

AEWA EUROPEAN GOOSE MANAGEMENT PLATFORM



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AEWA EUROPEAN GOOSE MANAGEMENT
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**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TAIGA BEAN GOOSE TASK FORCE
FOR 2025/2026 AND DRAFT WORKPLAN FOR 2026/2027**

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with contributions from the members of Taiga Bean Goose Task Force*

Summary:

This document provides an overview of the status and key activities undertaken by the Taiga Bean Goose Task Force from June 2025 to May 2026. It also presents a proposed set of recommendations, along with the draft annual workplan for 2026/2027.

Action requested from the EGM IWG:

Take note of the Task Force report and recommendations and adopt the annual workplan.

Introduction

According to Rule 29 of the European Goose Management International Working Group (EGM IWG) *Modus Operandi*, the EGM IWG may establish species and/or thematic Task Forces as necessary to deal with the preparation and coordination of decision papers and background documents, as well as to deal with other specific tasks.

The Taiga Bean Goose Task Force (TBG TF) was established in early 2017, following the recommendations of the 2nd Meeting of the EGM IWG (EGM IWG2) in June 2017, in Copenhagen, Denmark. Mr Mikko Alhainen was identified as the Coordinator for the TBG TF. The current membership of the TBG TF is indicated in Annex I to this document. In line with the Terms of Reference, the nomination of additional members to the Task Force is at the discretion of the National Government Representative of each Range States and representatives of EGM IWG Permanent Observers.

At EGM IWG3 in June 2018, in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands, the TBG TF presented on the work progress since the establishment of the TF and presented recommendations to the EGM IWG, referring to document AEWA/EGMIWG/3.13/Rev.1. Range States agreed on the extension of the period of the workplan for the implementation of non-AHM related actions of the AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Taiga Bean Goose (TBG ISSAP) from 2017/2018 until 2020 with small amendments, as recommended by the TBG TF. Moreover, the EGM IWG agreed on the establishment of a thematic sub-group to the Task Force including external goose monitoring experts not currently members of the Task Force, for the development of a monitoring framework.

At EGM IWG4 in June 2019, in Perth, Scotland, UK, the TBG TF presented on the work progress since the EGM IWG3 and presented recommendations to the EGM IWG, referring to document AEWA/EGMIWG/4.11. Range States agreed on the development steps on monitoring and population assessment for each Management Unit (MU), ¹ based on the work of the thematic sub-group between EGM IWG3 and EGM IWG4.

At EGM IWG5 in June 2020, held online, the TBG TF presented on the work progress since the EGM IWG4 and presented recommendations to the EGM IWG, referring to document AEWA/EGMIWG/5.9/Rev.1. Range States agreed on the new non-Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) workplan, continuation of at least October and March counts for the Central MU (now the Finland & NW Russia (br) population²) and adopted the Integrated Population Model (IPM) as the basis for AHM decisions.

At the EGM IWG6 in June 2021, which was an online meeting, the TBG TF presented on the work progress since EGM IWG5 and presented recommendations to the EGM IWG, referring to document AEWA/EGMIWG/6.8. Range States agreed on the extension of the non-AHM workplan and adopted the final IPM as the basis for AHM decisions.

¹ Note that, in accordance with the amendments to Table 1 of Annex 3 of AEWA that were adopted in 2022 at the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP8), the previous Western, Central and Eastern 1&2 Management Units of Taiga Bean Goose are now each regarded as individual populations (Resolution 8.2).

² The population name used throughout the remainder of this document are the current population names, as adopted by MOP9 in November 2025 (Resolution 9.2).

Between EGM IWG7 and EGM IWG10, held in 2022-2025, the TBG TF presented updates on progress made since the previous meetings, along with its recommendations to the EGM IWG. These are set out in documents AEWA/EGMIWG/7.10, AEWA/EGMIWG/8.10, AEWA/EGMIWG/9.12 and AEWA/EGMIWG/10.12.

This document provides an overview of the work that has taken place since the EGM IWG10, including the period until the end on the lifespan of the original TBG ISSAP and during the first half a year of the revised TBG ISSAP adopted by the 9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP9) to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). It also presents recommendations and a draft workplan for 2026/2027.

1. Status of the Task Force Membership

Presently, the TBG TF has 15 members. Members represent six Range States, one observer organisation. Mr Mikko Alhainen, representing the Finnish Wildlife Agency, remains the current Coordinator of the TBG TF.

Details of the current membership of the TBG TF are indicated in Annex I to this document. In line with the Terms of Reference, the nomination of additional members to the TF is at the discretion of the National Government Representative of each Range State and representatives of EGM IWG Permanent Observers.

2. Meetings

The meetings of the TBG TF were held online involving the TF Coordinator and members, together with the EGMP Secretariat and Data Centre.

