

JNCC / WWT / SNH GOOSE & SWAN MONITORING PROGRAMME

Notes of 17th Steering Group meeting

12th March 2013: 10:30

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

1. Minutes of previous meeting / outstanding actions

Corrections were made to the SG16 meeting notes. A revised version will be circulated to participants and uploaded to the GSMP web pages.

2. GSMP partnership – next contract

a) MoA and Schedule

A draft MoA has not yet been circulated. JNCC stated they were planning to produce a new agreement starting in April. There will be three parts: a) MoA document (legal), b) the schedule (how it's going to happen), and c) a work programme. The agreement will last for three years, though necessary adjustments depending on funding can be made.

Regarding the draft schedule:

Point 5.3. SNH queried why there was emphasis on monitoring of goose populations on sites that are SPAs but don't have that species as a qualifying species. The meeting agreed that we need to ensure that monitoring is going on at sites of importance for a species as well as those sites that are not important for that species and therefore the schedule text should combine points a) and c) and combine points b) and d).

Point 11.3 needs to be rephrased. Wording issues in Point 12.1 doesn't make sense – some edits still need to be made.

SNH agreed to add an extra column to Annex 2 indicating exactly what SNH currently funds and any likely changes during the duration of the Agreement. General agreement that we don't need to identify who pays for every last count/age count in work time or who pays for petrol etc, but in terms of indirect funding from SNH to fulfil the GSMP contract there are some key areas of work that SNH directly fund.

AP17/1: SNH to provide an extra column and information in Annex 1 and 2, identifying direct SNH contributions.

SNH also suggested that a summary of goose work undertaken within RSPB Area Frameworks (funded jointly by SNH) would make a useful addition to these Annexes.

AP17/2: WWT to develop Annex 2, adding some wording to highlight dependencies.

b) Draft workplan

The draft workplan was discussed and number of errors were noticed. WWT indicated that a £19k saving had been made to the three year contract.

AP17/3: All to feed any corrections through to WWT.

Draft Recommendations were discussed. Three categories of recommendations were identified:

Recommendations that we can do without additional funding.
Recommendations that are high priority and need some extra funding.
Recommendations that needs external funding.

Data management. Ongoing developments under *Indicia*, all considered high priority but none need extra funding.

Population estimation methods. Medium priority. An appraisal is needed of how population estimates are determined. JNCC introduced the 6-yearly Article 12 reporting cycle. Need to improve the reporting cycle for 2018, with data more readily available. In 2019, GSMP also need to report on distribution (need to be able to provide a 'distribution change indicator' which is back compatible with BTO Atlas data).

Reporting and communications. Archiving progressing well. Most reports now available online, but some still need to be done.

Bewick's Swan. There may be recommendations that fall out of the SPA review which may influence appropriate work for GSMP. Some recommendations might be about site management but some might be to do with monitoring. Feeding distribution information is becoming increasingly important, but funding would be the responsibility of the country agencies.

Whooper Swan. Recommendations mostly overlap with Bewick's Swan.

Taiga Bean Goose. Mention of feeding distribution for Slamannan needs to be removed.

Tundra Bean Goose. Since no birds appear to have returned to the UK after the influx in winter 2011/12, this recommendation can be dropped.

Pink-footed Goose. Spring counts frequency of 5-yearly rather than 3-yearly was deemed appropriate. In terms of feeding distribution data, DS suggested that a 'legacy audit' is undertaken to collate who has done what, where and when.

European White-fronted Goose. Nothing major apart from feeding information. DS asked that any recommendations need to identify the driver (we are losing the species from the UK).

Greenland White-fronted Goose. Status of the population at a few of the SPAs is poorly understood (on Islay and Coll). SNH have secured funding for repeating the WWT 1993/94 roost-feeding study and also some telemetry work on Barnacle Geese and Greenland Whitefronts. Add in priority actions from existing Action Plans. SNH said review due soon for the Greenland White-fronted Goose meeting held on Islay (five years after meeting = 2014; five years after plan adopted by AEWA = 2017).

Iceland Greylag Goose. Need for more monitoring in Iceland (rather than more in Scotland) because once they are in Scotland they mix with British birds and separation is impossible. JNCC questioned whether there is a need to hold a joint UK-Iceland workshop again? Iceland due to sign AEWA very soon.

British Greylag Goose. Scotland census provisionally scheduled for summer 2014, but unclear whether this will take place. SNH will probably be supportive of this. Unclear whether that would be a Scotland only census or whole UK. JNCC mentioned that the new BTO Atlas might be able to provide useful data (e.g. for stratified approach). It might be better to defer for a few years; SNH not wedded to a 2014 census so need to determine who needs what

data on British Greylag Geese. WWT said the scope of any census needs to be determined early enough so we can get the methodology developed. Discuss extent of census with BTO in April – CAA funding may be a possibility. Report back to GSMP SG18.

AP17/4: WWT to discuss options for a British Greylag Goose census in 2014 with BTO and report back to SG18.

SNH have some money for T&E for catching to deploy the 1,000 collars/rings already paid for.

Do we need greater surveillance for breeding success? BTO nest record cards have some limited data. However, there is no conservation driver to collect large amounts of data. SNH said surveillance of annual breeding success will be undertaken in areas with active population management/regulation (*i.e.* Islay, Tiree, Uists, Orkney) as part of ongoing monitoring.

AP17/5: WWT to produce a scoping paper to bring Greylag Goose issues together to prioritise areas for action (include in workplan for next contract).

Greenland Barnacle Goose. Finish the site review. Ensure counts at time of aerial survey dovetail with SPA counts on Islay.

Svalbard Barnacle Goose. No suggestions.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose. No suggestions.

Canadian Light-bellied Brent Goose. No suggestions.

East Atlantic Light-bellied Brent Goose. No suggestions.

c) Other contract issues

No suggestions.

3. Update on surveys & projects

a) Greenland Barnacle Goose census (WWT).

WWT carrying this out under contract to SNH. Scheduled for mid March 2013. Interim results should be available by end of March 2013.

b) Pink-footed Goose feeding distribution in England (WWT)

WWT mentioned a project funded by Natural England to collate feeding distribution records of Pink-footed Geese in England. Due to report by end March 2013.

c) Online database developments (WWT)

Still ongoing. No update provided.

d) Goose management policy update (CU)

Rae McKenzie (based on Islay) confirmed as SNH Adaptive Harvest Officer. Otherwise, no update provided.

4. Date of next meeting

Due to other commitments, a date in early October was proposed, subject to availability of participants.