**ANNEX D TO**

**RAFOS/SEC/17**

**DATED 24 NOV 17**

**FALO’S REPORT**

2017 Programme

The 2017 Field Activities programme is almost complete, with the major news being that the planned Nanjizal ringing expedition/trip was cancelled and, as anticipated, the proposed Joint Nature Conservation Committee Seabirds Census did not take place again, due to lack of funding and commitment from the JNCC/Natural England etc.

* Slimbridge Outing. Attended by 15 members, the team clocked up 60 species.
* Expedition WINTER DUCK 2017. Ten participants, split into 3 teams, covered 217 WeBS sites from an allocated 227, five of the missed sites around Cape Wrath and the other five where access wasn’t possible due to roadworks leading to isolated peninsulas. Little gull, and grey plover sightings were firsts, and a jack snipe only the 2nd for Exped WD. The results of this year’s survey were hand-delivered to BTO WeBS’ staff on 28 Apr 17 and RAFOS’ seventeen years of WeBS support was the subject of a presentation to the BTO’s WeBS 70th Anniversary Conference at Martin Mere in September.
* Somerset Levels (Spring). The inaugural field outing to the Somerset Levels was a great success, with 14 participants, mostly favourable weather and over 70 species seen. For example, great egrets were common, little egrets less so and the team managed to track down a pair of glossy ibis and heard and saw booming bittern, amongst many other things.
* Nanjizal. Cancelled – organisers were unable to generate sufficient interest and attract participants.
* Norfolk. Cancelled – no leader was forthcoming.
* Bird Fair and Catterick. Several members attended the Bird Fair. No details of the Catterick ringing experience element received.
* Gibraltar. Two RAFOS members formed part of the 6-strong joint service ringing expedition. The most successful GIBEX to date with numbers of birds caught well exceeding previous years – eg over 1000 blackcaps ringed out of the total of 1382 birds from 29 species processed. Weather conditions were ideal with easterly winds throughout resulting in Levanter cloud keeping the birds low first thing in the morning. Excellent daily summary on RAFOS closed FaceBook group kept members updated. £60 returned from £300 allocation.
* Forthcoming Events. Next up, the winter Somerset Levels event, from 1-3 December. Expected participation is around 12 with one or two others who may attend for a day or two’s birding.
  + Post AGM field trip. Following a survey of members on the website and the Facebook page the post AGM walk was cancelled due to lack of interest and no leader.
  + Somerset Levels (Winter). Repeat visit over the weekend of Friday 1st to Monday 4th December proposed and planning underway. Pete Evans is leading on planning and co-ordinating the outing.
* Summary of 2017 Programme (to date).

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| 2017 | Date | Venue | Leaders | Activity | Sponsored | Attendees |
| 1 | 15 Jan | WWT Slimbridge | Bill Francis | Wetland Centre Tour | No bid | 16 |
| 2 | 3-11 Feb | Winter Duck 17 | Martin Routledge | WeBS | £1100 | 10 |
| 3 | 31 Mar-2 Apr | Somerset Levels | Pete Evans *et al* | Field meeting | No bid | 14 |
| 4 | 24 Apr-1 May | Nanjizal | Julia Springett | Ringing | No bid | **Cancelled** |
| 5 | 13-16 May | Norfolk | None forthcoming | Migration watch | £200 | **Cancelled** |
| 6 | 18-20 Aug | Bird Fair & Catterick | Julia Springett | Ringing experience | No bid | N/A |
| 7 | 26 Sep – 10 Oct | Gibraltar | Julia Springett | Joint service ringing exped | £240 | 2 |
| 9 | 18 Nov | Otmoor/Little Marlow | TBD | Post-AGM Field meeting | No bid | TBC |
| 10 | 1-3 Dec | Somerset Levels | Pete Evans *et al* | Field meeting | No bid | 12+ |

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

Proposed 2018 Programme. A smaller but high-quality, high-impact event programme envisaged. The JNCC Seabirds Census is almost certainly likely to go ahead this year, and in 2019, as JNCC has now appointed a project co-ordinator with whom we are already in dialogue. Preliminary discussions have centred around an expedition to Orkney in June, to survey the breeding seabirds on some of the less-visited, under-surveyed islands and seabird breeding sites. When planning is further advanced, and locations timings and logistics have been further developed, an expedition order will be produced. In the meantime, members are invited to register their interest in participation with the FALO and/or Committee.

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| 2018 | Date | Venue | Leaders | Activity | Sponsored |
| 1 | 7 Jan | WWT Slimbridge | Bill Francis | Wetland Centre Tour | No bid |
| 2 | 4-12 Feb | Winter Duck 18 | Martin Routledge | WeBS | £1100 |
| 3 | TBD-Mar/Apr | Somerset Levels | Pete Evans | Field meeting | No bid |
| 4 | 12-19-May | Islay Mist | Team Knight | Field meeting | £250 |
| 5 | TBD-Jun | Orkney? | Keith Cowieson | JNCC Seabirds Census | ~£350 |
| 6 | TBD-Aug | Bird Fair & Catterick? | Julia Springett? | Ringing experience | No bid |
| 7 | Nov | TBD | TBD | Post-AGM Field meeting | No bid |
| 8 | Dec | Somerset Levels | Pete Evans | Field meeting | No bid |

**Notes: 2018 is not an ‘overseas expedition’ year, so the funding allocation is normally around £2000.**

* Proposed 2018+ Programme.
  + Seabirds Census **2018-19.** Drs Alex Banks and Niall Burton, Natural England (NE) and BTO’s Seabird Census coordinators respectively, have given the following update on progress on the delayed, national, periodic Seabirds Census:
    - A national Seabirds Census co-ordinator post has now been established. This will enable necessary coordination and mobilisation of volunteers like us, and allow allocation of specified seabird sites. Therefore, although some data has already been collected from regularly monitored seabird breeding sites in 2015-17 (by reserve wardens and the like), next year and the year after will allow us and fellow ‘citizen scientists to be involved (and receive a modest element of funding too).
    - A similar scheme is planned to run in 2019. That said, all is still dependent upon funding from central government sources being made available. Dr Alex Banks, the Senior Environmental Specialist – Marine Ornithology from NE and our guest speaker at the AGM updated us along these lines.

*Keith Cowieson*

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