

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

**A. PROPOSAL:** Inclusion of the Balearic Shearwater (*Puffinus mauretanicus*, Lowe, 1921) in Appendix I.

**B. PROPONENT:** Government of Spain.

**C. SUPPORTING DATA:**

**1. Taxonomic Information**

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|------------|--------------------------|---|
| <b>1.1</b> | <b>Classis:</b>          | Aves  |
| <b>1.2</b> | <b>Ordo:</b>             | Procellariiformes                                       |
| <b>1.3</b> | <b>Familia:</b>          | Procellariidae  |
| <b>1.4</b> | <b>Genus or Species:</b> | <i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i> (Lowe, 1921)               |
| <b>1.5</b> | <b>Common name(s):</b>   | English: Balearic Shearwater<br>Spanish: Pardela Balear |

**2. Biological Data**

**2.1** Distribution

The Balearic Shearwater is a pelagic seabird, living in waters of the western Mediterranean and north Atlantic. The breeding population is restricted to the Balearic Islands (Spain), with nesting sites in the Autonomous Regions of the Balears, Catalonia and the region of Valencia. During migration they move toward the Atlantic, passing the Communities of the Region of Murcia, Andalusia, Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria and Basque Country.

The pre-breeding visits to the colony start with the end of August and beginning of September. First clutches are laid at the end of February and consist of a single egg. The birds keep their links to the breeding colony also during the other 10 months of the year, with less frequent visits by juveniles and non-breeders.

**2.2** Population

The world's breeding population consists of approximately 2000 pairs, spread over breeding colonies throughout the Balearic Islands: 600 pairs in Mallorca, 350 in Ibiza, 200 in Menorca, 200 in Cabrera and 685 in Formentera (Govern Balear, 2004). Almost the whole population is found between Formentera and Ibiza, the south-west coast of Mallorca and the archipelagos of Cabrera.

**2.3** Habitat

The Balearic Shearwater is a colonial species that breeds in caves and cavities in coastal cliffs, rocky slopes and islets, in areas of difficult access that provide shelter from predators.

Outside the breeding season it is a strictly marine species. During the breeding season (March to June) it feeds mainly on small pelagic fish (anchovy and sardine) and also takes advantage of fishing discards during daytime (Arcos and Oró, 2002). The remainder of the year it stays in coastal areas and is very sociable, feeding much more on small pelagic fish than on discards (Arcos and Oró, 2002).

**2.4** Migration

Once the breeding season is finished, most of the birds leave the Mediterranean and cross the Straits of Gibraltar towards the Gulf of Biscay (summer-autumn) (Mouriño *et al*, 2003), with some birds

reaching southern Scandinavia and the Atlantic coast of north-east Africa, having been seen even as far as South Africa (Bourne, *et al.*, 1988).

### 3. Threats

#### 3.1 Direct threats to the populations

In the past, the harvesting and capture of live birds for human consumption was a common practice in the Balearic Islands, mostly in Ibiza and Formentera, with up to 2.400-2.700 birds being killed per year until the 70's. More recently, in 1991 and 1997, nest robbing has been reported at the colony located on the island of s'Espardell, in Formentera. This practice is, however, exceptional nowadays and is justified by the young generation as a traditional activity of their ancestors.

Currently the main threat for the conservation of the species is predation by introduced mammals, mainly cats, rats and small-spotted genets.

#### 3.2 Habitat destruction

Urban development prevents colonisation or re-colonisation of areas with adequate breeding habitat, which could be a limiting factor for the expansion of the population.

#### 3.3 Indirect threats

Illegal dumping at sea and pollution are also a risk factor, affecting both the species biology (highly sociable during its whole life cycle: colonial breeding, group migration and joint foraging in limited locations) and the habitats of its migratory range (the Mediterranean Sea suffers a high rate of illegal dumping and the Atlantic coast of Spain, the home of practically the whole population of the Balearic Shearwater, has experienced severe oil spills in the past). Taking into account that almost all the population gathers along these coasts during the winter months, the potentially catastrophic effect an oil spill near the wintering grounds or near the breeding colonies could have on the population becomes clear.

A demographic model developed by Oró *et al.* 2004 shows that the species could be suffering an average annual decrease of 7,4%, suggesting a high adult mortality at sea. This mortality could be related to incidental taking by fishermen. However, neither the surveys at sea nor the monitoring of the breeding colonies are consistent with such a negative trend.

## 4 Protection Status

#### 4.1 National protection status

- Protected by Law 4/89: Annex II.
- Included in National Catalogue of Threatened Species (Decree 439/90)
  - Category: in danger of extinction
  - Norma: Orden (10 March 2000)
  - BOE nº 72 (24 March 2000)
- Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands
  - Recovery Plan
  - Norma: Decreto 65/2004 de 2 de julio
  - BOIB nº 97; 13 July 2004

#### 4.2 International protection status

- Included in Annex I of Directive 79/409 for the protection of wild birds.
- Appendix II of the Bern Convention.
- IUCN status: critically endangered CR A4bce; B2ab (ii,iii,iv,v) (IUCN, 2004).

**5. Range States<sup>1</sup>**

Algeria , FRANCE , ITALY , MOROCCO , PORTUGAL, SPAIN

**6. Comments from Range states****7. Additional remarks****8. References**

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<sup>1</sup> CMS Parties in capitals .

