

**AEWA EUROPEAN GOOSE MANAGEMENT PLATFORM**



**4<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE  
AEWA EUROPEAN GOOSE MANAGEMENT  
INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP**

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**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE  
EGMP TAIGA BEAN GOOSE TASK FORCE AND DRAFT WORKPLAN FOR 2019/2020**

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## REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EGMP TAIGA BEAN GOOSE TASK FORCE AND DRAFT WORKPLAN FOR 2019/2020

### 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2 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 State and the Coordinator of the Task Force.

At the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the EGM IWG (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](#).

At EGM IWG3, Range States agreed on the extension of the period of the Workplan for the implementation of non-AHM related actions of the AEWA Taiga Bean Goose 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.

This document provides an overview of the work that has taken place since the EGM IWG3 and the recommendations and workplan for the implementation of the AEWA International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP) for the Taiga Bean Goose for 2019/2020, pending the incorporation of the outcomes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> face-to-face meeting of the EGMP Task Forces on 17 June 2019, in Perth, Scotland, UK.

### 1. Meetings

Since no funding has been specifically allocated for the work of the TBG TF, communication and information exchange has been conducted mainly either via email or through online meetings.

The key activity of the TBG TF in the period between EGM IWG3 and EGM IWG4 was the *establishment of a thematic sub-group of the Taiga Bean Goose Task Force involving relevant external goose monitoring experts with the objective of implementation and further development of the monitoring framework in order to have quality estimates/information of 1) population size, 2) harvest, 3) sub-species delineation in space and time.*

The TBG TF organised a first online meeting on 4 September 2018 to prepare the establishment of the Monitoring Sub-Group. Due to administrative delays the establishment of the Monitoring Sub-Group was delayed until the end of 2018. Leif Nilsson from Sweden and Carl Mitchell from the UK were nominated as additional external experts to join the Monitoring Sub-Group.

Two Management Unit-specific monitoring development meetings were organised. The Central Management Unit (MU) meeting was organised on 28 November 2018 in Stockholm at the kind invitation of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. The Western MU meeting was organised as an online meeting on 11 March 2019.

Joint TBG TF and Monitoring Sub-Group meetings were organised on 28 January, 25 March and 6 May 2019.

To maximise synergies and use of resources, the second in-person meeting for the TBG TF is taking place back-to-back with the EGM IWG4 meeting on 17 June 2019.

## 2. Report on Key Activities

The work of the TBG TF was based on the mandates and tasks from EGM IWG3.

Expected essential outcomes for 2018/2019 include the following points. Key results of expected outcomes are listed under each point:

- 1) *Functional connection to goose monitoring experts established and population size monitoring data from Germany and Poland received (Eastern MUs):*
  - a) An invitation letter was sent to Range States by the Secretariat to nominate experts to join the monitoring sub-group (The current membership is shown in Annex 3);
  - b) A connection to the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose Working Group was established and possible synergies found in the monitoring of the TBG, especially in the Eastern2 MU;
  - c) A letter was sent to Poland by the Secretariat to invite an expert to join the TBG TF. No feedback was provided to date.
- 2) *Population size monitoring methods of the Central/Western MU are evaluated to receive more accurate data on both MUs in respect to possible short-stopping and cold-weather movements and the possibility to use spring/autumn counts is assessed. Further adjustments of monitoring protocols proposed to the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EGM IWG (EGM IWG4) in 2019:*
  - a) A Central MU face-to-face meeting has been organised by Sweden on 28 November 2018 in Stockholm. Key outcomes are reported as a recommendation at EGM IWG4;
  - b) A Western MU online meeting has been organised on 11 March 2019. Key outcomes are reported as a recommendation at EGM IWG4.
- 3) *Harvest collection in Denmark and Sweden is developed for the Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) framework. Harvest data collection from Eastern MU countries is explored and developed:*
  - a) The need of harvest bag collections was raised several times in the TF meetings. Further development is needed in Sweden to meet the minimum requirements of harvest data and its timely delivery;
  - b) The EGMP Data Centre has been in e-mail correspondence with Mr Alexander Solokha who is working with harvest bag estimates in Russia, based on pictures taken by waterbird hunters.
- 4) *Guidelines (brochure) for separation of Tundra and Taiga Bean Goose are being prepared, disseminated and promoted to goose experts/counters/hunters to generate data on migration patterns and the proportions in harvest of the sub-species:*

This activity has been delayed due to time constraints. Guidelines are currently being drafted by a smaller working group within the TBG TF. The Guidelines are foreseen to be available before the mid-winter counts in 2020.
- 5) *Collection of datasets (pictures, DNA etc.) on sub-species to increase our understanding how to differentiate between Taiga and Tundra Bean Goose:*

Head samples have been collected in the previous hunting season in Finland, Sweden and Denmark. The Finnish and Swedish head samples are currently being DNA-analysed. Information from this study will be used to inform the forthcoming guidelines on sub-species separation.
- 6) In addition to previous activities, the TBG TF has worked towards the objective of *implementation and further development of the monitoring framework in order to have quality estimates/information of*
  - 1) population size,
  - 2) harvest,
  - 3) sub-species delineation in space and time:

