

**WWT/JNCC/SNH Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme**  
**Minutes for the 23rd Steering Group meeting**  
**Held 18 September 2017 at JNCC Peterborough**

Attending: Simon Cohen<sup>1</sup> (SNH), Colette Hall (WWT), Richard Hearn (WWT), Anna Robinson (JNCC) and David Stroud (JNCC)

**1. Apologies for absence / introductions**

**Apologies:** Carl Mitchell (though he was due to attend this meeting, Carl is no longer the manager for GSMP and so in future will only be attending Steering Group meetings as necessary).

**Introductions:** Colette was formally introduced as the new GSMP manager (though known to the group already).

**2. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved for uploading to the GSMP web pages once final amendments have been completed (available here <http://monitoring.wwt.org.uk/our-work/goose-swan-monitoring-programme/partnership-documents/>).

**3. Administrative items**

It was agreed that the Chair will be rotated between Steering Group meetings, starting with WWT, followed by JNCC and then SNH.

WWT suggested and it was agreed that from this meeting onwards the minutes of GSMP Steering Group meetings will be circulated and approved as soon as possible after the meeting, as opposed to waiting until the next meeting as has been done previously. Appropriately edited versions (to remove personal and financial information especially) would continue to be made publicly available on the web.

WWT had circulated a GSMP Operations Report to the Steering Group in advance of the meeting, which provided updates on various ongoing GSMP activities. JNCC and SNH agreed that this was a useful document. It was agreed that WWT would produce a similar report prior to future SG meetings and that JNCC can circulate these reports internally to the Country Agencies.

JNCC noted that the GSMP work programme in the 2017–2022 MoA was currently provisional and needed to be formally agreed. WWT, JNCC and SNH formally agreed to adopt the work programme as set out in the *2017–2022 GSMP MoA*, and contract delivery will continue to this end.

**4. Update on surveys, projects and annual outputs**

**4a) WWT staff roles in GSMP**

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<sup>1</sup> Via phone link SNH (Inverness)

WWT reported that Carl has retired as both manager of the GSMP and as organiser for the Icelandic-breeding Goose Census (IGC); this is due to a gradual change in his role at WWT. Colette has taken on the role of GSMP manager, whilst Kane Brides is now IGC organiser.

#### **4b) Review of 2017 outputs**

WWT reported that the 2017 GSMP reporting had been completed without any problems; positive feedback had been received from a few colleagues and counters about *GooseNews*. Fewer printed copies of *GooseNews* were required this year, with the majority of the network opting to download the newsletter (over 140 downloads had been recorded by the week of the meeting).

WWT noted that the results of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose age assessments presented online currently includes additional analysis, such as % young in varying flock size, and by habitat – these analyses were requested by JNCC in the early years of the GSMP. WWT queried whether these additional analyses are still necessary for the reporting (the additional data would continue to be collected). JNCC will check with colleagues.

**AP23/1: JNCC to confirm if the additional analyses of Dark-bellied Brent Goose age assessments are required. (Would the overall % young and mean brood size, and % young and mean brood size by estuary and by month be sufficient?)**

#### **4c) Survey updates**

Icelandic-breeding Goose Census (IGC): WWT reported that new Local Organisers (LO) had been recruited for Fife and Borders following the retirement of the previous LO, but that a LO is still needed for the Lothians. A LO is also required for Orkney, the position previously having been held by a SNH staff member who had left the agency. Contacts at SNH had also indicated to WWT that it would not be possible to help organise the autumn and spring counts this coming season. Hence, WWT are in the process of trying to find a new LO and contacting counters to see if counts on the islands will be possible.

There was a short discussion on the issue of covering Orkney for the IGC:

- SNH reported that the agency funding provided for the adaptive management on Orkney may soon end. In future, individual members of the Local Goose Management Group (farmers *etc*) are likely to be required to undertake any necessary management. It remains unclear how management actions would be coordinated.
- SNH offered to see if any help may be possible from SNH staff for the IGC in 2017/18.
- WWT indicated that one of the difficulties of counting geese on Orkney is that the birds are counted during the daytime at feeding locations, which means a large area needs to be visited. This means detailed local knowledge of the area is necessary, which makes it difficult to organise the counts from Slimbridge (though WWT could act as a temporary LO in the absence of a local option).
- JNCC noted that there was currently a lack of roost counts from Orkney for use to identify internationally important roost sites as potential SPAs in the current (third) SPA Review, and suggested that perhaps switching to roost counts might be one solution.

