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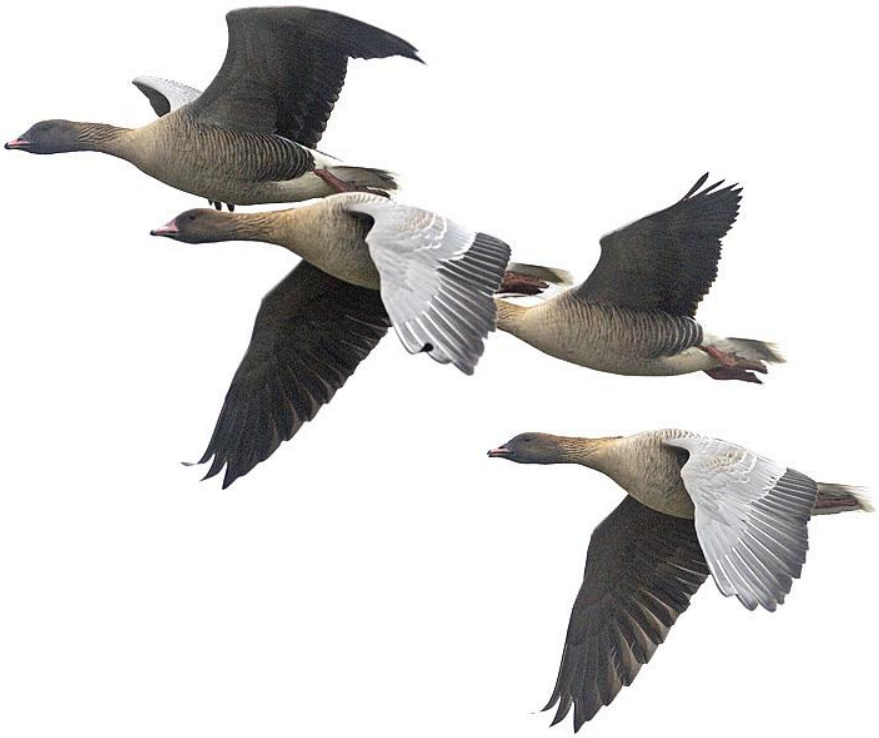
3rd MEETING OF THE AEWA EUROPEAN GOOSE MANAGEMENT INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP

20-21 June 2018, Leeuwarden, the Netherlands

ANALYSIS OF EGMP NATIONAL REPORTS FOR THE PERIOD 2017-2018

Prepared by the Secretariat



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The 3rd Meeting of the AEWA European Goose Management International Working Group is being hosted by the Province of Friesland.

ANALYSIS OF EGMP NATIONAL REPORTS FOR THE PERIOD 2017-2018

Introduction

As outlined in Rule 32 of the Modus Operandi of the European Goose Management International Working Group (EGM IWG) adopted at the 1st Meeting of the International Working Group (EGM IWG1) in December 2016, reports on the implementation of the AEWA International Single Species Action and Management Plans within the remit of the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) shall be prepared by each Range State, according to a format agreed by the EGM IWG, and be submitted to each face-to-face meeting of the EGM IWG.

These National Reports are also expected to provide the basis for the reporting obligations of the EGM IWG to the AEWA bodies (Modus Operandi Rule 33).

The scope of the National Reports is on activities foreseen in the respective Action and Management Plans in the remit of the EGMP as well as the implementation of adaptive harvest management programmes. In addition, reporting on other tasks as decided by the EGM IWG in terms of implementation, is included as necessary.

The draft format for the EGMP National Reports for the period 2017-2018 was compiled by the AEWA Secretariat and circulated for comments to the EGM IWG. Following the consultation period and the incorporation of feedback provided by the EGM IWG, the Chair of the EGM IWG approved the final format (Doc AEWA/EGMIWG/Inf.3.10).

The EGMP National Reports for the period 2017-2018 were compiled and submitted through the CMS Family Online Reporting System (ORS), which is an online reporting tool for the whole CMS Family.

The reporting cycle was launched by the Secretariat in February 2018 and access credentials to the ORS were provided to the Range States. The deadline for submission of the EGMP National Reports 2018 was set for the 20 April 2018, two months before the annual meeting of the EGM IWG (20-21 June 2018).

The majority of Range States submitted their reports within the deadline provided. The Secretariat continued accepting late submissions until 2.5 weeks later, i.e. by 7 May 2018. After this date, all submitted reports were analysed. By the cut-off date of 7 May 2018, 12 National Reports, or 86% of the due reports, were submitted through the ORS. One more report was submitted after the cut-off date, hence, it was not included in the analysis. All submitted EGMP National Reports 2018 are available on the meeting website.

The analysis of the EGMP reports was undertaken by the Secretariat.

Action requested from the EGM IWG

The EGM IWG is invited to note the analysis of EGMP National Reports for the Period 2017-2018 and take its conclusions and recommendations into account in the decision-making process.

Table of Contents

Overview of report submission rate

As of 8 May 2018, 86 % (12 out of 14 countries) of the EGM IWG Range States submitted a National Report for 2017-2018 (Figure 1).

Submitted:

Belarus, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Ukraine und UK

Late submission:

Estonia (submitted after the cut-off date of 7 May 2018, hence it was not included in the analysis)

Not submitted:

Iceland

Non-participating Range States:

Ireland, (Lithuania), Poland, Russia, Spain

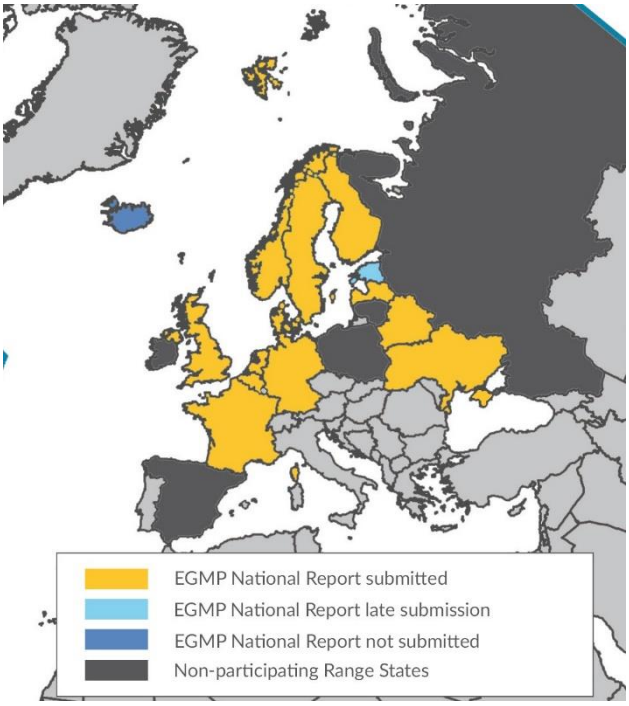

Figure 1. *Overview of reports submitted by EGMP Range States*

General non-species-specific reporting[1]

Level of Monitoring Agricultural Conflict

Range States were asked to report on the level of agricultural conflict (damage, complaints) with geese in their country. Eight Range States (67% of RRS; 57% of PRS) are monitoring the level of agricultural conflict, whilst two Range States (17% of RRS; 14% of PRS) stated not to monitor agricultural conflict (Denmark and Latvia).

