



# CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

Distribution: General

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11<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
Quito, Ecuador, 4-9 November 2014  
Agenda Item 24.1.1

## PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*) ON CMS APPENDIX I

### Summary:

Ecuador and Paraguay have submitted a proposal for the inclusion of the Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*) on CMS Appendix I for the consideration of the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11), 4-9 November 2014, Quito, Ecuador.

The proposal is reproduced under this cover for a decision on its approval or rejection by the Conference of the Parties.



**PROPOSAL FOR INCLUSION IN THE APPENDICES OF THE CONVENTION ON THE  
CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS (CMS)**

- A. PROPOSAL:** Inclusion of the Semipalmated Sandpiper, *Calidris pusilla*, on Appendix I of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
- B. PROPONENT:** Government of Ecuador and Government of Paraguay

**C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

**1. Taxon**

- 1.1 Class:** Aves
- 1.2 Order:** Charadriiformes
- 1.3 Family:** Scolopacidae
- 1.4 Genus/species:** *Calidris pusilla*
- 1.5 Common name:** English: Semipalmated Sandpiper  
Spanish: Correlimos Semipalmeado, Playerito escudado, Playerito Semipalmeado  
French: Bécasseau semipalmé

**2. Biological data**

**2.1 Distribution**

Limited mainly to the Western Hemisphere, *Calidris pusilla* is a long-distance migratory bird that nests in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic of North America, and winters mainly on the northern coasts of South America. It breeds from the extreme northeast of Siberia on the Chukchi Peninsula (Russian Federation), along the northern coast of Alaska (United States) and eastwards to the north of Quebec, the centre of Baffin Island and north Labrador (Canada). In the non-breeding season the species uses coastal estuarine habitats on the Pacific coast from Mexico to Peru, and on the Atlantic coast from the Yucatan and the West Indies south to central Argentina. Large concentrations occur along the coast of French Guiana, Suriname and northern Brazil (BirdLife International 2014, Hicklin and Gratto-Trevor 2010, Morrison *et al.* 2012).

**2.2 Population**

There are no recognized subspecies, but some authors distinguish between eastern, central and western subpopulations. The worldwide population of the species is estimated to be 2,260,000 individuals, with 405,000 making up the eastern subpopulation, 405,000 within the central subpopulation and 1,450,000 in the western subpopulation. The population trend has been stable in Alaska and the central population, whereas the population has experienced significant decreases in the east (Andrés *et al.* 2012 a, b).

According to Morrison *et al.* (2012), the numbers of *Calidris* spp. (mainly *C. pusilla*) wintering on the coast of Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana fell by 79% between 1982 and 2008-2011. The

*C. pusilla* in this area are mainly from the eastern and central subpopulations, with the decrease suggesting that the worldwide population used to be much larger than the current estimate.

### 2.3 Habitat

The species lives on the shores (beaches) of lagoons, swamps, river mouths, estuaries, mangroves and wetlands in general. The birds breed on the tundra near water (mainly in coastal areas). During migration and winter, the species visits intertidal areas, estuaries, sandy beaches and wetlands (Hicklin and Gratto-Trevor 2010).

### 2.4 Migration

During the spring migration, individuals from the east Arctic subpopulation (eastern) migrate north from South America along the Atlantic coast, while those that breed in the west and centre of the Arctic migrate north through inland North America. Most of those that breed in the west migrate south in the autumn over grasslands, while those that breed in the east and centre of the Arctic migrate to South America mainly down the Atlantic coast of North America (often flying above the ocean). Individuals in the western subpopulation seem to winter more to the west of South America than those that breed in the east (Naranjo *et al.* 2012). The adults migrate before the young in autumn, which results in two migration peaks. The adults begin to migrate south in mid-July (with the largest numbers travelling in late July and mid-August), while the juveniles reach their migration peak in late August and early September.

## 3. **Threat data**

*Calidris pusilla* is considered a Near Threatened species worldwide (BirdLife International 2014).

### 3.1 Direct threats to the population

Direct threats include hunting, particularly in the north east of South America (Suriname, French Guiana and Brazil) (Morrison *et al.* 2012). There is, however, a lack of information on the impact and scale of hunting of this species.

### 3.2 Habitat destruction

Habitat loss and degradation throughout its area of distribution were identified as the main causes of the decrease in the population of this species. The change in habitat throughout its migration routes prevents it from feeding enough to complete the migration (resulting in reduced survival rates among adults).

### 3.3 Indirect threat

Climate change: temperature changes in the breeding grounds are altering the availability of food resources. For instance, peaks in the number of insects available may occur before the eggs are laid (leaving the chicks without adequate food). Climate change may have other indirect impacts on the population (such as higher levels of parasites and disease, altered migration patterns and so on).

### 3.4 Threats related to migration

Habitat loss and hunting are threats during the migration period. The flocks are easy targets for hunters, while habitat loss results in a lack of food and shelter for the species. Other threats include human disturbance, infrastructure development, water pollution and coastal development.

### 3.5 National and international utilization

Although there are no data on utilization, the species is hunted (probably for food).

## 4. **Protection status and needs**

### 4.1 National protection status

In the United States, the species is included on the list of species of conservation concern at the national level (USFWS 2008), and is considered a “yellow watch list species” (Butcher *et al.* 2007).

### 4.2 International protection status

*Calidris pusilla* is included in Appendix II of the CMS in the Scolopacidae family.

### 4.3 Additional protection needs

- Determination of the impact of hunting in the north of South America and, where necessary, mitigate or reduce that impact
- Conservation and effective management of the natural habitat in their stopping points and wintering grounds
- Assessment of the impact of geese overpopulation in their breeding grounds
- Assessment of the impact of pollutants in their stopping points and wintering grounds.

## 5. **Range States<sup>1</sup>**

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA; ARGENTINA; BOLIVIA; Bahamas; Barbados; Brazil; Canada; CHILE; COSTA RICA; Colombia; CUBA; Dominica; ECUADOR; El Salvador; United States of America (incl. Puerto Rico); FRANCE (Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana); Grenada; Guatemala; Guyana; Haiti; Jamaica; NETHERLANDS (Netherlands Antilles); HONDURAS; Mexico; Nicaragua; PANAMA; PARAGUAY; PERU; Dominican Republic; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Suriname; Trinidad and Tobago; URUGUAY, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of); United Kingdom (overseas Caribbean territories).

## 6. **Comments from Range States**

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## 7. **Additional Remarks**

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## 8. **References**

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<sup>1</sup> CMS Parties in capitals.

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