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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Group of Experts on Conservation of Birds

Izmir, Turkey, 5-8 May 1997

Secretariat Memorandum
prepared by the
Directorate of Environment
and Local Authorities

The Standing Committee is invited to:

1. Express its gratitude to the Turkish authorities for the excellent preparation and warm hosting of the meeting;
2. Take note of the report of the Group of experts;
3. Take note, in particular, of the successful development and implementation of the Action Plans for the 23 globally threatened birds;
4. Take note, and if appropriate, modify the terms of reference for the Group (Appendix 9);
5. Examine and, if appropriate, adopt the following draft recommendations:
 - a) draft recommendation on the implementation of the Action Plans for globally threatened birds (Appendix 6);
 - b) draft recommendation on the conservation of the white-headed duck *Oxyura leucocephala* (Appendix 7);
 - c) draft recommendation on the conservation of threatened birds in the Macaronesian and Mediterranean regions (Appendix 8).

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by His Excellency Ziyattin TOKAR, Minister for the Environment of Turkey, who welcomed participants and informed them of a series of measures his government intends to take in the near future to improve the situation of threatened birds in Turkey, including the extension of the designated Ramsar area of the Burdur Lake to cover the whole extent of the lake.

A list of participants is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

Mr Ali _hsan KENÇ, Undersecretary of Environment, gave a lecture entitled "Protection of threatened birds in Turkey" in which he pointed out the main threats that rare bird species face in his country and the measures, particularly the protection of critical habitats and the creation of bird sanctuaries, his state has taken in recent years. The relevance of the Bern Convention, ratified by Turkey in 1986, and of the Ramsar Convention, ratified in 1995 were stressed. Turkey is conscious of the great importance and value of its extraordinary biological diversity, one of the highest in the Council of Europe states, and intends to preserve it for future generations.

In the name of participants and the Council of Europe, Mr Eladio Fernández-Galiano, from the Secretariat, thanked the Turkish authorities for their warm welcome, their hospitality and the excellent and most professional preparation of the meeting.

The Secretariat gave a short introduction explaining the framework in which the group was going to work. In 1995 the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention included in its programme of activities a workshop to facilitate the discussion with concerned governments of the 23 Action Plans on Globally Threatened Birds in Europe which had been prepared by BirdLife International and Wetlands International (and financed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the European Commission through a LIFE grant). As a result of those negotiations and contacts, the plans were amended and formally presented to the Standing Committee in January 1996. The Standing Committee of the Convention adopted its Recommendation No. 48 on those Action Plans (see Appendix 3 to this document). This Group of experts on conservation of birds which held its first meeting in Izmir was created by the Standing Committee to the Convention in December 1996 with the following terms of reference:

Terms of reference: to revise current problems on bird conservation in Europe and to suggest adequate action. The Group shall, in particular, follow up the implementation of Recommendation No. 48 (1996) of the Standing Committee on the conservation of European globally threatened birds, and inform the Committee on the progress in the implementation of the Action Plans referred to in that recommendation. The Group may suggest other species requiring Action Plans and propose measures that may be appropriate for the conservation of threatened birds."

As for all other groups of experts created under the Bern Convention, it was expected to report to the Standing Committee on its work, including possible draft recommendations for examination by the Committee.

2. Election of the chair

Mrs Serap Kuleli (Turkey) was elected Chairperson

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as it figures in Appendix 2.

4. Implementation of the 23 Action Plans

The governments of Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Poland (Gda_sk and Wroc_aw), Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey presented reports on the implementation of Recommendation No. 48 and, in general on their actions regarding the preservation of threatened bird. Several BirdLife partners also presented reports. All reports presented are included in Appendices 4.1 to 4.11 of this report.

Mr Zoltán Waliczky, coordinator of the European programme of BirdLife International, made a summary presentation on the way the plans were being implemented (Appendix 5.1).

Many different matters were raised regarding the situation of one or other species in different countries. It is not practical to register all the cases raised, but the most important ones have been included in a draft recommendation addressed to the Standing Committee for examination and possible adoption (Appendix 6).

As a very general summary of the many points raised, it can be said that the Action Plans can be generally considered as a success. They have been taken up very seriously by most of the States and are in many instances guiding the governments actions regarding the conservation of the 23 globally threatened species. Collaboration with non-governmental organisations (particularly BirdLife partners) is on-going, but this varies much from country to country. It can be said that the plans provide a good framework for conservation action on the species and that they are serving the purpose for which they were made.

A special recommendation was prepared on the conservation of the white-headed duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*). The main long-term conservation problem of the species seems to be linked to the spread of a competing non-native species, the ruddy duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*), which hybridise with the native white-headed duck. While there was general agreement among the experts that the only long-term solution was the eradication of the non-native ruddy duck, the United Kingdom delegation opposed this view, stating that it was enough that the wild population of ruddy ducks were controlled so as to avoid any dispersal to other countries. After a negotiating meeting at which the delegations of Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and BirdLife participated, and, in the absence of an agreed text on the positions of the United Kingdom and other delegations did not move, the Secretariat proposed to address to the Standing Committee a draft recommendation which kept opened both options (see Appendix 7).

