

Haunts in Denmark for White-fronted Goose
(*Anser albifrons*), Bean Goose
(*Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus*) and Pink-footed Goose
(*Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus*)

BY METTE FOG

(Med et dansk resumé: Rasteplasser i Danmark for
blisgås (*Anser albifrons*), sædgås (*Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus*) og
kortnæbbet gås (*Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus*).

Места привала в Дании *Anser albifrons*, *Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus*
и *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus*.

COMMUNICATION NO. 82 FROM VILDTBIOLOGISK STATION

Vildtbiologisk Station, Kalø, 8410 Rønde, Denmark

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Introduction

Counts of geese have been arranged in several European countries by the Goose Working Group under the International Wildfowl Research Bureau. Since September 1963 Denmark has participated and the Game Biology Station, Kalø, has undertaken the monthly counts of all species of geese.

The aim in the first place is to obtain comparative as well as absolute population figures for the different goose species in the different areas.

In this paper all important haunts for *Anser albifrons*, *Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus* and *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus* are described, and data are given on the maximum number of geese recorded in the years 1963-1970.

In most cases, the haunts include the feeding ground as well as the roosting place and areas are listed under the species most numerous in the locality.

The open season in Denmark for the above mentioned geese is: 1. August-31. December.

White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

The number passing Denmark is rather small, only a few hundred individuals. On the island of Funen flocks of birds are resting during some months every year on the estates of Gyldensteen and Wedellsborg, spaced about 25 km apart.

The whitefronts migrating through Denmark and wintering in Holland (Fog 1965), belong to the race *Anser albifrons albifrons* breeding in the USSR.

1. GYLDENSTEEN

Ownership: private.

Area: 1300 ha.

Area used by geese: particularly 15 ha.

Feeding habitat: wheat fields or freshly ploughed soil.

Roosting place: coastal areas.

Max. number:

Autumn: 300-400. Spring: 100-150.

Arrival: medio October.

Departure: ultimo March, generally the geese stay during the winter.

Hunting pressure: low.

Other species: bean goose, grey-lag goose (*Anser anser*).

2. WEDELLSBORG

Ownership: private.

Area: 3600 ha.

Area used by geese: 700 ha.

Feeding habitat: pasture land (reclaimed area).

Roosting place: coastal areas.

Max. number: Autumn: 100-150. Spring: < 100.

Arrival: medio October.

Departure: ultimo February.

Hunting pressure: low.

Other species: bean goose, grey-lag goose.

Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus*)

Most haunts are in the eastern part of the country, although the bean goose may be found regularly in a few localities in northern, central and eastern Jutland.

Flocks of bean geese are often observed in southwestern Jutland on migration, but are rarely roosting there.

Bean geese generally winter in Denmark, but in case of heavy snowcover they move further south.

3. HANSTED RESERVE

Ownership: the state, the Game Foundation and private.

Area: 6900 ha.

Area used by geese: Only a small part.

Feeding habitat: Moorland in the reserve and neighbouring haunts (no. 5) Ove Sø, Rosvang.

Roosting place: lakes in the reserve.

Max. number:

Autumn: 300. Spring: less than 100.

Arrival: medio October.

Departure: a few may stay during winter until April, but the main flock leaves medio December.

No hunting.

Other species: pink-footed goose.

4. VEJLERNE

Ownership: private, the area is a reserve.

Area: 6000 ha.

Area used by geese: a few hundred ha.

Feeding habitat: pasture land.

Roosting place: lakes in the reserve.

Max. number: Autumn: 300-400. Spring: 300.

Arrival: primo October.

Departure: medio April; the geese leave the area during severe winters.

Hunting pressure: low.

Other species: grey-lag goose, pink-footed goose.

5. TANDRUP-ROSVANG

Ownership: private.

Area: 500 ha.

Area used by geese: 300 ha.

Feeding habitat: pasture land and grain fields.

Roosting place: Hansted reserve, Vejlerne or Ove Sø (515 ha).

Max. number: Autumn: 200-400. Spring: 300.

Arrival: medio October.

Departure: Medio April, most of the geese stay during winter.

Hunting pressure: low.

Other species: occasionally pink-footed goose.

6. ESDAL

Ownership: private.

Area: 200 ha.

