



WWT/JNCC/SNH Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme

Minutes for the 24th Steering Group meeting

Held 11 October 2018 at JNCC Peterborough

Attending: Simon Cohen¹ (SNH), Colette Hall (WWT), Richard Hearn (WWT), Kirsi Peck (JNCC), Anna Robinson (JNCC) and David Stroud (JNCC)

1. Apologies for absence / introductions

- Kirsi Peck was introduced to the group. Kirsi is a Biodiversity Support Officer at JNCC and has been supporting Anna with various GSMP matters, in particular providing comments on the 2018 reports.

2. Administrative items

GSMP Operations report

- WWT reminded all that the GSMP Operations Report for October 2018 had been circulated to the group and asked for any comments. All were happy with the document and no comments or queries regarding the content were raised.
- JNCC suggested that a slight variation of the report (and future reports), for example, removing the action points and adding more web links, could be produced that could be circulated internally within JNCC and the other agencies. All agreed this was a good idea.

- ❖ **AP24/1: WWT to produce a variant of the GSMP Operations Report for circulation within the country agencies. JNCC and SNH to circulate as appropriate.**

Data Protection

- WWT and JNCC confirmed that the remaining issues regarding the GSMP Privacy Policy had been resolved, and that it had been agreed that WWT would be the sole Data Controller. WWT repeated that the policy is available on WWT's Waterbird Monitoring website and the network had been informed.

Historical GSMP reports online

- JNCC took the opportunity to formally thank the WWT volunteer on behalf of the GSMP Partnership for all their work in gathering and scanning grey literature in preparation for adding to the GSMP website. JNCC suggested that perhaps a piece could be included in the next newsletter to honour their contribution – the article could be an example of how volunteering for the GSMP does not have to just be about counting birds. All agreed this was a good idea.

3. Update on surveys

Icelandic-breeding Goose Census

- WWT repeated that the IGC in 2017/18 was completed without incident, including coverage of Orkney, with two volunteers stepping in as Local Organisers, although WWT had to provide funds to cover counter expenses (fuel and ferries).
- WWT noted the following regarding the 2018/19 census:

¹ Via phone link to SNH

- The November 2018 census dates clash with the Scottish Ringers' Conference which may result in counters being unavailable; hence, WWT is exploring the potential impact this may have and the feasibility of changing the census dates.
 - WWT is investigating the possibility of SNH taking on the role of Local Organiser for Orkney and is waiting to hear from SNH's area manager (new in post). It seems likely that WWT will need to take on the role of Local Organiser for 2018, or find another volunteer if possible. There may also be the need to provide expenses for Orkney's counter network, as in previous years.
 - The Local Organiser for the Moray Firth has retired and WWT are currently acting as the Organiser until a replacement can be found. WWT spoke to the retiring Organiser and discussed the potential need to change the way the geese are monitored in the area as the distribution and behaviour of the geese has changed in recent years and, for example, there may be a need to count the geese in feeding areas.
- In response to WWT's note about organising the IGC in Orkney, SNH offered to investigate the situation with respect to their involvement and whether they may be able to provide some funds towards counter expenses.
- ❖ **A24/2: SNH to investigate the agency's potential involvement in organising the IGC in Orkney and whether some funds may be available for expenses for the Orkney counter network.**
- JNCC suggested the having a plan in place (succession planning) in the event of a Local Organiser retiring; such as, looking for a potential new Local Organiser who may be able shadow the current Organiser in order for local knowledge to be passed across.
 - WWT reported that SNH will be funding a late summer survey of Greylags in Orkney in 2019.
 - SNH reported that changes to the local goose management schemes mean that some are coming to an end and it will be down to the local community to decide what management approach to take. This may also affect any counts that were being undertaken in the scheme areas, which was part of the monitoring carried out as part of the schemes.
 - SNH also reported that a National Goose Management Review Group meeting is due to take place in October 2018 where the management schemes will be discussed. SNH offered to provide the Steering Group with an update from the meeting.
- ❖ **AP24/3: SNH to provide an update to the Steering Group on the outcomes of the National Goose Management Review Group meeting taking place in October 2018.**

