



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL GAME COUNCILS

Office of N.A.R.G.C. Compensation Fund Administrator

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8 November 2018

TO/ All Regional Game Councils

Re: Survey to determine the current prevalence of lead shot in the gizzards of Ducks in Ireland.

Dear Colleague,

You will be aware of the moves afoot towards banning lead from wetlands and indeed much more, by the European Commission (EC). The EC has instructed the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to pursue this, which they are doing. You will also have seen the data which the ECHA produced claiming that more than 1 million water birds die from ingesting lead shot annually in Europe. In Ireland, we have never seen this alleged problem on the ground, and indeed, most of us would contend that we can see no evidence to support this at all.

Although this ECHA data is questionable, we currently have little or no data to counter this assertion or to reflect the true position as it pertains in Ireland. In the late 1980's, the late Dr. Douglas Butler did a survey on this subject which showed that 2.52% of gizzards examined had pellets in them. It is felt that the level of shooting now is much less than back then, but we need up-to-date real data to clearly show this to the EC and the Irish Government.

The NARGC has decided to do a survey and we need the help of all our RGC's to do it as follows: -

- (1) Each Region should produce 50 x wild duck gizzards. Nationally, 28 RGC's by 50 would give us an overall sample of 1,400 to survey. Any of the shootable duck species will be acceptable though it will mostly be Mallard and Teal probably.
- (2) The required gizzards should be immediately frozen to preserve their integrity while awaiting collection.
- (3) Care should be taken in relation to ducks shot at close range in case the projected lead may have entered the gizzard thus giving a false read. Suspect gizzards should not be supplied.
- (4) Each RGC should place the supplied gizzards in a small plastic bag e.g. a sandwich or children's lunch type bag and mark each bag with an indelible marker/pen, 1- 50, using

the county vehicle registration letters as the prefix, e.g. MN1, MN2 (MN being Monaghan for example).

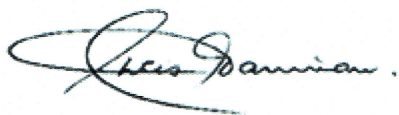
- (5) Each RGC should accumulate its 50 gizzards keeping them frozen throughout. When the 50 are available and ready for collection, contact your nearest Co-Ordinator who will arrange collection and transportation to the Laboratory for examination. It is hoped to send them to the Laboratory in batches of 50 from each RGC.
- (6) The Record Sheets attached should be completed using the above numbers as the reference, by each RGC.
- (7) The NARGC has engaged St. David Poultry Unit to carry out the independent gizzard examinations and to produce the analysis report afterwards.
- (8) This survey is being co-ordinated by the NARGC Research Sub-Committee and it has appointed the following four NEC members to co-ordinate the survey: -

Mayo Mr. Paddy Flynn (085.8498650) or email pflynnmayorgc@hotmail.com
Meath Mr. Jim Brennan (086.2725372) or email jandabrennans@eircom.net
Wicklow Mr. Tom O'Shea (087.2430081) or email tractor.tom@hotmail.com
Cork Mr. Raymond McCarthy (086.8456804) or email raymccarthy1210@yahoo.ie

We ask each RGC to complete this task as quickly as possible and hopefully so that we can assess its progression before Christmas,

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Gavican
NATIONAL FUND ADMINISTRATOR