	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Febr.	March	April
1963/64	0	1000	8000	4000	1500	1500	2300	2000
1964/65	0	0	1500	2400	1700	2000	2000	800
1965/66 ¹⁾	125	3000	2300	3000	1600	1750	500	0
1966/67	3	1400	3000	1700	1900	1000	700	0
1967/68	460	1350	700	1300	1400	1700	900	0
1968/69 ¹⁾	0	2800	1900	1250	1300	5500	1300	1170
1969/70 ¹⁾	0	2000	900	1000	560	1075	500	112

Table 1. Number of *Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus* counted in Denmark once a month from September to April 1963-1970. No correction for localities not counted. Years marked ¹⁾ are colder than normally.

Tabel 1. Antal alm. sædgæs, *Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus*, talt på de danske rasteplasser én gang om måneden fra september til april 1963-1970. Der ingen korrektion for ikke optalte lokaliteter. År mærket med ¹⁾ var koldere end normalt.

Табл. 1. Число обыкновенных гуменников, *Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus*, подсчитанных на датских местах привала раз в месяц с сентября до апреля 1963-1970 г. Поправок на местности без подсчета не произведено. Годы, помеченные 1), были холоднее нормального.

Area used by geese: 200 ha.
 Feeding habitat: grassland and grain-fields.
 Roosting place: Vejlerne and possibly Hansted reserve.
 Hunting pressure: low.
 Other species: pink-footed goose.

Regular counts have not been conducted here, and maybe the area is only occasionally used by geese.

7. TJELE

Ownership: private.
 Area: 2500 ha.
 Area used by geese: 500 ha.
 Feeding habitat: pasture land, stubble, potatoes.
 Roosting place: lake Tjele Langsø (465 ha).
 Max. number: Autumn: 800-1200. Spring: 250.
 Arrival: primo October.
 Departure: the main flock in the course of December. In spring small flocks pass the area.
 Hunting pressure: none on Tjele, but high hunting pressure on surrounding areas.
 Other species: none.

8. LILLE VILDMOSE

Ownership: private.
 Area: 7900 ha.
 Feeding habitat: pasture land.
 Max. number: Autumn: 200. Spring: 400-600.
 Arrival: medio October.
 Departure: primo April, generally no geese during the wintermonths.
 Hunting pressure: moderate.
 Other species: none.

9. SALTBÆKVIG

Ownership: private.
 Area: 2700 ha.
 Area used by geese: 500 ha.
 Feeding habitat: winter crops and oat fields.
 Roosting place: lake Saltbækvig (1850 ha).
 Max. number: Autumn: 450. Spring: 250.
 Arrival: primo November.
 Departure: ultimo March, the geese leave the area during severe winters.
 Hunting pressure: low.
 Other species: grey-lag goose, canada goose (*Branta canadensis*).

10. TISSØ WITH SURROUNDING ESTATES

Ownership: private.
 Area: 5000 ha.
 Feeding habitat: grain-fields and stubble.

Roosting place: lake Tissø (1300 ha).
 Max. number: Autumn: 200. Spring: 600-700.
 Arrival: medio December.
 Departure: ultimo February.
 Hunting pressure: moderate.
 Other species: grey-lag goose.

11. TYSTRUP-BAVELSE WITH SURROUNDING ESTATES

Ownership: private.
 Area: 3000 ha.
 Feeding habitat: winter crops.
 Roosting place: lake Tystrup (662 ha).
 Max. number: Autumn: 400. Spring: 400-600.
 Arrival: medio November.
 Departure: ultimo March, they generally stay during the winter.
 Hunting pressure: moderate.
 Other species: none.

12. BASNÆS-HOLSTEINSBORG

Ownership: private.
 Area: 1500 ha.
 Area used by geese: 400 ha.
 Feeding habitat: pasture land and wheat fields.
 Roosting place: in the shallow coastal waters nearby.
 Max. number:
 Autumn: 400-600. Spring: 400-800.
 Arrival: medio November.
 Departure: ultimo February.
 Hunting pressure: moderate.
 Other species: grey-lag goose.

13. LJUNGHOLM

Ownership: private.
 Area: 1500 ha.
 Area used by geese: 1200 ha reclaimed marshland.
 Feeding habitat: pasture land and winter crops.
 Roosting place: costal waters nearby.
 Max. number:
 Autumn: 500-1500. Spring: 500-1500.
 Arrival: medio December.
 Departure: ultimo February, the geese winter in the area.
 Hunting pressure: low.
 Other species: grey-lag goose.

14. BØTØ NOR

Ownership: private.
 Area: 900 ha.
 Area used by geese: about 150 ha.
 Feeding habitat: winter crops, stubble fields and unploughed potato fields.

