

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Chlidonias niger niger in Appendix II.

B. PROPONENT: Government of the Federal Republic of Germany

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxon

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| 1.1. Classis | Aves |
| 1.2. Ordo | Charadriiformes |
| 1.3. Familia | Laridae |
| 1.4. Genus/Species/Subspecies | <u>Chlidonias niger</u> (Linnaeus) 1758
ssp. <u>niger</u> |
| 1.5. Common names | |
| English: | Black Tern |
| Spanish: | Fumarel Comun |
| French: | Guifette noire |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Only the nominate subspecies occurs. This breeds in temperate regions of Europe and West Asia from France and Spain in the west to about 85°E in Western Siberia, and winters mainly on the west coast of Africa from Senegal south to Namibia, and also in much smaller numbers along the Nile Valley in Egypt and Sudan.

2.2. Population

Only one population is recognized.

- Entire population of niger: 100,000-200,000; declining.

Unpublished data suggest that the breeding population in Europe is between 60,000 and 85,000 pairs. Allowing for the relatively small numbers of birds breeding east of the Urals, this suggests a total population of about 200,000 birds. However, this estimate is considerably higher than some earlier figures suggest. Concentrations of up to 80,000 birds were recorded at the IJsselmeer during autumn passage in the Netherlands in the mid-1970s, and 100,000 were found wintering at the Banc d'Arguin in the early 1970s. These concentrations were thought to represent the bulk of the population. Furthermore, Perennou (1991) has recently estimated the entire West African wintering population at only 60,000 birds. Over 7,500 were recorded in Nigeria during the African Waterfowl Census of January 1993 (Taylor 1993). The species has decreased over much of its range, especially in the west, over the last 40 years, and has disappeared from many of its former breeding areas. In the Netherlands, the population fell from 7,500-10,000 pairs in 1945-50 to 2,000-3,000 pairs in 1978, while in Denmark, numbers fell from 700 pairs in 1950 to 200 pairs in the 1970s. Marked decreases have also been recorded in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Slovakia and Ukraine (Cramp 1985). Recent

breeding in Finland, Britain and Ireland has involved only a very small number of birds.

2.3. Habitat

Breeds mainly in well-watered lowlands in the temperate, steppe and Mediterranean zones; prefers fresh or brackish waters, permanent or sometimes temporary, which are rich in floating or emergent aquatic vegetation. Nest sites include small pools, lakes, ditches, overgrown canals, quiet reaches of rivers, oxbows, marshes, and swampy or relatively dry meadows or pastures, including inundated areas. Normally forages over water, but also occasionally over reed-beds and grassland. Moves to lakes, reservoirs, sewage farms, salt-marshes, estuaries and bays after the breeding season. In the winter quarters in West Africa, mainly frequents coasts, estuaries and coastal lagoons, and is uncommon inland (Cramp 1985; Urban et al. 1986).

2.4. Migrations

Migratory. The bulk of the Eurasian population winters in the coastal zone of tropical West Africa, mainly in the Gulf of Guinea (notably Ghana to Nigeria), with smaller numbers continuing on south to Namibia and South Africa (east to Natal and Transvaal). A relatively small number of birds winter in the Nile Valley in Egypt and Sudan, but the species is scarce further south in East Africa. Most European breeders appear to congregate in the southern North Sea in autumn and then follow the western seaboard of Europe to West Africa; birds breeding further east cross the Black Sea region and Southeast Europe on a broad front to reach the Mediterranean, and then mostly move west through the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. A few birds may cross the Sahara, but there is no evidence to suggest any major overland passage to West Africa. Observations suggest nocturnal as well as diurnal migration, sometimes at a considerable height. The species typically assembles in huge numbers at traditional feeding areas en route to its winter quarters, e.g. the Elbe Estuary in Germany, the Ijsselmeer in the Netherlands and the Banc d'Arguin in Mauritania (Cramp 1985).

3. **Threat data**

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Some birds are trapped for food and for recreation on the coast of West Africa, especially in Ghana.

3.2. Habitat destruction

Declines over much of the range in Europe are thought to be mainly due to the widespread drainage and reclamation of wetlands (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

A large proportion of the population congregates at a few major staging areas in the southern North Sea and Mauritania during the autumn migration. The loss of any one of these sites could have a major impact on the species.

3.5. National and international utilization

Hunting for food and recreation on the winter quarters in West Africa.

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 Benin, Gambia, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia; partially protected as a game species in Ghana.

4.2. International protection status

Chlidonias niger 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

Chlidonias niger niger is listed in the category 'Vulnerable' in the Draft Management Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, because it is a subspecies which may number less than 100,000 individuals and is declining throughout all or a large part of its range. 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**

- 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.
- Harrison, P. (1983). Seabirds: an identification guide. Croom Helm Ltd., Beckenham, U.K.

- Perennou, C. (1991). Les recensements internationaux d'oiseaux d'eau en Afrique tropicale. IWRB Special Publication No.15. IWRB, Slimbridge, U.K.
- Schouten, C. (1985). Vijf jaar tellingen van Zwarte Sterns Chlidonias niger in het IJsselmeergebied. Limosa, 58 afl. 3.
- Taylor, V. (1993). African Waterfowl Census 1993. IWRB, Slimbridge, U.K.
- Urban, E.K., Fry, C.H. & Keith, S. (1986). The Birds of Africa. Volume II. Academic Press, London & Orlando.

Taxon: <i>Chlidonia niger niger</i>		
Population		
(a) Entire population of ssp <i>niger</i>		
State	Pop.	Status
Albania	a	S
Algeria	a	Sp
Angola	a	W
Belarus	a	S
Belgium	a	S
Benin	a	W
Botswana	a	V
Bulgaria	a	S
Burundi	a	V
Cameroon	a	W
Congo	a	W
Cote d'Ivoire	a	W
Croatia	a	S
Czech Republic	a	S
Denmark	a	S
Faroese	a	V
Egypt	a	W
Equatorial Guinea	a	W
Estonia	a	S
Finland	a	S
France	a	S
Gabon	a	W
Gambia	a	W
Germany	a	S
Ghana	a	W
Greece	a	S
Guinea	a	W
Guinea-Bissau	a	W
Hungary	a	S
Iceland	a	V
Iran	a	P
Iraq	a	P
Italy	a	S

Jordan	a	V
Kazakhstan	a	S
Kenya	a	V
Kuwait	a	V
Latvia	a	S
Lebanon	a	V
Liberia	a	W
Libya	a	P
Lithuania	a	S
Macedonia	a	S
Madagascar	a	V
Mauritania	a	W
Moldova	a	S
Morocco	a	P
Namibia	a	W
Netherlands	a	S
Nigeria	a	W
Norway	a	V
Poland	a	S
Romania	a	S
Russian Federation	a	S
Senegal	a	W
Sierra Leone	a	W
Slovakia	a	S
Somalia	a	V
South Africa	a	W
Spain	a	S
Sudan	a	W
Sweden	a	S
Syria	a	V
Togo	a	W
Tunisia	a	P
Turkey	a	S
Ukraine	a	S
United Kingdom	-	-
Gibraltar	a	P
Uzbekistan	a	S
Yugoslavia	a	S

Zaire	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	<i>?</i> Status uncertain	
Upper case = primary status Lower case = secondary status		