Details of the monitoring methods, units, frequency and coverage have been indicated by some Range States. Some of these activities include compensation schemes to farmers for damage, sending out questionnaires about conflicts between wildlife and agriculture to farmers organization, and monitoring activities conducted by scientific institutions. In Lower Saxony, Germany, for example, the loss of biomass to foraging arctic geese has been evaluated through a three-year study in which test and control areas were compared in areas protected under the Birds Directive.

Not all the monitoring activities undertaken are species-specific, but in some countries, e.g. in Belgium species-specific activities are undertaken for the Barnacle Goose, Pink-footed Goose, Taiga Bean Goose and Greylag Goose, as well as other species of geese. In Norway most activities are targeted at the Pink-footed Goose and Greylag Goose.

Denmark indicated that there are no schemes for subsidies or compensation for goose damage in place and therefore also no monitoring of the damage. In Denmark, the Environmental Protection Agency uses the number of applications for derogation as an indicator for the level of conflict.

Monitoring of agriculture conflict and damage to crops in Latvia is not species-specific. Damage is usually caused by several species on one field.

[1] Reporting Range States (RRS), Participating Range States (PRS)

Two Range States (17% of RRS; 14% of PRS), Belarus and France, are reporting no or insignificant agricultural conflict to be recorded in their country. Table 1 below outlines the level and detail of monitoring activities taken by each Range State.

***Table 1**. Level of monitoring agricultural conflict*

Level	Detail	# of Range States	% RRS	% PRS	Range States
National	species-specific activities	0	0%	0%	
	non-species-specific activities	1	8%	7%	Finland
Regional	species-specific activities	2	17%	14%	Belgium, Norway
	non-species-specific activities	4	33%	29%	Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Ukraine
Local	species-specific activities	1	8%	7%	Ukraine
	non-species-specific activities	3	25%	21%	Germany, Sweden, Ukraine, UK

Management Measures applied to manage agricultural conflicts related to geese

Reporting on the management measures that are applied to address agricultural conflict, an overview is given in Figure 2 for the twelve reporting Range States and in Table 2 for each individual Range State. More detail on the types of measures specified by each Range State is outlined in Tables 3-7 below for the 10 Range States reporting agricultural conflicts present in their country (eight monitoring them and two not).

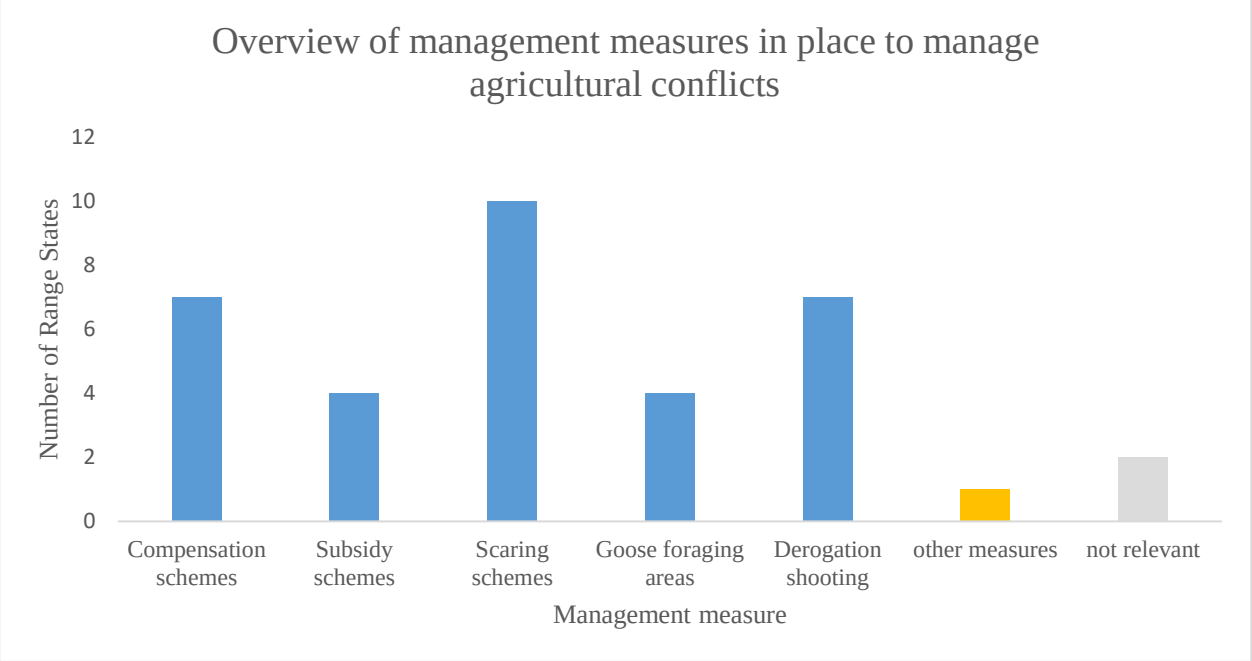

***Figure 2**. Measures applied to manage agricultural conflicts related to geese on national, regional and local level*

***Table 2**. Overview of management measures per country (● measure applied; ○ measure not applied)*

	Belarus	Belgium	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany	Latvia	Netherlands	Norway	Sweden	Ukraine	UK
Compensation schemes	○	●	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
Subsidy schemes	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	●	●	○	●
Scaring schemes	○	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Goose foraging areas	○	●	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	○
Derogation shooting	○	●	●	○	○	●	○	●	●	●	○	●
Other measures	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
Not relevant	●	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Compensation schemes (payments to farmers for losses e.g. crop damage)

Compensation schemes are mostly based on reporting of the farmer, followed by assessment by agricultural experts and, in Belgium, reassessment in the growing season to determine the effect of the damage on growth of the crops. Financial compensation is calculated by the agricultural authorities with varying formulas (per kg dry matter, reduction of yield in comparison to reference plots, etc.). The effectiveness of compensation schemes is only evaluated in Norway and the Netherlands. In Norway, this is done through annual monitoring and annual compensation. More details on reporting on compensation schemes in the Range States is found below in Table 3.

***Table 3**. Compensation schemes*[2]

Level	Detail	# of Range States	% RRS	% PRS	Range States	# Range states evaluating effectiveness	% RRS	% PRS	Range States evaluating effectiveness
National	species-specific compensation		0%	0%			0%	0%	
	non-species-specific compensation	1	8%	7%	Latvia		0%	0%	
Regional	species-specific compensation	1	8%	7%	Norway	1	8%	7%	Norway
	non-species-specific compensation	5	50%	43%	Belgium Finland Germany Netherlands Sweden	1	8%	7%	Netherlands
Local	species-specific compensation		0%	0%			0%	0%	
	non-species-specific compensation	2	17%	14%	Finland Sweden		0%	0%	

Subsidy schemes (payments to support farmers to provide for/tolerate geese on their land, replacing agricultural use)

Subsidy schemes are provided in Germany and in the UK. In Germany the subsidy schemes mainly entail providing forage for geese on fields in the winter months (Schleswig-Holstein), thereby not replacing agricultural use of the fields from springtime onwards. In the UK payments are calculated according to the additional cost of providing these habitats for geese, as well as the profit foregone when geese consume these crops. Table 4 below shows the extent subsidy schemes are used to monitor and control agricultural conflict detailed by Range States.

