



AEWA European Goose  
Management Platform

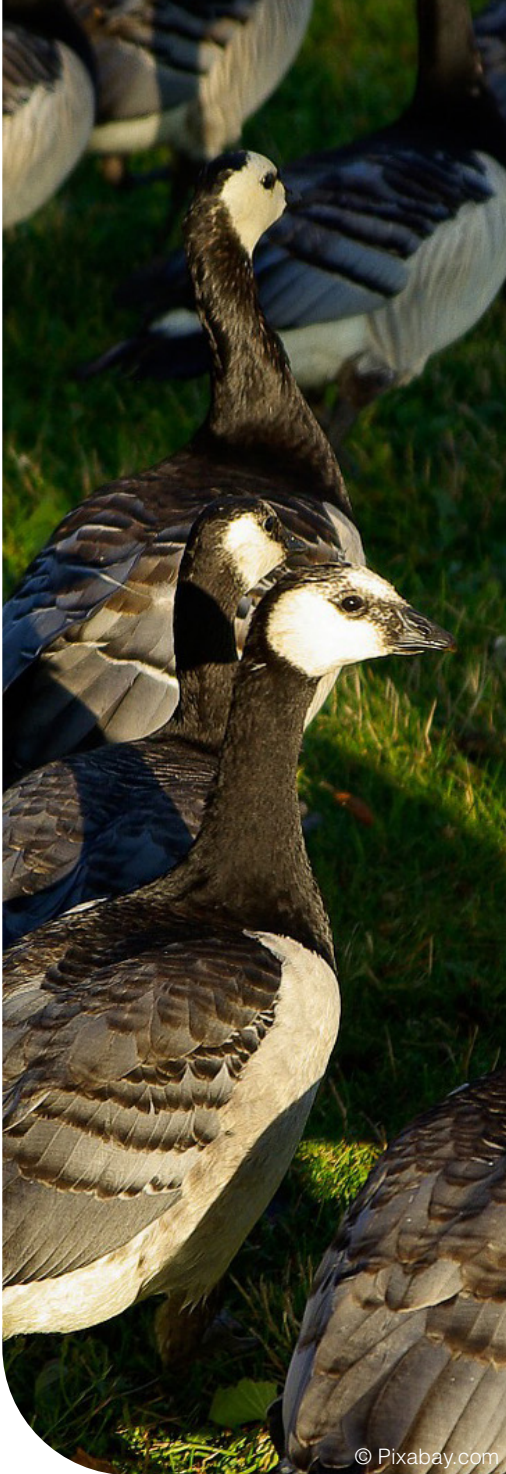
# Briefing Note

Population status and management recommendations

*10th Meeting of the European Goose Management International Working Group (EGM IWG10)*



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## Background

The European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) was established in 2016 under the auspices of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) to provide the mechanism for a structured, coordinated and inclusive decision-making and implementation process for the sustainable use and management of goose populations in Europe, with the objective of maintaining them at a favourable conservation status, while taking into account concerns of relevant stakeholders and the pertinent legislative frameworks and regulations.

Currently, four goose species are managed under the EGMP; the Svalbard Pink-footed Goose population, three populations of Taiga Bean Goose (the Scandinavia/Denmark and UK population, the West Siberia/Poland and Germany population, and the Finland and NW Russia/Sweden, Denmark and Germany population), two populations of Barnacle Goose (E. Greenland/Scotland and Ireland population and Russia/Germany and Netherlands population) and the NW/SW European Greylag Goose population. Each year the EGMP Population Status and Offtake Assessment Report provides the latest analysis and management guidance for the goose populations under the EGMP remit.

The information covers aspects related to population status, survival, and productivity, as well as an assessment of the cumulative impact of derogation and legal hunting and, for some populations, an assessment of the optimal harvest strategy.

Following the annual assessment process, the European Goose Management International Working Group (EGM IWG) meets to discuss the findings of the EGMP Population Status and Offtake Assessment Report and on this basis provide management recommendations for each population.

This briefing note provides the main messages from the 2025 report and the management recommendations decided at the 10th annual meeting of EGM IWG in 2025. Note that management recommendations follow the wording of the [EGM IWG10 Decisions Table](#) agreed on by the EGM IWG members.

