

**AEWA EUROPEAN GOOSE MANAGEMENT PLATFORM**



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AEWA EUROPEAN GOOSE MANAGEMENT  
INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP**  
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**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF BARNACLE GOOSE TASK FORCE FOR E  
GREENLAND (BR) AND THE SVALBARD (BR) POPULATIONS FOR 2025/2026 AND  
DRAFT WORKPLAN FOR 2026/2027**

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with contributions from the members of the Greenland/Svalbard Barnacle Goose Task Force*

**Summary:**

This document provides an overview of the status and key activities that the Barnacle Goose Task Force for the E Greenland (br) and the Svalbard (br) populations has undertaken from June 2025 until May 2026. In addition, a proposed list of recommendations is included as well as the proposed 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 EGMP Greenland/Svalbard Barnacle Goose Task Force was established in 2020 following the recommendations of the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the EGM IWG (EGM IWG5) in June 2020. The first meeting of the Task Force took place on 7 October 2020.

This document provides an overview of the work that has taken place since the EGM IWG10 and the recommendations and workplan for the implementation of the AEWA International Single Species Management Plan for the Barnacle Goose (BG ISSMP), in respect of the E Greenland (br) and the Svalbard (br) populations, for 2026/2027.

The agreed aims of the Task Force are:

- 1) assist the EGM IWG in coordinating and catalysing the implementation of the BG ISSMP and its corresponding Adaptive Flyway Management Programme (AFMP) for the respective population(s) under the EGMP;
- 2) assist the EGM IWG in stimulating and supporting Range States in the implementation of the BG ISSMP and its corresponding AFMP for the respective population; and
- 3) monitor and report on the implementation of these activities to the EGM IWG, as appropriate.

## 1. Status of the Task Force Membership

The Task Force is made up of 13 representatives from four Range States and the European Commission and three non-governmental organisations and is supported by the EGMP Secretariat and Data Centre. A full list of Task Force members is detailed in Annex I.

## 2. Meetings

Since the previous Task Force report submitted to EGM IWG10 in June 2025, the Task Force has participated in three Task Force meetings and members have also participated in meetings of the Agriculture Task Force. Iceland and the UK met bilaterally in May 2026 to discuss and agree on the offtake for 2026/2027.

## 3. Report of Key Activities and Outcomes

There are no Task Force activities reported for the Svalbard (br) population since the AFMP has not been developed yet for this population. It was agreed at the EGM IWG7 that the development of the AFMP would be postponed until we have a better understanding of the impacts of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) on the population. The Task Force should consider when to take forward this work.

Complimentary to the Task Force workplan, the Svalbard Barnacle Goose is monitored annually, with daily registrations, at stopover sites in Norway (Helgeland and Vesterålen). This activity is funded by the Norwegian Environment Agency and the County Governor of Nordland. NatureScot are working on a collaborative project

to examine serology with both Barnacle Goose populations and will feed the results into the Task Force once they have been published.

The Task Force followed the agreed workplan set out in Section 5 of last year's report and will continue to follow the workplan set out in Section 5 of this report. Over the past year, it was agreed that Iceland and Scotland keep offtake to a level that minimises the probability of falling below the Favourable Reference Population (FRP). Both Range States have established and implemented a coordination mechanism to ensure adherence to those levels. The agreement between Iceland and Scotland is set out in Section 4. Further discussion between Iceland and Scotland has taken place to agree offtake for 2025/2026 prior to the EGM IWG10 and this was discussed at EGM IWG10 and detailed in the [Decision Table](#) from that meeting.

Further to that, the Task Force continues work related to the Integrated Population Model (IPM) of the Greenland population, taking into account the data from the flyway census and additional impacts of HPAI. A full population census took place in February 2026 across the Scotland and Ireland, and initial feedback shows the count was higher than in recent years.

There is no agreement to date on who leads the work on the IPM for Svalbard population, and how it will be funded. Norway and the UK have prepared the impact model for the Greenland and Svalbard Barnacle Goose populations. New and ongoing work will consider the impacts of HPAI and any associated research, with research in Scotland over the past 2 years focussing on serology work.

