

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

- A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax (populations breeding in the Western Palearctic) 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>Nycticorax nycticorax</u> (Linnaeus) 1758. ssp <u>nycticorax</u>
1.5. Common names	
English:	Black-crowned Night-Heron
Spanish:	Martinete Comun
French:	Bihoreau gris

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Only the nominate subspecies occurs. This breeds widely in southern Eurasia, North Africa, subsaharan Africa and Madagascar. The populations breeding in subsaharan Africa and Madagascar are mainly sedentary, although some local movements have been reported in South Africa. The Northwest African and West Eurasian populations are migratory, wintering mainly in Africa south of the Sahara, although some birds winter in southern Europe, Egypt, Iraq and southwestern Iran.

2.2. Population

Two main migratory populations are recognized in the Western Palearctic.

- South & West European/Northwest African breeders (wintering mainly in West Africa): 150,000; increasing (Rose & Scott 1993).

- Southwest Asian breeders (wintering mainly in Northeast Africa): In the range 10,000-100,000; poorly known.

Rather scattered but locally common to abundant in the Western Palearctic; has increased during the second half of the present century, after a decline in the 19th and early 20th centuries when it disappeared from several countries. The breeding population in Europe, excluding the former U.S.S.R., is estimated at 44,000 pairs, with the greatest concentration in northern Italy (17,000 pairs in 1981). Numbers in the Camargue in southern France have declined since 1983 (del Hoyo et al. 1992). Perennou (1991) estimated the wintering population in West Africa at about 70,000-100,000 birds, including about 10,000 birds in the Senegal Delta. During the African Waterfowl Censuses of July 1992 and January 1993, the highest national totals in

West Africa were from Cameroon (2,684) and Senegal (5,268) (Taylor 1993). The species is fairly common in parts of Southwest Asia, especially in the Caspian Region. The breeding population in Iran was estimated at 650-700 pairs in the 1970s (Scott 1992). At least 3,500 winter in Southwest Asia, mainly in the Mesopotamian Marshes in Iraq, e.g. roosts of 1,000 in the Haur Al Hammar Marshes and 800 at Haur Chubaisah in 1979 (Scott and Carp 1982), but also in Iran (300-500), Oman and Saudi Arabia. No information is available on trends in the Southwest Asian population.

2.3. Habitat

Occurs in a wide variety of freshwater, brackish and saline wetland habitats, typically in areas with dense aquatic vegetation and especially in forested margins of rivers, lagoons, lakes, ponds and marshes, and in mangroves. Also frequents pastures, rice fields, reservoirs, canals and fish ponds. Occasionally occurs on dry land and along sea coasts, especially during migration. Roosts communally in leafy trees with thick cover, including pine plantations, palm groves and mangroves, sometimes in very large numbers. Nests colonially, usually in trees, but also in bushes and reed-beds, and even on cliff ledges or on the ground; often in mixed colonies with other species (del Hoyo et al. 1992).

2.4. Migrations

Populations breeding in the Western Palearctic are migratory, with most birds crossing the Mediterranean, the Arabian deserts and the Sahara on a broad front to winter in tropical Africa and further south. A bird ringed in Rumania has been recovered in Mozambique. However, a substantial number of birds remain throughout the winter in the Mediterranean Basin and Southwest Asia (particularly Iraq). The species also undertakes extensive post-breeding dispersals in Europe, with birds moving in all directions. Overshooting by northern breeders is common in spring.

3. **Threat data**

3.1. Direct threats to the population

The main causes for the decline in the 19th century and first half of the 20th century have been partly attributed to direct exploitation, especially of chicks. Locally, human disturbance at nesting colonies can be a problem.

3.2. Habitat destruction

Habitat destruction is thought to have been one of the main factors in the widespread decline in numbers during the 19th century and early part of the present century. Nycticorax nycticorax seems to have been severely affected by drought conditions prevalent in the Sahel in the 1970s; however, the species seems to have adapted to the changed conditions, and may now be wintering further to the south (del Hoyo et al. 1992).

3.3. Indirect threats

A decline in numbers in the Camargue since 1983 is thought to be due to increased salinity as a result of reduced rice cultivation (del Hoyo *et al.* 1992). Possibly at risk from contamination of wetlands with pesticides and other chemicals, but details lacking.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

Some hunting of adults for food probably still occurs, especially in parts of Southwest Asia, but the numbers taken are likely to be small.

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, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda; partially protected as a game species in Benin, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria.

4.2. International protection status

Nycticorax nycticorax is listed in Appendix II (strictly protected fauna) of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention), and is also listed in Annex I of the EEC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC).

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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- del Hoyo, J., Elliott A. & Sargatal, J. (eds). (1992). Handbook of the Birds of the World. Volume 1: Ostrich to Ducks. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.
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- Taylor, V. (1993). African Waterfowl Census 1993. IWRB, Slimbridge, U.K.

Taxon: <i>Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax</i>		
Population		
(a) S & W Europe/NW & W Africa		
(b) SW Asia/NE Africa		
State	Pop.	Status
Algeria	a	S
Armenia	a	S
Austria	a	S
Bahrain	b	Wp
Benin	a	W
Bosnia & Herzegovina	a	S
Bulgaria	a	S
Burkina Faso	a	W
Cameroon	a	W
Central African Republic	a	W
"	b	W
Chad	a	W
Cote d'Ivoire	a	W
Croatia	a	S
Czech Republic	a	S
Djibouti	b	W
Egypt	a	Wr
Ethiopia	b	W
France	a	S
Gambia	a	W
Georgia	a	S
Germany	a	S
Ghana	a	W
Greece	a	S
Guinea	a	W
Guinea-Bissau	a	W
Hungary	a	S
Iran	b	Sw
Iraq	b	Sw
Italy	a	S
Jordan	a	W
Kazakhstan	a	S

Kazakhstan	b	S
Kenya	b	W
Kuwait	b	P
Macedonia	a	S
Mali	a	W
Mauritania	a	W
Moldova	a	S
Morocco	a	S
Netherlands	a	S
Niger	a	W
Nigeria	a	W
Poland	a	S
Portugal	a	S
Qatar	b	P
Romania	a	S
Russian Federation	a	S
Saudi Arabia	b	Wp
Senegal	a	W
Sierra Leone	a	W
Slovakia	a	S
Slovenia	a	S
Somalia	b	W
Spain	a	S
Sudan	b	W
Syria	a	Psw
Togo	a	W
Turkey	a	S
Turkmenistan	b	S
Ukraine	a	S
United Arab Emirates	b	P
Uzbekistan	b	S
Yugoslavia	a	S

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	