

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Fulica atra atra (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	Gruiformes
1.3. Familia	Rallidae
1.4. Genus/Species/Subspecies	<u>Fulica atra</u> Linnaeus 1758 ssp. <u>atra</u>
1.5. Common names	
English:	Common Coot
Spanish:	Focha Comun
French:	Foulque macroule

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Only the nominate form occur. This breeds widely across West Eurasia and winters south to North Africa, Iraq and the Gulf States, with a few birds reaching West Africa (Senegal to Chad) and Northeast Africa (Sudan). No discrete populations are identifiable.

2.2. Population

Three main wintering populations are recognized.

- Northwest Europe: 1,500,000 (Rose & Scott 1993); stable or increasing.
- Black Sea/Mediterranean/West Africa: 2,500,000; declining (Rose & Scott 1993).
- Southwest Asia/Northeast Africa: 2,000,000; declining (Rose & Scott 1993).

Unpublished data suggest that the total breeding population in Europe is between 1,100,000 and 1,800,000 pairs. During the Western Palearctic Waterfowl Census of 1992, 631,000 were recorded in Northwest Europe, 126,000 in Central Europe and 522,000 in the Black Sea/Mediterranean Region (Rose 1992). The population wintering in Northeast Africa (south to Khartoum in Sudan) has been estimated at 5,000-10,000 (Perennou, 1992). In Southwest Asia, the total wintering population has been estimated at about 2,000,000, mainly in Azerbaijan (293,000 in 1991), Iran (300,000-500,000 in the 1970s, but only 130,000 to 160,000 in recent years), Iraq (230,000 in 1979) and Turkmenistan (455,000 in 1991) (Perennou & Mundkur 1992; Scott 1992; Scott & Carp 1982). Numbers in Northwest Europe fluctuate markedly due to hard winters, but have probably increased generally, aided by eutrophication, new man-made habitats, and adaptation to urban conditions in some areas (Cramp &

Simmons 1980). The populations in the Black Sea/Mediterranean region and Southwest Asia have shown substantial declines over the past 15 years, due in part to wetland loss, especially in the Mediterranean Basin and Middle East, and in part to excessive hunting, e.g. in the South Caspian region.

### 2.3. Habitat

Occurs on all but the deepest and smallest expanses of standing fresh water, including lakes, barrages, reservoirs, lagoons, ponds, ornamental lakes, canals, drainage channels, gravel pits and flooded lands; also occasionally on slow-flowing rivers. Requires at least some open water, but during the breeding season not normally found far from emergent or floating aquatic vegetation. In winter, commonly occurs on the open waters of large lakes and reservoirs, and often found on brackish to saline lakes where suitable vegetation flourishes, but only occasionally on the sea, where almost invariably in sheltered estuarine situations (Cramp & Simmons 1980; Ripley 1977; Urban et al. 1986).

### 2.4. Migrations

Mainly migratory in the northern and eastern parts of its range in the Western Palearctic, and mainly sedentary in the south and west. Migratory populations winter from the North Sea, Baltic (including Fenno-Scandia), east-central Europe and southern Russia southwards to the Senegal Delta, oases of the southern Sahara and lakes of the Sudan and perhaps Ethiopia. Major wintering concentrations occur in west and west-central Europe, the Mediterranean Basin, the Black Sea, the South Caspian region and Iraq. Numbers reaching the Mediterranean Basin and Middle East are variable, probably depending on the severity of the winter further north. Only small numbers winter in Africa south of the Sahara. Movement south and southwest through continental Europe is on a broad front (Cramp & Simmons 1980). Most birds wintering in the Middle East are believed to originate from the North Caspian region and Western Siberia.

## 3. Threat data

### 3.1. Direct threats to the population

The species is legally hunted in most countries in the Western Palearctic. While it is relatively unpopular as a game species in Northwest Europe, it is extensively shot in Southern and Eastern Europe and parts of the Middle East. Harvesting levels are extremely high in some areas, e.g. the South Caspian region, and are thought to have been at least partly responsible for the decline in numbers in recent decades.