Roosting place: costal waters outside a 60 ha reserve.
 Max. number:
 Autumn: 250-500. Spring: 500-1100.
 Arrival: medio December.

Departure: medio March, the geese may winter in the area.
 Hunting pressure: moderate.
 Other species: grey-lag goose, canada goose.

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus*)

This species only occurs in the western parts of Jutland, the migration route being very narrow.

The population from Spitsbergen (FOG 1965) arrives during the first weeks of October, when 10.000-15.000 geese are seen every year at Vest-Stadil Fjord. Later on they gradually move southwards, leaving the country during severe winters and returning when spring is coming. Sometimes the first flocks are seen already in January. They leave Denmark during May.

15. AGGER AND HARBOØR TANGER

Ownership: partly by the government, partly by private.
 Area: about 2000 ha.
 Feeding habitat: salt marshes.
 Roosting place: shallow coastal waters.
 Max. number: Autumn: Nil. Spring: 3000-4000.
 Arrival: primo April.
 Departure: ultimo May.
 Hunting pressure: high in autumn, perhaps the reason no geese are resting at that time of the year.
 Other species: brent goose (*Branta bernicla*).

16. NISSUM FJORD

Ownership: partly by the government, partly by private.
 Area: 10.000 ha.
 Feeding habitat: pasture land, winter crops and salt marshes.
 Roosting place: the shallow fjord.
 Max. number: Autumn: nil. Spring: 3000-4000.
 Arrival: medio February.
 Departure: ultimo May.
 Hunting pressure: high in autumn, probably the reason there are no resting individuals.
 Other species: brent goose.

17. VEST-STADIL FJORD

Ownership: private.

Area: 1500 ha.
 Area used by geese: 1500 ha.
 Feeding habitat: oat fields, stubble fields.
 Roosting place: lake Sønder Dyb within the area (513 ha).
 Max. number:
 Autumn: 10.000-15.000. Spring: 6000-7000.
 Arrival: primo October.
 Departure: ultimo May. There are no geese during the months December-February.
 Hunting pressure: moderate.
 Other species: grey-lag goose, bean goose.

18. TIPPERNE-VÆRNENGENE

Ownership: Tipperne: a state reserve; Værnengene: private.
 Area: 1000 ha.
 Area used by geese: Spring 1000 ha; autumn: mostly used as roosting place.
 Feeding habitat: pasture land and salt marshes.
 Roosting place: the shallow water in the surrounding fjord.
 Max. number:
 Autumn: 2000-3000. Spring: 2000-3000.
 Arrival: medio October.
 Departure: ultimo April. There are no geese during the months December-February.
 Hunting pressure: high on Værnengene. No shooting on Tipperne.
 Other species: grey-lag goose, bean goose, brent goose.

19. FIILSØ

Ownership: private.
 Area: 4000 ha.
 Area used by geese: 2000 ha cultivated area.
 Feeding habitat: pasture land, oat fields, stubble.
 Roosting place: Tipperne and the fjord around it (No. 18).
 Max. number:
 Autumn: 7000. Spring: 2000-3000.
 Arrival: medio October.
 Departure: ultimo April. No geese during December-February.
 Hunting pressure: high.
 Other species: grey-lag goose, bean goose.

20. BALLUM ENGE

Ownership: private.

Area used by geese: about 200 ha.

Feeding habitat: pasture land.

Roosting place: the Waddensea outside the dikes.

Max. number: Autumn: 2000-4000 (only a few days). Spring: 3000-4000.

Arrival: medio November on migration, they return medio February.

Departure: medio April. The geese are passing through the area rather quickly both autumn and spring.

Hunting pressure: moderate, but great disturbance in the area both autumn and spring because of sheep and cattle.

Other species: grey-lag goose, bean goose.

21. HØJER ENGE AND HØJER FORLAND

Ownership: partly private and partly the state.

Area used by geese: about 1000 ha.

Feeding habitat: pasture land and salt marshes.

Roosting place: Højer Forland and the Waddensea outside the dike.

Max. number:

Autumn: 2000-4000. Spring: 3000-4000.

Arrival: medio November.

Departure: medio April, generally the geese leave the area rather quickly in the autumn, but in mild winters lesser flocks may stay in the salt marshes just south of the Danish-German border during the winter. In spring they move northwards as soon as snowcover disappears, and they only roost in the area rather short.

Hunting pressure: moderate, but great disturbance in the area autumn and spring because of sheep and cattle.

Other species: grey-lag goose, bean goose.

