



## 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group

30. November – 1. December 2010, Helsinki, Finland

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### - Summary of Implementation of the International Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose –

Based on national reports received from the range states by 28<sup>th</sup> November 2010

#### INTRODUCTION

Working Group members belonging to the 22 range states as defined in the International Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the Lesser White-fronted Goose will be requested to regularly submit national reports to the Working Group on the implementation of the SSAP and the status of the LWfG, according to a procedure and format to be decided on at the first Working Group Meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November and the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2010 in Helsinki. The submission of national reports was already requested in the run-up to the first meeting, but their submission was as not yet mandatory.

The reports will in future be used as a means to obtain current information on the status of the species and to assess the progress in implementation of conservation measures in each range state. The reports should also allow the identification of knowledge gaps and needs for action and will serve as the basis for updates of the International SSAP.

In the following the AEWA Secretariat has attempted to summarize the information provided by those range states that submitted national reports and to use this summary to draw some conclusions and identify broad priorities for the implementation of the SSAP. Bearing in mind that not many reports were received, it should be pointed out that this paper does not provide an in-depth analysis nor does it cover the entire array of implementation in every range state.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

LWfG range states that have provided national reports as of 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2010 (9 of 22; ca. 40% of due reports). Reports were submitted by Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iran, Kazakhstan, Norway, Syria, Sweden and Ukraine.

#### - SPECIES STATUS UPDATE

According to the information received the status of the species was ranked as stable (Estonia, Syria) or declining (Finland, Norway, Iran). Two range states ranked the status of the Western main population as increasing (Kazakhstan, Ukraine). The separate Swedish population was also ranked by Sweden as increasing.

In many range states, however, there seems to be a lack of information concerning the exact numbers of LWfG occurring in the country – particularly during migration and wintering. This lack in knowledge makes estimates of change in status difficult.

Conclusion: More information is needed particularly on the Western main population in order to be able to

monitor the status of the species more accurately.

#### - UPDATE ON CRITICAL SITES

The national reports showed that there are still a number of countries where critical sites for the LWfG are not being sufficiently protected (Finland, Syria, Kazakhstan, Iran, Ukraine). Several range states also noted that monitoring and satellite tracking have revealed further sites critical for the LWfG (Norway, Kazakhstan, Iran, Ukraine).

Estonia, Hungary and Sweden reported that all identified critical sites for the LWfG are protected.

Conclusion: Further implementation efforts are needed in order to assure the efficient protection of the most critical sites for the species. There still seem to be gaps in knowledge, meaning that all critical sites for the LWfG have not yet been identified.

#### - UPDATE ON PRESSURES/THREATS AND RESPONSES

Based on the answers given, hunting can generally be said to be a low threat to the species in the breeding areas (Sweden, Norway, Finland). The threat from hunting along the rest of the flyway was, however, marked as high (Ukraine, Kazakhstan) or at least medium (Iran, Syria). Exceptionally, the threat from hunting in Estonia and Hungary was also marked as low.

Poisoning was either rated as no threat, not applicable or as there being no information by all range states.

Human disturbance was mostly rated as medium (Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Syria, Kazakhstan, Norway) or low (Iran, Hungary) with measures being implemented to reduce this disturbance in 4 range states (Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Norway). In Ukraine human disturbance was ranked as high.

Predation appears to be a threat specific to the breeding areas (Finland, Norway, Sweden) and was not considered a threat elsewhere. Appropriate measures are being implemented to reduce the threat of predation.

Habitat loss/degradation was ranked as a medium to high threat in 5 range states (Estonia, Syria, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Iran). Finland, Norway, Sweden and Hungary estimated the threat from habitat loss as low or no threat.

Conclusion: Hunting can still be seen as the major threat to the species and warrants urgent action throughout the range of the species (with exception of Hungary and the breeding areas). Human disturbance and habitat loss/degradation pose medium to high threats and need to be addressed through appropriate conservation activities in many of the range states.

Measures are being implemented in the breeding areas in order to address the threats from predation and human disturbance and they need to be carried on in order to ensure optimal conditions.

#### - UPDATE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION AND ACTIVITIES

The LWfG is legally protected in all the range states, but national hunting legislation was in some range states not seen as providing adequate protection of the species (Ukraine, Hungary). Several range states also reported that sufficient human and/or financial resources have not been allocated to the enforcement of this legislation in practice (Syria<sup>1</sup>, Hungary, Ukraine, Iran).

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<sup>1</sup> Situation in Syria requires clarification.

Of the range states that submitted reports 4 (Estonia, Finland, Norway, Sweden) have national action plans which are in place and are being implemented, 1 (Ukraine) has a national action plan which is not – at present – being implemented, 1 (Kazakhstan) is in the process of developing a national action plan and 3 (Hungary, Iran, Syria) do not have national action plans. Four range states reported having national working groups for the species in place (Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Norway).

Seven range states have monitoring schemes in place specifically for LWfG (Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Syria<sup>2</sup>, Sweden, Norway, Kazakhstan). Iran and Ukraine reported having partial schemes in place.

Conclusion: Further efforts are needed to enforce existing national legislation in most of the range states. This can best be done through the implementation of National Single Species Action Plans and the establishment of National Working Groups involving all relevant national stakeholders.

Monitoring does take place in most range states, but there is clearly a need for yearly, systematic monitoring specifically of LWfG. This should be coordinated between the range states in order to obtain an accurate estimate of population size, trends, movements and distribution.

#### - UPDATE ON FUNDING

National funding for LWfG conservation measures is available within the Scandinavian range states (Finland, Norway, Sweden) and in Estonia. National mechanisms for nature conservation funding do exist in some of the other range states, but were described as extremely difficult to access for the implementation of LWfG conservation measures (Kazakhstan, Ukraine). Other range states have no existing national funding mechanisms at present through which national LWfG conservation measures could be funded (Hungary, Iran, Syria).

Conclusion: Lack of national funding is clearly a key issue hampering the implementation of conservation activities for the LWfG in most range states and this issue needs to be addressed in most of the range states.

#### - UPDATE ON KEY KNOWLEDGE

Several range states identified key knowledge gaps which still exist regarding the LWfG. A clear difference in available knowledge vs. knowledge gaps can be seen throughout the reports between the range states situated along the European flyway (mainly of the Fennoscandian population) - where more research and projects have been conducted also on flyway level - and the range states along the so-called Eastern flyway (Western main population), particularly concerning the wintering areas of the LWfG.

Conclusion: There is a need to review the key knowledge gaps defined in the SSAP and to perhaps make a new prioritization.

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<sup>2</sup> Situation in Syria requires further clarification.