

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Xema sabini (Atlantic population) 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>Xema sabini</u> (Sabine) 1819<br>Monotypic |
| 1.5. Common names             |   |
| English:                      | Sabine's Gull                                 |
| Spanish:                      | Gaviota de Sabine                             |
| French:                       | Mouette de Sabine                             |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Almost circumpolar. Birds which breed on the arctic tundra of Canada and Greenland migrate southeast across the Atlantic to winter in the cool Benguela Current off Namibia and South Africa (between 18°S and 34°S). The few pairs breeding in Svalbard presumably also winter off Southwest Africa. The population breeding in Alaska and northern Siberia (west to about 90°E) winters in the Southeast Pacific, and is thus extralimital. Some authors recognize four subspecies, but these are weakly defined.

2.2. Population

Only one population is recognized.

- Canada & Greenland/Southwest Africa: Unknown (over 25,000).

No information is available on numbers or population trends. The breeding population in Greenland is estimated at between 100 and 300 pairs. The numbers on Svalbard are very small; there are few proven cases of breeding, and then only single pairs (Cramp & Simmons 1983).

2.3. Habitat

Breeds in coastal lowlands from the subarctic to high Arctic, seldom more than a few km from the coast. Prefers marshy tracts of flat tundra, floodlands and low-lying brackish pools, especially those containing islets or narrow peninsulas which can be used as nest sites. Usually breeds in small scattered groups, often in association with Sterna paradisaea. Outside the breeding season, almost entirely pelagic frequenting cold upwellings in the shelf-edge zone south of the equator, usually within 40 km of the coast but occasionally up to 150

km or more offshore. Only occasionally occurs along the coast or inland in Western Europe during migration (Cramp & Simmons 1983; Urban *et al.* 1986).

#### 2.4. Migrations

Populations breeding on the arctic tundra of Canada and Greenland migrate southeast across the Atlantic to winter in the cool Benguela Current off Namibia and South Africa (between 18°S and 34°S). The few pairs breeding in Svalbard presumably also winter off Southwest Africa. The species occurs commonly on migration off the West African coast, but is only an occasional visitor to the Atlantic seaboard of Europe (mainly the Bay of Biscay).

### 3. **Threat data**

#### 3.1. Direct threats to the population

No information.

#### 3.2. Habitat destruction

None known.

#### 3.3. Indirect threats

None known.

#### 3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

#### 3.5. National and international utilization

No information.

### 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 Angola, Benin, Gambia, Mauritania, Morocco and South Africa.

#### 4.2. International protection status

Xema sabini is listed in Appendix II (strictly protected fauna) of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention).

#### 4.3. Additional protection needs

The population in question is considered to have a favourable conservation status, and is 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**

- 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.
- Urban, E.K., Fry, C.H. & Keith, S. (1986). The Birds of Africa. Volume II. Academic Press, London & Orlando.

Taxon: <i>Xema sabini</i>		
Population		
(a) Canada & Greenland/SW Africa		
State	Pop.	Status
Angola	a	P
Belgium	a	V
Benin	a	P
Cameroon	a	P
Canada	a	S
Congo	a	P
Cote d'Ivoire	a	P
Denmark	a	V
Faroos	a	V
Greenland	a	S
Egypt	a	V
Equatorial Guinea	a	P
Finland	a	V
France	a	P
Gabon	a	P
Gambia	a	P
Germany	a	V
Ghana	a	P
Guinea	a	P
Hungary	a	V
Iceland	a	V
Ireland	a	V
Israel	a	V
Italy	a	V
Liberia	a	P
Mauritania	a	P
Morocco	a	P
Namibia	a	W
Netherlands	a	V
Nigeria	a	P
Norway	a	V
Svalbard	a	S
Poland	a	V

Portugal	a	P
Romania	a	V
Senegal	a	P
Sierra Leone	a	P
South Africa	a	W
Spain	a	P
Sweden	a	V
Switzerland	a	V
Togo	a	P
United Kingdom	a	V
Gibraltar	a	V
Zaire	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	