

EGMP Briefing Note

Major discussion points and decisions to be taken at EGM IWG9 (18-20 June 2024)



Greylag Geese by ©wzdigipho/Pixabay

EGMP general issues

- Agreement on the EGMP budget and costed Programme of Work for 2025
- Discussion of plans for celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the EGMP in 2026
- Date and Venue of the next EGM IWG meeting

Pink-footed Goose

Agreement on a harvest quota for the Pink-footed Goose

Following the uncertain population size estimate presented at IWG8 in 2023, the Data Centre committed to investigate potential biases in the biannual counts by exploring the use of GPS-tagged birds to estimate detection probabilities. This has been done, as described in the EGMP Population Status and Offtake Assessment Report 2024 ([Doc. AEW/EGMIWG/9.8](#)), and the bias-corrected population estimates suggest stabilization of numbers since 2010. The estimate of the May 2024 population size is 77,713 (61,767 – 90,867). The recommended harvest quota for the 2024/2025 hunting season is 26,700. For comparison, the realized harvest averaged 10,111 (sd = 734) during the last three years. The suggested 2024 harvest quotas for Norway and Denmark this year are 8,010 and 18,690, respectively.

Update on the Pink-footed Goose International Single Species Management Plan (ISSMP) Evaluation and Revision process

The Pink-footed Goose Task Force (PfG TF) has been actively engaged in providing data for the evaluation of the ISSMP, with the preliminary evaluation report submitted to EGM IWG9 (Doc. AEW/EGMIWG/9.9). This preliminary report recommends that the ISSMP should be revised. The report will be finalized after EGM IWG9 and submitted to AEW's Technical and Standing Committees for a formal decision on whether the ISSMP should be retired or continued now that it has reached the end of its lifespan, and – if continued – whether it should be extended, updated or revised. To finalize the report, it will be important for the EGM IWG to decide whether this species remains a priority for management planning. The plan for the revision process has also been discussed by the TF, although still awaiting the formal decision on the future of the ISSMP either way aiming for adoption at AEW MOP9 in 2025. A PfG ISSMP revision workshop will be held in Norway in October 2024. As presented during EGM IWG8, Pink-footed Geese have established a new migration route through Sweden and Finland with breeding grounds in Novaya Zemlya in northern Russia. It has been agreed by the AEW Technical Committee (TC), supported by the TF, that birds breeding in Novaya Zemlya and Svalbard should be regarded as belonging to the same population. This has now been submitted for endorsement by the AEW Standing Committee.

Taiga Bean Goose

Agreement on a harvest quota for the Taiga Bean Goose – Finland and NW Russia/Sweden, Denmark and Germany population

In the EGMP Population Status and Offtake Assessment Report 2024 ([Doc. AEWA/AGMIWG/9.8](#)), the population estimate for the Finland and NW Russia/Sweden, Denmark and Germany population has been corrected using information from GPS-tagged individuals. The March 2024 population estimate is 75,363 (66,829 – 84,837), with an 88% probability that the March 2024 population is above the target of 70,000. If the Finland and NW Russia/Sweden, Denmark and Germany population were at its median conservation goal of 70,000, the harvestable surplus would be 5,200 birds. A total harvest of 1,000 birds annually during the next two years is projected to maintain the population near its current level. For comparison, the total harvest has averaged 453 birds (sd = 71) during the last two years. The TF recommends a total offtake of less than 3,000.

Update on the Taiga Bean Goose International Single Species Management Plan (ISSAP) Evaluation and Revision process

Following the decisions taken by AEWA MOP8 in 2022, the former Management Units (Western MU, Central MU, Eastern 1 & 2 MUs) were redefined as separate populations, with Eastern 2 MU currently being considered a different subspecies. The ten-year lifespan of the Taiga Bean Goose ISSAP is ending in 2025, and the evaluation of the ISSAP implementation has been initiated by the AEWA Secretariat and the Taiga Bean Goose Task Force. Progress has unfortunately been impeded by lack of staff time, but the TF Coordinator and the AEWA Secretariat are working to catch up on the process. The evaluation will provide the basis for the formal decision whether to retire, extend, update or revise the ISSAP and will also provide useful information for any necessary updates or revisions to the plan. It is currently anticipated that the ISSAP will require revision and the aim is to submit a revised version to AEWA MOP9 for adoption in 2025. It is recommended that a Range State workshop for revision of the ISSAP is organized for early 2025, although funding and a host country are yet to be identified.