The Greenland/Svalbard Barnacle Goose Task Force proposes to continue to support the implementation of the BG ISSMP and the respective AFMP, extend the AFMP for 1 year and begin work to review the AFMP, following the workplan of previous years and recommended activities. Task Force meetings will be organised as necessary.

The main work of the Task Force over the past year has been to consider how to address concerns about the low numbers of Barnacle Geese and to work with Iceland and the UK on the coordination of offtake. More detail on that is included in Section 4. The UK and Ireland coordinated and funded the triennial population census, which took place in February 2026.

Provisional data indicates that the flyway population census is 76,894, an increase of 23.7% since the 2023 census and the second highest total on record (which was the 2013 census which recorded 80,617 birds). The total number of birds in Scotland was 57,836 (up 19.6% in 2023) and the total in Ireland was 19,058 (up 37.8%). Breeding success for the Greenland (br) population on Islay was 11.2%<sup>1</sup> indicating further improvement in productivity over the past few years.

Within the AFMP, the population has never reached the 200% FRP figure, so the Task Force has discussed using a risk assessment based on the population model as a means of coordinating discussions around offtake, as has been used in the past two seasons. The proposal going forward is to address this within a revised AFMP. There are no management plan activities reported for the Svalbard (br) population, since the AFMP has not been developed yet.

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<sup>1</sup> Ogilvie, MA. Breeding success in 2025 of Barnacle Geese wintering on Islay and of Greenland White-fronted Geese wintering on Islay and Kintyre .

In a new project funded by the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund, the aim is to merge and coordinate all available ringing and resighting data on the population into a common database. The information comes from various research groups working with Barnacle Geese since the 1970s and has been collected in Svalbard, along the migration route in mainland Norway, and in the wintering area in the United Kingdom. This project will secure the data collected and facilitate new submissions of sightings by goose observers. Stavanger Museum will handle all technical aspects, and, by 2027, all information will be made open access, allowing the public to participate in building the database by uploading resightings to the Norwegian Ringing Scheme portal. A key function of the data will be to enable a better understanding of the dynamics leading to changes in the numbers or distribution of Barnacle Geese, not only at the population level but also at a local level, using information from individually identified birds.

It was concluded that for the most part of the TF workplan, the work is ongoing but there have been delays due to HPAI and lack of data availability.

#### **4. Recommendations for 2026/2027**

1. Following on from actions to minimise the offtake in 2025/2026 it is recommended that similar actions should be put in place for 2026/2027. The 2026 model predicted a reduced risk of the population falling below the FRP and that allowed more flexibility in agreeing the offtake.

Following the Task Force meeting in early May 2026, Iceland and the UK met to agree a proposal for offtake in 2026/2027. This is as follows:

- i. The maximum offtake will be 4,250, split between the two Range States (Iceland - 3,250, UK - 1,000).
  - ii. According to Table 3.5-1 of the document AEWA/EGMIWG11.12 (*EGMP Population Status and Assessment Report 2026*), the risk to a population of an offtake of 4,250 at 65,000 is 0.06 and 66,000 is 0.04. The estimated population was 65,516 (55,558 – 76,459) in March 2026, so the risk will be approximately 0.05. We consider that this level of offtake allows more flexibility for sustainable management to reduce agricultural damage, and for hunting this season, at a low risk, given that the population has increased in the past year. The offtake in the UK is strictly controlled through the issuing of licences. Iceland will implement restrictions on their hunting season. Iceland and the UK will continue to meet regularly to coordinate these measures.
  - ii. Iceland and the United Kingdom will implement a coordination mechanism to ensure adherence to these limits.
  - iii. Iceland and the United Kingdom will inform the EGM IWG in writing on both the agreed level of offtake (if any) and the agreed coordination mechanism immediately after these arrangements have been agreed.
2. The TF recommends extending the lifespan of the Greenland Barnacle Goose AFMP until EGM IWG12 and request the Task Force to prepare any proposed revisions for submission to EGM IWG12, following the process outlined below:
    - i. Taking into account, inter alia, the stocktake of implementation of the BG ISSMP actions and the assessment of AFMP indicators, the Task Force will identify any elements of the AFMP that may benefit from revision, as well as any associated resource requirements.

