

AEWA BLACK-TAILED GODWIT INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP



Rolling Work Plan of the Breeding Range States 2023-2025

Date: 13.09.2023

ROLLING WORK PLAN 2023-2025

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 European breeding range states, an inter-sessional work plan was developed during the 2nd regional Working Group Meeting in 2016 in The Hague, the Netherlands and last revised during the Working Group Meeting in 2022 in Papenburg, Germany.

It should be noted that the <u>purpose of the work plan is specifically to facilitate the timely planning of and fundraising for internationally coordinated activities prioritized by the Working Group.</u> 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.

The rolling work plan for the period 2023-2025 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.

As this is a rolling work plan, suggestions for amendments are welcome at any point in time and new revisions will be reviewed at each meeting of the Range States.

Content:

- Annex I Draft rolling work plan for the AEWA BtG IWG 2023-2025 (general activities)
- Annex II Draft rolling work plan for the AEWA BtG IWG 2023-2025 (NW-European breeding range states specific)
- Annex III Draft rolling work plan for the AEWA BtG IWG 2023-2025 (E-European breeding range states specific)



Annex I – Draft rolling work plan for the AEWA Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group 2023-2025 (general activities)

Project/activity	Timeframe	Lead	Detailed actions	Budget	Comments
1. Overarching activities – HIGH/ESSEN	TIAL				
Explore the possibility to cCreate coalitions nationally as well as potentially internationally between various stakeholders to promote the protection of sites, grasslands, BtG habitats on arable land etc. etc. (nationally as well as	2023-2024	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. Identify which countries could benefit from new coalitions.	In kind	
potentially internationally)	2024-2025	Government representatives of identified countries	Create coalitions to involve stakeholders in conservation schemes and projects	In kind	
Stimulate collaboration between Breeding Range States in NW-Europe and E-Europe.	2023-2024	Gov. reps and national experts in close cooperation with BtG Coordinator	Explore possibilities for a joint EU LIFE project 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 cofunding necessary.	AEWA Secretariat can provide letter of support for project application, which is usually very helpful.
	2023-2025	BtG Coordinator, Univ. of Groningen in close cooperation withand national experts	Specifically find mechanism and funding for hiring PhD students in E-European Range States.	<u>In kind</u>	

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Explore possibilities for Organize stronger cooperation with the AEWA IWG for the Eurasian Curlew for more effective coordination and management of both IWGs.	2022-2023	BtG Coordinator together with EC Coordinator	Decide on extent of cooperation, e.g. organising joint IWG meetings and topical meetings on shared issues, set up shared newsletter.	<u>In kind</u>	Follows success of 1st Joint Meeting in Aug 2022 in PapenburgPartly completed as shown by joint meetings. Extent also depends on future of EC IWG.
	2023	BtG Coordinator together with EC Coordinator	Develop shared part of workplan with common issues for both species	In kind	
	2024	BtG Coordinator	Make workplans for the two species consistent, such that the BtG workplan will have the same structure as the EC workplan.	<u>In kind</u>	In accordance with UK feedback.
	2023 - 2025 Rolling	BtG Coordinator together with EC Coordinator	Organize topical meetings for members of both working groups (habitat restoration, reproductive success, etc.)	In kind if online	
	2023- 2025Rolling	BtG Coordinator together with EC Coordinator	Organize regular Europe-wide assessment of breeding success (e.g. once per year)	In kind if assessment of productivity and population size is in place in all Range States.	
Discuss whether general and regional (NW-European and E-European) population targets for the Black-tailed Godwit should be agreed and if yes, determine what it-they should be.	2023	BtG Coordinator and the regional sub-set of the IWG	Determine what it would 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 addition to the possible overall	In kind	Given the different

Project/activity	Timeframe	Lead	Detailed actions	Budget	Comments
		government s in NW- Europe led by IWG members representatives	target for the European region, eExplore possibilities to set national/regional population targets, where possible		approaches taken setting population targets in the various countries, this activity will obviously not be applicable everywhere.
	2024	National experts in cooperation with gov. reps and BtG Coordinator	Establish scheme following agreed structure		First it should be agreed that there is a need for this.
	2024	To be determined	Develop overall monitoring guidance for BtGs and share results within the IWG		BtG Coordinator w start with collecting methods from Range States.
	2025	National gov. reps	Promote the scheme amongst the stakeholders, i.e. farmers, hunters, site managers etc. and encourage them to participate		First, scheme has be developed and agreed.
2. ISSAP activity: Prevent further habita	t loss in key bree	eding areas - HIGH			
Prohibit conversion of permanent grasslands in key sites (see activities under point 3 below)	-	-	-	-	-
3. ISSAP activity: Prevent loss and degi	•				
Establish an agreed ecological definition of permanent grasslands – i.e. what constitutes a good permanent/historic grassland	2023	National IWG experts in consultation with gov. reps.	Develop definitions of permanent grasslands reflecting the respective natural conditions.	None	Definitions from B DE, FR, NL, SE a UK are collected.
	2023	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.	engoingRolling	Coordinated by IWG gov. reps and/or experts	Create mechanism for monitoring permanent grassland	ls this assessment of the overall land use already being undertaken by the regional authorities?	Is this assessment of the overall land use already being undertaken by the regional authorities

