact in different MS.
- Proposals to address the loopholes:
 - Availability of centralized databases.
 - Secure, unique and uniform marking systems.
 - Guidelines to the marking system.
 - Registration, licensing, marking.
 - Harmonized documentation.

- Achieve Public awareness and recognition.
- Acceptance and support by public and decision-makers.
- Judiciary.

- New challenges:
 - Trade on Internet.
 - Wild vs. Bred in captivity or artificially propagated.
 - New species groups in trade (timber, sharks).

Closed foot rings and nanochips presentations

João Loureiro from ICNF, Portugal, has delivered a presentation about [marking as a tool to enforce traceability in the EU](#) for birds, mammals, amphibians, live reptiles, crocodile's skin, timber, musical instruments, caviar labelling, and others.

Jamie Bouhuys from NVWA, Netherlands, has shown the workshop participants how the Dutch Database works for the control of the licenses on breeders, proof of origin and the foot rings or chips.

Breakout groups Session II - How to build up the Network and Ideas for new projects

Group 1: How to build up the Network – feedback to the group by Alfred Dreijer. The key points were as follows:

- Experts can share their own contacts with the ET to build the Network further.
- Ask National Coordinators for a list of experts on the topics of the projects running under the IMPEL Nature Protection Expert Team.
- Plan in advance and have a draft agenda when opening the registration for the project workshops / meetings.

Group 2: Ideas for new projects – feedback to the group by Jamie Bouhuys. The two main ideas that surfaced from this discussion were:

- Conservation regulation and welfare regulation should be more aligned with each other.
- Invasive (alien) species – Alfred Dreijer and João Loureiro to work on the ToR for the project.

Presentations with updates and recent developments by members and partner organisations

- Nicholas Barbara from BirdLife delivered a presentation with updates regarding the [latest developments and successes of BirdLife International](#).

- Gilbert Haber from ERA, Malta, delivered a presentation on an ongoing IKB case. However, since the case was / is still under investigation, this presentation cannot be shared.
- Florian Debève from Traffic / WWF delivered a presentation about the [EU Wildlife Cybercrime Project](#) which aims to improve the understanding on cyber enabled wildlife crime and wildlife trafficking within the postal and parcel supply chains in the EU as well as deliver tailored tools and training to EU MS enforcement staff. Facilitating and supporting intelligence-led investigations and operations to address cyber enabled wildlife crime and engaging the business sector leadership of online technology companies in the EU to collaborate in combatting wildlife crime is also in the scope of the project.
- Wendy Sprangers from NVWA, Netherlands, delivered a presentation on the [Internet Locard's Principle](#) and what should be taken into consideration when performing an internet inspection.
- Mr. Heesakkers from the Netherlands, guest speaker from the Bird Market delivered a presentation about the [Zwolle Bird Market history](#) to set the scene for the joint visit.
- Jamie Bouhuys from NVWA, Netherlands, delivered a presentation focused on the [Inspections of Bird markets, traders and breeders](#) in the Netherlands.

Conclusions / Final Considerations

The workshop shows that it is important to exchange information about implementation, regulation, *modus operandi* according to the obligations and use of closed foot rings and regulation according to captive bred. There are differences between Member States which hinders an effective inspection of the trade of birds. Because of the workshop the inspectors and participants present have built on their network, therefore the contact between Member States and finding the right responsible colleagues in a specific Member State will be much easier in the future and it is important to extend this network of experts.

During the workshop, in Lelystad, it became very clear that it is possible to tamper with closed foot rings. It is possible to use the closed foot rings to legalize nest links that are taken from wild nests. When captive bred birds are important from other member states it is not so easy to check documents at authenticity. Inspectors are confronted with plastic and unknown rings. It is important that the check can be done easily and quickly. In practice this is difficult, starting with finding the organization of a person in the member state.

During the workshop, loopholes and challenges were discussed and how to tackle them. According to the legal framework, participants mentioned that the legislation is complicated. Participants have also pointed out that sometimes they see very strict rules and other times softer rules. It seems that the directives are implemented in different ways in the different Member States (MS). We see different regulations according to seizures and punishment. Regulation of closed foot rings and the system / procedures that are used in each MS and that the information is shared and available to all.

Participants also mentioned different levels of protections of species. A clearer approach towards wild birds vs birds bred in captivity is also important to look if there are new species groups in the trade.