- ii. An overview of the elements proposed for revision will be consulted with the relevant National Government Representatives for approval.
- iii. The Task Force will draft the proposed revisions.
- iv. Draft revisions will be consulted with the relevant National Government Representatives.
- v. The draft revised AFMP will be submitted for consideration and adoption by EGM IWG12. Should the Task Force determine that no revisions are desirable, it will recommend extending the AFMP for the remainder of the ISSMP's lifespan.

## 5. Draft Workplan 2026/2027

Table 1. Greenland/Svalbard Barnacle Goose Task Force Workplan for 2026/2027

Type of action	Actions from the ISSMP	Priority	Timescale	Greenland/Svalbard Task Force
	4.2 Assess periodically, and report to the AEWA EGM IWG, the cumulative impact of derogations (as well as hunting in Range States in which derogation is not required) on the development of the population, the likelihood of serious damage to agriculture and risk to air safety and to other flora and fauna (including the Arctic ecosystems), and the non-lethal measures taken to prevent damage/risk, as well as the effectiveness of these. If necessary, coordinate the derogation measures between Range States to avoid risk to the population and to enhance effectiveness of the measures.	Essential	Short	Impact model update / review and preparation of documents going to EGM IWG / providing recommendations  Review AFMP  Coordinate offtake from population
	A.1 Produce and update periodically, spatially explicit population size estimates based on agreed international monitoring.	Essential	Short / Rolling	Consultation
	A.2 Maintain an annually updated bag statistics database including geese taken by any means (whether under derogations or, in those Range States in which it is permissible, hunting).	Essential	Ongoing / Rolling	Consultation
	A.3 Maintain a spatially explicit database on goose damage to agriculture, other fauna and flora and fauna and risk to air safety.	Essential	Medium / Rolling	Consultation
	A.4 Begin work to review and revise AFMP.	Essential		

National	2.2. Provide accommodation areas to reduce risks and conflicts at sensitive areas through e.g. subsidies [2].	Medium	Medium/ Rolling	Information exchange
National	2.3 Apply scaring and/or land management techniques to reduce the attractiveness of sensitive areas to geese, monitoring the implications of such local displacement for conflicts at wider scale [3].	High	Short / Rolling	Information exchange
	3.2 Establish an internationally coordinated programme to assess agricultural damage including monitoring and assessment protocols.	High	Short	Consultation
National	3.3 Liaise with farmers affected by goose damages to reduce agricultural conflicts.	High	Short / Rolling	Information exchange
	4.3 Improve effectiveness of derogation measures through experimenting with different timing and methods and better understanding the relative efficacy of lethal versus non-lethal scaring techniques.	High	Medium	Information exchange - Liaise with other Task Forces
	4.4 Promote best practices of goose population adjustment including timing to minimize damage and significant disturbance to other species.	Medium	Medium / Rolling	Information exchange - Liaise with other Task Forces
National	4.5 Maintain low crippling rates.	High	Medium / Rolling	
	4.6 Improve derogation shooting techniques to further reduce crippling.	Medium	Long / Rolling	Information exchange - Liaise with other Task Forces
	A.4 Collect demographic (mortality, reproduction, differential migration and connectivity) data from an agreed representative sampling framework across the range.	High	Short / Rolling	Consultation
	C.1 Develop and implement a communication strategy and plan.	Medium	Short / Rolling	Liaise with other Task Forces

**Annex I. Members of the Greenland/Svalbard Barnacle Goose Task Force as of May 2026**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
<b>European Commission</b>	Sylvia Barova	Directorate-General for Environment
<b>Iceland</b>	Sunna Björk Ragnarsdóttir	Natural Science Institute of Iceland
	Bjarni Jonasson	Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland
<b>Ireland</b>	Seán Kelly	National Parks and Wildlife Service
	Tony Murray	National Parks and Wildlife Service
<b>Norway</b>	Ingunn Tombre	Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA)
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Rae McKenzie	NatureScot (Task Force Coordinator)
	Jessica Shaw	NatureScot
	Peter Clark	Scotland Director British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BASC)
<b>FACE</b>	Cy Griffin	Senior Conservation Manager
<b>Nordic Hunters' Alliance</b>	Johan Svalby	Senior Advisor for International Affairs
<b>Wetlands International</b>	Luca Guitink	Senior Advisor

<b>Country</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
	Szabolcs Nagy	Senior Advisor for International Affairs