

Roadmap for the implementation of collective actions within the Recommendations for the protection and conservation of OSPAR listed Species and Habitats

2017-2025

Action sheet 39

Action 39	Undertake further research on the causes of decline in the Steller's eider, in particular through the Norwegian-Russian Environmental Commission
Participants	Lead: Norway
Plan:	<p>The action includes the Steller's eider (<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>), which in the OSPAR maritime area is present in Region I only.</p> <p>Through the Norwegian-Russian Environmental Commission and The Norwegian Environment Agency there are ongoing activities to improve the knowledge about the Steller's eider:</p> <p>Planned and on-going activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual ongoing monitoring of the Varanger wintering population of Steller's eider (i.e. the population within the Norwegian part of OSPAR-region 1). • Comprehensive population survey/census on the total European wintering population (simultaneously in Norwegian and Russian wintering sites) at approximately ten year intervals. The last one conducted in 2009, the next one planned for 2019 (pending availability of funding). • Ongoing research project which includes more in-depth data (compared to the annual monitoring effort) on population (flock) dynamics, behavioral patterns and migration patterns etc., by regular monitoring (monthly - winter 2016/17) and use of satellite tracking (winter 2017/18).
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norway and OSPAR Secretariat engage with CAFF to explore options for collaboration: during 2018 • Annual monitoring (Varanger) – April: annual report in fall • Satellite tracking – study winter/spring 2018: report fall 2018 • Results brief/presentation at ICG POSH fall 2018 • Comprehensive survey (Barents Sea coast) – spring 2019; report fall 2019 • Presentation of results at ICG POSH fall 2019 and/or BDC 2020
Events	<p>Plenary meeting (joint survey) planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moscow, fall 2018 • Tromsø, spring 2019.

Links to other actions	<p>The planned activities would also cover (or partially cover) the following collective actions in <i>OSPAR Recommendation 2013/12</i> relating to the Steller's eider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and implement a monitoring and assessment strategy in the OSPAR maritime area to promote and coordinate the collection of information on distribution, species status and threats/impacts • raise awareness of status and threats to the Steller's eider among both relevant management authorities and general public. • further research on the ecology of this species at its wintering grounds
Added value of action by OSPAR	<p>The action(s) is addressed through other fora, but the OSPAR-status adds value by international focus; The species has become a priority species in the Arctic Council biodiversity working group <i>Conservation Arctic Flora and Fauna's</i> (CAFF) new initiative "Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative" – AMBI.</p> <p>OSPAR was granted observer status to the Arctic Council in 2017. Exploring options for cooperation on Steller's eider, and as relevant other birds, between OSPAR and CAFF under the Arctic Council could present one option for increased coordination in the field of monitoring and assessment in OSPAR Region I.</p>
Resources	<p>The proposed actions to follow up on this action, described above, are subject to the availability of funding.</p> <p>Funding towards securing the implementation of the planned activities is welcomed.</p> <p>Russian involvement is critical to fulfil the objectives of the planned activities, and needs to be stressed.</p>
Barriers to Progress	<p>The planned activities, apart from the annual monitoring, are pending on necessary funding and Russian involvement.</p> <p>The methodology involving the implantation of satellite transmitters (external GLS loggers) in the Steller's eider is "sensitive" in several aspects, and the collection of birds is also difficult. The quality and amount of data and results coming out of this effort are therefore uncertain, but potentially extremely valuable to the further understanding of Steller's eiders wintering and migration biology.</p>
Stakeholders to engage	<p>Academics and NGOs (NOF - Birdlife Norway) are currently involved.</p> <p>Russian involvement secured through the Norwegian-Russian Environmental Commission and Russian lead of CAFF/AMBI.</p> <p>Russian oil industry is another potential stakeholder.</p>
Other Competent Authorities:	<p>This action involves the sub-population of Steller's eider present in the OSPAR area.</p> <p>The Steller's eider is under the competency of the <i>Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds</i>, CAFF/AMBI and the permanent sub-group CBird (including a separate Strategy/Action Plan for Eiders) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).</p> <p>The Steller's eider is listed as VU/Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.</p>
Product(s):	<p>Annual monitoring results will be available at birdlife.no. The comprehensive survey (of 2009) is published (<i>The European wintering population of Steller's eider Polysticta Stelleri</i></p>

reassessed. Bird Conservation International, 2012)

New results to be reported and published in scientific journals.