

To: Office of Althingi
Umhverfis- og samgöngunefnd Alþingis

Ref. 021-20

Subject: Concerns over proposed resolution to authorize hunting bird species

15 March 2021, Brussels

Dear mister, miss,

On behalf of Birdlife Europa and Central Asia, I want to express my strong concern regarding the proposal in the Icelandic Parliament for a resolution to authorize the hunting of Whooper swan, Greylag goose, Pink-footed Goose and Barnacle Goose during the spring migration and breeding season.

Birdlife Europe and Central Asia strongly opposes this proposal, because the Whooper swan is a fully protected species in Iceland and the hunting season for Greylag goose and Pink-footed Goose is already very long (August 20 - March 15). The most worrying issue, however, is that the proposal is seeking permission to hunt these species during their most vulnerable period: when they return from wintering grounds and during the breeding season. This is in breach of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement and the Bern Convention, both of which Iceland is a contracting party. As such, the proposal raises serious legality concerns, as well as ethical ones.

Moreover, hunting during the breeding season is strictly forbidden in the European Union by the Birds Directive. Allowing this hunting in Iceland would strongly undermine efforts by other European countries to conserve these species.

Iceland has a very important role to play in the protection of these bird species on the national and international level. In this context, Iceland is renown globally as a natural paradise and an environmental front runner. Allowing such hunting practices would strongly undermine this positive image of your country.

Instead of passing this ill thought hunting proposal, Birdlife Europa and Central Asia would suggest that the Icelandic Parliament considers instructing the relevant institutions in Iceland to consult with the AEWA Secretariat and stakeholder States. In this way, useful information can be gathered and shared on specific management issues for the species concerned, including best practices in damage prevention.

Yours sincerely,



Ariel Brunner
Senior Head of Policy and Acting Director
Birdlife Europe and Central Asia