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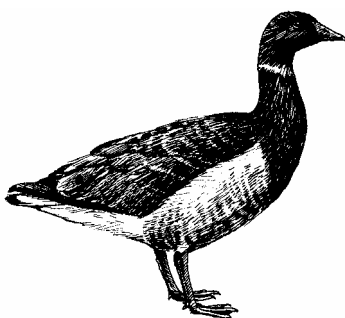
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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

26th meeting
Strasbourg, 27-30 November 2006

**International Single Species Action Plan
for the Conservation of the Light-bellied Brent Goose
(East Canadian High Arctic population)
(*Branta bernicla hrota*)**



AEWA Technical Series No. 11

*Prepared with the financial support of National Parks & Wildlife Service (Dublin),
Environment & Heritage Service (Belfast), and the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust*

Compiled by James A. Robinson^{1,2} & Baz Hughes¹

¹ The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge, Glos. GL2 7BT, UK. Email: research@wwt.org.uk

² Current address: RSPB Northern Ireland, Belvoir Forest Park, Belfast, BT8 4QT, UK. E-mail: james.robinson@rspb.org.uk

With contributions from: Ken Abraham, Dave Allen, Stuart Bearhop, Hugh Boyd, Sean Boyd, Bob Brown, Kathy Dickson, Bart Ebbsing, Ian Enlander, Gudmundur Gudmundsson, Jim Hines, Richard Inger, John McCullough, Graham McElwaine, Kerry Mackie, Paddy Mackie, Mark Mallory, Oscar Merne, Ian Montgomery, James Orr, Bruce Pollard, Alex Portig, Austin Reed, Tony Richardson, David Thompson, Matthew Tickner, Lynne Tinkler and Hugh Thurgate.

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Geographical scope

This International Single Species Action Plan requires implementation in the following countries regularly supporting East Canadian High Arctic Light-bellied Brent Geese: Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, the UK, France and Spain.

Reviews

This International Single Species Action Plan should be reviewed and updated every ten years (first review 2015). An emergency review will be undertaken if there are sudden major changes liable to affect the population.

Credits

Thanks go to Bert Lenten, Sergey Dereliev and Yuki Itakura (UNEP/AEWA Secretariat) and Lorraine Robinson who provided support during the preparation of this International Single Species Action Plan.

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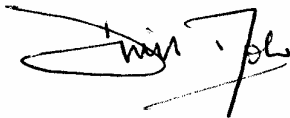
Foreword by H.E. Dick Roche, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Republic of Ireland

Ireland is of special significance for the population of the Light-bellied Brent Goose covered by this International Species Action Plan. Most of the population concerned winters here. There is a considerable history of research, survey and conservation work on the Light-bellied Brent Goose in Ireland. This work has also demonstrated the value of working on issues in partnership and on an all-island basis. Apart from regular surveys, the species has been the subject of an intensive marking study, and more recently of satellite-tracking research, all aimed at identifying migration routes, timing of migration and use of staging areas. Such information is clearly important to underpin conservation, but may also prove vital for less obvious reasons - as for example in dealing with the current situation on avian influenza.

As with many other species and habitats, our own conservation work has been complemented and strengthened by EU inspired measures. Most of the more important sites in Ireland are now Special Protected Areas and thereby included in the EU network of biodiversity areas. Clearly species such as the Brent Goose - whose range takes in Canada, Greenland and Iceland – need action at a broader scale. This International Species Action Plan - and indeed its parent, the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds – provide the mechanisms to stimulate the required international co-operation and bring about on the ground implementation. This AEWA Species Action Plan is a testimony not only to co-operation between countries, but also to collaboration between many organisations and dedicated individuals.

The Brent Goose is increasingly visible and familiar to many people in Ireland – having become quite tolerant of humans, and occurring in large numbers at coastal areas used by large numbers of people, including around our capital city. Few who come into contact with this wild bird of the coast fail to enjoy and have their day uplifted by the experience. Such encounters and experiences play a real role in mobilising public awareness and commitment to meeting EU and global targets for biodiversity.

While the population has increased from very low numbers in the early 1900s, we should not allow ourselves to become complacent. This AEWA International Species Action Plan provides the framework and detailed objectives and activities which will ensure we, along with others, provide for the conservation of this species into the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dick Roche', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dick Roche, T.D.
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Dublin

Foreword by H.E. David Cairns MP, Minister for the Environment, Northern Ireland

Brent Geese are remarkable and intriguing shore birds. Their beauty and importance as biological indicators make them a valuable asset when it comes to assessing the health and well-being of our coastal environment.

During the winter months these birds, which breed in Canada, are a very visible feature of a number of our designated coastal sites, notably Strangford Lough, Lough Foyle, Larne Lough and Killough Harbour. Because of the high numbers of waterbirds that they support, these sea loughs are amongst the “jewels in the crown” of Northern Ireland’s natural heritage. As Minister of the Environment in Northern Ireland, I recognize that the conservation of our species and ecosystems, in other words of biodiversity as a whole, is of global concern.

This document provides comprehensive up-to-date information on the status of Brent Geese throughout their entire flyway, and helps to highlight the importance of this species and the protection of its habitat. This knowledge will aid effective management to ensure that Brent Geese populations are maintained, or even increased, through co-ordinated conservation action throughout the flyway.

I applaud the work of all of those who have made this flyway management plan possible. It provides a marker against which future efforts, both here and further afield, will be measured.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Cairns". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Cairns MP
Minister for the Environment
Northern Ireland

Foreword by Mr. Bert Lenten, Executive Secretary, Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird (AEWA)

During their life cycle, migratory waterbirds cover considerable distances in order to find the best ecological conditions and habitats for feeding, breeding and raising their young. However, migration is a perilous journey, presenting a wide range of threats. Only a small number of birds are actually threatened by natural events. Sad but true, human activities are the source of most dangers migrating birds are exposed to. Flying over long distances means crossing many international borders and entering different political areas with their own environmental politics, legislation and conservation measures. It is clear that international cooperation between governments, NGOs and other stakeholders is needed along the whole flyway of a species in order to share knowledge and to coordinate conservation efforts. The necessary legal framework and coordinative instruments for such international cooperation is provided by international agreements such as Agreement on the conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA).

One of these coordinative instruments in conservation of biological diversity is International Single Species Action Plans (SSAP). They are being developed to find out more about populations of species with an unfavourable conservation status throughout their whole range, to identify underlying threats and, more importantly, to roster all necessary conservation measures in a systematic and structured way. This information is crucial to tackling the problems that have caused and are still causing decline of these species and to allow action to be taken to improve their status in the long term. Such International SSAPs can only be developed and effectively implemented in close cooperation with Governments, Intergovernmental Organizations and NGOs.

AEWA has therefore initiated this International Single Species Action Plan for the Light-bellied Brent Goose. The drafting of the plan was carried out by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (UK) and has been compiled by James Robinson and Kendrew Colhoun. The plan was adopted under Resolution 3.12 at the Third Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA in Dakar, Senegal, October 2005.

Estimations of the East Canadian High Arctic (ECHA) population of the Light-bellied Brent Goose comprise around 22,000 individuals. These numbers were subjected to strong fluctuations over the last 50 years due to habitat loss, changes in native food species dynamics and pollution as well as natural disasters. It scores poor conservation status on the AEWA list. The broad aim of the SSAP is, in short-term, to maintain the current population and distribution of the population throughout its range and, in the long-term, to secure a population size of more than 25,000 individuals.

I strongly hope that the Range States involved will make every effort to implement this Single Species Action Plan and that they will transform it into National Action Plans and work together to halt the decline in the Light-bellied Brent Goose population in the future. I very much believe that if the measures described in these plans are implemented in reality, this will trigger the recovery of the population of this bird to a favourable conservation status.



Bert Lenten
AEWA Executive Secretary

Foreword by Mr. Martin Spray, Chief Executive, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)

With concern for environmental issues at their greatest level in recent years, latest climatic predictions provide grim reading for the potential loss of biodiversity. Wetlands are especially vulnerable to changes in global climate and the concomitant threat to waterbird communities gives cause for concern.

Utilising such a large latitudinal range between widely-separated arctic nesting areas and temperate wintering areas makes populations of arctic-nesting geese especially susceptible to a range of potential negative effects. In this regard, the impact of climate change may be particularly pronounced, possibly involving deterioration of tundra breeding habitats and crucial sub-arctic staging sites, and loss of inter-tidal feeding habitats in the wintering range.

The diversity of potential threats, the effects of which are largely unknown, dictates the need for a flyway-wide approach to conserve these populations.

In this regard, the development and production of an AEWA Single Species Action Plan for Light-bellied Brent Goose is a welcome development and one in which WWT is proud to have played a central role. Its preparation could not have been undertaken without the support of the sponsoring organisations and the input from many experts from each flyway state.

This collaborative approach to action plan production, and the importance of interlinking science, education and community involvement is crucial to successful implementation of species action plans. WWT see this approach as a successful formula for conservation action through sound science underpinning conservation policy which has the support of communities in the many countries hosting this important population.

WWT has had a long tradition of involvement with the Light-bellied Brent Goose, primarily through the great spectacle provided when the vast majority of the population stopover each autumn near our Castle Espie centre at Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland. We trust that the publication of this Action Plan provides the framework for a host of strategic actions aimed at conserving this population, in doing so ensuring that this spectacle is one to be enjoyed by many future generations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Martin Spray" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Martin Spray
WWT Chief Executive

PREFACE

This International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Light-bellied Brent Goose (East Canadian High Arctic population) *Branta bernicla hrota* was commissioned to the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust. It has been compiled by James Robinson currently of RSPB (UK) and Kendrew Colhoun of WWT (UK). The drafts of the plan went through rigorous consultations and in the final approved version are reflected comments received from a number of experts, governmental officials from the range states, the AEWA Technical Committee. Financial support for the preparation of this Action Plan was provided by the National Parks & Wildlife Service (Dublin), the Environment & Heritage Service (Belfast), and the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT). The Action Plan follows the format for Single Species Action Plans approved by the AEWA 2nd Meeting of Parties in September 2002.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The East Canadian High Arctic (ECHA) Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* breeds in Canada's eastern Queen Elizabeth Islands with the great majority wintering on the coastline of the island of Ireland and smaller numbers on the Channel Islands and the northern coasts of France and Spain. It is protected under the general provisions of the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) (Birds Directive), the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and the Canada-U.S. Migratory Birds Convention 1916. The population is listed under Category A2 of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), because there are only between 10,000 and 25,000 individuals in the population.

The key threats to this population are habitat loss/degradation, natural disasters, changes in native food species dynamics (e.g. *Zostera* wasting disease) and pollution (directly through oil/chemical spills or indirectly through the potentially catastrophic effects and impacts of climate change). Other less important threats include illegal persecution, accidental mortality, disturbance, invasive alien species (e.g. *Spartina* encroachment in estuaries or potential competition with other geese on the breeding grounds) and intrinsic factors (restricted range, low productivity, climate-caused periodic non-production). In light of the small number of countries involved, and given the history of cooperative international conservation and research initiatives, it has been deemed appropriate to take an international approach to the conservation of this population, with the production of an AEWA International Single Species Action Plan (SSAP).

