

# WWT / JNCC / SNH Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme

## *Notes for the 18<sup>th</sup> Steering Group meeting*

Held 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2013 at JNCC (Peterborough)

### **1. 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 was provided:

AP16/2: WWT to ensure some follow up [with Iceland] based on review recommendations occurs (coming from partnership). Draft letter to be circulated and sent round to partners.

*Update: I suggest doing this once the Greylag Goose monitoring review has been completed (see AP17/4) as this is a major area where enhanced collaboration is desirable.*

All agreed, though JNCC pointed out some relevant political changes in Iceland that the GSMP SG should be aware of.

AP 16/5: WWT to contact other data owners who provided data incorporated into the sensitivity index regarding possible ways of making data available if requested.

*Update: done, awaiting feedback.*

AP16/16: WWT to clearly document how individual population estimates are produced, and the reasons for this and any associated assumptions.

*Update: draft paper circulated; comments welcome.*

AP17/4: WWT to produce a scoping paper to bring Greylag Goose issues together to prioritise areas for action.

*Update: to be completed in Jan-Mar 2014.*

### **2. Update on surveys**

#### *2a) General overview of 2012/13 reporting*

A summary of the 2012/13 season and the subsequent reporting was provided by WWT. It was noted that Pink-footed Geese have bounced back to c. 350,000 birds, but that most other populations showed little change from the previous year. There was some discussion of the summary table in *GooseNews* and the need to include other international counts or population estimates. There was also some discussion of the new GSMP website (<http://monitoring.wwt.org.uk/our-work/goose-swan-monitoring-programme/>) and how easy it was to navigate to from the WWT home page. Some changes to the structure of the main WWT website monitoring content have been made, and a further simplification is expected as part of other changes being made by the Communications department. An article on the new web pages should be included in the next *GooseNews*. Further comments were welcome from members of the GSMP SG.

**AP18/1: All to send comments on new GSMP web pages to WWT by end of December 2013.**

**AP18/2: WWT to include an article on the new GSMP web pages in the next issue of *GooseNews* (2014).**

*2b) Greenland Barnacle Goose census*

An update on the international census in March 2013 was provided by WWT. Approximately 80,000 birds were counted. A draft report has been prepared and is with SNH (the funders) for comment. A paper has also been produced for other censuses, in order to disseminate the results as widely as possible. Various options were discussed and it was agreed that it was desirable to keep the counts from Scotland and Ireland in the same paper, and therefore to publish in *Irish Birds* if that was the preference of the Irish co-authors.

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

*2c) Greylag Geese in Orkney 2013*

WWT provided a summary of the latest census of Greylag Geese in Orkney, where c. 21,000 geese were counted in August 2013. A draft report is in preparation and will be circulated in November 2013. JNCC asked about the feedback to the note on the status of Greylag Geese in Britain that WWT and JNCC co-authored<sup>1</sup> but none has been received. However, questions remain regarding the status of Greylag Geese in Ireland and those pertinent to Northern Ireland are a particular priority for the UK government.

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

**AP18/5: WWT to contact Wetlands international to make sure the current status of British Greylag Goose is recognised in the AEWA CSR and Waterbird Population Estimates 6.**

### **3. Other projects / issues**

*3a) Online database developments*

WWT provided an update on progress with the development of an online database for the IGC, breeding success and count boundary mapping, which are due to be completed in January 2014. A demonstration of this will be arranged for the next GSMP SG meeting.

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

JNCC also raised the issue of historical data and how far back the GSMP dataset currently goes. Resourcing for improving this is a possibility for underspend so it would be good to compile an overview of what was needed.

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

*3b) Review of population estimation methods*

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<sup>1</sup> Mitchell, C., R.D. Hearn & D.A. Stroud. 2012. The merging of populations of Greylag Geese breeding in Britain. *British Birds* 105: 498-505.

