

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

- A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of Sterna caspia (West Eurasian and African 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>Sterna caspia</u> Pallas 1770 ssp. <u>caspia</u>
1.5. Common names	
English:	Caspian Tern
Spanish:	Pagaza Piquirroja
French:	Sterne caspienne

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Several subspecies have been described, but all are weakly defined, and the species is regarded as monotypic by some authors (e.g. Cramp 1985). Only the nominate subspecies occurs in Africa and West Eurasia; this breeds at a number of widely scattered localities in temperate and southern Eurasia from the Baltic to northeastern China and also in Africa. The populations breeding in the Red Sea and Madagascar appear to be mainly sedentary. Reports of breeding in East Africa are unsubstantiated. Four main migratory populations are identifiable; (i) a population which breeds in the Baltic (Sweden, Finland and Estonia), Black Sea (Ukraine) and central Turkey (few), and winters mainly in tropical West Africa, notably in the upper Niger inundation zone and Gulf of Guinea, but with a few in the Mediterranean and upper Nile to Sudan; (ii) a population which breeds in the Caspian Region and Iran, and winters in Northeast and East Africa, Arabia and southern Iran; (iii) a population which breeds in Senegal, Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau and winters along the coast of West Africa, possibly to the Gulf of Guinea; and (iv) a population which breeds in Southern Africa (Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique) and winters north to Zambia, Botswana and Angola.

2.2. Population

Four migratory populations are recognized.

- Baltic Sea/Black Sea/Turkey (to West Africa): 10,000 (Rose & Scott 1993); now declining after a period of increase.
- Caspian Region/Iran (to Northeast & East Africa): At least 10,000; possibly declining (Rose & Scott 1993).
- West Africa: 12,000 (Rose & Scott 1993).
- Southern Africa: 500 (Rose & Scott 1993).

The population breeding in the Baltic, Southeast Europe and Turkey has recently been estimated at 2,500-3,000 pairs. After some range contraction in Northwest Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (e.g. in France, Germany and Denmark), there was a marked increase in the Baltic throughout the first half of this century until at least the late 1970s. In Sweden, the breeding population increased from 850-950 pairs in 1971 to about 1,050 pairs in the late 1970s, and in Finland, from about 12 pairs in the 1920s to 1,000 pairs in the 1970s (Evans 1984). Since then, however, numbers have declined to 500-600 pairs in Sweden and 700-750 pairs in Finland. A decline in numbers has also been reported in the Black Sea. The Turkish population has been reported as less than 50 pairs (Cramp 1985). Many birds from this population winter in the Mediterranean, including up to 800 in Tunisia (Urban et al. 1986).

At least 3,000 birds winter in Southwest Asia. The highest mid-winter counts in recent years have come from Oman (1,700 in 1990), Saudi Arabia (690 in 1992), Iran (640 in 1991) and Bahrain (150 in 1990) (Perennou & Mundkur 1991 & 1992; Perennou et al. 1990). The wintering population in Iran in the 1970s was estimated at 750-1,000 birds (Scott 1992).

The West African breeding population has been estimated at 3,500-4,300 pairs, with 1,200-1,800 pairs at the Banc d'Arguin and 100 pairs at Aftout in Mauritania, at least 1,800 pairs in Senegal, and 400-600 pairs in the Bijagos Archipelago in Guinea-Bissau (Urban et al. 1986). A total of 160 was recorded in Mauritania during the African Waterfowl Census of January 1993 (Taylor 1993). No information is available on the trends in this population.

The breeding population in Southern Africa may number as few as 150 pairs. The largest known breeding colony is at Lake St Lucia in South Africa (maximum of 100 pairs), with smaller numbers in the Zambesi Delta, Transvaal, Cape and Namibia (Urban et al. 1986). Cooper et al. (1984) list two colonies in Namibia (with a total of 40 pairs) and seven colonies in South Africa (with a total of 42 pairs). Up to 80 birds have been recorded in the Berg River Estuary (a breeding locality) in Cape Province (Hockey et al. 1989). No information is available on the trends in this population.

2.3. Habitat

Breeds along sheltered coasts and inland, around large freshwater, brackish or saline lakes or along large, slow-moving rivers, from the boreal zone to tropical regions. Prefers clear and fairly shallow water with flat or gently sloping margins. Loosely colonial, usually nesting in small colonies on islets or skerries, reefs or flat rock surfaces, sandy beaches, sand-dunes, shingle, or occasionally peninsulas on low rocky coasts. Outside the breeding season, occurs largely in coastal lagoons and other sheltered or inshore waters, or on freshwater lakes near the coast, but in parts of Africa occurs far inland along great rivers, at large lakes and in extensive inundation zones (Cramp 1985; Urban et al. 1986).

