

AEWA European Seaduck International Working Group - Final Workplan 2021-2023¹**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		Nele Markones, Ib Krag	Coordinate with Common Eider

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)

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			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.		Petersen & Ainars Aunins, JWGBird	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		

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Action	Range states	Timeframe	Activities	Budget needed	Lead	Comments
			factors affecting Long-tailed Duck breeding success (at key sites)			
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		2021	Collate case studies and use to raise awareness			

Objective: Increase survival rates						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Activities	Lead	Budget needed	Comments
stakeholders (AEWA Parties and non-Party Range States, fishing industry etc.) on all relevant aspects linked to reducing bycatch		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 seabirds 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			

Objective: Increase survival rates						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Activities	Lead	Budget needed	Comments
			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						
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 seabirds						
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 Seabirds	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

<i>Objective:</i>						
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

<i>Objective:</i>						
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			