5. New action plans: presentation by BirdLife International

Mr Norbert Schäffer (RSPB) presented the new plans that were being prepared by BirdLife. They concern the following species:

<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>	<i>Aquila clanga</i>	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	<i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i>
<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	<i>Aquila pomarina</i>	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>

(A summary of his presentation is found in Appendix 5.2 to this report.)

The Group agreed that the plans be formally presented to concerned governments once they have followed the necessary steps required by the European Commission (which is financing some of them through a LIFE grant).

It was suggested that discussion of the new Action Plans be included in the agenda of the next meeting of the Group of experts.

6. Role of the Group of Experts in the follow-up of the plans. Collaboration between governments and NGOs

The present terms of reference of the Group of Experts are as follows:

" To review current problems on bird conservation in Europe and to suggest appropriate action. The Group shall, in particular, follow up the implementation of Recommendation No. 48 (1996) of the Standing Committee on the conservation of European globally threatened birds, and inform the Committee on the progress in the implementation of the Action Plans referred to in that recommendation. The Group may suggest other species requiring Action Plans and propose measures that may be appropriate for the conservation of threatened birds. "

The Secretariat informed the Group that it was also meant to be used as a forum for discussion and collaboration between governments and governmental and non-governmental organisations concerned with bird conservation in Europe.

The delegate of RSPB made a proposal for amendment of the terms of reference of this Group so that its activities might be better structured (see Appendix 9).

The Secretariat informed participants that membership of the Group included Contracting Parties to the Convention, observer States and appropriate GO and NGO observers (these include other international organisations and conventions, BirdLife Partners, Medmaravis, Wetlands International, WWF, European Habitat Forum and other international NGOs).

The Group is to meet every two years under the authority of the Standing Committee.

[**Note:** After the closure of the meeting, RSPB suggested the creation of a small bureau of the Group of Experts comprising a chairman, a representative of BirdLife and the Secretariat, to be able to serve the Standing Committee between the meetings of the Group of Experts. The Secretariat thought appropriate to discuss this matter with the Standing Committee and inform the Group of Experts of its decision.]

7. Other actions of European interest. Proposals to the Standing Committee

The Group had an exchange of views on which other bird species may need priority attention from governments. There was a clear consensus towards the priority to elaborate new plans for globally threatened species, but that bird conservation in Europe should not stop there. The mandate of the Group was wide enough to deal with other species that might be threatened only in Europe, but not necessarily on a world scale. In any case, species with a mere accidental or very marginal population in Europe (and not globally threatened) did not need to be subject to the attention of the Group.

The Group felt that this matter could be dealt with at the regional level (for instance, within biogeographical regions). Two areas were set as pilot areas to explore such an approach: the Mediterranean Region and the Macaronesian Region. These areas were elected because they were the biogeographical regions with the highest biodiversity in Europe. The Action Plans proposed were to identify those bird species which were not globally threatened but might require Action Plans because of the existence of subspecies, population or variety at risk. A draft recommendation in this sense was proposed for the attention of the Standing Committee (Appendix 8).

8. Other business

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Nil.

APPENDIX 1

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OECD/OCDE

UN-ECE/ONU-CEE

AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRD AGREEMENT - Mr Bert LENTEN, Interim Secretariat of the African -Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement, Room 3510, PO 20401, 2500 EK THE HAGUE, Pays-Bas (E)

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Birdlife - Ukraine/UTOP

European Habitats Forum - represented by BirdLife and Wetlands International

APPENDIX 2

AGENDA

Monday 5 May 1997 to Wednesday 7 May 1997

Monday 9.30 am

Speech of welcome by H.E. Ziyattin TOKAR, Minister for the Environment of Turkey

1. Opening of the seminar

- Lecture "Protection of threatened birds in Turkey" by Mr Ali _hsan KENÇ, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Environment

- Introduction to the meeting of the Group of experts by the Secretariat of the Convention

2. Election of chairman

3. Adoption of the agenda

4. Implementation of the 23 Action Plans

- reports from governments

- action by non-governmental organisations

- discussion

- possible recommendation to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention

5. New action plans: presentation by BirdLife International

6. Role of the Group of Experts in the follow-up of the plans. Collaboration between governments and NGOs

7. Other actions of European interest. Proposals to the Standing Committee

8. Other business

Thursday 8 May 1997

Excursion organised by the Turkish authorities

Note: On 5 and 7 May 1997 the Ministry of Environment will invite participants to dinner marking the opening and closure of the meeting.