The participants of the workshop recommended a review of the legislation on closed foot rings in all Member States. It was recommended to start with the selection and this selection should be discussed further.

During the workshop we also looked at the organizational site. In the MS we see that according to the ringing of birds there are different responsibilities and there are different authorities in charge. For inspectors it is difficult to find the right organization or responsible person in other MS for further information or to check documentation. The situation now is that there are different levels of training and experiences of inspectors in different Member States. Therefore, practical enforcement training to share knowledge about closed foot rings, DNA analysis, new techniques, *modus operandi* and experiences in successful approaches is highly recommended. Additionally, new challenges like the trade on the internet and the effective use of this information to identify new crime cases should be part of these training sessions.

It should be easier to find the right person for exchange of information. IMPEL's Nature Protection Expert Team could work on a list of organizations involved and contact persons. By building up a network it should be easier to contact the right person within the Member States.

The workshop participants mentioned a few proposals to address the loopholes and to improve the collaboration between Member States. First, it was recommended a secure unique and uniform marking system for all MS. This could also mean that the principles/methods that are used for marking are equal. This system should be harmonized so that the origin of marking is clear at once. Therefore, it is necessary to work on guidelines for marking and inspection and to look and compare the good practices. For example, Belgium has implemented a good system to verify and validate the authenticity of the foot rings.

Based on their experience, inspectors have recommended the use of steel closed foot rings. Besides the guidelines they recommend an atlas (digital/app) of the European closed foot rings. Sizes of the rings, marks on the rings should be clear and easily available in this atlas, especially when it is not possible to further harmonize the systems. Furthermore, in the guidelines and in the atlas there should be a list of species that can be easily bred in captivity and also a list of birds for which it is hardly possible to have successful breeding captivity. Especially for this last situation DNA analysis should be used to check on infringements.

Uniformity on the European level starts with uniformity within MS themselves. For instance, in Italy there is regional legislation for breathing centres. Therefore, in the national action plan an important action is to organize uniformity of this regional legislation on breathing centres. In the action plan in Italy also the use of DNA analysis beside the use of closed foot rings is mentioned.

Registration licensing marking should be coordinated on the European level. IMPEL became aware that EUROring is an organization that is also working on this topic. It is important to contact EUROring to check on their activities and to discuss what their activities are and to look at what activities IMPEL can undertake to improve the work of inspectors and enforcement officers.

For inspectors, the availability of a centralized database is important, so it would be easier to check the birds and to verify information or documents. According to the documents it is also recommended to harmonize the forms. This also makes the work of the inspectors better. Further harmonisation of the system to exchange information is recommended by the inspectors.

Moreover, information about breeding centres in the European Union is important. What is the status, is there a license, what are numbers used for closed foot rings, etc. An indication of the number per species bred or held in captivity could be used for inspection purposes and probably for further investigation .

To improve the work of the inspectors based on the experiences and recommendations mentioned above and to work towards a better unified method of ringing and documentation there is the need of support from decision makers to invest capacity.

→ Conclusions for follow up of the project:

1. Work on an atlas of the European closed foot rings. Sizes of the rings, marks on the rings should be clear and easily available. In the atlas (or in guidelines) there should be a list of species that can be easily bred in captivity and a list of birds for which it is hardly possible to have successful breeding captivity. Additionally, regulation of closed foot rings and the system / procedures that are used in each MS and that the information is shared should be easily available to all.
2. IMPEL's Nature Protection Expert Team could work on a list of organizations (authorities, breeding centres, NGO's) involved and contact persons (IMPEL-ESIX). By building up a network it should be easier to contact the right person in the Member States.
3. Practical enforcement training to share knowledge about closed foot rings, DNA analysis, new techniques, *modus operandi* and experiences in successful approaches is highly recommended. New challenges like the trade on the internet and the effective use of this information to identify new crime cases should be part of these training sessions.
4. Review of the legislation on closed foot rings in all Member States. It was recommended to start with the selection and this selection should be further discussed.
5. Contact EUROring to check on their activities and to identify or check the right follow up activities for IMPEL to improve the work of inspections and prosecution.