This AEWA International Single Species Action Plan provides a framework for the conservation for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and is based on the format prepared by BirdLife International. Successful implementation of this SSAP will require effective international co-ordination of organisation and action. The broad aim of this SSAP will be, in the long-term, to restore the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose to favourable conservation status, i.e. by removing it from Column A2 of the AEWA and therefore negating the formal requirement for an action plan. The aim of the SSAP is, in the short-term, to maintain the current population and distribution of the population throughout its range and, in the long-term, to secure a population size of more than 25,000 individuals. The SSAP has been developed using internationally agreed standards for identifying actions and has been prepared specifically to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of subsequent implementation, linking threats, actions and measurable objectives.

This SSAP will need implementation in seven countries. The activities identified in this SSAP focus on the protection of the population and its habitats, appropriate management of key sites, and developing our understanding of the population and its conservation through research and monitoring. Each country within the core range of the population should commit to implementing this SSAP and develop National Action Plans.

The first international workshop held for this population was convened at the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Castle Espie (Strangford Lough, Northern Ireland) in autumn 2003. Experts attended from throughout the range of the Light-bellied Brent Goose, gave various presentations on the biology of the population and its conservation, and discussed the threats posed to the population and necessary conservation activities required to improve its conservation status.

The ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Working Group is the International Species Working Group (ISWG) for implementation of this SSAP. It is proposed that this working group will work under the auspices of the AEWA Technical Committee. This group will comprise representatives of the seven Range States, relevant international interest groups and several technical advisors

1. BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

| | |
|---|--|
| General information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The East Canadian High Arctic (ECHA) population of Light-bellied Brent Geese <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> breeds in Canada's eastern Queen Elizabeth Islands with the great majority wintering on the coastline of the island of Ireland, and smaller numbers in the Channel Islands, northern France and northern Spain. It comprises around 22,000 individuals in winter and is listed under Category A2 of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA). • Robinson <i>et al.</i> (2004) have produced a review that provides detailed information on abundance, trends, population delimitation, ecology and threats across the range of this population. It is an essential companion document to this AEWA International Single Species Action Plan (SSAP). • The first International Workshop held for this species was convened at the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, on the shores of Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland, in autumn 2003. Experts attended from throughout the range of this population and gave various presentations on the biology of the species and its conservation requirements. The workshop promoted cooperation and exchange of knowledge between researchers and conservationists and resulted in formal support for the production of an AEWA SSAP for this population of Brent Geese. |
| Taxonomy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phylum: <i>Chordata</i> • Class: <i>Aves</i> • Order: <i>Anseriformes</i> • Family: <i>Anatidae</i> • Species: <i>Branta bernicla</i> • Race/subspecies: <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> • Biogeographical population: Eastern Canadian High Arctic |
| Population development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no reliable estimates of population size in winter prior to the 1950s. Anecdotal information suggests that between 1850 and 1950 the population appeared to decline rapidly, possibly as a consequence of the disappearance of its favoured food <i>Zostera</i> from key sites (in the 1930s), and also hunting in European countries during the non-breeding season. The population was estimated at around 6,000 in the mid 1950s, rising to around 11,900 by 1960/61, when the first complete census was undertaken. Counts made in the 1960s and 1970s indicated that numbers fluctuated between 7,300 and 13,000 birds. Successful breeding seasons in the early 1980s were probably responsible for a rapid increase in numbers to around 25,000 individuals by winter 1985/86. Numbers fell, however, through the late 1980s and 1990s as the population levelled to around 20,000 birds. Low production through the 1990s caused the population to decline to around 8,300 birds in winter 1992/93. Since then, numbers have increased markedly, after several years of high productivity, to a high of over 27,000 in autumn 2003. • A global population of about 22,000 birds seems likely, although the true number may be higher (Wetlands International 2002; Irish Brent Goose Research Group unpubl. data). |
| Distribution throughout the annual cycle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breeds in the eastern Queen Elizabeth Islands, north of Lancaster Sound, from eastern Melville Island east to northern Ellesmere Island (Merne <i>et al.</i> 1999). Almost the entire population winters on the coastline of the island of Ireland with much smaller numbers reaching the Channel Islands, the west coast of Britain, the north coast of France, and the Galician coast of northern Spain (Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2004). There are three other recognised biogeographic populations of Light-bellied Brent Geese: a) the Western High Arctic Light-bellied Brent Goose that breeds on Melville Island, Prince Patrick Island and other smaller adjacent islands and winters in the northern Puget Sound area on the Pacific coast of the USA (population estimate: 7,500 individuals); b) the Atlantic Brent that |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| | <p>breeds in the eastern low arctic of Canada, from Queen Maud Gulf east to Baffin Island and from Southampton Island to Somerset Island and winters on the Atlantic coast of the USA (population estimate: 181,600 individuals); and c) the East Atlantic Light-bellied Brent Goose that breeds in Svalbard and northeast Greenland and winters around the North Sea (population estimate: 5,000 individuals) (Merne <i>et al.</i> 1999; Wetlands International 2002). Ringing studies have suggested that there is very little interchange between these populations. The question of interchange is, however, now being evaluated through studies using genetic markers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese migrate through Greenland and Iceland in spring and autumn (Boyd & Maltby 1979; Gudmundsson <i>et al.</i> 1995; Boertmann <i>et al.</i> 1997; Gardarsson & Gudmundsson 1997). The list of countries used by the population during the breeding and non-breeding seasons is presented in Table 1. A distribution map and probable flyway delimitation are shown in Fig. 1. | | | |
| Survival and productivity | <p>Between winters 1960/61 and 1999/2000, the mean proportion of first-winter birds in flocks was 14% (range 0-47%; Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2004). Over this period, mean brood size varied between 0 and 3.1 juveniles per pair on the wintering grounds. Although there have been marked birds in the population, survival rates have never been accurately assessed because too few birds have been marked and recaptured.</p> | | | |
| Life history | <p>Pre-breeding: Counts indicate that the entire flyway population occur in W Iceland during spring stopover. First arrivals are in early April, peak arrivals in early May and synchronous departure in the last week of May. Satellite-tracking indicates a rapid passage through Greenland in most years and arrivals to the breeding grounds in the Eastern Queen Elizabeth Islands during the first half of June.</p> | <p>Breeding: The results of the only intensive study made on the breeding grounds suggest that nests are isolated and widely dispersed, usually associated with freshwater lakes or braided riverbeds (Ó Briain <i>et al.</i> 1998). Some small colonies occur on offshore islands. Brood-rearing occurs on the shorelines of estuaries, lakes and rivers. In that study, mean clutch size was 4.5 eggs per pair. Mean incubation period was 23 days. Hatching occurred between 11 and 14 July. On lakes, broods were raised singly or in loose groups of 2-3 families, whereas on rivers and estuaries groups of up to 15 families were observed. There is no known information on nesting or fledging success.</p> | <p>Feeding: The species is herbivorous. On the breeding grounds, broods feed on sparsely distributed graminoids and other fleshy plants and mosses (Ó Briain <i>et al.</i> 1998). On the wintering grounds, birds rely almost entirely on intertidal <i>Zostera</i> in the late autumn and early winter (Portig <i>et al.</i> 1994; Mathers <i>et al.</i> 1998a, b). Algal foods such as <i>Enteromorpha</i> and <i>Ulva</i> and saltmarsh plants such as <i>Festuca</i> and <i>Puccinella</i> become increasingly more important later in the winter. Inland feeding has been recorded since the mid 1970s (Merne <i>et al.</i> 1999). Birds feed on improved grasslands, autumn stubbles, winter and spring cereals, and waste potatoes.</p> | <p>Post-breeding: Moult movements are poorly understood, but small flocks of non-breeding individuals gather to moult around lakes, river valleys and mouths of estuaries (Ó Briain <i>et al.</i> 1998). Some failed breeders moult in the vicinity of the nest site. Others have been captured during moulting on Prince Patrick and Melville Islands. Birds arrive in northwest Greenland from late August and most have left by mid September. Large numbers stage in western Iceland during the autumn. Small numbers arrive at Irish sites in County Kerry and at Strangford Lough (County Down) in late August. The main arrival, however, occurs in late</p> |

| | | | October (Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2004). |
|----------------------|--|----------|--|
| Habitat requirements | Habitat type* | Breeding | Non-breeding |
| | 5. Wetlands (inland) | | |
| | 5.1. Permanent Rivers/Streams/Creeks [includes waterfalls] | ■ | |
| | 5.2. Seasonal/Intermittent/Irregular Rivers/Streams/Creeks | ■ | |
| | 5.5. Permanent Freshwater Lakes [over 8 ha] | ■ | |
| | 5.6. Seasonal/Intermittent Freshwater Lakes [over 8 ha] | ■ | |
| | 5.7. Permanent Freshwater Marshes/Pools [under 8 ha] | ■ | |
| | 5.8. Seasonal/Intermittent Freshwater Marshes/Pools [under 8 ha] | ■ | |
| | 5.10 Tundra wetlands [includes pools and temporary waters from snowmelt] | ■ | |
| | 5.14. Permanent Saline, Brackish or Alkaline Lakes | ■ | ■ |
| | 5.15. Seasonal/Intermittent Saline, Brackish or Alkaline Lakes and Flats | ■ | ■ |
| | 5.16. Permanent Saline, Brackish or Alkaline Marshes/Pools | ■ | ■ |
| | 5.17. Seasonal/Intermittent Saline, Brackish or Alkaline Marshes/Pools | ■ | ■ |
| | 9. Sea | | |
| | 9.2. Shallow [usually less than 6 m deep at low tide; includes sea bays and straits] | ■ | ■ |
| | 10. Coastline | | |
| | 10.1. Rocky shores [includes rocky offshore islands and sea cliffs] | | ■ |
| | 10.3. Estuarine Waters | ■ | ■ |
| | 10.4. Intertidal Mud, Sand or Sand Flats | ■ | ■ |
| | 10.5. Intertidal marshes [includes salt marshes] | ■ | ■ |
| | 10.6. Coastal Brackish/Saline Lagoons | ■ | ■ |
| | 10.7. Coastal Freshwater Lagoons | ■ | ■ |
| | 11. Artificial - Terrestrial | | |
| | 11.1. Arable land | | ■ |
| | 11.2. Pastureland | | ■ |
| | 11.5. Urban areas | | ■ |
| | 12. Artificial - Aquatic | | |
| | 12.8. Seasonally Flooded Agricultural Land | | ■ |

*the number preceding each descriptor is the glcc classification number, see: <http://edcdaac.usgs.gov/glcc/glcc.html>

Table 1. Geographical distribution of the East Canadian High Arctic Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* during the annual cycle (v – vagrant only).

| Breeding season | Non-breeding season |
|-----------------|--|
| Canada | France (several hundred birds) Greenland Iceland Ireland Spain (v) United Kingdom |

Fig. 1. Global distribution of the East Canadian High Arctic Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* (breeding areas – black, non-breeding areas – grey, delimitation of flyway – hatched line)



2. AVAILABLE KEY KNOWLEDGE

The most contemporary information on the numbers and trends for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose across its range is presented in Table 2. More detailed information on the populations, demography and ecology of the species and gaps in knowledge are presented in Robinson *et al.* (2004).

