

## In Sweden they are saved!

In the 1980s - just in time before the Lesser White-fronted Geese were about to die out - a fine biotechnical method for saving them was invented in Sweden.

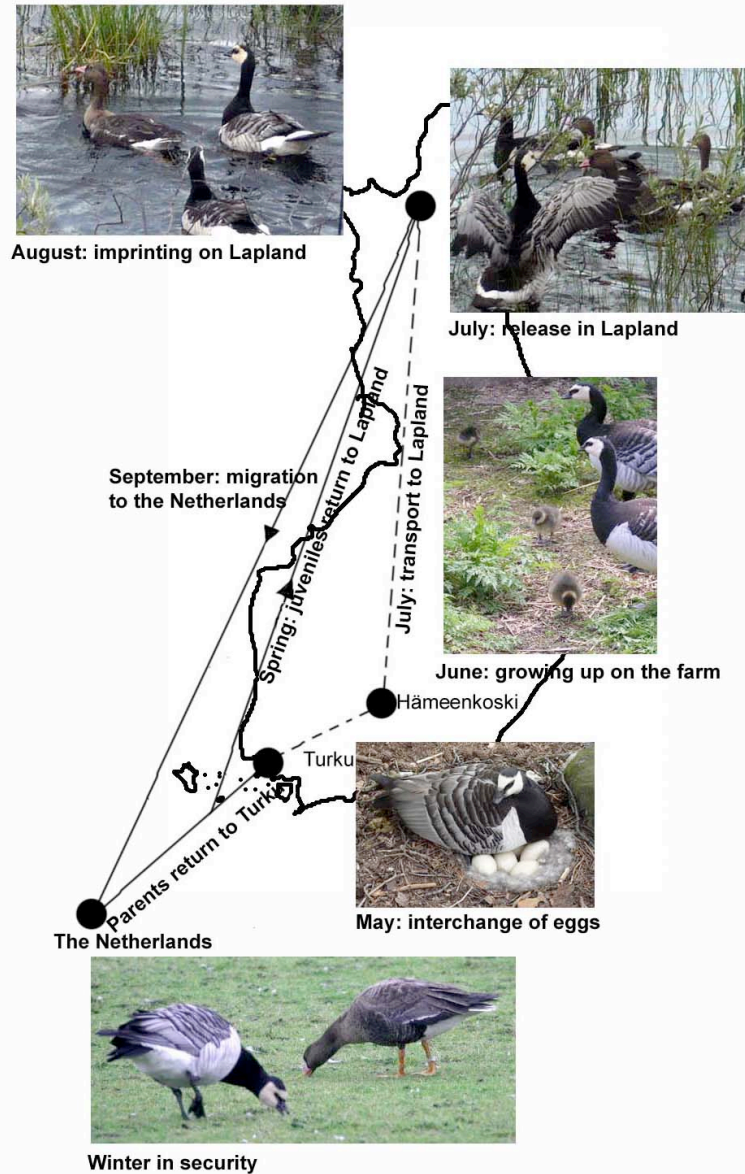
Lambart von Essen and his colleagues in the Swedish Hunters' Association had the idea to use Barnacle Geese as foster parents for Lesser White-fronted goslings. The foster parents would migrate to Western Europe avoiding the dangers in the south-east. Their adoptees would learn the safe migration route.

Eggs of captive Lesser White-fronted Geese were put into Barnacle Goose nests in Central Sweden. After hatching, the families were taken to captivity. Just before learning to fly, they were released in Swedish Lapland. The goslings were imprinted on this habitat. The foster parents were able to guide them to their wintering areas in the Netherlands. Next spring, the Barnacle Geese returned to their original nests whilst the yearling Lesser White-fronted Geese flew to Lapland, forming a population today counting 140 birds. No Barnacle Geese or hybrids breed in Swedish Lapland.

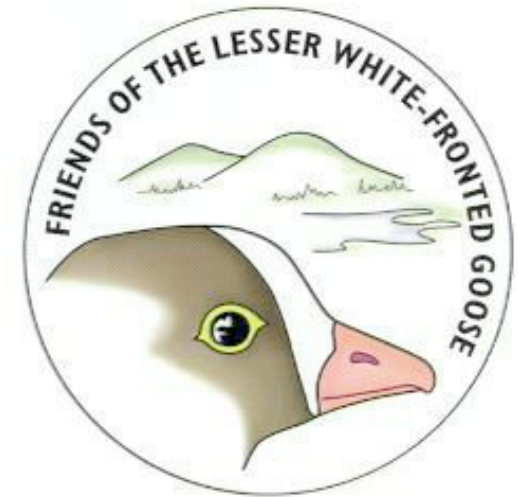
Simultaneously, in Finland Lesser White-fronted Geese were released without foster parents. That project failed.

