



Goose Management Group

GMG 5th Meeting

Bremen, 06 December 2012

FINAL DRAFT MINUTES

1. Opening

Document: GMG 2012-5.1 Draft Agenda

The chair, Mr Hilbrand Sinnema, welcomed the participants and opened the meeting on 06 December 2012 at 11:00 hours. A list of participants is in **Annex 1**.

The agenda was **adopted** without amendments and is in **Annex 2**.

2. Adoption of the Minutes GMG-4

Document: GMG-4 Final Draft Minutes

The meeting adopted the final draft minutes of the GMG-4 meeting, Hamburg, of 20 September 2012. The final draft minutes of GMG-4 have been distributed by e-mail of 17 October 2012. The final draft minutes are also available on the WSF website www.waddensea-forum.org.

3. Announcements

The Dutch representatives briefly informed about progress of the new goose management policies in the Netherlands. The so-called G7-group, in which all relevant parties with regard to goose management are involved (e.g. provinces, nature and farmer organisations), had not reached agreements on certain areas for geese accommodation so far, and also the compensation schemes had been rejected as insufficient. It was stated that the trilateral approach and recommendations could stimulate the further process in reaching agreements on a national goose management plan.

Manfred Vollmer informed about the outcome of the WSF-21 meeting on 13-14 November in Leck. The work on climate change and energy issues was stated as the most important topics for the future. Of course, topical themes like harbour development, shipping safety and sustainable development in the WSR in general would also be addressed. He also reported that a new WSF vice-chair was elected, who was Wiebe van der Ploeg, the deputy of the province of Groningen.

4. Translation goose information

The secretary refereed to the translation of the goose information document, which was available in 4 languages. Particularly the regional and local authorities as well as farmer organisations should receive the document to take note of the goose management situation and the on-going work by the WSF.

It was agreed to send contact details for distributing the information to the secretariat by end of January at the latest.

Responsibility: Meinte Engelmoer for NL, Markus Nipkow for Niedersachsen, Jan Kieckbusch for Schleswig-Holstein and John Frikke for Denmark.

5. Inventory of information

Documents: GMG 2012-5.5.1 Inventory NL

GMG 2012-5.5.2 Inventory WSR

Presentation: Inventory Niedersachsen by Markus Nipkow

The meeting welcomed the inventory of the Netherlands, which was elaborated since the last meeting in September.

Markus Nipkow presented the goose management scheme of Niedersachsen according to the inventory priorities, elaborated by the GMG. The given information was very comprehensive and made a comparison with the other regions possible. The inventory was distributed as hard copy and will be integrated in the Wadden Sea Region inventory matrix. For a common knowledge base and transnational approach, the inventory sheet will be kept on a more general level with information of the entire national region. An example is given by the Dutch and Niedersachsen inventory. Nevertheless, the detailed and very valuable information about various measures in Schleswig-Holstein will be added as an annex. The secretariat will improve and update the information sheet with the delivered information within the coming weeks and reviewed by the working group in the following.

Furthermore, the GMG agreed to include information, which describes the problems with geese in the regions (what are the problems, which species, which area is concerned, which period of the year). The problems should be defined and described on a general level in order to elaborated common solutions, but local facts and conditions should also be addressed. This description will encompass an outlook to the future, how problems could develop under certain circumstances.

Finally, it was **agreed** that a small core group will elaborate this part of the inventory. Under the lead of Meinte Engelmoer and with the support of Markus Nipkow, John Frikke and Jan Kieckbusch, the information will be elaborated by end of January 2013 to be included in the inventory sheet. This will serve as basis for the draft work plan.

6. Draft work plan

Document: GMG 2012-5.6.1 draft work plan

On the basis of the completed inventory, the draft work plan will be elaborated according to the agreed scheme. Till the next meeting in February 2013, the GMG will reconsider the listed priorities and-sub-priorities with a view on defining common aims and targets. Following, common targets will be discussed and finally defined at the next meeting. As an example for policy development, a common policy on Barnacle geese was mentioned. On this basis, actions to be taken in order to reach the defined targets as well as ambitious recommendations to the political level will be elaborated.

