



1st Meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group

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

- Knowledge Gaps, Update -

INTRODUCTION

One of the main challenges for the successful implementation of appropriate conservation measures for the Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG) is the lack of key knowledge of crucial relevance for the protection of the species. This includes knowledge concerning key sites, distribution, hunting pressure etc.

Consecutive projects along the European flyway of the Fennoscandian population have in the last years subsequently enhanced the knowledge base for the population, providing the basis for a more effective implementation of conservation measures in the range states along this flyway. In contrast, many fundamental knowledge gaps concerning the Western main population still exist.

Below both the knowledge gaps identified in the SSAP and additional knowledge gaps highlighted by range states in their national reports are listed.

KNOWLEDGE GAPS AS SPECIFIED BY THE SSAP

The key areas where current information is inadequate as listed in the SSAP:

- Locations of key staging and wintering sites for the Western main population.
- Current status of the species in several countries, including Azerbaijan, Belarus, Iran, Iraq, Lithuania, Poland, Russia (Ob Valley and Dagestan), Syria, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
- Extent of hunting/poaching at different staging/wintering areas.
- Extent of effectiveness of protected area management at critical sites for the LWfG.
- Extent and effectiveness of enforcement of hunting regulations at key sites.
- Extent of threat to species from poisoning.
- Location of breeding sites of remaining wild Fennoscandian population.
- Location of breeding grounds of a large part of the Western main population.
- Degree of exchange between populations.
- Population viability analysis for the Swedish and Norwegian populations.
- Impacts of land/habitat management and on LWfG and identification of desirable management practices.

ADDITIONAL KNOWLEDGE GAPS AS IDENTIFIED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTS

Finland:

- Updated population viability analysis (PVA) for the Fennoscandian LWfG population.
- Investigate the effect of the predation and disturbance by White-tailed Eagle (and other birds of prey).
- Study the effect of the population cycles of rodents, predation pressure by the red fox, overgrazing by reindeer, and the weather conditions on the breeding success of LWfG.

Hungary:

- More knowledge is needed on feeding habits of LWfG.

- Iran:* - Thorough monitoring is needed in order to assess the status of the population wintering in Iran.
- Kazakhstan:* - Identification of the importance of wetland habitats in northern Kazakhstan for the species (North Kazakhstan and Pavlodar oblast) as well as up to date data on the known LWfG stop-over sites in western Kazakhstan (Ural river basin).
- In Kostanay more extensive monitoring is needed in order to correctly assess the population size and age structure within the population.
- In addition concrete data on hunting pressure on LWfG and other species is needed.
- Sweden:* - Independent scientific review of LWfG flyways in Europe.
- Evaluation of the efficiency of different ways of releasing captive bred LWfG into the wild.

DISCUSSION

The Working Group is invited to consider if the gaps in knowledge to be addressed listed in the SSAP are still relevant and if yes, which should be prioritized and addressed urgently.