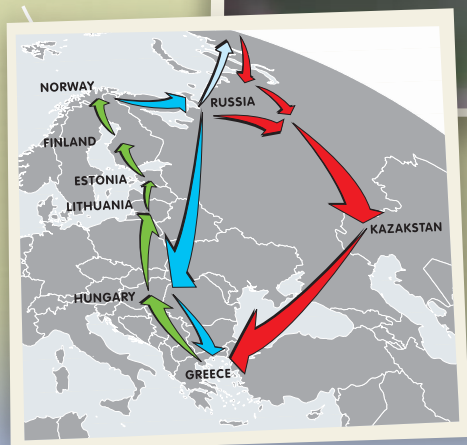
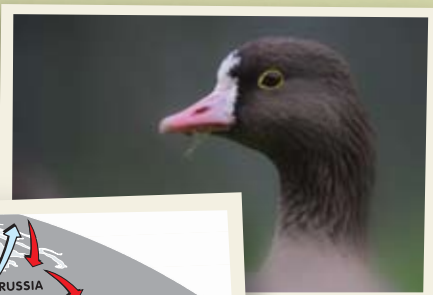


The travels of the Lesser White-fronted Goose

The migratory journey of the Lesser White-fronted Geese begins in the middle of August, following the summer breeding season in northern Scandinavia.

The Kanin peninsula in northwestern arctic Russia is the first important stop, from which the population will split and follow two distinct routes. The European route includes the Baltic countries and eastern Hungary and ends in the middle of October in Northern Greece, first in Kerkini Lake and finally in the Evros Delta. The remaining population follows a more adventurous route through Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. Lesser White-fronted Goose pairs that have managed to breed successfully will chose the European route, whereas unsuccessful breeders will follow the route through central Asia.

The Lesser White-fronted Geese remain in Greece until the middle of March. During spring migration they will follow a shorter route through the grasslands of Hortobágy National Park in Hungary, Lithuania, Estonia and Finland. At the end of May/ early June they will reach the Valdak Marshes in Norway and finally their breeding grounds in northernmost Norway.



Working together for the conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose



Halting the decline of the Critically Endangered European Lesser White-fronted Goose population is the common goal of eight organisations from Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary, Finland and Norway, who join forces in the framework of the LIFE+ Nature Project “**Safeguarding the Lesser White-fronted Goose Fennoscandian population in key wintering and staging sites within the European flyway**” (LIFE10 NAT/GR/000638).

The LIFE+ Project is coordinated by the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS/ BirdLife Greece) during 2011-2016 with the contribution of the LIFE+ financial instrument of the European Union and the co-financing of the Norwegian Environment Agency.

The project is implemented in collaboration with the Forest Research Institute of the Hellenic Agricultural Organisation “Demeter”, the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Greece), the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB), the Hortobágy National Park Directorate (Hungary), the UNEP/ African - Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement Secretariat (UNEP/AEWA), WWF Finland and the Natural Heritage Services of Metsähallitus (Finland).

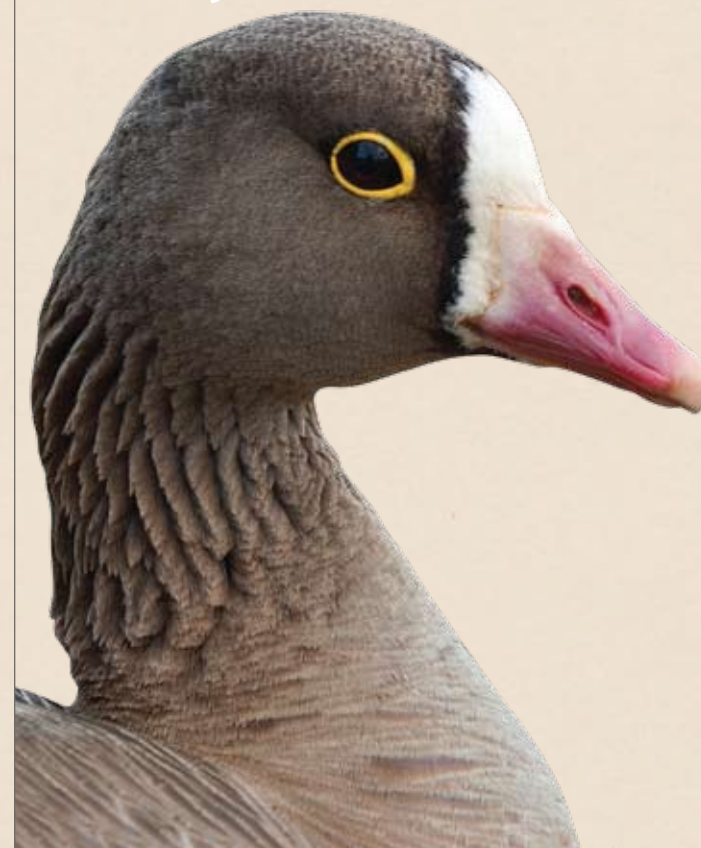
International cooperation, national and individual responsibility are challenging. But it's our duty to safeguard a population on the brink of extinction. An investment in the future of the Lesser White-fronted Goose is an investment in our own.

www.wwf.fi/lwfg
www.piskulka.net



Safeguarding the Lesser White-fronted Goose

from the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean



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The Lesser White-fronted Goose

The Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) is Europe's rarest and most endangered breeding goose.