7. Draft recommendations

The topic was part of agenda item 6.

8. Any other business

No other business discussed.

9. Next meeting

The meeting agreed to hold the GMG-6 meeting on **26 February 2013** in Hamburg and the GMG-7 meeting on **11 June 2013** also in Hamburg.

10. Closing

The chair thanked all participants for their contributions and closed the meeting at 15:30 on 06 December 2012.

ANNEX 2

Goose Management Group

GMG 4th Meeting

Hamburg, 20 September 2012

DRAFT ANNOTATED AGENDA

- Agenda item 1. Opening**
- Agenda item 2. Adoption of the Minutes GMG-3**
- Agenda item 3. Announcements**
- Agenda item 4. Translation goose information**
- Agenda item 5. Inventory of information**
- Agenda item 6. Draft work plan**
- Agenda item 7. Draft recommendations**
- Agenda item 8. Any other business**
- Agenda item 9. Next meeting**
- Agenda item 10. Closing**

ANNEX 3

Information Meadow birds

1) Increasing populations of geese and declining meadow bird populations: do geese contribute to the decline of meadow birds in the Netherlands?

David Kleijn¹, Erik van Winden², Paul Goedhart³, Wolf Teunissen²
Alterra, Sovon, Biometris - Alterra-report 1771 (2008)

Background

The Netherlands have important international responsibilities with respect to the conservation of geese and meadow birds. About 40, 28 en 11% of the European breeding populations of Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) and Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) breed in this country. However these Dutch breeding populations showed an average decline of 5% per year during the period 2000-2004.

Oppositely important proportions of 6 geese species spend their winter in the Netherlands. These proportions range between 20 and 95% of the European population. The European population sizes of these geese species increased 2.5 – 13-fold between 1970 and 2000. The number of breeding geese in the Netherlands increased in recent years exponentially with Greylag Geese and Barnacle Geese being the most important ones with resp. 100.000 and 25.000 breeding individuals and a yearly population growth of resp. 20 and 46%.

Purpose and intents of this study

This report focuses on the question whether the greatly increased densities of geese in some areas are at least partly responsible for the decline in the local meadow bird populations. If so, it has consequences for the Dutch policies with respect to wintering geese aiming at concentrating wintering geese in go-areas. However, it was not aimed to result in important declines of the local meadow bird populations in these go-areas.

The overlap between areas with high densities of geese and high densities of meadow birds was studied using data collected in the period 1990-2005 as part of the National Meadow Bird Monitoring System and the National Waterbird Assessments. In addition, it was examined whether increasing geese numbers in important meadow bird areas resulted in systematic changes in these areas with respect to the breeding numbers of meadow birds.

Results and discussion

Wintering geese are foraging to a significant extent in the best areas for meadow birds in the Netherlands. The overlap between the best feeding areas of wintering geese and the best meadow bird areas is appr. 50%. So there is considerable potential for interaction between geese and meadow birds. Habitat preference of meadow birds and foraging strategy of geese are good predictors of the degree of overlap. Species such as White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* and Barnacle goose

Branta leucopsis are most commonly seen in areas with the highest densities of waders. Areas with high densities of nesting Greylag geese showed relatively little overlap with areas with high densities meadow birds, with the exception of the duck species amongst the meadow birds.

The estimated effects of the wintering of geese will mainly be due to White-fronted geese and Wigeon and to a somewhat lesser extent Barnacle geese. These three species took 89% of the total number of observed geese in the period 1990-2005 for their account. The effects of White-fronted geese and Barnacle geese separately were similar to that of the total number of geese observed. Because the analyses were based upon the sum of the number of observed geese in the period January-May, the estimated effects were mainly determined by the number of geese present prior to the breeding period. About 73% of the number of observed geese was observed in January and February and 94% was observed in the period January-March.

There was no clearly positive or negative effect of wintering geese on the breeding numbers of most species of meadow birds. Meadow bird species, which were significantly influenced, generally had their most positive population trend in areas with the highest densities wintering geese. Waders showed almost without exception their most positive population trend in areas with the highest densities wintering geese.