For more information about the EGMP and previous results please visit our website (<https://egmp.aewa.info/>).



## Status of Pink-footed Goose

In 2023, the Data Centre was requested to investigate potential biases in the biannual counts by exploring the use of GPS-tagged birds to estimate detection probabilities. Since then, detection probabilities have been estimated for the November 2022-2024 and May 2023-2025 censuses. The updated IPM for the Pink-footed Goose now accounts for these biases.

The May 2024 population was estimated at 87,598 (75,263 – 101,044), growing to an estimated 98,192 (83,108 – 114,511) birds in November 2024. In May 2025, the population size was estimated at 78,749 (63,873 – 96,605).

Harvests and harvest rates have been relatively stable since implementation of the adaptive harvest management program in 2013. Estimates of annual survival have

generally decreased during the entire period of record, although there is uncertainty associated with the estimates in the last few years due to the cessation of the capture-mark-recapture program.

### Management recommendations for Pink-footed Goose

The EGM IWG agreed on a total harvest quota of 20,000 birds for the 2025/2026 hunting season (6,000 for Norway, 14,000 for Denmark), based on the estimated population of 78,749 individuals and 15 days above freezing in Svalbard in May 2025.

For comparison, the realized harvest averaged 9,838 (sd = 449) during the last three years.

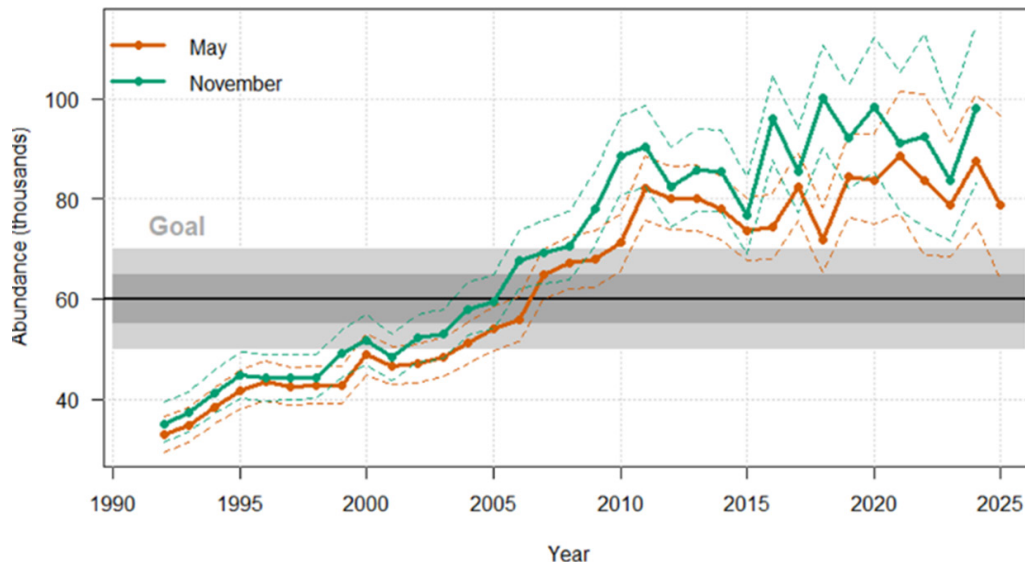
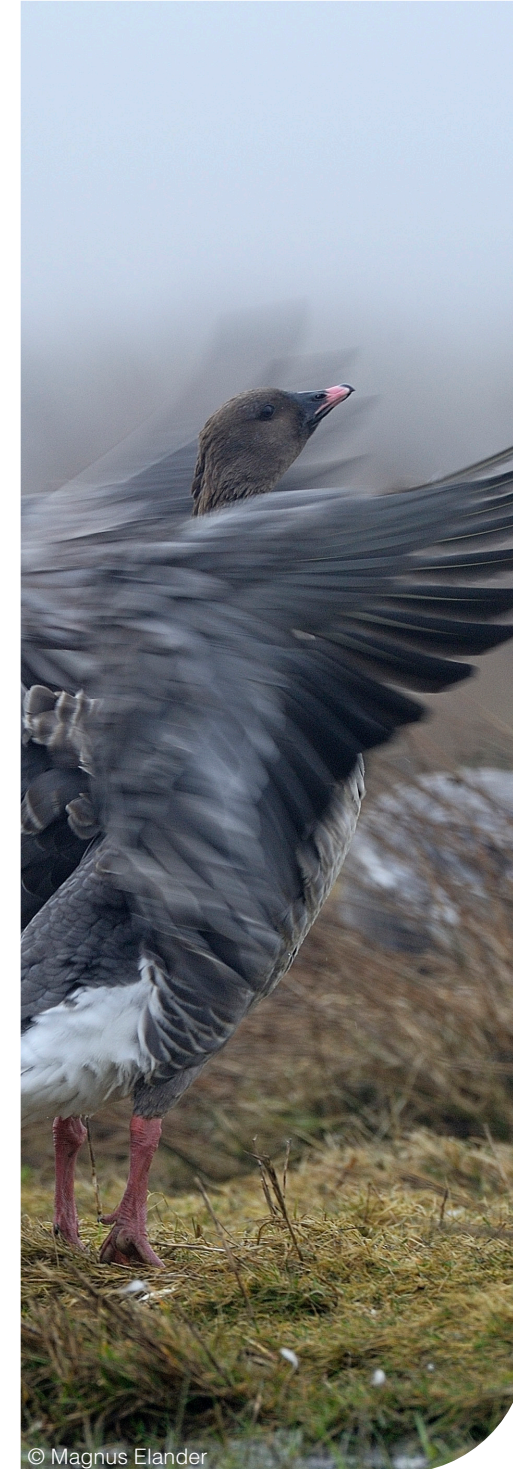
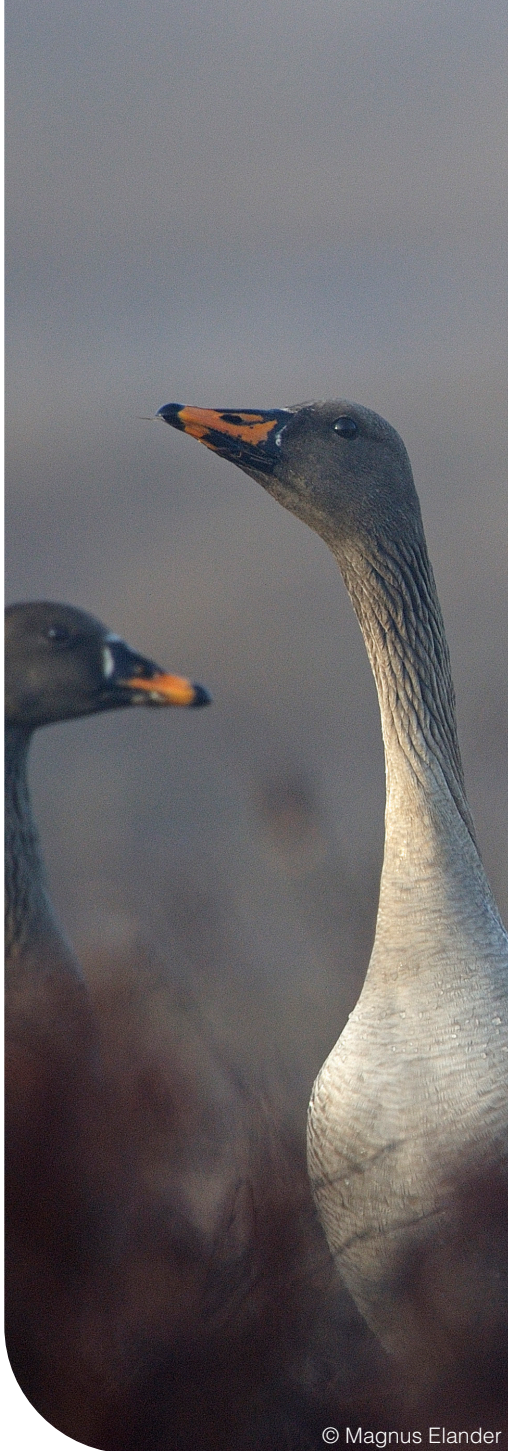


Figure 1. IPM-based estimates of abundance of Svalbard Pink-footed Geese in May and November, relative to the goal of 60,000 (95% credible intervals are indicated by the dashed lines). The dark grey band centered on the goal defines near-complete stakeholder satisfaction with population sizes, while the light grey band exhibits  $\geq \frac{1}{2}$  of maximum satisfaction.



