

Program

Virtual workshop
series on the new
EFSA birds and mammals
guidance document

1st Topic: Focal species derivation for birds

March 14, 2024 | 9:00 – 15:00 CET



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(*Luscinia svecica*,
breeding season)

09:00

Welcome & Introduction

09:30 – 10:55

How to find a suitable study area for a focal species study?

The recently revised EFSA guidance document for birds and mammals highlights the need to put more effort in the identification of the most vulnerable species per feeding guild as the most appropriate focal species (FS). It is now emphasised that not only prevalent and abundant species with a higher frequency of occurrence (FO) are to be considered, but also rare and/or more locally distributed species. A low abundance should not generally eliminate a species from consideration. A vulnerable species which is infrequently observed but nevertheless clearly present may be considered a more appropriate FS for the risk assessment, and more protective of similar species, than a less vulnerable species with a higher occurrence. Hence, already the selection of the study area to conduct a focal species study is crucial for including all relevant species.

20 min **Presentation**

10 min **Questions and Answers**

30 min **Discussion in break out groups**

25 min **Presentation of discussion results**

11:00 – 12:30

Factors to consider when conducting a focal species field study

The instructions in the revised EFSA guidance document for birds and mammals regarding the selection of focal species aim to avoid missing the worst case in terms of vulnerability and exposure of potential focal species. Hence, the requirements should be sufficiently addressed in a field study to achieve and descriptively show that the worst case is targeted and covered by the study. While these requirements for higher tier studies have been included in the guidance document, a clear methodology was not proposed, regarding the assessment of e.g. agricultural practice, food availability and focal species assessments. The objective would be to agree early on field methodologies to avoid inconsistent and variable interpretation of methodologies and results.

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20 min **Presentation**

10 min **Questions and Answers**

30 min **Discussion in break out groups**

30 min **Presentation of discussion result**

12:30 – 13:00

Lunch break

13:00 – 14:30

How to include vulnerability as criterion in focal species selection

The revised EFSA guidance document for birds and mammals emphasises vulnerability as criterion rather than prevalence for FS selection. Weyers et al. (2022) suggest to rank FS candidates according to their expected magnitude of exposure by calculating a species-specific daily dietary dose (DDD). With this, species with a potentially high exposure would be ranked as potentially more vulnerable and are identified as candidates for focal species. The DDD is calculated using – among others – the estimated ‘proportion of diet an individual obtains from the (potentially) treated crop’ (PT). A real PT is assessed through a radio-tracking field study, but not for all species such field data are available. Here, we present a proposal on how to obtain a PT surrogate in order to rank potential FS species according to their vulnerability.

20 min **Presentation**

10 min **Questions and Answers**

30 min **Discussion in break out groups**

30 min **Presentation of discussion results**

14:30 – 15:00

Conclusion & wrap-up

15:00

End of the workshop

The focus of the workshop lies on jointly discussing possible solutions for addressing the requirements set by the EFSA birds and mammals guidance document on the risk assessment for birds and mammals (2023) in order to reach a consensus about a concept that is practicable and acceptable for all contributors. Therefore, each session will start with a short plenary presentation that outlines new requirements and provides proposals on how to address them. Afterwards participants will discuss in sub-groups. The results of these discussions will be presented and discussed subsequently in the plenary.

