

PROPOSAL FOR INCLUSION OF SPECIES ON THE APPENDICES OF THE CONVENTION
ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS

- A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Larus audouinii in Appendix II.
B. PROPONENT: Government of the Federal Republic of Germany

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxon

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1.1. Classis | Aves |
| 1.2. Ordo | Charadriiformes |
| 1.3. Familia | Laridae |
| 1.4. Genus/Species/Subspecies | <u>Larus audouinii</u> Payraudeau 1826
Monotypic |
| 1.5. Common names | |
| English: | Audouin's Gull |
| Spanish: | Gaviota de Audouin |
| French: | Goeland d'Audouin |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

The species breeds only on islands in the Mediterranean, with colonies in Cyprus, France (Corsica), Italy, Greece, Turkey, Tunisia, Algeria and Spain. It winters mainly along Mediterranean coasts (especially Libya, Tunisia and Algeria), although some birds regularly pass through the Straits of Gibraltar to winter along the Atlantic coast of Morocco south to Mauritania and Senegal (Hoogendoorn & Mackrill 1987).

2.2. Population

Only one population is recognized.

- Entire population: 20,000; increasing (Rose & Scott 1993).

The total population has been estimated at 5,500-6,000 pairs (Evans 1986), the largest colonies being in the Ebro Delta (Spain) and on the Chafarinas Islands (Morocco) (de Juana et al. 1984; Hoogendoorn & Mackrill 1987). The breeding population in Spain showed a pronounced increase during the 1970s, and by 1982 was estimated at a minimum of 800 pairs at 11 colonies. A breeding colony of 40-50 pairs was discovered on the Columbretes Islands in 1974, and by 1982, there were some 200 pairs at this site. A new colony was established in the Ebro Delta, and this grew from 36 pairs in 1981 to at least 200 pairs in 1982. In the Balearic Islands, the population increased by nearly 20% from 350 to 420 pairs between the late 1970s and 1982 (de Juana 1984). In 1978, there were 500 pairs at eight sites in Algeria, with the largest colony being 96 pairs. The species is increasing on the Chafarinas Islands, where there were 500 pairs in 1966 and 2,220 pairs in 1981. Between 1962 and 1980, the numbers breeding in Corsica have fluctuated between two pairs in 1974 and 63 pairs in 1980 (Evans 1984). Counts in winter have included 108 on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, 824 in Algeria (mainly in the west) and 141 in Libya. Rare in northern

Tunisia, but up to 36 have been recorded in the extreme southeast. Up to 20 non-breeders have been found summering along the Atlantic coast of Morocco. Eleven were recorded in Senegal in January 1993 during the African Waterfowl Census (Taylor 1993).

2.3. Habitat

Strictly marine; confined to the warm Mediterranean maritime zone where it breeds colonially on exposed outer rocky islands and islets, or on larger, uninhabited, gently-sloping islands covered with rocks, grasses and low shrubs (e.g. in the Aegean). Adequate vegetation is especially important for nesting. Outside the breeding season, occurs along coasts, preferring sheltered bays with either shingly or sandy shores or with adjacent cliffs; occasionally visits seaside resorts or marinas, but does not normally scavenge around fishing boats or harbours (Cramp & Simmons 1983; Urban *et al.* 1986).

2.4. Migrations

A partial migrant, wintering mainly along the coast from Libya to northwestern Morocco, but wandering down the Atlantic coast as far as Senegal. It has occurred as a vagrant in Egypt.

3. Threat data

3.1. Direct threats to the population

In historic times and until recently at least, the main threat to the species in Spain and probably throughout its range, was egg-collecting for human consumption. As the species breeds colonially and synchronously on flat islets (never on steep cliffs), egg-collecting is likely to affect it more seriously than other Mediterranean seabirds. A virtual cessation of egg-collecting at the Spanish colonies is thought to have been the main cause behind the rapid recovery in the population (de Juana 1984). However, eggs were still be taken for sale from the Chafarinas Islands in the early 1980s, despite the status of the islands as a national game refuge (Urban *et al.* 1986). The principal threat to the breeding colonies on the Chafarinas Islands is predation by Larus cachinnans, which frequently takes both eggs and young. Predation levels are much heavier when the colony has been disturbed by man (de Juana *et al.* 1984). In 1986, 1,930 nests of L. audouinii almost totally failed, and consequently a cull of the islands' increasing population of L. cachinnans took place. In 1987, 2,845 nests fledged an estimated 1,027 young (Collar & Andrew 1988). A few birds are probably shot by hunters who mistakenly identify them for huntable species such as L. cachinnans, L. fuscus and L. ridibundus (de Juana 1984) and some birds have been found dead in offshore fishing lines (Urban *et al.* 1986). Visits by tourists to colonies, e.g. by private yacht, can cause much harmful disturbance, especially given the concentrations of nests on flat ground and the comparatively late breeding season (de Juana 1984).

3.2. Habitat destruction

None known.

3.3. Indirect threats

Pesticide residues have been found in eggs, but at levels unlikely to influence hatching success (Urban *et al.* 1986). The species is permanently at risk from floating and beached oil.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

Collection of eggs by humans probably still occurs at some colonies.

4. **Protection status and needs**

4.1. National protection status

Protected under national legislation in all twelve member states of the EEC. In Africa, fully protected under national legislation in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

4.2. International protection status

Larus audouinii is listed in Appendix I of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, in Appendix II (strictly protected fauna) of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention), and in Annex I of the EEC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC). The species is listed in category 'R' (Rare) in the 1990 edition of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals (IUCN 1990).

4.3. Additional protection needs

See attached note on additional protection needs for species and populations with an unfavourable conservation status.

5. **Range States**

See attached table.

6. **Comments from Range States**

7. **Additional remarks**

Larus audouinii is listed in the category 'Threatened' in the Draft Management Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds because of its IUCN listing as a globally threatened species.

8. **References**

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Taxon: <i>Larus audouinii</i>		
Population		
(a) Entire population		
State	Pop.	Status
Algeria	a	Wsr
Cyprus	a	Swr
Egypt	a	V
France - Corsica	a	S
Greece	a	Swr
Italy	a	Swr
Jordan	a	V
Lebanon	a	V
Libya	a	W
Mauritania	a	W
Morocco	a	W
Portugal	a	V
Senegal	a	W
Spain	a	Swr
Switzerland	a	V
Tunisia	a	Wsr
Turkey	a	Swr
United Kingdom - Gibraltar	a	P

Key to Status	
S/s Breeding summer visitor	R/r Resident
W/w Winter visitor	V Vagrant
P/p Passage migrant	? Status uncertain
Upper case = primary status Lower case = secondary status	