



AEWA BLACK-TAILED GODWIT
INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP



**3rd Regional Meeting of the NW-European Breeding Range States under the AEWA
Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group**

Thursday 2 September 2021 (*online via Zoom*)

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ROLLING WORKPLAN 2021-2023

Introduction

The AEWA Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group is charged with coordinating and facilitating the implementation of the AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Black-tailed Godwit.

In order to increase the implementation of conservation action for the species within the remit of the North-Western European breeding range states, an inter-sessional workplan was developed and last revised during the 2nd regional Working Group Meeting in 2016 in The Hague, the Netherlands.

It should be noted that the purpose of the workplan is specifically to facilitate the timely planning of and fundraising for internationally coordinated activities prioritized by the Working Group. The work plan is not necessarily meant to cover all nationally relevant activities and obligations to be implemented by countries as foreseen in the Action Plan, but rather to highlight those urgent actions in need of international cooperation and/or support to ensure timely implementation.

A revised draft workplan for the next inter-sessional period (2021-2023) is attached below outlining activities previously proposed by range states, stakeholders and/or within various processes. Further input from the Working Group is still required.



The 3rd Regional Meeting of the NW-European breeding range states under the AEWA Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group is being organized remotely by Sovon Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology and the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

Annex I –Rolling work plan for the AEWA Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group 2021-2023 (North-Western European breeding range states)

Project/activity	Timeframe	Lead	Detailed actions	Budget	Comments
1. Overarching activities – HIGH/ESSENTIAL					
Explore possibilities for a joint EU LIFE project in the NL/DE/BE etc. to ensure the implementation of the identified crucial conservation measures for the BtG in the North-Western European Breeding Range States (such a project could incorporate many of the activities outlined in the work plan below).	2022-2023	BtG Coordinator	Identify a lead organization to apply for the project; Draft project concept/structure and possible partners, look for co-funding opportunities etc.	Funding may be needed to pay for someone to draft the actual application (2 months' full time?) – this is quite work intensive and not sure what capacity is available from the Coordinator or within the countries. Overall funding need depends on the actions included and the co-funding necessary.	AEWA Secretariat can provide letter of support for project application, which is usually very helpful. Recommendation to prepare a project proposal for September 2022. This would provide a boost to implementing the necessary conservation measures across the NW breeding range. Could also be used to engage the NL Provinces.
Explore the possibility to create coalitions nationally as well as potentially internationally between various stakeholders to promote the protection of sites, grasslands, BtG habitats on arable land etc. etc.	2021-2023	BtG Coordinator in close cooperation with regional gov. reps and experts	Involve stakeholders in present conservation schemes and also for the future above mentioned life project.		
Discuss whether a regional (i.e. NW-European) population target for the Black-tailed Godwit should be agreed and if yes, determine what it should be	2022	BtG Coordinator and the regional sub-set of the IWG	Starting point could be: what would it take for the BtG to be considered as being in 'favourable conservation status' and to be moved to the Least Concern category on the IUCN Red List?		In practice this will be a flyway target for the birds breeding in the NW-European Range States, so consultations with other countries along this flyway will also be necessary

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	2022	Regional governments in NW-Europe led by IWG members	In addition to the possible overall target for the European region, explore possibilities to set national/regional population targets, where possible		Given the different approaches taken to setting population targets in the various countries, this activity will obviously not be applicable everywhere.
Explore the possibility for some form of Common Monitoring Scheme for the BtG (at least within the NW European breeding range states – if there is a common database for reporting observations, this could later perhaps be extended to other parts of the flyway.)	2022	BtG Coordinator	Develop a structure for the scheme in close consultation with the IWG experts and other research institutes (goal is not to double work, but to bring it together under one umbrella). Discuss, in particular, what information would be useful to collect from the various stakeholders (i.e. how can we involve them?).	Possibly – depending on the availability for example of an existing database etc.	Monitoring should lead to information about trends, reproduction (for instance simple BTS-counts) in combination with the applied management. It is important that the used basic monitoring method is the same in all countries.
			Establish scheme following agreed structure		
			Develop overall monitoring guidance for BtGs and share results within the IWG		
			Promote the scheme amongst the stakeholders, i.e. farmers, hunters, site managers etc. and encourage them to participate		
2. ISSAP activity: Prevent further habitat loss in key breeding areas - HIGH					
Prohibit conversion of permanent grasslands in key sites (see activities under point 3 below)	-	-	-	-	-
3. ISSAP activity: Prevent loss and degradation of permanent grasslands - ESSENTIAL					
Establish an agreed ecological definition of permanent grasslands – i.e. what constitutes	Dec 2016	BE	Geert: circulate the BE definition/framework of historic	None	BE model could be used as guidance

