AEWA European Seaduck International Working Group - Final Workplan 2021-2023[[1]](#footnote-1)

**MONITORING**

| ***Objective: Close knowledge gaps*** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Range states** | **Timeframe** | **Activities** | **Budget needed** | **Lead** | **Comments** |
| **Result: The understanding of population status is improved (Velvet Scoter, Long-tailed Duck [& Common Eider])** | | | | | | |
| Undertake periodic coordinated full surveys in winter to determine population sizes following agreed monitoring protocols (mid-winter counts) | Baltic range states | 2021 | Finalize timeline and secure resources needed to complete reporting on Baltic Sea 2016 census. |  | Ib Krag Petersen & Ainars Aunins, JWGBird | Consider to what extent the data capture, pre-processing and analysis could be automated with scripts to make the analyses replicable and faster in future. Opportunity for a multi-country LIFE project together with addressing the fisheries issues. |
| Baltic range states | 2022 | Complete reporting on Baltic Sea 2016 census. |  | Ib Krag Petersen & Ainars Aunins, JWGBird |  |
| Baltic range states | 2022 | Complete Baltic Sea 2020-21 surveys, finalize timeline and secure resources needed to complete reporting on census. |  | Ib Krag Petersen & Ainars Aunins, JWGBird |  |
| Baltic range states | 2023 | Complete reporting on Baltic Sea 2020-21 census. |  | Ib Krag Petersen & Ainars Aunins, JWGBird |  |
| ALL | 2022 | Agree on a schedule for coordinated long-term monitoring of abundance / population trend (for all populations of the three focal species) based/building on HELCOM guidelines for monitoring seabirds at sea, including timing and budget estimates for the surveys and joint data analysis, taking into account reporting needs to the AEWA, the EU, HELCOM and OSPAR. |  | Nele Markones, Ib Krag Petersen & Ainars Aunins, JWGBird | Coordinate with Common Eider monitoring being planned under the Adaptive Harvest Management Programme currently being established under AEWA. |
| ALL | Next survey 2025/2026 | Organize next survey, including budgeting for the analysis and reporting using the agreed monitoring protocol, with focus on the need for extension of the geographical area covered |  | Nele Markones, Ib Krag Petersen & Ainars Aunins, JWGBird |  |
| Undertake studies and establish  monitoring of breeding success |  | 2021 | Collate existing data and produce analysis of annual breeding success of Long-tailed Duck |  | Jochen Bellebaum, Kjell Larsson |  |
|  | 2021 | Develop an agreed protocol for coordinated long-term monitoring of annual reproduction rates of Long-tailed Duck and Velvet Scoter at flyway scales. |  | Kjell Larsson, Nele, Ib, Margus Ellermaa | This refers to monitoring undertaken during non-breeding period |
| All core countries | rolling | Undertake surveys to estimate annual breeding success. |  | Identify national leads |  |
|  | Every three years from 2024 | Collate annual breeding success data and estimate reproduction rates. |  | LtD West: Yann Kolbeinsson  LtD East: Kjell Larsson  VS: Nele Markones |  |
|  | 2022 | Undertake Velvet Scoter breeding success assessments on breeding grounds |  | Nele Markones, Ib Krag Petersen & Ainars Aunins, JWGBird |  |
|  |  | Explore opportunities through NO-RU bilateral cooperation, CAFF etc. for funding surveys in the Russian Arctic to assess factors affecting Long-tailed Duck breeding success (at key sites) |  |  | Although very important, not considered highest priority. |
| Increase knowledge of flyway delineations of Long-tailed Ducks |  | 2021 onwards | Develop and strengthen telemetry studies, building on ongoing geolocator projects, and explore potential to expand SEATRACK project |  | Ib Krag Petersen, Norway |  |

**BYCATCH**

| ***Objective: Increase survival rates*** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Range states** | **Timeframe** | **Activities** | **Lead** | **Budget needed** | **Comments** |
| **Result: The level of fisheries bycatch is significantly reduced (Velvet Scoter, Long-tailed Duck [& Common Eider])** | | | | | | |
| Support the implementation of existing bycatch monitoring programmes to collect and share standardised data on by-catch for both commercial and non-commercial fisheries (including  vessels <12m). | ALL | 2021 | Reinforce the need to implement this monitoring by contacting relevant range state authorities and EU Commission. | BirdLife International |  | As required under the EU CFP, the EU Seabird Plan of Action, EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and HELCOM.  Also consider the cumulative effects of harvest, bycatch etc.  Suggest that governmental entities (as for instance fisheries control personnel) check gillnets for by-catch, recording both position, time, gear specifications and by-catch. This has been used in Denmark in dedicated areas on a project level. There is no doubt that video surveillance is the most effective method, but difficult to get in place on small boats, and also increasingly challenging to encourage fishermen to accept the gear on board their vessels. |
|  | Highlight in particular the need to collect bycatch data from artisanal fisheries and commercial fisheries using vessels <12m. |  |  |
|  | Recommend that some coverage by observers/remote monitoring is needed in addition to self-reporting from fisheries, to ensure accuracy/reliability of data |  |  |
|  | Nominate both the Long-tailed Duck and Velvet Scoter for the OSPAR threatened and declining seabirds list. | ESIWG coordinators / Ian Mitchell |  |
| Raise awareness amongst stakeholders (AEWA Parties and non-Party Range States, fishing industry etc.) on all relevant aspects linked to reducing bycatch |  | 2021 | Collate case studies and use to raise awareness |  |  |  |
|  | 2021 | Focus on raising awareness with AEWA Parties, including providing relevant input to MOP8 (possibly including a side event at MOP8) | BirdLife International |  |  |
| Undertake large-scale risk analysis to assess how bycatch risk varies temporally and spatially given overlap between seaducks and fisheries for all populations |  | 2021 | Develop terms of reference with focus on Baltic and North Seas; and seek resources | UK (Matt Parsons), JWGBIRD |  | Would make sense if this covers all at risk species so needs collaborative efforts as not just LTD and VS (and Eider) |
|  | End of 2022 | Complete risk assessment | BirdLife International |  |  |
|  | 2022-2023 | Initiate raising awareness on likely need for seasonal closures (and perhaps compensation so problem not moved) in hotspots (once we have the risk assessments) |  |  |  |
| Support and coordinate research actions on the ground to develop seabird bycatch mitigation measures |  |  | Strengthen research actions across the range states to further develop “seabird friendly” gears (focusing on new options to modify gear). |  |  | Testing the deployment of I-VMS devices in key hotspots (VMS for inshore vessels). Exploring new technologies (e.g. electronic logbooks), etc. (wider application than just mitigation measures)  Highlight in particular the need to collect bycatch data from artisanal fisheries and commercial fisheries using vessels <12m |
| Identify funding opportunities |  |
|  |  |  | Promote the research and development for alternative-to-gillnets fishing gears in the range states, and facilitate their deployment in bycatch hotspots (e.g. parts of the Baltic sea. |  |  |  |

**MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING**

| ***Objective: Increase survival rates*** | | | | | | |
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| **Action** | **Range states** | **Timeframe** | **Activities** | **Lead** | **Budget needed** | **Comments** |
| **Result: Produce spatial planning tools to guide coordinated offshore development and the protection of key sites for seaducks** | | | | | | |
| Increase understanding of key sites for populations of LtD and Velvet Scoter (in particular moult, spring staging and those in Russian Arctic) | ALL RS | 2021 | Compile an overview of protected area networks including assessment of their management (with particular focus on bottleneck sites – flagging gaps in knowledge etc.) | Contract out? |  | Contracting Parties nominating sites under AEWA – IWG can review completeness of nominated sites in 2021 |
|  | 2022 | Plan and conduct additional surveys (aerial, ship) and telemetry studies as required to identify new key sites. | Ib Krag Petersen & Ainars Aunins, JWGBird |  | Plan in 2021 and conduct in 2022 |
| Promote the need for flyway scale strategic spatial planning/ cumulative impact assessment in relation to specific developments |  | 2021-2022 | Produce AEWA Conservation Guidance on Marine Spatial Planning and the Conservation of Seaducks | Contract out? |  | Plan and resource in 2021 and undertake in 2022 |
|  |  | Support ongoing sensitivity mapping efforts in relation to specific developments under other frameworks |  |  |  |
| Increase cooperation with shipping and fishing sectors to improve site management |  | 2021 | Flag at MOP8 as part of AEWA seabird priorities. | AEWA |  |  |

**HARVEST**

| ***Objective: Increase survival rates*** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Range states** | **Timeframe** | **Activities** | **Lead** | **Budget needed** | **Comments** |
| **Result: The level of mortality from hunting of Long-tailed Ducks, if hunting continues, is sustainable** | | | | | | |
| Assess harvest sustainability of both Long-tailed Duck populations on a rolling basis (as long as hunting continues) | Finland, Sweden, Iceland (Russia and Greenland) | 2021 | Propose simple methodology for harvest sustainability assessment based on population status and hunting bag data. | Aarhus University,  AEWA |  |  |
| 2021 | Agree on protocol within IWG, including provision for emergency review of sustainability in case of rapid population decline. | IWG |  |  |
| Starting from 2021; repeated every six years | Carry out periodic assessment of sustainability of harvest following the agreed approach every six years with reports back to IWG (including an assessment of the benefit selective hunting of males). Link to the agreed surveys on population status & trends. | Aarhus University  Finland, Sweden, Iceland |  | Consider as part of wider assessment of the cumulative mortality effects of harvest, bycatch etc.  Report back to the IWG results of the reported sex ratios of the hunting bag, when such data is available. |
| Raise awareness amongst hunters of the serious decline of the Long-tailed Duck | Finland, Sweden, Iceland (Russia and Greenland) – also Denmark | rolling | Continue efforts to inform hunting community on the threatened status of the Long-tailed Duck to increase awareness of why restrictions on hunting are in place. | FACE and national hunting organisations |  |  |

**SPECIFIC ACTIONS: LONG-TAILED DUCK**

| ***Objective:*** | | | | | | |
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| **Action** | **Range states** | **Timeframe** | **Activities** | **Lead** | **Budget needed** | **Comments** |
| **Result:** | | | | | | |
| Monitor body condition, plastic ingestion, crippling rates and other pressures | All | 2022 onwards | Develop research programme using bycatch casualties |  |  |  |

**SPECIFIC ACTIONS: VELVET SCOTER**

| ***Objective:*** | | | | | | |
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| **Action** | **Range states** | **Timeframe** | **Activities** | **Lead** | **Budget needed** | **Comments** |
| **Result:** | | | | | | |
| Monitor body condition, plastic ingestion, crippling rates and other pressures | All | 2022 onwards | Develop research programme using bycatch casualties |  |  |  |
| Predation by non- native carnivores (e.g. American Mink, Raccoon Dog) is minimised and eliminated where possible | All | 2021 onwards | Develop and implement national eradication plans for Raccoon Dog and American Mink |  |  |  |

1. This workplan was consulted and approved by correspondence following the 1st Meeting of the AEWA European Seaduck International Working Group (9-10 December 2020) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)