

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 maxima albidorsalis 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>Sterna maxima</u> Boddaert 1783
ssp. <u>albidorsalis</u> |
| 1.5. Common names | |
| English: | Royal Tern |
| Spanish: | Charran Real |
| French: | Sterne royale |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Only the subspecies albidorsalis occurs. This is endemic to West Africa and known to breed at only five sites on the coast of Mauritania and Senegal. The bulk of the population winters south along the coast to Angola and Namibia, with most in the Gulf of Guinea, but some birds move north along the Atlantic coast of Morocco.

2.2. Population

Only one population is recognized.
- Entire population of albidorsalis: 50,000; stable.

Some 3,000-6,000 pairs breed annually on the Banc d'Arguin in Mauritania, and up to 12,000 pairs at four sites in Senegal: Saloum Delta, Casamance Delta, Senegal Delta and Bijolo Islands (Urban et al. 1986). Cooper et al. (1984) give the breeding populations in the Senegal and Saloum Deltas as 2,000 pairs and 5,000 pairs respectively. Numbers appear to be relatively stable.

2.3. Habitat

Strictly marine, breeding along tropical and subtropical coasts. In West Africa, it nests in dense colonies on offshore sandy islands and feeds in the inshore upwelling zone. Outside the breeding seasons, disperses along the coast, and frequents sandy beaches, lagoons, creeks and harbours (Cramp 1985; Urban et al. 1986).

2.4. Migrations

Resident and intra-African migrant, dispersing along the West African seaboard from the breeding colonies in Mauritania and Senegal south to

Namibia (commonly to northern Angola). Most birds move south after breeding, and few remain on the Banc d'Arguin after September, although there may occasionally be as many as 2,000-3,000 present in some winters. Birds ringed in Mauritania have been recovered in Senegal, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. The bulk of the population probably winters in the Gulf of Guinea. Small numbers of birds move north along the Atlantic coast to Morocco (Tangier), mainly in June-October (Urban et al. 1986).

3. Threat data

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Human predation on eggs may be a problem at some of the breeding colonies. The collection of eggs by local inhabitants on the islets off Senegal has hopefully been reduced or eliminated since these islands were declared national parks (Cooper et al. 1984). Large numbers of Sterna spp. are hunted for food and recreation on the coast of West Africa, especially in Ghana, and some S. maxima are doubtless included in the kill.

3.2. Habitat destruction

None known.

3.3. Indirect threats

The species is possibly at risk from oil pollution.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

Probably hunted for food and/or recreation in parts of West Africa, but details are lacking.

4. Protection status and needs

4.1. National protection status

Sterna maxima is fully protected under national legislation in Benin, Gambia, Mauritania, Morocco and South Africa, and is partially protected as a game species in Ghana.

4.2. International protection status

None known.

4.3. Additional protection needs

Sterna maxima albidorsalis is listed in the category 'Localized' in the Draft Management Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, because it is a subspecies which, although numerically stable or increasing, is restricted to only a few

key sites during a part or the whole of its annual cycle. 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**

- 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.
- Harrison, P. (1983). Seabirds: an identification guide. Croom Helm Ltd., Beckenham, U.K.
- Urban, E.K., Fry, C.H. & Keith, S. (1986). The Birds of Africa. Volume II. Academic Press, London & Orlando.

Taxon: <i>Sterna maxima albidorsalis</i>		
Population		
(a) Entire population of ssp <i>albidorsalis</i>		
State	Pop.	Status
Angola	a	W
Benin	a	W
Cameroon	a	W
Congo	a	W
Cote d'Ivoire	a	W
Equatorial Guinea	a	W
Gabon	a	W
Gambia	a	W
Ghana	a	W
Guinea	a	W
Guinea-Bissau	a	W
Liberia	a	W
Mauritania	a	Sr
Morocco	a	W
Namibia	a	W
Nigeria	a	W
Senegal	a	Sr
Sierra Leone	a	W
Spain	a	V
Togo	a	W
United Kingdom - Gibraltar	a	P
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	