

AEWA EUROPEAN GOOSE MANAGEMENT PLATFORM



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**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BARNACLE GOOSE TASK FORCE FOR
RUSSIA (BR) POPULATION AND DRAFT WORKPLAN FOR 2026/2027**

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with contributions from the members of the Russia Barnacle Goose Task Force*

Summary:

This document provides an overview of the status and key activities undertaken by the Barnacle Goose Task Force for the Russia (br) population between June 2025 and May 2026. It also presents a proposed set of recommendations, together 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 its annual workplan.

1. Introduction

At the 5th Meeting of the European Goose Management International Working Group (EGM IWG5) in June 2020, the Range States agreed on the establishment and Terms of Reference (ToR) of – amongst others – two Task Forces for the Barnacle Goose – one for the E Greenland (br) population and one for the Russia (br) population (RBG TF). This report focuses on the operations of the Task Force for the latter population.

The role of the RBG TF is to:

- 1) assist the EGM IWG in coordinating and catalysing the implementation of the International Single Species Management Plan for the Barnacle Goose (BG ISSMP) and its corresponding Adaptive Flyway Management Programme (AFMP);
- 2) assist the EGM IWG in stimulating and supporting Range States in the implementation of the BG ISSMP and its corresponding AFMP; and
- 3) monitor and report on the implementation of these activities to the EGM IWG, as appropriate.

The RBG TF has been operating since October 2020. The ToR for the RBG TF can be found [here](#). Currently, the TF has 24 members representing 7 countries, the European Union and 4 non-governmental organisations. The full list of TF members is presented in Annex 1. Since March 2025, Sander Moonen serves as TF Coordinator.

2. Meetings

Since EGM IWG10 in June 2025, the Task Force has held two online meetings, which took place on 11 February 2026 and 7 May 2026. It is also planning a hybrid meeting on 15 June 2026, during the EGMP Task Force Day in Skövde, Sweden. In addition, together with the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) Secretariat, the Task Force organised an online webinar on the use and effectiveness of derogations to control agricultural damage caused by the Russia (br) population of Barnacle Goose on 21 April 2026.

3. Report of Key Activities and Outcomes

3.1. Task Force Workplan

The RBG TF has further updated its workplan to include the main activities planned for 2026/2027.

3.2. Coordination of Derogations

During EGM IWG8, the Netherlands and Germany, as Range States of the Management Unit 3 (MU3) of the Russia (br) population of the Barnacle Goose, agreed that if significant derogation activities were planned in Germany, coordination would be put in place between the two countries. Otherwise, coordination would mainly take place within the Netherlands, where the national Favourable Reference Population (FRP) has been distributed across the provinces and a coordinated implementation process is being carried out by the regional Wildlife Councils (see [Sovon 2022](#), [Sovon-Notitie 2022/14](#)). In response to population levels approaching the provincial FRP levels, the suspension or significant reduction of derogations has already taken place in some provinces in the Netherlands since the EGM IWG7 in 2022 (see the *EGMP Population Status and Assessment Report 2026*, document AEW/EGMIWG11.12 for details). Prior to EGM IWG11 in June 2026, contact will take place

between the Netherlands and the German federal states of Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein, with a report on the coordination of offtake in MU3 to be submitted to EGM IWG11 as document AEWA/EGMIWG/11.23.

3.3. Gaps in Monitoring Data

During preparations of the annual EGMP population status report, some issues have arisen that preferably should be given attention to by the respective Range States:

January counts: January counts are carried out in all relevant countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden), thanks to the International Waterbird Census network and dedicated goose counts in Denmark and the Netherlands. For the 2026 population status report, data for North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany (usually fewer than 15,000 wintering birds) were added to the full data series; however, data from the more important wintering areas in Schleswig-Holstein were still missing for January 2025. It would therefore be desirable for data from Schleswig-Holstein to be made available at an earlier stage, i.e. within one year after the census has taken place. As all count data from Schleswig-Holstein are now collected using an app-based system with online data submission, this should be feasible without requiring significant additional effort.

