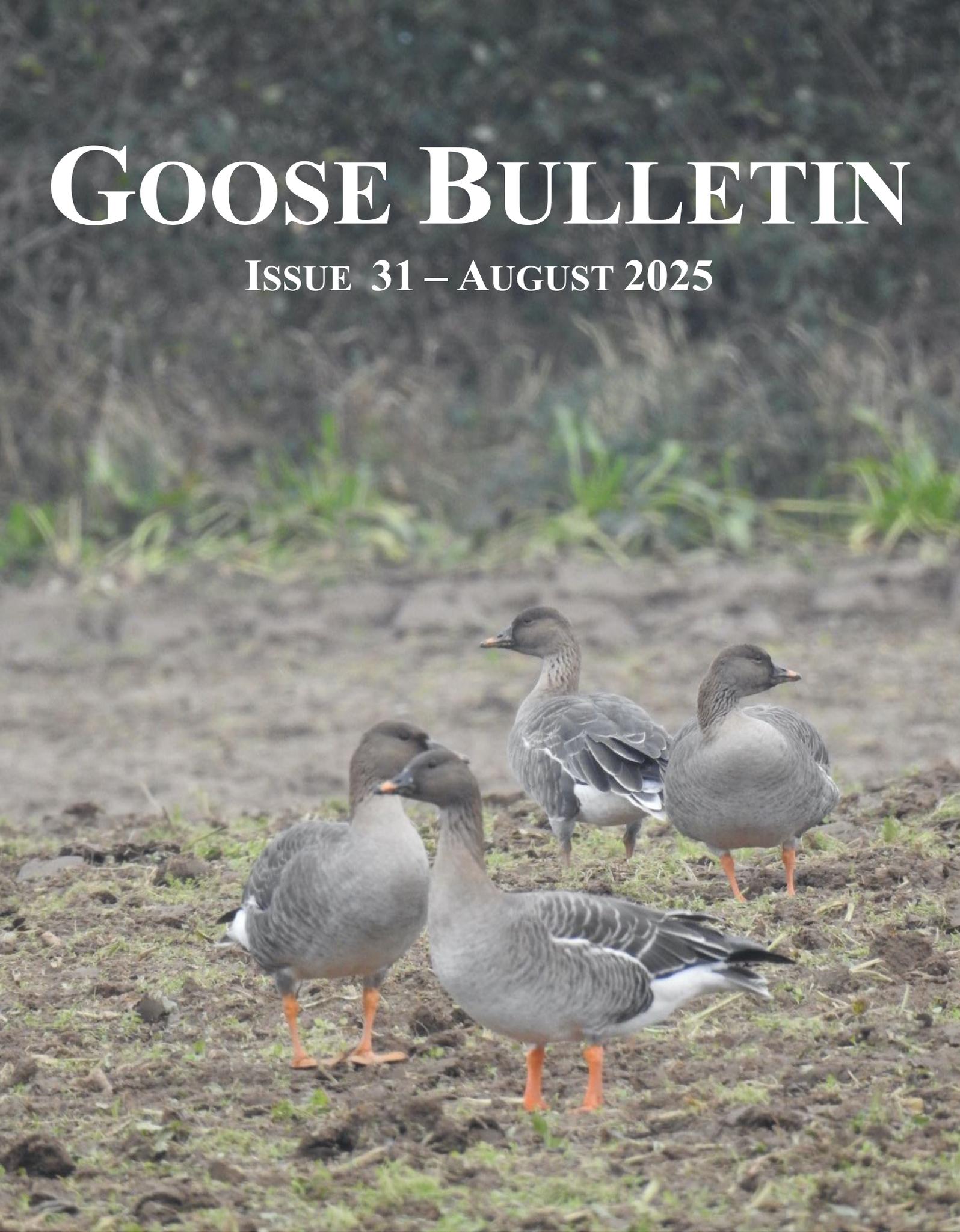


GOOSE BULLETIN

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Contents

Editorial	1
MUSIL, P. - Short report of the 21 st Goose Specialist Group Conference	3
GUILLEMAIN, M. - International scientific congress on waterfowl, France, March 2028	5
GSG-BOARD - Good research practices for goose specialists	7
SHIMADA, T. et al. - Swan Project - A Public Bird Migration Tracking and Citizen Science Initiative	9
HAAPANEN, A. et al. - The population crash and recovery of the Lesser White fronted Goose in Relation to Nuclear Weapon Testing.....	13
CHOUDHURY, A. - Status of Geese of the genus Anser in Assam, India	21
CHOI, H.-A. - Roundtable on Citizen Science for Swan Goose Conservation in Paju City, Republic of Korea.....	27
MOOIJ, J.H. - Obituary: Eugeniusz Nowak: 1933-2024.....	31
MOOIJ, J.H. - Outstanding Ornithologist of the past: Peter Simon Pallas (1741–1811)	33
New Publications 2024 - 2025	36

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The bulletin aims to improve communication and exchange information amongst goose researchers throughout the world. It publishes contributions covering goose research and monitoring projects, project proposals, status and progress reports, information about new literature concerning geese, as well as regular reports and information from the Goose Database.

Contributions for the **GOOSE BULLETIN** are welcomed from all members of the Goose Specialist Group and should be sent as a Word-file to the Editor-in-chief.

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Roundtable on Citizen Science for Swan Goose Conservation in Paju City, Republic of Korea

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The Roundtable on Citizen Science for Swan Goose Conservation was co-organized by Eco Korea, the Bookcity Culture Foundation, the Paju Bookcity Corporate Association (Ecology Committee), and the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) Korea on 20 November 2025 in Paju, RO Korea.



Swan Geese and Tundra Bean Geese
in the Han River Estuary
© Bernhard Seliger

The event provided an opportunity for participating organizations to share their activities and exchange perspectives on the ecological significance of the Swan Goose *Anser cygnoides*. Although many important migratory and protected species inhabit the Han River and the inter-Korean border region, the Swan Goose remains one of the most symbolic and ecologically significant species in this area.