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APPENDIX/ANNEXE**List of species for which Action Plans have been made /
Liste d'espèces pour lesquelles des Plans d'action ont été rédigés**

Macaronesian and Iberian endemics / Endémiques macaronésiens et ibériques

<i>Pyrrhula murina</i>	<i>Columba junoniae</i>
<i>Pterodroma madeira</i>	<i>Fringilla teydea</i>
<i>Pterodroma feae</i>	<i>Chlamydotis undulata</i>
<i>Columba trocaz</i>	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>
<i>Columba bolli</i>	

Waterbird species / Oiseaux d'eau

<i>Numenius tenuirostris</i>	<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>
<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>	<i>Branta ruficollis</i>
<i>Phalacrocorax pigmaeu</i>	<i>Anser erythropus</i>
<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>	

Non-waterbird species / Autres espèces

<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	<i>Larus audouini</i>
<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	<i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>
<i>Falco naumanni</i>	<i>Crex crex</i>
<i>Otis tarda</i>	

APPENDIX 3

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 48 of the Standing Committee, adopted on 22 January 1996 concerning the conservation of European globally threatened birds

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention,

Having regard to the aims of the Convention to conserve wild fauna and its natural habitats;

Recalling that Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Convention requires Parties to give particular emphasis to the conservation of endangered and vulnerable species;

Noting that a considerable number of bird species of Europe have suffered a decreased in their numbers, a reduction in their geographical distribution or have critically endangered populations;

Desirous to avoid a further loss of biological diversity in Europe;

Aware that the design and implementation of Recovery Plans may be a useful tool to redress the situation of European globally threatened birds;

Aware of the obligations under the Africa-Eurasia Waterfowl Agreement concluded in the framework of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn) and of the efforts to amend the Protocol concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (Geneva) (Protocol to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution) to include provisions on the protection of threatened birds;

Welcoming the intention of UNEP/CMS to increase coordination with the Bern Convention in the implementation of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement and other agreements under the Bonn Convention;

Recalling Resolutions (67) 24 and (73) 31, and the Recommendation (82) 10 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, on birds in need of special protection in Europe;

Referring to the Action Plans on European globally threatened birds presented by BirdLife and Wetlands International;

Desirous to take prompt action for the conservation of Europe's most threatened birds;

Recommends that Contracting Parties to the Convention or States invited to accede thereto or to attend sessions of the Standing Committee as observers;

consider carrying out (or, if appropriate, reinforcing) National Action Plans for the species listed in Appendix A to the recommendation; take note, in that context, of the above-mentioned Action Plans on European globally threatened birds.

Appendix A to the Recommendation

Macaronesian and Iberian endemics

<i>Pyrrhula murina</i>	<i>Columba junoniae</i>
<i>Pterodroma madeira</i>	<i>Fringilla teydea</i>
<i>Pterodroma fear</i>	<i>Chlamydotis undulata</i>
<i>Columba trocaz</i>	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>
<i>Columba bolli</i>	

Waterbird species

<i>Numenius tenuirostris</i>	<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>
<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>	<i>Branta ruficollis</i>
<i>Phalacrocorax pigmaeus</i>	<i>Anser erythropus</i>
<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>	

Non-waterbird species

<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	<i>Larus audouini</i>
<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	<i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>
<i>Falco naumanni</i>	<i>Crex crex</i>
<i>Otis tarda</i>	

APPENDIX 4

- 4.1 Bulgaria
- 4.2 Estonia
- 4.3 Finland
- 4.4 France
- 4.5 Greece
- 4.6 Hungary
- 4.7 Poland (Gda_sk and Wroc_aw)
- 4.8 Portugal
- 4.9 Romania
- 4.10 Russia
- 4.11 Slovakia
- 4.12 Spain
- 4.13 Sweden
- 4.14 Switzerland
- 4.15 Turkey
- 4.16 Ukraine
- 4.17 United Kingdom
- 4.18 Programme LIFE - *Crex crex* en Belgique

4.1 Bulgaria

4.2 Estonia

Respondent: Tiit Randla
Director, Nature Conservation Division
Ministry of the Environment
Board Member, Estonian Ornithological Society

Of the 331 bird species (together with sub-species) in Estonia, 222 species are protected under the Act on Protected Natural Objects (1994). Protected species are divided into three categories. The most rare breeding birds belong to category I. Their number has decreased significantly and they may be in danger of extinction. These birds are endangered and vulnerable. There are seven species in category I: White-tailed Eagle, Osprey, Short-toed Eagle, Peregrine, Black Stork, Willow Grouse, Golden Eagle. The species of category I are specified in an Act. The number of White-tailed Eagle has increased in recent decades (up to 60 pairs in Estonia) and thus should be transferred to category II.

Rare and demanding species (35 altogether) are in category II. The species of category II are specified in a governmental regulation.

Other protected species fall into category III. Protection of these species has a somewhat moral meaning (singing birds, decorative birds). The species of category III are nominated with a regulation of the Minister of Environment.

The lists of protected species were drawn up and approved after Estonia's accession to the Bern Convention (1992) and thus, requirements under this Convention have been taken into account.

On the initiative of the Nature Conservation Commission of the Academy of Science of Estonia, a Red Data Book of Estonia has been compiled. The first edition was published in 1982. Estonia took an active part in compiling also the Red Data Book of the Baltic countries (published in 1992). This year (1997), a new Red Data Book List will be published. In Estonia, the Red Data Book is an expression of activities of the public and public bird protection. The assessments published in the RDB are taken as basis for formulation of a national bird protection policy. Drawing up management plans for protected species is one of the new trends in Estonia. In 1997, such management plans will be drawn up for White-tailed Eagle, Common Crane and Caipercaille. Publication of a Bird of the Year is also one of the most important bird protection instruments, giving rise to collection of new data and promotion of bird protection. The Bird of the Year 1995 was Corncrake, that of 1996 Curlew and this year - Common Crane.

