

XIV. NUMBER OF BEAN GOOSE (*ANSER FABALIS* SP.) IN THE WINTERING AREAS

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The breeding range of the *Anser fabalis* is the boreal and tundra zones from about 75° N to about 60° N (in some areas 50° N) in Scandinavia and USSR. Within the range subspecies have developed. On the European wintering grounds two subspecies are dominating, namely the *Anser fabalis fabalis*, a taiga goose breeding in Scandinavia and western Siberia wintering in Scania, DDR, Poland, northern part of The Netherlands and Great Britain, and the *Anser f. rossicus*, a tundra goose breeding more to the east and north and dominating on the wintering grounds in Hungary, and southern part of The Netherlands.

Timmermann et al. (1976) state that about 100 000 individuals of *Anser fabalis* sp. are wintering in central Europe, about 4000 in Spain, 40 000 in northwest Europe, and in Great Britain a few hundred.

Number of geese in winter quarter 1977 – 80

Countings of Bean geese have taken place more or less steadily in many countries, even there is no stable co-ordination of the counting dates. However, the old system of using the week-ends nearest to the middle of the month still functions, and data are kept either by a national co-ordinator or by persons who are specially dealing with the Bean Goose. In some cases data from the latest years have already been published or might be available at the IWRB headquarters.

For this report – the first on Bean goose since my commencement as a co-ordinator of the IWRB Bean Goose Research – the above mentioned sources have been contacted.

It is not possible to give a complete survey on the species in Europe because of the incompleteness of data and lack of exact counting day. Besides the method used for counting varies very much from one country to another.

Best data, however, are from 1977/78 and 1978/79 and therefore chosen as an example. Unfortunately no data were available from Estonia, Latvia, and Czechoslovakia. From FRD only data up to 1976 were present. In Poland only the Slonsk Reserve is counted, but it is said that in autumn 80 000 – 100 000 Bean geese use to stay in Northwest Poland. Great Britain is not in the figure as so very few geese are present. In the winter 1980/81 a total of 165 was reached in Norfolk, the highest number since 1945. Besides 100 were seen in Scotland. From Ireland is stated that Bean goose is not there.

For both years the November counts give the highest number, namely about 200 000 in 1977 and 300 000 in 1978. This must be a minimum size as it is no total count. The main part of the *Anser f. fabalis* were in Sweden and GDR. In both countries neck-banding programmes have taken place during some years. Observations and recoveries have given a hint of the fact that the individuals in those two countries do not mix up very much, so it is very unlikely that it should be the same birds counted twice. In other parts of Europe most geese were seen in Poland and Hungary. The data from Poland is a minimum as we know that only one locality is counted. From here – the reserve of Slonsk – two counts however were available, and the number given is an average. From Hungary more data are available, for example 17.11. 1979 and 16. 11. 1980 where 69 000 and 65 000 *Anser fabalis* were present, and in December 1979 and 1980 60 000 and 109 000 individuals were observed. In GDR about 100 000 were present in Nov. 1979.

Comparing these data to those given by *Timmermann et al.* the number of *Anser fabalis* sp. wintering in Europe is increasing. This might be a true increase even may be the countings have been better in some areas.

a) Neckbanding programme, breeding biology study, migratory and moulting study in the Nordic countries within the framework of the Nordic Council for Game Research 1976 – 81

b) Countings are taking place in certain European countries

c) Neckbanding programme in GDR

d) Feeding ecology in Denmark

Table XIV/1.

Number of geese in winter quarter

1977-78	Nov	Dec	Jan	Febr	March
Sweden	42 000	22 000	24 000	17 000	23 000
Denmark	1 000	1 000	3 000	2 000	1 000
GDR about	90 000	*/	40 000	*/	*/
The Netherlands	473	16 000	29 000	45 000	2 000
Hungary	39 000	2 000	25 000	3 000	442
Poland	26 000	11 000	10 000	8 000	7 000
Total	198 473	52 000	131 000	75 000	33 442
1978-79	Nov	Dec	Jan	Febr	March
Sweden	60 000	26 000	12 000	2 000	16 000
Denmark	1 000	2 000	2 000	1 000	1 000
GDR	110 000	*/	4 000	*/	*/
The Netherlands	160	11 000	100 000	76 000	3 000
Hungary	84 000	47 000	7 000	14 000	630
Poland	38 000	49 000	—	—	2 500
Total	293 160	135 000	125 000	93 000	23 130

* not available

e) Hand-rearing and stocking of *Anser fabalis* in Middle and Northern Sweden (WWF etc.), Sweden.

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