

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Casmerodius albus albus (Western Palearctic populations) 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>Casmerodius albus</u> (Linnaeus) 1758 ssp. <u>albus</u>
1.5. Common names	
English:	Great Egret (Great White Egret)
Spanish:	Garceta Grande
French:	Grand Aigrette

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Two subspecies occur. The nominate race breeds in eastern Europe and Southwest Asia, and winters west to France and south to Tunisia, Egypt and the Persian Gulf. C. a. melanorhynchos breeds throughout Africa south of the Sahara, and appears to be largely sedentary except for some post-breeding dispersal.

2.2. Population

Two main migratory populations are recognized in the Western Palearctic.

- Southeast Europe/Black Sea (wintering mainly in East Mediterranean): 5,000-10,000; declining (Rose & Scott 1993).
- Southwest Asia/Caspian Region (wintering mainly in Kazakhstan, Iraq and Iran): In the range 10,000-25,000 (Rose & Scott 1993).

Intense persecution for the plume trade in the 19th and early 20th centuries led to a crash in numbers and shrinking of range, but the species has now recovered to a considerable extent, although it is still threatened in parts of Europe due to habitat loss. Unpublished data suggest that the total breeding population in Europe excluding Russia is currently between 2,500 and 5,500 pairs, with about 1,000 pairs at scattered localities in Central Europe. The species is apparently expanding in the west, and has recently bred in the Netherlands and Italy. Common and widespread in Southwest Asia, with at least 10,000 wintering in the region, mainly in Iran (4,500-7,500) and Kazakhstan (max. 1,830); over 9,660 were recorded during the Asian Waterfowl Census of January 1992 (Perennou & Mundkur 1992). Major concentrations occur in the South Caspian Region of Iran, e.g. up to 2,600 at Miankaleh Protected Region in the Southeast Caspian (Scott

1992). No information is available on trends in this population.

2.3. Habitat

Occurs in all kinds of wetlands, both inland and along the coast, including marshes, floodplains, river margins, lake shores, salt-pans, estuaries, coastal swamps, mangroves and mud-flats. Also occurs in agricultural land, especially rice fields and drainage ditches, and occasionally in dry pastures. Nests in reed-beds, bushes or trees, often in colonies with other species but also alone or in small groups (del Hoyo et al. 1992).

2.4. Migrations

The northernmost and easternmost populations in the Western Palearctic are migratory, moving southwest or south to winter in the Mediterranean Basin and Middle East, while those in the south are partially migratory or dispersive. Some birds from both the Southeast European and Southwest Asian populations winter in Africa south of the Sahara, but the numbers appear to be small. All populations perform extensive post-breeding dispersals.

3. **Threat data**

3.1. Direct threats to the population

The species was heavily persecuted for the plume trade in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Water pollution and the uncontrolled use of pesticides may be causing a problem in some parts of Southeast Europe and Southwest Asia.

3.2. Habitat destruction

Widespread loss and degradation of freshwater wetlands with tall emergent vegetation has undoubtedly limited the recovery of the species in parts of Europe, and may be causing a decline in breeding populations in some parts of Southwest Asia, but details are lacking.

3.3. Indirect threats

None known.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

Some hunting for food 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 Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Tunisia; partially protected as a game species in Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan and Togo.

4.2. International protection status

Casmerodius albus is listed in Appendix III of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) for Ghana. It 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 Southeast European/Black Sea population of Casmerodius albus is listed in the category 'Threatened' in the Draft Management Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, because it is a biogeographical population which is thought to number less than 10,000 individuals. See attached note on additional protection needs for species and populations with an unfavourable conservation status.

5. **Range States**

See attached table.

6. **Comments from Range States**

7. **Additional remarks**

8. **References**

- 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.
- del Hoyo, J., Elliott A. & Sargatal, J. (eds). (1992). Handbook of the Birds of the World. Volume 1: Ostrich to Ducks. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.
- Hancock, J. & Elliott, H. (1978). The Herons of the World. London Editions, London.
- Perennou, C. & Mundkur, T. (1992). Asian and Australasian Waterfowl Census 1992. IWRB, Slimbridge, 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.
- Scott, D.A. (1992). Summary of Waterfowl Counts in Iran in the 1970s. Unpublished manuscript on file at IWRB, Slimbridge, U.K.

Taxon: <i>Casmerodius albus albus</i>		
Population		
(a) SE Europe/Black Sea/E Mediterranean		
(b) SW Asia/Caspian Region/Iraq		
State	Pop.	Status
Albania	a	Wr
Armenia	b	S
Austria	a	S
Bahrain	b	Wp
Bosnia & Herzegovina	a	W
Croatia	a	W
Egypt	a	W
France	a	W
Greece	a	W
Hungary	a	S
Iran	b	W
Iraq	b	W
Israel	a	W
Italy	a	W
Jordan	a	W
Kazakhstan	b	S
Kuwait	b	P
Luxembourg	a	W
Moldova	a	S
Qatar	b	P
Romania	a	Wrs
Russian Federation	a	S
"	b	S
Saudi Arabia	b	P
Slovenia	a	W
Tunisia	a	W
Turkey	a	Ws
Turkmenistan	b	Sw
Ukraine	a	S
United Arab Emirates	b	P
Uzbekistan	b	S
Yugoslavia	a	Wr

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	