

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 repressa 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 repressa</u> Hartert 1916<br>Monotypic |
| 1.5. Common names             |  |
| English:                      | White-cheeked Tern                               |
| Spanish:                      | Charran Cariblanco                               |
| French:                       | Sterne a joues blanches                          |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

The species breeds in the Persian Gulf, in the Red Sea and along the African coast south to northern Kenya (Lamu Archipelago), and apparently winters mainly at sea in the Indian Ocean. There are many breeding sites in the Red Sea north to Egypt (Tiran Island, Abu Mingar) and in the Persian Gulf.

2.2. Population

Only one population is recognized.  
- Entire population: 600,000; decreasing in some areas (Rose & Scott 1993).

The total population has recently been estimated at about 600,000 birds or at least 150,000 breeding pairs, although there may be many more. Sheedvar Island off the south coast of Iran supported an immense colony of this species, roughly estimated at 300,000 pairs, in 1972. However, by 1976 and 1977, the population had crashed to only about 25,000-50,000 pairs, almost certainly as a result of massive egg-collecting by the inhabitants of nearby Lavan Island (Gallagher et al. 1984). Populations breeding in Africa include 1,000 pairs on the Kiunga-Tenewe Islands in Kenya, and 470 pairs in the Suakin Archipelago and 600 pairs in the Mukawar, Taila and Mayetib Islands in Sudan (Cooper et al. 1984). The species is uncommon along the African coast south of the breeding sites in Kenya, and uncommon in the Red Sea north of the Suakin Archipelago, Somalia (Urban et al. 1986).

2.3. Habitat

Strictly marine, frequenting tropical warm waters of the Indian Ocean. Nests colonially on sandy coral-fringed islands, sand-dunes and sand-

spits; occasionally on bare and exposed sand-flats. Occurs widely along sandy coastlines and in inshore waters during the migration seasons, but relatively few have been observed in winter and it seems that the bulk of the population stays well offshore (Cramp 1985; Urban *et al.* 1986).

#### 2.4. Migrations

Dispersive and migratory. Absent from the main breeding colonies in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf between October and March. The relatively small number of birds breeding in Somalia are thought to be resident (Urban *et al.* 1986). The species occurs on passage and in winter south to East Africa and east to Pakistan and India, but most birds apparently stay well offshore in winter.

### 3. **Threat data**

#### 3.1. Direct threats to the population

The commercial harvesting of eggs for human consumption was almost certainly responsible for the dramatic decline in the breeding colony on Sheedvar Island off the coast of Iran in the 1970s. Egg-collecting and the disturbance of breeding colonies by fishermen and tourists are doubtless the principal threats at many of the breeding sites.

#### 3.2. Habitat destruction

No information.

#### 3.3. Indirect threats

The species is possibly at risk from oil pollution, especially in the Persian Gulf.

#### 3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

#### 3.5. National and international utilization

Collection of eggs for human consumption.

### 4. **Protection status and needs**

#### 4.1. National protection status

In Africa, *Sterna repressa* is fully protected under national legislation in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, Somalia and Tanzania.

#### 4.2. International protection status

None known.

#### 4.3. Additional protection needs

Sterna repressa is listed in the category 'Potentially vulnerable' in the Draft Management Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, because it is a species which, although still with a population size of over 100,000 individuals, has shown a marked decrease in numbers over the whole or a large part of its range in recent decades. 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

The entire population of Sterna repressa is also included in the Bonn Convention Draft Agreement on the Conservation of Asian-Australasian Migratory Waterbirds, as a substantial proportion of the population spends a part of its annual cycle in the Asian-Australasian Region.

#### 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. (ed.). (1985). Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Vol.4: Terns to Woodpeckers. Oxford University Press. Oxford, London and New York.
- Gallagher, M.D., Scott, D.A., Ormond, R.F.G., Connor, R.J. & Jennings, M.C. (1984). The Distribution and Conservation of Seabirds Breeding on the Coasts and Islands of Iran and Arabia. In Croxall, P.J., Evans, P.G.H. & Schreiber, R.W. (eds), Status and Conservation of the World's Seabirds: 421-456. ICBP Technical Publication No.2. ICBP, Cambridge, U.K.
- Harrison, P. (1983). Seabirds: an identification guide. Croom Helm Ltd., Beckenham, U.K.
- Rose, P.M. & Scott, D.A. (1993). Waterfowl Population Estimates. Draft report presented at the Fifth Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, 9-16 June 1993, Kushiro, Japan. IWRB, Slimbridge.
- Urban, E.K., Fry, C.H. & Keith, S. (1986). The Birds of Africa. Volume II. Academic Press, London & Orlando.

Taxon: <i>Sterna repressa</i>		
Population		
(a) Entire population		
State	Pop.	Status
Bahrain	a	Sw
Djibouti	a	Sw
Egypt	a	S
Ethiopia	a	Sw
Iran	a	S
Israel	a	V
Jordan	a	V
Kenya	a	Sw
Kuwait	a	S
Oman	a	Sw
Qatar	a	S
Saudi Arabia	a	S
Seychelles	a	V
Somalia	a	R
South Africa	a	V
Tanzania	a	V
United Arab Emirates	a	S
Yemen	a	W

  

Key to Status	
<i>S/s</i> Breeding summer visitor	<i>R/r</i> Resident
<i>W/w</i> Winter visitor	<i>V</i> Vagrant
<i>P/p</i> Passage migrant	? Status uncertain
Upper case = primary status Lower case = secondary status	