Annex I – Workshop Agenda



IMPEL Nature Protection Expert Team

**EU Action Plan Against Wildlife Trafficking
Workshop & Joint Inspection**

27 - 29 February 2020

Lelystad & Zwolle, Netherlands

~~ First day ~~

➔ **Location:** Provincie Flevoland, Visarenddreef 1, 8232 JN Lelystad

Thursday, 27 th February 2020		
9.00 - 9.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome - Adoption of the Agenda 	John Visbeen
9.15 - 10.30	<p>Short presentations by each attending member state how the trade in captive bred is implemented in their national law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How the implementation was done - Extra national regulation or not - How are the footrings regulated - Which agency does the inspections 	All
10.30 - 10.50 Coffee break		
10.50 - 12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best practice and loopholes in implementation based on the presentations. - Breakout groups. 	All
12.00 - 13.00 Lunch		
13.00 - 14.00	Feedback to the group from the breakout groups and discussion	All
14.00 - 15.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to proceed with the exchange of information between agencies - Breakout groups 	All
15.00 - 15.30 Coffee break		

15.00 - 16.00	The history of the Zwolle Bird Market	Guest speaker of the Bird Market: Dhr Heesakkers
16.00 - 17.30	Workshop: Closed footprints and nanochips	Jaap Reijngoud Local or foreign speakers on this topic
19.00 Dinner		

~~ Second day ~~

➔ Location: Provincie Flevoland, Visarendreef 1, 8232 JN Lelystad

Friday, 28 th February 2020		
9.00 - 10.30	<p>IMPEL Nature Protection Expert Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing projects 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning Tool (NIRAM) - IMPEL-ESIX - Wildlife Trafficking - Hunting Tourism - BIOVAL - GreenForce • Building up the network of Nature Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breakout groups • Brainstorm for new project proposals for 2021 and beyond <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breakout groups 	Elisabete Dias Ramos Jaap Reijngoud João Loureiro Gisela Holzgraefe John Visbeen Cristian Trupina Alfred Dreijer
10.30 - 11.00 Coffee break		
11.00 - 12.00	Feedback to the group from the breakout groups and discussion	All
12.00 - 13.00 Lunch		
13.00 - 14.00	Recent developments in the various projects that are fed back to the Expert team.	Willem v.d. Bosse (Birdlife) Eleonora Panella (IWAF) Gilbert Haber (Malta)

14.00 - 15.00	Presentation on how to do an internet inspection	Dutch Police
15.00 - 15.30 Coffee break		
15.30 - 17.00	Presentation of the NVWA on inspecting Bird markets and breeders	Jamie Bouhuys (NVWA)
19.00 Dinner		

~~ Third day ~~

 Location: Zwolle Bird Market

Saturday, 29th February 2020		
9.30 - 12.00	Joint inspection on the Bird market in Zwolle with the NVWA; https://zwollevogelmarkt.nl/english/ https://english.nvwa.nl/	
Farewell Lunch and Departure		

Kind regards,
John Visbeen
Cristian Trupina
Alfred Dreijer

Annex II – List of participants

First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Country	27/02/2020	28/02/2020	29/02/2020
				Signature	Signature	Signature
Alfred	Dreijer	Province of Drenthe	Netherlands			
Cristian	Trupina	National Environmental Guard + Impel	Romania			
Darja	Pajtlar	Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for the Environment and Spatial Planning	Slovenia			
Elisabete	Dias Ramos	IMPEL	IMPEL Secretariat			
Ellen	Greve	IMPEL	IMPEL Secretariat			
Frederico	de Freitas Lobo	Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF)	Portugal			
Gilbert	Haber	Environment and Resources Authority	Malta			
João	Bastos Loureiro	Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF)	Portugal			
Nicolai Bolt				pro. Flevoland (nature 2019)	NL	

First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Country	27/02/2020	28/02/2020	29/02/2020
				Signature	Signature	Signature
John	Visbeen	Province of Flevoland	Netherlands			
Matthias	Leonhard	European Commission	Belgium	CANCELED		
Nancy	Isarin	IMPEL	IMPEL	CANCELED		
Nuno	Saavedra	Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF)	Portugal			
Nicholas	Barbara	BirdLife Malta	Malta			
Roman	Antoška	Slovak Environmental Inspectorate	Slovakia			
Simon	Rakuljić Zelov	Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for the environment and spatial planning	Slovenia			
Tanja	Šurbat	State Inspectorate	Croatia			
Umberto	Gallo-Orsi	LIPU / BirdLife Italy	Italia	CANCELED		
Zbynek	Maryska	Czech Environmental Inspectorate	Czech Republic			
Jamie	Bouhuys	NWA	Netherlands			
FLORIAN	DEBÈVE	TRAFFIC/WWF	BELGIUM			