

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Ardea cinerea cinerea (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>Ardea cinerea</u> Linnaeus 1758 ssp. <u>cinerea</u>
1.5. Common names	
English:	Grey Heron
Spanish:	Garza Real
French:	Heron cendre

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Three subspecies occur. A. c. monicae of Mauritania and A. c. firasa of Madagascar, Aldabra and Comoro are sedentary. The nominate race is widespread in Eurasia and Africa, with populations breeding in northern and eastern Europe wintering throughout southwest Europe, North Africa and Africa south of the Sahara to about 4°S. West Asian populations winter south to Arabia. The populations breeding in subsaharan Africa are mainly sedentary.

2.2. Population

Two main migratory groups are recognized.

- European breeders (wintering to Africa): 450,000; increasing (Rose & Scott 1993).

- West Asian breeders (wintering to Arabia): In the range 10,000-25,000 (Rose & Scott 1993).

Heavily persecuted in Europe in the past, but now common and expanding both in the north and in the south, colonizing much of Scandinavia and the Mediterranean Basin this century, e.g. Camargue (France) in 1964 and Albufera de Valencia (Spain) in 1984. Unpublished data suggest that the total breeding population in Europe is currently between 130,000 and 170,000 pairs, with the population continuing to increase (e.g. the French population increased from 2,000 pairs in the 1960s to 13,000 pairs in 1985. At least 10,000 winter in Southwest Asia; mainly in Iran (2,750-3,600), Iraq (max. 564), Oman (max. 1,390) and Saudi Arabia (max. 1,000); over 6,000 were recorded during the Asian Waterfowl Census of January 1992 (Perennou & Mundkur 1992). No information is available on trends in the West Asian population.

2.3. Habitat

Occurs in a wide variety of wetland habitats, including almost any kind of shallow water body, whether fresh, brackish or saline, standing or flowing. Generally prefers areas with some trees, but can occupy very open areas. Equally at home inland, where frequents rivers, canals, lakes, marshes, floodplains, wet meadows, rice fields, irrigated areas, ditches in farmland and open grassland, or along coasts, where it frequents deltas, estuaries, tidal mud-flats, mangroves and even rocky shores. Usually nests in small to large colonies in trees, but also locally on the ground, on cliff ledges, in reed-beds or bushes, and even on buildings (del Hoyo et al. 1992).

2.4. Migrations

The northernmost and easternmost populations are migratory; populations breeding in the Iberian Peninsula, Britain and Ireland are sedentary, although they show a marked post-breeding dispersal. Populations in West Asia are mainly migratory, although some individuals overwinter on the breeding grounds. Most migration is towards the southwest, although some birds migrate south or southeast in autumn.

3. Threat data

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Heavily persecuted in the past for the plume trade. Now persecuted only locally as a perceived pest at fish ponds, fish hatcheries, etc.

3.2. Habitat destruction

There has been widespread loss and degradation of wetland habitats throughout the range of the species. This seems to have had little, if any, impact on numbers as it is readily able to adapt to man-made wetlands and well-watered agricultural land, and accepts a wide range of nesting sites.

3.3. Indirect threats

Water pollution, and especially the contamination of wetlands with pesticides, is known to have affected A. cinerea in some areas. In Britain, there are indications of a 20% reduction in egg-shell thickness since 1947, and this has been attributed to high levels of pesticide residues in the birds' tissues (del Hoyo et al. 1992).

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

Ardea cinerea is fully protected under national legislation in all twelve member states of the EEC except in Denmark, Germany, Ireland and the United Kingdom where it may, under specific conditions, be controlled as a pest species. In Africa, the species is protected under national legislation in Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda, and is partially protected as a game species in Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria.

4.2. International protection status

Ardea cinerea is listed in Appendix III (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

- 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.

Taxon: <i>Ardea cinerea cinerea</i>		
Population		
(a) Europe/N Africa		
(b) W Asia		
State	Pop.	Status
Algeria	a	W
Armenia	b	R
Austria	a	S
Azerbaijan	b	Rw
Bahrain	b	Ws
Belarus	a	S
Belgium	a	Wr
Benin	a	W
Bosnia & Herzegovina	a	Wrs
Bulgaria	a	Wrs
Burkina Faso	a	W
Cameroon	a	W
Central African Republic	a	W
Chad	a	W
Congo	a	W
Cote d'Ivoire	a	W
Croatia	a	Wsr
Cyprus	a	W
Czech Republic	a	S
Denmark	a	Srw
Egypt	a	Wr
Equatorial Guinea	a	W
Estonia	a	S
Ethiopia	a	W
Finland	a	R
France	a	Wrs
Gabon	a	W
Gambia	a	W
Georgia	a	R
Germany	a	Rws
Ghana	a	W
Greece	a	Wr

Guinea	a	W
Guinea-Bissau	a	W
Hungary	a	S
Iran	b	Wr
Iraq	b	W
Ireland	a	R
Israel	a	W
Italy	a	Wr
Jordan	b	W
Kazakhstan	b	Sr
Kenya	a	W
Kuwait	b	Ws
Latvia	a	S
Lebanon	a	W
Liberia	a	W
Libya	a	W
Lithuania	a	S
Luxembourg	a	W
Macedonia	a	S
Mali	a	W
Moldova	a	S
Morocco	a	W
Netherlands	a	R
Niger	a	W
Nigeria	a	W
Norway	a	Sr
Poland	a	Srw
Portugal	a	Wr
Qatar	b	Ws
Romania	a	S
Russian Federation	b	S
"	a	S
San Marino	a	W
Saudi Arabia	b	W
Senegal	a	W
Seychelles	?	P
Sierra Leone	a	W
Slovakia	a	S

Slovenia	a	Ws
Spain	a	Wr
Sudan	a	W
Sweden	a	Sr
Switzerland	a	Sr
Togo	a	W
Tunisia	a	W
Turkey	a	Wr
Turkmenistan	b	Wsr
Uganda	a	W
Ukraine	a	S
United Arab Emirates	b	Ws
United Kingdom	a	R
Uzbekistan	b	S
Yugoslavia	a	Swr
Zaire	a	W

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	