

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Ardea purpurea purpurea (populations breeding in the Western Palearctic) in Appendix II.

B. PROPONENT: Government of the Federal Republic of Germany

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxon

1.1. Classis	Aves
1.2. Ordo	Ciconiiformes
1.3. Familia	Ardeidae
1.4. Genus/Species/Subspecies	<u>Ardea purpurea</u> Linnaeus 1766 ssp. <u>purpurea</u>
1.5. Common names	
English:	Purple Heron
Spanish:	Garza Imperial
French:	Heron pourpre

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Three subspecies occur. A. p. madagascariensis of Madagascar and A. p. bournei of the Cape Verde Islands are sedentary. The nominate subspecies occurs widely in Africa, southern Europe and Southwest Asia east to Kazakhstan. The populations breeding in subsaharan Africa appear to be mainly sedentary. North African and West Eurasian populations winter almost exclusively in Africa south of the Sahara south to the equator.

2.2. Population

Two main migratory populations are recognized in the Western Palearctic.

- South & West Europe/Northwest Africa (wintering mainly West Africa): 20,000; declining.
- Black Sea/Caspian Region/Southwest Asia (wintering mainly Northeast and East Africa): Probably over 25,000.

Generally rather scarce in the Western Palearctic, except locally in Southwest Asia. There has been some expansion into Central Europe since 1940, with colonization of new areas and increasing numbers in Germany and the Netherlands. Most recent trends, however, suggest a decline in Europe, e.g. in France, where numbers generally fell during the period 1974-1983, except along the Atlantic coast; also declining in Spain. Unpublished data suggest that the total breeding population in Europe, excluding the Black Sea area and former U.S.S.R., is currently between 6,000 and 7,500 pairs. Perennou (1991) estimated the wintering population in West Africa at about 20,000 birds. Little information is available on the breeding population in SE Europe and West Asia, and the trends are unknown. Approximately 7,500 pairs are thought to breed

around the Black and Caspian Seas, and there were an estimated 250 breeding pairs in Iran in the 1970s (Scott 1992).

2.3. Habitat

Occurs in open, shallow, freshwater swamps with dense marshy vegetation; typically in extensive reed-beds, but also in ditches and rice fields, along river margins and lake shores, and in mangroves. Usually nests in flooded reed-beds, but also occasionally in bushes or trees (del Hoyo et al. 1992).

2.4. Migrations

Western Palearctic populations are migratory, wintering in Africa south of the Sahara but north of the Equator, and especially in West Africa. A few birds winter in the Mediterranean Basin and the Middle East, especially in the Mesopotamian Marshes in Iraq. There is also a marked post-breeding dispersal. Migration normally occurs by day in small groups, but flocks of 350-400 have been observed in Turkey and Iran.

3. **Threat data**

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Water pollution and the uncontrolled use of pesticides has caused severe contamination of wetlands in parts of southern Europe, and this has affected the birds through their fish diet. Indiscriminate use of pesticides in the Ebro Delta in Spain in the 1970s almost exterminated the local population of A. purpurea, which dropped from over 1,000 pairs in the 1960s to only 60 pairs in 1973. With the control of pesticide usage in this area, the population has shown some recovery to 475 pairs by 1990 (del Hoyo et al. 1992).

3.2. Habitat destruction

The widespread loss and degradation of reed-beds and other freshwater wetlands with tall emergent vegetation has undoubtedly been a major cause of the decline of this species in many areas.

3.3. Indirect threats

None known.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

Some hunting for food still occurs, especially in parts of Southwest Asia, but the numbers taken are likely to be small.

4. Protection status and needs

4.1. National protection status

Protected under national legislation in all twelve member states of the EEC. In Africa, protected under national legislation in Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda; partially protected as a game species in Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria.

4.2. International protection status

Ardea purpurea 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

The population of Ardea purpurea of South and West Europe and Northwest Africa is listed in the category 'Threatened' in the Draft Management Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, because it is a biogeographical population which is thought to number less than 25,000 individuals and appears to be 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

- Brown, L.H., Urban, E.K. & Newman, K. (1982). The Birds of Africa. Volume I. Academic Press, London & New York.
- Cramp, S. & Simmons, K.E.L. (eds). (1977). Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Vol.1: Ostrich to Ducks. Oxford University Press. Oxford, London and New York.
- del Hoyo, J., Elliott A. & Sargatal, J. (eds). (1992). Handbook of the Birds of the World. Volume 1: Ostrich to Ducks. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.
- Hancock, J. & Elliott, H. (1978). The Herons of the World. London Editions, London.
- Perennou, C. (1991). Les recensements internationaux d'oiseaux d'eau en Afrique tropicale. IWRB Special Publication No.15. IWRB, Slimbridge, U.K.
- Scott, D.A. (1992). Summary of Waterfowl Counts in Iran in the 1970s. Unpublished manuscript on file at IWRB, Slimbridge, U.K.

Taxon: <i>Ardea purpurea purpurea</i>		
Population		
(a) S & W Europe/NW & W Africa		
(b) Black Sea/SW Asia/NE & E Africa		
State	Pop.	Status
Algeria	a	Sp
Armenia	b	S
Austria	a	S
Azerbaijan	b	S
Bahrain	b	P
Benin	a	W
Bosnia & Herzegovina	a	S
Bulgaria	a	S
"	b	S
Burkina Faso	a	W
Cameroon	a	W
"	b	W
Central African Republic	b	W
"	a	W
Chad	a	W
"	b	W
Congo	a	W
Cote d'Ivoire	a	W
Croatia	a	S
Czech Republic	a	S
Egypt	b	Wp
Equatorial Guinea	a	W
Ethiopia	b	W
France	a	S
Gabon	a	W
Gambia	a	W
Georgia	b	S
Germany	a	S
Ghana	a	W
Greece	a	S
"	b	S
Guinea	a	W

Guinea-Bissau	a	W
Iran	b	S
Iraq	b	Sr
Israel	b	S
Italy	a	S
Jordan	b	S
Kazakhstan	b	S
Kenya	b	W
Kuwait	b	P
Liberia	a	W
Libya	a	P
"	b	P
Liechtenstein	a	S
Macedonia	a	S
Mali	a	W
Mauritania	a	W
Moldova	b	S
Morocco	a	Sp
Netherlands	a	S
Niger	a	W
Nigeria	a	W
Portugal	a	S
Qatar	b	P
Romania	a	S
"	b	S
Russian Federation	a	S
"	b	S
Saudi Arabia	b	P
Senegal	a	W
Seychelles	b	V
Sierra Leone	a	W
Slovakia	a	S
Slovenia	a	S
Somalia	b	W
Spain	a	S
Sudan	b	W
Switzerland	a	S
Syria	b	S

Togo	a	W
Tunisia	a	P
Turkey	b	S
Turkmenistan	b	S
Uganda	b	W
Ukraine	b	S
United Arab Emirates	b	P
Uzbekistan	b	S
Yugoslavia	a	S
Zaire	b	W
"	a	W

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	