International Greenland Barnacle Goose Census

- WWT noted that the coordinated census took place in March 2018 and that a draft report is currently with SNH; however, this has not yet been signed off by SNH.
- ❖ **AP24/4: SNH to review the draft 2018 International Greenland Barnacle Goose Census report and provide comments to WWT as soon as possible.**
- SNH stated that the report will be reviewed within the next week or so. WWT highlighted the need for the report to be signed off as soon as possible so that the final population estimate can be included in the update of *Waterbird Population Estimates* that is due to be submitted for publication in December 2018.
 - JNCC queried the possibility that the results from the surveys in Ireland and Scotland may be published as two separate papers; and suggested that WWT could, perhaps, contact National Parks & Wildlife Service and the census coordinators again to try to encourage a joint paper, perhaps in *Irish Birds* if that was a preference. WWT agreed.
- ❖ **AP24/5: WWT to contact NPWS and the IGBGC coordinators in Ireland regarding the possibility of a joint scientific paper.**

International Swan Census

- WWT recapped on the status of the reporting for the 2015 Bewick's Swan census: all the data from the census have now been submitted and a paper will be drafted by a WWT colleague.
- WWT staff will also be attending the Swan Specialist Group Symposium in Estonia in mid-October 2018, where staff will present on the results of the 2015 Whooper Swan census and also run a workshop related to the next international swan census in 2020.
- JNCC suggested a point to raise at the workshop and for planning the next census: the possibility of using data from other surveys (such as data collected through BirdTrack) to 'top up' the census results for sites that were not covered during the census.
- JNCC noted that one project being undertaken in the Terrestrial Surveillance Development and Analysis programme involved comparing data from structured and unstructured monitoring schemes, the uses of the different data collected, and whether it's possible to combine the different types of data in analyses.

4. 2017/18 annual reporting

- WWT gave a brief update on the 2017/18 reporting, during which it was remarked that fewer participants are requesting paper copies of the newsletter. Ceasing the print run of the newsletter was suggested, but it was also noted that there are still a number of participants and interested parties who do not have access to the internet and others who much prefer the paper copy. It was agreed that WWT should review this further in the coming year (including looking at whether WWT can print the newsletter internally to reduce costs), and in the next edition of the newsletter include a piece that asks the participants their opinion so that WWT can gauge the response to only making the newsletter available to download (and possibly a printed copy from WWT).
- ❖ **AP24/6 WWT to review the feasibility of ceasing the print run of GooseNews: including looking into the practicalities of printing the newsletter internally and asking for participant feedback in the 2019 edition.**

5. Capacity development of networks

Project proposal: Developing a statistical basis for the evaluation and co-ordination of the GSMP

- There was a brief discussion around the project proposal presented by WWT. JNCC queried the method that would be used to produce confidence intervals for population estimates derived from GSMP data, given that a similar review for WeBS had shown that it was not possible in cases where WeBS data are used. WWT suggested providing further information to the Steering Group about the methods that might be applied. All agreed this would be useful.
- ❖ **AP24/7: WWT to provide further details about the proposed method(s) for calculating confidence intervals for population estimates derived from GSMP data.**
- WWT suggested that the time required for the project was taken from that allocated to 'counter network development' in the 2017/18 budget which had not been used by WWT. Similarly, JNCC indicated that a few days had been allocated for TePoP that had not been used by WWT in 2017/18 which could also be transferred to the project. All agreed this was an appropriate use of the unused time.

Hvanneyri 2 workshop

- WWT recapped on the current status of the proposal for a Hvanneyri 2 workshop: WWT provided a proposal for a workshop to Icelandic colleagues for submission to the Icelandic Ministry; however, to date, WWT have not had any response. WWT will be contacting colleagues in due course to assess current interest in collaboration.
- For interest, WWT also informed the group that government funding for the wing surveys in Iceland (used for age assessments of geese) had ceased, so the survey would not take place in 2018/19.

