

DRAFT

Minutes of the first meeting of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose Working Group
National Environmental Research Institute, 10 October 2001, Roskilde, Denmark.

Participants:

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| Russia: | Eugeny Syroechkovsky, Russian Academy of Science |
| Denmark: | Jesper Madsen, National Environmental Research Institute (chair/minutes) |
| Germany: | Martin Stock, Landesamt den Nationalpark Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer |
| The Netherlands: | Bart Ebbinge, Alterra |
| United Kingdom: | Richard Saunders, English Nature |
| France: | Vincent Schricke, Ministry of Environment |
| FACE: | John Harradine, British Association for Shooting and Conservation |
| AEWA Secretariat: | Bert Lenten |

1. Opening

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the participants to NERI, appreciating the positive feed-back and representation from all the range states of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose as well as from FACE and the AEWA Secretariat to the invitation to participate in this first meeting of the Working Group under the Flyway Management Plan for the Dark-bellied Brent Goose

2. Introduction on the Management Plan for the Dark-bellied Brent Goose

The Secretary of AEWA introduced the history of the Flyway Management Plan for the Dark-bellied Brent Goose, originally prepared on the initiative by the Dutch Government, and now handed over to the AEWA for implementation. The Plan was presented at the Meeting of the Parties of AEWA in Cape Town, November 1999 but was not adopted at that time. At the first meeting of the Technical Committee of AEWA in Bonn, November 2000, it was decided to start the implementation process by establishing the Dark-bellied Brent Goose working group and subsequently seek adoption of the Plan. The AEWA Secretariat contacted the range states (here defined as countries used by Dark-bellied Brent Geese during the annual cycle, excluding fly-over countries) to get their approval to proceed prior to adoption of the Plan and asked for a national representative for the Working Group. Due to the positive feed-back from the countries, it was decided to hold the first meeting of the Working Group. France and Russia are not contracting parties to AEWA. Nevertheless, France expressed its interest to participate in the Working Group. The Russian representative has the status of expert in the Working Group.

The AEWA Secretariat will seek adoption of the Plan before the next Meeting of Parties which will be in October 2002. The Secretariat and the Working Group agreed that the implementation of the model is important for several reasons:

- the Plan is in an advanced stage, having been negotiated at two previous workshops; drafts have been circulated to range states; a population model is now being prepared (see below) which may give future improved guidance of the process.
- the Plan is the first AEWA Single Species Action Plan and will act as an important model for subsequent plans
- there are signs of recent population declines (see below) which are not yet of major concern but the population development should be monitored carefully.

The Secretariat informed the meeting that one of the countries raised the point that the Secretariat should give priority to species with an unfavourable conservation status. Taking into account that the Dark-bellied Brent Goose has a favourable conservation status the Secretariat could not commit itself at this stage to facilitate the work of the working group. The working group unanimously endorsed the involvement of the Agreement Secretariat. Although perhaps the species is not a priority species currently the population is decreasing, the plan is in an advanced stage, lessons learned regarding the development of the Management Plan could be used for future Action Plans, etc, etc, which justifies the involvement of the Agreement Secretariat.

3. Review and adoption of the Terms of Reference for the Working Group

Draft TOR were prepared by the AEWA Secretariat in collaboration with the Chair and had been circulated to the participants in advance of the meeting. The draft TOR were discussed and agreed with some amendments. The AEWA Secretariat will make the necessary corrections and will circulate the revised version for approval by the members of the Working Group.

It was agreed to make a Dark-bellied Brent Goose home page under the AEWA web site from where minutes, the TOR, reports etc by the Working Group will be made available.

It was agreed to invite BirdLife International to participate in the Working Group.

4. Report on the development of the population model and population status

A year-round population model for the Dark-bellied Brent Goose is currently developed under the 5th EU Framework programme Coast Bird Diversity (2001-2004). The model is a behaviour and individual-based and is developed to predict population impacts of any anthropogenic pressure, e.g. from habitat changes or hunting. A first prototype will be ready early 2003. JM and BE participate in the programme. JM will ask the coordinator of the programme, Prof. John Goss-Custard, to let the AEWA Secretariat become a member of the User Steering Group which is linked to the programme.

BE gave a short summary of the recent population development. The breeding success in the population has decreased, even in peak years. Consequently, the population has decreased in recent years, to a current level of approximately 200,000 (in 1998). BE presented results suggesting that density-dependent processes, probably operating at the breeding grounds, now affect productivity.

5. National reports on the implementation of the Management Plan

Each of the national representatives gave a brief summary of actions taken which will affect the status of the Dark-bellied Brent Geese in the countries. A more standardized report for each country will be produced in 2002.

6. Development of a work programme for the Working Group for 2001-2002

Adoption process:

At the forthcoming meeting of the Technical Committee of AEWA (5-7 November) the Chair will report on the activities and work programme of the Working Group.

The AEWA Secretariat will send out the Draft Management Plan to the range states shortly after.

In case, members of the Working Group have any comments to the 3rd version of the Plan, comments should be sent to the AEWA Secretariat no later than 15 November.

The AEWA Secretariat will ask range states to reply by early March 2002. A revised Plan will then be sent to Range States for adoption. It is hoped that adoption will happen in the first half of 2002, or at least before MOP2 in October 2002.

Annual report for 2002:

The deadline for the annual report will be 1 June 2002. This will be a short interim report. JM will prepare a framework for the national report which will be circulated to the members of the Working Group for comments.

Population monitoring:

At the moment, the results of the international population counts and productivity estimates are lacking 2-3 years behind. For the process of effective monitoring in relationship to the Management Plan procedure it is highly desirable to minimise the gap to not more than one year.

Work Group members are urged to contact the national coordinators of the goose counts to report the national counts swiftly to the database of the Wetlands International Goose database. The mid January count is of highest priority.

Awareness campaign:

The AEWA Secretariat has funding to produce a poster presenting the Management Plan. It was agreed to produce a poster with an English and Russian text. Working Group members are asked to provide good pictures. The AEWA Secretariat will circulate a draft for comments.

A flyway map will be presented on the AEWA web site.

7. Arrangements for the Second session of the Meeting of the Parties

The next MOP will take place in Bonn during 26-28 October 2002. Hopefully an adopted Management Plan can be presented.

8. Date and venue for the next meeting of the Working Group

A decision was not made. Depending on the adoption, a meeting will be scheduled for second half of 2002.

9. Any other business

The AEWA Secretariat has limited financial resources to support the work of the Working Group. The current meeting in particular the travel and subsistence costs of the funded delegates was supported by the Netherlands. Hopefully in the nearby future the Secretariat will receive again voluntary contributions to support the meetings of the group.