

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 cirrocephalus poiocephalus (West African and Southern African populations) 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 cirrocephalus</u> Vieillot 1818
ssp. <u>poiocephalus</u> |
| 1.5. Common names | |
| English: | Grey-headed Gull |
| Spanish: | Gaviota Cabecigris |
| French: | Mouette a tete grise |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

The subspecies poiocephalus occurs in West Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, and southern Madagascar. In West Africa, the species occurs along the coast from Mauritania to Togo and inland along the major rivers from Mali to Lake Chad. In Eastern Africa and Southern Africa, it is more widespread, occurring from the Nile Valley in Sudan and Ethiopia south through East Africa to South Africa. Only the populations breeding on the coast of West Africa and in Southern Africa appear to be migratory.

2.2. Population

Two migratory populations are recognized.

- Southern Africa: Unknown (over 10,000).
- Coastal West Africa: 10,000.

Uncommon in parts of its range, but locally abundant in others. The coastal population of West Africa is in the region of 2,900 pairs, with 15-30 pairs at the Banc d'Arguin in Mauritania, 50 pairs in the Senegal Delta and 2,600 pairs in the Sine-Saloum Delta in Senegal, and 200 pairs in the Bijagos Archipelago in Guinea-Bissau (Cooper et al. 1984; Perennou 1991). Up to 300 birds have been recorded on the Banc d'Arguin in November (Cramp & Simmons 1983). The bulk of the Southern African population breeds inland, with only about 175 pairs breeding at 15 localities along the coast (Namibia and South Africa) (Cooper et al. 1984). Some 560 were recorded in Zimbabwe during the African Waterfowl Censuses of July 1992 and January 1993 (Taylor 1993). No information is available on the trends in either population.

2.3. Habitat

Breeds along sea coasts, along large rivers and on freshwater and alkaline lakes far inland. Nests in colonies, usually on rocky or sandy islands but also in clumps of emergent vegetation and on floating heaps of decomposing weeds. In West Africa, occurs along sandy coasts and on offshore islands, and also on the edges of lakes and along great rivers. In southern Africa, common on inland lakes and open waters, although also found on sea coasts (Cramp & Simmons 1983; Urban *et al.* 1986).

2.4. Migrations

Most populations appear to be sedentary or dispersive, but the population in Southern Africa (in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia and southern Angola) is at least partly migratory, while the population breeding on the coast of West Africa (Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau) spreads along the coast in winter to Sierra Leone, in lesser numbers into the Gulf of Guinea as far as Togo (Cramp & Simmons 1983). Birds ringed in Transvaal have been recovered in coastal Natal, southern Mozambique, Zimbabwe, western Zambia, Botswana, coastal Namibia and southern Angola (Urban *et al.* 1986). Wanderers from the West African population have reached southern Spain.

3. Threat data

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Human predation on eggs is reported to be a serious problem at some breeding colonies, especially in the Sine-Saloum Delta in Senegal (Urban *et al.* 1986). The collection of eggs by local inhabitants on the islets off Senegal has hopefully been reduced or eliminated since these islands were declared national parks (Cooper *et al.* 1984).

3.2. Habitat destruction

The loss and degradation of wetlands may be having a negative impact on some populations, but as a bird of sea coasts, large lakes and major rivers, less likely to be affected by wetland loss than most other waterbirds.

3.3. Indirect threats

The widespread application of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals in and around wetlands may be having a harmful effect on some populations. Pollution from agrochemicals may become a problem in Senegal with the major agricultural developments in the deltas (Cooper *et al.* 1984).

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

Collection of eggs for food.

4. Protection status and needs

4.1. National protection status

In Africa, Larus cirrocephalus is fully protected under national legislation in Angola, Benin, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Swaziland and Tanzania.

4.2. International protection status

None known.

4.3. Additional protection needs

The populations in question are considered to have a favourable conservation status, and are not in need of any additional special protection measures at the present time.

5. Range States

See attached table.

6. Comments from Range States

7. Additional remarks

8. References

- Cooper, J., Williams, A.J. & Britton, P.L. (1984). Distribution, population sizes and conservation of breeding seabirds in the Afrotropical Region. In: Croxall, J.P., Evans, P.G.H. & Schreiber, R.W. (eds), Status and Conservation of the World's Seabirds: 403-419. ICBP Tech. Publ. No.2. Cambridge, UK.
- Cramp, S. & Simmons, K.E.L. (eds). (1983). Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Vol.3: Waders to Gulls. Oxford University Press. Oxford, London and New York.
- Harrison, P. (1983). Seabirds: an identification guide. Croom Helm Ltd., Beckenham, U.K.
- Perennou, C. (1991). Les Recensements Internationaux d'Oiseaux d'Eau en Afrique Tropicale. IWRB Spec. Publ. No.15. Slimbridge, UK.
- Taylor, V. (1993). African Waterfowl Census 1993. IWRB, Slimbridge, U.K.
- Urban, E.K., Fry, C.H. & Keith, S. (1986). The Birds of Africa. Volume II. Academic Press, London & Orlando.

Taxon: <i>Larus cirrocephalus poiocephalus</i>		
Population		
(a) Southern Africa		
(b) Coastal W Africa		
State	Pop.	Status
Angola	a	Sr
Botswana	a	Sr
Gambia	b	Sr
Ghana	b	Wr
Guinea	b	Wr
Guinea-Bissau	b	Sr
Lesotho	a	Sr
Liberia	b	W
Mauritania	b	Sr
Mozambique	a	Sr
Namibia	a	Sr
Senegal	b	Sr
Sierra Leone	b	Wr
South Africa	a	Sr
Spain	b	V
Swaziland	a	Sr
Togo	b	Wr
Zambia	a	Sr
Zimbabwe	a	Sr

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	