- JNCC mentioned that staff would be attending the Ramsar COP this month [October 2018] where there may be the opportunity to talk to the representatives from the Icelandic Ministry and the Ireland government, if in attendance, about collaboration and the workshop proposal. For this purpose, JNCC requested a short brief from WWT that provided a few key messages about the need for collaboration *etc* and also a copy of the workshop proposal. WWT proposed that staff should contact colleagues in Iceland prior to the COP to advise them about the possibility of this discussion taking place.
- ❖ **AP24/8: WWT to provide JNCC with a short brief outlining key messages regarding the need for increased collaboration between Iceland and the UK on goose monitoring and management etc.**
- ❖ **AP24/9: WWT to contact Icelandic colleagues to inform them of the possible discussion between JNCC and representatives from the Icelandic Ministry at the Ramsar COP.**
- ❖ **AP24/10: WWT to circulate the Hvanneyri 2 workshop proposal to the Steering Group.**

6. GSMP contract

Data access

- WWT confirmed that staff had received the latest copy of the access agreement sent by JNCC and it would be reviewed and signed off in due course. The majority of the remaining queries from WWT were around informing the network and requesting permissions. These were discussed and addressed in the meeting.
- One outstanding point in the draft agreement is a question for SNH relating to timescales for the release of data from the International Greenland Barnacle Goose Census for distribution as per the data access agreement. JNCC asked SNH to confirm this.
- ❖ **AP24/11: SNH to confirm timescales for releasing data from the International Greenland Barnacle Goose Census for distribution as per the GSMP data access agreement.**
- There was a discussion about how to request permission from counters as data are being submitted, with some disagreement about the process of opt in versus opt out. It was suggested that WWT draft some wording and circulate for JNCC to review.
- ❖ **AP24/12: WWT to draft text that informs the network about the use of data under the OGL at the point of data submission in order to collate permissions, and circulate to JNCC for review.**
- JNCC proposed an idea for a newsletter: a piece that explains how and where data from the GSMP are used. This would help inform the network and perhaps provide more understanding of how their data are used.

UK Terrestrial Evidence Partnership of Partnerships (TEPoP) update

- JNCC updated the group on the recent TEPoP meeting:
 - Positive feedback had been received from various participants.
 - More staff from the SNCBs (mainly JNCC) attended the meeting compared with the previous one in 2017.
 - The meeting included three workshops around the following topics: volunteers and maintaining networks; policy gaps and need based gaps; and the linkages between Earth Observation analyses and JNCC partnership surveillance schemes - how they can benefit each other.
 - JNCC will be circulating a questionnaire to participants for feedback about the 2018 meeting as well as asking for ideas for the next meeting in 2019.
- It was noted that there were no representatives from SNH at the meeting. SNH indicated this may have been due to a mix up over who would be attending. SNH will feedback to the agency to inform on the remarks raised about the lack of attendance in order to try to encourage future participation.

A look ahead to the next 6–12 months

- A few extra points were noted:
 - The Barnacle Goose management plan will be presented at the next AEWA MOP in December 2018. If adopted, adaptive management programmes will be implemented for the Barnacle Goose populations. Data will be needed from the GSMP for these programmes.
 - WWT noted that in the report on the results of the Greenland Barnacle Goose census, it has been proposed that the census is shifted to three-yearly rather than five-yearly. JNCC suggested that if a census was not possible, it is worth investigating how many sites would need to be covered annually to get a reasonable assessment of trend for the total population – this could be part of the project WWT has proposed to assess the statistical use of GSMP data. SNH suggested that c. 55% of the Scottish population is currently monitored annually, with the possibility of coverage being increased in some areas e.g. Skye.

7. Progress against actions from previous meetings

Actions from previous Steering Group meetings were reviewed. Actions from the 24th meeting and any outstanding actions to be carried over are listed in Annex 1.