Despite its global importance, public awareness and research on the Swan Goose in RO Korea have remained limited, raising several key questions that this roundtable sought to address. In contrast, DPR Korea has demonstrated strong interest in the species, notably hosting the 2019 Mundok Swan Goose Festival in cooperation with the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership and HSF Korea. Countries such as Mongolia, Russia, and China also regard the Swan Goose as a highly significant migratory bird.

The roundtable therefore explored why the Swan Goose holds particular importance across Northeast Asia and what its status implies for conservation and site management within the Han River Estuary.



Mr. Young-Kwon Cho, Gongreungcheon Friends, presented the current condition of the Gongreung-cheon estuary. Gongreungcheon Friends, a community-based group formed by local residents, was established out of concern that the river maintenance project launched in 2021 might threaten the area's natural environment. Historically, the landscape around Gongreung-cheon consisted of interconnected rice paddies, wetlands, and nearby villages, forming an ideal habitat frequently visited by Swan Geese and numerous other migratory species.



However, concrete reinforcement of irrigation channels and changes in surrounding agricultural land have significantly altered the habitat, leading to a drastic decline in Swan Goose sightings. Large-scale river engineering works conducted between 2022 and 2023 further transformed the ecological characteristics of the estuary.

Mr. Kyeong-Soo Park, Paju Bookcity Ecological Survey Team, introduced the history of ecological monitoring in Paju Bookcity, which began in 2020. Munbal Wetland—one of the monitoring sites—is a brackish estuarine system influenced by both freshwater inflow and tidal seawater.

Regular surveys have confirmed high biodiversity within the area, demonstrating that this purpose-built industrial complex also possesses substantial ecological value. The establishment of a citizen-based ecological survey group has strengthened Bookcity’s identity as an environmentally conscious urban district while enhancing ecological awareness among employees, residents, and partner organizations. The accumulated ecological data also provides an important evidence base for addressing local environmental issues and supporting collaborative efforts with Paju City.

