

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 albifrons albifrons and Sterna albifrons guineae 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 albifrons</u> Pallas 1764 ssp. <u>albifrons</u> and <u>guineae</u>
1.5. Common names	
English:	Little Tern
Spanish:	Charrancito
French:	Sterne naine

2. **Biological data**

2.1. Distribution

Two subspecies occur. The nominate subspecies breeds across temperate and southern Europe and North Africa east to Central Asia, and winters south to South Africa and Northwest India. S. a. guineae occurs in West and Central Africa from Mauritania and Senegal to Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon and Gabon. Birds breeding on the coast are largely sedentary, but those breeding inland in West Africa are migratory. An isolated population at Lake Turkana in Kenya is sedentary. Four main breeding groups are recognized: (i) birds which breed in Western Europe and Northwest Africa, and winter in West Africa from Senegal to the Gulf of Guinea and probably also in Southwest Africa; (ii) birds which breed in Eastern Europe, the Black Sea region and Turkey, and winter in the Red Sea and southern Arabia; (iii) birds which breed in the Caspian Region, Aral Sea, Iraq and Iran, and winter from the Persian Gulf east to Pakistan and possibly also in East Africa; and (iv) birds which breed in West Africa (Mauritania to Cameroon) and move to the coast in winter.

2.2. Population

Four main breeding groups are recognized.

- West Europe/Northwest, West & Southwest Africa (albifrons): 25,000; declining (Rose & Scott 1993).
- East Europe/Black Sea/East Mediterranean/Red Sea (albifrons): 75,000 (Rose & Scott 1993).
- Caspian Region/Iraq/Iran/Arabian Sea (to Pakistan): 12,000 (Rose & Scott 1993).
- West Africa (guineae): Unknown; probably in the range 10,000-25,000; apparently stable.

Unpublished data suggest that the breeding population in West Europe is currently between 8,500 and 10,500 pairs. Numbers have declined markedly throughout much of its range in Northwest Europe in recent decades. Major decreases have been reported in the British Isles, France, the Netherlands and Germany. Populations in Scandinavia have remained more or less stable, with only a slight decline in Denmark and a slight increase in Finland. Recent local increases (e.g. in France and the United Kingdom) are probably due to careful protection of breeding sites (Evans 1984). The population breeding in Eastern Europe, the Black Sea and East Mediterranean has been estimated at between 20,000 and 40,000 pairs, with 5,000-15,000 of these in Turkey, while that in the Caspian Region and Middle East has been estimated at about 12,000 birds. No information is available on the trends in these two populations.

The small coastal population S. albifrons guineae in Senegal and Mauritania has been estimated at about 150 pairs, with 25-50 pairs on the Banc d'Arguin in Mauritania and about 100 pairs in the Senegal Delta (Cooper et al. 1984). However, this endemic subspecies is locally common inland, and concentrations of up to 1,000 have been recorded on the Nigerian coast in July (Urban et al. 1986). The numbers are thought to be stable (Urban et al. 1986).

2.3. Habitat

Breeds in a wide variety of coastal and inland wetland habitats from cool temperate to steppe and Mediterranean zones. Frequently coast-dwelling, more along mainland coasts than islands, but also extends up major river systems and occurs widely around freshwater, brackish and saline lakes, especially in the eastern parts of its range in Western Eurasia. Nests in loose colonies, and shows a strong preference for linear strips of bare shingle, shell-beach or sand just above normal high-tide or flood limits. Outside the breeding season, mainly marine, frequenting inshore waters off sandy or shingle beaches, tidal creeks, coastal lagoons and salt-pans, but has been recorded at upwellings up to 600 km off the West African coast (Cramp 1985; Urban et al. 1986).