Project/activity	Timeframe	Lead	Detailed actions	Budget	Comments
	2023-2024	Species experts	Identify method to assess overall land use and percentage of permanent grasslands	Budget required if new method has to be developed	Hard to catch incremental improvement by artificial fertilizer and agri-chemical deployment.
Should permanent grassland habitat have been lost, ensure the provision of replacement habitat.	As necessary; ongoing in the UK			YesOrganized by national governments	
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	BtG Coordinator to approach research institutes to get an overview of existing methods	Funding would probably be needed for this survey work in kind	
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. Consultation with relevant government reps.	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.
Stimulate national policy makers to keep influencing the EU CAP Pillar I and Pillar II funding distribution, so that more funding is made available for the conservation of BtG and other meadow birds (if possible, in coalition with local stakeholders, i.e. farmers).	2022-2025	Nat. gov. reps and/or national experts			Influence on CAP procedures remains possible also after the adoption of the new CAP.
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	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	Landscape conservation has strong public support and linking permanent grasslands to be seen as part of the wider landscape

Project/activity	Timeframe	Lead	Detailed actions	Budget	Comments
			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.	quality university-level interns?	approach could engage the public and stakeholders in particular politicians. Should be carried out in all the important regions
	2023	Regional BTG gGov. 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.	where BtG grasslands and landscape conservation occurs.
	2023	Regional governments in NW-Europe led by IWG members Government representatives	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 overview, analysis and recommendations (see above).	Unknown, depends on the recommendations	
4. ISSAP activity: Improve ment the ma		ected areas - HIGH/ESSEN	TIAL		
Exchange of knowledge amongst managers and best practice between countries	2021-2023 ₋ 2025	BirdLife NL, NABU NGOs in cooperation with the regional governments and the management authorities of the protected areas		Yes	

Project/activity	Timeframe	Lead	Detailed actions	Budget	Comments
	2023-2025	UK experts in cooperation with gov. reps	Increase awareness among stakeholders of the potential for godwits to breed in grasslands in the wider landscape outside protected areas		Following UK feedback on work plan.
5. ISSAP activity: Reduce mortality from	n predators - HIC	 GH			
Discourage predators by improving openness, increasing water levels and creating wet features in key breeding sites	2023-2025	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.
Exchange best practices with regard to electric fencing among managers and between breeding range states	2023-2025	Regional/nNational experts in close cooperation with BtG Coordinator	Organize online workshop		
Develop a protocol for headstarting of BtG chicks in captivity	2023	BTOWWT	Ensure effective exchange of information, experiences, pitfalls between initiatives across breeding range.		Exchange of experiences with members of the IWG for Eurasian Curlew is highly recommended. LIFE Godwit headstarting protocol will be made available.
	2024	National experts	Techniques for range recolonisation need to be developed in addition to the headstarting protocol.	Requires project funding	In accordance with UK feedback
6. ISSAP activity: Support biodiversity-	sensitive manag	ement of important breedi	ng nabitats through AES in order t	o promote cnick survival -	ESSENTIAL/HIGH

