

AEWA EUROPEAN GOOSE MANAGEMENT PLATFORM



**7th MEETING OF THE
AEWA EUROPEAN GOOSE MANAGEMENT
INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP**



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**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PINK-FOOTED GOOSE TASK FORCE
AND DRAFT WORKPLAN FOR 2022/2023**

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with contributions from the members of the Pink-footed Task Force

Summary:

This document provides an overview of the status and key activities that the Pink-footed Goose Task Force has undertaken since June 2021 until May 2022. In addition, a proposed list of recommendations is included as well as the proposed annual workplan for 2022/2023.

Action requested from the EGM IWG:

Take note of the task force report and recommendations and adopt the annual workplan

The full list of members is presented in Annex 1. Currently, the Task Force consist of 18 members from six Range States (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium). Prof. Jesper Madsen (DK) has been identified as Coordinator of the PFG TF.

1. Meetings

Since no funding has specifically been allocated for the work of the PFG TF, communication and information exchange has been conducted through online meetings. The 9th meeting (virtual) was held on 21 October 2021. The 10th meeting (virtual) was held on 5 May 2022.

2. Report of key activities and outcomes

In June 2021, the EGM IWG approved the PFG TF workplan for 2021/2022, which encompassed the following tasks:

3.1 Continue as internal reviewers of annual Monitoring and Harvest Assessment Reports.

The Task Force kindly conducted a review of the chapter concerning PFG in the EGMP Monitoring and Assessment Report, 2022.

3.2 Continue initiative to improve international exchange regarding hunting organisation and hunters' contribution to data collection via wing collection of shot geese.

Informal contacts between Norwegian and Danish PFG hunters have been established, including exchange of experiences with organisation of effective goose shooting using blinds, decoys and calls. A video of effective PFG goose shooting and shooting training has been produced by the Norwegian Farmers' Union, with financial support from the Norwegian Environment Agency (Ove Martin Gundersen). Wing collections (identification of juveniles and adults in the hunting bag) of PFG shot in Norway has been organised for the hunting seasons 2021 and 2022, with a substantive sample accomplished by skilled hunters (organised by Ove Martin Gundersen). Data can be used to compare the differential age vulnerability to hunting in Norway and Denmark (where wing collection has been recorded since the start of the 1990s), to be used in the annual assessments.

3.3 Continue technical discussions regarding potential biases in demographic variables and monitoring; programs, and analysis of critical components in the monitoring program (in collaboration with the Data Centre).

Using the Integrated Population Model (IPM) for the annual assessment, it has been suggested that there are biases in certain demographic variables. The Data Centre has addressed some of these sources of biases, for example the productivity (age counts). An analysis and scientific manuscript is currently in preparation and is planned to be submitted for publication in the autumn of 2022.

Parts of the current monitoring program (Capture-Mark-Recapture using neckbands) and age counts in Denmark and Norway have been funded by a research program by Aarhus University (grant to Jesper Madsen, 2012-2021). The funding has expired as of 31 December 2021, and so far it has not been possible to renew the funding. Therefore, it has been necessary to prioritise the monitoring variables most critical for the annual assessments. The Data Centre (led by Fred A. Johnson) has conducted an analysis (Value of Information) which shows that the most critical and cost-effective variables are the population counts in November and May, harvest data, number of May thaw days in Svalbard and productivity (age counts, reduced). Whereas excluding the very costly CMR program,

providing annual adult survival and population estimates, did not affect the performance of the annual harvest assessment. The analysis is currently under review in a scientific journal. Regrettably, it has been decided to stop the CMR program and, from 2022 onwards, the annual assessment will no longer include data derived from neckbanding (i.e., annual survival and Lincoln estimate of population size). Aarhus University is aware of the fact that resighting of neckbands is an important stimulus of volunteer birdwatchers to engage in monitoring of geese in the range states; however, the data used for the assessment work has relied on concentrated annual campaigns of resightings by professional observers when volunteer efforts have unfortunately been low. It is not regarded as realistic that volunteers can replace the contributions by professional observers.

3.4 Propose a plan for the assessment to be used for the revision of the ISSMP in 2024

Since it was decided to postpone the revision of the ISSMP for PfG until 2024, the preparation of input to the revision was put on hold for 2022/2023.

3. Recommendations

Revision of PfG ISSMP

The most pressing need for the PfG TF is to plan the input to the forthcoming revision of the ISSMP for the PfG population in 2024, in collaboration with the EGMP Secretariat and the Data Centre (see also the PfG TF report from IWG 6). An outline of the overall components and steps are shown in Table 1.

