
Meeting Notes for the Meeting of the Barnacle Goose Task Force

(Russia/Germany & Netherlands Population)

Date and Time:	25 January 2022 14:00-15:30 Central European Time
Online meeting convened using:	GoToMeeting
Chair:	Mr Kees Koffijberg
Attendees;	Belgium: Floris Verhaeghe, Frank Huysentruyt, Christina Verscheure & Eckhart Kuijken; Denmark: Iben Hove Sørensen; European Commission: Joseph van der Stegen; Finland: Nina Mikander; Germany: Markus Nipkow; Netherlands: Nick Warmelink, Sofia Kolkman, Nikkie van Grinsven, Norway: Ingunn Tombre; FACE: Cy Griffin; Norwegian Association of Hunters and Anglers: Olav Greivstad; Wetlands International: Szablocs Nagy; Wageningen University Research: Hans Baveco; EGMP Data Centre: Gitte Høj Jensen, AEWA Secretariat: Eva Meyers, Shenay Huseynova.

Agenda item 1 – Welcome and Agenda

The meeting agenda was adopted without further comments from the TF members.

The TF has two new members representing the Noord-Holland province in the Netherlands. Sofia Kolkman, a project leader at Provincial Fauna Management Unit and Nikkie van Grinsven, an ecologist specialized in wildlife management at Provincial Fauna Management Unit.

Agenda item 2 – Round Table

There appears to be some damage from avian influenza in Belgium, but not massive. The regular number in the coast region are currently quite low.

The wintering numbers in the Netherlands are about average with the season having started rather late. The breeding success is rather low compared to previous years (6%). There are numerous reports of avian influenza, especially in the Wadden Sea area. Juvenile birds are particularly affected. However, it is hard to quantify the numbers at this stage.

A working group including government representatives has been established in the Netherlands to coordinate the input for AEWA and EGMP. The first meeting with the representatives of provinces has been held on 25 January on the topic of goose management. The group will facilitate involvement of provinces and implementation of plans.

A number of dead geese has been reported on the coast in Schleswig Holstein in Germany. Monitoring of main goose habitats is ongoing with updates to be given at a later stage.

The number of birds affected by avian influenza is quite high in Denmark. Lots of poultry farms have been shut down.

8 March is a national theme day of the Barnacle Goose in Denmark. Meetings of researchers, government representatives and other stakeholders are planned to discuss agricultural conflict and other pertinent issues.

There are no records of geese in Norway at the moment. Bird flu has taken a big toll on Svalbard population. Assessments are being made with the figures to be published soon. The current estimates show that a quarter or even a third of the population has fallen due to the disease which is a worrying trend.

Small groups of BG have been recorded in the coastal area of Sweden. So far just one case of BG death due to avian influenza has been reported.

No geese are currently seen in Finland. There were confirmed cases of avian influenza in BG during autumn migration when the birds flew back from Russia. A big project has been conducted on agricultural fields in the east of Finland. The project outcomes will reveal more precise data on avian influenza. In general, numbers are high across all species in comparison to previous years.

AEWA Secretariat (Staffing, EGM IWG7 update, etc.)

Shenay's contract is ending on 31 January. She will leave the Secretariat. The advertisement of the programme assistant position for EGMP is in progress and will be published soon.

The Secretariat is liaising with Finland regarding organisation of the EGM IWG7 in June 2022. If circumstances allow, a face-to-face meeting will take place. In the contrary case, the meeting will be held online as in the last two years.

The Data Centre is in the process of receiving data for annual assessments. Two meetings of the EGMP Modelling Consortium have been scheduled in March 2022 – one of them focusing only on BG Russia population (10 March 2022), both on the impact models and assessment, and another one dedicated to the GG (17 March), particularly focusing on summer counts.

Agenda item 3 – Updates Data and AFMPs

Data overview - missing derogation data at MU level and other data requests (Kees Koffijberg)

There is a gap in data from wintering numbers from Germany since 2017. Currently the analysis is done with imputed numbers. Germany reported that it had been agreed for this data both from Niedersachsen and Schleswig Holstein to be published on the ministry websites of Niedersachsen and Schleswig-Holstein.

In terms of MU populations, the main gap refers to summer counts in Sweden, which makes it difficult to assess the size of MU2. Sweden reported that some efforts were underway. However, no promises can be made since the population is very spread out. Coverage of summer counts is not complete in MU3 as well (parts of Germany missing), but available data will be sufficient to estimate numbers within some range.

In Denmark the frequency of counts has been changed from every six to every three years. This covers the major concentration on the island of Saltholm between Denmark and Sweden.

In EU-countries, derogation data is available through reports on Eionet or by delivery of national data. An issue here, is that part of the data is only available as a total for one calendar-year, which affects proper use in the modelling set-up (which would need to distinguish between the summer and winter counts and need an assignment of the respective MUs). Preferably, derogation data should come available with a monthly resolution to overcome this problem.

The table below shows the overview of the current data from the Range States.