At present, the Red Data Book List of Extinct Species contains Red-throated Diver and Great Grey Owl, which have not been found breeding during the last half century. Seven species are listed as endangered species: Black-throated Diver, Short-toed Eagle, Peregrine, Willow Grouse, Great Snipe, Black Guillemot and European Roller.

Nine species are listed as species demanding special responsibility (vulnerable): Black Stork, Merlin, Common Quail, Dunlin, Ruff, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Caspian Tern and Green Woodpecker.

Of the 26 globally threatened species in Europe, action plans have been drawn up for the protection of 23 of them. Corncrake is numerous in Estonia (up to 5,000 breeding pairs). Estonian ornithologists participated in drawing up this national action plan. Now it is time to implement it.

Steller's Eider, another of the above species, is wintering in our waters. In 1990-1997, an average of four and a maximum of six thousand birds were wintering near the western coasts of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa from November till May.

Among other species, Spotted Eagle is a very rare breeding bird; Ferruginous Duck, Red-breasted Goose and Lesser White-fronted Goose are occasional visitors.

Close co-operation with the Conventions of Ramsar, Bern and Bonn is a priority of the Estonian bird protection policy. The Estonian Government has approved the proposition to introduce new important wetlands (10 new sites). It has been planned to accede to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement under the Bonn Convention (EAWA).

4.3 Finland

Respondent: Seppor VUOLANTO
Ministry of the Environment
PO Box 399
00121 Helsinki

28 April 1997

4.4 France

CITES ➤

LE RALE DES GENÊTS

Crex crex L.

Gruiformes

Rallidés

Convention de Bonn ➤

Convention de Berne ➤ Annexe II

Directive Oiseaux ➤ Annexe I

Directive

Habitats Faune, Flore ➤

Droit interne ➤ Arrêté du 17/04/81 (article 1)

Catégorie UICN ➤ Au niveau mondial ➤ R

➤ En France ➤ V

Présentation

La distribution de l'espèce est eurasienne, des îles britanniques à la Sibérie et des côtes norvégiennes aux rivages septentrionaux de la Mer Noire. Plus de la moitié de la population mondiale pourrait se reproduire en Asie. En Europe, les populations les plus importantes se trouvent dans la partie orientale du continent, de la Russie à la Pologne, (au moins 80 000 mâles chanteurs). Plus à l'ouest, la France est le seul pays qui accueille un effectif supérieur au millier de mâles chanteurs.

Présent en Europe d'avril à août, elle se reproduit dans les prairies fauchées tardivement en particulier dans celles des vallées alluviales inondables, hiverne en Afrique australe. Nocturne, le mâle émet un chant bisyllabique très caractéristique.

La femelle peut entreprendre une deuxième ponte avec un partenaire parfois différent dans certains secteurs, quand les conditions le lui permettent (fauches tardives).

cas fauchées et ne niche qu'exceptionnellement dans d'autres habitats (mégaphorbiaies, roselières, cariçaies, ...). Sa conservation nécessite impérativement de lui maintenir des habitats favorables.

Répartition et situation des populations en France

En France, comme dans la plupart des autres pays d'Europe, le rôle des genêts a commencé à régresser dès le début du XX^e siècle. Une première enquête menée de 1982 à 1984 montre que la population française du rôle des genêts était répartie en cinq entités principales : une population normande (70 à 330 mâles chanteurs), une population dans le bassin de la Loire inférieure (900 à 1 230 chanteurs), une population dans le centre ouest (200 chanteurs), une population dans le bassin de la Saône (300 chanteurs) et une dans le Val-de-Meuse (20 à 50 chanteurs).

En 1991, un nouveau recensement national fait apparaître par rapport à l'enquête précédente, une régression de 43 % en Normandie, 37 % dans le Val-de-Loire, 50 % dans le Centre ouest, 65 % dans le bassin de la Saône et 25 % dans le Val de Meuse. Aujourd'hui, la population française du rôle des genêts est estimée à 1 100 - 1 200 mâles chanteurs, soit une diminution de 40 % en 8 ans.

Causes de raréfaction et menaces

Les principales causes de régression de l'espèce sont liées :

- à la perte des habitats favorables à l'espèce (drainage et mise en culture des prairies humides, abandon de prairies de fauches entraînant une modification de la structure de l'habitat, extension de la populiculture dans les plaines alluviales) ;
- aux modifications des pratiques agricoles (fauchage trop précoce et plus rapide des prairies, notamment en raison de l'utilisation de matériel moderne plus performant, du pâturage plus précoce, du développement de la pratique de l'ensilage).

Problématique de conservation

Cette espèce est strictement liée aux prairies humides, dans la plupart des

Objectifs du programme d'action

L'objectif du programme vise à replacer le râle des genêts dans un état de conservation favorable, c'est-à-dire de doubler au minimum la population actuelle.

L'objectif visé doit s'obtenir en augmentant les surfaces de prairies de fauches par abandon des cultures dans les vallées inondables, et la mise en pratique de mesures favorables à l'espèce sur l'ensemble de son aire de répartition. Pour être rapidement efficace, ces mesures doivent s'appliquer sur des territoires abritant au moins 50 % de la population nationale de l'espèce.

