

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

- A. PROPOSAL:** Listing the entire population of *Pterodroma atrata* on Appendix I.
- B. PROPONENT:** Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT:**

1. Taxon

- 1.1 Class:** Aves
- 1.2 Order:** Procellariiformes
- 1.3 Family:** Procellariidae
- 1.4 Genus/species/subspecies:** *Pterodroma atrata*
- 1.5 Common name:** Henderson Petrel

2. Biological data

2.1 Distribution

The species is known to breed only on Henderson Island (Pitcairn Islands, to UK), but a dark *Pterodroma* species, breeding on other islands in the region, is believed likely to be this species: these other islands comprise the Gambier, Marquesas, Austral and Tuamotu Islands (French Polynesia, to France).

2.2 Population

In 1991, the Henderson Island population was estimated at c. 16,000 breeding pairs. If the species breeding on the French Polynesian Islands is indeed *atrata*, the total population there may be less than on Henderson. The world population is estimated to be in the range 50,000-100,000 birds.

2.3 Habitat

On Henderson Island, the breeding habitat is dense forest, in which breeding birds are scattered. Outside the breeding season, the species is entirely pelagic.

2.4 Migrations

The species breeds throughout the year, but with an apparent peak of egg laying in June-July; the young fledge about 90 days later, and leave immediately for pelagic waters. Because of the difficulty of differentiating it at sea from other *Pterodroma* species, the non-breeding range is not well understood; however, it is probably largely tropical, and perhaps within limits of 20 degrees North and 30 degrees South, and between 110 and 150 degrees West.

3. Threat data

3.1 Direct threats

Predation by Pacific rat *Rattus exulans* is believed to be the main cause of chick mortality on Henderson, though predation by crabs *Coenobita* spp. is also a possibility. Breeding success is low, with less than 20% of eggs yielding fledglings and failure mostly occurring at the early chick stage.

3.2 Habitat destruction

Not known to be a problem.

3.3 Indirect threats

Lack of precise understanding of taxonomy and thus breeding distribution.

3.4 Threats connected especially with migrations

Although there is no direct evidence, the threats faced by other pelagic birds are presumed to apply, including oil and other pollution, ingestion of manmade debris in mistake for food, and possibly damaging interaction with fisheries.

3.5 National and international utilisation

None known.

4. **Protection status and needs**

4.1 National protection status

Protected under Pitcairn Local Government Regulations 1971 (part IV) as amended in 1982. In addition, island access requires special permits.

4.2 International protection status

The species is listed by IUCN as Endangered.

4.3 Additional protection needs

A better understanding is needed of the status of the species. Consider the eradication of rats from Henderson Island, and islands in French Polynesia, as appropriate.

5. **Range States¹**

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, and believed to occur also in FRANCE.

6. **Comments from Range States**

The Pitcairn Islands Government supports this proposal.

7. **Additional remarks**

Appendix I listing would draw international attention to the Endangered status of this species, and would encourage cooperation among those working on seabirds, particularly in the Range States of France and the United Kingdom. Such cooperation could include, among other things, work to elucidate the taxonomic questions surrounding some of the populations involved, cooperation on survey and monitoring, shared experience on managing threats at the breeding colonies, and elucidation of the range of the species at sea.

8. **References**

BirdLife International (2000) *Threatened Birds of the World*. Barcelona and Cambridge, UK: Lynx Edicions and BirdLife International.

BirdLife web site <http://www.birdlife.net/datazone/index>; accessed 7 June 2005.

Brooke M de L (2004) *Albatrosses and Petrels across the world* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

¹ CMS Parties in capitals.