Greylag Goose (NW/SW European Population)

Recommendations for future monitoring

In Doc. AEWA/EGMIWG/9.10 (Estimating Greylag Goose breeding population size and productivity), the Data Centre provides a set of recommendations for future monitoring of the Greylag Goose. All Range States of MU1 are encouraged to explore further options for carrying out annual post-breeding counts in August, while also introducing regular age counts. Furthermore, Range States are encouraged to continue investigating migratory movements (including moult migration) and estimating count bias by use of GPS-tagged individuals, and to adopt the methodology described by Johnson (2024) to transform post-breeding population size estimates into estimated number of breeding pairs in each country.

Range States of MU2 are encouraged to keep providing updated and regular data on population size and offtake, paying attention to existing gaps in the available data. Despite several improvements in data availability, population management at MU level is still prevented by missing information.

Agreement on a way forward for offtake assessment of Greylag Goose

The Greylag Goose Task Force supports the recommendations for future monitoring, and, in the meantime, recommends that all Range States focus on offtake strategies that minimise the need for breeding-season derogation (those with high winter offtake). As no unique level and distribution of offtake will meet MU population targets, there is still a need for a discussion and agreement of protocol regarding how levels and distribution of offtake can/should be evaluated in terms of cost, feasibility, and legal mandates. While derogation is a legal means of alleviating local socio-economic conflicts, it should not be used in a planned manner to meet a population target.

Barnacle Goose (Russia/Germany and Netherlands population)

Population Status and Offtake Assessment

The EGMP Population Status and Assessment Report 2024 ([Doc. AEWA/AGMIWG/9.8](#)) provides an offtake assessment of the three MUs in the Russia/Germany and Netherlands population for the period 2005/06-2022/23. Data from field counts as well as the Integrated Population Model (IPM) result in an estimated flyway population of about 1.4 million individuals in midwinter 2022/23, thus 3.8 times the Favourable Reference Population (FRP). The population has been stable around this level for four years now, after a long period of nearly continuous growth. Converted into breeding pairs, Russian MU1 and Baltic MU2 are well beyond the FRP, whereas the number of breeding pairs in the North Sea MU3 is very close to the FRP. Thus, derogation effort targeting the breeding population should be undertaken with caution and coordinated between Range States.

Barnacle Goose (East Greenland/Scotland and Ireland population)

Population Status and Offtake Assessment

This year's status report is the first report based on the IPM. After a peak flyway population of 80,000 in 2006 and in 2012, abundance declined to 56,994 (48,616 – 66,230) in March 2024. For much of the period of record, abundance on Islay exceeded that in all other wintering areas, but that pattern has been reversed since 2018. The total harvest rate of adults has increased over the period of record, from around 0.01 to a peak of 0.05 (0.04 – 0.07) in 2017. Thereafter, harvest rate declined to 0.03 (0.02 – 0.05) in 2023. Annual survival rate of adults (including both harvest and natural mortality) declined at the same time

harvest rates were increasing, suggesting that harvest may have contributed to the decline in flyway abundance, although poorer than average reproduction could also have played a role.

Coordination of offtake

Currently, there is a 24% probability that the March 2024 population was below the FRP of 54,000. As only extremely low offtake rates are expected to result in relatively low probabilities of the population falling below the FRP, tight coordination of offtake between Iceland and Scotland is required to ensure the population does not fall below the FRP. If the current level of offtake is maintained, there is a 43% probability that the population will fall below the FRP by 2026. The TF recommends reducing offtake to levels as close as possible to zero in order to minimize the risk of falling below the FRP and that Iceland and Scotland establish and implement a coordination mechanism to ensure adherence to those levels.