[2] E.g. payments to farmers for losses e.g. crop damage

Table 4. *Subsidy schemes*[3]

Level	Detail	# of Range States	% RRS	% PRS	Range States	# Range states evaluating effectiveness	% RRS	% PRS	Range States evaluating effectiveness
National	species-specific subsidies		0%	0%			0%	0%	
	non-species-specific subsidies		0%	0%			0%	0%	
Regional	species-specific subsidies		0%	0%			0%	0%	
	non-species-specific subsidies		0%	0%			0%	0%	
Local	species-specific subsidies	1	8%	7%	UK	1	8%	7%	UK
	non-species-specific subsidies	1	8%	7%	Germany		0%	0%	

Scaring schemes or preventive measures designed to actively keep geese away from farmland

Scaring schemes are relatively widely used by Range States on all levels – national, regional and local. Visual and acoustic scaring devices are used, as well as repellents and other measures. In some Range States advice is provided by the Ministry of Environment on the use of scaring devices. Belgium reports, that the extent of the use of scaring devices is regulated by law for farmers seeking compensation. This exempts areas, designated for wintering waterbirds, where scaring is not a mandatory prerequisite for compensation. Yet, the effectiveness of these scaring schemes in not evaluated in more than half of the Range States that have provided information (5 out of 9). In the UK for example, the effectiveness of the local schemes is reviewed through discussion and consultation with stakeholders.

[3] E.g. payments to support farmers to provide for/tolerate geese on their land, replacing agricultural use

Table 5. *Scaring schemes or other preventive measures*[4]

Level	# of Range States	% RRS	% PRS	Range States	# Range states evaluating effectiveness	% RRS	% PRS	Range States evaluating effectiveness
National	2	17%	14%	Denmark, Latvia		0%	0%	
Regional	3	25%	21%	Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden	2	17%	14%	Netherlands, Sweden
Local	5	42%	36%	Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Ukraine, UK	4	33%	29%	Netherlands, Norway, Ukraine, UK

Designation of goose foraging areas (accommodation areas)

The designation of goose foraging areas (accommodation areas) is a viable non-lethal method to ease the widespread grazing pressure on agriculture fields. Belgium and Germany report that some areas have been specifically allocated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the Birds Directive and are regularly monitored. In Lower Saxony, in Germany, farmers tolerate geese in these SPAs and have joined agri-environmental schemes under which they are paid for the loss of biomass caused by foraging geese. Table 6 outlines the details reported on accommodation areas.

Table 6*. Accommodation areas*[5]

Level	# of Range States	% RRS	% PRS	Range States	# Range states evaluating effectiveness	% RRS	% PRS	Range States evaluating effectiveness
National		0%	0%			0%	0%	
Regional	4	33%	29%	Belgium Germany Netherlands Sweden	4	33%	29%	Belgium Germany Netherlands Sweden
Local	1	8%	7%	Germany Sweden	1	8%	7%	Germany Sweden

[4] Measures designed to actively keep geese away from farmland
[5] Designation of goose foraging areas

Derogation shooting to keep geese away from sensitive crops and to reduce population size

Derogation shooting to keep geese away from sensitive crops and/or to reduce the population size is used as yet another measure to contain agricultural conflict with geese in the Range States. Reporting on derogation shooting is compiled in Table 7 below. Range States report derogation shooting to be applied in line with the EU Birds Directive. Licenses for shooting under derogation are granted upon application and assessment of the related conflict and damage to crops.

***Table 7**. Derogation shooting*[6]

Level	# of Range States	% RRS	% PRS	Range States	# Range states evaluating effectiveness	% RRS	% PRS	Range States evaluating effectiveness
National	1	8%	7%	Denmark		0%	0%	
Regional	2	17%	14%	Belgium, Netherlands	2	17%	14%	Belgium, Netherlands
Local	4	33%	29%	Germany, Norway, Sweden, UK	3	25%	21%	Norway, Sweden, UK

Other measures

Germany also reports providing additional grasslands for feeding of livestock in areas where the first cut of grasslands used for animal husbandry has been damaged by geese.

Pink-footed Goose International Species Management Plan (ISMP)

All four Range States to the Svalbard population of the Pink-footed Goose (PfG) (Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands and Norway) have reported on the implementation of the International Species Management Plan for the population. In addition, two Range States (Sweden and Finland), which have been admitted as observers to the PfG ISMP implementation process, have also provided relevant information.

National, regional or local management plans for the Pink-footed Goose

According to the PfG ISMP, Range States should endeavor to produce national/local management plans, ensuring recreational activities are established and evaluated at local level (economic and cultural value) *(PfG ISMP, p.29)*. Range States were asked to report on the establishment of any national, regional and/or local management plan/s that are in place to implement the PfG ISMP.

Out of the four Range States, only Norway has reported to have a Regional (sub-national) management plan for the PfG. The management plan also promotes recreational uses such as tourism and hunting.

Belgium has indicated that although the PfG is a game species, there is no hunting season for it. Conservation goals have been set but as long as the population is not increasing and agricultural damage remains limited, no hunting season will be opened.

Denmark has not yet decided on the development of a management plan, however, the PfG ISMP is being implemented directly.

Finland has indicated that the PfG is a protected species in Finland and therefore not huntable, while Sweden indicated that this is a new species in the country.

[6] Derogation shooting to keep geese away from sensitive crops and/or to reduce population size

National, regional or local working group for the implementation of the PfG ISMP

Range States were asked whether a national, regional and/or local working group to support the implementation of the PfG ISMP had been established in their countries. Except for the Netherlands, all Range States (Belgium, Denmark and Norway) have established a working group. An overview is provided in Table 8.

***Table 8**. Overview of national, regional or local working groups (● yes; ○ no)*

Range State	Working Group		Type of WG
	Yes	No	
Belgium	●	○	Regional
Denmark	●	○	National
Netherlands	○	●	
Norway	●	○	N/A

In Belgium, the implementation of the PfG ISMP is coordinated within the Flemish Goose Working Group. This working group is composed of different stakeholders, dealing with EGMP-related issues. The working group comes together once a year to discuss issues such as population size, trends and agriculture damage of wintering geese. Recommendations from this group are taken forward to EGMP-related meetings. Since PfG only winter in the Flemish region, no other working group for other regions has been established.

Denmark has established a working group that advises the Ministry of Environment and Food and forms the national delegation at the EGM IWG meetings. The group comments on documents, draft management plans, etc. prior to any decision-making.

Finland indicated that although no working group has been established, the implementation of the PfG ISMP is the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment together with regional governmental organizations (Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment).

Sweden has indicated that a national working group for the management of geese, swans and cranes had been established.

PfG ISMP Objective 1. Maintain a sustainable and stable PfG population and its range

Key sites identified for PfG

Range States were asked to provide a list of key sites that have been identified for PfG. Out of the 6 countries that responded to this question, 4 countries have identified key areas for the PfG (Figure 3) and provided details on these sites, including location, habitat types and protection status.