Project/activity	Timeframe	Lead	Detailed actions	Budget	Comments
(see link to activity 2: prevent further h	abitat loss in key	breeding areas)			
Explore possibilities to organize a best- practice exchange for farmers between countries (could be linked to other EU funding opportunities/Interreg)	202 <u>3</u> 2	BtG coordinator			
Develop AES management tailored to BtG needs	2023-2025	National experts in cooperation with gov reps.	Develop suitable AES management options and identify regions to apply these	Yes	Note that AES measures in NL are heavily focussed on BtG.
Ensure the appropriate monitoring of implemented activities	ongoing	Regional gGov. reps in cooperation with national BtG experts			
7. ISSAP activity: Maintaining/re-introd	ucing grassland	areas with optimal ground	water level to secure food availab	ility – HIGH/ESSENTIAL	
Combine BTG conservation measures with eco-system services	2021- 2023 <u>2023-</u> <u>2025</u>	Gov. reps in cooperation with national experts	Incorporate BtG conservation measures in initiatives for carbon sequestration, water retention, etc.		
Ensure habitat quality (composition of the vegetation etc.)	2021 -2023- <u>2025</u>	Gov. reps in cooperation with national experts and relevant stakeholders			Could be incorporated in agrienvironment schemes. Should also consider above and below ground invertebrate availability.
8. ISSAP RESULT: Improve knowledge	and close key kr	nowledge gaps			
Key habitats and threats in Eastern Europe, especially Poland	202 <u>23</u>	BtG Coordinator in cooperation with national experts	Should be established by joint meetings and stronger collaboration between regions (see 1. Overarching activities)		
How to best reduce predation in protected/key sites	2021 -2023 <u>-</u> 2025	BtG Coordinator in cooperation with national experts	Stimulate knowledge exchange		Need to understand how to influence mesopredator abundance.
Understanding the potential impact of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza	2023-2025	National experts	Contact virologists/epidemiologists working on HPAI	_	

Annex II – Draft rolling work plan for the AEWA Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group 2023-2025 (**NW-European breeding range states_specific**)

S	Budget	Comments
ation with the IWG er research institutes buble work, but to under one ess, in particular, would be useful to various stakeholders involve them?). e following agreed monitoring guidance are results within the eme amongst the farmers, hunters,	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. Would assist in engaging people in
tc. and encourage te		the long term and in ensuring continuity of the activities beyond individual workshops, trainings etc.
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	Funding would probably be needed for this survey work	

Project/activity	Timeframe	Lead	Detailed actions	Budget	Comments
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.	202 <u>24</u>	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
	2024	BtG Coordinator in cooperation with Dutch species experts	Write article in magazine "Het Waterschap" about importance of water levels for grassland-breeding waders	In kind	
4. ISSAP activity: Improvement the manage	ment of protecte	ed areas - HIGH/ESSENT	IAL	l	
Organize training/awareness-raising workshops for the managers of protected areas important for the BtG.	2021-2023 <u>-</u> 2025	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

Project/activity	Timeframe	Lead	Detailed actions	Budget	Comments
Awareness-raising on political level to	2021- 2023-	BtG Coordinator in	Develop concept with suggestions	Maybe some travel	AEWA Secretariat
improve SPA protection (particularly in	2025	cooperation with	for improvements in the	funds for meetings	can provide letters
Lower Saxony)		NABU, local reg. gov.,	management of designated SPAs -	within the region?	of support if needed
		BMU, BirdLife Europe,	including a prioritization of the SPAs	_	
		AEWA, EC etc.?	according to conservation value.		
6. ISSAP activity: Support biodiversity-sens	sitive manageme	ent of important breeding	habitats through AES in order to pro	mote chick survival - l	ESSENTIAL/HIGH
(see link to activity 2: prevent further habita					
Training of "AES Coordinators" to improve	2021-2023	NL Provinces in			There could maybe
planning and implementation of BtG		cooperation with NL			be 1-2 leading
measures in NL farming cooperatives		BtG experts			Provinces promoting
					this approach
7. ISSAP activity: Maintaining/re-introducing	g grassland area	as with optimal groundw	ater level to secure food availability –	HIGH/ESSENTIAL	
Raise awareness of NL Water Boards as	202 <mark>24</mark>	BtG Coordinator	See above regarding Water Boards		
well as farmers using best practice examples	_				
(see permanent grasslands activity above as					
well)					
8. ISSAP RESULT: Improve knowledge and	close key know	ledge gaps			
How to make effective management	2021- 2023 <u>-</u>	Govt. reps together	Evaluate possibilities offered by CAP		
economically sustainable for farmers	2025	with species experts	and possibly national schemes to		
		and representatives of	improve economic situation for		
		farmers	farmers who create and maintain		
			godwit habitat		

Annex III – Draft rolling work plan for the AEWA Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group 2023-2025 (E-European breeding range states specific)