Table 2. Numbers and trends for the Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* in individual range states (in alphabetical order). (Grey cells represent periods when the species is probably not present in the country)

| Country | Breeding Season | | | | | | Non-breeding season | | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|-------|---------|---------------------|---|---------|---------------------|-------|---------|
| | No. Breeding (pairs) | Quality | Year(s) of Estimate | Trend | Quality | Year(s) of Estimate | No. Migrating or Non-breeding (indivs) ¹ | Quality | Year(s) of Estimate | Trend | Quality |
| Canada | ? | 3 | - | ? | 3 | - | | | | | |
| France | | | | | | | 700 | 2 | 2003 | ? | 2 |
| Greenland | | | | | | | | 3 | 2003 | ? | 3 |
| Iceland | | | | | | | >17,000 | 2 | 2003 | ? | 2 |
| Ireland | | | | | | | 16,000 | 1 | 2002 | +1 | 1 |
| Spain | | | | | | | <50 | 1 | 2003 | +1 | 1 |
| United Kingdom | | | | | | | >20,000 ¹ | 1 | 2003 | +1 | 1 |

Quality: Data quality is assessed by assigning one of the following categories: **1** Reliable quantitative data (e.g. atlas data or monitoring data) are available for the whole period and region in question; **2**

¹ Figure is average of Northern Ireland (UK) autumn peaks – 5-year period to 2003/04

Species generally well known, but only poor or incomplete quantitative data available; and **3** Species poorly known, with no quantitative data available.

Trend: Trend in numbers is assessed by assigning to one of the following categories: **+2** Large increase of at least 50% between 1995 and 2002; **+1** Moderate increase of 20-49% between 1995 and 2002; **0** Stable, with overall change less than 20% between 1995 and 2002; **-1** Moderate decrease of 20-49% between 1995 and 2002; **-2** Large decrease of at least 50% between 1995 and 2002; and **F** Fluctuating with changes of at least 20%, but no clear trend since 1995.

It should be noted that there is considerable redistribution of this population of Brent Geese during the non-breeding season and, therefore, simply adding peak counts from each country cannot derive the international population estimate. The vast majority of the 25,000 birds recorded at peak times in the UK are confined to Northern Ireland; the peak number of birds in Ireland estimated from counts made at sites south of the border (i.e. The Republic of Ireland). The international population size is estimated during a systematic and synchronised census of all key sites in the island of Ireland (and in recent years Iceland) during the late autumn.

3. THREATS

The ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose faces various threats throughout its range. In this section, a comprehensive description of the threats facing the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose at a global scale, together with information on special cases, and the relative importance of each threat for the global population, is presented. In addition, a complete list of the threats facing the species in the breeding and non-breeding seasons, and their relative importance, is presented in Table 3. All threats have been identified according to categories listed in the IUCN Species Survival Commission SIS Threats Authority files.

The criteria used to assess threats in this review are:

| | |
|----------|---|
| Critical | a factor causing or likely to cause very rapid declines (>30% over 10 years); |
| High | a factor causing or likely to cause rapid declines (20-30% over 10 years); |
| Medium | a factor causing or likely to cause relatively slow, but significant, declines (10-20% over 10 years); |
| Low | a factor causing or likely to cause fluctuations ; |
| Local | a factor causing or likely to cause negligible declines ; |
| Unknown | a factor that is likely to affect the species but it is not known to what extent. |

3.1. Description of Threats

| Threat | Overall importance | Specific threat category | Issues |
|---|--------------------|---|--|
| Habitat Loss/Degradation (human induced) | HIGH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture (Marine aquaculture) • Infrastructural development (Industry, Human settlement, Tourism/Recreation, Dams) • Invasive alien species (directly impacting habitat) | Many of the most important sites used by ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese have been proposed for human development, especially on the wintering grounds (Heath & Evans 2000). Proposals for new developments across the range will undoubtedly increase the pressure on the carrying capacity of the small number of sites used and require sensitive management. The encroachment of <i>Spartina</i> has been identified as a potential threat to the feeding areas used by birds on the wintering grounds (Heath & Evans 2000; NATURA & Robinson 2003). However, the scale of the problem remains unknown at many sites. |

| | | | |
|---|------------------|--|--|
| Accidental mortality | LOCAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collision (Pylon and building collision) | Accidental hunting probably occurs on a small scale throughout the non-breeding range (Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2004). Collisions with pylons have been recorded and the potential effects of wind turbines located in key areas remain unclear. The number of birds involved is, however, thought to be small. |
| Persecution | LOCAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pest control | Illegal hunting probably occurs on a small scale away from the breeding grounds. For example, in Ireland, there are known cases of farmers shooting birds to protect crops (Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2004). The number of birds involved is, however, thought to be small but may increase if the use of cropped habitats for feeding increases. |
| Pollution (affecting habitat and/or species) | CRITICAL? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atmospheric pollution (Global warming/oceanic warming (sea-level rise)) Water pollution (Agricultural, Domestic, Commercial/Industrial, Oil slicks) | <p>The potential effects and impacts of global climate change require urgent attention given that they are incredibly difficult to predict. On the breeding grounds, short-term effects of increased temperatures will melt the upper permafrost under vegetated areas, eventually leading to soil slumping and vegetational dieback (S. Edlund unpubl. data). The impacts of increased drought and sea-level rise on coastal nesting areas remain unknown. Alternatively, warmer temperatures in the arctic could conceivably increase production and survival rates and/or changes in the numbers of predators and competitors. The effects on the wintering and staging grounds, e.g. from loss of habitat due to sea-level rise, frozen seas due to disruption of the North Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation system, and erosion due to increased frequency of storms, may also be damaging but their effects are, as yet, unknown. Increased incidence or severity of storms could impact on migration, increasing mortality in some cases.</p> <p>Although the majority of studies suggest a negative impact of nutrient enrichment (both from agricultural run-off and domestic discharges) on <i>Zostera</i> beds (e.g. Borum 1985; den Hartog & Poldeman 1975), the impact may be positive in some cases (e.g. Fonseca <i>et al.</i> 1975) and the consequences for Brent Geese remain unclear. By contrast, the likely impacts of major petrochemical spills at the numerically most important sites for geese on the staging and wintering grounds could be catastrophic for the population.</p> |
| Natural disasters | HIGH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drought Storms/flooding | Increased frequency of natural disasters due to global climate change could be damaging to habitats across the range. Drought could reduce the productivity of tundra on the breeding grounds whilst stormy conditions on the wintering |

| | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|--|
| | | | grounds can remove large areas of <i>Zostera</i> , green algae and saltmarsh plants from important feeding sites. |
| Changes in native species dynamics | CRITICAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitors • Pathogens/parasites | <p>It remains unclear whether large increases in the populations of some large goose species, e.g. Snow Geese, may put pressure on the habitat used by breeding ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese.</p> <p>In the 1930s, the abundance of <i>Zostera</i> across Europe and North America was severely reduced by a 'wasting disease' (Rasmussen 1977), which may have led to a dramatic decline in the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose population. The recovery of adequately surveyed beds has been limited and localised and the disease has reappeared intermittently. There is some evidence to suggest that <i>Zostera</i> succumbs to the disease when under stress from factors such as low levels of insolation, increases in temperature or pollution.</p> |
| Intrinsic factors | HIGH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor recruitment, reproduction, and/or regeneration • Restricted range | <p>In very cold summers (when June temperatures are below -3°C), ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese do not breed (Ó Bríain <i>et al.</i> 1998). Predators such as Arctic Foxes <i>Alopex lagopus</i> may take large numbers of young and there may be a relationship between annual productivity and the lemming cycle. Therefore, breeding success is unpredictable and, on average, the rate of success is low. The habitats used by this population in the breeding and non-breeding seasons are restricted within the geographical areas frequented. For example, at least 75% of the population occurs at Strangford Lough, Northern Ireland, in the late autumn (Ó Bríain & Healy 1991) and is susceptible to catastrophic events at this site.</p> |
| Human Disturbance | MEDIUM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation/tourism • Transport • Other (Agricultural) • Other (Industrial) | <p>Disturbance can prevent Brent Geese from gaining access to food resources and roosting areas, either temporarily or for longer periods. In this respect, disturbance can be equated to net habitat loss (Mathers <i>et al.</i> 2000). The impacts of disturbance involve a reduction in body condition, productivity or survival and are of primary conservation concern and may be particularly important for population dynamics if large numbers of birds are involved.</p> |

3.2. Relative importance of threats throughout the range

A breakdown of the threats and their relative importance during the breeding and non-breeding seasons is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Relative importance of threats to the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* during the breeding and non-breeding season. “-” refers to where the particular activity is not perceived to be a current threat to the population in the relevant season.

| Threat category | | Breeding | Non-breeding |
|--|--|-----------|--------------|
| 1. Habitat Loss/Degradation (human-induced) | | | |
| 1.1. Agriculture | | | |
| 1.1.6. Marine aquaculture | | - | LOCAL |
| 1.4. Infrastructure development | | | |
| 1.4.1. Industry | | - | HIGH |
| 1.4.2. Human settlement | | - | HIGH |
| 1.4.3. Tourism/recreation | | - | HIGH |
| 1.4.6. Dams (Barrages etc.) | | - | HIGH |
| 1.5. Invasive alien species (directly impacting habitat) | | - | MEDIUM |
| | | | |
| 4. Accidental mortality | | | |
| 4.2. Collision | | | |
| 4.2.1. Pylon and building collision | | - | LOCAL |
| 5. Persecution | | | |
| 5.1. Pest control | | - | LOCAL |
| 6. Pollution (affecting habitat and/or species) | | | |
| 6.1. Atmospheric pollution | | | |
| 6.1.1. Global warming/oceanic warming | | CRITICAL? | CRITICAL? |
| 6.3. Water pollution | | | |
| 6.3.1. Agricultural | | - | LOW |
| 6.3.2. Domestic | | - | LOW |
| 6.3.3. Commercial/Industrial | | LOW | HIGH |
| 6.3.6. Oil slicks | | LOW | HIGH |
| 7. Natural disasters | | | |
| 7.1. Drought | | HIGH | HIGH |
| 7.2. Storms/flooding | | HIGH | HIGH |
| 8. Changes in native (food) species dynamics | | | |
| 8.1. Competitors | | - | LOCAL |
| 8.5. Pathogens/parasites | | LOW | CRITICAL |
| 9. Intrinsic Factors | | | |
| 9.2. Poor recruitment/reproduction/regeneration | | MEDIUM | - |
| 9.9. Restricted range | | MEDIUM | HIGH |
| 10. Human disturbance | | | |
| 10.1. Recreation/tourism | | - | MEDIUM |
| 10.4. Transport | | - | MEDIUM |
| 10.6. Other (Agricultural) | | - | MEDIUM |
| 10.6. Other (Industrial) | | LOCAL | MEDIUM |

‘Problem trees’ for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose are shown in Fig. 2a and b. They have been produced to explain how the threats affect the population and how they are related. The root causes of the problems facing the species are shown on the right hand side of the tree.

