

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Sterna nilotica nilotica (West Eurasian and 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>Sterna nilotica</u> Gmelin 1789 ssp. <u>nilotica</u>
1.5. Common names	
English:	Gull-billed Tern
Spanish:	Pagaza Piconegra
French:	Sterne hansel

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Only the nominate subspecies occurs. This breeds in widely scattered colonies across southern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, and also locally in northern Europe and West Africa. West Eurasian breeders winter south to the Gulf of Guinea, Tanzania and the Arabian Peninsula. Three populations are identifiable: (i) a population which breeds in Western Europe (north to Denmark and Germany), the West Mediterranean (east to Tunisia) and Northwest Africa south to Mauritania and Senegal, and winters mainly inland in West Africa east to Nigeria and Chad; (ii) a population which breeds in the Balkans, the Black Sea, the Eastern Mediterranean and central Turkey, and winters mainly inland in Northeast and East Africa from Sudan south to Tanzania (occasionally Botswana); and (iii) a population which breeds in the Caspian Region, Aral Sea and Kazakhstan, and winters in Iraq, southern Iran, the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula.

2.2. Population

Three populations are relevant.

- West Europe/West Mediterranean/West Africa: 12,000; declining.
- Black Sea/Turkey/East Mediterranean/Northeast & East Africa: 15,000-25,000 (Rose & Scott 1993).
- Kazakhstan/Caspian Region/Middle East: Probably in the range 10,000-25,000.

The population breeding in the West European/West African region has been estimated at between 4,000 and 4,500 pairs. These include 1,600-1,900 pairs on the Banc d'Arguin and mainland near Nouakchott in Mauritania, and 100-200 pairs in the Senegal Delta in Senegal (Urban et al. 1986). Unpublished data suggest that the total breeding population

in Western Europe is about 2,350 pairs. The small population breeding in Northwest Europe has declined markedly this century. In Germany, numbers peaked in 1917 and declined to only three pairs in 1972, but then increased to 52 pairs in 1976-1979. In Denmark, the population declined from about 650 pairs in 1895-1900 to 106 pairs in 1961-1970, 30 pairs in 1979 (Evans 1984) and only two in recent years. The species breeds irregularly in small numbers in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Perennou (1991) has estimated the West African wintering population at 12,000-15,000 birds. The population breeding in the Black Sea/East Mediterranean region has been estimated at between 4,500 and 10,000 pairs, with the majority in Turkey. Up to 3,400 have been recorded in Southwest Asia in winter. The highest mid-winter counts in recent years have come from Saudi Arabia (910 in 1992), Bahrain (330 in 1992), Kuwait (180 in 1990) and Oman (130 in 1990) (Perennou & Mundkur 1992; Perennou et al. 1990), but in the 1970s, the wintering population in Iran alone was estimated at 1,000-3,000 birds (Scott 1992). During the African Waterfowl Census of January 1993, the highest national totals were from Kenya (308), Niger (251) and Uganda (574) (Taylor 1993). No information is available on trends in the Black Sea/East Mediterranean and Southwest Asian populations.

2.3. Habitat

Breeds in temperate, steppe, Mediterranean and subtropical zones; inhabits lowland coasts, estuaries, deltas and lagoons, also inland lakes, rivers and marshes, ascending to mountain lakes in Armenia, Iran and Turkey. Less aquatic and less marine than most terns, and generally avoids exposed ocean coasts. Nests colonially on sand-banks, pebbly spits or dry mud, usually on islands by shallow brackish, saline or fresh water; also locally in dry littoral meadows. Often forages over grassland or steppe far from water. Outside the breeding season, occurs far inland in Africa on large rivers, lakes, extensive inundation zones and rice fields, and also along the coast on tidal mud-flats, estuaries, lagoons, saltpans and extensive sand flats (Cramp 1985; Urban et al. 1986).

