

Side Event World of Hunting and Nature Exhibition 2021  
CIC-ELO – Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September

**Protecting small fauna in fields and meadows:  
Best practices and management efforts in Europe**

For several decades, the agricultural plains have seen a dramatic decline in the number of small wildlife in fields and meadows. The European Landowners' Organization (ELO), together with the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), are delighted to host a session together during the World of Hunting and Nature Exhibition 2021 to open the discussion on durable approaches to tackle these issues and to show how farmers and managers of territories are already or could be main actors to restore biodiversity.

During a first session we will inform you about the declining biodiversity of fields and meadows in Europe and how the European Union started to react by adopting nature legislations and by developing biodiversity strategies. We will have a look at the most important management experimented practices to protect small wildlife in the fields and meadows, discuss the role of hunting and study the increasing populations of predators and their effects on small wildlife of fields and meadows. We will also look forward to the new CAP just adopted and the role farmers could play in the protection of small wildlife.

A second session will go deeper into the opportunities of a new European agro-biodiversity label, called Agri-LIFE and initiated by ELO. Inspired by the success of the Wildlife Estates Label, ELO wants to focus more specifically on agriculture through rural and farms lands. It will reward farmers delivering high-quality efforts and results in improving agro-biodiversity conditions through best and exemplary practices and management around ambitious objectives that are both economically and socially viable and promote the restoration of biodiversity and the environment. It will also anticipate movement towards regenerative agriculture and promotes innovation. Doing so, it will converge actions of the revised CAP, the Biodiversity EU strategy & the EU Green Deal and create a recognized network mobilizing all operating forces. During this session we discuss how such a label can reflect and contribute to different components of these strategies.

## **PROGRAM**

9.30 – 9.40 **Welcome**

### **Session 1 Small wildlife of fields and meadows in Europe**

9.40 – 10.00 **Presentation publication ‘Small wildlife of fields and meadows in Europe’ (20’)**

*Jurgen Tack, Scientific Director ELO*

10.00 – 10.20 **The role of Agri-environmental Measures (20’)**

*Fondation François Sommer*

10.20 – 11.00 **Panel discussion (40’)**

11.00 – 11.10 **Coffee Break**

### **Session 2 Labelling agro-biodiversity in Europe**

11.10 – 11.30 **Presentation AgriLIFE Label (20’)**

*Alain Scriban, Special advisor, ELO*

**11.30 – 11.50 Agro-Biodiversity labeling: Supporting regenerative agriculture and innovation within the EU strategies (20’)**

11.50 – 12.30 **Panel discussion (40’)**

12.30 – 13.30 **Lunch (TBC)**

## **Session 1: Small wildlife of fields and meadows in Europe**

The decline in small wildlife populations is caused by multiple practices including crop intensification, agricultural land consolidation, use of pesticides, urbanisation etc. We will take a closer look at agricultural production techniques, study the effect of grazing and the use of fertilisers and pesticides. We will also discuss the role of hunting and study the increasing populations of predators and their effects on the small wildlife of fields and meadows.

Once the causes of the decline of these small wildlife species of fields and meadows are known we will have a look at the most important management practices to protect the small wildlife in the fields and meadows. This includes habitat related management: hedges, grassed strips and wildlife fallow strips by providing refuge areas and additional food resources to generate small wildlife recovery. Next to habitat management we will look at management practices at the species level, including the regulation of predators and artificial feeding. We will also inform you on the importance of guardianship and how the “Wildlife Estates” label can play a role in the much-needed public recognition towards private landowners.

In order to encourage the implementation of voluntary actions in favour of the environment in agricultural areas, the CAP has launched the programme of Agri-Environmental Measures (AEM) based on multiannual contracts. These allow for the implementation of developments on the edges and within the crops that increase the carrying capacity of the plains, i.e. the capacity of a territory (and its habitats) to accommodate a certain density of individuals for each species.

## **Session 2: A Label for agro-biodiversity**

Thanks to its experience of nearly 20 years in the field and its ability to bring together wide networks of stakeholders, the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) wishes, through the AgriLIFE project to award high-quality efforts and results from farmers and create a sustainable and recognised network able to mobilise all operating forces to meet the challenge of improving agrobiodiversity conditions on European farms.

It is the first-ever pan-European Label with the ambition to draw a common methodology to assess the agro-biodiversity conditions of European Territories. Doing so, it should help to better take into account communication around best and innovative practices and could feed some useful experience in national debates around certification.

Numerous Actions of the EU Green Deal and the EU biodiversity strategy complemented with the next CAP are supposed to shape the future of the agricultural sector and the food chain in general. These often overly theoretical and arithmetical targets lose sight of the pragmatic, and bottom-up approach that is essential for successful policies.

Objectives of a new agri-biodiversity label:

- Reward and acknowledge the most exemplary and high biodiversity farms and farmlands in Europe through communication instruments and promotion of best practices. It could also be applied to few projects out of Europe if they are also recognised as part of most exemplary farms and farmlands within the ELO network
- Promote best know-how and practices in the uptake 4 flagships eco-schemes: Agroforestry, agro-ecology, precision farming, carbon farming
- Create a network aggregating strategic thinking and know-how in the sector of agriculture and environmental resources preservation
- Elaborate a tangible bottom-up set of criteria as well as guidelines to deliver on targets easy to implement for the farmer community
- Map existing successful initiatives at national/regional local level