

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus and Haematopus ostralegus longipes 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	Haematopodidae
1.4. Genus/Species/Subspecies	<u>Haematopus ostralegus</u> Linnaeus 1758 ssp. <u>ostralegus</u> and <u>longipes</u>
1.5. Common names	
English:	Eurasian Oystercatcher
Spanish:	Ostrero
French:	Huitrier pie

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Two subspecies occur: ostralegus in Europe, North Africa and Asia Minor, and longipes on inland waters of West and Central Asia. The Icelandic and Faeroese birds are sometimes considered as a separate subspecies (malacophaga), as are the British and Irish birds (occidentalis). In winter, the nominate subspecies occurs widely along the Atlantic coast of Europe from the North Sea and Wadden Sea south to Morocco (less commonly to Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau) and in the Mediterranean Basin (mainly on the North African coast). The nominate race comprises five relatively discrete populations: (i) birds breeding in Iceland, Faeroes and Scotland; (ii) birds breeding in Norway; (iii) birds breeding in the Baltic and northeast Russia; (iv) birds breeding in southern Britain, Ireland, the Low Countries and France; and (v) birds breeding in the Mediterranean Basin. Because of the extensive overlap of these five populations in western Europe during the migration seasons, they are here treated as a single population. H. o. longipes breeds from the Black Sea and Asia Minor to Western Siberia and Central Asian Republics, and winters along the coasts of Northeast Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf east to northwestern India.

2.2. Population

Only two populations are recognized.

- Atlantic Europe/West Mediterranean/Northwest Africa (ostralegus, 'malacophaga' and 'occidentalis): 875,000; increasing.
- East Europe/Black Sea/Southwest & South Asia/Northeast Africa (longipes): 25,000 (Rose & Scott, 1993).

The population wintering on the Atlantic coast of Europe and West Africa has been estimated at over 873,000 birds (Smit & Piersma 1989); this total includes 856,000 in NW Europe, 13,000 in NW Africa and 3,000 in the Mediterranean. Unpublished data suggest that the total breeding population in Atlantic Europe and the West Mediterranean is between 170,000 and 250,000 pairs, with another 10,000 to 30,000 pairs breeding in Russia. After a decrease in some areas in the 19th century, the Atlantic population has increased steadily during the present century, due in part to climatic amelioration (e.g. in Iceland) and in part to increased protection (e.g. in much of Northwest Europe). The increase has been particularly marked in the Netherlands, where the population has increased from 8,000-12,000 pairs in 1955 to 50,000-60,000 pairs in 1976/77. The population wintering in Southwest Asia and Northeast Africa has been estimated at a minimum of 25,000 birds (Rose & Scott 1993). High counts in recent years have included almost 6,000 in Oman in 1990 and over 800 in Saudi Arabia in 1992. An estimated 9,000-12,000 wintered along the south coast of Iran in the 1970s (Scott 1992). No information is available on trends in this population.

2.3. Habitat

Occurs in a wide variety of coastal habitats from bases of steep cliffs and rocky skerries, or inshore and offshore islands, to sand-dunes, sand and shingle spits, salt marshes and tidal flats, especially where sand predominates. Birds breeding inland frequent shingle banks in rivers or on lake shores. In parts of Western Europe, the species now breeds commonly on arable land near the coast. Locally, the need for suitable high-tide roosts and acceptable nest-sites with easily accessible feeding areas can be limiting factors (Cramp & Simmons 1983).

2.4. Migrations

Most breeding populations are migratory, although a small proportion of birds in Western Europe are sedentary or dispersive. Birds breeding in Iceland, Faeroes and Scotland winter in Ireland and western Britain. Birds breeding in Norway winter in the North Sea area. Birds breeding in the Baltic and northeast Russia winter in the Wadden Sea. Birds breeding in southern Britain, Ireland, the Low Countries and France winter on the Atlantic coast of Europe south to Iberia and Morocco (less commonly to Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau). Birds breeding in the Mediterranean Basin winter mainly on the North African coast. H. o. longipes winters along the coasts of Northeast Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf east to northwestern India.