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a good permanent/historic grassland in the NL and in DE.			grasslands used within the BE Natura site designation to IWG members		for ecological determination of 'permanent grasslands' in other RSs
	2022	National IWG experts in consultation with gov. reps.	Develop definitions of permanent grasslands reflecting the respective natural conditions.	Depending on amount of work needed, could possibly be done in-house?	
	2022	Coordinated by IWG gov. reps and/or experts	Consultation with relevant government and other stakeholders – adoption of ecological definition	None	
Continue monitoring the overall percentage of permanent grasslands to ensure that no further permanent grasslands (as per the definition above) are lost.	ongoing	Coordinated by IWG gov. reps and/or experts		Is this assessment of the overall land use already being undertaken by the regional authorities?	
Should permanent grassland habitat have been lost, ensure the provision of replacement habitat.	As necessary; ongoing in the UK			Yes	
Monitor, in addition, the quality of the remaining permanent grasslands important for Black-tailed Godwits to ensure that their quality is not declining (as per the ecological definition of permanent grasslands above).	Starting in 2022, follow-up surveys could be conducted every 3 years for example	BtG Coordinator to approach research institute		Funding would probably be needed for this survey work	
Prohibit conversion of permanent grasslands (which may occur as part of the national implementation of the EU CAP 5% grassland target) to benefit all grassland breeding birds, by influencing local and regional decision-makers, to make the <5% reduction target of the CAP apply to all (relevant) grassland regions, not only on a national scale.	2021-2023	Coordinated by IWG gov. reps and/or experts	Establish which are the permanent grasslands which are most suitable to fill the 5% quota from a BtG/grassland wader perspective in DE and NL and prepare a proposal for their designation.	I suppose this is already known, so no budget necessary?	To fit with overall 5% target, sites are not designated where they would be most beneficial for BtGs and other grassland breeding birds
			Consultation with relevant government reps.		

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Raise the awareness of national policy makers in order to influence the EU CAP Pillar I and Pillar II funding distribution, so that more funding is made available for the conservation of BtG and other meadowbirds (if possible, in coalition with local stakeholders, i.e. farmers).	2018-2019	Nat. gov. reps and/or national experts	Present concept to political decision-makers		
Strengthen the link between landscape conservation and the conservation of permanent grasslands (i.e. how to 'sell' the conservation of permanent grasslands to a wider audience).	2022-2023	BtG Coordinator together with gov. reps. and national experts	Produce overview of ongoing landscape conservation activities in each Country/Province/Bundesland near/adjacent to permanent grasslands important for the BtG and assess possibilities for collaboration. This could be done by arranging a low-cost meeting with gov. reps dealing with landscape conservation. The outcome of the overview and the consultations should lead to concrete recommendations for strengthening the link between the two conservation areas.	Possibly none, if it can be done in the framework of the government work with people self-funding national travel. Could also be a nice project for a few high quality university-level interns?	Landscape conservation has strong public support and linking permanent grasslands to be seen as part of the wider landscape approach could engage the public and stakeholders – in particular politicians.
	2023	Regional BTG gov. reps in collaboration with NGOs + landscape conservation stakeholders	Raise general public awareness on local/regional level about landscape conservation and the conservation of permanent grasslands (and the species that need them), as well as about the work undertaken in the review above.	Yes Depending on the conclusions and possibilities for cooperation, this topic could potentially make for some very nice awareness-raising materials etc.	Should be carried out in all the important regions where BtG grasslands and landscape conservation occurs.
	2023	Regional governments in NW-Europe led by IWG members	Start implementing the recommendations, as feasible, possibly with the aim to establish a long-term cooperation with landscape conservation management policy (at least at a regional/local level), depending of course on the outcome of the	Unknown, depends on the recommendations	