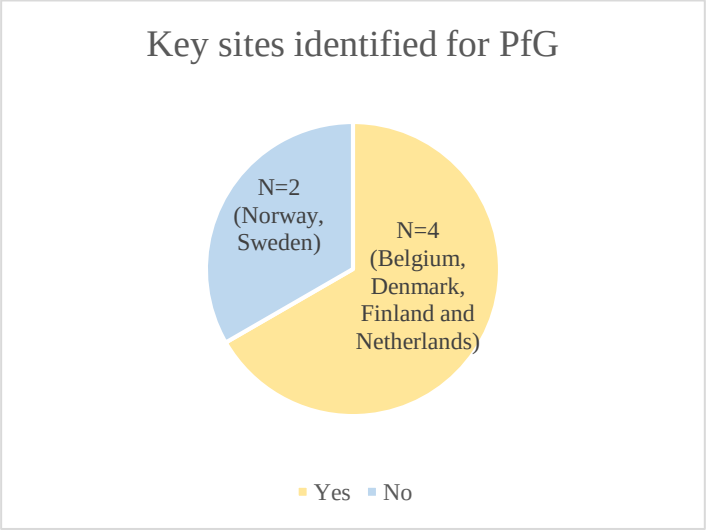

***Figure 3**. Key sites identified for the Pink-footed Goose in Range States*

Measures to restore/rehabilitate PfG roosting and/or feeding habitats

Range States were asked to provide information on the measures that have been taken to restore and/or rehabilitate PfG roosting and/or feeding habitats and if these measures are being implemented in staging and wintering areas. Figure 4 shows which Range States have measures in place for staging and wintering areas.

Denmark applies measures in both the staging and wintering areas. Roosting sites in all key sites have been protected through the designation of NATURA 2000 sites, including disturbance and hunting-free zones. Denmark has also indicated that geese are primarily foraging in adjacent farmlands (up to 40 km from roosts), which are not managed. Some of the roosting sites in the wintering areas in Denmark, which have been newly occupied are not yet designated for protection for PfG.

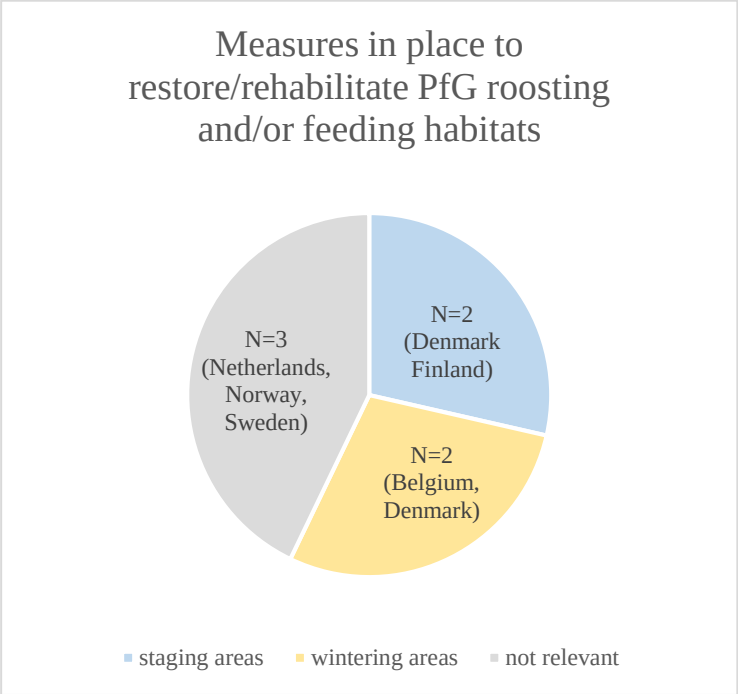

***Figure 4**. Measures in place to restore/rehabilitate PfG roosting and/or feeding habitats*

Measures taken in the wintering sites in Belgium mostly focus on the restoration of wet polder grasslands, in order to provide good foraging opportunities for PfG in nature reserves and to reduce agricultural damage in the surrounding areas.

In Finland, habitat restoration and recurring management measures (removing the reed, grazing and mowing of coastal meadows) were carried out as an ongoing activity, including the most important roosting areas for PfG. In Sweden, no former roosting or feeding habitats are known.

Preventing PfG breeding on mainland Norway

The development and implementation of a program for prevention of PfG in the mainland of Norway was included as a medium priority result in the PfG ISMP. Norway was asked to report on the implementation of such a programme and reported that such a programme has not yet been developed.

PfG ISMP Objective 2. Keep agricultural conflicts to an acceptable level

Level of agricultural conflicts

Range States were asked to provide information on the level of agricultural conflicts (e.g. crop damage) in their countries and how potential conflicts have been addressed.

Three Range States (Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands) as well as Finland and Sweden, have indicated that agricultural conflicts related to PfG are at an acceptable level (Figure 5).

In Belgium, damage caused by PfG is compensated.

Denmark reported that in autumn and winter, PfG primarily forage on waste crops (cereal and maize stubble), supplemented by pastures and winter cereal, limited to cold winters; whereas in spring, PfG forage on pastures. In the past, PfG caused damage to newly sown spring cereal fields (taking grain). However, nowadays, PfG depart on spring migration for Norway in late March/early April, prior to the sowing of spring cereals.

Sweden has indicated that so far, there have not been any reports from farmers on damages caused by PfG.

Only Norway has reported that agricultural damage in Norway is not at an acceptable level.

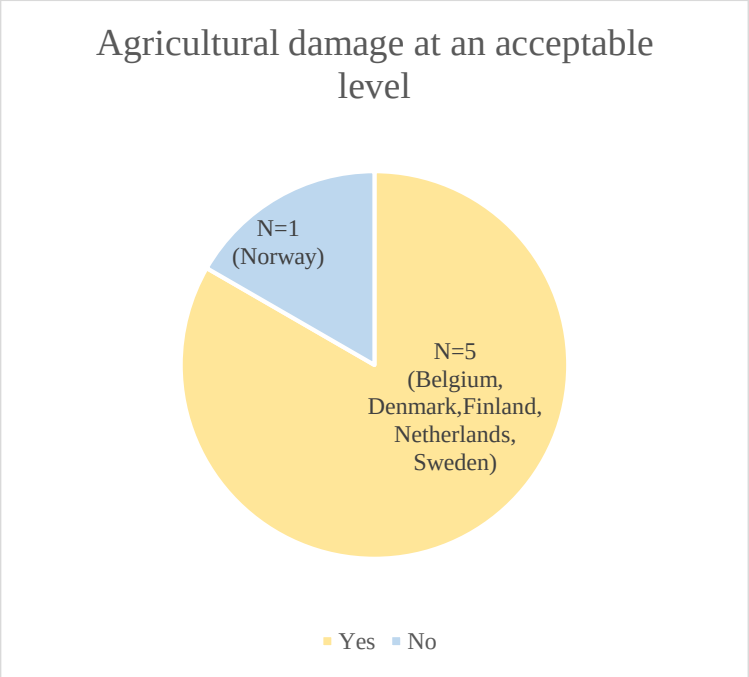

Figure 5. *Level of agricultural conflict in Range States*

PfG ISMP Objective 3. Avoid increase in tundra vegetation degradation in the breeding range

Monitoring the extent of arctic tundra degradation on Svalbard caused by PfG

Norway indicated that the extent of arctic tundra degradation on Svalbard caused by PfG has been monitored and reported on an increase in the level of degradation.

PfG ISMP Objective 4. Allow for recreational use that does not jeopardize the population

Hunting is conducted in a sustainable manner

Denmark and Norway, as the only Range States with open hunting seasons, were asked to report on the promotion and/or implementation of any national or regional hunting-related campaigns, training programmes and/or management activities (see Table 9 for details).