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## Status of Taiga Bean Goose

In the Scandinavia/Denmark and UK population (former Western MU), winter counts in Denmark (835 individuals), Scotland (169 individuals) and England (1 individual) resulted in a total of around 1,000 geese in 2024/2025. This is similar to last year's result (1,174 individuals), both in terms of numbers and distribution.

Population size of the West Siberia/Poland and Germany population (former Eastern1 MU) continues to be estimated at 15,000-20,000 individuals.

For the Finland and NW Russia/Sweden, Denmark and Germany population, the integrated population model has generally been successful at mediating all sources of count and harvest data to provide biologically reasonable and robust estimates of population status. However, coping with these biases has become increasingly challenging, and no formal assessment could be offered in 2025. Nevertheless, March counts have been relatively stable in recent years, suggesting the population is likely well above the median recovery target of 70,000. As a precautionary measure, a conservative harvest below 3,000 is recommended to avoid precipitating a decline in population size (recent harvests have averaged about 500 birds).

## Management recommendations for Taiga Bean Goose

The EGM IWG agreed on a total annual harvest of less than 3,000 birds (1,740 for Finland, 900 for Sweden, and 120 for Denmark) in the Finland and NW Russia/Sweden, Denmark and Germany population for the 2025/2026 hunting season.

Harvest, if any, of the other two populations should be minimized.



## Status of Greylag Goose

Despite considerable improvements in data availability, it has still not been possible to move from the information-gap decision model at population level to a dynamic and model-based management at management unit (MU) level. However, technical progress has been made, including the development of a flyway population model, a utility model used to evaluate various offtake strategies in terms of their ability to meet population targets, and a model for estimating number of breeding pairs from post-breeding counts.

In 2022, a post-breeding population of 540,115 individuals in MU1, resulting in approximately 132,000 breeding pairs, and a post-breeding population of 748,110 individuals in MU2, equivalent to approximately 180,000 breeding pairs, indicate that both MUs are well above the set targets of 70,000 and 80,000 breeding pairs, respectively.

In January 2024, the wintering population was estimated at 932,910 individuals, which also indicates a population size well above the target of approximately 545,000 individuals in winter. With a reported offtake of at least 425,393 Greylag geese in 2023/2024, we continue to suspect that the reported offtake is significantly biased high.

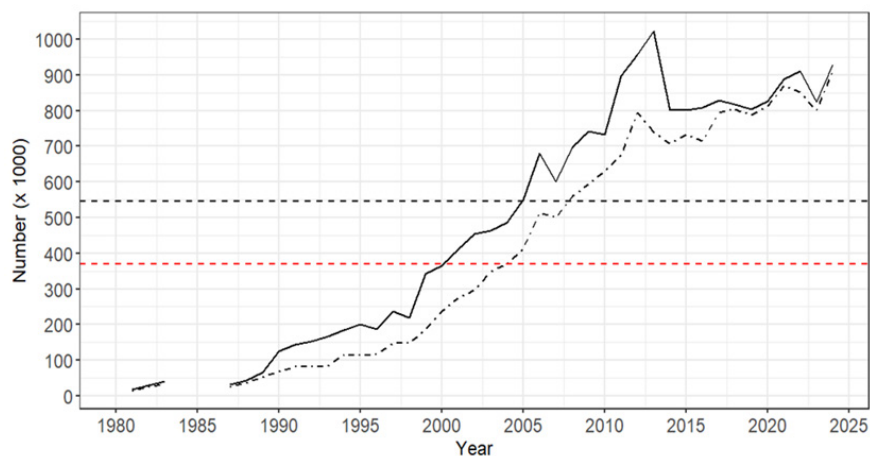


Figure 2. Development of the size of the NW/SW European winter population of Greylag geese based on IWC imputed values from 1980-2024, with (solid line) and without estimates from Spain (dot-dashed line), as well as special goose count schemes in Denmark and the Netherlands. The dashed black line represents the target for the wintering population, and the red dashed line represents the Favourable Reference Population.