Mise en œuvre

La mise en œuvre du programme nécessite en dehors de l'acquisition par divers organismes des terrains favorables à l'espèce (600 hectares acquis à ce jour), d'arrêter la destruction des habitats encore favorables à l'espèce, c'est-à-dire d'arrêter le drainage et la mise en culture des prairies inondables, d'encourager les fauches tardives, de limiter l'ensilage, de recréer des habitats lors de l'abandon des cultures.

Les actions déjà en cours sont de deux types :

- des programmes de conservation ;
- des programmes de promotion d'opérations locales comportant des mesures agri-environnementales compatibles avec la biologie du râle des genêts.

Pour les opérations du premier type, il s'agit :

- d'un programme mené par la LPO dans les basses vallées angevines qui vise à sauvegarder la population la plus importante de l'Europe communautaire ;
- de programmes menés par les conservatoires régionaux et l'ONC dans le Val-de-Saône et les vallées de l'est de la France ;
- du programme RSPB-LPO qui se déroule sur cinq sites pilotes (en Normandie, Bourgogne, estuaire de la Loire, vallée de la Charente) et qui propose des programmes d'acquisition et de gestion du milieu par les agriculteurs.

Les actions du deuxième type portent sur des contrats de maintien de la fauche et du retard de la fauche après la première, voire la deuxième nichée en Val-de-Loire et de Saône notamment.

Une enquête nationale doit être menée tous les cinq ans afin de juger de l'efficacité des mesures engagées avec une attention particulière sur les sites concernés par les mesures agri-environnementales.

Les premiers résultats montrent que les fauches centrifuges permettent de sauver jusqu'à 50 % des poussins et que les fauches tardives permettent la survie de la majorité des poussins issus d'éclosions précoces.

Ces travaux montrent que, d'une part, les opérations d'acquisition ou de gestion doivent se poursuivre sur les sites de populations actuelles et que, d'autre part, la mise en application et le renouvellement des mesures agri-environnementales, dites opérations locales, doivent se systématiser à l'ensemble des zones de nidification françaises. Ce dernier type d'actions est le seul à pouvoir atteindre l'objectif fixé.

Les partenaires actuels sont les associations de protection de la nature locales, le LPO, les conservatoires régionaux, l'ONC, les pouvoirs publics, les ADASEA, les syndicats agricoles et les agriculteurs eux-mêmes.

Les moyens mobilisés proviennent de l'union européenne, des ministères de l'Agriculture et de l'Environnement, de la LPO, de l'ONC et des collectivités.

CITES ➤ Annexe II (C1)

**LE FAUCON
CRÉCERELLETTE**
Falco naumanni Fleischer
Accipitriformes
Falconidés

Convention de Bonn ➤ Annexe II
Convention de Berne ➤ Annexe II
Directive Oiseaux ➤ Annexe I
Directive
Habitats Faune, Flore ➤
Droit interne ➤ Arrêté du 17/04/81 (article 1)
Catégorie UICN ➤ Au niveau mondial ➤ R
➤ En France ➤ E

Présentation

Le faucon crécerellette couvre l'Eurasie méridionale et le Maghreb.

La régression de l'espèce de près de 90 % des effectifs de l'Europe communautaire entre 1965 et 1980, avec un total estimé à seulement 15 000 couples (1992), la fait considérer comme l'une des sept espèces d'oiseaux les plus menacées d'Europe. Elle est éteinte dans plusieurs pays d'Europe centrale.

Le faucon crécerellette est un petit rapace insectivore migrateur. Son biotope d'alimentation est varié : pelouses sèches à graminées (steppes) pâturées ou non, cultures de céréales non irriguées, jachères, friches herbacées, bordures de zones humides pâturées et rizières avant la mise en eau.

Il installe son nid dans des trous de falaises, des constructions humaines, dans des arbres creux ou des tas de pierres. Il s'adapte facilement à différents types de nichoirs.

conquête de nouveaux sites de reproduction dans l'ensemble de la plaine semble lente, malgré la pose de plusieurs dizaines de nichoirs favorables à l'espèce.

Hors de la plaine de Crau, aucun des anciens sites de nidification ne semblent avoir été recolonisé à ce jour. Par ailleurs, certaines modifications culturales (jachères, abandons de cultures, présence de jeune friches, ...) peuvent être favorables à l'installation progressive de colonies nouvelles. Les plaines agricoles du Languedoc-Roussillon et de la Provence pourraient donc, dans certaines conditions, devenir favorables à l'espèce.

Répartition et situation des populations en France

La seule population connue est située dans la plaine steppique de la Crau (Bouches-du-Rhône). Les effectifs nicheurs de cette population augmentent régulièrement depuis une douzaine d'années (moins de 5 couples en 1985, 42 couples au minimum pour la saison 1996). En effet, après une très forte baisse de la population française de crécerellettes (95 % de perte en trente ans), seule une petite population existait encore à la fin des années 80. Cette population située en Crau, augmente d'environ 30 % par an. Les résultats du baguage laissent penser que le dynamisme de cette population ne dépend pas d'apports extérieurs (même si des échanges existent). La population française représente moins de 1 % de la principale population européenne, la population espagnole (8.000 couples). Toutefois elle est actuellement la population la plus au nord, et représente le seul "lien" entre les populations espagnoles et italiennes. Sa dynamique de population semble plus élevée que celle des populations ibériques qui sont étudiées.