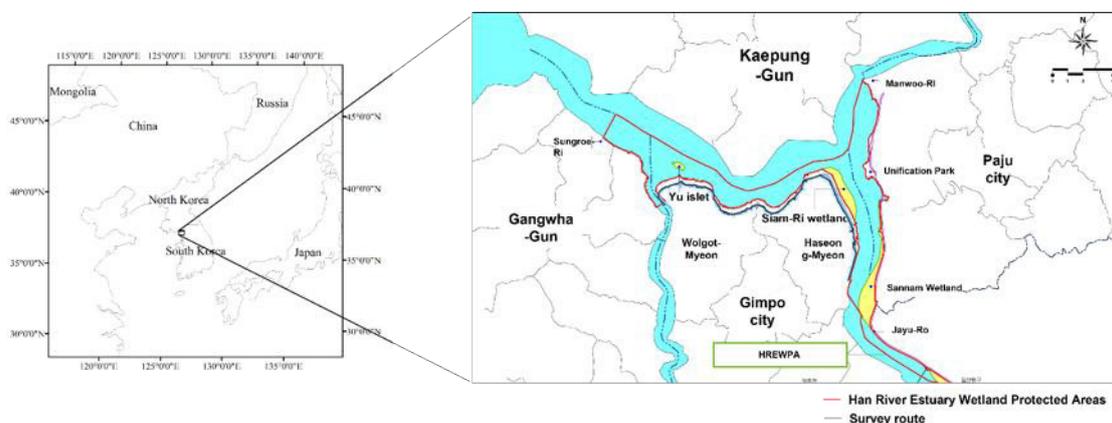


Ms. Eung-Jeong Kim, Eco Korea, presented the long-term monitoring history of Janghang Wetland. Monitoring activities began in 2003 in response to the construction of the Ilsan Bridge. Eco Korea has since conducted monthly surveys and citizen engagement programs for 23 consecutive years. Since 2002, civic participation in Janghang Wetland monitoring has continued to grow, contributing to broader public recognition of the wetland’s ecological importance.



Dr. Hyun-Ah Choi, Hanns Seidel Foundation Korea, presented the monitoring recording in Mundok Wetland, DPR Korea and emphasized the ecological connectivity among Mundok, the Han River estuary wetlands, including the Siam-ri and Jogang-ri wetlands in Gimpo. The analysis highlighted the need to understand Swan Goose migration and habitat use within a broader flyway context.

During the discussion session, participants reviewed key issues related to habitat management. In the past, large numbers of Swan Geese were regularly observed across sites such as Munbal Wetland, Janghang Wetland, Jogang-ri, and Gongneung-cheon - sometimes as many as 800 individuals. However, given the rapid urban development and changes in land use in surrounding communities, it is understandable that current habitat conditions are no longer favorable for the return of large numbers of Swan Geese. While numbers fluctuate considerably at individual sites, the total Swan Goose population in the Han River estuary has remained relatively stable at approximately 1,000 individuals for over a decade. This indicates that the overall migrating population has not collapsed. Nevertheless, the reasons behind shifts in movement patterns and site-specific preferences remain poorly understood.



Map of Han River Estuary Wetland Protected Area by ME (2006).

(ME (2006): Han River Estuary Wetland Protection Area Designation Map. - ME (Ministry of Environment) RO Korea)

Participants agreed on the need to expand research across the entire Han River estuary to better understand the factors influencing Swan Goose site selection. The species depends on a combination of feeding grounds, resting areas, and safe roosting conditions—elements that must function together to support a viable habitat.

Currently, no comparable or comprehensive data exists for the Han River estuary, underscoring a significant information gap. Future research should explore:

- the ecological role of agricultural fields; and
- how internal (farmland) and external (wetland) feeding resources interact to support the species.

Participants agreed and emphasized that, as a species entirely dependent on healthy wetland ecosystems, the Swan Goose can return only when suitable habitats are maintained and protected.

Prior to the roundtable, the citizen science group conducted a bird survey along Munbal Wetland. The survey recorded several migratory and protected species, including the Tundra Bean Goose, Black-faced Spoonbill, and Eurasian Spoonbill. However, the Swan Goose had not yet appeared at Munbal Wetland during the week of the survey.