	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Febr.	March	April
1963/64	0	2000	2200	450	300	2200	3500	3000
1964/65	12	6500	1700	3	1000	2400	5000	5000
1965/66 ¹⁾	5	15.000	7500	100	0	1030	5000	11.500
1966/67	550	15.000	5000	550	50	5000	7500	5000
1967/68	2100	15.000	5600	600	300	350	5600	9000
1968/69 ¹⁾	0	12.200	55	600	2600	300	8300	8200
1969/70 ¹⁾	0	12.000	2100	1000	0	0	1000	10.000

Table 2. Number of *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus* counted in Denmark once a month from September to April 1963-1970. No correction for localities not counted. Years marked ¹⁾ are colder than normally.

Tabel 2. Antal kortnæbbede gæs (*Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus*) talt på de danske rasteplasser én gang om måneden fra september til april 1963-1970. Der er ingen korrektion for ikke optalte lokaliteter. År mærket med ¹⁾ var koldere end normalt.

Табл. 2. Число *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus*, подсчитанных на датских местах привала раз в месяц с сентября до апреля 1963-1970 г. Поправок на местности без подсчета не произведено. Годы, обозначенные 1), были холоднее нормального.



Fig. 1 and 2. *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus* at Fiilsø (19) (Fig. 1) and Vest-Stadil Fjord (17) (Fig. 2) in W. Jutland. (P. Uhd Jepsen phot.).

Fig. 1 og 2. *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus* ved Fiilsø (19) (Fig. 1) og Vest-Stadil Fjord (17) (Fig. 2) i Vestjylland.



Fig. 3. *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus* flying at Højer enge and Højer forland (21) in Southwest Jutland. (P. Uhd Jepsen phot.).

Fig. 3. *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus* over marskenge ved Højer (21) i Sydvest-Jylland.



Fig. 4. Tjele, a locality for *Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus*. (P. Uhd Jepsen phot.).

Fig. 4. Tjele – en traditionel rasteplass for *Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus*.

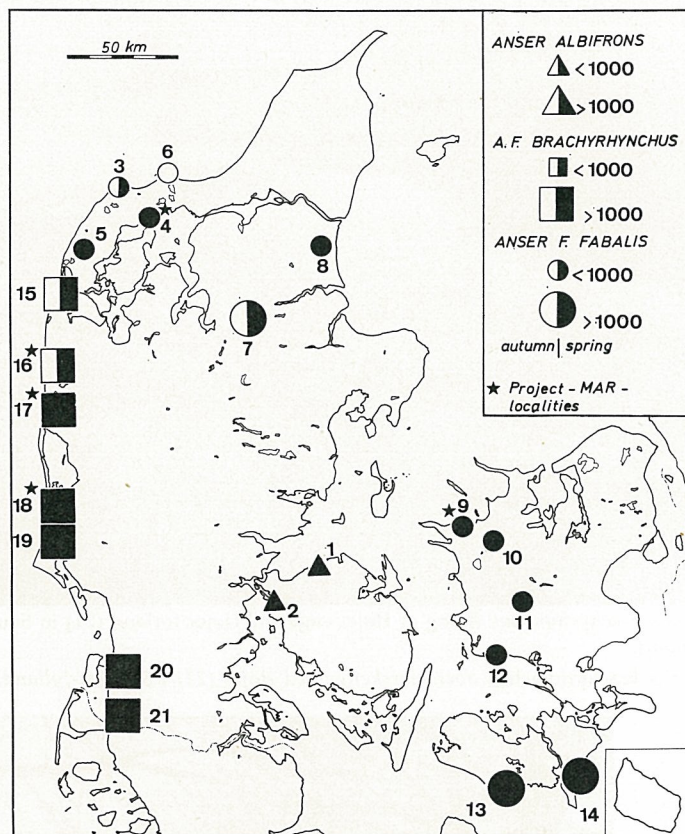


Fig. 5. Haunts for *Anser albifrons*, *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus* and *Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus* in Denmark. The size of the signatures indicates whether less than or more than 1000 birds are seen regularly, and black indicates whether this number occurs during autumn (left half of signature) or spring (right half). Numerals refer to numbers in the text.

Fig. 5. Rasteplasser for *Anser albifrons*, *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus* og *Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus* i Danmark. Signaturernes størrelse markerer, om der regelmæssigt optræder hhv. under og over 1000 fugle, og de sorte felter i hver signatur henviser til hhv. efterår (venstre halvdel) og forår (højre halvdel). Tallene er løbenumre jvf. teksten.