Table 9*. Activities implemented in Denmark and Norway to ensure hunting is conducted in a sustainable manner (● yes; ○ no)*

Activity	Range State	
	Denmark	Norway
Wise use hunting practices	●	●
Best practices to reduce crippling rates	●	●
Self-organization and coordination of local hunting	●	●

Denmark reported that the Danish Hunters' Association ran a campaign to promote wise use hunting practices and has organised local courses in west and north Jutland. A series of articles has been produced in hunting magazines on wise use, species identification and goose shooting.

Since 1997, a national plan to reduce the crippling of game, including geese, has been put in place by the Ministry of Environment and Food. The rate of crippling in PfG has been monitored by Aarhus University since 1990 (most recently in 2017). The Danish Hunters' Association and the Ministry of Environment and Food have promoted the need for reduction of crippling in several campaigns, specifically targeting goose

hunters, advocating for the use of decoys and blinds to attract geese at close range, keeping to the recommended maximum shooting distance of 25 m, as well as hunting in teams.

A project carried out by Aarhus University and the Danish Hunters' Association from 2012 to 2016 focused on voluntary self organisation of goose shooting and documented the effects in terms of higher bags, lower cartridge use, improved local communication, as well as reduced disturbance of geese. The Danish Hunters' Association has promoted the wider use of self-organisation in articles in hunting magazines.

Additional information provided by Range States

Denmark indicated that the PfG ISMP has increased the awareness among Danish hunters about their role and responsibility to participate in the management of the population, as well as its wise use. It has generally been accepted by the hunters, that the hunting season can change according to the status of the population and its proximity to the set target.

Taiga Bean Goose International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP)

Reporting on Taiga Bean Goose has been split in two sections:

- Section A: Taiga Bean Goose ISSAP – Eastern 1 Management Unit
- Section B: Taiga Bean Goose ISSAP – Western and Central Management Units

(A) Taiga Bean Goose ISSAP – Eastern 1 Management Unit

Range States for the Eastern 1 Management Unit of the Taiga Bean Goose are Belarus, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Ukraine. Of these Range States four (Belarus, Germany, Latvia and Ukraine) have reported in this section.

TBG ISSAP Objective 1. Increase survival rate of adults

Legal harvest does not jeopardize an increase of adult survival rates

Three Range States - Germany, Latvia and Ukraine – have developed and adopted a legislation for the closure of hunting of Taiga Bean Goose to allow the birds to pass before the goose hunting season is opened (see Figure 6 below), whilst Belarus reports a lack of data and specialists studying Taiga Bean Goose as reasons for having passed no legislation yet.

In Germany legislation varies regionally with some federal states having closed the hunting of TBG in general and others not having adopted the legislation for closure yet.

In Latvia hunting of TBG is restricted from 15 September to 30 November to provide safe passage to TBGs on their autumn migration.

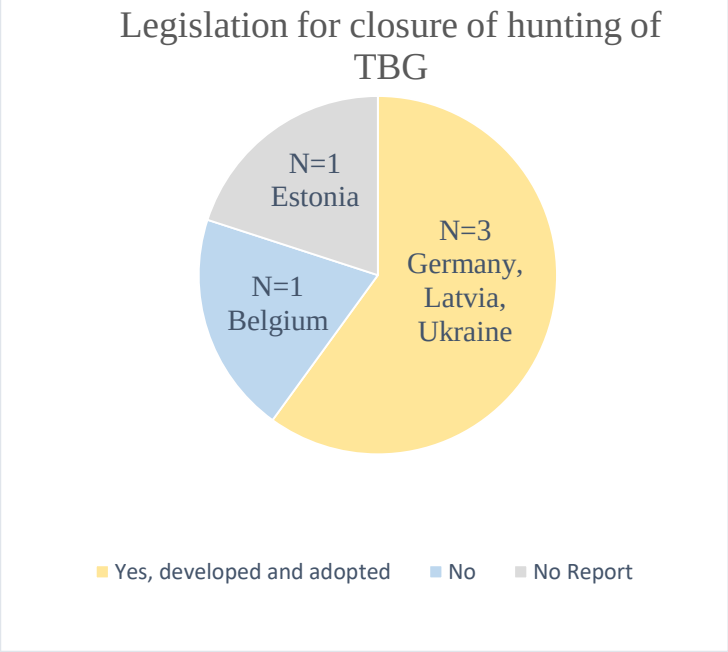

***Figure 6**. Development and adoption of legislation for the closure of hunting of Taiga Bean Goose to pass before goose hunting is opened*

In Ukraine the numbers of TBG during the autumn migration and wintering is low, occurring in southern Ukraine, whereas during spring the numbers in the northern part of the country are higher, warranting a ban on spring hunting, allowing the TBG to migrate along the flyway. In Ukraine new instructions on the inventory of harvested game are also to be adopted before the hunting season, improving the quality of data – and information campaign and trainings are planned to follow the adoption of the instructions.

Knowledge is improved on the occurrence of TBG in all Eastern MU Range States

The four Range States reported on the following activities to improve knowledge of the occurrence of TBG in their countries:

- Ensuring national monitoring at all known key sites
- Providing identification training to people carrying out the monitoring activities
- Providing equipment to people carrying out the monitoring activities
- Carrying out a satellite/GPS tagging project on TBG in the wintering/staging areas
- Any other relevant activities

Figure 7 and Table 10 below show activities that have been carried out by each Range States.

In Belarus geese are monitored within the framework of the National Environmental Monitoring System at a permanent national monitoring point set up at the Pripyat River. In addition, training courses and distribution of field guides of waterfowls have been run by APB-BirdLife Belarus. Provision of equipment and satellite/GPS tagging projects were not possible to undertake due to lack of financial resources.

Germany's monitoring programmes are mainly concentrating on Barnacle Goose counts on the North Sea Coast. There is no monitoring programme for species such as TBG, which are distributed further inland. It is however endeavoured to set up a dedicated monitoring programmes for the TBG.

In Latvia all key sites of the TBG are covered by Natura 2000 sites and are monitored through the sub-programme of Biological Diversity Monitoring within the State Environmental Monitoring Programme 2015-2020.

Ukraine reports that TBG counts are conducted in various sites across the country in the northern region. In the southern region, wintering sites are monitored within the framework of the International Waterbird Census (IWC). There is no special national monitoring system, but in protected areas monitoring is carried out within the framework of the Programme of the Chronicle of Nature, scientific organizations and IWC Trainings and other measures have not been undertaken to date due to lack of funding.