Project/activity	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Actions	Budget needed	Comments
Result: Degradation of breeding habita	at quality and	d habitat loss h	as stopped			
Identify and protect key breeding sites for the BtG under national legislation	Blr, Kz, Rus, Ukr	2023-2025		Identify key breeding sites for the BtG		Ukraine: in west key sites are known, in east they can be predicted but not fully known. Protection should be arranged more at national level. Ongoing changes in sites being used.
		<u>2023-2025</u>		Review protection status of identified key breeding sites for the BtG		
		2023-2025		If applicable, implement national legislation to protect key breeding sites for the BtG		
	Rus	2023-2025		Prevent important breeding areas to be lost through urbanisation, infrastructure and other planning. Implement this kind of protection in national legislation		
Develop guidance for the adequate management of key Black-tailed Godwit breeding sites in protected and non-protected areas (including agricultural areas, abandoned agricultural areas etc.) identifying appropriate tools and best practice examples	ALL	202 1 <u>4</u>	BtG Coordinator in cooperation with species experts	Coordinate with AEWA Eurasian Curlew IWG, EU Grassland Wader Plan and the Wader Study Group – scoping exeercise, what exists?	n/a	In collaboration with North-West European BtG IWG sub-set, AEWA Eurasian Curlew IWG, EU Grassland Wader Plan and the Wader Study Group Guidance will help make management plan suitable for waders
				Draft guidance outline and consult with IWG members and any additional experts	n/a	In guidance: how to deal with populations in agricultural areas Include examples of how to implement Env Impact Assessment

Project/activity	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Actions	Budget needed	Comments
				Draft guidance	5,000	Area of nature reserves in Russia all human activities prohibited. No ideal for godwit (overgrowth of meadows). Ministry is informed about necessity of controlled grazing or haymaking for BtG. Disturbance in guidance.
Prevent the current practice of (late) spring burning of dry meadow vegetation which leads to loss of BtG nests and decrease in food recourses	Blr, Ukr	2024		Identify options for legal action to prevent late spring burning. Incorporate in guidance (see above)		Ukr: big wildfires in April and May due to low water level and dry weather. Include also in management guidance. Legal measures already exist but locall this is still a problem. Implementi this into guidance provides a tool use for the local governments (international document)
Result: Improved survival and recruite	ment					_
Stop hunting in spring (high priority) and other hunting and prevent illegal hunting.	Blr <u>, Rus</u>	2024	BtG Coordinator	Identify how IWG can support national experts and gov. reps in their attempts to close spring hunting.		Get back to Pavel to ask if we ca support him to close spring hunting. Russia: lobby with ministry of environment to ban species from hunting list. Long term process to get it in Red Book. Expand gettin in local Red Books.
Assess level of predation and provide guidance on reducing predation pressure		2024 <u>4</u>	BtG Coordinator in cooperation with species experts	Identify which predator species are involved and potential measures against them.		Large variation between sites. La of monitoring makes it challengin to identify trends in predation pressure. Exchange knowledge of success factors between countries.
Result: Knowledge gaps filled	T =				1	
Prepare more detailed distribution maps	Blr, Kz, Rus, Ukr		Gov. reps in cooperation with species experts	Organize breeding bird counts		Based on work for European Breeding Bird Atlas? 50x50 km squares, so not precise enough. Russia: need to regularly refresh information because agricultural land use is changing very quickly

Project/activity	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Actions	Budget needed	Comments
Prepare update of the estimates of breeding population	Blr, Pl, Rus, Ukr	2023-2025	National species experts			
Carry out inventory of key sites and determine habitat threats	Rus, Ukr	2023-2025	National species experts	Identify key breeding sites and determine potential threats to breeding population		Part of preparation of distribution maps
	Blr, Fin, Est, Rus, Ukr	2023-2025	National species experts in cooperation with gov. reps	Investigate staging sites, migration routes and wintering areas by expanding marking schemes		Train volunteer ringers and ring readers More focus on transmitters rather than colour rings. Almost no information about migration routes Investigate site fidelity to help population estimates (less site fidelity in east than in west?)
Examine habitat requirements	Fin, Lv	2023-2025	National species experts	Identify opportunities for funded research/fieldwork		BtG responds to changes, for example due to drought in Ukraine birds are moving to agricultural land
Determine locally relevant management requirements according to the habitat requirements	Fin, Lv, Est	2023-2025	National species experts			
Investigate staging sites, migration routes and wintering areas by expanding marking schemes	Blr, Fin, Est, Rus, Ukr			Train volunteer ringers and ring readers		More focus on transmitters rather than colour rings. Almost no information about migration routes Investigate site fidelity to help population estimates (less site fidelity in east than in west?)
Estimate survival and causes of mortality	Blr, Fin, Est, Kz	<u>2023-2025</u>	National species experts	Identify opportunities for funded research/fieldwork		We know little about nest predation but almost nothing about chick predation → focus on chick survival
Research the impact of agricultural activity on the productivity of the BtG	Fin	2023-2025	National species experts	Set up a nest monitoring scheme		Ukr: no information at all because they only recently moved to agricultural land.