This work includes the following activities:

- a) The TBG TF supported the EGMP Data Centre in compiling a project proposal to raise funding for the Integrated Population Model (IPM) for the Central MU:

- i) Project proposal was shared with Range States in February 2019;
  - ii) The Government of Finland has confirmed that it will provide significant funding for this task with foreseen delivery by EGM IWG5 in 2020.
- b) The TBG TF identified a key knowledge gap in the development of monitoring frameworks in the Eastern 1&2 MUs and compiled a project proposal with the following objective: *To increase understanding of migratory patterns and to develop the monitoring capacity for Taiga Bean Geese (*Anser fabalis fabalis*) in the Eastern 1&2 MUs to provide data for further development of a monitoring framework for assessing the population status of the Eastern 1&2 MUs:*
- The project proposal was shared with Range States in May 2019.
- c) The TBG TF Chair supported the EGM IWG Chair and the AEWA Secretariat in the response to a letter from the Russian Academy of Science with respect to the status of Taiga Bean Goose in Russia.

### 3. Recommendations of the TBG TF

#### 3.1. Western Management Unit

The Western MU of TBG is among the most well-known goose populations in Europe. Wintering flocks in Slamannan and Norfolk, UK, are monitored on a weekly basis and traditional wintering sites in Jutland, Denmark, are well monitored. TBG numbers in the UK are declining, especially in Norfolk. It is unknown whether the decline is genuine or if the birds are short-stopping in Denmark and Sweden for wintering, due to milder weather. Recent telemetry studies have revealed unexpected movements of wintering birds in Denmark, which indicates that current monitoring activities in traditional sites are not covering the entire current distribution of Western MU birds.

Consequently, the TBG TF recommends the development of a monitoring framework for the Western MU population including the following activities:

- 1) Increase of the number of GPS-tagged Taiga Bean Geese to assess unknown staging and wintering sites, focus the monitoring activities on the right areas and provide information on possible risks associated with Swedish hunting and spring derogation/conditional shooting. Put special focus on the GPS-tagging of the Norfolk group, which has experienced the most severe decline and whose current migratory patterns and threats they are exposed to are currently unknown;
- 2) Continue age structure/juvenile proportion assessment in Slamannan and organise such in Jutland. In Norfolk ageing of the birds can be challenging due to their late arrival;
- 3) Compile all existing data to combine with the new telemetry data for the assessment of key sites and combine with spatial data on the extent and distribution of spring derogation/conditional hunting;
- 4) Improve international coordination of the mid-winter counts. Immediate sharing of monitoring data and bird movements between monitoring experts to increase the chances of finding the birds during mid-winter counts.

#### 3.2. Central Management Unit

The following tasks are recommended for the development of a cost-effective and reliable long-term monitoring framework for the Central MU of the TBG in order to deliver an estimate of the true population size to be used as a basis for harvest strategy modelling:

- 1) For the period of 3 years, the Central MU TBG population size is monitored in three seasonal counts:
  - (1) Autumn, (2) Mid-winter and (3) Spring counts. Together with previous datasets they will provide the basis for further analysis of the optimal monitoring framework:

- i) Continue autumn and January counts as part of the Swedish Monitoring programs;
  - ii) Supported with funding spring counts based on voluntary efforts to cover essential coordination and travel costs and ensure successful monitoring;
  - iii) Consider further expanding the spring monitoring to spring staging sites in Finland and Denmark. A proposal to organise spring counts in Finland will be prepared, if considered necessary.
- 2) An IPM is used to 1) estimate the true population size and 2) analyse which of the available censuses provides greatest value for effort and how to further strengthen the monitoring within the available resources, thus providing feedback to required monitoring efforts;
  - 3) Harvest bag recording in Sweden and Denmark is further strengthened and new ways of collecting harvest data on species and/or sub-species subject to international quotas is explored. Harvest bag recording shall cover regular hunting, conditional hunting and derogation shooting with the possibility to differentiate between forms of harvest. A harvest data estimation process will be developed to meet the schedule of the annual decision-making process of the EGM IWG.

### **3.3. Eastern 1&2 Management Units**

The following tasks are recommended to enable the establishment and development of the monitoring framework:

- 1) Secure funding for the project proposal compiled by the TBG TF and circulated to the Range States in May 2019;
- 2) Designate a second coordinator, taking the lead on the implementation of the ISSAP and non-AHM workplan as well as monitoring in the Eastern 1&2 MUs. The Coordinator of Eastern MUs should have a good network in the region and is preferably Russian-speaking for more effective communications.

## **4. Workplan for the Implementation of non-AHM related Actions (2019/2020)**

The EGM IWG3 agreed on the extension of the period of the workplan for the implementation of non-AHM related actions of the AEWA Taiga Bean Goose ISSAP from 2017-2018 until 2020. The TBG TF proposes no further amendments to this workplan.