- 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?
 - JNCC confirmed that this level of assessment was sufficient.
 - Action discharged.
- AP23/2: SNH to circulate an update on the adaptive management programme on Orkney, and the situation as it currently stands.
 - SNH updated the Steering Group at the meeting.
 - It was suggested that an update on adaptive harvest management be added as an agenda point for future Steering Group meetings. All agreed
 - Action discharged.
- AP23/3: WWT to Contact Orkney IGC network to ask for information on Greylag Goose roost sites in the islands.
 - Due to the temporary replacement of Local Organiser for 2017/18 and the uncertainty over surveys for 2018/19, WWT are waiting until the IGC network and new organiser (if recruited) have settled in place before progressing this action.
 - Action carried over
- AP23/4: WWT to try to recruit new IGC Local Organiser for Orkney.
 - Two volunteers stepped in as Local Organisers for the 2017/18 IGC; however, this was only a temporary situation and there is a need to try to find someone to help in 2018/19. WWT will continue to try to recruit a replacement organiser.
 - Action discharged / ongoing
- 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.
 - Coverage was improved in 2017/18 and WWT will continue to maintain the network and fill gaps where possible.
 - Action discharged
- AP23/6: SNH to send WWT the Statement of Requirement for the 2018 Greenland Barnacle Goose International Census.

- The appropriate documents were sent to WWT, and the census was undertaken and completed in March 2018.
- Action discharged.
- AP23/7: SNH to confirm whether the outstanding 2016/17 data are available (Greylags on Uists or Harris/Lews, and Greenland Barnacle Geese 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 indicated that counts of Greylags on the Outer Hebrides were not undertaken; however, counts were undertaken on South Walls.
 - SNH proposed that it may be prudent to change the IGC for Greylags to every three years rather than annual; which would enable monies to be found to help with a coordinated count.
 - WWT indicated that it would be good to know SNH's intentions regarding the continued monitoring of geese in Scotland.
 - SNH noted that there was due to be discussions about the various schemes at the next National Goose Management Review Group, and SNH will update the Steering Group on any points raised and outcomes from the meeting (AP24/3).
 - Action discharged
- AP23/8: WWT to circulate draft proposal for Hvanneyri 2 workshop to GSMP Steering Group for comment once prepared.
 - WWT would do so following this meeting [subsequently done].
 - Action discharged
- AP23/9: JNCC to circulate the Greenland White-fronted Goose International Workshop (Islay, 2009) plan, which can be used as a model for international meeting planning.
 - JNCC had circulated the document following the 23rd Steering Group meeting.
 - Action discharged
- AP23/10: WWT to carry out the following in relation to the data access policy:
 - i. Provide comments on the revised policy.
 - Completed
 - ii. Provide a list of the data sets currently held for GSMP.
 - Completed - list provided as part of the data access agreement.
 - iii. Provide a summary of the current data validation process to JNCC.
 - **Revised as AP24/13** (see Appendix 1).
 - iv. Talk to third party data providers to encourage them to agree to the OGL.
 - **Revised as AP24/14** (see Appendix 1)
 - v. 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).
 - **Revised as AP24/15** (see Appendix 1)
 - vi. Ensure that individual recorders are clear that their data will be made available under OGL as they submit their data.
 - **Replaced by AP24/12** (see Appendix 1)
 - vii. 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).
 - **Revised as AP24/16** (see Appendix 1).
- AP23/11: WWT to map the current GSMP data flow and circulate to the Steering Group.
 - Action carried over

- 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.
 - This review had been suggested by WWT to BirdWatch Ireland staff but it had not been progressed and those staff at BirdWatch Ireland involved in the discussion have now left the organisation.
 - It was noted that such a review would be part of any UK – Ireland – Iceland discussions at the Hvanneyri 2 meeting, should it take place.
 - Action discharged
- 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.
 - This has been progressed by a WWT volunteer and there are a number of reports ready to be added to the website, which will happen in due course.
 - Action discharged
- AP23/14: WWT to follow up on the status of the GSMP population estimates method assessment.
 - WWT indicated that the latest version staff possess contained comments from JNCC and WWT but there was no final version. JNCC indicated that the latest version was in fact with agency staff and needed to be reviewed. WWT to remind JNCC in early 2018.
 - **Action renewed as AP24/17** (see Appendix 1)
- AP23/15: WWT to add the IGC surveillance review to the GSMP website on the Partnership documents page.
 - On investigating the status of this review, WWT staff involved believed that at the time it had been agreed that the review was an internal document only and was not to be made publically available. It was suggested that the Steering Group revisit the document to review whether it was suitable for public dissemination.
 - **Action revised as AP24/18** (see Appendix 1)

