

WWT / JNCC/ SNH GOOSE & SWAN MONITORING

Notes of 13th Steering Group Meeting

10th March 2011: 12:30

JNCC, Peterborough (with tele-conference link to SNH)

- 1) **Apologies for absence:** None
- 2) **Introductions:** The new project manager of the GSMP partnership for JNCC introduced herself and her new role and all others present also gave a brief overview of their role within their respective organisation, and within the GSMP partnership.
- 3) **Minutes of previous meeting:** The minutes were accepted unanimously with no changes. It was agreed that, in line with other similar monitoring schemes, a version should be produced for dissemination via the GSMP web pages hosted by WWT. Furthermore, it is desirable to also make available the current MoA, and possibly other relevant papers.
AP1: WWT to draft version of previous minutes for SG approval and then to publish on WWT GSMP website.
AP2: JNCC and SNH to check MoA for confidential information and to notify RDH of any required edits.
AP3: WWT to produce a version of the current MoA suitable for public dissemination on WWT website.
AP4: ALL to consider other partnership papers that would be useful for inclusion on web.
- 4) **Update on survey & projects:**

WWT reported that the survey activity during 2010/11 had proceeded to plan and that the data were now being collated. They outlined the reporting timetable to clarify the period when input would be required from non-WWT representatives on reports and other outputs. This is roughly mid-July, but the full timetable will be clarified soon.

AP5: WWT to circulate 2011 reporting timetable.

JNCC asked about the development of population-wide estimates of annual breeding success, as the long mooted need for Arctic indicators is now coming to the fore. JNCC have ongoing work related to this which they will update the SG on. WWT reported that a more unified system for collecting ABS data was currently being developed for the priority species (Bewick's Swan and Dark-bellied Brent Goose) with SOVON, and that a web-based system for data collection would be developed as part of broader developments over the course of FY2011/12. JNCC suggested that, in conjunction with other species groups, primarily waders (currently overseen by the International Wader Study Group), a joint system could be developed, and that it would be helpful to try and get this added to the AEWA list of priority projects when this is reviewed in September

2011. This concept of a broader initiative was welcomed. WWT highlighted that this issue was flagged at the Goose Specialist Group meeting in Sweden in October 2009, but that little has happened since. Nevertheless, there is a GSG working group looking at this issue), and it is important that they are engaged. Furthermore, the next GSG conference is happening later this month and, as WWT is attending, they can ensure continued engagement with the relevant people there.

AP6: JNCC to update SG on his ongoing work on Arctic indicators.

AP7: WWT/JNCC to develop concept note for AEWA in conjunction with IWSG (and possibly other Specialist Groups).

AP8: JNCC to clarify timetable for submitting to AEWA.

AP9: WWT to discuss with Goose and Swan SGs, and other key stakeholders, the idea of a single system for ABS recording.

WWT outlined plans for a spring IGC census in 2012. This is a priority due to the lack of recent data (last surveys conducted in mid 1990s) and the need for recent data to appraise current SPA suites. Although not part of the current partnership workplan, such a census can be delivered for relatively little resource and WWT can therefore proceed with it. Some issues regarding coverage remain to be resolved, and these will be addressed over the coming months. SNH mentioned the possibility of funds or support from SNH staff to assist with fieldwork; this should be explored again nearer the time.

AP10: WWT to assess likely coverage needs and circulated costed plan for filling these.

WWT provided an update on the International Swan Census 2010. All ISC data had now been computerised and validated; now just waiting for WeBS data so that analyses can begin. It is expected to have the analyses and reporting completed by the end of summer 2011. There are still uncertainties over the reporting of Bewick's Swan data at the flyway scale; these need to be clarified and delays avoided. One option discussed was to formalise the reporting process in the Bewick's Swan Action Plan, currently being prepared under AEWA.

AP11: WWT and JNCC to liaise with ISC organisers over formalising the census, including reporting, in the Bewick's Swan Action Plan.

5) GSMP website and reporting 2011

WWT outlined current plans for website (and to some extent database) development, and the reporting in 2011. This includes the likely use of Indicia. JNCC highlighted that the JNCC data team are involved with NBN/Indicia and may be able to help with scoping and planning this work.

AP12: JNCC to determine whether their data team may be able to provide support for this work.

Some confusion over data flows and storage, and responsibilities for this, between GSMP and other waterbird monitoring schemes was highlighted, including the process for administering data requests.

AP13: WWT to document data flows and responsibilities for GSMP and other waterbird count data with WeBS secretariat and relevant others.

SNH mentioned the current difficulty accessing count data for sites with few birds, mainly for Pink-footed Geese and Greylag Geese, and the fact that there is an increasing need for this in relation to wind farm and other proposed developments.