	RU	FI	EE	SE	NO	DK	DE	NL	BE	last in DB	Action needed
Counts											
January (winter)				x	x	x	!	x	x	2020	Closing gap German counts 2017 onwards
July-August (summer)		x		!	x	x	~	x	x	2020	Setting up census in SE (no old data); in DK last count 2021 (tri-annual); in DE no data submitted but partially published information available (estimate possible); BE will resume census 2021
Productivity											
MU1 & MU2 (Oct-Dec)							x	x		2021	Samples in wintering flocks (mainly NL)
MU2 specific (Jul-Aug)		x		!	x	!				2020	Setting up samples in SE and DK
MU3 specific (Jul)							~	x		2020	In DE partially published information, but no data submission
Offtake											
Hunting bags										none	Retrieve data from RU or calculate numbers shot (NL Modelling Consortium)
Derogations		x	x	x	(x)	x	x	x	x	2020	Differentiation of MUs (by splitting data into finer resolution as calendar year), so far only possible in NL, data from SE and FI announced

Update on the modelling work (Hans Baveco/Kees Koffijberg)

A presentation was made on this item which is shared with these meeting notes.

AFMP: Coordination of derogations – Definition, way forward (Eva Meyers/Gitte Høj Jensen)

In the ISSMP, action 4.2 requires assessing the cumulative impact of derogations. It mentions that, if necessary, the Range States (RS) should coordinate the derogations. There was discussion on this during EGM IWG6, and it was decided to continue it in the Task Forces.

A footnote was added to the AFMP further clarifying the term “coordination”. The “coordination” doesn’t mean that the RS will have to de facto coordinate. The word “coordination” would mean that the population doesn’t drop below the FRP. The European Commission was asked to develop a guidance on the application of Article 9 of the Birds Directive.

Action Point: The definition to be further discussed and agreed on in the TF.

Avian influenza – EGMP role (Gitte Høj Jensen)

The Data Centre offered to collect the available information on the status of the avian influenza for the Dutch Research Consortium to do the assessment. The aim would be to include all available info on the avian influenza in the EGMP population status report. Even if the data is not comprehensive, this would create an overview of the situation.

It was mentioned that monitoring of the avian influenza was being conducted by the EU. The data can be assessed here: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/6953> The Data Centre can use this information for the planned assessment.

The plan is to run the population data to determine the impact of the disease with the current level of derogation and project it into future. The results from this analysis are to be presented in the annual EGMP population and status report and presented at the EGM IWG meetings.

The Data Centre invited the Range States to put forward their ideas and suggestions and specific scenarios to be investigated. The Secretariat noted that the requirement to do the assessment of the cumulative impact was included in the management plan at the request of the RS. The Secretariat and the Data Centre would like to provide the trajectories but also ask the Range States to indicate what can be done to assist them with the management decisions.

The European Commission noted that they are assessing the derogation reports at species level, not population level. However, they would be willing to take part in a discussion on the topic.

Finland expressed interest in the analysis suggested by the Data Centre. A similar overview has been requested in Finland due to the widespread agricultural damage. An analysis including other Range States would be highly valuable for Finnish administrative authorities when making decisions. Ms Mikander stressed that it was crucial to clarify with the European Commission how they saw member states using this information and analysis in their decision-making. Even if the RS wouldn't be coordinating among themselves, some kind of agreement is needed since the implementation of the Birds Directive and derogations is different in each country.

Agenda item 4 – National Reporting

The Secretariat is drafting a document outlining the process and workflow for the new EGMP National Reporting format. It would be good if the workplans are looked at again – the national columns with the new information. For example on the new Dutch Working Group.

Action Point: TF members to look again at [the workplans](#) and update sections for the national plans.

Agenda item 5 – Communication

Communication document for EGM IWG7 (Eva Meyers)

The EGMP team has been having internal meetings on strategic planning of the platform's future. Based on the discussions, communications is one of the most crucial areas for EGMP which could benefit from improvement. The Secretariat and the Data Centre are developing a document on the improvement of the platform's communication efforts. The document will be circulated to the TF for feedback.

Update of the upcoming webinars of the EGMP (Shenay Huseynova)

Two webinars have been planned in the coming months:

1. "Adaptive Management: Concepts, Applications, and Challenges" to be held on 3 February 2022, from 14:00 – 16:00 CET. The webinar will be led by Fred Johnson from the Data Centre.
2. Webinar "EGMP: The Platform's Structure, Processes and Objectives" to be held on 3 March 2022, from 13:00 – 15:00 CET. Eva Meyers and Gitte Høj Jensen will lead this webinar.

The webinars are open to public, and the invitations with registration links have been circulated to the wider AEWA and EGMP networks.

Due to lack of time, the briefing notes and website updates will be discussed at the next TF meeting.

Agenda item 6 – Functioning of this Task Force, Coordinator, survey to EGM IWG

Since the position of the TF coordinator still remains vacant, it was agreed to rotate the chairing of the TF meetings among TF members. Nina Mikander agreed to chair the next TF meeting given that the date of the next meeting will not clash with her other commitments.

Agenda item 7 – Agree on the date for the next meeting & AoB

The next TF meeting is planned for the end of March/early April 2022.

Action Point: The Secretariat to coordinate the dates with Nina and circulate a Doodle poll to the TF members.