3. **Threat data**

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Within the EEC, the species is legally hunted only in France, where the numbers taken are probably insignificant. H. o. longipes is exposed to some hunting on migration (e.g. in the South Caspian region), but the bulk of the population winters in sparsely populated areas where it has little contact with man.

3.2. Habitat destruction

The loss of estuarine habitats in Northwest Europe has undoubtedly caused some local declines, and proposals to utilize some of the major estuaries for production of tidal energy could pose a serious threat in the future. Loss of natural nesting habitat (shingle and sandy beaches and coastal salt marshes) has apparently not been a serious problem, except perhaps locally, because of the bird's ability to colonize reclaimed land (coastal meadows and arable land).

3.3. Indirect threats

Much suitable nesting habitat along the seashore is subject to high levels of human disturbance during the summer months, and this may have strengthened the tendency of birds in many parts of Northwest Europe to nest inland.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

Some legal hunting occurs in parts of the species' range, but the numbers of birds taken are probably insignificant.

4. **Protection status and needs**

4.1. National protection status

Protected under national legislation in all twelve member states of the EEC except France where a hunting season is established. Fully protected under national legislation in Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Mauritania, Somalia, Tanzania and Tunisia; partially protected as a game species in Morocco.

4.2. International protection status

Haematopus ostralegus is listed in Appendix III (protected fauna) of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention), and is also listed in Annex II/2 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

The entire population of H. o. longipes is also included in the Bonn Convention Draft Agreement on the Conservation of Asian-Australasian Migratory Waterbirds, as a substantial proportion of the population spends a part of its annual cycle in the Asian-Australasian Region.

8. References

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- Hayman, P., Marchant, J. & Prater, T. (1986). Shorebirds: An identification guide to the waders of the world. Croom Helm, London & Sydney.
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- Urban, E.K., Fry, C.H. & Keith, S. (1986). The Birds of Africa. Volume II. Academic Press, London & Orlando.

Taxon: <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> (ssp <i>ostralegus</i> & <i>longipes</i>)		
Population		
(a) W Europe/Mediterranean/NW Africa		
(b) Entire population of <i>longipes</i>		
State	Pop.	Status
Albania	b	S
Armenia	b	S
Austria	?	P
Azerbaijan	b	S
Bahrain	b	W
Belgium	a	Wsr
Benin	a	W
Bulgaria	b	S
Comoros	b	V
Cote d'Ivoire	a	W
Denmark	a	Sr
Faroese	a	S
Greenland	a	V
Egypt	b	W
Estonia	a	S
Ethiopia	b	W
Finland	a	S
France	a	Wsr
Gambia	a	W
Georgia	b	S
Germany	a	Sr
Ghana	a	W
Greece	b	Wsr
Guinea	a	W
Guinea-Bissau	a	W
Hungary	?	P
Iceland	a	Sr
Iran	b	Ws
Iraq	b	W
Italy	a	S
Kazakhstan	b	S
Kenya	b	W

Kuwait	b	Wp
Latvia	a	S
Liberia	a	W
Libya	a	W
Lithuania	a	S
Mauritania	a	W
Morocco	a	W
Mozambique	b	W
Netherlands	a	Wsr
Nigeria	a	W
Norway	a	S
Svalbard	a	V
Poland	a	S
Portugal	a	W
Qatar	b	W
Russian Federation	a	S
"	b	S
Saudi Arabia	b	W
Senegal	a	W
Sierra Leone	a	W
Somalia	b	W
South Africa	b	V
Spain	a	W
Sudan	b	W
Sweden	a	S
Tanzania	b	W
Togo	a	W
Tunisia	a	W
Turkey	b	Swr
Turkmenistan	b	S
Uganda	b	V
Ukraine	b	S
United Arab Emirates	b	W
United Kingdom	a	Swr
Uzbekistan	b	S
Yugoslavia	b	S
Zaire	b	V

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	