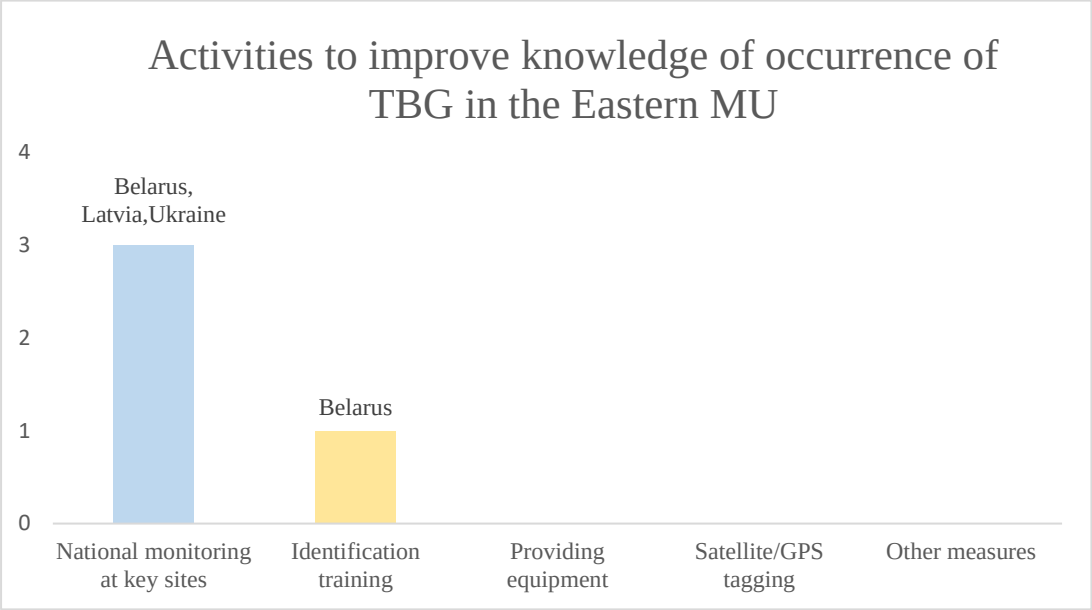

***Figure 7**. Activities to improve the knowledge of the occurrence of TBG on sub-species level*

***Table 10**. Activities applied to improve the knowledge of occurrence of TBG in the Eastern 1 MU (● yes; ○ no; - not included in the analysis)*

Activities	Belarus	Estonia	Germany	Latvia	Ukraine
Ensuring national monitoring at all known key sites	●	-	○	●	●
Providing identification training to people carrying out the monitoring activities	●	-	○	○	○
Providing equipment to people carrying out the monitoring activities	○	-	○	○	○
Carrying out a satellite/GPS tagging project on TBG in the wintering/ staging areas	○	-	○	○	○
Any other relevant activities	○	-	○	○	○

Result 1.2 Illegal harvest is reduced to non-significant levels

Belarus and Ukraine were asked to report on the implementation of an awareness-raising campaign for hunters to complement necessary legislation change. Both countries reported that no awareness-raising campaigns have been implemented to date. However, an awareness-raising campaign is under development in Ukraine, not implemented due to lack of funding and planned to be held during August-December 2018. Belarus also reports a lack of specialists on TBG, leading to a lack of reliable data on the number of TBG in the country and difficulties in species identification.

Ukraine is currently preparing a publication on the occurrence of the TBG, in line with activity 1.2.2.2. of the Biannual TBG implementation plan 2017-2018 (agreed at the 1st EGM IWG meeting in Kristianstad, Sweden in December 2016).

Reducing Taiga Bean Goose crippling

No specific measures have been undertaken to date to reduce TBG crippling in the Range States. In Belarus, there is a lack of reliable data on the number of species and the shooting of TBG. Germany has not reported any activities, while in Latvia no activities are necessary since training is part of the education programme for hunters.

Raising identification skills and awareness amongst hunters

Reporting on training programmes to develop identification skills amongst hunters, organized by national hunting associations, Range States state no such programmes to be available at the moment. Belarus reports a lack of interest amongst hunters, as well as a lack of specialists to conduct the trainings as the reason, whilst Latvia states that in 2017 only two TBG have been counted (data taken from the analysis of hunted bird photos organized by the Latvian Hunters Association in cooperation with scientists) and therefore the occurrence of TBG in the hunting bag is too small to warrant trainings.

Other information provided, relevant to the implementation of the TBG ISSAP

Belarus also informs that the Ministry of Forestry revised rules for hunting management and hunting to improve the state management in the field of hunting (Rule approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 112, 12 March 2018).

(B) Taiga Bean Goose ISSAP – Western and Central Management Units

Range States for the Western and Central Management Unit of the Taiga Bean Goose are Denmark, Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the UK. All participating Range States (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the UK) have reported on this section.

TBG ISSAP Objective 1. Increase survival rate of adults

Illegal harvest is reduced to non-significant levels

According to activity 1.2.2.1 of the Biannual TBG implementation plan 2017-2018 (agreed at the 1st EGM IWG meeting in Kristianstad, Sweden in December 2016), Denmark was asked to report on the TBG shooting investigations in North-East Jutland and Zealand. As far as possible, Aarhus University has asked observers on the ground to keep an eye open for illegal hunting in NE Jutland. It has been publicized that there is a need to differentiate between Tundra and Taiga Bean Geese on Zealand. There are ongoing actions to derive photos from hunters of their shot Bean Geese to determine the relative contributions of the two races to the annual bag. More information on the ongoing activities will be provided in future reporting cycles.

Impact of huntable native predators in breeding and moulting areas is reduced

Finland was asked to report on the annual campaigns that are being undertaken amongst hunters in breeding areas to strengthen Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) management. Finland indicated that the breeding areas of TBG cover roughly half of Finland. However, fox management is relevant for the entire country. The importance of small predator management has been promoted to hunter's though magazines and social media to strengthen management activities. Finland indicated that although not in practice, there is on-going work that has been carried out at more general level considering ground nesting birds at large, not specified to TBG, providing largely the same end result though.
It was further indicated that recent field observation from South-west Lapland show that the fox population is currently declining due to a combination of several factors. However, the importance of fox management for

TBG was raised in a recent press release focused on Raccoon Dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) management in Northern Finland.

In northernmost Finland, fox management has been further strengthened by the Finnish Wildlife Agency and the Forestry and Parks Service, particularly for the conservation of the endangered Arctic Fox (*Vulpes lagopus*).

Impact of alien predators in breeding and moulting areas is reduced

Finland and Sweden were asked to report on the implementation of programmes for eradication of the Raccoon Dog and the effectiveness of these programmes.

In Finland, an on-going project is in place to stop the dispersal of Raccoon Dog to Scandinavia. The objective in Northern Finland is to decrease the population size of Raccoon Dog. An annual funding of ca €150,000 has been provided for this project in Finland. In addition, a significant amount of volunteer efforts from local hunters has been dedicated to this project.

In southern breeding areas Raccoon Dog management is under the responsibility of local hunting associations that are regularly encouraged to undertake effective small predator management. Despite the implementation of locally effective activities, the Raccoon Dog population is increasing in the southern part of the country.

The Racoon Dog is currently listed as a huntable species. Hunting of males and juveniles is allowed year-round, but females and their young are protected between 1 May and 31 August. The recent change in EU listing of invasive species, which will have an impact on the status of the species, will come into force in 2019. Consequently, more effective management tools are foreseen to be developed.

Overall, the Racood Dog population in Finland is steadily increasing, despite the high levels of harvest. In 2016, Raccoon Dog harvest exceeded 200,000 individuals, and it was the second most numerous game animal harvested in Finland.

Sweden reported that the Swedish Racoon Dog project has been ongoing since 2008 and as a LIFE+ project together with Denmark and Finland in 2010-2013. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is financing the project, which is headed by the Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management. From 2014, the project also has the task of managing the Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) within the Raccoon Dog management system. The overall objective of the project is to minimize the occurrence and spread of the Raccoon Dog and the Raccoon in Sweden, in cooperation with the other Nordic countries.

Based on the long-term trend in the monitoring data it has been concluded that the Raccoon Dog population is currently under control and decreasing.

