



Barnacle Goose Session

*Report and Recommendations of East Greenland/Svalbard
Barnacle Goose Task Force*
AEWA_EGM_IWG_8_11_GBG_TF_REPORT

Document title
Doc. AEWA/EGMIWG/8.11

EG/Svalbard Barnacle Goose Task Force Report & recommendations

The agreed aims of the Task Force are to:

- 1) Assist the EGM IWG in coordinating and catalysing the implementation of the ISSMP for the Barnacle Goose and its corresponding AFMPs for the respective populations under the EGMP;
- 2) Assist the EGM IWG in stimulating and supporting Range States in the implementation of the ISSMP for the Barnacle Goose and its corresponding AFMP for the respective population(s); and
- 3) Monitor and report on the implementation of these activities to the EGM IWG, as appropriate.

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Task Force Members 2022-23

Rae McKenzie (UK) Task Force Co-ordinator
Svenja Auhage (IS)
Sigurdur Thrainsson (IS)
Sean Kelly (Ire) - no longer in post and no replacement identified
Ingunn Tombre (NO)
Kate Layton-Matthews (NO)
Iben Hove Sørensen (DK)
Johan Svalby (SE)
Jessica Shaw (UK)
Richard Hearn (UK – WWT)

Colin Shedden (UK – BASC)
Iva Obretenova or Jérémie Crespin will replace Joseph Van Der Stegen (EU)
Cy Griffin (FACE)
Szabolcs Nagy (Wetlands International)
Eva Meyers (EGMP Secretariat)
Jesper Madsen (EGMP Data Centre)
Gitte Høj Jensen (EGMP Data Centre)
Fred Johnson (EGMP Data Centre)

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The Task Force has had one meeting since the last IWG

Task Force members have also contributed to Agricultural Task Force meetings and webinars over the past year, most notably on air safety, and provided some input into the communications plan

Work outwith meetings has focused on finalising an Impact Model

Task Force work has been impacted upon by the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza outbreak in the UK – both in terms of data and understanding of the outbreak and staff resource available to drive TF work forward (especially TF co-ordinator time)

It was agreed at EGM-IWG7 that development of the AFMP for the Svalbard/South West Scotland population would be postponed until we have a better understanding of the impacts of HPAI

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HPAI impacts

- Work has taken place in Scotland to better understand the genetics of the virus
- NatureScot has worked closely with the Animal & Plant Health Agency in the UK on recording, mapping and swabbing of carcasses to monitor the spread of the disease in wild birds.





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HPAI impacts

Winter 2022/23

Data from NatureScot mortality reporting framework

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HPAI impacts

- Winter 21/22 around **13,000 Svalbard barnacle geese** died in the Solway
- Winter 22/23 only **a few hundred deaths** recorded in the Solway
- Winter 21/22 around **1000 deaths in the Greenland barnacle goose** population in Ireland and on Islay (Scotland)
- Winter 22/23 **around 5000* deaths estimated on Islay**, and around 100 on the neighbouring islands of Oronsay, Colonsay, Tiree and Coll. No information available from Ireland.
- *Derogation shooting on Islay minimal or suspended during last 2 winters due to HPAI*

**Final estimates cannot be made until Irish data is available as it is likely there is movement between Ireland and Islay*

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HPAI impacts

- *Blood taken from a sample of apparently healthy Svalbard barnacle geese in the Solway in spring 2023 showed that all birds sampled had antibodies for the particular variant of H5N1 in circulation at the time*
- *Blood taken from a sample of apparently healthy Greenland barnacle geese on Islay in spring 2023 showed mixed results, but in those showing antibodies it wasn't possible to confirm the specific variant of H5N1*
- *The Animal and Plant Health Agency are currently preparing a paper on HPAI genetics in Svalbard barnacle geese.*
- *Planning is in progress to agree serology work going forward into winter 2023/24*

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Greenland Barnacle Goose Census 2023

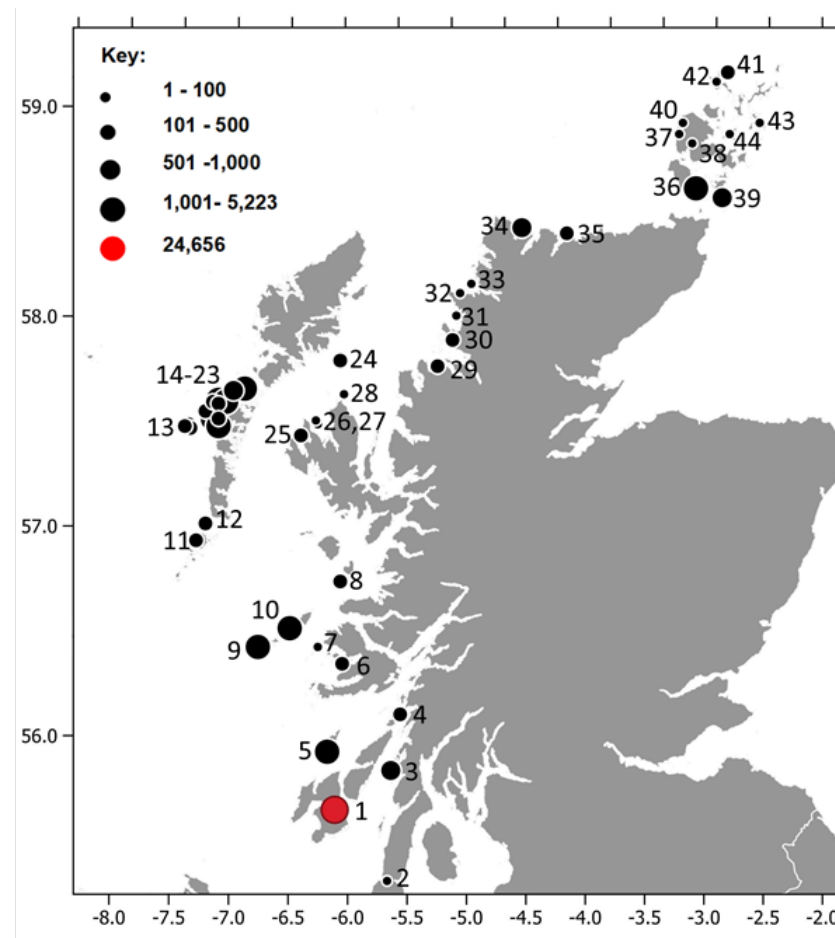
- *A full census of Greenland barnacle geese across Scotland and Ireland was carried out at the end of February 2023 (work contracted by NatureScot to Carl Mitchell)*
- *Counts were undertaken but, to date, no data has been received from Ireland*
- *The Scottish part of the survey found **48,332 birds, a decline of 16.8%** compared to counts made in March 2020*

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Greenland Barnacle Goose Census 2023

Scottish data (C. Mitchell draft report)



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Draft workplan

- Continue to support the implementation of the ISSAP and AFMP, following the workplan activities of previous years and recommended activities
- *The integrated population model will be used to inform management across the range (but needs Irish data).*
- New work will include considering the impacts of HPAI on both populations, using the impact model, and how this might impact on the AFMP and agreed management activities
- Meetings will be organised as necessary, especially for the evaluation of the IPM