

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Larus marinus (European population) 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 | Laridae |
| 1.4. Genus/Species/Subspecies | <u>Larus marinus</u> Linnaeus 1758
Monotypic |
| 1.5. Common names | |
| English: | Great Black-backed Gull |
| Spanish: | Gavion |
| French: | Goeland marin |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

The species breeds widely on the coasts of northern Europe from Greenland, Iceland, Svalbard and the Kola Peninsula south to the British Isles and Brittany. The migratory northern populations winter south to the North Sea and in smaller numbers to the Bay of Biscay. Other populations are mainly sedentary with some southward dispersal of immatures in winter. The population breeding in southern Greenland appears to be entirely sedentary and is therefore excluded from this proposal.

2.2. Population

Only one population is recognized.

- Europe (excluding Greenland): 350,000; increasing (Rose & Scott 1993).

Unpublished data suggest that the total breeding population in Europe, including Iceland, is between 110,000 and 130,000 pairs, suggesting a total population of about 350,000 birds. The species has increased over much of its range this century, colonizing France (1925), Denmark (1929), Bear Island (1921), Svalbard (1930) and Jan Mayen (60-100 pairs in 1983). Elsewhere, increases have taken place in Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom, and probably also Sweden and Iceland. The Faeroes population increased in the first half of this century then seems to have declined (Evans 1984). These increases have generally been attributed to increases in food supply in the form of fish-waste and garbage provided by man.

2.3. Habitat

Breeds mainly in the coastal zone, preferring oceanic coasts rather than land-locked inlets and estuaries; usually nests on small islands, islets and tops of stacks, but will also nest on broad cliff-ledges, beaches and salt marshes, and in some areas nests inland on islets in freshwater lakes and rivers or even on open moorland. Outside the breeding season, extends across the offshore zone, sometimes beyond 150 km from land, but most often remains over the continental shelf. Frequently scavenges at fishing ports, refuse tips and sewage outfalls, and often penetrates urban areas (Cramp & Simmons 1983).

2.4. Migrations

Populations breeding north of the Arctic Circle are completely migratory, wintering south along the coast commonly to the North Sea and in smaller numbers to the Bay of Biscay and occasionally Portugal and southwest Spain. Young birds tend to travel furthest. Birds breeding in the southern part of the range are mainly sedentary, with some southward dispersal of immatures in winter. Icelandic birds are mainly sedentary, although some winter in Northwest Europe. Generally scarce inland, but will occur locally in numbers in river valleys of maritime countries where these hold favoured feeding or roosting sites (Cramp & Simmons 1983).

3. **Threat data**

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Breeding colonies are extensively disturbed by visits from tourists, fishermen and scientists (Vermeer & Rankin 1984). The species is legally hunted in Denmark and Germany, and perhaps elsewhere in northern Europe, and is controlled as a pest in the United Kingdom and Ireland, but this persecution is having negligible, if any, effect on numbers.

3.2. Habitat destruction

None known.

3.3. Indirect threats

Permanently at risk from floating and beached oil, especially in the heavily polluted North Sea.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

Legally hunted in Denmark and Germany, and perhaps elsewhere in northern Europe.

4. Protection status and needs

4.1. National protection status

Larus marinus is fully protected under national legislation in all twelve member states of the EEC except Denmark and Germany, where a hunting season is established, and Ireland and the United Kingdom, where it is classified as a pest species and may be controlled under specific conditions.

4.2. International protection status

Larus marinus is listed in Annex II/2 of the EEC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC).

4.3. Additional protection needs

The population in question 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

- Cramp, S. & Simmons, K.E.L. (eds). (1983). Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Vol.3: Waders to Gulls. Oxford University Press. Oxford, London and New York.
- Evans, P.G.H. (1984). Status and Conservation of Seabirds in Northwest Europe (excluding Norway and the USSR). In: Croxall, J.P., Evans, P.G.H. & Schreiber, R.W. (eds), Status and Conservation of the World's Seabirds: 293-321. ICBP Tech. Publ. No.2. Cambridge, UK.
- Harrison, P. (1983). Seabirds: an identification guide. Croom Helm Ltd., Beckenham, U.K.
- Rose, P.M. & Scott, D.A. (1993). Waterfowl Population Estimates. Draft report presented at the Fifth Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, 9-16 June 1993, Kushiro, Japan. IWRB, Slimbridge.
- Vermeer, K. & Rankin, L. (1984). Influence of Habitat Destruction and Disturbance on Nesting Seabirds. In: Croxall, J.P., Evans, P.G.H. & Schreiber, R.W. (eds), Status and Conservation of the World's Seabirds: 723-736. ICBP Tech. Publ. No.2. Cambridge, UK.

Taxon: <i>Larus marinus</i>		
Population		
(a) Europe (excluding Greenland)		
State	Pop.	Status
Belgium	a	V
Denmark	a	Wrs
Estonia	a	Sr
Finland	a	Sr
France	a	Wrs
Germany	a	W
Iceland	a	Rs
Latvia	a	W
Lithuania	a	W
Netherlands	a	W
Norway	a	Srw
Svalbard	a	Sr
Poland	a	W
Portugal	a	W
Russian Federation	a	Sr
Spain	a	W
Sweden	a	Swr
United Kingdom	a	Wrs

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	