

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of *Polysticta stelleri* in Appendix I

B. PROPONENT: Government of the Republic of Hungary

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxon

1.1 Classis	Aves
1.2 Ordo	Anseriformes
1.3 Familia	Anatidae
1.4 Genus/Species/Subspecies	<i>Polysticta stelleri</i> (Pallas) 1769, Monotypic
1.5 Common (English) name	Steller's Eider

2. Biological data

2.1 Distribution

The species breeds in Northern Eurasia and Northwestern North America (Alaska) only. It winters in the Bering and White Seas (Eastern population), Northeastern Europe and the Baltic Sea (Western population).

2.2 Population

The population in the Aleutians suffered a steep decline since the 1970s. The global population may be in the range of 200,000 - 300,000 birds, out of which the NE-European/Western Siberian population is estimated at 30,000 birds (Scott and Rose, 1994).

2.3 Habitat

The species breeds on pools, lakes, rivers and tundra bogs in the high Arctic. It winters on rocky coasts, in bays and on estuaries of marine areas, especially on the Bering, White and Baltic Seas.

2.4 Migration

The populations are moving to the open sea generally to the South and to the East of their breeding areas: the most significant movement is shown by birds wintering in the Baltic Sea.

3. Threat data

3.1 Direct threats to the population

Hunting is thought to have an important effect on the population especially in winter (Collar et al. 1994). In the wintering areas, oil spills represent a major threat, especially because the birds winter in relatively small offshore areas in large numbers where they are more vulnerable to pollution effects (del Hoyo et al. 1992).

3.2 Habitat destruction

Not known in the breeding areas.

3.3 Indirect threats

Intensive fisheries are thought to negatively affect the wintering populations (Collar et al. 1994).

3.4 Threats connected especially with migration

As described above, most of the threats are affecting the populations in the non-breeding season.

3.5 National and international utilisation

Exact data is not available on the precise scale of utilisation.

4. Protection status and needs

4.1 National protection status

No information available.

4.2 International protection status

The species is listed in Appendix II of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention).

Global Conservation Status: Vulnerable (IUCN criterion A1a).

4.3 Additional protection needs

An international action plan for the species is under preparation by BirdLife International in association with Wetlands International, supported by the EU Life funds. Parts of the important wintering areas along the Varanger Fjord in Norway are protected, as well as some areas of high concentration in Estonia.

Conservation measures required include the identification of main causes of decline, legal protection of the species and key breeding areas in range states and special protection zones of key wintering concentrations.

5. Range States (parties and signatories to the Convention in bold)

The species breeds in Russian Federation and northern Alaska (U.S.A.). Its wintering range includes also **Denmark**, Estonia, **Finland**, Latvia, Lithuania, **Norway** and **Poland**.

6. Comments from Range States

7. Additional remarks

8. References

Collar, N.J., Crosby, M.J. and Stattersfield, A.J. (1994) Birds to Watch 2: the world list of threatened birds. Cambridge, U.K.: BirdLife International.

del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A. and Sargatal, J. eds. (1992) Handbook of the Birds of the World. Volume 1. Barcelona: Lynx Editions.

Rose, P.M. and Scott, D.A. (1994) Waterfowl Population Estimates. Slimbridge: IWRB.

Tucker, G.M. and Heath, M.F. (1994) Birds in Europe: their conservation status. Cambridge, U.K.: BirdLife International.