

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Egretta vinaceigula in Appendix II.

B. PROPONENT: Government of the Federal Republic of Germany

Ministry of the Environment, Bonn, 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>Egretta vinaceigula</u> (Sharpe) 1895
Monotypic |
| 1.5. Common names | |
| English: | Slaty Egret |
| Spanish: | Garceta Gorgirroja |
| French: | Aigrette vineuse |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Known to breed only in northern Botswana, mainly in the Okavango Delta and northeastern Namibia (Caprivi Strip), but likely to breed in Zambia, where it has been recorded from Kafue Flats, Liuwa Plain and Bangweulu Swamp. During the wet season, occurs in wetlands around Lake Malawi and along the Shire and Zambezi Rivers in Malawi and northwest Mozambique, and thought likely to occur in southeast Angola and in the Upemba Basin in southern Zaire. Has occurred, perhaps only as a straggler, in Zimbabwe and South Africa (Brown et al. 1982; Collar & Stuart 1985).

2.2. Population

Only one population is recognized.

- Entire population: Probably in the range 5,000-10,000.

Confirmation of this egret as a distinct species came only in 1971, and nothing is known of its past status. Little information is available on numbers. The species is reported to be uncommon throughout its restricted, probably relict range. A breeding colony of 26 nests was discovered in the Caprivi Strip in northeastern Namibia in 1988 (del Hoyo et al. 1992). Concentrations of up to 40 have been observed in the Okavango Delta in Botswana, and parties of up to 30 have been recorded on the Liuwa Plain and Kafue Flats in Zambia during the dry season (Collar & Stuart 1985). The species is declining in some areas; the tens of birds that occurred in Blue Lagoon National Park in the early 1970s had disappeared a few years later (Collar & Stuart 1985). Collar and Stuart (1985) concluded that the total population was unlikely to exceed many thousands. The habitat that is thought to be suitable is widely available, and the rarity of the species is as yet unexplained. It may be a relict species, declining naturally towards extinction

through some unknown natural factor, e.g. unsuccessful competition with E. ardesiaca (Hancock & Elliott 1978).

2.3. Habitat

Occurs in marshes and floodplains; apparently favours extensive shallow inundation zones, especially where the water level is dropping. Usually found in areas with ample vegetation cover, often feeding in long grass, and seldom ventures into areas of open water. Frequently perches on trees. Nests have been found in reed-beds and thickets of the fig Ficus verrucosa (del Hoyo et al. 1992). The chief habitat requirement appears to be shallow expanses of receding water (i.e. seasonally inundated floodplains, swamps), with a good growth of stranded aquatic vegetation (Collar & Andrew 1985).

2.4. Migrations

Largely sedentary, but also undertakes quite extensive movements, probably connected with seasonal variations in habitat conditions (del Hoyo et al. 1992). There is a pronounced eastward movement of birds during the wet season to wetlands around Lake Malawi and along the Shire and Zambezi Rivers in Malawi and northwest Mozambique (Brown et al. 1982).

3. Threat data

3.1. Direct threats to the population

The breeding colony of 26 nests in northeast Namibia in 1988 was ravaged by a pair of African Fish-Eagles (Haliaeetus vocifer), reducing breeding success to nil (del Hoyo et al. 1992). The nestlings of other Ciconiiformes breeding in southern Zambia are occasionally taken by humans for food, and it is possible that E. vinaceigula suffers similar persecution (Collar & Stuart 1985).

3.2. Habitat destruction

Alterations in land-use are likely to affect its numbers seriously; the Kafue Flats are already subject to regulation by damming, and this resulted in the complete disappearance of the species from the Blue Lagoon National Park in the mid-1970s. Bangweulu Swamp is the subject of a hydro-electric scheme proposal, and there are plans to clear the Okavango Delta of tsetse fly, which may result in substantial damage either from chemicals or a subsequent invasion of cattle (Collar & Stuart 1985).

3.3. Indirect threats

No information.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

None known.

4. **Protection status and needs**

4.1. National protection status

The species, along with all other egrets, is totally protected under national legislation in Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia. The main areas of concentration in Zambia occur or occurred within national parks (Lochinvar, Blue Lagoon and Liuwa Plain), and a small part of the Okavango Delta in Botswana (including two of the species' breeding sites) is within the Moremi Wildlife Reserve and Chobe National Park (Collar & Stuart 1985).

4.2. International protection status

Egretta vinaceigula is listed in category 'I' (Indeterminate) in the 1990 edition of the IUCN List of Threatened Animals (IUCN 1990).

4.3. Additional protection needs

Egretta vinaceigula is listed in the category 'Threatened' in the Draft Management Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, because of its IUCN listing as a globally threatened species. See attached note on additional protection needs for species and populations with an unfavourable conservation status.

Reinforcement of the integrity of Lochinvar National Park on the Kafue Flats in Zambia and permanent protection for a larger part of the Okavango Delta are needed. Ecological studies of the species are clearly important to determine the factors affecting its numbers and distribution (Collar & Stuart 1985).

5. **Range States**

See attached table.

6. **Comments from Range States**

7. **Additional remarks**

8. **References**

- Brown, L.H., Urban, E.K. & Newman, K. (1982). The Birds of Africa. Volume I. Academic Press, London & New York.
- Collar, N.J. & Andrew, P. (1988). Birds to Watch. The ICBP World Checklist of Threatened Birds. ICBP Technical Publication No.8. ICBP, Cambridge, U.K.
- Collar, N.J. & Stuart, S.N. (1985). Threatened Birds of Africa and Related Islands. Third Edition. ICBP, Cambridge, U.K., and IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.

- 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.
- IUCN (1990). 1990 IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals. Compiled by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre. IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Gland, Switzerland.

Taxon: <i>Egretta vinaceigula</i>		
Population		
(a) Entire population		
State	Pop.	Status
Botswana	a	Rs
Malawi	a	W
Mozambique	a	W
Namibia	a	Rs
South Africa	a	V
Zambia	a	Rs
Zimbabwe	a	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		