Causes de raréfaction et menaces

Les principales causes potentielles de raréfaction concernent :

- l'usage des pesticides sur les zones de reproduction (Europe et Afrique du Nord) et sur les zones d'hivernage (Afrique) ;
- la destruction ou modification des habitats favorables en zone de reproduction et transformation de l'agriculture ;
- la destruction ou la réhabilitation des sites de reproduction ;
- la concurrence avec d'autres espèces pour les sites de nidification (choucas). Cette thèse est controversée mais on a constaté, en Crau, que la colonisation d'une bergerie par le choucas avait provoqué l'abandon progressif des couples de crécerellettes nicheurs.

Problématique de conservation

Si la population relictuelle ne semble plus menacée, en revanche, la

Objectifs du programme d'action

Le programme vise à la restauration de populations viables ou d'un niveau comparable à celui des années 60, en Crau et hors Crau (70 à 150 couples).

Mise en œuvre

En Crau, la mise en œuvre de l'objectif nécessitera de poursuivre les actions engagées et d'obtenir à minima la conservation, à long terme, de l'ensemble de la zone de protection spéciales (ZPS), de poursuivre les acquisitions, de réhabiliter les zones périphérique où la déprise agricole apparaît.

Pour la protection du biotope constitué par la steppe de la Crau, plusieurs programmes environnementaux ont été développés avec l'Union européenne et les ministères de l'Environnement et de l'Agriculture. Le suivi de cette population est effectué depuis 1984 et, depuis 1994, des opérations de baguage sont menées en liaison avec l'Espagne. Depuis 1993, sont conduites des études sur la biologie d'alimentation du faucon crécerellette en Crau et sur les densités par milieu des principales proies.

Une zone de protection spéciales (ZPS) a été mise en place sur 11 500 ha de pelouses steppiques (originellement les steppes de Crau couvraient 60 000 ha).

250 ha de steppe (2 bergeries) ont été acquis par des associations et 300 ha supplémentaires le seront prochainement. Le crécerellette a niché plusieurs années sur un des sites acquis.

Parallèlement, la surveillance des sites de nidification, réalisée avec le FIR depuis 1986, a donné lieu à l'établissement de relations positives entre les associations et les propriétaires des sites. Environ 80 nichoirs ont été posés. Pour l'avenir, il est envisagé d'acquérir et de réhabiliter les secteurs arboricoles du centre Crau (environ un millier d'hectares), au fur et à mesure de leur disponibilité.

Des expérimentations pastorales doivent être développées, ainsi que des expérimentations de nichoirs et d'aménagement de nouveaux sites de nidification. Parallèlement est à réaliser une information-sensibilisation des propriétaires fonciers, éleveurs, bergers, chasseurs, et touristes.

Hors de Crau, la mise en œuvre de l'objectif nécessitera, après avoir mené des études de potentiel alimentaire, d'élaborer un programme de réhabilitation des steppes et des sites favorables à la reproduction, au nord de l'étang de Berre ainsi qu'entre l'étang de Berre et l'Espagne, sur les plaines alluviales caillouteuses de la Provence et du Languedoc-Roussillon. Une première démarche expérimentale sera utile, sur un domaine de surface suffisante ; si l'on n'obtient pas de recolonisation naturelle des sites, il conviendra d'étudier les conditions d'une éventuelle réintroduction.

Les différents partenaires actuels du programme sont le FIR, le CEEP, l'EPHE, le CRBPO, la station biologique de Doñana en Espagne, (programme LIFE pour la Crau).

Les moyens mobilisés proviennent du ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Union européenne et des moyens propres à chaque partenaire.

Goéland argenté (*Larus argentatus* Pontopp.) goéland d'Audouin (*Larus audouinii* Payraudeau) ; goéland leucophaée (*Larus cachinnans* Pallas) ; goéland cendré (*Larus canus* L.) ; goéland brun (*Larus fuscus* L.) ; goéland railleur (*Larus genet* Brème) ; goéland bourgmestre (*Larus hyperboreus* Gunnerus) ; goéland marin (*Larus marinus* L.) ; mouette mélanocéphale (*Larus melanocephalus* Temminck) ; mouette pygmée (*Larus minutus* Pallas) ; mouette rieuse (*Larus ridibundus* L.) ; mouette de Sabine (*Larus sabini* Sabine) ; mouette tridactyle (*Rissa tridactyla* L.) ; laridés, charadriiformes.

Présentation et situation des populations en France

La mouette mélanocéphale nichea pour la première fois en 1965 en Camargue, en 1990 171 couples y étaient recensés. Des cas de reproduction se sont multipliés par la suite sur tout le territoire, l'espèce installant le plus souvent ses nids (200 à 300 couples estimés actuellement) au sein de colonies de mouette rieuse.

L'effectif des colonies de mouette rieuse atteignait 35 000 couples au début des années 1980. Compte-tenu du considérable dynamisme de l'espèce, cet effectif dépasserait certainement les 50 000 couple nicheurs. Les populations françaises hivernent sur les côtes de la péninsule ibérique ainsi que du Maroc au Sénégal. Par rapport à la population européenne, celle de France représente de l'ordre du 1 %.

