

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Bubulcus ibis ibis (migratory populations of Western Eurasia and Africa) 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>Bubulcus ibis</u> (Linnaeus) 1758 ssp. <u>ibis</u>
1.5. Common names	
English:	Cattle Egret
Spanish:	Garcilla Bueyera
French:	Heron gardeboeuf

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Only the nominate subspecies occurs. This breeds widely in Africa south of the Sahara, in Madagascar and also in Northwest Africa, Southwest Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, Iraq and the Caspian Region. Four main migratory populations are identifiable: (i) a population which breeds in Southern Africa (from 16°S to the Cape) and winters north to the Central African Republic, Zaire, Uganda and Tanzania; (ii) a population which breeds in the northern tropics (10-16°N) from Senegal to the Red Sea, and is a rains migrant within this zone; (iii) a population which breeds in Southwest Europe and Northwest Africa and is partially migratory within this region, with Spanish breeders regularly crossing to Northwest Africa; (iv) a population which breeds in the Near East and Caspian Region and is partially migratory, with a few birds wintering as far north as the Caspian. The populations breeding in Egypt, Central and East Africa, and Madagascar are mainly sedentary.

2.2. Population

Four main migratory populations are recognized.

- Southern Africa: Unknown (minimum 100,000); increasing.
- Northern tropics of Africa: In the range 100,000-1,000,000.
- Southwest Europe/Northwest Africa: 250,000; increasing rapidly (Rose & Scott 1993).
- Near East/Caspian Region: Under 25,000, poorly known.

Bubulcus ibis has undergone an enormous expansion this century, initially through Africa, Southwest Europe and South and East Asia, and has now colonized all continents except Antarctica. Little information is available on numbers in Southern Africa, but it is reported to be abundant, and has increased considerably since the 1930s. The species

is particularly abundant in the northern tropics of Africa. Perennou (1991) estimated the wintering population in West Africa at about 250,000 birds, while some 63,000-65,000 pairs were found breeding in the Inner Delta of the Niger, Mali, in 1986/87 (del Hoyo *et al.* 1992). There has been a considerable increase in the breeding population in Europe in recent decades. The total population was estimated at 50,000 pairs in the mid-1970s, but by 1990, there were 80,000 pairs in the Iberian Peninsula alone. The species is much less common in Southwest Asia, where there may be only a few thousand birds. In the 1970s, the breeding population in Iran was estimated at only 120 pairs (Scott 1992). Most of this population may remain in Southwest Asia throughout the winter, as at least 3,500 birds winter in the region, mainly in Saudi Arabia (max. 1,824) and Yemen (max. 657). Over 2,780 were recorded during the Asian Waterfowl Census of January 1992 (Perennou & Mundkur 1992). No information is available on trends in this population.

2.3. Habitat

Occurs in open grassy areas, meadows, freshwater swamps, floodplains, rice fields and irrigated cultivation; rarely in marine habitats. One of the least aquatic of the Ardeidae, occurring regularly in dry, arable fields and on semi-arid steppe; can remain for long periods in dry land far from water. Sometimes found in suburban areas and even in town parks. Nests in reed-beds, bushes or trees, often in very large colonies with other species. One of the most gregarious of herons, often occurring in large flocks (del Hoyo *et al.* 1992).

2.4. Migrations

Birds breeding in Southern Africa are migratory, wintering north to the Central African Republic, Zaire, Uganda and Tanzania, while birds breeding in the northern tropics are rains migrants within this zone. Most other populations in Africa south of the Sahara are mainly sedentary, with far-reaching dispersive movements in search of suitable feeding conditions, often in connection with the rains. Birds breeding in Southwest Europe are partially migratory, wintering in the southern Iberian Peninsula and to a lesser extent in North Africa. North African breeders appear to be mainly sedentary, with some movements south down the coast. Birds breeding between Turkey and the Caspian Sea migrate southwest to winter mainly in the Middle East, although some apparently reach Northeast Africa.

3. **Threat data**

3.1. Direct threats to the population

None known. Commonly associates with domestic livestock and much less sensitive to human disturbance than most other herons and egrets.

3.2. Habitat destruction

None known. Much less of a wetland species than most other herons and egrets, and therefore less affected by wetland loss and degradation. The species has clearly benefitted from an expansion in irrigated agriculture, pastureland and the numbers of domestic livestock.

3.3. Indirect threats

Possibly at risk from contamination of grasslands and wetlands with pesticides and other chemicals, but details lacking.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

No information.

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 Angola, Botswana, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia; partially protected as a game species in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Togo and Zaire.

4.2. International protection status

Bubulcus ibis is listed in Appendix III of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) for Ghana, and is also listed in Appendix II (strictly protected fauna) of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention).

4.3. Additional protection needs

The populations in question are considered to have a favourable conservation status, and are 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**

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- 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.
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- Perennou, C. (1991). Les recensements internationaux d'oiseaux d'eau en Afrique tropicale. IWRB Special Publication No.15. IWRB, Slimbridge, U.K.
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- Scott, D.A. (1992). Summary of Waterfowl Counts in Iran in the 1970s. Unpublished manuscript on file at IWRB, Slimbridge, U.K.

Taxon: <i>Bubulcus ibis ibis</i>		
Population		
(a) Southern Africa (North to 16° S)		
(b) Northern tropics (10-16° N)		
(c) SW Europe/NW Africa		
(d) Near East/Caspian Region		
State	Pop.	Status
Algeria	c	Wr
Angola	a	Sr
Armenia	d	S
Azerbaijan	d	S
Bahrain	d	P
Benin	b	Wrs
Botswana	a	Sr
Burkina Faso	b	Wrs
Burundi	a	Wr
Cameroon	a	Wr
"	b	Wsr
Central African Republic	a	Wr
"	b	Wr
Chad	b	Swr
Congo	a	Wr
Cote d'Ivoire	b	Wrs
Djibouti	b	Swr
Equatorial Guinea	a	Wr
Ethiopia	b	Swr
France	c	S
Gabon	a	Wr
Gambia	b	Wr
Ghana	b	Wrs
Guinea	b	Wsr
Guinea-Bissau	b	Wrs
Iran	d	Sw
Iraq	d	W
Jordan	d	P
Kuwait	d	P
Lesotho	a	Sr

Liberia	b	Wr
Mali	a	Sr
"	b	Wrs
Mauritania	c	W
Morocco	c	Wr
Mozambique	a	Sr
Namibia	a	Sr
Niger	b	Wr
Nigeria	b	Wrs
Portugal	c	Wrs
Qatar	d	P
Russian Federation	d	S
Rwanda	a	Wr
Saudi Arabia	d	Pw
Senegal	b	Wr
Sierra Leone	b	Wr
Somalia	b	Wrs
South Africa	a	Sr
Spain	c	Wrs
Sudan	b	Swr
Swaziland	a	Sr
Syria	d	Wr
Tanzania	a	Wr
Togo	b	Wrs
Tunisia	c	W
Turkey	d	Wr
Turkmenistan	d	S
Uganda	a	Wr
United Arab Emirates	d	P
Zaire	a	Wr
Zambia	a	Sr
Zimbabwe	a	Sr

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	