Fig. 2a. Problem tree for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* I: Direct Threats (solid bold frame – CRITICAL; hatched bold frame – HIGH, dotted thin frame – MEDIUM, solid thin frame – LOCAL; numbers in parentheses relate to IUCN SSC Threats Authority File codes)

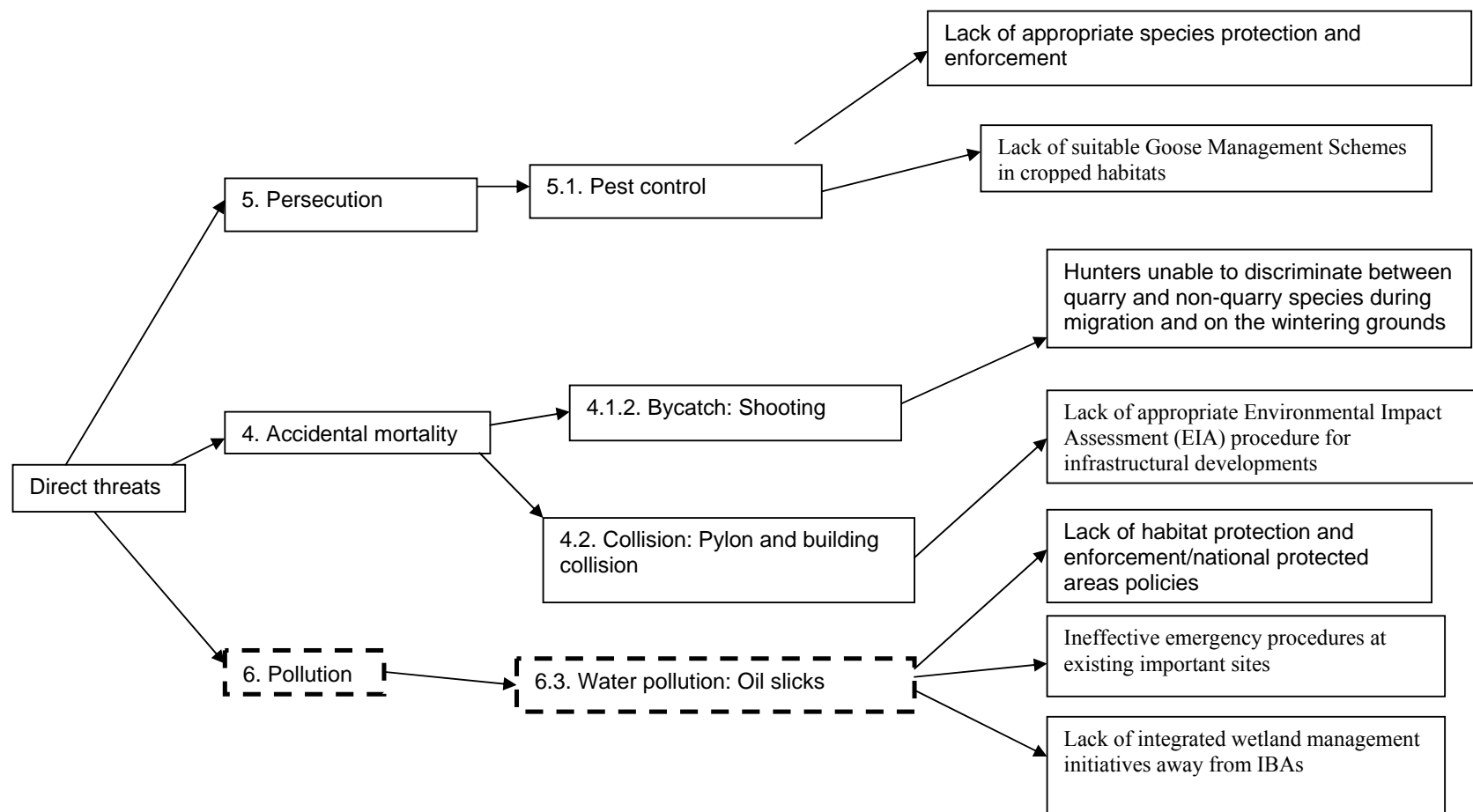
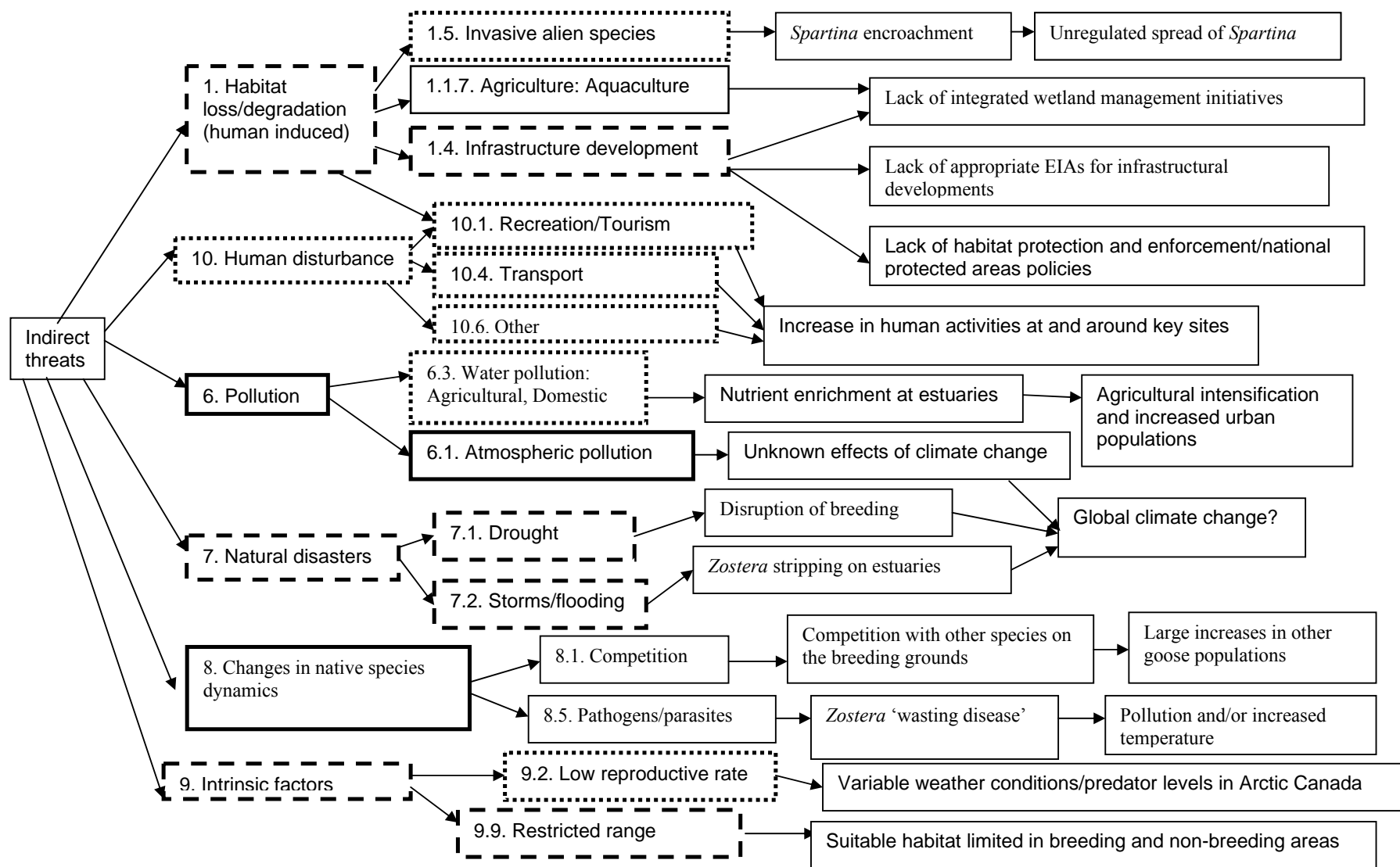


Fig. 2b. Problem tree for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* II: Indirect Threats (solid bold frame – CRITICAL; hatched bold frame – HIGH, dotted thin frame – MEDIUM, solid thin frame - LOCAL; numbers in parentheses relate to IUCN SSC Threats Authority File codes)



4. POLICIES AND LEGISLATION RELEVANT FOR MANAGEMENT

4.1. International Conservation and Legal Status of the Species

Table 4 shows the status of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose under the main international legislative instruments for conservation.

Table 4. International conservation and legal status of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* (Note: Headers in grey relate to measures relevant to European countries only).

| World Status (IUCN) | European Status | SPEC category | EU Birds Directive Annex | Bern Convention Annex | Bonn Convention Annex | African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement | Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species | Migratory Birds Convention (Canada and United States) |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| NT | Vulnerable | SPEC 3 | II-2 | Appendix III | Appendix II | A2 | Not listed | Protected migratory game bird |

4.2. Member States/Contracting Parties Obligations

The obligations/commitments of Member States/Contracting Parties under various Directives/Conventions are presented in Annex 1.

4.3. National policies, legislation and ongoing activities

The species is afforded full protected under national legislation in Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, the UK, France and Spain. A sustained harvest, primarily for subsistence, is allowed in Canada and subsistence hunting occurs in Greenland.

4.4. Site (and habitat) protection and research

The complete list of European Important Bird Areas (IBAs) identified for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose, together with their co-ordinates, the numbers of birds they support, the season for which they are important and the criteria used to identify each site, is shown in Annex 2.1. The protection status of each of these IBAs is shown in Annex 2.2. If we accept that the global population estimate is roughly 22,000, then the IBA network in Europe currently supports up to 100% during passage period in Iceland and up to 100% during the winter. There have been no IBAs identified for this population in Greenland.

Only one IBA in the United Kingdom has yet to be notified as an SPA and Ramsar site and all receive some protection under national legislation (e.g. as Areas of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves). In Ireland, all but one IBA has been designated as an SPA, 75% as Ramsar sites (the remainder having been proposed), but only 54% receive protection under national legislation (e.g. as Wildfowl Sanctuaries, Natural Heritage Areas or Nature Reserves). Of the six IBAs identified in Iceland, only one is a Ramsar site and four receive some protection under national legislation (e.g. as Conservation Areas or Nature Reserves). No IBAs in France or Spain have been identified for this species.