## Management recommendations for Greylag Goose

The EGM IWG acknowledged that due to monitoring issues, managing the population at MU level is still not possible. However, all Range States\* will continue to focus on offtake strategies that minimize the need for derogations.

Considering that the population level of both MUs is well above the target population size, and that the population shows no declining trend, the EGM IWG agreed to maintain the current level of offtake for the 2025/2026 hunting season.

\*It was noted that in the Netherlands there is no recreational hunting, and thus all offtake falls under derogation.



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## Status of the Barnacle Goose – Russia/Germany and Netherlands population

Data from field counts and estimates from the IPM indicate a flyway population size of about 1.6 million individuals in January 2024, which is equivalent to four times the Favourable Reference Population size (FRP). Hence, after being stable at a level of around 1.4 million individuals, the flyway population size seems to have increased again in the past two seasons despite reports on losses caused by outbreaks of avian influenza.

Converted into breeding pairs, numbers in the Russian Management Unit 1 (MU1) are well above the FRP and the 200% FRP threshold level. In contrast, the Baltic Management Unit 2 (MU2) has seen a decline, with population size falling below the 200% FRP threshold in 2024. This development triggered the need for coordinated management of offtake if significant levels of derogation are expected to impact the local breeding populations in Denmark, Finland, or Sweden.

## Management recommendations for Russia/Germany and Netherlands population of Barnacle Goose

Given that the numbers in MU3 are below the 200% threshold, the EGM IWG agreed on the continued need for coordination of offtake between the Range States of the MU3 as done in previous years. The EGMP Russia Barnacle Goose Task Force will continue to liaise with Range States regarding the potential establishment of coordination of offtake for MU2.

In the North Sea MU3, the number of breeding pairs has increased recently and is now above the FRP. However, numbers are still below the 200% threshold, thus requiring coordinated management of derogation between Germany and the Netherlands.

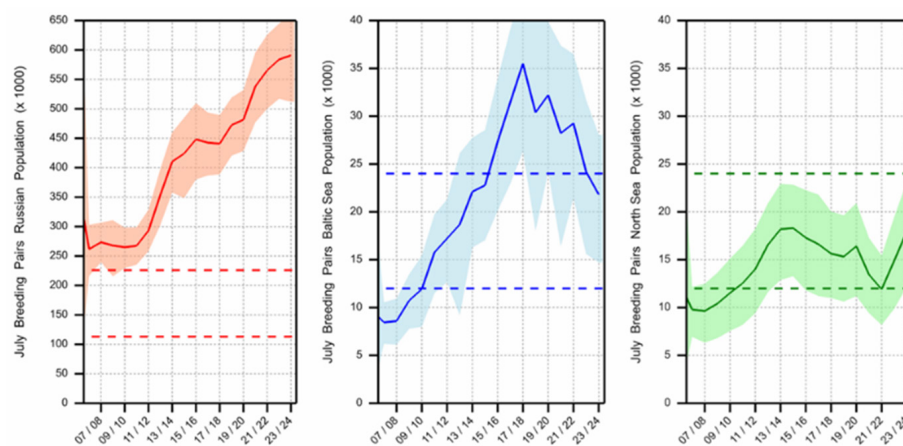


Figure 3. IPM-based means (solid line) and 95% posterior intervals (shaded areas) for the number of breeding pairs in July for the three MUs. Dashed lines are the FRP as well as the 200% of the FRP. Left (red) MU1, centre (blue) MU2, right (green) MU3. In the IPM framework, the number of breeding pairs has been set as the number of individuals of 2 years and older, divided by 2. Note the different scales on the y-axes.



## Status of Barnacle Goose – East Greenland/Scotland and Ireland population

After a peak flyway population of 80,000 in 2006 and 2012, population size declined to 62,438 (52,845 – 72,986) in March 2025. 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 approximately 0.03 (0.02 – 0.04) in 2024. Annual survival rate of adults declined while harvest rates were increasing, suggesting that harvest may have contributed to the decline in flyway population size, although poorer than average reproduction could also have played a role.

There currently is a 4% probability that the March 2025 population is below the FRP of 54,000.

