

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 hirundo hirundo (populations breeding in the Western Palearctic) in Appendix II.

B. PROPONENT: Government of the Federal Republic of Germany

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxon

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| 1.1. Classis | Aves |
| 1.2. Ordo | Charadriiformes |
| 1.3. Familia | Laridae |
| 1.4. Genus/Species/Subspecies | <u>Sterna hirundo</u> Linnaeus 1758
ssp. <u>hirundo</u> |
| 1.5. Common names | |
| English: | Common Tern |
| Spanish: | Charran Comun |
| French: | Sterne pierregarin |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

Two subspecies occur. The nominate race breeds widely in Europe, Northwest Africa and West Asia east to Kazakhstan and Western Siberia, and winters south to South Africa and east to western India. S. h. tibetana is mainly extralimital, breeding in Central Asia and wintering in South and Southeast Asia, although the subspecies has been recorded in some numbers in South Africa and once in Malawi. Three populations of hirundo are recognized: (i) birds which breed in Western Europe (east to Germany), Southern Europe, North Africa (Tunisia) and West Africa (Mauritania and Senegal), and winter mainly in West Africa, from Mauritania to Nigeria; (ii) birds which breed in Northern and Eastern Europe, and winter mainly on the west coast of Southern Africa from Angola to South Africa, but also to a lesser extent in West Africa to Ghana and along the east coast of Southern Africa north to Mozambique; and (iii) birds which breed in Asia Minor, the Caspian Region, Western Siberia, Kazakhstan, Iraq and Iran, and winter around the Indian Ocean from southeastern Africa to Pakistan and northwestern India, perhaps mainly off Northeast and East Africa.

2.2. Population

Three populations are recognized.

- West & South Europe/Northwest & West Africa: 180,000 (Rose & Scott 1993); decreasing in many areas, increasing locally.
- North & East Europe/Southwest & South Africa: 600,000 (Rose & Scott 1993).
- West Asia/Middle East/Northeast & East Africa: Probably in the range 100,000-1,000,000.

Unpublished data suggest that the total breeding population in Europe is between 200,000 and 300,000 pairs. The breeding population in West and South Europe has been estimated at 75,000-100,000 pairs. The species appears to have declined in many parts of Northwest Europe in the 19th century, but then increased, at least locally, with protection during the first half of the 20th century, since when there have been declines again in many areas (e.g. France, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark). Little information is available on trends in the large North European population, estimated at between 150,000 and 200,000 pairs. In Finland, numbers have remained more or less stable in some areas since the 1950s, but have declined in others (Evans 1984). In Southwest Asia, there are at least 25,000 breeding pairs in the Caspian Sea (Golovkin 1984). No information is available on trends in this population.

2.3. Habitat

Breeds in a wide variety of coastal and inland wetland habitats, from the arctic fringe through the boreal, temperate, steppe and Mediterranean zones to the semi-desert zone. Nests both in small groups and in large colonies; along maritime coasts, usually favours flat rock surfaces on inshore islands or islets, or open shingle and sand on upper beaches or in dunes; occasionally nests in salt-marshes. Inland sites include islands in coastal lagoons, rocky or stony islands in freshwater or brackish lakes, shingle banks in rivers, marshes, ponds, flooded grassy areas, and gravel pits. Outside the breeding season, occurs along sea coasts, mainly close inshore along sandy coasts (Cramp 1985).

2.4. Migrations

Migratory throughout most of the Western Palearctic. Birds breeding in Western and Southern Europe and Northwest Africa migrate along the Atlantic coast to winter mainly in West Africa, from Mauritania to Nigeria, with the major concentrations in Senegal, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Ghana. Birds breeding in Northern and Eastern Europe winter mainly on the west coast of Southern Africa from Angola to South Africa, but also to a lesser extent in West Africa to Ghana and along the east coast of Southern Africa north to Mozambique. Northern breeders pass through the Baltic and North Sea then follow the Atlantic coast, while many eastern breeders pass through the Black Sea and Mediterranean to reach the Atlantic at the Straits of Gibraltar. Birds breeding in Western Siberia and Southwest Asia migrate south through the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf to winter around the Indian Ocean from southeastern Africa to Pakistan and northwestern India, with the majority probably wintering off Northeast and East Africa.