In the Canadian arctic, ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese receive protection within the following protected areas:

- Northern Ellesmere Island National Park
- Seymour Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary
- Polar Bear Pass National Wildlife Area

The following IBAs have been identified in northern Canada, and could support ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese: NU010, NU045, NU049, NU051, NU052, NU053, NU054, NU059, NU060. Details about these sites can be found at <http://www.ibacanada.com>.

Given that nest sites are highly dispersed and the breeding range has yet to be accurately identified, it remains unclear as to what proportion of the population is protected within these areas. A new national park has been proposed (abutting the Polar Bear Pass NWA), which would include the northern half of Bathurst Island and some small adjacent islands.

4.5. Recent conservation measures

Table 5 provides a summary of some of the conservation measures already in place for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose. This population remains one of the least studied of all the goose populations that spend the winter in the Western Palearctic and there are many gaps in our knowledge. A comprehensive list of published studies is presented in Section 8.

Table 5. Recent conservation measures, by country

| Country | Conservation measures |
|--------------------------|--|
| Joint initiatives | <p>In 1989, the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Irish National Parks & Wildlife Service twinning Polar Bear Pass National Wildlife Area (NWA) with three nature reserves in County Dublin (North Bull Island, Rogerstown Estuary and Baldoyle Estuary) as ‘Sister Reserves’. In the same year, CWS and the Northern Ireland Department of the Environment and the Northern Ireland National Trust signed a Statement of Intent linking Polar Bear Pass NWA with areas in Strangford Lough protected by the Strangford Lough Wildlife Scheme. These agreements were implemented for a five-year period in the first instance; unfortunately, neither has been formally reviewed since (Merne <i>et al.</i> 1999; Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2004).</p> <p>Annual all-Ireland censuses were initiated by Major R.F. Rutledge in winter 1960/61 and were continued by the Irish Wildfowl Committee/Irish Wildbird Conservancy and then the Forest & Wildlife Service (predecessors of the current National Parks and Wildlife Service). Since 1996, all-Ireland censuses of this population have been organised by the Irish Brent Goose Research Group through the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust and the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (see Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2004). Late autumn and mid-winter counts are now made. The proportion of first-year birds in flocks and brood sizes are recorded during the census.</p> <p>Satellite telemetry studies, investigating the use of key sites and migratory routes, were undertaken in the early 1990s, 2002 and 2004 (Gudmundsson <i>et al.</i> 1995; K. Colhoun, J.A. Robinson, G.A. Gudmundsson & P. Clausen unpubl. data). The genetic structuring within and between global populations of Light-bellied Brent Geese is on-going, coordinated by the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS).</p> |
| Canada | <p>The Canadian Museum of Nature, CWS and the Irish Brent Goose Study (IBGRG) undertook studies of Light-bellied Brent Geese on Bathurst and Seymour Islands between 1968 and 1989. Much of the data collected appears in Ó Briain <i>et al.</i> (1998). Before then, ad-hoc research trips to the breeding grounds were undertaken by the CWS.</p> <p>The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board completed a</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| | territory-wide harvest survey during 1996-2001 (Priest & Usher 2004). Average annual harvest of ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese was estimated at 15 birds. CWS is currently reviewing and updating the publication “Key migratory bird terrestrial habitat sites in the Northwest Territories”, (Alexander <i>et al.</i> 1991). |
| France | Counts are made annually at key sites as part of the International Waterbird Census (Debout & Leclerc 1990). |
| Greenland | The little information about Light-bellied Brent Geese in Greenland comes primarily from the studies co-ordinated by the National Environmental Research Institute, Denmark (Boertmann <i>et al.</i> 1997). |
| Iceland | Aerial and land-based counts of staging geese have been organised by the University of Iceland and Icelandic Institute of Natural History since the early 1990s (Gardarsson & Gudmundsson 1997). Autumn counts have been made by land and plane since 2002. Collaborative studies of stopover ecology and timing of migration is ongoing at a key site in W Iceland, including colour-marking individuals and behaviour (GA Gudmundsson & WWT/IBGRG). |
| Ireland | The Irish Wetland Bird Survey was initiated in 1994/95. Counts are made by volunteer, and some professional, ornithologists at various wetland habitats generally on the middle Sunday of each month, and primarily between September and March (Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2004). Studies on the distribution, feeding ecology and social behaviour of Light-bellied Brent Geese was undertaken at University College, Dublin, in the mid-1980s (e.g. Ó Briain 1989, 1991; Ó Briain & Healy 1991; Ó Briain <i>et al.</i> 1998). |
| United Kingdom | Outside of national legislative site-safeguard, the National Trust established the Strangford Lough Wildlife Scheme in 1966, which provides extra protection at this particularly important site (Merne <i>et al.</i> 1999). The inclusion of wetland sites in Northern Ireland within the UK Wetland Bird Survey began in 1986. Counts are made by volunteer, and some professional, ornithologists at various wetland habitats, generally on the middle Sunday of each month, and primarily between September and March (Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2004). Queen’s University, Belfast, has been undertaking research projects on the ecology of Light-bellied Brent Geese at Strangford Lough since the early 1990s (e.g. Portig <i>et al.</i> 1994; Mathers & Montgomery 1997; Mathers <i>et al.</i> 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2000). In addition, an international research programme was developed by WWT in 2000, components of which are undertaken by various members of the Irish Brent Goose Research Group. One of the key components of this work is the marking and resighting of birds with engraved coloured plastic leg-rings to provide novel information on population dynamics and movements of individual birds. |
| Spain | With no documented occurrence of this flyway population in Spain prior to 1985, little information exists on the species’ status and distribution. Salaverri (2002) produced a detailed review of the status of <i>Branta bernicla</i> in Galicia. |

5. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

This section of the document identifies and defines the goal, the purpose and results of the SSAP and sets targets and the means of verification of its implementation.

The Goal is the higher level of objective to which the SSAP will contribute. The Purpose is the objective or effect of the plan. The Results are the changes that will need to have been brought about by the plan if the Purpose is to be realised. The Objectively Verifiable Indicators specify the meaning of the Results. They are designed to be easy to measure and independent from the Operational Objectives. The indicators are designed to measure the impact of the activity rather than the process undertaken to achieve it. The indicators are measured by Means of Verification, which are time bound.

The Goal, purpose, results and activities of this plan have been designed to be specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time-bound following the internationally agreed process.

5.1. Goal

Overall, the goal of this Plan will be to secure the favourable conservation status of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose. The short-term aim of the plan is to maintain the current population and distribution of the species throughout its range. The long-term aim is to increase to and then maintain the population size at or above 25,000 birds, thus removing it from Category A2 of the AEWA and removing the requirement for national action planning.

5.2. Purpose

An overall **priority** for each Purpose is given, according to the following scale:

- Essential: an objective that will prevent a large decline in the population which could lead to species or sub-species extinction
- High: an objective that will prevent a decline of more than 20% of the population in 20 years or less
- Medium: an objective that will prevent a decline of less than 20% of the population in 20 years or less
- Low: an objective that will prevent local population declines or which is likely to have only a small impact on the population across the range

A **priority** for each Result is given, according to the following scale:

- Essential: an action that is needed to prevent a large decline in the population which could lead to species or sub-species extinction
- High: an action that is needed to prevent a decline of more than 20 % of the population in 20 years or less
- Medium: an action that is needed to prevent a decline of less than 20% of the population in 20 years or less
- Low: an action that is needed to prevent local population declines or which is likely to have only a small impact on the population across the range

| Purpose | Priority | Result | Priority | Objectively verifiable indicator | Means of verification ¹ |
|---|------------|--|----------|--|---|
| To end illegal and accidental shooting by 2014 | LOW | Strict enforcement of species protection legislation across the range by 2008 | LOW | By 2008, a measurable increase in the number of penalties issued to those infringing national and international legislation regarding the species and its habitat | <p>Within three years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All known incidences of illegal shootings investigated • Guilty parties penalised according to national legislative requirements <p>Within six years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial penalties for contravening national legislation • Annual assessment of illegal shootings |
| | | No conflict between ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and agricultural interests on the non-breeding areas after 2014 | LOW | By 2014, a measurable increase in the number of Goose Management Schemes designed to reduce conflict between ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and agricultural interests | <p>Within nine years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goose Management Schemes developed and implemented in areas where there is known conflict between ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese and agricultural interests • National monitoring of the success and efficacy of Goose Management Schemes designed to reduce conflict between ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and agricultural interests |
| | | A reduction in the number of birds taken accidentally during the non-breeding season by 2008 | LOW | By 2008, a measurable decrease in the number of accidental shootings reported | <p>Within three years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles on identification and conservation of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose published in shooting magazines across the non-breeding range <p>Within six years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual assessment of accidental shootings • Introduction of an identification test for hunters; where one exists already, to include ECHA Brent if not already done so |
| To ensure permitted harvest levels | LOW | Harvest levels monitored at regular intervals in | LOW | By 2014, knowledge of the number of ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese harvested annually | <p>Within nine years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvest assessed in Canada and Greenland |

| Purpose | Priority | Result | Priority | Objectively verifiable indicator | Means of verification ¹ |
|---|----------|---|----------|---|---|
| continue to remain sustainable | | Canada and Greenland to ensure that the take remains sustainable | | in Canada and Greenland | |
| To provide protection and management of sufficient habitat across the range to support 25,000 birds by 2014 | HIGH | Adequate protection and management of existing IBA network for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose by 2014 | HIGH | By 2014, all existing IBAs identified for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese protected and adequately managed | <p>Within three years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and develop the Sister Reserves Memorandum of Understanding <p>Within six years (not relevant to Canada):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full protection of known IBAs under national legislation Emergency measures and procedures developed and documented for IBAs that are likely to be highly vulnerable to pollution incidents Review of existing human activities at known IBAs to inform comprehensive management planning process <p>Within nine years (not relevant to Canada):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designation of all IBAs as Ramsar sites and SPAs, as appropriate Management plans developed and implemented for all IBAs (to include provisions for nutrient management as a priority) EIAs undertaken for all development proposals within IBAs Disturbance-free zones established in at least eight IBAs where human disturbance occurs Licence schemes developed for IBAs supporting aquacultural interests <p>Within twelve years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring of human activities at |

