

**International Single Species Action Plan for the Western Palearctic Population
of the LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE, *Anser erythropus***

**SUMMARY of Comments from SWEDEN on Version 3.0. - Third and Final Draft,
May 2008**

Requested by the AEWA Secretariat: 9 July 2008
Reception date: 17 July 2008 (email, ref. dnr126-5153-08)

In summary and apart from editorial comments in the files sent on June 28, the Swedish EPA would like to highlight the following:

1. The SSAP and Annexes drafts of 15 May 2008 lack much of the provided information and therefore contain text sections that are erroneous, incomplete or not up to date. Accordingly, we corrected, updated and moderated the texts (see the email attachments of June 28).

2. Reliable observations and unpublished records of LWfG indicate that it was not regionally extinct in northern Sweden nor in the Tjålmejaure area, where and when releases of captive-bred birds commenced in 1981. The IUCN Guidelines for Re-introductions make a clear distinction between re-introduction and population re-enforcement/ supplementation. The SSAP draft and Annexes label the population in the Swedish release area as "re-introduced" throughout all text, when it is "re-enforced" or "supplemented" according to the IUCN terminology. Thus, we have revised this and texts in the SSAP and its Annexes describing observations and the population in Sweden. We also added that seven Swedish wild-caught LWfG were among the founders of the captive-breeding colony used until 1999. Three of the revised paragraphs, on pp. 11 and 22 of the SSAP and on page XV of the Annexes that Peter sent June 28, have a common sentence which needs further updating (here: blue): "In 1979 an adult LWfG with four young, in 1981 six flying adults and a pair with five young, and in June 1982 ten LWfG without rings were observed nearby the Lapland release area, indicating that a small natural population was present there (Å Andersson, unpubl. data)." .

3. Given that the Swedish LWfG population is supplemented/re-enforced and not re-introduced, we think it should be viewed as a local or regional subpopulation of the Fennoscandian population. Thus, at the global level there are three subpopulations of LWfG.

4. The Swedish EPA emphasizes that assessments of the efficiency of the conservation measures should be done in consultation or co-operation with independent conservation scientists (Implementation, page 7 and 56).

5. The Committee for LWfG captive breeding, reintroduction and supplementation in Fennoscandia is an advisory committee and according to the revised ToR and RoP it reviews and gives advice and recommendations. The text should be updated in accordance with the revised ToR and RoP of the Committee. This should be updated throughout the document when reference is given to this committee.

6. Regarding illegal hunting:

(a) It is important that the SSAP describes more clearly how the illegal hunting should be targeted and reduced in practice.

(b) On p.19 of the SSAP it is important to include updated info on a satellite-tagged LWfG that was illegally shot in the Evros delta (see www.piskulka.net).

7. Based on the hypothesis that adult survival has greater effect than sub-adult/juvenile survival on population growth rate the SSAP recommends (item 6 of Result 1 on page 49 and in Table 8) that "As far as possible, redirect hunting from adults to juveniles in areas where Greater White-fronts and Lesser White-fronts occur together away from key sites". On page 16-17, it is indicated that "juvenile"="immature". The Swedish EPA do not support this recommendation for two reasons:

(a) Most LWfG start breeding as 3-yr-olds. Demographic whole-model sensitivity and elasticity analyses of Norwegian LWfG survival data suggest that yearly survival of 0-2 yr-olds ("subadults") together has greater effect on population growth rate than has that of adults, 3 yr-old and older. Increasing the former with 0.03 makes lambda change from 0.993 to 1.03 while a similar increase in the latter makes lambda change from 0.993 to 1.01.

(b) In the field, especially in bad light, it's problematic to separate between adults and juveniles. This induces both a practical and a compliance problem.

8. The information regarding the Swedish IBAs in Annex 3a needed to be updated and corrected.

9. Reference and Annex 8j dealing with the IUCN Guidelines for re-introductions: (a) Is the publication year 1995 or 1998? (b) the Annex should be 8k and text on "re-enforcement/supplementation" needs to be included. See the suggested text below* with added/edited text in blue.

(k) IUCN Guidelines for Reintroduction

These *Guidelines*, published in 1995 by the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), have no legal status but are generally regarded as the most authoritative international guidance available concerning species reintroductions and population supplementation in general. As a component on actions being taken in response to a complex international conservation challenge, Lesser White-fronted Goose reintroductions and population supplementation should be compatible with IUCN/SSC guidance.

The *Guidelines* define "re-introduction" as "an attempt to establish a species(2) in an area which was once part of its historical range, but from which it has been extirpated or become extinct (3) ("Re-establishment" is a synonym, but implies that the re-introduction has been successful)" and "re-inforcement" or "supplementation" as "addition of individuals to an existing population of conspecifics." They also state the aims and objectives of reintroduction as follows:

"The principle aim of any re-introduction should be to establish a viable, free-ranging population in the wild, of a species, subspecies or race, which has become globally or locally extinct, or extirpated, in the wild. It should be re-introduced within the species' former natural habitat and range and should require minimal long-term management.

The objectives of a re-introduction may include: to enhance the long-term survival of a species; to re-establish a keystone species (in the ecological or cultural sense) in an ecosystem; to maintain and/or restore natural biodiversity; to provide long-term economic benefits to the local and/or national economy; to promote conservation awareness; or a combination of these."

The guidelines also state that "Site should be within the historic range of the species. For an initial re-inforcement there should be few remnant wild individuals. For a re-introduction, there should be no remnant population to prevent disease spread, social disruption and introduction of alien genes. In some circumstances, a re-introduction or re-inforcement may have to be made into an area which is fenced or otherwise delimited, but it should be within the species' former natural habitat and range."

Guidance is provided on Pre-project Activities (biological, socio-economic and legal); Planning, Preparation and Release Stages; and Post-release Activities.

Letter from SWEDEN on Version 3.0. - Third and Final Draft, May 2008

Reception date: 28 June 2008 (email)

Sweden considers it of vital importance that the single species action plan for this species will be finalised and adopted, and has also economically supported the finalization of the draft.

However, we find that the draft SSAP and annexes generally needs to be updated in relation to what has happened during recent years and therefore we have rather extensive and detailed comments on the documents (please find enclosed).

If our comments are well received and included into the SSAP we would be happy to support it.