

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 cachinnans (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 | Charadriiformes |
| 1.3. Familia | Laridae |
| 1.4. Genus/Species/Subspecies | <u>Larus cachinnans</u> Pallas 1811
ssp. <u>michahellis</u> , <u>cachinnans</u> ,
<u>omissus</u> , <u>heuglini</u> and <u>taimyrensis</u> |
| 1.5. Common names | |
| English: | Yellow-legged Gull |
| Spanish: | Gaviota Argentea |
| French: | Goeland leucophee |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Larus cachinnans is here considered to comprise all the yellow-legged forms of the argentatus/cachinnans/fuscus group except for the two darkest-backed forms (treated as Larus fuscus) and the rather distinct Larus armenicus. The group occurs widely across southern Europe and Asia east to southern China, and winters south to West Africa, East Africa, southern India and Southeast Asia. Eight forms have been described: (1) atlantis of the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands; (2) michahellis of southwest France, western Iberia, Morocco and the Mediterranean; (3) cachinnans from the Black Sea through the Caspian Sea to eastern Kazakhstan and western China; (4) barabensis of the Central Asian steppes; (5) mongolicus of the southeast Altai and Lake Baikal region; (6) omissus in the eastern Baltic, Estonia, Finland and northwest Russia; (7) heuglini from the southern Kola Peninsula east to the Yenisey River; and (8) taimyrensis from the Yenisey River to the Taymyr Peninsula. The northern forms heuglini and taimyrensis are often treated as subspecies of L. fuscus, while omissus hybridizes extensively with L. argentatus in Denmark, and is often treated as a member of that group e.g. Cramp & Simmons 1983. Recent work (as yet unpublished) has suggested that it might be more appropriate to retain atlantis, michahellis and nominate cachinnans as forms of the Yellow-legged Gull Larus cachinnans, and to group the five other forms and Larus armenicus under a new species, Larus sibiricus. An alternative approach, also currently gaining acceptance, would be to lump all the cachinnans group, including armenicus, with the Larus fuscus group as a single 'ring species'.

Of the eight forms listed above, atlantis is mainly sedentary, while barabensis and mongolicus are largely extralimital, wintering mainly in

South and East Asia, although both forms have been recorded in the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. Thus only five migratory forms are relevant in the Western Palearctic.

2.2. Population

The five migratory forms in the Western Palearctic are here treated as separate populations, although they overlap extensively on their winter quarters, and are then indistinguishable in the field.

- michahellis (SW France/W Iberia/Morocco/Mediterranean): 350,000; increasing (Rose & Scott 1993).
- cachinnans (Black Sea/Caspian Sea/E Kazakhstan): Probably over 100,000.
- omissus (Baltic/Estonia/Finland/NW Russia): Unknown (over 25,000); increasing.
- heuglini (Kola Peninsula to Yenisey): Unknown (over 10,000).
- taimyrensis (Yenisey to Taymyr): Unknown (over 10,000).

Unpublished data suggest that the total breeding population of L. c. michahellis is between 110,000-125,000 pairs. This subspecies has been increasing in many parts of its range in recent decades, with increases noted in France, Italy, Portugal and Tunisia. L. c. omissus is also increasing; a marked increase has occurred in Finland since the 1940s and increases have been reported in the small populations in Estonia and Lithuania. At least 17,000 pairs of L. c. cachinnans breed in the Black Sea and Caspian Sea. Over 33,300 'Herring Gulls' were recorded in Southwest Asia during the Asian Waterfowl Census of January 1992, mainly in Oman (20,000), Iran (6,220) and Bahrain (6,060) (Perennou & Mundkur 1992). However, in the 1970s, the wintering population in Iran alone was estimated at 20,000-35,000 birds (Scott 1992). Most of the birds wintering in Southwest Asia are believed to be cachinnans, heuglini and taimyrensis. No information is available on population trends in cachinnans, heuglini and taimyrensis.

2.3. Habitat

The subspecies michahellis of the Mediterranean is almost exclusively marine, preferring rocky coasts with cliffs and offshore islands and islets. Other subspecies breed in a wide variety of coastal and inland habitats, including low tundra (heuglini and taimyrensis), high moorland (omissus), and shores of freshwater lakes, saline lagoons, broad rivers, and even reed-beds (cachinnans). Outside the breeding season, the species occurs widely around the shores of inland seas, at large freshwater lakes and along marine coasts (Cramp & Simmons 1983).