| Purpose | Priority | Result | Priority | Objectively verifiable indicator | Means of verification ¹ |
|---------|----------|---|----------|--|--|
| | | | | | IBAs for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose, identifying illegal development and adverse effects of existing human activity (will form essential component of management plan monitoring schemes) |
| | | Regular assessments of the numbers of ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese at IBAs across the range by 2008 | LOW | By 2008, an improved knowledge of IBAs and their importance to ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese, particularly in Greenland, Iceland and Canada | Within three years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National inventories of known IBAs for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose published • Numbers of ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose at each IBA in the non-breeding range published annually, where possible (International Waterfowl Census (IWC) to provide support) |
| | | Knowledge of IBAs in remote areas by 2008 | MEDIUM | By 2008, data on migratory movements and key sites in remote areas used to inform future IBA identification | Within three years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTTs attached to birds on the staging and breeding grounds and migratory routes tracked • At least one published paper on migratory movements and potentially important staging areas • Results used to inform discussions of the International Species Working Group regarding the need for ground-truthing studies and site protection |
| | | Knowledge of habitat requirements and feeding ecology, especially during migration, by 2011 | HIGH | By 2011, data on habitat requirements and feeding ecology used to inform site management plans | Within six years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two published papers on habitat requirements and feeding ecology in Greenland and Iceland • Results used to inform discussions of the International Species Working Group (see definition in Section 7.1) regarding site management |

| Purpose | Priority | Result | Priority | Objectively verifiable indicator | Means of verification ¹ |
|---|------------------|---|-----------|--|--|
| | | Inclusion of wider countryside measures for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose conservation in national strategies and policies by 2014 | HIGH | By 2011, national strategies and policies promoting the conservation management of important areas outside the IBA network | Within nine years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated wetland management initiatives developed across the range to ensure sensitive management of key wetland sites for the population outside the IBA network (e.g. in non-estuarine coastal areas during the winter) |
| To understand population dynamics fully by 2014 | HIGH | KNOWLEDGE OF POPULATION DYNAMICS BY 2014 | HIGH | By 2014, data on the abundance, productivity and survival rates of this population used to inform species management | Within three years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual assessment of population size (international census) Annual assessment of productivity during the annual census Upkeep of international census database Upkeep of re-sightings database 200 birds colour-ringed per year Within nine years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First comprehensive analysis of annual survival rates undertaken At least one published paper on population dynamics (using productivity and resightings data) Results used to inform discussions of the International Species Working Group regarding future conservation measures |
| | | More accurate census technique developed by 2014 | MEDIUM | By 2014, development of a more effective census technique to assess annual population size | Within nine years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of census techniques published, informing national monitoring Results used to inform discussions of the International Species Working Group regarding population assessment |
| To understand fully the effects and impacts of currently | ESSENTIAL | Knowledge of the impacts of climate change during the non-breeding | ESSENTIAL | By 2017, development of suitable models to predict the potential effects and impacts of global climate change on the | Within three years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First assessments of the food resource available to birds in the island of Ireland and in Iceland |

| Purpose | Priority | Result | Priority | Objectively verifiable indicator | Means of verification ¹ |
|------------------------------|----------|--|-----------|--|---|
| unquantified threats by 2014 | | season by 2017 | | wintering and staging grounds and inform future conservation efforts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one published paper on the use of food resources by ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese in Ireland and Iceland A scheme to monitor intertidal food resources in the island of Ireland and in Iceland, developed and implemented (to monitor, in part, potential outbreaks of 'wasting disease'). <p>Within six years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive review of the potential effects and impacts of climate change on the non-breeding grounds <p>Within twelve years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A population model that predicts the impacts of sea-level rise on the population (using data collected on demography and resource use) Results used to inform discussions of the International Species Working Group regarding future conservation measures |
| | | Knowledge of the impacts of climate change on the breeding grounds by 2008 | ESSENTIAL | By 2008, a greater understanding of the potential effects and impacts of global climate change on the breeding grounds | <p>Within three years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of the potential impacts of global climate change in the Canadian arctic A research plan developed in conjunction with other researchers working in the breeding areas to assess the impacts of climate change on this population <p>Within six years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results of review and new research used to inform discussions of the International Species Working Group regarding future conservation measures |
| | | Knowledge of the possible effects of | LOW | By 2014, data on the availability of green algae and | <p>Within nine years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one published paper on the effects |

| Purpose | Priority | Result | Priority | Objectively verifiable indicator | Means of verification ¹ |
|---------|----------|---|----------|--|--|
| | | tertiary sewage water-treatment on food availability for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese in the non-breeding areas | | other food resources in relation to implementation of EU Directives on sewage treatment (e.g. Water Framework Directive) | <p>of tertiary treatment of sewage on food availability for foods for ECHA Brent</p> <p>Within twelve years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results used to inform discussions of the International Species Working Group regarding habitat management |
| | | Knowledge of the impact of <i>Spartina</i> encroachment on the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and its wintering habitat by 2014 | LOW | By 2014, data on the effects of <i>Spartina</i> encroachment on the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and its habitat used to inform habitat management | <p>Within nine years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one published paper on the effects of <i>Spartina</i> encroachment on the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and its habitat <p>Within twelve years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Spartina</i> monitoring programme developed and implemented in the island of Ireland All-Ireland <i>Spartina</i> management plan developed Results used to inform discussions of the International Species Working Group regarding habitat management |
| | | Knowledge of the effects of interspecific competition on the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and its breeding grounds by 2014 | LOW | By 2014, data on competition between the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and other goose species used to inform species management | <p>Within nine years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one scientific paper on the effects of interspecific competition on ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese <p>Within twelve years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results used to inform discussions of the International Species Working Group regarding species management |

¹Period mentioned in these columns refers to the period of the formal adoption and review of the SSAP by the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA.

6. ACTIVITIES BY RANGE STATES

This section identifies the activities at country level where the actions needed to achieve each ‘Result’ are listed with their priority and urgency, and with ‘Means of Verification’. The activities for each country are identified using the following system:

Time scales (linked to the timescale for formal adoption of the SSAP by AEWA) are attached to each Activity using the following criteria:

- Immediate: completed within the next year
- Short: completed within the next 1-3 years
- Medium: completed within the next 1-6 years
- Medium/Long: completed within the next 1-9 years
- Long: completed within the next 1-12 years

6.1. Canada

| Result | National activity | Time scale |
|---|---|------------|
| Strict enforcement of species protection legislation across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and record any reported incidences of illegal hunting Apply existing penalties for those contravening legislation | SHORT |
| Harvest levels monitored at regular intervals in Canada to ensure that the take is sustainable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor harvest on a regular basis | MEDIUM |
| Adequate protection and management of existing IBA network for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and develop the Sister Reserves Memorandum of Understanding with other countries in the range Produce a review of human activities in key breeding areas, if appropriate Develop and implement emergency measures for breeding areas likely to be highly vulnerable to pollution incidents | SHORT |
| Regular assessments of the numbers of ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese at IBAs across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake studies to refine knowledge of the breeding range, possibly through habitat suitability mapping using remotely-sensed data | MEDIUM |
| Knowledge of IBAs in remote areas by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the potential for attaching PTTs on the breeding grounds to complement on-going satellite telemetry studies | SHORT |
| Inclusion of wider countryside measures for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose conservation in national strategies and policies by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, and the people who determine land use processes, to protect important lowland areas in the eastern high arctic | LONG |
| Knowledge of population dynamics by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake at least one study on the factors influencing annual productivity | LONG |
| Knowledge of the impacts of climate change on the breeding grounds by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the potential impacts of global climate change in the Canadian arctic In conjunction with other researchers working in the breeding areas, develop a research plan to assess the impacts of climate change on this population of geese | SHORT |
| Knowledge of the effects of interspecific competition on the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and its habitat by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the potential impact of interspecific competition between ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese and other goose species breeding in the eastern high arctic | LONG |

6.2. Greenland

| Result | National activity | Time scale |
|---|--|------------|
| Strict enforcement of species protection legislation across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and record any reported incidences of illegal hunting Apply existing penalties for those contravening legislation | SHORT |
| Reduction in the number of birds taken accidentally by hunters during the non-breeding season by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and record any reported incidences of accidental shooting Publish articles on the identification and conservation of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose in relevant periodicals | SHORT |
| Harvest levels monitored at regular intervals in Greenland to ensure that the take is sustainable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor harvest on regular basis | MEDIUM |
| Adequate protection and management of existing IBA network for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate entering the Sister Reserves Memorandum of Understanding Ensure all known IBAs are protected under national legislation and designated as Ramsar sites Develop and implement emergency measures for staging areas likely to be highly vulnerable to pollution incidents Use EIAs to investigate the impact of new developments on IBAs Develop and implement management plans for all known IBAs | SHORT |
| Regular assessments of the numbers of ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese at IBAs across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review national inventory of IBAs for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Attempt to make at least one spring and autumn count at each IBA every three years | SHORT |
| Knowledge of habitat requirements and feeding ecology, especially during migration, by 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake at least one study on the habitat requirements of ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese at Greenland IBAs during the spring (and autumn, if appropriate) | MEDIUM |

6.3. Iceland

| Result | National activity | Time scale |
|---|---|-----------------|
| Strict enforcement of species protection legislation across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and record any reported incidences of illegal hunting Apply existing penalties for those contravening legislation | SHORT |
| No conflict between ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and agricultural interests on the non-breeding areas by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement Goose Management Schemes in areas where there is known conflict between ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese and agricultural interests Develop and implement schemes to monitor the success of these Goose Management Schemes | MEDIUM/ LONG |
| Reduction in the number of birds taken accidentally by hunters during the non-breeding season by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and record any reported incidences of accidental shooting Publish articles on the identification and conservation of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose in relevant periodicals | SHORT |
| Adequate protection and management of existing IBA network for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and develop the Sister Reserves Memorandum of Understanding with other countries in the range Ensure all known IBAs are protected under national legislation and designated as Ramsar sites (see Annex 2.2) Develop and implement emergency measures for staging areas likely to be highly vulnerable to pollution incidents Use EIAs to investigate the impact of new developments on IBAs Produce a review of human activities at IBAs and consider a long-term scheme to monitor human impacts at IBAs Develop and implement management plans for all known IBAs | SHORT |
| Regular assessments of the numbers of ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese at IBAs across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review national inventory of IBAs for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Undertake spring and autumn counts at IBAs on an annual basis (where possible also assessing productivity) | SHORT |
| Knowledge of habitat requirements and feeding ecology, especially during migration, by 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake at least one study on the habitat requirements at Icelandic IBAs for the population during the spring | MEDIUM |
| Inclusion of wider countryside measures for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose conservation in national strategies and policies by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the application of national policies and strategies to protect birds using areas outside the IBA network | MEDIUM |
| Knowledge of population dynamics by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to international census in autumn and submit data to international coordinator Partake in annual re-sightings programme and submit data to international coordinator Catch and mark at least 50 birds a year with colour rings from the internationally agreed scheme Contribute scientific expertise to analyses of survival rates | SHORT |
| Knowledge of the impacts of climate change during the non-breeding season by 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liase with experts in Northern Ireland and Ireland to investigate ways of extending the geographical scope of the predictive population modelling work | SHORT |