AP14: WWT to incorporate an appendix into future IGC reports that provides data for all sites. This to eventually be available on WWT website as part of updated and searchable waterbird reviews.

It was also highlighted that the current website requires more intuitive terminology, fewer clicks to get into the GSMP pages. These issues should mostly be dealt with as part of a wider WWT website overhaul which is nearing completion, but any further thoughts from the SG were welcome. Further developments will take place later in 2011 and a list of options has already been drafted by WWT, to which thoughts on additions and priorities would be welcome.

AP15: ALL to send further thoughts on GSMP web pages to WWT, ideally by 15 April 2011.

AP16: WWT to send website development ideas to SG for comments.

WWT outlined the plan to develop interactive maps showing known feeding areas of goose and swan species. This requires a collation of relevant GSMP data and other data sources, primarily BirdTrack and county bird club data. JNCC expressed interest in this and SNH mentioned that they had a similar project to initiate with regard to wind farm assessments (which requires flightline data too). It would make sense to link these initiatives together through the GSMP.

AP17: WWT to forward link to SNH/SG for the preliminary maps on Pink-footed Goose feeding distribution they have developed.

AP18: WWT and SNH to assess ways of working together to deliver all needs for these data.

6) AoB

SNH outlined the latest on the Scottish Government review of goose policy. Initial changes to the system had recently been announced in a press release, and further details will become available from Scottish Government/NGMRG in due course. It is likely a move to three species groups will be made: i) protected and vulnerable (Greenland White-fronted Goose and Bean Goose), ii) protected and secure (both Barnacle Geese), iii) huntable species. Some monitoring recommendations have been made, but these are minimal with respect to counts and breeding success. More significant needs relate to capture/recapture data as there is growing interest in developing an adaptive harvest management approach. However, it is unlikely anything further will happen until after the elections in May 2011.

AP19: SNH to keep the SG up-to-date with further developments.

The planned meeting to take forward the Greenland Barnacle Goose site review did not take place in December 2010 due to weather related travel difficulties. This needs to be rescheduled.

AP20: WWT/JNCC to fix meeting date for approx. May 2011.

JNCC highlighted the need to begin considering the future of GSMP beyond the current MoA. In order to begin such discussions a meeting was needed between JNCC and senior WWT Conservation Dept. staff.

AP21: JNCC to contact WWT to arrange meeting (approx June/July 2011).

Previous actions (all from SG12)

AP1: SNH to circulate [Scottish goose policy] review when finalised.

Discharged - now readily available

AP2: WWT to summarise existing data for this population [Greenland Barnacle Goose] and determine whether demographic explanation for Islay decline is possible.

Some further data collated, but other data awaited; complete in conjunction with data collation for site review

AP3: WWT to draft short paper proposing the archiving of licence returns on the web, for circulation to the group for comment.

To complete

AP4: SNH to take paper to GSAG, hopefully for forward transmission to NGMRG.

Pending completion of SG12/AP3

AP5: JNCC to pursue the publishing of licence returns in England and Wales.

To complete

AP6: WWT to clarify with WWT whether it is considered appropriate to publish such data on the GSMP web site.

Completed; this is acceptable to WWT

AP7: WWT to draft a paper for SPARSWG (identifying level of data required), and disseminate to group

To complete; new deadline is end May 2011 in time for next SPAR SWG meeting in June 2011

AP8: JNCC to take paper to December meeting of SPARSWG

Now deferred until June 2011 meeting

AP9: WWT to provide JNCC with assessment of volunteer time in GSMP.

Completed; now forward to new JNCC contact

AP22: WWT to resend assessment of volunteer time to JNCC

AP10: SNH to forward most appropriate SNH logo to WWT.

Completed

AP11: JNCC to clarify level of detail required in financial reporting and inform WWT.

Completed

AP12: WWT to check that they can invoice JNCC for the amount already agreed.
Completed

AP13: JNCC to check whether alterations to the MoA are required.
To complete; now for new JNCC contact to do

AP23: JNCC to check whether alterations to the MoA are required in the light of changes to the rate of VAT

AP14: WWT to canvas counter opinion on making GooseNews an electronic document.
Completed

AP15: JNCC to include WWT on invitation list for workshop
Completed

AP16: JNCC to find a list of actions following a meeting [about Greenland Barnacle Goose site review] with JNCC, SNH and other experts some time back and forward to WWT.
To complete (in time for rescheduled meeting in ~May 2011)

AP17: SNH to request that BTO provide the Islay database to WWT.
To complete (in time for rescheduled meeting in ~May 2011)

AP18: JNCC and WWT to meet in 3rd week of December to audit data from Islay.
To complete – see SG13/AP20 above

- 7) **Date of next meeting:** Approx. Sep/Oct 2011; all to complete existing Doodle request
AP24: WWT to recirculate the Doodle link