- WWT and SNH noted that there is some unpredictability in the roost locations, for example some geese roost on the sea.
- JNCC suggested asking for feedback from counters regarding the locations of roost sites. Any information would be useful. WWT agreed.

**AP23/2 SNH to circulate an update on the adaptive management programme on Orkney, and the situation as it currently stands.**

**AP23/3 WWT to contact Orkney IGC network to ask for information on Greylag Goose roost sites in the islands.**

**AP23/4 WWT to try to recruit new IGC Local Organiser for Orkney.**

Dark-bellied Brent Goose age assessments: WWT reported that there is a need to try to expand the observer network in several key areas - some sites are not being regularly covered; and also to ensure there are enough counters to cover sites when the usual observers are not available or retire. Priority areas are the south coast of England (Dorset, Hampshire and Sussex), Essex / Thames Estuary and The Wash. WWT are currently trying to recruit counters: adverts asking for help have been placed in *GooseNews*, *WeBS News* and on WWT's Waterbird Monitoring website and Twitter account. WWT plan to target specific areas through, e.g. contacting bird clubs, possibly giving presentations, and through other sources.

**AP23/5 WWT to work towards expanding the Dark-bellied Brent Goose age assessment network, particularly for priority areas in south England and The Wash.**

Greenland Barnacle Goose International Census 2018: WWT reported that SNH had agreed to fund the next census. Carl Mitchell will be organising the counts in coordination with Alyn Walsh, who will organise the counts in Ireland.

SNH reported that the Statement of Requirement for the census had been drafted and would be ready for circulation to WWT later in the week.

It was agreed that WWT should aim to have the final report completed before June 2018, as it would then be available for the next AEWA European Goose Management Platform meeting.

SNH offered to try to expand the Greenland Barnacle Goose counter network on Skye and possibly also at Wester Ross sites; and also agreed (following a query from WWT) that it might be possible to include these sites in the annual surveys.

As a side note, SNH reported a new Greenland Barnacle Goose ringing project on Islay, which is being carried out as part of the adaptive management work.

**AP23/6 SNH to send WWT the Statement of Requirement for the 2018 Greenland Barnacle Goose International Census.**

International Swan Census: WWT reported that preliminary results from the 2015 NW European Bewick's Swan census had been collated but data from Germany had yet to be confirmed; hence, the paper that is due to be written (led by Eileen Rees, Chair of the Swan Specialist Group), which will report on the results, is still on hold.

#### **4d) GSMP network updates**

WWT/SNH data flow: WWT reported that data for 2016/17 had not been received from SNH for British Greylag Geese on the Uists or Harris/Lewis, and Greenland Barnacle Geese on Uists or South Walls (Orkney); and there had been a lack of response from SNH when chasing these data. Other data were also received late, though this was due to SNH staff being away; however, there had also been some difficulty finding this information out. As this was an unusual situation, WWT asked SNH whether there had been any particular problems with the counts last season, and whether there was anything that could be done to improve data flows.

SNH reported that:

- Previous organiser for Uists at SNH has left the agency.
- SNH provided a possible contact for the Uists: counts are still being organised through SNH's Uist office.
- There is currently a lack of counters on the Western Isles.
- There is some discrepancy between SNH's counts of Barnacle Geese on the Uists and those provided by the crofters.
- There was possibly no count of Greylags in 2016/17 on Harris/Lewis.
- SNH usually hold an internal 'goose meeting' where various issues are discussed; the next meeting may be an opportunity to confirm the current situation regarding counts.

**AP23/7 SNH to confirm whether the outstanding 2016/17 data are available (Greylags on Uists or Harris/Lewis, and Greenland Barnacle on Uists or South Walls); what the current situation is regarding SNH undertaking goose counts on the Uists; and also whether SNH will hold the internal 'goose meeting' this year.**

#### **4e) Sub-contracts with Irish Brent Goose Research Group (IBGRG) and Greenland White-fronted Goose Study (GWGS)**

WWT reported that sub-contracts for the IBGRG and GWGS to undertake the annual censuses of the Canadian Light-bellied Brent Goose and Greenland White-fronted Goose, respectively, are being prepared.

JNCC requested feedback during the process of discussion with the respective groups regarding data access, particularly if there is any problem with access through the Open Government Licence (OGL).

#### **4f) Hvanneyri 2 workshop update**

WWT informed the group of a meeting held between WWT and colleagues in Iceland in which plans were discussed for holding an international workshop on various aspects of goose/swan monitoring

and research of shared UK/Iceland/Ireland populations. The preferred date is late summer/early autumn 2018. WWT will be producing a proposal for the workshop for the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, which will be circulated to the GSMP Steering Group for comment.

JNCC provided the following ideas, based on the Greenland White-fronted Goose action planning workshop held on Islay:

- Hold a public meeting that revolves around geese and agriculture (or related issues of public issues/concern).
- Produce an educational programme for engaging with schools.
- Hold evening sessions with presentations for the public utilising the presence of international speakers.
- Use the Islay workshop plan (which JNCC can provide) as a possible model for planning.
- Set up a steering committee to help with the organisation.

JNCC also stressed the need for detailed planning and preparation to get the most from such a meeting. The workshop should be discussing already drafted solutions to issues, not just rehearsing already identified problems. To that end, time is already short.

JNCC also noted that as the Greenland White-fronted Goose population has fallen below 20,000 birds there is a requirement under the international action plan to hold a meeting, which could tie in with the workshop.

As a side note, WWT reported that the Icelandic colleagues would like to hold a meeting (in November 2017) with WWT to discuss various aspects of Greylag Goose monitoring. WWT invited other members of the Steering Group to attend if it would be useful.

**AP23/8 WWT to circulate draft proposal for Hvanneyri 2 workshop to GSMP Steering Group for comment once prepared.**

**AP23/9 JNCC to circulate the Greenland White-fronted Goose action planning workshop (Islay, 2009) plan, which can be used as a model for international meeting planning.**

## **5. GSMP Contract renegotiation**

### **5a) Data access agreement**

JNCC provided an update on the status of the data access agreement. WWT have provided feedback on initial agreement. JNCC have provided a second version (with comments) for WWT to review.

Main points:

- Summary data will continue to be made available to the current timetable *i.e.* after the GSMP reporting is completed.
- Timescale for availability of raw data is still to be determined.

- Historical data do not have been made available through the OGL; however, JNCC would be keen for historical data to be made available under the OGL; all data for the term of the MoA should be made available through the OGL.
- Charges for requests should only be for those that take longer than approximately two hours (exact length of time to be agreed) to provide data in the format required.
- JNCC request that age assessment data be made available through the OGL.
- Data request forms can be a barrier to requesting data. Only information needed for providing the data should be collected; other questions (such as use of the data) should be optional.

It was suggested that the European Goose Management Platform could also be added to the list of initiatives with which the GSMP Partnership share data, which are specified in the data access policy.

**AP23/10 WWT to carry out the following in relation to the data access policy:**

- **Provide comments on the revised policy.**
- **Talk to third party data providers to encourage them to agree to the OGL.**
- **Provide a list of the data sets currently held for GSMP.**
- **Provide a summary of the current data validation process to JNCC.**
- **Update the Terms & Conditions for provision and use of GSMP data, which are currently available on WWT's Waterbird Monitoring website (following agreement of policy).**
- **Ensure that individual recorders are clear that their data will be made available under OGL as they submit their data.**
- **Update the data request process currently shown on WWT's Waterbird Monitoring website, to take into consideration the new data access policy (following agreement of policy).**

As a side note, it was agreed that it would be useful to have a better understanding of the current GSMP data flow. WWT offered to map the data flow and circulate to the group.

**AP23/11 WWT to map the current GSMP data flow and circulate to the Steering Group.**

**5b) UK Terrestrial Evidence Partnership of Partnerships (UKTEPoP)**

JNCC briefed the group on plans for the UKTEPoP meeting, which is due to be held in Manchester on 10 October 2017. The agenda will include presentations by each of the partners, and an update on the Terrestrial Surveillance Development and Analysis (TSDA) contract. WWT are invited to provide a five minute presentation on GSMP, perhaps mentioning a topical point of interest, areas of collaboration or lessons learnt; and also provide a handout summarising the GSMP.

**6. Outstanding actions**

The outstanding actions from previous Steering Group meetings were reviewed. Actions from the 23rd meeting are listed in Annex 1.