6.4. Ireland

| Result | National activity | Time scale |
|---|--|-----------------|
| Strict enforcement of species protection legislation across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and record any reported incidences of illegal hunting Apply existing penalties for those contravening legislation | SHORT |
| No conflict between ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and agricultural interests on the non-breeding areas by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement Goose Management Schemes in areas where there is known conflict between ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese and agricultural interests Develop and implement schemes to monitor the success of these Goose Management Schemes | MEDIUM/ LONG |
| Reduction in the number of birds taken accidentally by hunters during the non-breeding season by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and record any reported incidences of accidental shooting Publish articles on the identification and conservation of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose in relevant periodicals | SHORT |
| Adequate protection and management of existing IBA network for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and develop the Sister Reserves Memorandum of Understanding with other countries in the range Ensure all known IBAs are protected under national legislation and designated as Ramsar sites/SPAs (see Annex 2.2) Develop and implement emergency measures for non-breeding areas likely to be highly vulnerable to pollution incidents Use EIAs to investigate the impact of new developments on IBAs Establish disturbance-free zones at at least four IBAs where human disturbance is a potential threat Develop and implement licence schemes for aquacultural developments on key sites Produce a review of human activities at IBAs and monitor activities thereafter Develop and implement management plans for all known IBAs | SHORT |
| Regular assessments of the numbers of ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese at IBAs across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review national inventory of IBAs for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Undertake monthly counts at IBAs on an annual basis through I-WeBS Publish count data in I-WeBS annual report | SHORT |
| Knowledge of IBAs in remote areas by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support satellite telemetry study of migratory movements and potentially important sites along the entire flyway | MEDIUM |
| Inclusion of wider countryside measures for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose conservation in national strategies and policies by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the application of national policies and strategies to protect birds using areas outside the IBA network | MEDIUM |
| Knowledge of population dynamics by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to international census in autumn and winter and submit data to international coordinator (includes annual assessments of productivity) Partake in annual re-sightings programme and submit data to international coordinator Catch and mark at least 50 birds a year with colour rings from the internationally agreed scheme Support analyses of survival rates | SHORT |

| Result | National activity | Time scale |
|---|---|-----------------|
| MORE ACCURATE CENSUS TECHNIQUE DEVELOPED BY 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the review of census methodology through the Irish Brent Goose Research Group | MEDIUM/ LONG |
| Knowledge of the impacts of climate change during the non-breeding season by 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the collection of demographic and resource use data to support development of a predictive population model Develop a scheme to monitor the food resources available in Ireland | SHORT |
| Knowledge of the impact of <i>Spartina</i> encroachment on the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and its wintering habitat by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support research to measure the effects of <i>Spartina</i> encroachment on ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese and their habitats Develop an all-Ireland <i>Spartina</i> monitoring programme with UK PUBLISH AN ALL-IRELAND <i>SPARTINA</i> MANAGEMENT PLAN, IF NECESSARY | MEDIUM/ LONG |

6.5. United Kingdom

| Result | National activity | Time scale |
|---|--|-----------------|
| Strict enforcement of species protection legislation across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and record any reported incidences of illegal hunting Apply existing penalties for those contravening legislation | SHORT |
| No conflict between ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and agricultural interests on the non-breeding areas by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement existing Goose Management Schemes (<i>Countryside Management Scheme</i> and <i>Management of Sensitive Sites</i>) in areas where there is known conflict between ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese and agricultural interests (especially around Strangford Lough) Develop and implement schemes to monitor the success of these Goose Management Schemes | MEDIUM/ LONG |
| Reduction in the number of birds taken accidentally by hunters during the non-breeding season by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and record any reported incidences of accidental shooting Publish articles on the identification and conservation of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose in relevant periodicals | SHORT |
| Adequate protection and management of existing IBA network for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and develop the Sister Reserves Memorandum of Understanding with other countries in the range Ensure all known IBAs are protected under national legislation and designated as Ramsar sites/SPAs (see Annex 2.2) Develop and implement emergency measures for non-breeding areas likely to be highly vulnerable to pollution incidents Use EIAs to investigate the impact of new developments on IBAs Establish disturbance-free zones at at least four IBAs where human disturbance is a potential threat Develop and implement licence schemes for aquacultural developments at key sites Produce a review of human activities at IBAs and monitor activities thereafter Develop and implement management plans for all known IBAs | SHORT |
| Regular assessments of the numbers of ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese at IBAs across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review national inventory of IBAs for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Undertake monthly counts at IBAs on an annual basis through WeBS Publish count data in WeBS annual report | SHORT |
| Knowledge of IBAs in remote areas by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support satellite telemetry study of migratory movements and potentially important sites along the entire flyway | MEDIUM |
| Inclusion of wider countryside measures for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose conservation in national strategies and policies by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the application of national policies and strategies to protect birds using areas outside the IBA network, e.g. Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) | MEDIUM |
| Knowledge of population dynamics by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to international census in autumn and winter and submit data to international coordinator Partake in annual re-sightings programme and submit data to international coordinator Catch and mark at least 100 birds a year with colour rings from the internationally agreed scheme Support analyses of survival rates | SHORT |

| Result | National activity | Time scale |
|---|--|-------------------|
| More accurate census technique developed by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the review of census methodology through the Irish Brent Goose Research Group | MEDIUM/ LONG |
| Knowledge of the impacts of climate change during the non-breeding season by 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the collection of demographic and resource use data to support development of a predictive population model • Develop a scheme to monitor the food resources available in Ireland | SHORT |
| Knowledge of the impact of <i>Spartina</i> encroachment on the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose and its wintering habitat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support research to measure the effects of <i>Spartina</i> encroachment on ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese and their habitats • Develop an all-Ireland <i>Spartina</i> monitoring programme with Ireland • PUBLISH AN ALL-IRELAND <i>SPARTINA</i> MANAGEMENT PLAN, IF NECESSARY | MEDIUM/ LONG |

6.6. France

| Result | National activity | Time scale |
|---|--|------------|
| Strict enforcement of species protection legislation across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and record any reported incidences of illegal hunting Apply existing penalties for those contravening legislation | SHORT |
| Reduction in the number of birds taken accidentally by hunters during the non-breeding season by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and record any reported incidences of accidental shooting Publish articles on the identification and conservation of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose in relevant periodicals | SHORT |
| Adequate protection and management of existing IBA network for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate entering the Sister Reserves Memorandum of Understanding Ensure all known IBAs are protected under national legislation and designated as Ramsar sites/SPAs (see Annex 2.2) Develop and implement emergency measures for non-breeding areas likely to be highly vulnerable to pollution incidents Use EIAs to investigate the impact of new developments on IBAs Establish disturbance-free zones at at least four IBAs where human disturbance is a potential threat Develop and implement licence schemes for aquacultural developments at key sites Produce a review of human activities at IBAs and monitor activities thereafter Develop and implement management plans for all known IBAs | SHORT |
| Regular assessments of the numbers of ECHA Light-bellied Brent Geese at IBAs across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review national inventory of IBAs for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Undertake monthly counts at IBAs on an annual basis through waterbird count schemes (where possible assessing productivity) Publish count data in annual reports | SHORT |
| Inclusion of wider countryside measures for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose conservation in national strategies and policies by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the application of national policies and strategies to protect birds using areas outside the IBA network, e.g. Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) | MEDIUM |
| Knowledge of habitat requirements and feeding ecology by 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake at least one study on the habitat requirements at French IBAs for the population during the spring | MEDIUM |
| Knowledge of population dynamics by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to international census in autumn and submit data to international coordinator Partake in annual re-sightings programme and submit data to international coordinator Catch and mark at least 50 birds a year with colour rings from the internationally agreed scheme Contribute scientific expertise to analyses of survival rates | SHORT |
| Knowledge of the impacts of climate change during the non-breeding season by 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liase with experts in other range states to investigate ways of extending the geographical scope of the predictive population modelling work | SHORT |

6.7. Spain

| Result | National activity | Time scale |
|---|--|------------|
| Strict enforcement of species protection legislation across the range by 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and record any reported incidences of illegal hunting Apply existing penalties for those contravening legislation | SHORT |
| Inclusion of wider countryside measures for ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose conservation in national strategies and policies by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the application of national policies and strategies to protect birds using areas outside the IBA network, e.g. Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) | LONG |
| Knowledge of population dynamics by 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to international census in autumn and submit data to international coordinator; monitor numbers of <i>hrota</i> throughout winter months Partake in annual re-sightings programme and submit data to international coordinator | SHORT |

7. IMPLEMENTATION

This section provides a framework for the implementation of the SSAP focusing on the role of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Working Group, country actions and a timetable for monitoring, evaluation and communication (Table 6).

7.1. International ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Working Group

The ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Working Group is the International Species Working Group (ISWG) for implementation of this SSAP, working under the auspices of the AEWA Technical Committee.

This group comprises representatives of each of the 7 Range States and representatives of relevant international interest groups, including each of the relevant treaties (e.g. AEWA Technical Committee) and several technical advisors.

AEWA Range States have a responsibility to monitor the national populations of the species and its habitat, as well as the actions taken, including their impact on the species/habitat, successes and problems. This should be done by NSWG as recommended by the AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 1 (National Single Species Action Plans). To ensure lessons are learnt and shared internationally, this information then needs to be communicated to the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Working Group and thus to other Range States, including via the relevant international treaties.

To improve action for the species, the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Working Group aims to catalyse and co-ordinate the collection of improved conservation-relevant information on the species, including on population biology (e.g. details of breeding population size and range, migration habits, wintering range) and ecology (e.g. habitat use and diet).

Thus, the role of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Working Group will include work to:

- Develop guidelines for population censusing and monitoring.
- Organise a co-operative ringing programme.
- Develop guidelines for habitat management practices.
- Facilitate the development of a population model, where this will be helpful to focus conservation effort (for example through identifying parameters for which improved data are most needed).
- Assist in and co-ordinate the process of National Action Plan preparation.
- Co-ordinate and facilitate information exchange between Range States (NSWG) and between the AEWA and the Range States.
- Collect country data and annual reports on the implementation of the SSAP from the NSWGs.
- Monitor implementation of the SSAP through the preparation of an annual international report by the ISWG.
- Organise intermediate meetings with groups of Range States (training, emergency measures, etc.).
- Prepare and organise the triennial review meeting between Range States.
- Prepare and submit a review of the SSAP to the triennial Range States' meeting and to the AEWA MOPs.

Detailed Terms of Reference based on the above description of activities will be prepared by the AEWA Technical Committee, and endorsed by the Range States to assist the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Working Group with its work.

