

## EGMP Briefing Note

Major discussion points and decisions to be taken at EGM IWG8 (20-22 June 2023)



Greylag Geese by J.P.Kjeldsen

## EGMP general issues

- Establishment of a Flight Safety Task Force
- Agreement on the EGMP budget and costed Programme of Work for 2024
- Date and Venue of the next EGM IWG meeting
- Election of the new Chair of the EGM IWG

## Pink-footed Goose

### Agreement on a harvest quota for the Pink-footed Goose

Based on the [EGMP Population Status and Assessment Report 2023](#) the harvest quota for the 2023/2024 hunting season is 7,300, based on the estimated spring population size of approximately 62,800 and 9 days above freezing in Svalbard in May 2023. We emphasize, however, that the population estimate is highly uncertain for the reasons explained previously. In fact, we can only say with 80% certainty that the true quota lies between 0 and 15,650. If we were to require 95% certainty, the interval would be even wider. If we use the nominal quota of 7,300 and the agreed upon allocation of the quota (30% for Norway, 70% for Denmark), harvest quotas for Norway and Denmark this year are 2,190 and 5,110, respectively. For comparison, the realized harvest has averaged 12,630 ( $se = 1,416$ ) during the last five years. We note, however, that harvest has decreased rather dramatically in Denmark during the last two years for reasons that are unclear. As a consequence, the total harvest during the last two years averaged only 9,577 ( $se = 154$ ), well within the 80% credible interval of the allowable harvest for 2023. Finally, we note that for a population near its target of 60,000, small changes in population size or days above freezing in Svalbard can lead to changes in quotas that are well below those which can be regulated effectively. Therefore, in the coming year, the Data Centre will explore how to account for this lack of precise control over realized harvests.

The Data Centre asked the Task Force for recommendations how to proceed with regard to harvest regulation needs for the coming hunting season: Option 1: reducing the level of harvest in accordance with the quota or, Option 2: in light of the data uncertainties, postpone a regulation while the Data Centre attempts to better estimate the magnitude and reasons for the biases in the May and November counts. The recommendation is divided, but the majority recommends Option 2.

### ISSMP Evaluation (new points to be included in the ISSMP)

Pink-footed Geese have established a new [migration route](#) through Sweden and Finland with breeding grounds in Novaya Zemlya in north Russia. The new population qualifies as a separate biogeographic population according to AEWA definitions. How it will be treated will be agreed upon as part of the evaluation/revision process of the ISSMP in 2023-2025. It is recommended that a range state workshop (including Sweden and Finland) is organized in 2024 to discuss and compile a revised ISSMP (to be presented for adoption at AEWA MOP9 in 2025).

### Taiga Bean Goose

#### Agreement on a harvest quota for the Taiga Bean Goose – Central Management Unit

Based on the [EGMP Population Status and Assessment Report 2023](#), a total harvest of 1,000 birds annually during the next two years is projected to maintain the population near its current level (on average). The population is increasing slowly while harvest has been low. The small quota compared to the population size is due to the population size being close to the model's carrying capacity.

#### ISSMP Evaluation (new points to be included/discussed)

The plan will be evaluated in 2023-2024 and is envisaged to be revised by mid-2025. Following the decisions taken by AEWA MOP8 in 2022, the Management Units (MU Western, MU Central, Eastern 1) were redefined as separate populations, whereas MU Eastern 2 is now considered a different subspecies on AEWA Annex 3. It is recommended that a range state workshop is organized in 2024 to discuss and compile a revised ISSMP (to be presented for adoption at AEWA MOP9 in 2025).

### Greylag Goose (NW/SW European Population)

#### Agreement on a way forward for offtake assessment of Greylag Goose

Based on the EGMP Population Status and Assessment Report 2023, MU or population level management is still not possible for a number of reasons: 1) the post-breeding population sizes for the two MUs cannot be updated due to missing data, 2) there is evidence that the offtake data are biased high, and 3) there are multiple offtake strategies (in terms of level and distribution) that indicate a high probability of meeting both MU targets; thus offtake strategies must additionally be evaluated in terms of cost, feasibility, and legal mandates.

The TF recommends all Range States to focus on offtake strategies minimising the need for breeding-season derogation (those with high winter offtake), as long as an agreed protocol for harvest assessment including coordination hereof is lacking. As no unique level and distribution of offtake will meet Management Unit (MU) population targets, there is a need for a discussion and agreement of protocol of how levels and distribution of offtake can/should be evaluated in terms of cost, feasibility, and legal mandates, noting that while derogation is a legal means of alleviating local socio-economic conflicts, it cannot be used in a planned manner to meet a population target.

*Agreement on a way forward for damage impact assessment of Greylag Goose*

The damage impact assessment has shown that knowledge of damage impact from Greylag Goose is limited and further investigations are recommended.

*Russia, Germany and Netherlands population of Barnacle Goose*

*Presentation of how to “coordinate” offtake of the Russian Barnacle Goose*

In 2022, at EGM IWG7, it was agreed that should the population size drop below the 200% threshold of the FRP, the role of the EGMP will be to facilitate dialogue, as appropriate and necessary, among the Range States regarding “coordinating” offtake. For MU3 it was decided that a trilateral discussion on how to coordinate offtake would take place between the Netherlands and the German Federal States of Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein. The outcomes were discussed in the EGMP Task Forces and will be communicated to the EGM IWG8.

*Agreement on a way forward for a damage impact assessment of Russian Barnacle Goose*

The goose damage synthesis which will be presented at the EGM IWG8 meeting shows that for Barnacle Geese (data from all three flyway populations), there is a significant damage caused to grassland yield crops, which is particularly related to spring grazing. There is a clear dose-response relationship between Barnacle Goose abundances and reduction in grass yields, although the relationship is not necessarily 1:1 nor linear.

## East Greenland, Scotland and Ireland population of Barnacle Goose

### Agreement on a way forward for offtake assessment of Greenland Barnacle Goose

According to the EGMP Population Status and Assessment Report [2023](#), it is not possible to perform the offtake assessment, due to missing data from Ireland and a lack of agreement on which offtake strategies to investigate during the assessment, including possible levels of losses due to avian influenza outbreak.

However, based on the latest population size estimate from 2021, the population size is below the 200% population threshold of the FRP. Thus, coordination of offtake is recommended, and a discussion on how this coordination should be done.

### Agreement on a way forward for a damage impact assessment of Greenland Barnacle Goose

The goose damage synthesis which will be presented at the EGM IWG8 meeting shows that for Barnacle Geese (data from all three flyway populations), there is a significant damage caused to grassland yield crops, which is particularly related to spring grazing. There is a clear dose-response relationship between Barnacle Goose abundances and reduction in grass yields, although the relationship is not necessarily 1:1 nor linear.