As of 25 May 2026, the Task Force has had two online meetings during the period between EGM IWG10 and EGM IWG11. Another meeting of the Task Force prior to EGM IWG11 is scheduled to take place in person, in the framework of the EGMP Task Force Day to be held on 15 June 2026 in Skövde, Sweden.

3. Report of Key Activities and Outcomes

3.1. Updates on decisions and actions from EGM IWG10

In 2025, EGMP IWG10 agreed on the following recommendations (the key activities achieved in respect of each recommendation have been presented in italics):

- Continue and strengthen January/mid-winter counts of all populations for the population size estimates and delineation of the populations in overlapping wintering areas (*ongoing work in the Range States*).
- Continue October and March counts of the Finland & NW Russia (br) population for the foreseeable future for the data generation for the IPM, and
 - extend, as a matter of priority, the coordinated counts to Finland and Denmark as relevant for robust population monitoring (*monitoring project concerning October counts is under planning in Finland*);
 - analyse the data on Finland in terms of changes in staging TBG numbers during key counting times to inform the IPM and development of the monitoring framework. (*The data has been analysed and work is ongoing. GPS data is useful at correcting the count bias.*)

- Strengthen and extend the age ratio monitoring in early autumn staging areas of the Finland & NW Russia (br) and Scandinavia (br) populations (Finland, Denmark, Sweden).
- In cooperation with the AEWa Secretariat, prepare for the implementation of the revised TBG ISSAP.
- For improved population size estimates, understanding of migration patterns and breeding distribution an annual pool of 30-50 GPS-tagged Taiga Bean Goose per population would be beneficial to be delivered by international funding in the form of a long-term monitoring project. The Range States are encouraged to fund monitoring project(s).
 - This would take an initial investment of perhaps ~50 tags to be followed by annual addition of around 10-20 tags to keep up with the level of 30-50 tags. *(The Finland & NW Russia (br) population currently has around 80 functioning tags set in Denmark, Sweden and Finland in projects such as HABITRAC. The initial investment is done, and the focus should be on maintaining the pool of tags. There is an ongoing tagging in the Germany & Poland (nbr) population and C Asia (nbr) population, providing valuable information.)*
- Adaptive Harvest Management

Noting the current challenges in the population modelling the Task Force recommendation for harvest is less than 3,000 birds to ensure maintenance of the population at the target range, while providing opportunities for sustainable harvest. *(Hunting regulations in the Range States remained at approximately the same).*

3.2. Task Force activities

The ten-year lifespan of the TBG ISSAP concluded in 2025. An evaluation of its implementation was conducted by the AEWa Secretariat, the EGMP Data Centre and the TBG TF. The resulting report, together with its recommendations, was subsequently endorsed by the AEWa Technical and Standing Committees. This evaluation provided the foundation for revising the ISSAP, culminating in the adoption of the revised ISSAP at AEWa MOP9 in 2025.

During the 2025–2026 intersessional period, the TF reviewed recent developments across the Range States. Updates highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen data collection, monitoring and population analysis. Several countries reported notable progress. Finland is currently analysing GPS tracking data, with a publication forthcoming, and has secured funding for comprehensive national counts aligned with Swedish autumn surveys to strengthen the IPM. Sweden has likewise obtained funding to compile Taiga Bean Goose data and is reviewing hunting season structures, with a revised framework planned for July 2027.

In Norway, a recent master's thesis analysing 15 years of data from Trøndelag indicates very high adult survival and strong recruitment, with a peak of 34 birds recorded in 2023. Denmark is advancing GPS tagging efforts in northeast Jutland and assessing the impacts of energy infrastructure while also raising concerns about the stagnant status of the Scandinavia (br) population, illegal hunting and gaps in monitoring coverage. In Scotland, numbers remain stable at approximately 170 individuals, although some unusual distribution patterns have been observed; however, no funding is currently available for tagging.

In light of the MOP decision to redefine management units into distinct populations, the Task Force agreed on the need to restructure its work accordingly. It proposed establishing three subgroups, each with a dedicated lead person, corresponding to: (1) the Scandinavia (br), (2) Finland & NW Russia (br), and (3) Germany & Poland (nbr) and C Asia (nbr) populations combined, in order to enable more targeted conservation and

management actions. The Scandinavia (br) population remains of particular concern due to its lack of growth despite ongoing efforts, and the Task Force emphasised the need to increase GPS tagging to better understand its dynamics.

For the Germany & Poland (nbr) and C Asia (nbr) populations, limited expert engagement and insufficient representation from Range States were identified as key challenges. Encouragingly, the Central Asian Conservation Network has established a dedicated goose working group with Taiga Bean Goose as a priority species, and approximately 20 GPS tags are expected to be deployed with support from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Strengthening collaboration with experts from Poland and Germany was also identified as a priority. The Task Force further reviewed progress in implementing the TBG ISSAP, noting that a dedicated implementation plan is expected to be developed by EGM IWG12.

