

WWT / JNCC / SNH Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme

Notes of the 21st Steering Group meeting

Held 28 September 2015 at JNCC (Peterborough)

Attending: Simon Cohen (SNH)¹, Richard Hearn (WWT, Chair), Carl Mitchell (WWT)¹, Anna Robinson (JNCC)

1 Apologies for absence/introductions

Apologies: David Stroud (JNCC)

2 Minutes of previous meeting/outstanding actions

The minutes / notes of the previous meeting were approved for uploading to the GSMP web pages (available here <http://monitoring.wwt.org.uk/our-work/goose-swan-monitoring-programme/partnership-documents/>). The following updates on outstanding actions were provided:

Action points from 20th SG meeting

AP18/3: WWT to explore with co-authors whether it was possible to publish a paper on the whole 2013 census in *Irish Birds*.

Update: Discharged. Irish co-authors have already published a paper in Irish Birds on the results of the 2013 survey in Ireland only. Need to discuss with Irish collaborators in advance of the spring 2018 flyway survey the best outlet for combined results.

AP18/4: WWT to review the issues surrounding the status of Irish Greylag Geese in the review of Greylag Goose monitoring needs (see AP17/4).

- *Ongoing. WWT to meet with Birdwatch Ireland in spring 2016 to discuss monitoring needs.*

AP18/6: WWT to arrange demonstration of GSMP online at the next GSMP SG meeting.

- *Discharged. WWT demonstrated the online system to JNCC at the November 2014 WeBS SG meeting and to SNH at the GSMP counter conference at Caerlaverock in September 2014.*

AP18/7: WWT to put together an overview of what is needed to complete historical data compilation.

- *Ongoing. Full list still not available, but process nearing completion and what is left is not significant.*

AP18/8: All to send comments on the draft population estimation methods paper to WWT by the end of December 2013.

- *Ongoing. See previous meeting note. Comments have been received but paper production has been stalled due to senior author leaving BTO.*

AP19.2: JNCC to ask Defra to formally ask the Iceland (and other country) authorities to share in this collective monitoring.

- *Ongoing. JNCC to report on progress at next SG meeting.*

¹ Via telephone link (SNH, Aviemore)

AP19.3: JNCC and SNH to provide comments of IGC surveillance review by 18 April 2014.

- *Discharged. All comments received.*

AP20.1: WWT to re-format IGC report from summer 2015.

- *Ongoing. WWT produced the summer 2015 report in the traditional format, but will seek to produce new trimmed down version of IGC report from summer 2016.*

AP20.2: WWT to determine whether the number of PDF downloads from the GSMP web-pages can be assessed.

- *Ongoing. WWT to provide data at end September 2015. Kane Brides to circulate to SG.*

AP20.3: WWT to undertake an analysis of GSMP webpage use and also assess whether the web pages provide all the information needed. To be prepared for the next (21st) SG meeting.

- *Ongoing. WWT will provide these data for the next (22nd) SG meeting in autumn 2016.*

AP20.4: WWT to look ways of improving how participating and contributing organisations are acknowledged in any GSMP outputs.

- *Discharged. Contributing organisations are acknowledged in any GSMP outputs.*

AP20.5: WWT to hold an internal discussion about capacity building for GSMP.

- *Discharged by WWT. This is an ongoing task and one that online communication (e.g. GSMP counters pages, regular emails to GSMP counters etc) helps with.*

AP20.6: WWT to check internally on reporting timetable for the 2015 Bewick's Swan census.

- *Ongoing. Data collation nearly complete. Data still need from WeBS. Draft report due by end of March 2016 and to be published by mid-summer 2016.*

3 Update on surveys & projects

a) Review of 2015 GSMP outputs

WWT outlined GSMP reporting schedule for summer 2015. All went relatively smoothly with deadlines being met. WWT asked JNCC for feedback (good or bad). Pertinent questions being, are WWT providing enough information? Is there anything that can be improved? JNCC are happy with reporting and content, but stressed that the main area of interest was the web pages.

JNCC asked if *GooseNews* and the IGC report were peer-reviewed externally. WWT said that neither were, although it went through internal peer review and proof reading.

WWT commented that some logistical issues between the Irish Brent Goose Research Group (IBGRG) and collaborators in Iceland need to be resolved.

AP21.1: WWT to liaise with IBGRG to see if WWT can help resolve logistical issues and discuss a more formal arrangement for reporting results of surveillance.

WWT said that winter maxima from the most important wintering sites in the UK for Greenland Barnacle Geese are recorded, data are collated by WWT and reported. In the Republic of Ireland, the most important sites there are also counted with count data being co-ordinated by *Birdwatch Ireland* and lodged with iWeBS.

b) International Swan Census (ISC) January 2015

WWT overseeing collation of results and reporting. Online data capture system appeared to work well with a large uptake in use. Early results suggest that the number of Bewick's Swans recorded in the UK has declined. Formal reporting due in spring/summer 2016.

c) GSMP Counter Conference – September 2014

WWT reported that the meeting was generally considered a success, but that due to a small number of counters unable to attend at the last minute, attendance was low at ~24 counters. The venue at Caerlaveock (Dumfriess-shire) may have been too far for some counters to attend from North Scotland and South England. A consideration would be to hold future counter conferences either in the middle of Scotland or in southern England, alternately, with, for example, the England conference having a focus on Brent Geese and Pink-footed Geese. A three year rolling programme seemed appropriate, in which case the next GSMP counter conference could be scheduled, and planned for, in September 2017.

d) Online monitoring/data capture

WWT reported that the system is well developed and had been successfully used for the ISC (see above). Rollout to counters would take place in late 2015.

SNH suggested that GSMP counters need to be reminded what to do when reporting colour ring sightings.

AP21.2: WWT to include instructions in *GooseNews* and on the GSMP online database on reporting colour rings.

4 GSMP Contract renegotiation

a) Update on funding situation/schedule

Current contract ends at end of March 2016. Currently uncertainty on future funding. Too late now to renegotiate a new three year contract. The hope is to extend the current contract for one more financial year (to end March 2017). JNCC could not commit to this, but decision likely by end December 2015. 2016/17 will be used by JNCC as an opportunity to appraise the bird monitoring it supports as a whole. SNH to hold a special internal goose meeting in November 2015 about geese (licensing, management, monitoring, etc.).

b) Monitoring priorities

WWT asked if we need to be thinking about monitoring priorities now. JNCC said that it is hard to know what the priorities might be if funding is not secured.

SNH said that in Scotland, the priorities are the areas where management of geese is currently being carried out, but also Svalbard Barnacle, Greenland White-fronted and Bean Geese.

WWT asked SNH if they had any plans to increase the frequency of flyway surveillance of Greenland Barnacle Geese. SNH said not at the moment, but may wish to increase the number of birds ringed away from Islay.

5 AOB

- SC's postal address should be changed to SNH Dingwall office
- SNH reported that they had recently held a staff goose meeting. Two senior SNH staff to attend a goose management workshop in Denmark in October 2015. WWT to send one member of staff. Aim of the meeting is to promote, and get support for, a pan-European goose management platform under auspices of AEWA.

- WWT have added a section on GSMP website about feeding distribution studies with PDF downloads of reports available.
- WWT have set up an email 'GSMP News' system, which will go out to all GSMP counters with email addresses. JNCC/SNH were encouraged to think about any news items they wish to share through this system.

6 Date of next meeting

A quick meeting may be necessary in April 2016 (unless a one year extension to the contract, should it be approved, can be carried out by email). The main SG meeting should be held at the end of Sept, or early Oct 2016. WWT to canvass for dates.