## **5. TBG TF Workplan for 2019/2020**

An indicative and dynamic workplan for the TBG TF for the period June 2019 – May 2020 is provided in Annex 1 to this document, pending the incorporation of the outcomes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> face-to-face meeting of the EGMP Task Forces on 17 June 2019, in Perth, Scotland, UK.

## Annex 1

### Draft<sup>1</sup> Workplan of the TBG TF 2019/2020

#### 5.1. July - September 2019

- Finalise the TF workplan and prepare its activities following the decisions and outcomes from EGM IWG4

#### 5.2. September 2019

- TF online meeting:  
Discuss and agree on the implementation of the activities included in the TBG TF Workplan.

#### 5.3. October-November 2019

- Develop the guidelines on TBG sub-species and grey geese identification;
- Support the development of the TBG IPM;
- Support the implementation of the project in Eastern 1&2 MU's;
- Support the development of harvest estimation in Sweden.

#### 5.4. December 2019

- TF online meeting:
  - Adopt of the guidelines on TBG sub-species and grey geese identification;
  - Status update on the progress of other activities;
  - Welcome the 2<sup>nd</sup> coordinator of the TBG TF.

#### 5.5. January-February 2020

- Finalise the TBG IPM;
- Support the activities in Eastern 1&2 MUs.

#### 5.6. March 2020

- TBG TF online meeting:
  - Provide and update on the status of activities;
  - Discuss draft recommendations and proposed timeline for the delivery of meeting documents for EGM IWG5.

#### 5.7. April 2020

- Finalise documents for EGM IWG5;
- Prepare and agree in the TBG TF report and recommendations to EGM IWG5.

#### 5.8. May 2020

- TF online meeting:
  - Adopt the meeting documents for EGM IWG5;
  - Draft and agree on an agenda for the 3<sup>rd</sup> face-to-face meeting of the TBG TF.

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<sup>1</sup> To be revised after EGM IWG4 taking into account the decisions and actions agreed by the Range States.

**Annex 2****Membership of the Taiga Bean Goose Task Force**

Table 1 below shows the current membership of the Taiga Bean Goose Task Force per Range State.

*Table 1. Membership of Taiga Bean Goose Task Force as of May 2019*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	Prof. Anthony Fox	Aarhus University
	Ms Iben Hove Sørensen	Danish Hunters Association
	Mr Knud Flensted	BirdLife Denmark
	Mr Boris Schønfeldt	BirdLife Denmark
<b>Finland</b>	Mr Mikko Alhainen (Coordinator)	Finnish Wildlife Department
	Mr Toni Laaksonen	Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)
<b>Norway</b>	Dr Ingunn Tombre	Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Department of Arctic Ecology
<b>Sweden</b>	Mr Per Risberg	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
<b>Ukraine</b>	Dr Olesya Petrovych	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine (Chief Specialist in Dept. of protected Areas)
	Dr Vasyl Kostyshyn	Institute of Zoology NAS of Ukraine, Department of Monitoring and Conservation of Animals
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Ms Morag Milne (rep for Scotland)	Scottish Natural Heritage's Wildlife Policy Officer
	Mr Bart Donato (rep for England)	Natural England
<b>Wetlands International</b>	Dr Szabolcs Nagy	Wetlands International
<b>Wetlands &amp; Aquatic Research Center U.S. Geological Survey / USGS</b>	Dr Fred Johnson	Wetlands & Aquatic Research Center U.S. Geological Survey / USGS
<b>Bird Ringing Center</b>	Ms Sonia Rozenfeld	Bird Ringing Center
<b>EGMP Data Centre</b>	Dr Henning Heldbjerg	Aarhus University
<b>AEWA Secretariat</b>	Mr Sergey Dereliev	UNEP/AEWA
<b>AEWA Secretariat</b>	Ms Eva Meyers	UNEP/AEWA

### Annex 3

#### Membership of the Taiga Bean Goose Monitoring Sub-Group

*Table 1. Membership of Taiga Bean Goose Monitoring Sub-Group as of May 2019*

Country	Representative	Affiliation
<b>Finland</b>	Mr Mikko Alhainen	Finnish Wildlife Department
<b>Norway</b>	Dr Ingunn Tombre	Norwegian Institute for Nature Research
<b>Sweden</b>	Mr Leif Nilsson	University of Lund
<b>Ukraine</b>	Dr Olesya Petrovych	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine (Chief Specialist in Dept. Of Protected Areas)
	Dr Vasyl Kostiusyn	Institute of Zoology NAS of Ukraine, Department of Monitoring and Conservation of Animals
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Ms Morag Milne (rep for Scotland)	Scottish Natural Heritage's Wildlife Policy Officer
	Mr Carl Mitchell	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT)
<b>EGMP Data Centre</b>	Dr Henning Heldbjerg	Aarhus University