

AEWA Svalbard Pink-footed Goose International Working Group

Terms of Reference

... DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION ...

Goal (as defined in the International Species Management Plan for the Svalbard population of the Pink-footed Goose)

- To maintain the favourable conservation status of the Svalbard pink-footed goose population at flyway level while taking into account economic and recreational interests.

Objectives (as defined in the International Species Management Plan for the Svalbard population of the Pink-footed Goose)

To achieve this goal the following set of objectives have been established, in consultation with national authorities and key stakeholders:

- I. Maintain a sustainable and stable pink-footed goose population and its range.
- II. Keep agricultural conflicts to an acceptable level.
- III. Avoid increase in tundra vegetation degradation in the breeding range.
- IV. Allow for recreational use that does not jeopardize the population.

Key Actions (as defined in the International Species Management Plan for the Svalbard population of the Pink-footed Goose)

To attain the objectives the following key actions are regarded as essential:

1. Implement an adaptive management framework and modelling concept for the flyway population.
2. Maintain a population size of around 60,000, within a range to prevent the population to collapse or irrupt, respectively. To be agreed and reviewed on the basis of rigorous scientific evaluation and stakeholder consultations as part of the adaptive management process.
 - a. Optimise hunting regulations and practises to regulate the population size if needed and in range states where hunting is permitted.
 - b. Prevent establishment of breeding colonies on mainland Norway.
3. Ensure sustainable hunting where practised (at present in Norway and Denmark) and following 'wise use' principals, whilst ensuring that crippling rates are kept at a minimum level.
4. Maintain and enhance spatial management to ensure that pink-footed geese can fulfil their ecological requirements throughout their annual cycle and allowing for their natural annual migration pattern. Any of the following measures should not jeopardise this:
 - a. Agricultural/environmental policies and subsidy schemes which adversely impact the above (those that result in significant habitat loss e.g. conversion of traditional feeding grounds to other non-beneficial agricultural crops).
 - b. Land use and agricultural practices which unduly influence the ecological requirements of the geese.
 - c. Containment and exclusion tactics (provision of goose feeding areas, scaring, shooting) which unduly influence population distribution and dynamics.
 - d. Recreational activities and infrastructure development.
5. Support the evaluation and optimisation of national and regional compensation/subsidy schemes, or accommodation policies and alternative non-consumptive methods to minimise agricultural conflicts in the range countries.

6. Support 'conflict mitigation' through the development of national and regional management plans that promote recreational uses such as tourism and hunting (where permitted or relevant).
7. Increase habitat available to pink-footed geese where there is no conflict (e.g. reduce disturbance on stubble fields in autumn or by restoration of grassland complexes which can reduce the feeding on crops or pastures).
8. Collect systematic data on the impact and extent of tundra degradation due to goose foraging in Svalbard.

Purpose

The purpose of the AEWA Svalbard Pink-footed Goose International Working Group is to:

- 1) provide a forum for building consensus on a common vision for the management of the Svalbard population of the Pink-footed goose;
- 2) coordinate and catalyse the implementation of the International Species Management Plan (ISMP), as approved by the AEWA Meeting of the Parties;
- 3) provide for an agreed population target for the Svalbard Pink-footed Goose, along with international management actions to achieve the goal and objectives of the ISPM;
- 4) stimulate and support Range States in the implementation of the ISMP, and the establishment of National Management Plans and National Management Groups (where deemed appropriate);
- 5) critically assess the implementation, monitoring and the effectiveness of the ISMP, along with associated management actions and their impacts on the population;
- 6) provide a forum for considering issues, challenges and resolving conflicts arising from the management actions of the ISMP;
- 7) act as a central advisory group that promotes an integrated, multi-disciplinary, collaborative and adaptive approach to the management of the species.

Role

The AEWA Svalbard Pink-footed Goose International Working Group will:

- assist Range States in producing National Management Plans;
- review and set a population target for the Svalbard population of the Pink-footed Goose, taking in to account ecological and socio-economic considerations;
- review and set priorities for international action, along with measurable management targets for agreed actions;
- promote the development of innovative proposals and alternative management actions in accordance with the ISMP Key Actions;
- promote the development and maintenance of predictive models to guide decisions;
- ensure regular and thorough monitoring of the species population size, dynamics and trends;
- promote the development and standardization of measures to monitor the impact of management actions;
- ensure that key data provided by national stakeholders are collated and maintained in a central database, integrated with a website for efficient retrieval and exchange of information;
- stimulate scientific research and reviews of model predictions and monitoring data, communicating new knowledge emerging and making timely recommendations for adapting/changing management actions according to the findings;
- facilitate internal and external learning, through the communication and exchange of, scientific, technical, legal and other relevant information, amongst stakeholders and other specialists and interested parties;
- facilitate and promote learning amongst the general public by communicating relevant information on the goal, objectives, actions and results of the ISMP as well as emerging knowledge as part of the adaptive management process;
- actively engage with stakeholders from nature conservation, agricultural and hunting interests as well as other interested parties;
- ensure sufficient commitment and funding is obtained from range states and international organisations to maintain the long-term collaboration required for successful adaptive management;
- prioritise and publish annual work program with key actions, responsibilities and measurable management targets based on reviews of previous actions and their outcomes;

- undertake periodic multi-disciplinary reviews of the ISMP (every 5 years) and critically assess the impact of management actions and update the ISMP;
- regularly report on the implementation of the ISMP to the AEWA Meeting of the Parties through the National Focal Points.

Membership

The AEWA Svalbard Pink-footed Goose International Working Group will comprise (1) designated representatives of national state authorities in charge of the implementation of AEWA, (2) designated national experts and (3) optionally, representatives of organisations as invited to the national delegations by the state authorities.

Countries forming the working group: Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands and Norway.

The Chair of the AEWA Svalbard Pink-footed Goose International Working Group may invite and admit, as observers, other international experts and representatives of international conservation, farming and hunting organisations to the Working Group, as necessary.

Officers

The Chair of the AEWA Svalbard Pink-footed Goose International Working Group will be elected amongst its members.

A Coordinator post will be established. The Coordinator will be in charge of the day-to-day operations of the Working Group and shall act in close cooperation with the Chair and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

The designated representatives of national state authorities will act as National Focal Points for the ISMP and will be the main contact persons for the Chair and the Coordinator.

Meetings

The Working Group should aim to hold meetings once a year (either face-to-face or virtual). Other face-to-face meetings may be arranged as circumstances allow (e.g. back-to-back meetings with other international fora). Between meetings, business will be conducted electronically via the Working Group's website and list server.

Reporting

A thorough report on the implementation of the ISMP will be produced according to a standard format with contributions from all Range States and submitted for inclusion into the general International Review on the Stage of Preparation and Implementation of International Species Action and Management Plans to the AEWA Meeting of the Parties. Reports shall also be prepared by each Range State to a format agreed by the Working Group and presented at each meeting of the Working Group. These National Reports shall be submitted to the Coordinator annually, and one month prior to the date of the next Meeting of the Working Group at the latest. Other reports will be produced as required by the AEWA Technical Committee or the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

Financing

The operations of the AEWA Svalbard Pink-footed Goose International Working Group, including the coordinator post, are to be financed primarily by its members; the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat cannot commit regular financial support and may only provide such if possible. Funding for ISMP activities of the Working Group or its members is to be sought from various sources.