3. **Threat data**

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Vulnerable at breeding places to inclement weather, flooding, predators and human disturbance. The decline in numbers at some breeding colonies has been attributed to displacement by gulls (Vermeer & Ranking 1984). Major declines in the population in Northwest Europe in the 19th century (and the near extinction of the species in the Netherlands) are attributable to persecution for the plume trade (Evans 1984). Large

numbers of birds are trapped for food on the coast of West Africa, especially in Ghana.

3.2. Habitat destruction

Most recent population declines in Northwest Europe may be attributed to habitat destruction or disturbance (Evans 1984).

3.3. Indirect threats

Possibly at risk from contamination of wetlands with pesticides and other chemicals, but details are lacking.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

None known.

3.5. National and international utilization

Hunting (with snares and baited traps) for food and recreation on the winter quarters 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, 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 hirundo 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 population of Sterna hirundo breeding in Western Europe and Northwest Africa is listed in the category 'Potentially vulnerable' in the Draft Management Plan for the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, because it is a biogeographical population which, although still with a population size of over 100,000 individuals, has shown a marked decrease in numbers over the whole or a large part of its range in recent decades. 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

The population of Sterna hirundo breeding in Western Siberia and West-central Asia and wintering in the Indian Ocean east to Pakistan is also included in the Bonn Convention Draft Agreement on the Conservation of Asian-Australasian Migratory Waterbirds, as a substantial proportion of the population spends a part of its annual cycle in the Asian-Australasian Region.

8. References

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Taxon: <i>Sterna hirundo hirundo</i>		
Population		
(a) W & S Europe/W Mediterranean/NW & W Africa		
(b) N & E Europe/SW & S Africa		
(c) W Asia/Middle East/NE & E Africa		
State	Pop.	Status
Albania	b	S
Algeria	a	P
"	b	P
Angola	b	W
Armenia	c	S
Austria	b	S
"	a	S
Azerbaijan	c	S
Bahrain	c	P
Belarus	b	S
Belgium	a	S
Benin	a	W
"	b	P
Bosnia & Herzegovina	b	S
Bulgaria	b	S
Cameroon	b	P
Cape Verde	a	V
Congo	b	P
Cote d'Ivoire	a	W
"	b	P
Croatia	b	S
Czech Republic	a	S
Denmark	a	S
Djibouti	c	Pw
Egypt	b	P
Equatorial Guinea	b	P
Estonia	b	S
Ethiopia	c	Pw
Finland	b	S
France	a	S
Gabon	b	P

Gambia	b	P
Georgia	b	S
Germany	a	S
Ghana	a	W
"	b	P
Greece	b	S
Guinea	a	W
"	b	P
Guinea-Bissau	a	W
"	b	P
Hungary	b	S
Iceland	a	V
Iran	c	S
Iraq	c	S
Ireland	a	S
Israel	b	S
Italy	a	S
"	b	S
Jordan	b	P
Kazakhstan	c	S
Kenya	c	Wp
Kuwait	c	P
Latvia	b	S
Liberia	a	W
"	b	P
Libya	b	P
Lithuania	b	S
Macedonia	b	S
Madagascar	c	W
Malawi	c	P
Mauritania	a	Srw
"	b	P
Moldova	b	S
Monaco	a	S
Morocco	a	P
"	b	P
Mozambique	c	Wp
Namibia	b	W

Netherlands	a	S
Nigeria	a	W
"	b	P
Norway	a	S
Oman	c	Pw
Poland	a	S
Portugal	a	P
Qatar	c	P
Romania	b	S
Russian Federation	b	S
"	c	S
Saudi Arabia	c	Pw
Senegal	a	Srw
"	b	P
Seychelles	c	P
Sierra Leone	a	W
"	b	P
Slovakia	b	S
Somalia	c	Wp
South Africa	b	W
"	c	W
Spain	a	S
Sudan	c	P
Sweden	a	S
"	b	S
Switzerland	a	S
Tanzania	c	Wp
Togo	a	W
"	b	P
Tunisia	a	S
"	b	P
Turkey	b	S
"	c	S
Turkmenistan	c	S
Uganda	c	V
Ukraine	b	S
United Arab Emirates	c	P
United Kingdom	a	S

Gibraltar	a	P
"	b	P
Uzbekistan	c	S
Yemen	c	Pw
Yugoslavia	b	S
Zaire	b	P
Zambia	c	P

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	