7.2. Country actions

To assist implementation of the SSAP, each Range State should commit itself to, at least:

- Endorse the Terms of Reference of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Working Group.
- Endorse this SSAP.
- Establish a National Species Working Group.
- Report to the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose Working Group (through the AEWA Secretariat) about relevant issues in the country, at least through contributing information for the preparation of the annual report by the ISWG.
- Prepare within one year a National Action Plan, in co-operation with the NSWG, and based on this International SSAP (see AEWA Conservation guidelines No. 1).
- Implement the National Action Plan.
- Prepare a review of National Action Plan every three to five years.

Maintain and further develop adequately funded research and monitoring programmes to deliver key data.

Table 6. Timetable for monitoring, evaluation and communication

| Time path | 1 st year | 2 nd year | 3 rd year | 4 th year |
|-----------------|---|---|--|---|
| | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| Actions | AEWA Technical Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve/ recommend endorsement of the International Action Plan by the Standing Committee • Prepare Terms of Reference for the Working Group • Facilitate information exchange AEWA Standing Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the International Action Plan and propose it for submission to MOP | Working group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist and co-ordinate production of National Action Plans • Monitor implementation of the National and International Action Plans • Organise workshops/training • Facilitate information exchange | Working group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor implementation of the National and International Action Plans • Organise workshops/ training • Facilitate information exchange | Working group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare triennial Range States meeting • Monitor implementation of the National and International Action Plans and prepare three-year reports • Prepare Action Plan review • Organise workshops/ training • Facilitate information exchange |
| | Range States: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the International Action Plan² • Endorse the Working Group • Identify national focal points | Range States: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare National Action Plan • Implement National Action Plan • Contribute to workshops • Exchange information | Range States: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement National Action Plan • Contribute to workshops • Exchange information | Range States: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement National Action Plan • Contribute to the three-year reports • Contribute to workshops • Exchange information |
| | ⇓ | ⇓ | ⇓ | ⇓ |
| Products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Endorsed Action Plan ❖ Endorsed Working Group ❖ Web page for information exchange | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ National Action Plans ❖ National Focal Points ❖ Technical Guidelines (i.e. population / habitat monitoring) ❖ Information exchange | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Information exchange ❖ Guidelines for management practices ❖ Population model ❖ Review of scientific knowledge (filling specific gaps) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Triennial Range States' meeting ❖ Triennial Range States report ❖ Triennial report on International Action Plan ❖ Information exchange ❖ Reviewed Action Plan |

² This could be done for the AEWA Contracting Parties by adoption of the International Species Action Plan by MOP.

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9. ANNEXES

Annex 1. Contracting parties to international conventions, agreements and directives that are relevant to the conservation of the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* (acc. – accession only; sig. – signatory only; app. – approved only. Light grey cells relate to European countries only, dark grey to Canada only)

| Country | Ramsar | CMS | AEWA | Bern | EU | CBD | Migratory Birds Convention |
|----------------|--------|-----|------|------|----|-----|----------------------------|
| Canada | • | | | | | • | • |
| France | • | • | • | • | • | • | |
| Greenland | • | | | | | • | |
| Iceland | • | | | • | | • | |
| Ireland | • | • | • | • | • | • | |
| United Kingdom | • | • | • | • | • | • | |
| Spain | • | • | • | • | • | • | |

Key

Ramsar: Convention on Wetlands of International Importance

CMS: Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

AEWA: Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds

Bern: Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

EU: European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC)

CBD: Convention on Biological Diversity

Annex 2. Important Bird Areas of relevance for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* in Europe

Annex 2.1. Data presented in Important Bird Areas in Europe (Heath & Evans 2000)

| Country | International name | Area (ha) | Location | | Population | | Year | Season | Criteria |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|----------|---------|------------|--------|------|--------|--------------|
| | | | Lat (N) | Lon (E) | Min | Max | | | |
| France* | Baie des Veys et Marias du Contenin | 37,500 | 49° 20 | 1° 15 | ? | ? | 1997 | winter | A4i, B1i, C3 |
| | Havre de la Seine | 5,150 | 49° 00 | 1° 34 | 250 | 750 | 1997 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| UNITED KINGDOM | Lough Foyle (also Ireland) | 21,083 | 55° 10 | 7° 05 | 4,500 | 4,500 | 1996 | winter | A4i, B1i, C3 |
| | Strangford Lough | 15,580 | 54° 27 | 5° 35 | 10,700 | 10,700 | 1995 | winter | A4i, B1i, C3 |
| | Carlingford Lough (also Ireland) | 4,660 | 54° 04 | 6° 12 | 315 | 315 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Killough Harbour and Coney Island Bay | 240 | 54° 15 | 5° 38 | - | 330 | 1994 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Larne Lough and Swan/Blue Circle Islands | 1,160 | 54° 49 | 5° 46 | 220 | 220 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Dundrum Inner Bay | 500 | 54° 15 | 5° 49 | 210 | 210 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Outer Ards | 1,016 | 54° 29 | 5° 25 | 255 | 255 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| Ireland | Dublin Bay | 3,000 | 53° 21 | 6° 12 | 1,800 | 1,800 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Boyne Estuary | 404 | 53° 43 | 6° 15 | 210 | 210 | 1996 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Skerries Islands | 62 | 53° 34 | 6° 05 | 215 | 215 | 1996 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Wexford Harbour and Slob | 5,000 | 52° 19 | 6° 26 | 2,609 | 2,609 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Tralee Bay and Barrow Harbour | 3,290 | 52° 16 | 9° 48 | 535 | 535 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Dundalk Bay | 4,920 | 53° 55 | 6° 20 | 447 | 447 | 1996 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Rogerstown Estuary | 368 | 53° 30 | 6° 06 | 1,804 | 1,804 | 1996 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Malahide/Broadmeadow Estuary | 606 | 53° 27 | 6° 09 | 1,200 | 1,200 | 1996 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Baldoyle Bay | 203 | 53° 24 | 6° 08 | 480 | 480 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | North Wicklow coastal marshes | 670 | 53° 04 | 6° 03 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Bannow Bay | 958 | 52° 13 | 6° 48 | 1,161 | 1,161 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | The Cull/Killag | 896 | 52° 12 | 6° 39 | 695 | 695 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Dungarvan Bay | 1,300 | 52° 04 | 7° 34 | 616 | 616 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Tramore Backstrand | 1,557 | 52° 10 | 7° 06 | 591 | 591 | 1996 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Castlemaine Harbour | 11,374 | 52° 07 | 9° 55 | 1,062 | 1,062 | 1996 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Shannon and Fergus Estuary | 16,718 | 52° 40 | 9° 04 | 318 | 318 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Inner Galway Bay | 11,905 | 53° 12 | 9° 03 | 525 | 525 | 1996 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Broadhaven, Blacksod and Tullaghan Bays and parts of the Mullet peninsula | 10,852 | 54° 15 | 9° 52 | 194 | 227 | 1997 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Killala Bay | 4,294 | 54° 13 | 9° 09 | 229 | 229 | 1996 | winter | B1i, C3 |

| Country | International name | Area (ha) | Location | | Population | | Year | Season | Criteria |
|----------------|--------------------------------|-----------|----------|---------|------------|--------|------|---------|----------|
| | | | Lat (N) | Lon (E) | Min | Max | | | |
| | Ballysadare Bay | 2,146 | 54° 13 | 8° 35 | 200 | - | 1996 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Trawbreaga Bay | 1,100 | 55° 17 | 7° 18 | 319 | 319 | 1995 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| | Cummeen Strand (Sligo Harbour) | 1,865 | 54° 18 | 8° 32 | 608 | 608 | 1996 | winter | B1i, C3 |
| Iceland | Skerjafjörður | 3,300 | 64° 04 | 22° 00 | 205 | 1,334 | | passage | B1i |
| | Breidafjörður | 300,000 | 65° 19 | 23° 00 | - | 10,000 | | passage | A4i, B1i |
| | Hvalfjardareyri-Laxárvogur | 900 | 64° 19 | 21° 40 | - | 395 | | passage | B1i |
| | Innstavogsnes-Grunnafjörður | 1,900 | 64° 22 | 21° 55 | - | 4,983 | - | passage | A4i, B1i |
| | Álftanes-Akrar | 13,300 | 64° 31 | 22° 15 | 307 | 10,000 | - | passage | A4i, B1i |
| | Álftafjörður-Hofsstadavogur | 3,000 | 65° 00 | 22° 40 | 1,200 | 3,200 | - | passage | B1i |

Criteria: the following criteria were used to identify IBAs for *Light-bellied Brent Geese*:

Category A1 Species of global conservation concern: The site regularly holds significant numbers of a globally threatened species, or other species of global conservation concern.

Category A4 Congregations: i) The site is known or thought to hold, on a regular basis, $\geq 1\%$ of a biogeographic population of a congregatory waterbird species.

Category B1 Congregations: i) The site is known or thought to hold $\geq 1\%$ of a flyway or other distinct population of a waterbird species.

Category C1 Species of global conservation concern: The site regularly holds significant numbers of a globally threatened species, or other species of global conservation concern.

Category C3 Concentrations of migratory species not threatened at the European Union level: The site is known to regularly hold at least 1% of a flyway population or of the EU population of a species not considered threatened at the EU level (as referred to in Article 4.2 of the EC Birds Directive and not listed on Annex 1).

Annex 2.2. Protection status of Important Bird Areas for the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* (boxes are filled when a protective status has been conferred on the site; P = proposed)

| COUNTRY | IBA name | Protective instrument | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|-----|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|--|
| | | Ramsar | SPA | Conservation Area | Nature Reserve | Area of Special Scientific Interest | National Nature Reserve | Private Reserve | Willfowl Reserve | Hunting Reserve | |
| United Kingdom | Lough Foyle (also Ireland) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Strangford Lough | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Carlingford Lough (also Ireland) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Killough Harbour and Coney Island Bay | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Larne Lough and Swan/Blue Circle Islands | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Dundrum Inner Bay | | P | | | | | | | | |
| | Outer Ards | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ireland | Dublin Bay | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Boyne Estuary | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Skerries Islands | | P | | | | | | | | |
| | Wexford Harbour and Slobbs | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Tralee Bay and Barrow Harbour | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Dundalk Bay | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Rogerstown Estuary | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Malahide/Broadmeadow Estuary | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Baldoyle Bay | | | | | | | | | | |
| | North Wicklow Coastal Marshes | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Bannow Bay | | | | | | | | | | |
| | The Cull/Killag | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Dungaravan Bay | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Tramore Backstrand | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Castlemaine Harbour | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Shannon and Fergus Estuary | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Inner Galway Bay | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Braodhaven, Blacksod and Tullaghan Bays and parts of the Mullet peninsula | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Killala Bay | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Ballysadare Bay | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Trawbreaga Bay | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cummeen Strand (Sligo Harbour) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Iceland | Skerjafjörður | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Breidafjörður, including Alftafjörður-Hofstadavogur | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Hvalfjardareyri-Laxárvogur | | | | | | | | | |
| Innstavogsnes-Grunnafjörður | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Álftanes-Akrar | | | | | | | | | | |