WWT outlined the paper circulated to the SG beforehand. JNCC reiterated that the main need for this paper is to document evidence standards, in other words to outline and justify what we do and why with respect to population estimation. The final document could be published as a JNCC report and thus there may be a need for external peer review. It could also be incorporated into a wider review of waterbird counting methods being carried out for AEWA.

Regarding a second draft of the paper, all SG members are to send comments to WWT by the end of 2013, with a final report complete by the end of March 2014. Peer review could then be completed by approximately September 2014. Specific comments made at the meeting included: i) that all populations should be included for completeness, even where the best method comes from WeBS rather than a GSMP organised census, ii) add a section on justification, iii) provide a summary in the next *GooseNews*.

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

#### *3c&d) Goose management policy update and Islay goose research*

SNH and WWT provided a general overview of ongoing issues in Scotland. There is now a roadmap for the implementation of an Adaptive Harvest Management approach to the relevant existing goose management schemes, and there is to be detailed research work carried out on Islay this winter and in 2014/15 to inform future goose management protocols there. No actions relevant to GSMP SG were identified.

## **4. Work plan for 2014/15**

#### *4a) One day GSMP conference*

Preliminary plans for the one-day GSMP counters conference in September 2013 were outlined by WWT. This is expected to be held in the Stirling/Perth area, with probably 30-40 people attending. GSMP SG members from JNCC and SNH would likely attend also. The date is likely to be either 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup>.

Ideas regarding the focus of the day were discussed and it was agreed to focus on i) Pink-footed Goose and Greylag Goose and ii) recruitment of new counters. The structure of the day should be as interactive as possible. Other ideas for possible inclusion were: i) monitoring the SPA network, ii) monitoring needs/recommendations from the SPA review and APEP.

#### *4b) Planning for International Swan Census, January 2015*

WWT outlined plans for the census and in particular discussed the issue of whether stratification was needed to improve the quality of the census, most likely the Whooper Swan census. Organisation of the census internationally should be smoother this time due to changes with the coordination of the Swan Specialist Group.

## **5. AOB**

#### *5a) SPA Review*

JNCC highlighted the monitoring recommendations document and welcomed input from GSMP SG.

**AP18/9: JNCC to circulate the SPA Review monitoring recommendations for comment by GSMP SG. Comments needed asap.**

#### *5b) Greylag Goose census 2014*

A query was raised by WWT regarding the need for a Scotland-wide (or even national) census of British Greylag Geese in 2014, which has been raised previously based on the fact that the last one was in 2008. However, no clear need for these data could be identified so it is likely that this will not be needed. However, SNH will confirm with colleagues and report back to SG promptly, as planning would need to start soon if anything was to take place next summer.

**AP18/10: SNH to confirm if a census of British Greylag Geese is needed in Scotland in 2014 and report back to SG by the end of November 2013.**

*5c) GSMP-WeBS liaison*

Following a previous action, WWT visited BTO to discuss GSMP-WeBS liaison and a number of specific issues in April 2013. Notes and actions were taken and can be circulated.

**AP18/11: WWT to circulate meeting notes/actions from the GSMP-WeBS liaison meeting held in April 2013.**

*5d) Orkney goose counts*

An issue regarding future RSPB support for goose counts in Orkney was raised by WWT, as there is the possibility that this will be reduced in the near future. WWT will be supporting the counts this winter and determining the best way forward for 2014/15 with relevant people there. This is also a relevant issue for those involved in Scottish goose management, and so the issue should be raised at the next Goose Science Advisory Group meeting in December 2013.

**AP18/12: WWT and/or SNH to highlight the issue regarding future RSPB support for goose counts in Orkney at the next Goose Science Advisory Group meeting in December 2013.**

*5e) Update on African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership (AEWMP)*

A brief update on the work of the AEWMP, particularly with respect to the Goose Specialist Group plans for improving the coordination of goose counts internationally, was provided. The funding application that GSG made for this work was unsuccessful and currently there are no further plans for another application.

## **6. Date of next meeting**

Date of next meeting agreed as 11<sup>th</sup> March 2014, to be held as usual at JNCC Peterborough with video link to SNH.