Summer counts: In Management Unit 2 (MU2), summer counts take place in Finland (annually), Sweden (annually, in September), and Denmark (periodically, though infrequently). It is important to achieve high coverage in the Swedish September counts, and it would be preferable to investigate whether the Swedish counts, which are conducted a few weeks after those in Finland, interact with the Finnish counts (i.e. involve potential double counting). Analyses of resighting of ringed birds show that in both Sweden and Finland, summer counts are conducted before Arctic-breeding birds from Russia arrive (L. de Vries/NIOO, pers. comm.). However, it remains unclear to what extent birds from Finland and Sweden may have moved, for example, to Denmark, early in the autumn. Summer counts in Denmark would greatly improve coverage of the MU2. Results from the Danish national bird monitoring report (NOVANA) suggest that the number of breeding Barnacle Geese in Denmark has recently declined, at least at a local level.

Productivity/age ratio data: Well covered during autumn, but assessments are mainly conducted in the Netherlands, with few or none in the more recently colonised wintering areas in northern Germany, Denmark and Sweden. Extending age-ratio counts in these countries would help to assess the representativeness of the counts so far conducted mainly in the Netherlands. This is currently the only measure available to assess breeding success in Management Unit 1 (MU1), where breeding occurs in remote areas of Russia. For MU2, productivity data have so far only been available from the Helsinki region, which may be biased low, as this is a long-established breeding population that may be subject to density dependence and therefore produce fewer offspring. Recently, data have also been collected from other Finnish breeding populations, and these data will be included in the 2027 population status report. In addition, there remains a lack of productivity data from Swedish and Danish breeding populations. For MU3, extensive samples of age ratios are collected during summer counts in the Netherlands and in North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany, and in some years also in Lower Saxony. However, no data are available from Schleswig-Holstein, where such data would also support monitoring of clutch management, which is carried out in this MU.

Derogation data: Delivered by national agencies or obtained through data retrieval from the EU portal. The main issue is that assignment to the respective MUs is, to some extent, arbitrary. In particular in MU2 countries, it is important to improve the assignment between MU1 and MU2. Although no direct data are currently available to fully support this, it could be explored whether assignment can be improved based on the time of year and/or the regions in which derogations take place. In addition, countries could take greater account of which populations are targeted when derogations are issued, based on reporting the region and the time of year. Furthermore, some

derogation permits refer to two annual periods (e.g. from July to June), which makes assignment to specific MUs more difficult.

3.4. Derogation Webinar

On 21 April 2026, a webinar on the use and effectiveness of derogations to control agricultural damage caused by the Russia (br) population of Barnacle Goose was organised by the EGMP Secretariat and the BG TF. The aim of the webinar was to bring together national and subnational authorities, policy practitioners and academic experts to exchange experiences and promote dialogue on the use of derogations in managing agricultural damage caused by this population.

More specifically, the webinar aimed to:

- facilitate the exchange of experiences among Range States on the implementation of national regulations governing derogations for BG management;
- provide insight into how derogation permits are issued, applied and monitored in practice at national and local levels;
- present recent scientific advances and methodological approaches for evaluating the effectiveness of derogation measures in reducing agricultural damage;
- identify common challenges, good practices and knowledge gaps related to the use of derogations, with a view to supporting more effective and coherent management approaches across the species' range.

The webinar consisted of three sessions. The first session opened with a presentation by the European Commission, which aimed to clarify the newly published guidance document on the general system of protection of bird species under Articles 5 and 9 of the EU Birds Directive¹. This was followed by presentations from the following Range States: Finland, Estonia, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands. Representatives from these countries explained the current national implementation of derogations and how these are applied in practice. The second session consisted of three presentations in which speakers from Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands exchanged experiences on how the effectiveness of derogations is evaluated within their respective national frameworks. The third and final session comprised a general discussion and a question-and-answer session led by the EGMP Secretariat, providing further insight into the experiences of the many stakeholders involved in derogation policy and implementation. The first two sessions were recorded and will be made available online via the [EGMP YouTube channel](#).