2.4. Migrations

L. c. michahellis is dispersive, with immatures undertaking substantial movements within the Mediterranean and on the Atlantic coast of Africa south to the Gulf of Guinea. L. c. cachinnans is partly migratory, wintering south to the East Mediterranean, northern Red Sea and Persian Gulf. L. c. omissus winters in the western Baltic, southern Sweden and Danish archipelago. L. c. heuglini winters south through the Black, Aral and Caspian Seas to Northeast Africa, the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea east to India. The main winter quarters of L. c. taimyrensis are probably on the shores of the Arabian Sea east to

Pakistan, although small numbers have been recorded inland in Kenya.

3. Threat data

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Breeding colonies in the Mediterranean are extensively disturbed by visits from tourists and fishermen, and eggs are collected for human consumption at some colonies.

3.2. Habitat destruction

No information.

3.3. Indirect threats

Permanently at risk from floating and beached oil.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

The species may be legally hunted in Spain, and perhaps also in parts of Eastern Europe and Southwest Asia.

4. Protection status and needs

4.1. National protection status

Within the EEC, Larus (argentatus) cachinnans is protected under national legislation in France, Greece, Italy and Portugal, and is classified as a game species for which a hunting season is established in Spain. Fully protected under national legislation in Benin, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Somalia and Tunisia.

4.2. International protection status

Larus argentatus is listed in Annex II/2 of the EEC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC). This presumably includes gulls of the cachinnans group in southern Europe.

4.3. Additional protection needs

The populations in question are considered to have a favourable conservation status, and are not in need of any additional special protection measures at the present time.

5. Range States

See attached table.

6. Comments from Range States

7. Additional remarks

8. References

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Population		
(a) Entire population of <i>michahellis</i>		
(b) Entire population of <i>cachinnans</i>		
(c) Entire population of <i>omissus</i>		
(d) Entire population of <i>heuglini</i>		
(e) Entire population of <i>taimyrensis</i>		
State	Pop.	Status
Albania	a	Rsw
Algeria	a	Wr
Angola	d	V
Austria	a	W
Azerbaijan	b	Wr
Bahrain	b	W
"	d	W
"	e	W
Bosnia & Herzegovina	a	Rs
Botswana	d	V
Bulgaria	a	W
"	b	Srw
"	d	W
Burundi	b	V
"	d	W
Croatia	a	Rs
Cyprus	a	Wr
"	b	W
Denmark	c	W
Djibouti	b	W
"	d	W
Egypt	a	W
"	b	W
"	d	W
Estonia	c	Sr
Ethiopia	b	W
"	d	W
Finland	c	Sr
France	a	Sr

Gambia	a	W
Georgia	b	Wrs
"	d	W
Germany	c	W
Greece	a	Rws
"	b	W
"	d	W
Guinea	a	W
Guinea-Bissau	a	W
Hungary	a	W
Iran	b	W
"	d	W
"	c	W
Iraq	b	Ws
"	d	W
Israel	a	W
"	b	W
"	d	W
Italy	a	Rsw
Jordan	a	W
"	b	W
"	d	W
Kazakhstan	b	Swr
"	d	W
Kenya	b	W
"	d	W
"	e	W
Kuwait	b	W
"	d	W
"	e	W
Latvia	c	Sr
Lebanon	a	W
"	b	W
"	d	W
Liechtenstein	a	W
Libya	a	W
"	d	W
Lithuania	c	W

Macedonia	a	W
Malawi	d	W
Malta	a	Wr
Mauritania	a	W
Monaco	a	W
Morocco	a	Wsr
Mozambique	d	W
Nigeria	a	V
Oman	b	W
"	d	W
"	e	W
Poland	c	W
Portugal	a	Sr
Qatar	b	W
"	d	W
"	e	W
Romania	a	W
"	b	Srw
"	d	W
Russian Federation	b	W
"	c	Srw
"	d	Srw
"	e	Sr
Rwanda	d	W
Saudi Arabia	b	W
"	d	W
"	e	W
Senegal	a	W
Slovenia	a	W
Somalia	b	W
"	d	W
South Africa	b	V
"	d	W
Spain	a	Sr
Sudan	b	W
"	d	W
Sweden	c	W
Switzerland	a	Rw

Syria	a	W
"	b	W
Tanzania	b	W
"	d	W
Tunisia	a	Wr
Turkey	a	Wrs
"	b	Wrs
"	d	W
Turkmenistan	b	Wrs
"	d	W
Uganda	b	V
"	d	W
Ukraine	b	Srw
"	d	W
United Arab Emirates	b	W
"	d	W
"	e	W
Uzbekistan	b	S
"	d	W
Yemen	b	W
"	d	W
Yugoslavia	a	Rs
Zaire	d	W
Zambia	d	W
Zimbabwe	d	W

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	