



AEWA LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP



Doc: LWfG IWG Inf. 3.9
Date: 18.3.2016

3rd Meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group

12-14 April - Trondheim, Norway

The definition of species populations under AEWA

(Drafted and approved by the AEWA Technical Committee at its 13th Meeting – 14.-17. March 2016)

Introduction

Annex 2 of the Agreement lists the species the agreement applies to. It has also been established that only migratory populations of species should be listed in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan.

Document MOP3.12 reviews the practice and principles of defining waterbird populations and concludes:

"A waterbird biogeographical population is a population of a species or a sub-species that is either geographically discrete from other populations at all times of the year, or at some times of the year only, or is a specified part of a continuous distribution so defined for the purposes of conservation management".

Key elements of this definition are that biogeographical populations are to be defined based on taxonomy (i.e. species, subspecies) and dispersion patterns (discrete throughout the year, some time of the year, or it is a specified part of a continuous distribution).

However, the guidelines do not address how to treat populations of AEWA species:

- 1) isolated as a consequence of population decline (i.e. a formerly continuous distribution becoming fragmented leading to discrete populations);
- 2) translocated completely within the native range;
- 3) newly established or for which migration routes have been modified, including the creation of new breeding and/or non-breeding/wintering ranges as a result of translocation;
- 4) newly established as a result of range expansion or colonisation;
- 5) newly established as a result of unintended introductions (e.g. due to escaped birds);
- 6) where two formerly separate/fragmented populations have merged into a continuous population.

Proposed treatment

Regarding populations under point 1) above, the definition outlined in document MOP3.12 can be applied to fragmented populations as appropriate.

Regarding populations under point 2), the original - or in the absence of a former AEWA listing, the historical - population definition would apply.



The 3rd Meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group is being hosted by the Norwegian Environment Agency with additional funding provided by the EU LIFE+ project "Safeguarding the Lesser White-fronted Goose along its European Flyway" [LIFE10 NAT/GR/000638].

Regarding populations falling under point 3), it follows from AEWA's conservation objectives that these populations should be listed on Table 1 if their reintroduction was carried out according to the principles of the AEWA translocation guidelines. Further, it follows from the definition of biogeographic populations in document MOP3.12, that populations which are discrete throughout the year or part of the year should be treated as separate populations.

For populations under point 4) the issue to be considered is whether the new population is an extension of an existing population - in which case it should be considered as part of the original population - or whether it is a distinct one – in which case it could be considered as a separate population following the definition outlined in document MOP3.12.

Regarding populations under point 5) - without prejudice to those falling under point 3) - and following from the provisions of Article III.g)¹ of the Agreement Text , non-native species are not subject to the conservation regime of AEWA.

For populations under point 6), these previously separate populations can be considered as one population, applying the definition outlined in document MOP3.12.

¹ Article III.g) requires that Parties shall *"prohibit the deliberate introduction of non-native waterbird species into the environment and take all appropriate measures to prevent the unintentional release of such species if this introduction or release would prejudice the conservation status of wild flora and fauna; when non-native waterbird species have already been introduced, the Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent these species from becoming a potential threat to indigenous species"*.