TBG ISSAP Objective 2. Increase reproductive rates

Intraspecific competition in spring staging areas is reduced

Sweden was asked to provide updates on the implementation of the "fields for geese" programme.

The County Administrative Board (CAB) has fields for geese in most counties in Sweden.

Finland reported that implementation of the "unharvested-fields-for-birds" programme was put on hold for the moment and will be discussed when the preparation of the next Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) period is being implemented at national level.

Impact of forestry works is reduced

Finland was asked to report on the working models that have been developed for wildlife-friendly forest management. The concept and working models of Wildlife Friendly Forest Management (WFFM) in Finland is well developed and was established largely based on the national management plan for grouse species.
Finland indicated that the brood habitat of grouse and TBG have significant overlap in forested areas and mire

restorations for Willow Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*) can have potential benefits for TBG, depending on site-specific features.

The WFFM is promoted, taught and communicated to forest owners, forestry professionals and corporations via set of projects managed by Finnish Wildlife Agency and Finnish Forest Centre and applied at state lands.

The results of recent survey show that the WFFM is in the interest of forest owners and professionals. Out of the reached forest owners 61% were interested in the subject and about 40 % had tried the principles of WFFM. 88% of the answered forestry professionals saw that promoting WFFM is part of their job.

Finland further indicated that there is a close co-operation with major forestry corporations in terms of example sites and information activities. The principles of WFFM largely overlap with requirement of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certificate, which is rapidly increasing coverage in Finland.

Breeding, staging and wintering habitats are not further lost due to oil and gas or renewable energy developments

Denmark reported on the monitoring of the collision risk posed by renewable energy developments to TBG close to Special Protection Areas, identified as important wintering sites for TBG.

Previous monitoring of the collision risk posed by a large offshore wind turbine test centre had been completed and had been reported to the clients involved. These results showed that all large bodied birds avoided flying in the vicinity of the turbines and those that did adjusted their altitude to further avoid the sweep area of the turbines. Specific studies on Taiga Bean Geese flying between the turbines showed similar avoidance and no collisions. Intensive searches with specially trained dogs also failed to locate corpses. A more comprehensive and full report of these studies will be provided.

Impact of agriculture on natural Taiga Bean Goose habitats is minimized

According to activity 3.1.1.1 of the Biannual TBG implementation plan 2017-2018 (agreed at the 1st EGM IWG meeting in Kristianstad, Sweden in December 2016), Finland was requested to increase the area of managed coastal grassland under CAP. Finland reported that compared to 2017 there was no meaningful increase of managed coastal grasslands. The investment funds for the establishment of new managed areas has already been used up at this stage. However, Finland indicated that the area can be further increased by a meaningful level if and when the new CAP has adequate funding for it.

Review of factors possibly contributing to the declines in eastern England and implementation of appropriate management responses

At the EGM IWG2, which took place in June 2017 in Copenhagen, the UK delegation had asked to include this activity into the work plan of the Western and Central TBG Management Units. The UK was asked to report on this activity and indicated that the work was ongoing and a review was currently being prepared by Natural England.

Reducing TBG crippling

All Range States to the Western and Central Management Units were asked to report on activities undertaken in the past three years to reduce TBG crippling rates. An overview of the responses is provided in Figure 8.

In Finland, the issue on adequate shooting distance to reduce crippling was raised in article in a hunting magazine informing the restrictions on the reopened Bean Goose hunting season, which was restricted in time and space to focus the harvest on Tundra Bean Goose.

The Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management has initiated an education programme for goose hunters, in order to reduce the crippling rates.

Denmark has indicated that now activities were implemented in the past three years. However, there has already been a sustained campaign of public awareness and outreach in relation to the Pink-footed Goose on this subject. It was further indicated that a survey of crippling rates (by X-ray) in Taiga Bean Geese could be conducted if a larger catch of geese would be organized.

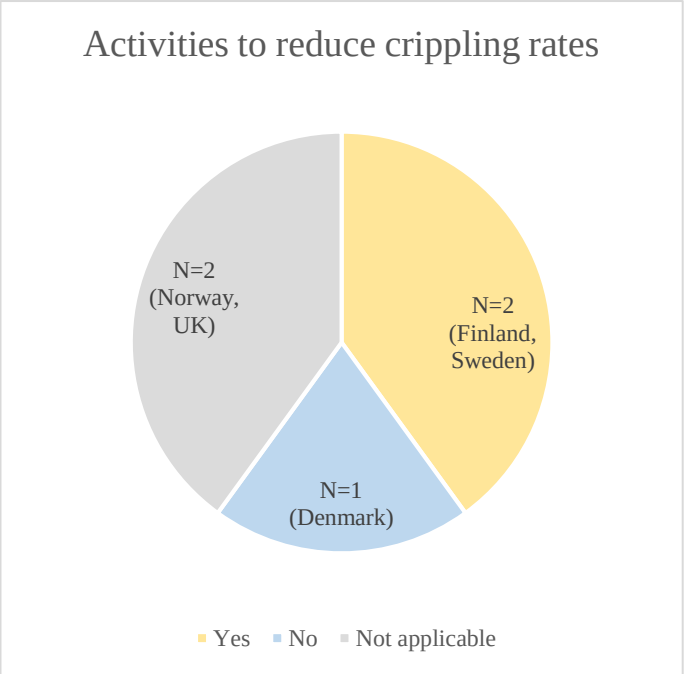

***Figure 8**. Activities undertaken by Range States to reduce crippling rates*

Raising identification skills and awareness amongst hunters

Range States were asked to indicate if any training programmes to develop identification skills amongst hunters have been organized by national hunting associations in their respective countries (see Figure 9).

Denmark and Sweden indicated that no specific local training programmes have been implemented. However, both countries, as well as Finland, have addressed specific issues (e.g. the identification of the two subspecies, crippling rates, hunting season) through publications in hunting magazines. The Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management has initiated an education programme for goose hunters, in order to reduce the crippling rates.

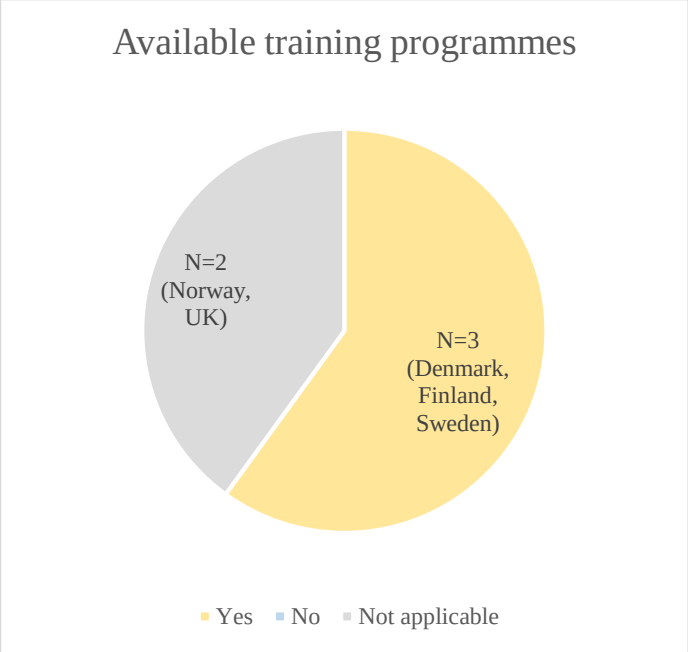

***Figure 9**. Available training programmes to raise identification skills amongst hunters*

So far, none of the Range States has liaised with BirdLife partners or other conservation NGO´s to develop cooperative training programmes.