2.4. Migrations

Partly migratory, partly dispersive and partly sedentary. Northern populations are highly migratory, with birds from the Western Palearctic commonly reaching the Gulf of Guinea and Kenya. Passage migrants from the Palearctic mainly cross the Sahara or follow the Nile Valley and eastern seaboard. There have been many recoveries in subsaharan Africa of birds ringed in the Baltic Sea and Black Sea, mainly from the inundation zone of the Upper Niger and coast of Ghana south to Zaire, but also east to Sudan and Ethiopia (Urban et al. 1986). Birds recorded on passage in the Red Sea, Somalia and coastal Kenya probably originate from the West Asian breeding populations.

Birds from the West African and Southern African colonies disperse widely outside the breeding season. The Banc d'Arguin is largely deserted in October, but the destination of the birds is unknown. The small flocks regularly reported in Zambia, Botswana and Angola are believed to originate from the Southern African colonies (Urban et al. 1986).

3. **Threat data**

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Some predation on eggs by humans has been reported in Africa (Urban et al. 1986). Large numbers of Sterna spp. are hunted for food and recreation on the coast of West Africa, especially in Ghana, and some S. caspia are doubtless included in the kill.

3.2. Habitat destruction

The widespread loss and degradation of freshwater wetlands are doubtless having a negative impact on populations in many parts of the species' range, but details are lacking.

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. This has been identified as a potential threat to the small South African breeding population (Cooper et al. 1984).

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

Collection of eggs for food in parts of Africa and perhaps elsewhere; probably some hunting for food in West Africa.

4. **Protection status and needs**

4.1. National protection status

Protected under national legislation in all twelve member states of the

EEC. In Africa, fully protected under national legislation in Benin, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Tunisia; partially protected as a game species in Ghana.

4.2. International protection status

Sterna caspia is listed in Appendix II (strictly protected fauna) of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention), and is also listed in Annex I of the EEC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC).

4.3. Additional protection needs

The Southwest Asian/Northeast African population of Sterna caspia is listed in the category 'Threatened' in the Draft Management Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, because it is a biogeographical population which is thought to number less than 25,000 individuals and appears to be declining throughout all or a large part of its range. The Southern African population is listed in the category 'Threatened' because it is a biogeographical population which is thought to number less than 10,000 individuals. The populations of Sterna caspia breeding in the Baltic Sea/Black Sea and in West Africa are listed in the category 'Localized', because they are biogeographical population which, although numerically stable or increasing, are restricted to only a few key sites during a part or the whole of their annual cycles. 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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Taxon: <i>Sterna caspia</i>		
Population		
(a) Baltic & Black Sea/W Africa		
(b) SW Asia/NE & E Africa		
(c) West Africa		
(d) Southern Africa		
State	Pop.	Status
Albania	a	W
Algeria	a	W
Angola	d	W
Azerbaijan	b	P
Bahrain	b	Wr
Belgium	a	P
Benin	a	W
"	c	W
Botswana	d	W
Bulgaria	a	P
Burkina Faso	a	W
Cameroon	a	W
Central African Republic	a	W
Chad	a	W
Cote d'Ivoire	a	W
"	c	W
Denmark	a	P
Djibouti	b	W
Egypt	a	W
"	b	Wr
Equatorial Guinea	a	W
Estonia	a	S
Ethiopia	b	W
Finland	a	S
France	a	Pw
Gabon	a	W
Gambia	a	W
"	c	Sr
Germany	a	P
Ghana	a	W

Ghana	c	W
Grece	a	W
Guinea	a	W
Guinea-Bissau	a	W
"	c	Sr
Iran	b	Sw
Italy	a	W
Kazakhstan	b	S
Kenya	b	W
Kuwait	b	Wr
Latvia	a	P
Liberia	a	W
"	c	W
Libya	a	W
Lithuania	a	P
Mali	a	W
Mauritania	a	W
"	c	Sr
Morocco	a	Pw
Mozambique	d	S
Namibia	d	S
Netherlands	a	P
Niger	a	W
Nigeria	a	W
"	c	W
Oman	b	W
Poland	a	P
Portugal	a	P
Qatar	b	W?
Romania	a	P
Russian Federation	a	S
"	b	S
Saudi Arabia	b	Wr
Senegal	a	W
"	c	Sr
Sierra Leone	a	W
"	c	W
Somalia	b	W

South Africa	d	S
Spain	a	Pw
Sudan	a	W
"	b	Wr
Sweden	a	S
Tanzania	b	W
Togo	a	W
"	c	W
Tunisia	a	W
Turkey	a	Sw
Turkmenistan	b	S
Uganda	b	W
Ukraine	a	S
United Arab Emirates	b	Wr
Uzbekistan	b	S
Yemen	b	W
Zaire	a	W
"	b	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	