AP18/4: WWT to review the issues surrounding the status of Irish Greylag Geese in the review of Greylag Goose monitoring needs (see SG21 minutes AP17/4). *Ongoing. WWT to meet with Birdwatch Ireland in spring 2016 to discuss monitoring needs.*

- The review was a follow on from the paper Mitchell *et al* 2012 on the status of Greylag Geese in Britain; and the point raised at the 18th Steering Group meeting ‘...questions remain regarding the status of Greylag Geese in Ireland and those pertinent to Northern Ireland are a particular priority for the UK government.’
- It was agreed that WWT should follow up on the status of this review before deciding on how to proceed.
- **Renewed as action AP23/12**

**AP23/12 WWT to follow up on the status of the review that was due to be undertaken of the issues surrounding the status of Greylag Geese in Ireland and the monitoring needs.**

AP18/7: WWT to put together an overview of what is needed to complete historical data. *Ongoing. There were some discussions about JNCC capacity to scan documents.*

AP22/2: To find out whether there is an opportunity for costing/ listing as an activity the digitisation of reports through JNCC contract.

AP22/3: WWT to contact authors of papers for digitisation where not authored by WWT.

- WWT reported that, with the help of a volunteer, numerous reports have been scanned and added/will be added to WWT’s Waterbird Monitoring website, and this work will continue.
- JNCC noted that a number of regional reports (Lancashire IGC) have been scanned and are available to WWT if needed.
- WWT to check what reports are required and also to get permission from authors to add reports to the website.
- **Renewed as action AP23/13**

**AP23/13 WWT to confirm which historical reports (including regional reports) still require adding to WWT’s Waterbird Monitoring website; and to contact the relevant authors for permission to do so.**

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

AP22/4: JNCC to investigate capacity to publish as a JNCC report.

AP22/5: All steering group to refresh themselves on the publication.

- WWT to follow up on the status of the paper and report back to SG so a way forward can be agreed.
- **Renewed as AP23/14**

**AP23/14 Follow up on the status of the GSMP population estimates method assessment.**

AP19/2 JNCC to ask Defra to formally ask the Iceland (and other country) authorities to share in collective monitoring. *Ongoing. JNCC to raise with Defra, in addition to raising the idea of a joint meeting between flyway countries.*

AP22/6: JNCC to raise with Defra potential for joint meeting with Iceland and other country authorities.

- JNCC reported that the issue had previously been raised with Defra, and will raise it again once the proposal for Hvanneryi 2 has been completed. JNCC suggested that a summary of the proposal, pitched slightly differently, could be produced for this purpose.
- **Actions discharged**

AP19/3: JNCC and SNH to provide comments of IGC surveillance review by 18 April 2014. *Update. All comments have been received, the next step is to consider placing this on to the website. This could require formatting and creation of the cover note.*

AP22/7: To decide on whether the IGC surveillance review should be published on the GSMP website.

- The review was completed.
- It was agreed that it should be published on the GSMP website, under 'Partnership documents'.
- **Renewed as AP23/15**

**AP23/15 Add the IGC surveillance review to the GSMP website on the Partnership documents page.**

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.*

AP22/8: Kane Brides to circulate future periodic GSMP [pdf] download assessments to the Steering Group.

- All completed
- The assessments will form part of the GSMP Operations report provided to the Steering Group in advance of future meetings.
- **Actions discharged**

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.*

AP22/9: WWT to give some consideration on how to use information from the website analytics and whether a survey of counter needs should be undertaken.

- It was decided that no further action is required.
- **Actions discharged**

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.*

- There is still a delay due to late data from Germany (see above)
- **Action discharged**

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.

- Census issues have been resolved – related to counts in Iceland.
- WWT are developing a sub-contract with IBGRG for delivery of the Canadian Brent Goose census
- **Action discharged**

AP22/1: WWT to discuss in advance the best way of publishing the combined results [of International Greenland Barnacle Goose Census] as Alyn Walsh (principal Irish author) is keen to get the next census results published in *Irish Birds*. The next survey is 18 months away [spring 2018] and the conversation should start now to agree outputs with Irish collaborators.

- WWT are in communication with Alyn Walsh regarding the next census and the publication of the results.
- **Action discharged**

AP22/10: There is a need for a review of potential [GSMP] outputs for targeting i) new counters/ audiences, and ii) decision makers.