Фиг. 5. Места привала в Дании *Anser albifrons*, *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus* и *Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus*. Величина сигнатур указывает, встречается ли регулярно более или менее 1000 птиц, а черные поля отдельных сигнатур обозначают осень (левая половина) или весну (правая половина). Числа соответствуют очередным номерам в тексте.

The habitat

The feeding habitat for the whitefronts, bean geese and pink-feet on their migration through Denmark or their wintering in the country are wide, open, level areas near lakes or the sea.

Generally they prefer cultivated areas and pastures. Apparently there are no real distinction between the choice of habitat of the three species. The pink-footed goose, however, favours salt marshes

more than the two others, owing to the fact that this particular habitat is found frequently on the migration route of this species.

The roosting place is fresh or salt water and it seems important to the geese, that the lakes are large, at least about 400 ha. In most cases the roosting place is quite close to the feeding ground.

Dansk resumé

Rastepladser i Danmark for blisgås (*Anser albifrons*), sædgås (*Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus*) og kortnæbbet gås (*Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus*).

Tællinger

En forskergruppe, gåsearbejdsgruppen, inden for International Wildfowl Research Bureau har i en årrække koordineret tællinger af gæs i hele Vesteuropa og dele af Østeuropa. Danmark har deltaget siden efteråret 1963. Tællingerne er forestået af Vildtbiologisk Station.

I løbet af de år, tællingerne har fundet sted, har man tilvejebragt megen ny viden om gæssenes fordeling og mængde i Danmark efterår, vinter og forår.

I afhandlingen gennemgås de vigtigste rastepladser, d. v. s. de områder, hvor man regelmæssigt træffer gæssene fouragerende og/eller overnattende. På disse arealer er der optalt gæs fra 1963-1970 én gang om måneden fra september til april.

Kortet fig. 5 viser rastepladsernes geografiske fordeling for de omtalte gæs, og tabel 2 og 3 viser det maksimale antal

sædgæs og kortnæbbede gæs talt i perioden.

Rastepladserne er opstillet efter og omtalt under den art (race), der på stedet er den talrigste.

Rastepladsernes beskaffenhed

Det ser ud til, at de tre arter (racer) foretrækker fourageringssteder af nogenlunde samme kvalitet, nemlig vidtstrakte, åbne, flade arealer. De opsøger den dyrkede jord og kulturgræsset fremfor naturgræs-områder. Den kortnæbbede gås opsøger i højere grad end de to andre strandenge, hvilket måske hænger sammen med, at denne biotop netop forekommer på racens trækrute.

Om natten holder gæssene til på vand, enten i ferskvand eller i saltvand. Det ser ud til, at en vandflade skal have en vis udstrækning, mindst 400 ha, for at tilfredsstillende gæssenes krav til nattesæde.

Резюме на русском языке:

Места привала в Дании *Anser albifrons*, *Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus* и *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus*.

Подсчеты

Группа исследователей при *International Wildfowl Research Bureau* в течение ряда лет координировала подсчеты гусей по всей Западной Европе и частям Восточной Европы. Дания участвовала с осени 1963 г. Подсчетами руководила Станция Исследования Биологии Дичи (*Game Biology Station*).

В течение лет, в которые производились подсчеты, было добыто много новых сведений о распределении и количестве гусей в Дании осенью, зимой и весной.

В статье рассматриваются важнейшие места привала, т. е. местности, где регулярно встречаются гуси фуражирующие или ночующие. В этих местностях гуси подсчитывались с 1963 по 1970 г. раз в месяц с сентября до апреля.

Карта фиг. 5 показывает географическое расположение мест привала вышеозначенных гусей, а таблицы 1 и 2 показывают максимальные количества *Anser fabalis non brachyrhynchus* и *Anser*

fabalis brachyrhynchus, подсчитанных в течение периода.

Места привала перечислены и оговорены по виду (подвиду), наиболее многочисленному в указанной местности.

Характер мест привала

Повидимому, указанные три вида (подвида) предпочитают для фуражирования местности приблизительно одинакового качества, а именно обширные, открытые и ровные пространства. Они предпочитают культурные земли и травы местностям с натуральной травой. *Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus* чаще, чем остальные два вида, посещает морские прибрежные луга, что может быть связано с тем, что этот биотоп встречается именно на пути пролёта этого подвида.

Гуси ночуют на воде, пресной или морской. Кажется, что для потребности ночёвки, водное пространство должно быть по крайней мере около 400 га.

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