Finally, the EGMP Data Centre provided an update on efforts to address biases in the IPM. In recent years, discrepancies between October and March counts—particularly unrealistically low October figures observed since around 2020—have reduced the model’s reliability. To improve consistency, a correction factor has now been introduced. In addition, newly available Swedish tagging data from 2023–2024 is further strengthening the robustness of the dataset.

4. Recommendations

The TBG TF would like to thank everyone involved in the essential monitoring activities of the Taiga Bean Goose and recommends the following to the EGM IWG, with a view to strengthening support from the governments for monitoring activities, which are largely done on voluntary basis and with limited resources:

1. Continue and strengthen January/mid-winter counts of all populations for the population size estimates and delineation of the populations in overlapping wintering areas.
2. Continue October and March counts of Finland & NW Russia (br) population for the foreseeable future for the data generation for the IPM, and
 - i. improve the count coverage in Finland and Denmark;
 - ii. continue analysing the data on Finland in terms of changes in staging TBG numbers during key counting times to inform the IPM and development of the monitoring framework.
3. Strengthen and extend the age ratio monitoring in early autumn staging areas of the Finland and NW Russia (br) population and C Asia (nbr) population (Finland, Denmark, Sweden).
4. For improved population size estimates, understanding of migration patterns and breeding distribution an annual pool of 30-50 GPS-tagged Taiga Bean Geese per population would be beneficial to be delivered by international funding in a form of a long-term monitoring project. The Range States are encouraged to fund monitoring project(s) and to strengthen and start projects where necessary.
 - i. This would take an initial investment of perhaps ~50 tags to be followed by annual addition of around 10-20 tags to keep up with the level of 30-50 tags.

5. In cooperation with the AEWAs Secretariat, it is proposed that the TBG Task Force plan and execute the following actions regarding implementation of the revised TBG ISSAP:
 - i. plan and prepare a draft implementation plan for the revised TBG ISSAP (for adoption by the EGM IWG12) through the following steps:
 1. preparation of a document describing the proposed content, structure, and frequency of updates of the implementation plan, which will be circulated to Range States for their approval by the end of 2026; and
 2. preparation of a draft implementation plan, which will be consulted with Range States in advance of EGM IWG12;
 - ii. plan and implement the data collection and necessary analysis for the FRV setting for the respective populations, with necessary activities built-in to the implementation plan.
6. For the improved implementation of the ISSAP with increased focus at population level, the Range States are encouraged to nominate experts to the Task Force to strengthen the output capacity of the TF.
7. Adaptive Harvest Management, Interim Harvest Strategy:

Noting the current challenges in the population modelling and the new population estimate just above the target of at least 70,000 individuals in spring, the TF recommendation for harvest is less than 3,000 birds to allow the maintenance of the population above the target level, while providing opportunities for sustainable harvest.

It is recommended that the EGM IWG request the Data Centre, in cooperation with the Task Force, to prepare full Adaptive Harvest Management framework for the Taiga Bean Goose Finland & NW Russia (br) population.

5. Draft Workplan 2026/2027

The TBG TF foresees that it will continue actively working to support the implementation of the TBG ISSAP by drafting a new implementation plan aligned with the revised TBG ISSAP.

A total of at least three meetings is planned for the period between EGM IWG11 and EGM IWG12.

- 1) September-October 2026: organisation and further planning of the TF activities based on outcomes of the EGM IWG11, planning the implementation of the revised ISSAP;
- 2) February-March 2027: update on agreed tasks and progress and other agreed work;
- 3) June 2027: an in-person meeting back-to-back with EGM IWG12.

Additional meetings will be organised as necessary, especially for the implementation planning of the revised TBG ISSAP.

Annex I. Members of the Taiga Bean Task Force as of May 2026

Country	Representative	Affiliation
Denmark	Anthony Fox	Aarhus University
	Lene Midtgaard	Danish Hunters' Association
	Knud Flensted	BirdLife Denmark
Finland	Mikko Alhainen (<i>TF Coordinator</i>)	Finnish Wildlife Agency
	Toni Laaksonen	University of Turku
	Markus Piha	Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)
	Antti Piironen	Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)
Norway	Ingunn Tombre	Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Department of Arctic Ecology
Sweden	Sofia Sollenberg	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
Ukraine	Vasyl Kostyshyn	Institute of Zoology NAS of Ukraine, Department of Monitoring and Conservation of Animals
United Kingdom	Bart Donato (<i>representative for England</i>)	Natural England
	Gillian Fisher	Natural England
	Jessica Shaw	NatureScot
Wetlands International	Szabolcs Nagy	Senior Advisor
	Luca Guitink	Junior Technical Officer