Participants noted that the administrative burden associated with applying for derogation permits appears to vary considerably between Range States. There was broad agreement on the importance of continuing the exchange of experiences in the future in order to help ensure that, where derogations are used, they are implemented effectively.

3.5. Crippling Rates

In 2026, a new paper ([Buij et al. 2026](#)) on crippling rates of waterfowl in Northwestern Europe was produced, including data from multiple Range States (Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands). In total, nine species were investigated during 2017-2022. From the 3,843 x-rayed individuals, 17% had been crippled by shotgun pellets. Logistic regression models showed that the risk of crippling varied between species and increased

¹ For more information, please see https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/guidance-document-general-system-protection-bird-species-article-5-and-article-9-birds-directive_en.

with age, but not with individual body mass within species. On average, crippling rates increased with the average body mass of the species; the highest crippling rate was detected in Bewick's Swans and Greylag Geese, with respectively 33% and 28% of individuals being crippled, and the lowest rate in Eurasian Wigeons and Brent Geese, with respectively 5% and 4% being crippled. On average, 19% of the adult birds carried embedded pellets, versus 4% of the first-year birds. The higher crippling rates and numbers of embedded pellet in adults compared with juveniles suggested cumulative exposure. Crippling rates of geese differed between countries and depending on the species' population status, as exemplified by Barnacle Goose: 15% of the wintering adults were crippled in the Netherlands versus 9% in Germany and 15% of the adults of winter migrants versus 21% of the intensively managed sedentary population in the Netherlands. The reported crippling rates are within the range of previously reported rates for geese and swans, including high rates for Bewick's Swan and Barnacle Goose that are protected in part of their range. The analysis identified that crippling continues to be a conservation and animal welfare concern that can be tackled effectively via targeted management actions.

4. Recommendations

The Russia BG TF would like to recommend the following to the EGM IWG:

1. to implement activities outlined in the workplan for 2026/2027 (see section 5);
2. to continue supporting the Dutch Modelling Consortium by facilitating in gathering and provision of required data and by assisting with communication where needed;
3. to address gaps in monitoring information used for the annual assessment of the population;
4. to support the ongoing AFMP indicator assessment by the Data Centre and assist in formulating recommendations to be presented to the EGM IWG and the Range States (presentations will be given both at the EGMP Task Force Day prior to the EGM IWG11 and during the EGM IWG11);
5. in preparation for the establishment of an offtake coordination mechanism for MU2, the Task Force recommends that Denmark, Sweden and Finland improve the provision of data on the temporal and spatial distribution of derogations in order to enable an assessment of their impact on MU2;
6. to monitor the development of local breeding population size and distribution in Schleswig Holstein in light of clutch management;
7. to extend the lifespan of the RBG 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 BG ISSMP's lifespan.

5. Draft Workplan 2026/2027

Table 1. Draft Workplan for 2026/2027 of the Barnacle Goose Task Force for Russia (br) population.

Actions from the ISSMP	Priority	Timescale	Russia Barnacle Goose Task Force
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	Exchange of experience (Agriculture TF is also dealing with this).
3.1. Reduce risk posed by goose migration to air safety through operational measures such as radar surveillance [4].	High	Short / Rolling	Strengthen collaboration with the Flight Safety TF.
3.2 Establish an internationally coordinated programme to assess agricultural damage including monitoring and assessment protocols.	High	Short	Liaise with Agriculture TF and Data Centre. Agriculture TF Coordinator to update the RBG TF, exchange information.
3.3 Liaise with farmers affected by goose damages to reduce agricultural conflicts.	High	Short / Rolling	X
4.2 Assess periodically, and report to the AEWI 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	<p>The Norwegian authorities do not consider the breeding population in the Oslofjord area as "naturally occurring". But some data exist scattered in the few municipalities practicing derogation (based on the Norwegian legislations; not population regulating tool, only for damage prevention). With some effort this information can be collected. Discuss and provide recommendations to EGM IWG on the coordination of derogation measures between Range States.</p> <p>The EGM IWG agreed that coordination of offtake will take place on a case-by-case basis for populations and MUs that drop below the 200% threshold (as stated in the AFMP). Should a population or MU drop below this threshold, the role of the EGMP will be to facilitate</p>

