

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Rynchops flavirostris 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 | Rynchopidae |
| 1.4. Genus/Species/Subspecies | <u>Rynchops flavirostris</u> Vieillot 1816
Monotypic |
| 1.5. Common names | |
| English: | African Skimmer |
| Spanish: | Rayador African |
| French: | Bec-en-ciseaux d'Afrique |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

The species occurs along major river systems in subsaharan Africa from Senegal, Sudan and Ethiopia south to Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and extreme northeastern South Africa. Known breeding areas include: the middle Senegal River and Niger River from Lake Debo, Mali, down to Katcha, Nigeria; the lower Benue, Logone and Chari Rivers in Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad; the Congo River from its mouth to Lukolela and probably up its main tributaries in Zaire; the Nile and its tributaries from Lake Albert in Uganda to about Dongola in northern Sudan; western and southern Ethiopia; northern Kenya (Lake Turkana); southern Tanzania (Ruaha, Kilombero, Rufiji and Ruvuma Rivers); all of the Zambezi River and its major tributaries in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique (except the Kariba and Cabora Bassa sections); the Kafue and Luangwa Rivers in Zambia; the Shire/Mwanza confluence in Malawi; the Okavango, Cunene and lower Cuanza Rivers in Angola, northeastern Namibia and northwestern Botswana; the Lundi River in southeastern Zimbabwe; and the Save and lower Limpopo Rivers in Mozambique (Urban *et al.* 1986). Much more widespread outside the breeding season, occurring in the deltas of the Senegal and Gambia Rivers, in coastal Ghana, along the Nile north to southern Egypt, and widely in suitable habitat in Zaire, Tanzania and Angola.

2.2. Population

Only one population is recognized.
- Entire population: Unknown (over 10,000).

Little information is available on numbers, and no estimate of the total population size is possible. The species is locally common, and concentrations of several hundred birds are not infrequent. High counts have included 200 at Gamsay on the lower Logone River, 300 on the Nile

in Murchison Falls National Park (Uganda), 1,000 at Ferguson's Gulf (Kenya), 1,500 at Lake Rukwa (Tanzania) and 600 at Lochinvar (Zambia) (Urban *et al.* 1986). During the African Waterfowl Census of January 1993, the highest national totals were from Cameroon (200), Kenya (560) and Uganda (400) (Taylor 1993). No information is available on population trends.

2.3. Habitat

During the breeding season, frequents broad, meandering rivers with huge dry sand bars more or less bare of vegetation; less commonly sandy lake shores. Nests colonially on sand banks; has nested on sandy sea coasts (Zululand). Outside the breeding season, also occurs in estuaries, coastal lagoons, salt-pans, and occasionally sewage farms, dams and swamps. Requires expanses of calm water for feeding (Urban *et al.* 1986).

2.4. Migrations

Partly a resident and partly an intra-African migrant, but its movements are complex and poorly understood. The migrations are evidently dictated by the need for calm weather and still, not very shallow water. In Nigeria, birds vacate their nesting sandbars in June, July and August, when the rivers are rising, and disperse up to 600 km in all directions but mainly downstream (southward on the Niger River towards the coast, northwards on the Benue/Logone Rivers to Lake Chad). Lake Chad is vacated with the onset of strong winds in November or December, when birds return to their nesting areas. The hundreds of birds occurring at Lake Edward (Zaire) and on the Nile in Murchison Falls National Park (Uganda) are non-breeders, probably from Zambia and southern Tanzania. Most birds arrive on their breeding grounds in Zambia between March and July, and depart in November; birds are present in Zimbabwe from April to December (Urban *et al.* 1986).

3. Threat data

3.1. Direct threats to the population

A breeding colony of 50 pairs on Central Island in Lake Turkana, Kenya, was much disturbed by humans (Urban *et al.* 1986).

3.2. Habitat destruction

Some suitable habitat must have been lost as a result of the creation of dams on some of the major rivers within the species' range.

3.3. Indirect threats

Possibly at risk from contamination of rivers and lakes with pesticides and other chemicals, but details are lacking.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

None known.

4. **Protection status and needs**

4.1. National protection status

Fully protected under national legislation in Benin, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Somalia, South Africa, Swaziland and Tanzania; partially protected in Rwanda.

4.2. International protection status

None known.

4.3. Additional protection needs

The species is considered to have a favourable conservation status, and is not in need of any additional special protection measures at the present time.

5. **Range States**

See attached table.

6. **Comments from Range States**

7. **Additional remarks**

8. **References**

- 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>Rynchops flavirostris</i>		
Population		
(a) Entire population		
State	Pop.	Status
Angola	a	?
Benin	a	?
Botswana	a	?
Burkina Faso	a	?
Burundi	a	?
Cameroon	a	?
Central African Republic	a	?
Chad	a	?
Congo	a	?
Equatorial Guinea	a	?
Ethiopia	a	?
Gabon	a	?
Gambia	a	?
Ghana	a	?
Kenya	a	?
Mali	a	?
Mauritania	a	?
Mozambique	a	?
Namibia	a	?
Niger	a	?
Nigeria	a	?
Rwanda	a	?
Senegal	a	?
Somalia	a	V
South Africa	a	?
Sudan	a	?
Tanzania	a	?
Togo	a	?
Uganda	a	?
Zaire	a	?
Zambia	a	?
Zimbabwe	a	?

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	