

2021 Report

IUCN SSC Goose Specialist Group



CHAIR

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RED LIST AUTHORITY COORDINATOR

BirdLife International

NUMBER OF MEMBERS

363

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Facebook: Goose Specialist Group

Website: <https://www.geese.org/gsg/>

Mission statement

The Goose Specialist Group seeks to strengthen contacts between all researchers on migratory goose populations in the northern hemisphere by organising regular scientific conferences and stimulating population dynamics research on geese.

Projected impact 2021–2025

The main aim for our group is to update the information on population status of Northern Hemisphere goose populations. This includes the compilation of population counts as well as counts of juvenile production. This information is vital to understand the changes in conservation status of goose populations. Besides this main goal, we have several projects aimed at specific conservation issues regarding specific species.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-001 Investigate whether geese flee high and far, and with aftereffects from New Year's fireworks.

T-002 Study survival, breeding behaviour and migration pattern of local breeding Greylag Geese (*Anser anser*).

T-004 Update the Global Audit of the Status and Trends of Arctic and Northern Hemisphere Goose Populations.

T-005 Provide a climate resilient network of critical sites for the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) in Europe (LIFE LWfG CLIMATE LIFE19 NAT/LT/000898).

COMMUNICATE

T-006 Organise the Goose Specialist Group Conference in 2023.

T-007 Publish the *Goose Bulletin*.

Activities and results 2021

ASSESS

Research activities

T-001 (KSR 5)

Number of scientific publications about species research that acknowledge SSC affiliation: 0

Result description: Analysis of all 2013–2021 data (347 goose tracks) revealed that four species of geese (Barnacle Goose, *Branta leucopsis*; Greater White-fronted

Goose, *Anser albifrons*; Tundra Bean Goose, *Anser serrirostris*; and Pink-footed Goose, *Anser brachyrhynchus*) responded to New Year's fireworks by flying up higher and further than on nights without fireworks. They moved to more distant roost sites, were more active at night and likely compensated for this by foraging for longer periods of time in subsequent nights.

T-002 (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 0

Result description: The goal of this project is to address the lack of knowledge of the goose species, established as a breeding bird in the 1980s by the Ministry of Agriculture and hunting organisations, as well as to monitor avian flu by cloacal sampling and blood sampling. In 2021, a total of 780 birds were colour-banded and several of these were sampled.

T-004 (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 0

Result description: The global audit of northern hemisphere goose populations (published in 2017 but based on data up to around 2015) suggested that there were between 39.0 and 39.2 million wild geese in the northern hemisphere, belonging to



A banded Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)
Photo: Helmut Kruckenberg



The research team of Swan Goose (*Anser cygnoid*) in Mongolia
Photo: Iderbat Damba

68 populations of 15 species at that time. Most of populations showed increasing or stable trends over the previous 10 years, largely due to their successful transition from feeding on natural wetland and other habitats, to feeding on artificial agricultural habitats that provide considerably better food intake rates, forage quality and energy. Some of the most rapidly increasing populations have brought conservation challenges due to their abundance affecting economic interests, which we continue to need to address. However, our ability to judge these trends was highly variable among populations and, in addition, the assessment identified 23 populations that had declined in the previous 10 years at that time. The Goose Specialist Group therefore sees as its core activities to continue: (1) to monitor all northern hemisphere goose populations, and in the coming 18 months attempt to revise all estimates of current population size and recent (10 year) and longer trend as far as possible with an assessment of their quality; (2) to improve our knowledge of those populations for which we are data deficient; (3) to focus on improved knowledge about the causes for the declining trends among those populations that have unfavourable conservation status and to gather information about methods to restore these populations to favourable conservation status.

T-005 (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: ongoing

Result description: We carried out monitoring of the Fennoscandian population in the entire flyway from the breeding grounds to the wintering grounds. We started site restoration action in Lithuania and Hungary, and started land purchase in Greece.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-006 (KSR 12)

Number of scientific events organised: ongoing

Result description: We are in touch with parties that are interested in organising the Goose Specialist Group Meeting in 2023. So far, there appears to be an option in Eastern Europe and in East Asia. By mid-summer 2022, we will make sure to have more information from these parties and make a decision on where to organise the meeting.

T-007 (KSR 12)

Number of Species e-bulletin, Save Our Species newsletter, SSC Groups' newsletter editions produced: 1

Result description: *Goose Bulletin 27* was published in 2021.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 6

Geographic regions: 2 Asia, 1 America, 5 Europe

Actions during 2021:

Assess: 4 (KSR 5)

Communicate: 2 (KSR 12)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:

