



Goose Management Group

GMG 4th Meeting

Hamburg, 20 September 2012

FINAL DRAFT MINUTES

1. Opening

Document: GMG 2012-4.1 Draft Agenda

The chair, Mr Hilbrand Sinnema, welcomed the participants and opened the meeting on 20 September 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-3

Document: GMG-3 Final Draft Minutes

The meeting adopted the final draft minutes of the GMG-3 meeting, Hamburg, Hamburg, of 21 June 2012. The final draft minutes of GMG-3 have been distributed by e-mail of 26 July 2012. The final draft minutes are also available on the WSF website www.waddensea-forum.org.

3. Announcements

No announcements made.

4. Translation goose information

Document: GMG 2012-4.4.1 goose information documents

The meeting welcomed the translation of the goose information documents and stated the contents as sufficient to inform regional and local authorities and organisations.

The meeting tasked the secretariat to distribute the document in the respective language to the addressees, which would be national, regional and local governments and relevant organisations. The GMG will assist the secretariat to compile the address list.

5. Inventory of information

Documents: GMG 2012-4.5.1 Inventory SH

GMG 2012-4.5.2 Inventory DK

GMG 2012-4.5.3 Presentation distribution geese in SH

GMG 2012-4.5.4 Presentation example acoustic detection in DK

The meeting very much welcomed the inventory of Schleswig-Holstein as guidance for the other regions. Denmark delivered their inventory at the meeting. Lower

Saxony and The Netherlands agreed to deliver the inventories of their regions within the coming weeks. The meeting **agreed** that it would be absolutely necessary to have the whole set of inventories available by mid November 2012 in order to have a detailed discussion at the next meeting and to have a basis for the work plan. The secretariat will work up the inventory of the 4 regions for easy comparison to the next meeting.

Jan Kieckbusch gave a presentation about the distribution of geese as well as policy issues in Schleswig-Holstein. The presentation was very much welcomed and will be made available as pdf document.

Ole Roland Therkildsen gave a presentation on acoustic detection of conflict species in Denmark. The very inspiring presentation was also welcomed and will be made available as pdf document too. The methods will be discussed within the GMG with regard to the feasibility of application in other areas.

6. Draft work plan

Document: GMG 2012-4.6.1 draft work plan

The meeting **agreed** on the sections outlined in the draft work plan. The inventory will be function as status quo report. On the basis of this, targets, actions and recommendations will be elaborated.

It was also **agreed** to amend the work plan with a section, which describes the problems with geese in the regions (e.g. which species, which period, on which farming products). The problems would differ among the regions and solutions will be addressed on local and regional level, but under a broader umbrella.

7. Draft recommendations

The topic was postponed to the meeting in December.

8. Any other business

The meeting briefly discussed the dealings with meadow birds on the basis of the two documents delivered by Meinte Engelmoer (see **Annex 3**). Only information about meadow birds effecting geese and vice versa would be relevant for the time being. It was agreed to include these information in the inventory table.

9. Next meeting

The meeting agreed to hold the next GMG meeting on **6 December 2012** in Hamburg.

10. Closing

The chair thanked all participants for their contributions and closed the meeting at 15:30 on 20 September 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.