Jusqu'à la fin des années 1960, le goéland railleur n'était nicheur, en

Camargue, qu'à raison de quelques couples. A partir de 1972, la population nicheuse y passe de 3 couples à 25 en 1977, puis à 244 en 1990 ; toutefois, l'espèce n'a pas colonisé d'autres sites.

La petite population nicheuse du goéland d'Audouin est limitée à la Corse où les 90 couples présents se répartissent en trois colonies. Les effectifs y sont variables et freinés par la présence des florissantes colonies de goéland leucophaées. La France héberge moins de 1 % de cette population principalement concentrée en territoire espagnol (93 % des effectifs).

C'est en 1966 que le goéland cendré se reproduit pour la première fois en Haute-Savoie, alors que sa présence n'était noté jusqu'à cette période qu'en hiver en France. Depuis, les cas se sont multipliés conduisant à un effectif nicheur de l'ordre de 35 couple environ, disséminés dans les deux tiers septentrionaux du pays. La population française tient un rang très marginal au niveau européen.

La répartition actuelle du goéland brun en France est côtière et s'étend du Pas-de-Calais à la Gironde. Ne comptant qu'environ 200 couples nicheurs vers 1920, son expansion démographique devint exceptionnelle au début des années 1960. La population est estimée à 13 000 couples en 1977-1978, puis à 23 000 couples en 1987-1989. Forte de 23 000 couples en 1987-1989, la population française représente 11 % de l'effectif mondial de l'espèce.

Rare en Bretagne au début de ce siècle, la population nicheuse de goéland argenté qui appartient à la sous-espèce *argenteus* comptait environ 7 000 couples en 1975. A partir du début des années 1960, les effectifs croissent au rythme de 10 % chaque année pour atteindre le niveau de 90 000 en 1987-1989. L'espèce qui était restée côtière commence à s'implanter à l'intérieur des terres et depuis le début des années 1970, l'espèce installe ses colonies en milieu urbain sur les toits des immeubles notamment dans les

ville de Brest, Quimper, Morlaix, Rennes, Le Havre, Rouen. Les goélands argentés nicheurs en France représentent 22 % de l'effectif mondial.

Egalement, peu abondant au cours du premier quart de ce siècle et limité à la côte méditerranéenne continentale et à la Corse, le goéland leucophée voit ses effectifs s'accroître et, dès 1950, coloniser progressivement la côte atlantique (du Morbihan à la Gironde) et les vallées des grands fleuves (Rhône puis Rhin, Bassin de la Garonne, Loire, Seine récemment). Sa population estimée à 32 000 couples en 1989 et qui représentait 22 % de la population du bassin méditerranéen occidental situé à l'ouest de l'axe Italie-Tunisie, n'a pas fait l'objet de recensements récents.

Les colonies du goéland marin se situent sur le littoral de la Manche et de l'Atlantique, du Pays-de-Caux en Seine-Maritime jusqu'au bassin d'Arcachon en Gironde. Peu mentionné avant 1920, ce goéland connaît, à partir de la fin des années 1950 un fort accroissement de ses effectifs qui s'accompagne d'une expansion géographique. Comme le goéland argenté, il niche actuellement sur des édifices en ville (Cherbourg, Le Havre, Dieppe, Le Tréport, Saint-Malo, Brest, Douarnenez). Les effectifs nicheurs français, avec 2 200 couples en 1989, représentent un peu moins de 1 % de la population mondiale de l'espèce.

Problématique de conservation

La problématique de conservation pour la plupart de ces espèces doit être abordée en terme de contrôle des effets induits par certaines d'entre elles devenues gênantes et ceci tout spécialement pour les goélands.

L'occupation précoce de certains sites coloniaux par les goélands et la mouette rieuse ainsi que la prédation exercée par les goélands marin, brun, argenté et leucophée sur certaines espèces à reproduction plus tardive comme les sternes peuvent mettre localement en péril certaines colonies. Certains goélands argentés peuvent atteindre un stade de spécialisation telle dans la capture de jeunes océanites tempêtes qu'ils sont susceptibles de mettre en péril certaines colonies.

LES MOUETTES ET LES GOÉLANDS

On connaissait des colonies de mouettes tridactyles en France dès le XVII^e siècle, mais avec des effectifs restreints et des implantations coloniales fluctuantes. L'accroissement de la population débute véritablement au cours des années 1970. Le caractère pélagique de l'espèce conduit des oiseaux nés en France à hiverner jusqu'au sud du Groenland et au large des côtes américaines. En expansion, la population de mouette tridactyle subit une progression démographique de l'ordre de 10 % par an en France. La population de mouette tridactyle comprend en France 4 000 à 5 000 couples nicheurs et tient un rang marginal.

La mouette pygmée s'observe près de nos côtes aussi bien en période de migration qu'en hiver, période au cours de laquelle elle s'y montre fort peu abondante. La France n'est que très peu concernée par cette espèce.

Toutes les espèces, sauf le goéland brun, le goéland argenté et le goéland marin figurent aux annexes II ou III de la Convention de Berne (19/09/79). Le goéland d'Audouin est inscrit à l'annexe I de la Convention de Bonn (23/06/79).