### 3.2. Habitat destruction

The loss and degradation of wetlands in Northwest Europe appear to have been more than offset by the increase in artificial wetlands such as gravel pits and reservoirs which are rapidly colonized by the species. However, drainage and reclamation of extensive shallow water bodies in the Mediterranean Basin and Middle East are thought to be having an adverse effect on populations. Recent attempts to drain the vast

marshes of lower Mesopotamia threaten one of the largest wintering populations of F. atra in Southwest Asia.

### 3.3. Indirect threats

The widespread application of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals in and around wetlands may be having a harmful effect on some populations.

### 3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

### 3.5. National and international utilization

Legally hunted as a game species in many parts of its range. The species comprises a high proportion of the waterfowl shot and netted by market hunters in Iran, Iraq and possibly elsewhere in Southwest Asia.

## 4. **Protection status and needs**

### 4.1. National protection status

Protected under national legislation in Ireland, Luxembourg and Northern Ireland (United Kingdom); a game species for which an open season is established in the rest of the United Kingdom and all other countries in the EEC. Fully protected under national legislation in Ethiopia, Gambia, Mauritania and Somalia; partially protected as a game species in Burkina Faso, Morocco and Tunisia.

### 4.2. International protection status

Fulica atra is listed in Appendix III (protected fauna) of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention), and is listed in Annex II/1 and III/2 of the EEC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC).

### 4.3. Additional protection needs

The Northwest European population is considered to have a favourable conservation status, and is not in need of any additional special protection measures at the present time.

The East European/Black Sea/Mediterranean and West Siberian/Southwest Asian populations of Fulica atra are listed in the category 'Potentially vulnerable' in the Draft Management Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, because they are biogeographical populations which, although still with population sizes of over 100,000 individuals, have shown a marked decrease in numbers over the whole or a large part of their ranges in recent decades. 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

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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>Fulica atra atra</i>		
Population		
(a) NW Europe		
(b) E Europe/Black Sea/W Africa		
(c) W Siberia/SW Asia/NE Africa		
State	Pop.	Status
Albania	a	Rs
Algeria	a	Wr
Armenia	c	Rw
Austria	a	Rw
Azerbaijan	c	Wr
Bahrain	c	W
Belarus	b	S
Belgium	a	Rw
Bosnia & Herzegovina	a	Srw
Botswana	b	
Croatia	a	Sr
Cyprus	b	W
Czech Republic	a	Sr
Denmark	a	Rw
Egypt	b	Wr
Estonia	b	S
Ethiopia	b	W
Finland	b	S
"	a	S
France	a	Rws
Gambia	a	W
Georgia	b	Rw
Germany	a	Rw
Greece	b	Rws
Hungary	a	Sr
"	b	S
Iran	c	Wr
Iraq	c	Wr
Ireland	a	Rw
Israel	b	Wr
Italy	a	Rws

Jordan	b	Wr
Kazakhstan	b	S
"	c	Srw
Kuwait	c	Pw
Latvia	b	S
Lebanon	b	Wr
Libya	a	W
Liechtenstein	a	R
Lithuania	b	S
Luxembourg	a	S
Macedonia	b	S
Malta	a	W
Moldova	b	S
Monaco	a	R
Morocco	a	Wrs
Netherlands	a	Rw
Norway	a	Swr
Poland	a	Sr
"	b	Sr
Portugal	a	Rws
Qatar	c	Wr
Romania	b	Srw
Russian Federation	b	Sr
San Marino	a	R
Saudi Arabia	c	Wr
Senegal	a	W
Slovakia	a	S
"	b	S
Slovenia	a	Sr
Spain	a	Rws
Sudan	b	W
Sweden	a	Sr
"	b	S
Switzerland	a	Rw
Syria	b	Wr
Tunisia	a	Wr
Turkey	b	Wr
"	c	Rw

Turkmenistan	c	Wrs
Ukraine	b	Srw
United Arab Emirates	c	W
United Kingdom	a	Rw
Uzbekistan	c	Wr
Yugoslavia	a	Sr
"	b	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	