There were both positive and negative effects of populations of breeding Greylag geese on a limited number of meadow bird species even in spite of the relatively low densities and limited overlap in breeding areas between Greylags and meadow birds.

Conclusions

The effects of high densities of wintering geese on breeding meadow birds in the Netherlands appear to be negligible or positive. Especially waders seem to benefit from the earlier occurrence of wintering geese. Minor negative effects were only observed in Shelduck, Partridge and Yellow Wagtail.

Most Dutch meadow bird areas do not have to fear for the increased numbers of wintering geese. There seems to be little reason for concern that increasing densities of wintering geese, due to the designation of go-areas, will lead to negative effects on breeding meadow birds.

Knowledge gaps

Effects on meadow birds in areas where wintering geese stay until late in April and May were under represented in this study. It involves a relatively small number of meadow bird areas (Noord-Friesland Buitendijks, Ezumakeeg, Workumerwaard, Bandpolder and Schiermonnikoog). We neither could conclude on the effects of high densities of summering geese other than Greylag geese.

This study shows that the occurrence of geese has both positive and negative effects on meadow birds. The mechanisms leading to these effects are unknown. This makes it hard to predict on the effects of changing numbers of geese (both winter and summering) on the breeding of meadow birds.

2) The effect of the presence of Barnacle Geese on the time-budgets of breeding meadow birds and on the vegetation structure of the breeding grounds of meadow birds

David Kleijn¹ & Daan Bos²

Alterra en Altenburg & Wymenga - Alterra-Report 1772 (2008)

Summary

The marked increase in the number of breeding and wintering geese coincides both spatially and in time with the decline of meadow birds in the Netherlands. Earlier studies showed that few problems arise from the wintering populations of geese with respect to the breeding of the meadow birds later in spring. However, knowledge was needed with respect to the impact of staging geese while meadow birds were already breeding, since then most interactions and conflicts are to be expected.

This study focused on the effects of staging geese on (1) the time-budget of breeding meadow birds and (2) the vegetation structure of the breeding grounds of meadow birds. The study is limited largely to the impact on breeding Lapwing and Black-tailed Godwit of (1) breeding Barnacles in the Wormer and Jisperveld and (2) late staging Barnacles in Fryslân. The time-budgets of breeding meadow-birds in presence and absence of Barnacles was measured during 99 hours of observation. The effect of geese on the vegetation was examined using 'exclosures', where grazing was excluded, and paired control-plots with grazing. Both in the Wormer and Jisperveld as in Fryslân were 10 plot-pairs.

With Barnacles in the vicinity of the nest, Black-tailed Godwits spent up to about 7% more time on the nest and Lapwings 19%. Barnacles close-by were experienced as a threat to their eggs by meadow-birds. Direct interactions between meadow-breeding birds and Barnacles were limited and mainly concerned the defence of non-incubated clutches.

The grazing of Barnacles had a negative effect on height and dry weight of the grassland vegetations from mid April in Fryslân onwards and from early May in the Wormer-en Jisperveld. This suggests that (for meadow birds) visible effects on vegetation structure occur just before and during the hatching period. As a result the nest site choice of meadow birds might be influenced. An analysis of the population trends of the breeding meadow birds and breeding Barnacles in the Wormer-en Jisperveld between 2000 and 2007 did not show significant correlations. The distribution of meadow bird territories did not seem to be affected by the increase of breeding Barnacles.

The effect of breeding Barnacles on the hatching behaviour and the establishment of breeding Lapwings and Black-tailed Godwits seems to be limited. The effect of non-breeding but late staging Barnacles on the breeding behaviour of Lapwings and Black-tailed Godwits are also relatively small. This suggests that Barnacles hardly affect the local populations of meadow birds and suggests that the presence of Barnacles is not the main cause of the decline of meadow birds. However, some aspects were not studied in the present study. Therefore some caution is necessary. It concerns (1) the limitations in space and time and (2) a possible effect of Barnacles on the establishment of the breeding territories of meadow birds. Neither attention is paid to chick survival under the circumstances with and without Barnacles in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the situation might also be different with other geese species.