Additional information provided by Range States

In addition to the requested questions, Denmark has indicated that the harvest of Bean Geese in SE Denmark (supposed to target selectively Tundra Bean Geese) will be subject to studies in the coming years, aiming to get a subspecies discrimination of the harvest by photos of heads.

Sweden also indicated that the Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management, has performed a monitoring study of the hunting bag of 2017/18, which will soon be published.

Conclusions and Recommendations

On the basis of this analysis of EGMP National Reports 2018, the following conclusions and recommendations have been identified for consideration by the EGM IWG.

Submission rate

Overall the submission rate (93%, 13 out of 14 due reports) of the EGMP National Reports 2018 is very positive, considering the timeframe that was given to Range States (86%, 12 reports, were submitted by the cut-off date and 7%, one report, afterwards). A few reports have been submitted with a delay up to 2.5 weeks, which caused an overall delay in the preparation of this document. It should be noted that this is the first reporting cycle for the EGM IWG, hence completing the National Reports required more input from Range States than future reports may require. The information that has been provided will be saved in the online reporting system until the next reporting cycle, when information can be updated accordingly.

The level of detail provided varied greatly amongst Range States. Some Range States have taken advantage of the opportunity to provide further information and evidence on the implementation of certain activities or explanations why activities were not undertaken.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a similar reporting format is kept for future reporting cycles, to ensure that time series are provided that can be used to monitor the implementation of the International Species Action and Management Plans, as well as identify any major implementation gaps.

Agricultural Conflict

The level of agricultural conflict is monitored by eight Range States (67% of RRS; 57% of PRS), whilst two Range States (17% of RRS; 14% of PRS) are not monitoring (Denmark and Latvia). Except for Norway, all reporting Range States to the PfG (Belgium, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands and Sweden) have indicated that currently agricultural conflicts related to the PfG are at an acceptable level. Norway is undertaken specific activities to monitor the conflict with Pink-footed and Greylag Geese.

Agricultural conflict caused by other species, such as Barnacle and Taiga Bean Geese are also monitored in Range States specific to the species.

Although there are various management measures applied to resolve agricultural conflicts, most Range States opted for implementing scaring schemes followed by compensation schemes and derogation shooting. The effectiveness of these measures is monitored in a few Range States, yet only little information has been provided on the evaluation and results.

The information provided in this reporting cycle will be useful to inform the EGMP Agriculture Task Force and contribute to the development of an overview of different management measures applied in Range States and their effectiveness.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Range States monitor the effectiveness of the management measures that are applied, and that experiences are shared within the EGM IWG through the EGMP Agriculture Task Force.

Implementation of the PfG ISMP

Although reporting on the implementation of the PfG ISMP was only requested from four Range States (Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands and Norway), Finland and Sweden, have also provided relevant information.

Except for Norway, no other Range State has set up a national/regional/local management plan for the PfG. Nevertheless, Range States are still implementing activities of the ISMP and national/regional working groups have been established.

Overall, efforts and activities towards achieving the objectives of the PfG ISMP have been made by all Range States, including Finland and Sweden. These activities include the identification and protection of key sites for PfG, the implementation of measures to restore/rehabilitate PfG roosting sites and feeding habitats and the improvement of hunting practices such as wise use practices, species identification and self-organisation of local hunting.

Recommendation

Awareness raising, in particular amongst the local hunting communities, on their role and responsibility to participate in the management of the population has improved in some countries and can be further strengthened, for example through a common EGMP communication strategy.

Implementation of the TBG ISSAP – Eastern 1 Management Unit

The principal Range States for the Eastern 1 Management Unit for the TBG are Belarus, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Ukraine. However, only five are participating Range States to the EGMP and only four[7] have reported in this section.

In Germany (in some federal states), Latvia and Ukraine, legislation for the closure of hunting of TBG has been developed and adopted, whereas Belarus lacks resources and data to develop and pass any legislation.

A key activity identified for the Eastern 1 MU is the improvement of knowledge on the occurrence of TBG in all Range States. Increased knowledge on the occurrence, distribution and migration patterns is essential for the development of appropriate hunting legislation. Although most Range States have reported monitoring of TBG at some key sites, there is still need for improvement and development of more dedicated monitoring programmes.

Overall, Range States have reported that the lack of financial resources is hindering the implementation of measures to improve the knowledge of TBG. Identification training to people carrying out monitoring activities, provision of adequate monitoring equipment and tagging studies in wintering/staging areas are still lacking and should remain priority activities to be implemented the Eastern 1 MU.

Illegal harvest in the Eastern 1 MU is considered to occur mainly due to the misidentification of goose species, in particular in Belarus and Ukraine. Awareness-raising campaigns for hunters to complement legislation changes, including guidance on the identification of geese are essential, yet both countries reported that due to lack of funding they have not yet been implemented.

In general, the Eastern 1 MU lacks sufficient funding as well as reliable data and expertise in the region. Raising identification skills and awareness amongst hunters and reducing crippling rates are still to be tackled in order to increase the survival rate of adults.

Recommendation

Based on the information provided in this reporting cycle, there is still a need to ensure that the agreed activities included in the Biannual TBG implementation plan 2017-2018 (agreed at the 1st EGM IWG meeting in Kristianstad, Sweden in December 2016) are implemented in the Eastern 1 MU. It is therefore recommended that these activities are included in the new implementation plan for this MU and the work is intensified.

Implementation of the TBG ISSAP – Western and Central Management Unit

The principal Range States for the Western and Central Management Unit of the Taiga Bean Goose are Denmark, Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the UK.

[7] Estonia was not included in this analysis due to late submission of the national report

Most activities of the Biannual TBG implementation plan 2017-2018 (agreed at the 1st EGM IWG meeting in Kristianstad, Sweden in December 2016) for this Management Unit were identified for Denmark, Finland and Sweden and implemented accordingly.

Denmark reported that there is still a need to raise identification skills (between Tundra and Taiga Bean Goose) and awareness of the status of different goose species amongst hunters in Zealand.

Progress has been made in Finland and Sweden on reducing the impact of huntable native predators and alien predators in breeding and moulding areas.

Furthermore, efforts have been made to increase the reproductive rates of TBG in Denmark, Finland and Sweden. Activities have been undertaken to minimize the impact of forestry works and agriculture in TBG habitats.

In addition, Range States have reported on activities that have been undertaken to reduce TBG crippling rates and to raise the identification skills and awareness amongst hunters. Most Range States have been very active, either by initiating an education programme for goose hunters or publicizing articles in relevant hunting magazines.

Some Range States announced that the results of various activities and studies (e.g. a review of the factors possibly contributing to TBG declines in eastern England and appropriate management measures) will be published and made available soon.

Recommendation

Although various activities of the Biannual TBG implementation plan 2017-2018 (agreed at the 1st EGM IWG meeting in Kristianstad, Sweden in December 2016) related to the Western and Central Management Unit have been successfully implemented, there is further need to strengthen the identification skills and raise awareness of the status of different goose species amongst hunters, and to communicate the activities and results that have been achieved in terms of TBG conservation. Thus, it is recommended to prioritize the development of a shared EGMP communication strategy.