2.4. Migrations

The nominate race is migratory, and almost exclusively coastal in winter. West European and Northwest African breeders winter in West Africa from Senegal to the Gulf of Guinea and probably also in Southwest Africa; birds ringed in Western Europe have been recovered in Morocco, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. Birds from Eastern Europe, the Black Sea region and Turkey winter in the Red Sea and southern Arabia south to Somalia (Cramp 1985). Southwest Asian birds winter from the Persian Gulf east to Pakistan, and probably also along the east coast of Africa south occasionally to South Africa. Populations of S. albifrons guineae breeding inland along the major rivers in West Africa are migratory, moving to the coast in winter. The small coastal population of this subspecies is probably sedentary (Urban et al. 1986).

3. Threat data

3.1. Direct threats to the population

Declines in the European populations in the 19th century were probably due to human persecution (Evans 1984). During the present century, the principal threat to the species has been disturbance at the nesting sites, especially from holiday-makers and fishermen. Sterna albifrons is warier of baited traps than other Sterna spp., and hence much less prone to persecution in West Africa (Cramp 1985).

3.2. Habitat destruction

Habitat destruction, generally associated with beach development for tourism, has been a major cause of the decline in breeding populations of S. albifrons in many areas.

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

Some 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, Morocco, Somalia, Tanzania and Tunisia; partially protected as a game species in Ghana.

4.2. International protection status

Sterna albifrons 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 albifrons breeding in Western Europe and Northwest Africa 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. Sterna albifrons guineae is listed in the category 'Vulnerable' because

it is a subspecies which is thought to number less than 25,000 individuals and is dependent on a habitat type which is widely under threat. 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 albifrons breeding in the Caspian Region, Iran and Iraq and wintering from the Persian Gulf 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 albifrons</i> (ssp <i>albifrons</i> & <i>guineae</i>)		
Population		
(a) W Europe/NW, W & SW Africa		
(b) E Europe/Black Sea/E Mediterranean/Red Sea		
(c) SW Asia (to Pakistan)		
(d) West Africa (ssp <i>guineae</i>)		
State	Pop.	Status
Albania	b	S
Algeria	a	Sp
Azerbaijan	c	S
Bahrain	c	W
Belarus	b	S
Belgium	a	P
Benin	a	W
"	d	W
Bulgaria	b	S
Cameroon	a	W
"	d	Sw
Cote d'Ivoire	a	W
"	d	W
Cyprus	b	P
Denmark	a	S
Djibouti	b	W
Egypt	b	Sw
Equatorial Guinea	a	W
Estonia	a	S
"	b	S
Ethiopia	b	W
Finland	a	S
France	a	Sp
Gabon	a	W
Gambia	a	W
"	d	Sw
Georgia	b	S
Germany	a	S
Ghana	a	W
"	d	Sw

Greece	b	S
Guinea	a	W
"	d	W
Guinea-Bissau	a	W
"	d	W
Hungary	a	S
"	b	S
Iran	c	Sw
Iraq	c	S
Ireland	a	S
Israel	b	S
Italy	a	S
Jordan	b	P
Kazakhstan	c	S
Kenya	b	W
Kuwait	c	W
Latvia	a	S
"	b	S
Lebanon	b	P
Liberia	a	W
"	d	W
Libya	a	S
Lithuania	a	S
"	b	S
Mauritania	a	P
"	d	Sw
Monaco	a	P
Morocco	a	Sp
Mozambique	b	W
Netherlands	a	S
Nigeria	a	W
"	d	Sw
Oman	c	W
Poland	a	S
"	b	S
Portugal	a	Sp
Qatar	c	W
Romania	b	S

Russian Federation	b	S
"	c	S
Saudi Arabia	b	W
"	c	W
Senegal	a	W
"	d	Sw
Sierra Leone	a	W
"	d	W
Somalia	b	W
South Africa	b	W
Spain	a	Sp
Sudan	b	W
Sweden	a	S
Syria	b	P
Tanzania	b	W
Togo	a	W
"	d	W
Tunisia	a	S
Turkey	b	S
Turkmenistan	c	S
Ukraine	b	S
United Arab Emirates	c	W
United Kingdom	a	S
Gibraltar	a	P
Uzbekistan	c	S
Yemen	b	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	