

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of *Anser erythropus* 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>Anser erythropus</i> (Lin.) 1758, Monotypic
1.5 Common (English) name	Lesser White-fronted Goose

2. Biological data

2.1 Distribution

Breeds in the high Arctic in Fennoscandia and Northern Russia in a very fragmented distribution. During migration it occurs widely in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Its very fragmented and largely unknown wintering range extends from the Eastern Mediterranean region through the Middle East to China.

2.2 Population

Since the 1940's the total population has probably fallen by more than 90% and is now estimated at about 15,000 individuals (Paynter, Aarvak & Sultanov 1996). Breeding population per country in Europe (Tucker and Heath 1994):

Finland 15-20 pairs, Norway 30-50 pairs, Russia 1,000 - 2,500 pairs, Sweden 1-5 pairs.

2.3 Habitat

The species breeds in lightly wooded tundra, on hills and by lakes in the low-Arctic tundra zone. During migration and for wintering it uses shallow coastal and inland lakes, dry steppe and agricultural land.

2.4 Migrations

The total population is migratory, moving southwards from the breeding areas after summer. There is at least one known moulting ground in the Kanin-peninsula in NW-Russia (Aarvak et al. 1995). Winters from the Eastern Mediterranean region to China in the East in a very fragmented distribution.

3. Threat data

3.1 Direct threats to the population

The reasons for the species' rapid decline are not fully understood but it is believed that damaging factors at key migratory and wintering areas are the most important. One of these is hunting, both incidental and deliberate. (Heredia et al. 1996).

3.2 Habitat destruction

The main breeding areas lie in the northern parts of Russia, where there is relatively little habitat destruction and there is a number of extensive protected areas (e.g. on Taimyr). On the other hand, habitat loss is probably one of the major factors in the decline of the species' populations at key passage and wintering sites. It is believed that a shift in the species' wintering grounds occurred as a result of large-scale habitat change in the Caspian Sea region (Heredia et al. 1996).

3.3 Indirect threats

A combination of negative factors at the breeding grounds, e.g. disturbance and increased predation may have contributed further to the decline (Heredia et al. 1996).

3.4 Threats connected especially with migrations

See above.

3.5 National and international utilisation

The only country in Europe where the species is considered a quarry is Romania. There is no information from Asian countries.

4. Protection status and needs

4.1 National protection status

The species is protected in Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Kazakstan, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine (no information from the Asian countries). There is a problem of law enforcement especially in the former states of the USSR.

4.2 International protection status

The species is listed under Annex I of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) and under Appendix II of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention).

Global Conservation Status: Vulnerable (IUCN criteria A1a,b,c).

4.3 Additional protection needs

There is an international Action Plan prepared by BirdLife International with support from the European Union LIFE funds and Council of Europe (Heredia et al. 1996). The most immediate needs are to find out key staging and wintering areas and the precise factors for the species' decline. An international project involving governmental and non-governmental organisations in Norway, Hungary, Russia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria and Greece is underway to satellite-track individual birds between their breeding and wintering areas in Europe. There is a reintroduction scheme in Sweden and are-stocking programme in Finland.

The most important measures required to halt the decline of the species include: identification and protection of key sites, full enforced legal protection in all range states, adequate management of feeding areas, monitoring and research.

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

Breeding range include **Norway, Sweden, Finland** and predominantly Russian Federation. During migration and winter the species occurs in Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, China, **Greece, Hungary, India**, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Japan, Kazakstan, Latvia, **Pakistan**, Romania, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Yugoslavia.

6. Comments from Range States

7. Additional remarks

8. References

- Aarvak,T., Oien,I.J., Lorentsen,S. and Broseth,H. (1995) The Lesser White-fronted Goose Monitoring Programme. Annual Report 1995. NOF Report No. 4-1995. Klaebu: NOF.
- Heredia,B., Rose,L. and Painter,M. eds. (1996) Globally threatened birds in Europe: Action plans. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Paynter,D., Aarvak,T. and Sultanov,E. (1996) Conservation of wetland reserves in Azerbaijan: Count of wintering birds January-February 1996. Report.
- Tucker,G.M. and Heath,M.F. (1994) Birds in Europe: their conservation status. Cambridge, U.K.: BirdLife International.