It looks very much like the Greater White-fronted Goose - a much more common goose species in Europe - and it is very difficult to tell them apart, especially when they are observed in a mixed flock.

How can we distinguish an adult Lesser White-fronted Goose from an adult Greater White-fronted Goose?



© Jari Kosiet

- It is smaller in size
- The neck is shorter and darker brown
- The head is more box shaped and a uniform dark brown
- The bill is stubby, almost as long as its height at the base, and intensively pink
- The white front blaze reaches higher up to the crown
- It has a bright yellow eye ring

We can find it in natural open land with low vegetation near wetlands like lakes and swamps and more rarely in cultivated fields. It prefers wet grasslands but also frequents salt marshes, whereas, like all wild geese, it avoids areas with high vegetation (eg. reedbeds) that hinder its visibility.



The Lesser White-fronted Geese that visit the Mediterranean, belong to the distinct Fennoscandian population that counts less than 30 pairs.

The main threats of the Lesser White-fronted Goose are:

- **High mortality due to illegal killing and accidental shooting.** The Lesser White-fronted Goose Fennoscandian population is so small that the loss of even a single adult individual is detrimental. The resemblance with the Greater White-fronted Goose, a more common and often quarry species in the countries along the migration route of the Lesser, combined with poaching in the wetlands where the Lesser visits, classify the above threats as the most important for the species.
- **Disturbance.** Human activity, such as the unrestricted movement of vehicles in the wetlands, tourism, fishing and hunting can scare the Lessers and force them to move to potentially less safe feeding and roosting places.
- **Habitat loss and degradation.** Lesser White-fronted Geese favour natural grasslands as the preferred foraging ground, the deterioration of which is evident throughout Europe. Wetland drainage and the modern cultivation methods have led to sub optimal feeding sites for the Lesser-White fronted Geese throughout its range.
- **Lack of knowledge.** A lot still remains unknown for the Lesser White-fronted Geese. Even in Europe, a few staging grounds are still to be found. Due to lack of knowledge, the conservation measures cannot always be targeted and planned in the most efficient way.



How does the LIFE+ Project help the Lesser White-fronted Goose?



- **Implements** novel and high tech patrolling systems in the protected staging and wintering areas of the Lessers in Bulgaria and Greece



- **Runs a campaign** against illegal killing in the Greek wetlands, which targets the public as well as key stakeholders like the hunting community, aiming to reduce the possibility of illegal shooting



- **Designs** and delivers habitat restoration actions for the Lessers in Greece and Hungary



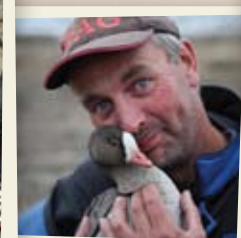
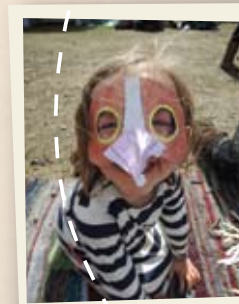
- **Elaborates** National Action Plans for the Lesser White-fronted Goose in Greece, Bulgaria, and Hungary that aim towards the long term conservation of the species



- **Informs** and educates the public about the rarity and the importance of the Lesser White-fronted Goose, and encourages its involvement in the conservation efforts



- **Monitors** the Lesser White-fronted Geese throughout the European migration route, in order to study and protect the population, as well as to locate new breeding and staging areas.





CONSERVATION without Borders for the Lesser White-fronted Goose

1 species - 5 countries | Conservation along 4,000 km
from the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean

NORWAY



- Valdak marshes
Staging area



FINLAND



- Finnish Bothnian Bay coast
Spring staging site
- Northern Finnish Lapland
Potential breeding areas

HUNGARY



- Hortobágy National Park
Migration stopover
The biggest natural grassland of Europe

BULGARIA



- Batova
Migration stopover
- Zlatiata
Migration stopover
- Pyasachnik reservoir
Migration stopover



GREECE



- Lake Kerkini
Wintering site
In the secure waters of Lake Kerkini, the Lesser White-fronted Geese stay for 2-4 months
- Evros Delta
Wintering site
Meet-up point, where the entire Fennoscandian population gathers before departing to the north.
- Lake Ismarida
Wintering site