Actions from the ISSMP	Priority	Timescale	Russia Barnacle Goose Task Force
			dialogue, as appropriate and necessary, among the Range States.
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	In April 2026 a webinar on the use and effectiveness of derogation to control agricultural damage by the Russia (br) population of BG was organised by the Secretariat and the RBG TF.
4.4 Promote best practices of goose population adjustment including timing to minimize damage and significant disturbance to other species.	Medium	Medium / Rolling	Exchange information and experience. Collate, summarise results (possibly workshop), time + resources needed.
4.5 Maintain low crippling rates.	High	Medium / Rolling	Exchange information and experience. Investigate BG crippling rates. In 2026, Buij et al. produced an article investigating current crippling rates of waterfowl, in which a great number of BG were investigated.
4.6 Improve derogation shooting techniques to further reduce crippling.	Medium	Long / Rolling	Exchange information and experience. Collate, summarise results (possibly workshop, time + resources needed), liase with Pink-footed Goose TF and share information.
A.1 Produce and update periodically, spatially explicit population size estimates based on agreed international monitoring.	Essential	Short / Rolling	Consultation, support governments/national coordinators to deliver data - monitoring plan.
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.

Actions from the ISSMP	Priority	Timescale	Russia Barnacle Goose Task Force
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	Share relevant information.
D.1 Develop a specific guidance on the application of Art. 9 of the Birds Directive in the context of the Barnacle Goose Management Plan.	Essential	Immediate	A guidance has been published by the European Commission and presented for discussion at the EGMP Webinar in April 2026 dedicated to the use and effectiveness of derogations to control agricultural damage by the Russia (br) population of BG.
D.2 For Range States in which hunting is legal, review national legislation in the light of the framework legal guidance document developed under the EGMP.	Essential	Immediate	X

Annex I: Members of the Russia Barnacle Goose Task Force as of May 2026

Table 2. Members of the Russia Barnacle Goose Task Force as of May 2026.

Country/Organisation	Representative	Affiliation
Belgium	Floris Verhaeghe	Flemish Nature and Forest Agency
	Frank Huysentruyt	Research institute for Nature & Forest (INBO) Flemish Government
Denmark/Danish Hunters' Association	Lene Midtgaard	Danish Hunters' Association
Denmark	Søren Egelund Rasmussen	Danish Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment
Estonia	Ivar Ojaste	Estonian University of Agriculture
European Commission	Sylvia Barova	Directorate-General for Environment
Finland	Petri Ahlroth	Ministry of the Environment
	Kim Jaatinen	Finnish Environment Institute
Germany	Iris Hermann	Lower Saxony Water Management, Coastal Defence and Nature Conservation Agency
Netherlands	Nick Warmelink	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
	Verna de Groes	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
	Kees Koffijberg	Sovon Vogelonderzoek Nederland
	Gerben Mensink	Province of Fryslân
	Teresa Kalverboer	Province of Zeeland
	Sofia Kolkman	Provincial Wildlife Council of Noord-Holland
	Sander Moonen (Task Force coordinator)	Wageningen Environmental Research
Norway	Ingunn Tombre	Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA)

Country/Organisation	Representative	Affiliation
Norway	Kate Layton-Matthews	Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA)
BirdLife International	Christine Verscheure	Natuurpunt
FACE	Cy Griffin	Senior Conservation Manager
Nordic Hunters' Alliance	Olav Greivstad	Consultant
Wetlands International	Szabolcs Nagy	Senior Advisor
	Luca Guitink	Junior Technical Officer