8. AOB

- JNCC remarked that the agency is currently reviewing MOAs to investigate whether it is necessary to change content relating to data protection to take in to consideration the new regulations and resulting privacy policies. JNCC will send WWT a revised copy of the GSMP MOA. WWT indicated that the MOA would need to be internally reviewed before agreement.
 - ❖ **AP24/19: JNCC to send WWT a revised copy of the GSMP MOA with any necessary changes to content relating to data protection. WWT to review and return any comments to JNCC.**
- WWT asked JNCC if the quarterly reports provided in advance of the invoices were sufficient. JNCC confirmed this was the case.
- WWT took the opportunity to formerly thank David Stroud for being part of the GSMP Steering Group and for his contribution to the scheme over the years. David is due to retire from JNCC in 2019. All present seconded this.

9. Date of next meeting

- All agreed that the 25th GSMP Steering Group meeting should be held in September/October 2019. WWT will circulate proposed dates in due course.

Appendix 1: action points from the 24th GSMP Steering Group meeting

Reference number	Action	Responsible
AP23/3	Contact Orkney IGC network to ask for information on Greylag Goose roost sites in the islands.	WWT
AP23/11	Map the current GSMP data flow and circulate to the Steering Group.	WWT
AP24/1	Produce a variant of the GSMP Operations Report for circulation within the country agencies. JNCC and SNH to circulate as appropriate.	WWT
AP24/2	Investigate the agency's potential involvement in organising the IGC in Orkney and whether some funds may be available for expenses for the Orkney counter network.	SNH
AP24/3	Provide an update to the Steering Group on the outcomes of the National Goose Group meeting [taking place in October 2018].	SNH
AP24/4	Review the draft 2018 International Greenland Barnacle Goose Census report and provide comments to WWT as soon as possible.	SNH
AP24/5	Contact NPWS and the IGBGC census coordinators in Ireland regarding the possibility of a joint scientific paper.	WWT
AP24/6	Review the feasibility of ceasing the print run of <i>GooseNews</i> : including looking into the practicalities of printing the newsletter internally and asking for participant feedback in the 2019 edition.	WWT
AP24/7	Provide further details about the proposed method(s) for calculating confidence intervals for population estimates derived from GSMP data.	WWT
AP24/8	Provide JNCC with a short brief outlining key message regarding the need for increased collaboration between Iceland and the UK on goose monitoring and management etc.	WWT
AP24/9	Contact Icelandic colleagues to inform them of the possible discussion between JNCC and representatives from the Icelandic Ministry at the Ramsar COP	WWT
AP24/10	Circulate the Hvanneyri 2 workshop proposal to the Steering Group.	WWT

Reference number	Action	Responsible
AP24/11	Confirm timescales for releasing data from the International Greenland Barnacle Goose Census for distribution as per the GSMP data access agreement.	SNH
AP24/12	Draft text that informs the network about the use of data under the OGL at the point of data submission in order to collate permissions, and circulate to JNCC for review	WWT
AP24/13	Provide a summary of the current data validation process to JNCC	WWT
AP24/14	Talk to third party data providers to encourage them to agree to the OGL	WWT
AP24/15	Update the terms & conditions for provision and use of GSMP data, which are currently available on WWT's Waterbird Monitoring website (on sign off of data access agreement).	WWT
AP24/16	Update the data request process currently shown on WWT's Waterbird Monitoring website, to take into consideration the new data access policy (on sign off of data access agreement).	WWT
AP24/17	Review the GSMP population estimates method paper: latest version is thought to be with JNCC. WWT to remind JNCC in early 2019.	JNCC/WWT
AP24/18	WWT to send a copy of the IGC surveillance review to the SG. All to review to assess suitability for public dissemination.	WWT/JNCC/ SNH
AP24/19	JNCC to send WWT a revised copy of the GSMP MOA with any necessary changes to content relating to data protection. WWT to review and return any comments to JNCC.	JNCC/WWT