



15th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
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**DELINEATION OF BIOGEOGRAPHIC POPULATIONS OF THE BLACK GUILLEMOT
(*CEPPHUS GRYLLE*)**

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE POPULATION DELINEATIONS

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Name of population(s):

- [1] *Cepphus grylle mandtii* (Black Guillemot), Arctic E North America to Greenland, Jan Mayen & Svalbard E through Siberia to Alaska
- [2] *Cepphus grylle arcticus* (Black Guillemot), N America, S Greenland, Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia, White Sea

Current status on AEWA Table 1:

- [1] Category 1 of Column C
- [2] Category 1 of Column C

What is the issue?

In general, the species is not truly migratory, but it was listed on AEWA Annex 2 because fledglings undertake poorly known long-distance dispersal ([AEWA/MOP3.16](#)). The subspecies *C. g. mandtii* and *arcticus* both have discontinuous range separated by the ranges of other subspecies. According to the existing AEWA guidelines ([AEWA/MOP 3.12](#)), it is only possible to recognise populations of individuals that belong to the same subspecies. Therefore, it is suggested to recognise two biogeographical populations of *C. g. mandtii* and two biogeographical populations of *C. g. arcticus* for management purposes based on their separate breeding grounds:

- [1a] *Cepphus grylle mandtii*, E Canadian Arctic & W Greenland (bre): Canadian Arctic, Hudson Bay, and James Bay east to Labrador (south to about 58°N), N Newfoundland, and W Greenland (south to about 72°N),
- [1b] *Cepphus grylle mandtii*, E Greenland to E Laptev Sea (bre): E Greenland (south to and 69°N), Jan Mayen, Barents & Kara Seas and eastern part of Laptev Sea,
- [2a] *Cepphus grylle arcticus*, NE America and S Greenland (bre): S Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia and S Greenland,
- [2b] *Cepphus grylle arcticus*, British Isles and N Europe: Norway, Russia east to White Sea.

What is the evidence supporting the proposal?

Resident and mostly sedentary except in N regions, where movement to adjacent ice-free waters occurs according to the Handbook of the Birds of the World ([HBW](#)) and the Birds of North America ([BNA](#)). In general, the winter distribution of adults is essentially as during the breeding season near to the colony. The [EURING database](#) does not contain any recoveries in Europe from North America. Fledglings often move considerable distances from natal sites, usually in direction of prevailing sea currents. Inter-colony movement of immatures was found to be important

but involves relatively short distances and would not justify treating distant and separated segments of the same subspecies as one biogeographic population. E North American and Greenland birds intergrade with *C. g. arcticus* along the coast of Labrador and W Greenland (BNA) and this uncertainty is reflected in the population delineation presented in Figure 1.

What are the implications of the proposal including any changes in status on AEWA Table 1?

[1a] *Cepphus grylle mandtii*, E Canadian Arctic & W Greenland (bre): the Canadian population in the Canadian Arctic alone exceeds 250,000 individuals. The entire Greenland population is estimated at 30,000 – 60,000 individuals including E Greenland. Proper trend information is lacking for this population (Berglund & Hentati-Sundberg 2014). BirdLife International (2015) has estimated 100,000 – 500,000 individuals for Greenland as a whole (including the subspecies *mandtii* both E and W and the subspecies *arcticus* in the S) and a stable population. Based on even this uncertain data, the new population can be classified in Category 1 of Column C in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan (i.e. no change compared to the current classification of the population of *mandtii* subspecies).

[1b] *Cepphus grylle mandtii*, E Greenland to eastern Laptev Sea (bre): The population is estimated around 20,000 pairs, i.e. 60,000 individuals in Svalbard and 9,000 – 11,000 pairs in European Russia, Jan Mayen is small, c. 100 pairs (Berglund & Hentati-Sundberg 2014, Strom et al. 2016). As mentioned above, there are uncertainties concerning the population size in Greenland and its division between W and E Greenland although the E one can be considered to be the smaller one. Boertmann et al. (2009) was able to control only 4 colonies and reported the observation of only 68 individuals during their July-August surveys. Thus, it is likely that the size of the E Greenland population is less than 10,000 individuals. This means that the population exceeds 25,000 individuals but probably below 100,000 individuals. The population trend is unknown. Therefore, this population is proposed to be classified in Category 1 of Column B.

[2a] *Cepphus grylle arcticus*, S Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia and S Greenland (bre): S Greenland population is estimated at 180,000-190,000 pairs (i.e. 540,000-570,000 individuals). This means that this population should be classified in Category 1 of Column C even without taking into account of the birds breeding in Eastern Canada that were estimated at around 70,000 in the 1980s (Nettleship & Evans 1985). Thus, this population retains the same classification on Table 1 as the current population covering the entire *C. g. arcticus* subspecies.

[2b] *Cepphus grylle arcticus*, British Isles and N Europe east to White Sea (bre): Berglund & Hentati-Sundberg (2014) estimated the total population at around 180,700 – 238,200 individuals without Greenland, but including nearly 8,000 pairs at the Murman coast and the White Sea in Russia (Strom et al. 2016). As the population trend is thought to be largely stable, it can be classified in Category 1 of Column C. Thus, this population also retains the same classification on Table 1 as the current population covering the entire *C. g. arcticus* subspecies.

Figure 1. Delineation of the proposed biogeographic populations of *C. g. mandtii* and *C. g. arcticus* together with the delineations of the populations not proposed for change. (Note: the range map produced by BirdLife International is only to provide a backdrop for the flyway delineation. It will require update at a later stage to incorporate the correction proposed by experts during the consultation process).