Our goslings will be guided!

## Guided goslings survive



## Save The Finnish Lesser White-fronted Goose



100 years ago, the Lesser White-fronted Goose was a common breeding bird in Lapland. Thousands migrated through Finland. Decimation took place in the 20th century. In Finland no breeding is known since 1995. Unsustainable hunting still goes on along the migration routes in the territory of the former Soviet Union and in South East Europe.

Globally, these geese are severely threatened. On average, their population is almost halved in ten years. No more than three broods left Norway in autumn 2008 or 2009. Sweden is the only country where their numbers increase in nature: due to a clever restocking program, they now count more than 140 already.

This is our goal in Finland also.

## The Friends of the Lesser White-fronted Goose follow the Swedish example

The association "The Friends of the Lesser White-fronted Goose" is a nature conservation organization. Our aim is the conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose in cooperation with other actors in this field. The association maintains a captive population of 60-120 geese in Hämeenkoski, Southern Finland.



The releasing of Lesser White-fronted Goose goslings with their Barnacle Goose foster parents was started in 2004.

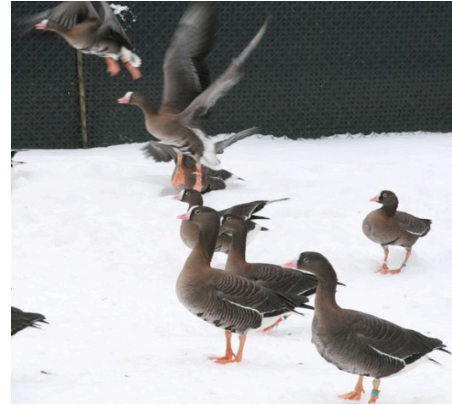
Some goslings released by us were observed in the Netherlands. In summer 2009, a flock of five Lesser White-fronted Geese were seen near our Finnish releasing area. These may have been "our birds" and/or their offspring.



This map shows the migration routes of the tiny remnant population breeding in Norway (brown and red) and those of the Swedish geese (green). The routes with most red are those with the highest hunting pressure. The Swedish geese stay in the EU and on the safe route. That makes the difference.

## The Goal

Our long term goal is to re-establish the favorable conservation status of the species in Finland. In practice this means the regeneration of a viable population migrating to the south-west within the EU area. According to Swedish experience, this requires that at least three broods per year are released, and the complete project may take up to 20 years.



## Action

Our activities entirely depend on the voluntary daily work of the goose breeder Pentti Alho and on the contribution of members maintaining the very special farm constructions. So far, we have managed to keep the farm in good condition and the geese healthy enough to produce annually at least one brood to be released. In the future, there is need for new members, partners and sponsors.

## The avoided claimed pitfalls

- It was claimed that captive Lesser White-fronted Geese are hybrids with the Greater White-fronted Goose. The suspect genes have turned out to be of common origin for both species.
- There exists no "Scandinavian subspecies". Like the former originals, the released geese belong to a common north-western Palearctic population.
- The Barnacle Goose is not an alien species. Also, using them as foster parents will not speed up their natural expansion to Lapland. The Swedish experience verifies this.
- The south-west migration route is not artificial but traditional. Due to earlier hunting, only few Russian geese still use it.

## Join the Friends!

The reintroduction of the Lesser White-fronted Goose can become a success story. While waiting for others to gain this insight, you can help the geese already today. The best way is to become a member of the Friends of the Lesser White-fronted Goose.

We offer few benefits - only the Bulletin. But you will find good company and have an opportunity to do something real for nature conservation by working on the breeding station. And more than that, you will have some influence on the survival chances of this wonderful bird, the Lesser White-fronted Goose.

### Contact:

Chairman: Dr. Antti Haapanen [antti.haapanen@kolumbus.fi](mailto:antti.haapanen@kolumbus.fi)

Secretary: Dr. Lauri Kahanpää [lauri.kahanpaa@jyu.fi](mailto:lauri.kahanpaa@jyu.fi)

Mail: Lauri Kahanpää PB 35

FIN 00140 University of Jyväskylä, Finland

<http://www.ansererythropus.tk/>

Bank Nordea Bank Finland Plc

•SWIFT: NDEAFIHH

•IBAN: FI6210323000513444

Membership fee (2010) 40 €