**ANNEX D TO**

**RAFOS/SEC/16**

**DATED 24 NOV 16**

**FALO’S REPORT FOR RAFOS COMMITTEE MEETING ON 13 OCT 16**

2016 Programme

The 2016 Field Activities programme is more than half way through, with the major news being that the planned Sep/Oct expedition to Hungary was cancelled, and that we were unable to participate in the short-notice JNCC ‘Breeding Waders of English Upland Farmland’ (BWEUF) survey in spring/summer.

* Slimbridge Outing. Attended by 24 members, on a wet January Sunday, the team clocked up 70 species and hosted one new member.
* Exped WD 16. Ten x participants, split into 3 teams, covered 213 WeBS sites from an allocated 225, the bulk of the missed sites being around Cape Wrath where access wasn’t possible. An additional element this year was the inclusion of the periodic NEWS survey sites, and the teams managed to cover some 58 x NEWS counts. An avocet sighting by Team 3, the 1st for Exped WD, was submitted on a rare bird form to the Highland Bird Recorder. Results of both surveys were hand-delivered to BTO WeBS’ staff on 7 Mar 16. **(Niall Burton, the BTO’s Head of Wetland & Marine Research, tells me that the NEWS data analysis is nearing completion and will be fed into the wider WeBS survey data later this year).**
* Chew Valley (Spring). Eleven participants who generated £47 for the CVRS. Dave Bodley reports that attendance figures are well down from the 20+ figures hitherto experienced. Moreover, current CVL management regime may be leading to fewer birds being encountered as water levels are kept high, resulting in less exposed mud (for waders etc.).
* Norfolk Weekend. Seventeen members took part including a recent recruit, Matthew Gulliver, a serving member. Ninety three species were recorded and everything went swimmingly well. For the future, after 2 years of organising the trip, John Towers has decided to step aside and let someone else take over. He stands ready to hand over planning and other logistical details when a replacement is identified. **Replacement to be sought at the AGM?**
* Skokholm. Two RAFOS members formed part of the 5-strong joint service ringing expedition. The expedition was curtailed by one day due to impending bad weather. Accommodation sub-optimal in unseasonably cold spring. Ringing highlights included a water rail, many Manx shearwater and a subalpine warbler – the latter being a Skokholm first.
* Bird Fair and Catterick. Several members attended the Bird Fair, but the Catterick ringing experience element was cancelled due to poor weather.
* Hungary. Cancelled – organisers were unable to generate sufficient interest and attract participants.
* Proposed BWEUF Participation. Only 4 members responded to the trawl for participants and the very late nature of BTO planning and Tetrad allocation meant that it was not possible to coordinate activities between the widely geographically separated members and unallocated survey areas in time. An approach to AOS to mount some sort of joint enterprise was also made, but they too were unable to drum up any support at such short notice. BTO informed.
* Forthcoming Events. Next up, the Chew Valley autumn field meeting, Islay and post-AGM Field Meeting.
	+ Chew Valley (Autumn). Sunday 23rd October at Chew Valley Ringing Station from 09:30, followed by a tour of the lake. Lunch will be provided followed by a slide show if anyone volunteers, or further birdwatching around the lake. Nine to ten participants expected.
	+ Islay. 29 Oct – 5 Nov. Likely to be 10 strong with 4 ‘newbies’ attending. Team Knight have had to withdraw, so Team Earnshaw now leading the push. WeBS work may be included.
* Summary of 2016 Programme (to date).

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| 2016 | Date | Venue | Leaders | Activity | Sponsored | Attendees |
| 1 | 16 Jan | WWT Slimbridge | Bill Francis | Wetland Centre Tour | No bid | 24 |
| 2 | 5-13 Feb | Winter Duck 16 | Martin Routledge | WeBS | £1100 | 10 |
| 3 | 10 Apr | Chew Valley | Dave & Anne Bodley | Field meeting | No bid | 11 |
| 4 | 13-16 May | Norfolk | John Towers | Migration watch | £200 | 17 |
| 5 | 25 Apr-9 May | Skokholm | Julia Springett | Joint service ringing exped | £200 + £50 underspend | 2 (of 5) |
| 6 | 21-23 Aug | Bird Fair & Catterick | Julia Springett | Ringing experience | No bid | N/A |
| 7 | Sep/Oct | Hungary | Dave & Anne Bodley | Hortobagy | £250 | **Cancelled** |
| 8 | 23 Oct | Chew Valley | Dave & Anne Bodley | CVL Survey | No bid | 9 or ten expected |
| 9 | 29 Oct-5 Nov | Islay | Team **Earnshaw** | Obs & gen survey | £250 | 10 expected |
| 10 | 20 Nov | Little Marlow Gravel Pits | TBD | Post-AGM Field meeting | No bid |  |

**Notes: 2016 was not an ‘overseas exped’ year, so the funding allocation was £2000. The 2015 Gib underspend of £50 was reallocated to Skokholm 2016.**

**The further retained £350 underspend from 2015 was rolled over for a possible 2016 Seabird Census, but not required.**

* Proposed 2017 Programme. First stab below – very wet concrete! Seabird Census very unlikely.

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| 2017 | Date | Venue | Leaders | Activity | Sponsored |
| 1 | 15 Jan | WWT Slimbridge | Bill Francis | Wetland Centre Tour | No bid |
| 2 | 3-11 Feb | Winter Duck 17 | Martin Routledge | WeBS | £1100 |
| 3 | TBD-Mar | Nanjizal | Julia Springett | Ringing | TBC |
| 4 | TBD-Apr | Somerset | TBC | Field meeting | No bid |
| 5 | TBD-May | Norfolk | TBD | Migration watch | ~£200 |
| 6 | TBD-Jun | TBC | Keith Cowieson | JNCC Seabird Census | ~£350 |
| 7 | TBD-Aug | Bird Fair & Catterick | Julia Springett | Ringing experience | No bid |
| 8 | TBD-Sep/Oct | Gibraltar | Julia Springett | Joint service ringing exped plus other birding TBD | ~£300 |
| 9 | TBD Oct | Somerset | TBC | CVL Survey | No bid |
| 10 | Nov | TBD | TBD | Post-AGM Field meeting | No bid |

**Notes: 2017 is an ‘overseas exped’ year, so the funding allocation is normally a maximum of £2500.**

**Propose that the retained £350 underspend from 2015 be rolled over again for the National Seabird Census on the slim chance that it may go ahead in 2017.**

* Proposed 2018+ Programme.
	+ Seabird Census **2018-19.** Dr Niall Burton, the BTO’s Seabird Census coordinator, has given the following update on progress on the delayed, national, periodic Seabird Census. Funding remains an issue, and will not be resolved until the future of the JNCC, the preferred national coordinating body, is decided later this year. **The latest feeling is that JNCC will probably survive, more or less in its current form.** Therefore, although some data has been, and will be, collected from regularly monitored seabird breeding sites (by reserve wardens and the like) in 2015-16, and next year, **no volunteer effort such as ours is now envisaged until the 2018-2019 breeding seasons**.
* Two funding streams are being investigated, through national conservation channels and from European sources. In the event that suitable funding is secured, and a national coordinating body confirmed, it is possible that we could request sectors to cover in Western Scotland, N Ireland or the Republic of Ireland, as depicted in the following map.



* Dr Burton expects to be in a position to update us further by end-2016.
* The possibility of revisiting some of the 2008-20011 Bird Atlas Tetrads on the Kintyre Peninsular is being scoped to see how the avianscape has changed over 10 years. Exped to be based out of either Machrihannish or Lochgilphead in early summer.