

A. PROPOSAL

Inclusion of *Haliaeetus albicilla* in Annex I.

B. PROPONENT

European Economic Community

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT1. Taxonomy

1.1 Class: Aves

1.2 Order: Accipitriform

1.3 Family: Accipitridae

1.4 Genus: *Haliaeetus albicilla* (Linnaeus, 1758)

1.5 Common names: White-tailed Eagle (English)
Pygargue à queue blanche (French)

2. Biological Data

2.1 Distribution: very extensive range from Greenland, Iceland, Scandinavia, Central Europe, across Eurasia to the Pacific; in the north to Taymyr, in the south to North Africa, Iraq, Mongolia, China. The range was larger in the 19th century.

2.2 Population: the West Palearctic population is estimated at 1,000 pairs (Norway: about 460 pairs; Iceland: 20; Sweden: 60; Finland: 5; Poland: 50; German Democratic Republic: 110; Federal Republic of Germany: 4; Czechoslovakia: 1; Denmark: 1; Hungary: 8; Romania: 10; Greece: 5; Turkey: 20). It diminished substantially in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. After a short period of stabilisation, the decline restarted due to the low rate of breeding. This applies also to the European part of the USSR. The nesting population of Estonia fell from 28 to 6 pairs in a few years and the densities in the centre of the European part of the USSR are very low (0.04 breeding pairs/100 km², against 0.1 in the Ural region and 1.4 in a protected area of Lapland). Similarly, in the southern part of the breeding area in Asia (southern Siberia, Mongolia, China), the numbers seem to be decreasing too, although exact figures are lacking. Further north in the Siberian taiga region, there is no indication of decrease.

- 2.3 Habitat: coastal areas, large lakes and wide rivers, nests mainly in forests rich in old tree populations, but also on cliffs.
- 2.4 Migration: the population of north USSR (beyond about 60°N) is all migratory. In the west and south of the breeding area, the young birds travel for a shorter distance and the adults are partly sedentary. The breeding and wintering area is widespread in Europe, but in Asia the birds winter further from their breeding area.
3. Threat data
- 3.1 Direct threat: in Europe in particular, persecution caused the large-scale decline of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Direct threats are now rare in Europe, but more frequent in western and southern Asia. The problem arises in particular, in the areas where hunting is intensive (for example, in the Asian range of the musk rat) and in sheep-rearing regions. Adults are shot, but eggs and young birds are sometimes destroyed too.
- 3.2 Habitats: intensive silviculture is destroying the old trees that are suitable for breeding.
- 3.3 Disturbance: pressure from disturbance is high in Europe due to tourist activity on stretches of water and to mechanized forestry.
- 3.4 Contamination: the concentration of organochlorine pesticides and heavy metals (mercury) in the food chains is a serious threat, particularly in Europe. It entails a decrease in the reproduction rate and consequently a decline in the long-term. Moreover, accidents are possible through consumption of dead animals which have been poisoned by other products.
- 3.5 Threats related to migration: the northern part of the range is probably not directly affected by the factors in 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4, but the birds of that region may be contaminated by pesticides and heavy metals in their wintering area.
4. Protection status and needs
- 4.1 In the range States: the species is legally protected in most of the nesting countries (but sometimes very recently: 1968 in Norway). In Iceland, the poisoning of animals, such as foxes, has been prohibited since 1964 and the use of baits to lure birds has been restricted. In Sweden a conservation programme begun in 1971 includes the provision of uncontaminated food. A similar programme exists in Finland. In the European Economic Community, the species is the subject of special conservation measures (Annex I of Council Directive relating to the conservation of wild birds); eggs from abandoned nests have been successfully entrusted to wild birds in Germany (Schleswig-Holstein) and reintroduction is being attempted in the United Kingdom (Scotland).

- 4.2 International protection: the species is listed in Annex I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; it is already listed in Annex II of the present Convention.
- 4.3 Additional protection needs: a more rigorous application of protection laws is still necessary in some countries and should be backed up by more information and public awareness work. More sites should be classified as reserves. Pollution of aquatic ecosystems by toxic substances must be dealt with more effectively, in particular the Baltic Sea ecosystem. Specific conservation programmes, such as those mentioned in 4.1 might, if necessary, be adapted in other regions. Lastly, the Balkan and Asian populations should be better followed up, by repeated inventories and a better identification of conservation problems, which would lead to actions.

5. Range States

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, European Economic Community, [Belgium, Denmark (Greenland), France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Ireland: extinct, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Hungary, Iceland, Iran, Iraq, Israel, (extinct), Japan, Mongolia, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Taiwan, Turkey, USSR, United States, Yugoslavia.

6. Comments from range States

None

7. Additional remarks

This species is listed in "ICBP Bird Data Book" (classified as "vulnerable") and in the Red Data Book of the USSR.

8. References

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