2.4. Migrations

Birds from West Europe and the West Mediterranean migrate both along the coast and overland, with records of flocks in Chad and southeastern Morocco suggesting that many birds cross the Sahara. These birds and West African breeders winter throughout West Africa south of the Sahara, but mainly inland and especially in the inundation zone of the Upper Niger, northern Nigeria and Chad. Very small numbers reach the Gulf of Guinea (Urban et al. 1968). Birds which breed in the Balkans, the Black Sea, the East Mediterranean and central Turkey migrate up the Nile Valley to winter mainly inland in eastern Africa from Sudan south to Tanzania and occasionally Botswana. Birds which breed in the Caspian Region, Aral Sea and Kazakhstan probably account for the birds wintering in Iraq, southern Iran, the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula.

3. Threat data

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Human disturbance at breeding colonies in Europe; possibly predation on eggs by humans, especially in Southwest Asia. Large numbers of Sterna spp. are hunted for food and recreation on the coast of West Africa, especially in Ghana, and some S. nilotica are doubtless included in the kill.

3.2. Habitat destruction

The widespread loss and degradation of freshwater wetlands are doubtless having a negative impact on populations in many parts of the species' range, but details are lacking. Declines in Northwest Europe have been attributed to habitat changes (Cramp 1985).

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.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

Probably some hunting for food in West Africa, and possibly some egg-collecting, but details are lacking.

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, Benin, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Somalia, Tanzania and Tunisia; partially protected as a game species in Ghana.

4.2. International protection status

Sterna nilotica is listed in Appendix II (strictly protected fauna) of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention), and is also listed in Annex I of the EEC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC).

4.3. Additional protection needs

All three West Eurasian and African populations of Sterna nilotica are listed in the category 'Threatened' in the Draft Management Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, because they are biogeographical populations which are thought to number less than 25,000 individuals and appear to be

declining throughout all or a large part of their ranges. 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

8. References

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Taxon: <i>Sterna nilotica nilotica</i>		
Population		
(a) W Europe/W Mediterranean/W Africa		
(b) Black Sea/E Mediterranean/NE Africa		
(c) Kazakhstan/Caspian Region/Middle East		
State	Pop.	Status
Algeria	a	S
Angola	b	V
Armenia	c	S
Azerbaijan	c	P
Bahrain	c	Pw
Belgium	a	P
Benin	a	W
Botswana	b	V
Bulgaria	b	S
Burkina Faso	a	W
Burundi	b	W
Cameroon	a	W
Chad	a	W
Comoros	b	Wp
Cote d'Ivoire	a	W
Cyprus	b	P
Denmark	a	S
Djibouti	b	W
Egypt	b	Sp
Ethiopia	b	W
France	a	Sp
Gambia	a	Wsr
Georgia	b	P
Germany	a	S
Ghana	a	W
Greece	b	S
Guinea	a	W
Guinea-Bissau	a	W
Hungary	a	V
Iran	c	Ws
Iraq	c	W

Ireland	a	V
Israel	b	P
Italy	a	S
Kazakhstan	c	S
Kenya	b	W
Kuwait	c	Pw
Liberia	a	W
Luxembourg	a	V
Madagascar	b	V
Mali	a	W
Mauritania	a	Sw
Monaco	a	P
Morocco	a	P
Mozambique	b	V
Netherlands	a	P
Niger	a	W
Nigeria	a	W
Norway	a	V
Oman	c	W
Poland	a	V
Portugal	a	P
Qatar	c	P?
Romania	b	S
Russian Federation	b	S
"	c	P
Rwanda	b	W
Saudi Arabia	c	W
Senegal	a	Wsr
Seychelles	b	Wp
Sierra Leone	a	W
Somalia	b	W
South Africa	b	V
Spain	a	Sp
Sudan	b	W
Sweden	a	V
Switzerland	a	V
Syria	b	V
Tanzania	b	W

Togo	a	W
Tunisia	a	S
Turkey	b	S
Turkmenistan	c	S
Uganda	b	W
Ukraine	b	S
United Arab Emirates	c	Pw
United Kingdom	a	V
Gibraltar	a	P
Uzbekistan	c	S
Yemen	c	W
Zaire	b	W
Zambia	b	W
Zimbabwe	b	V

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	