- JNCC noted that the review they are currently undertaking of the value of surveillance schemes will help raise awareness of GSMP internally. The second part of this review will take into account Country Agency needs.
- It was agreed that there is a need to continue to look for opportunities for mentioning the value of the GSMP, particular to/for decision makers.
- The BirdTrack newsletter was suggested as a possible resource for advertising to new potential counters.
- WWT noted that there is now a GSMP e-newsletter, and GSMP is also promoted through WWT's Twitter account, along with staff personal accounts. WWT also reported that there has been an internal discussion about improving the use of WWT's conservation Twitter account (@Conservation) to better publicise work; and in due course, this will be a means by which GSMP can be better promoted.
- **Action discharged**

AP22/11: To decide on plans to feed into the celebration of the 70th anniversary of WeBS.

- Kane Brides is attending on behalf of WWT and as a WeBS LO. Tom Clare (warden at WWT Martin Mere) will highlight the value of GSMP, and specifically IGC and age assessments, in his presentation.
- David Stroud will be mentioning additional surveys in his presentation, which will include GSMP.
- **Action discharged**

## **7. AOB**

SNH reported that the review of goose policy in Scotland has been submitted and the outcomes may influence funding for monitoring.

JNCC requested that WWT provide a report, preferably before each quarterly invoice is raised, to inform on current progress, with reference to the GSMP work programme.

## **8. Date of next meeting**

WWT to organise date for next meeting, which will be in autumn 2018.

## Annex 1: Actions from the 23rd GSMP Steering Group meeting, 18 September 2017

Reference number	Action	Responsible
AP23/1	Confirm if the additional analyses of Dark-bellied Brent Goose age assessments are required. (Would the overall % young and mean brood size, and % young and mean brood size by estuary and by month be sufficient?)	JNCC
AP23/2	Circulate an update on the adaptive management programme on Orkney, and the situation as it currently stands.	SNH
AP23/3	Contact Orkney IGC network to ask for information on Greylag Goose roost sites in the islands.	WWT
AP23/4	Try to recruit new IGC Local Organiser for Orkney.	WWT
AP23/5	Work towards expanding the Dark-bellied Brent Goose age assessment network, particularly for priority areas in south England and The Wash.	WWT
AP23/6	Send WWT the Statement of Requirement for the 2018 Greenland Barnacle Goose International Census.	SNH
AP23/7	Confirm whether the outstanding 2016/17 data are available (Greylags on Uists or Harris/Lews, and Greenland Barnacle on Uists or South Walls); what the current situation is regarding SNH undertaking goose counts on the Uists; and also whether SNH will hold the internal 'goose meeting' this year.	SNH
AP23/8	Circulate draft proposal for Hvanneyri 2 workshop to GSMP Steering Group for comment once prepared.	WWT
AP23/9	Circulate the Greenland White-fronted Goose International Workshop (Islay, 2009) plan, which can be used as a model for international meeting planning.	JNCC
AP23/10	Carry out the following in relation to the data access policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide comments on the revised policy.</li> <li>• Talk to third party data providers to encourage them to agree to the OGL.</li> <li>• Provide a list of the data sets currently held for GSMP.</li> <li>• Provide a summary of the current data validation process to JNCC.</li> </ul>	WWT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the Terms &amp; Conditions for provision and use of GSMP data, which are currently available on WWT's Waterbird Monitoring website (following agreement of policy).</li> <li>• Ensure that individual recorders are clear that their data will be made available under OGL as they submit their data.</li> <li>• Update the data request process currently shown on WWT's Waterbird Monitoring website, to take into consideration the new data access policy (following agreement of policy)</li> </ul>	
AP23/11	Map the current GSMP data flow and circulate to the Steering Group.	WWT
AP23/12	Follow up on the status of the review that was due to be undertaken of the issues surrounding the status of Greylag Geese in Ireland and the monitoring needs.	WWT
AP23/13	Confirm which historical reports (including regional reports) still require adding to WWT's Waterbird Monitoring website; and to contact the relevant authors for permission to do so.	WWT
AP23/14	Follow up on the status of the GSMP population estimates method assessment.	WWT
AP23/15	Add the IGC surveillance review to the GSMP website on the Partnership documents page.	WWT