Dissemination

Several dissemination initiatives focussing on PfG have been taken. One new initiative includes a plan to establish a network of dissemination platforms (museums, visitor centres, online facilities) along the flyway, coupled to the ongoing GPS-tagging of PfG which can be followed online (Danish initiative; contact Jesper Madsen; funding of Danish Centre by Lemvig and Holstebro Municipalities). Another initiative is a reportage centred around the use of science to inform management decisions with PfG as example; the movie is planned for Norwegian television, but will also come in English and Danish texted versions, to be used by the EGMP and others (Norwegian initiative: contact Ove Martin Gundersen; financed by the Norwegian Environment Agency). The PfG TF would like to engage in further initiatives to promote the EGMP flyway approach and uptake by national stakeholders, e.g. related to agricultural conflict resolution, reduction of crippling etc.

Adjustments of monitoring

In light of the cuts of in the monitoring program for PfG, the Data Centre and the PfG TF will discuss and plan adjustments of some variables, mainly age counts in the autumn.

4. Draft Workplan 2022/2023

Table 1. Pink-footed Goose Task Force Draft Workplan for 2022/2023

| Task | When | By whom? | Deliverables |
|---|--|---|---|
| Discussions on adjustment of monitoring program | June-September 2022 | DC + TF | Decision on organisation of age counts (and possibly fundraising) |
| Contribution to agricultural conflict resolution | June-November 2022 | PfG TF + Agricultural TF | Provide technical guidance, priority on Norwegian PfG spring staging sites |
| Crippling | June-August 2022 | DC + TF | Reporting of status of PfG crippling 2022 and plans ahead |
| Dissemination platform along the PfG flyway, using online animations of year-round whereabouts of GPS-tagged geese, stories from the flyway, webcams etc. | August-December 2022 | TF + Aarhus University + Nissum Fjord Naturpark + Relevant and interested museums and visitor centres | Project description, identification of potential partners, plan for funding |
| Plan for assessment to be used for the ISSMP revision in 2024 | 2022/2023: Impact model for agricultural damage in range states (funded) | DC + TF | Analysis of relationship between abundance of PfG and damage |
| | Svalbard tundra degradation assessment (to be funded) | DC + TF + COAT (Norway) | Analysis of relationship between abundance of PfG and tundra impact |
| Internal review of annual reports | Early June 2023 | TF | Review back to DC early June 2023 |
| Plan for assessment to be used for the ISSMP revision in 2024 | 2023/2024: Evaluation of ISSMP fundamental objectives, including range, ecological integrity, habitat restoration, population target, damage, tundra impacts, crippling | TF + DC | Chapters in report to be used for revision of ISSMP |
| | Decision on treatment of new migration route | TF | AFMP to be developed after IWG 2024 |
| | Development of an Adaptive Flyway Management Program (AFMP) | TF + DC + EGMP Sec | |

Annex 1. Members of the Pink-footed Goose Task Force as of 19 May 2022

| Country | Representative | Affiliation |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Belgium | Floris Verhaeghe | Nature and Forest Agency |
| Belgium | Frank Huysentruyt | Institute for Nature and Forest Research |
| Belgium | Eckhart Kuijken | Research Institute for Nature and Forest, Flemish Government of Belgium Expert, Univ. Ghent Belgium |
| Belgium | Christine Verscheure | Natuurpunt Belgium |
| Denmark | Jesper Madsen (Coordinator) | Aarhus University |
| Denmark | Søren Egelund Rasmussen | Danish Environmental Protection Agency |
| Denmark/CIC - International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation | Iben Hove Sørensen | Danish Hunters' Association |
| Denmark | Niels-Erik Jørgensen | Danish Hunters' Association |
| Denmark | Knud Flensted | BirdLife Denmark |
| The Netherlands | Kees Koffijberg | Sovon Vogelonderzoek Nederland |
| Finland | Jorma Pessa | Centre for Economic Development |
| Norway | Ingunn Tombre | NINA |

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| Norway | Ove Martin Gundersen | Norwegian Farmer's Union |
| Sweden | Per Risberg | Swedish Environmental Protection Agency |
| Sweden | Leif Nilsson (tbc) | Department of Animal Ecology |
| EGMP Data Centre | Gitte Høj Jensen | EGMP Goose Monitoring Coordinator |
| EGMP Data Centre | Fred Johnson | Aarhus University |
| UNEP/AEWA Secretariat | Eva Meyers | EGMP Coordinator |