

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

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Larus hemprichii 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 | Laridae |
| 1.4. Genus/Species/Subspecies | <u>Larus hemprichii</u> Bruch 1853
Monotypic |
| 1.5. Common names | |
| English: | Sooty Gull |
| Spanish: | Gaviota de Aden Piquiverde |
| French: | Goeland d'Hemprich |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

The species breeds on islands off the coast of the Arabian Peninsula and northeast Africa south to Kenya, in the Red Sea north to Wadi El Gamal Island in Egypt, and on the Makran coast of Pakistan (regularly only on Astola Island). Outside the breeding season, it occurs along the East African coast south to Mozambique, in the southern Persian Gulf, and along the coast of the Arabian Sea to extreme northwest India.

2.2. Population

Only one population is recognized.

- Entire population: 40,000 (Rose & Scott 1993); decreasing as a breeding species in Pakistan, but increasing as a winter visitor to East Africa.

The principal breeding sites are on islands in the southern Red Sea and off the south coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Only 50-100 pairs breed along the African coast south of the Gulf of Aden, at Brava in Somalia and at Kiunga in Kenya (Urban et al. 1986). Thousands were found nesting on Astola Island off the coast of Pakistan in the 1870s, but numbers have apparently been much smaller in recent decades (Roberts 1991). Much the most important wintering concentrations are in Oman, which may hold upwards of 75% of the population in some years. The highest mid-winter counts recorded during the Asian Waterfowl Census have been 34,000 in Oman in 1991, 5,000 in Saudi Arabia in 1992, and 855 in Pakistan in 1992 (Perennou & Mundkur 1991, 1992). Reported to be much commoner in East Africa than it was earlier this century; several roosts of 500 or more are known in Kenya and Tanzania, mostly near harbours and fish markets (Urban et al. 1986). The entire breeding population has been estimated at 10,000 pairs.

2.3. Habitat

Strictly marine; breeds on coasts and islands in tropical seas. Usually a colonial nester, but on the East African coast breeds solitarily on old coral islands. Nests are placed on bare rock or sand, or under a small bush or overhanging rock; locally nests under mangrove bushes. Forages mainly close inshore, along the tideline, on mud-flats, and around fishing boats, fishing villages and harbours; occasionally further out to sea, usually following ships (Cramp & Simmons 1983; Urban *et al.* 1986).

2.4. Migrations

Resident in parts of its range, but dispersive or migratory elsewhere. Present all year round on the East African coast, but south of 2°S the numbers present in June-September are only 10-20% of the numbers in October-May (Urban *et al.* 1986). There is a large influx of birds into the southern Persian Gulf and Pakistan in spring and summer, when concentrations of over 500 have been recorded in the Bandar Abbas area and on Hormoz Island in Iran.

3. **Threat data**

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Fishermen regularly collect eggs at the breeding colony on Astola Island, Pakistan, and this is thought to have been at least partly responsible for the decline in numbers along the Pakistan coast in recent decades (Roberts 1991). Direct human predation at the colonies in Africa is thought to be insignificant because the nests are inconspicuous and usually far outnumbered by conspicuous nests of other Laridae (Urban *et al.* 1986).

3.2. Habitat destruction

None known; many of the breeding islands are remote and seldom visited.

3.3. Indirect threats

The bird is permanently at risk from floating and beached oil.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

Some egg-collection for human consumption.

4. **Protection status and needs**

4.1. National protection status

In Africa, fully protected under national legislation in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique and Somalia.

4.2. International protection status

None known.

4.3. Additional protection needs

Larus hemprichii is listed in the category 'Localized' in the Draft Management Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, because it is a species which, although numerically stable or increasing, is restricted to only a few key sites during a part or the whole of its annual cycle. 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). (1983). Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Vol.3: Waders to Gulls. Oxford University Press. Oxford, London and New York.
- Gallagher, M.D., Scott, D.A., Ormond, R.F.G., Connor, R.J. & Jennings, M.C. (1984). The Distribution and Conservation of Seabirds Breeding on the Coasts and Islands of Iran and Arabia. In Croxall, P.J., Evans, P.G.H. & Schreiber, R.W. (eds), Status and Conservation of the World's Seabirds: 421-456. ICBP Technical Publication No.2. ICBP, Cambridge, U.K.
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- 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.
- Urban, E.K., Fry, C.H. & Keith, S. (1986). The Birds of Africa. Volume II. Academic Press, London & Orlando.

Taxon: <i>Larus hemprichii</i>		
Population		
(a) Entire population		
State	Pop.	Status
Bahrain	a	P?
Djibouti	a	Wr
Egypt	a	Rs
Iran	a	W
Israel	a	V
Jordan	a	V
Kenya	a	Ws
Lebanon	a	V
Mozambique	a	W
Oman	a	Rs
Qatar	a	P
Saudi Arabia	a	Rs
Somalia	a	Wr
Tanzania	a	W
United Arab Emirates	a	Sr
Yemen	a	Rs

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	