

Contrasting trends in two Black-tailed Godwit populations: a review of causes and recommendations

JENNIFER A. GILL¹, ROWENA H.W. LANGSTON², JOSÉ A. ALVES¹, PHILIP W. ATKINSON³,
PIERRICK BOCHER⁴, NUNO CIDRAES VIEIRA⁵, NICOLA J. CROCKFORD², GUILLAUME GÉLINAUD⁶,
NIKO GROEN⁷, TÓMAS G. GUNNARSSON^{1,8}, BECCA HAYHOW¹, JOS HOOIJMEIJER⁷,
ROSEMARIE KENTIE⁷, DAVID KLEIJN⁹, PEDRO M. LOURENÇO⁷, JOSÉ A. MASERO¹⁰,
FRANCIS MEUNIER¹¹, PETER M. POTTS¹², MAJA ROODBERGEN^{7,9}, HANS SCHEKKERMAN¹³,
JULIA SCHRÖDER⁷, EDDY WYMENGA¹⁴ & THEUNIS PIERSMA⁷

¹ School of Biological Sciences, University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ, UK j.gill@uea.ac.uk

² Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, SG19 2DL, UK

³ British Trust for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, IP24 2PU, UK

⁴ Laboratoire Littoral Environnement et Sociétés, Pôle Sciences et Technologies,
University of La Rochelle, 17042 La Rochelle, France

⁵ Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves, Av. Liberdade 105, 2^o Esq., 1250-140 Lisboa, Portugal

⁶ Bretagne Vivante – SEPNEB, Réserve Naturelle Des Marais De Séné. Brouel Kerbihan- 56860 Séné, France

⁷ Animal Ecology Group, Centre for Ecological and Evolutionary Studies,

University of Groningen, PO Box 14, 9750 AA Haren, The Netherlands

⁸ Snæfellsnes Research Centre, University of Iceland, Hafnargata 3, IS-340 Stykkishólmur, Iceland

⁹ Alterra, Centre for Ecosystem Studies, PO Box 47, 6700 AA, Wageningen, The Netherlands

¹⁰ Grupo de Investigación en Biología de la Conservación, Área de Zoología,

Universidad de Extremadura, Avenida de Elvas s/n, 06071 Badajoz, Spain

¹¹ Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, Corderie Royale, BP90263, 17300 Rochefort, France

¹² Farlington Ringing Group, Solent Court Cottage, Chilling Lane,

Warsash, Southampton, Hampshire, SO31 9HF, UK

¹³ Dutch Centre for Avian Migration and Demography, PO Box 40, 6666ZG Heteren, The Netherlands

¹⁴ Altenburg & Wymenga Ecological Consultants, PO Box 32, 9269 ZR Veenwouden, The Netherlands

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In recent decades, the West European population of Black-tailed Godwits, *Limosa limosa limosa*, has declined in size at a quite alarming rate, while the Icelandic population, *L. l. islandica*, has undergone a rapid increase in population size. These two populations have been the subject of a great deal of research, much of which has been focused on understanding the causes and consequences of the contrasting population trends. In 2007, a workshop was held during the annual conference of the International Wader Study Group at La Rochelle, France, with the aims of identifying the likely causes of the population changes and providing recommendations for future actions to improve the conservation of both populations. The available evidence strongly suggests that changes in productivity as a consequence of agricultural intensification are the most likely driver of the decline in *L. l. limosa*, although the concentration of much of the population in just a few sites in winter and spring is likely to exacerbate their vulnerability to future habitat changes. Agricultural and climatic changes are implicated in the expansion of *L. l. islandica*, and the availability of both intertidal mudflats and wet grasslands as foraging habitats appears to be very important across much of the winter range of this population. A series of recommendations for actions to conserve both populations are provided, including improving agricultural land management and protecting key passage and winter sites and habitats.