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			overview, analysis and recommendations (see above).		
Raise awareness amongst the Dutch Water Boards of the importance of managing the water levels in grasslands to ensure the best possible conditions for BtGs.	2022	NL Provinces in cooperation with NL experts	Organise a workshop with representatives of water boards to increase awareness and knowledge	Probably limited funding needed	Regional Water Boards in the Netherlands decide on what ground water levels are maintained in their region and thus are very important in conservation of BtG – Consider inviting representative from Water Board as observer to the IWG
4. ISSAP activity: Improvement the management of protected areas - HIGH/ESSENTIAL					
Organize training/awareness-raising workshops for the managers of protected areas important for the BtG.	2021-2023	BirdLife NL, NABU, NGOs in cooperation with the regional governments and the management authorities of the protected areas		Yes	NOTE: Need to define protected areas in this context. Are Dutch 'meadow bird core areas' with possibilities for uptake of AES also considered as protected areas? Goal: try to train managers at all key protected sites for the BtG within the next 3 years – including providing them with information materials with which they can further educate new staff

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Exchange of knowledge amongst managers and best practice between countries (could be follow-up to the activity above).	2021-2023	BirdLife NL, NABU NGOs in cooperation with the regional governments and the management authorities of the protected areas		Yes	
Awareness-raising on political level to improve SPA protection (particularly in Lower Saxony)	2021-2023	BtG Coordinator in cooperation with NABU, local reg. gov., BMU, BirdLife Europe, AEWA, EC etc.?	Develop concept with suggestions for improvements in the management of designated SPAs - including a prioritization of the SPAs according to conservation value.	Maybe some travel funds for meetings within the region?	AEWA Secretariat can provide letters of support if needed
5. ISSAP activity: Reduce mortality from predators - HIGH					
Discourage predators by improving openness, increasing water levels and creating wet features in key breeding sites	2017-	Regional governments/provinces	Include 'increasing openness and water levels' in environmental plans	Yes	Provinces in NL could critically review environmental plans of collectives whether they include landscape scale measures such as openness and ground water levels and support such measures financially
6. ISSAP activity: Support biodiversity-sensitive management of important breeding habitats through AES in order to promote chick survival - ESSENTIAL/HIGH (see link to activity 2: prevent further habitat loss in key breeding areas)					
Training of "AES Coordinators" to improve planning and implementation of BtG measures in NL farming cooperatives	2021-2023	NL Provinces in cooperation with NL BtG experts			There could maybe be 1-2 leading Provinces promoting this approach
Explore possibilities to organize a best-practice exchange for farmers between countries (could be linked to other EU funding opportunities/Interreg)	2022	BtG coordinator			
Ensure the appropriate monitoring of implemented activities (in NL this should be	ongoing	Regional gov. reps in cooperation with			

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linked into the training of the coordinators of the cooperatives)		national BtG experts			
7. ISSAP activity: Maintaining/re-introducing grassland areas with optimal groundwater level to secure food availability – HIGH/ESSENTIAL					
Raise awareness of NL Water Boards as well as farmers using best practice examples (see permanent grasslands activity above as well)	2022				
Combine BTG conservation measures with eco-system services	2021-2023				
Ensure habitat quality (composition of the vegetation etc.)	2021-2023				
8. ISSAP RESULT: Improve knowledge and close key knowledge gaps					
Key habitats and threats in Eastern Europe, especially Poland	2022				
How to best reduce predation in protected/key sites	2021-2023				
How to make effective management economically sustainable for farmers	2021-2023				