## Management recommendations for East Greenland/Scotland and Ireland population of Barnacle Goose

The EGM IWG took note of the agreement between Iceland and the United Kingdom that the maximum offtake will be 3,250 birds, split between the two range states. This shall not be considered as a precedent in the context of any future EGM IWG decisions or in the broader context of AEWA.

Because of the proximity of the population to the FRP in recent years, the Adaptive Flyway Management Plan requires tighter coordination of offtake between Iceland and Scotland to ensure the population does not fall below the FRP.

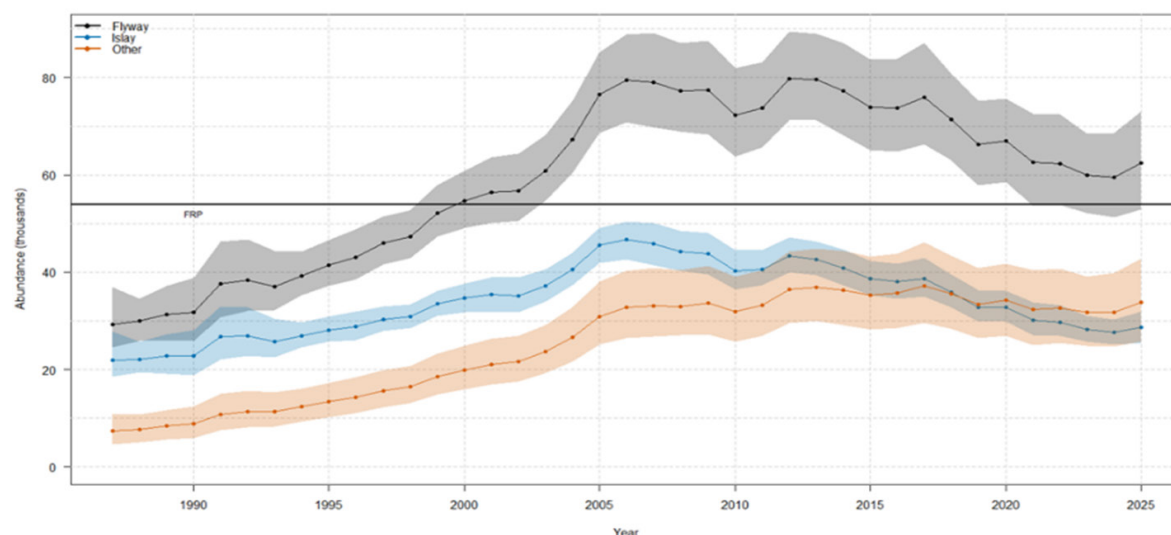


Figure 4. Development of the March population size of E. Greenland/ Scotland & Ireland Barnacle Geese as based on the IPM. The FRP = 54,000. Shading represents the 95% credible intervals.



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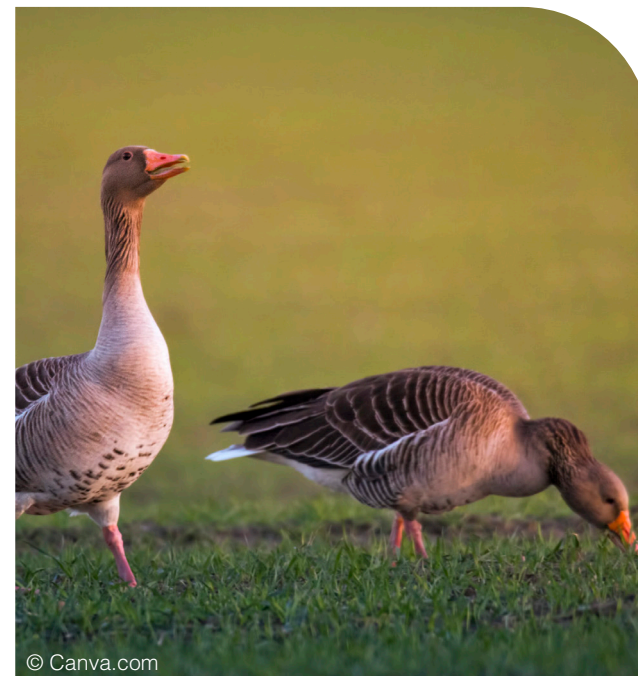
## Relevant Links:

Population Report: [Population Status and Offtake Assessment Report 2025](#)

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