L'arrêté national du 17/04/81 modifié fixe la liste des oiseaux protégés sur l'ensemble du territoire métropolitain. Toutes les espèces de mouettes et de goélands sont protégées, totalement ou partiellement, par cet arrêté.

En France, 3 espèces sont considérées comme vulnérable et une espèce rare.

Causes de raréfaction et menaces

Pour la plupart des espèces de laridés, il apparaît que leur expansion démographique a été largement favorisée par leur mise en statut d'espèces protégées.

Autrefois, les colonies de goélands argenté, leucophée, brun et marin, étaient soumises au ramassage traditionnel des œufs. Mais l'exceptionnel dynamisme démographique des laridés tient aussi au fait qu'ils ont su tirer le meilleur parti de nouvelles sources alimentaires abondantes avec, d'une part, l'augmentation des activités humaines de pêche engendrant le rejet en mer des déchets de poisson en quantité croissante et, d'autre part, l'augmentation considérable du volume des déchets ménagers mis en décharge qui leur a permis ainsi d'augmenter leur taux de succès à la reproduction et leur taux de survie hivernale.

Dans le cas des mouettes rieuses et secondairement de celui de la mouette mélanocéphale, l'augmentation du volume d'exploitation des granulats alluvionnaires, en multipliant les grands plan d'eau artificiels dans des régions qui étaient dépourvues de lacs et d'étangs, a créé les conditions idéales d'installation de nouvelles colonies et de dortoirs hivernaux. Ainsi, la mouette rieuse a pu devenir un hôte hivernal quasi omniprésent sur l'ensemble du territoire national ce qui était loin de lui être possible avant les années 1960.

LES MOUETTES ET LES GOÉLANDS

Le géolant leucophée est également capable de s'attaquer aux œufs et poussins du flamant rose ou aux familles de canetons par exemple.

Localement, les goélands argenté et leucophée, notamment, peuvent commettre des dégâts dans les élevages conchylicoles en brisant les coquilles de jeunes moules ou huîtres pour s'en nourrir.

Le goéland argenté a su se spécialiser dans l'éventrement des sacs poubelles en matière plastique déposés sur les trottoirs avant leur ramassage par les services de nettoyage pour y trouver toutes sortes de déchets alimentaires. La reproduction du goéland argenté et du goéland marin sur les édifices citadins pose problème : les troupes d'oiseaux concernés se montrent extrêmement bruyantes, responsables de l'obstruction des voies d'écoulement des eaux des toits et particulièrement actifs à rechercher leur nourriture dans les poubelles.

Objectifs du programme d'action

Le programme d'action pour les mouettes et les goélands vise à conserver leurs populations dans un état de conservation favorable tout en minimisant les effets induits par certaines espèces devenues gênantes sur d'autres espèces en mauvais état de conservation et sur les activités humaines, mais aussi en soutenant les espèces dont le statut est encore précaire.

Mise en œuvre

La mise en œuvre de ce programme passe par une bonne connaissance des populations, la mise en place simultanée d'actions visant à réduire les effets induits pour les espèces devenues gênantes et d'actions visant à soutenir les espèces dont le statut est précaire.

C'est ainsi qu'à rythme décennal, le groupement d'intérêt scientifique pour les oiseaux marins (GISOM) et ses associations partenaires effectuent les recensements des oiseaux marins nicheurs dont les laridés côtiers.

L'extension des recensement aux laridés non-côtiers (mouette mélanocéphale, mouette rieuse, goéland cendré et goéland leucophée) devrait également être mis en œuvre. Le prochain recensement aura lieu en 1997.

Le goéland d'Audouin, espèce mondialement menacée, fait l'objet d'un suivi annuel particulier de ses colonies de reproduction en Corse.

Alors que d'importants travaux de recherches avaient été conduits sur le goéland argenté en Bretagne et sur le goéland leucophée sur nos côtes méditerranéennes, ce sont les dynamiques des populations du goéland marin et de la mouette tridactyle en Bretagne et en Normandie, de la mouette rieuse en région Rhône-Alpes, de la mouette mélanocéphale dans la région Nord-Pas-de-Calais et du goéland leucophée en Languedoc qui sont actuellement en cours d'étude afin d'identifier et de quantifier la valeur des paramètres démographiques qui gouvernent les populations des laridés étudiés.

Lorsque les populations de goélands argenté et leucophée deviennent localement gênantes, des mesures visant à limiter les effectifs de ces goélands peuvent être admises. Il s'agit :

- de mesures d'effarouchement acoustique utilisées notamment dans le secteur mytilicole ;
- de la neutralisation des pontes (œufs trempés dans un bain d'huile) qui constitue un des moyens de limitation des naissances. L'inconvénient de cette méthode utilisée principalement sur les populations nichant en ville, est que, compte-tenu de la grande longévité des adultes, ses effets sur les effectifs ne se ressentent que dans la mesure où elle est appliquée durant de nombreuses années consécutives ;

- de l'éradication des nicheurs par empoisonnement. Cette méthode est utilisée lorsque les colonies de goélands occupent des sites sensibles comme par exemple des sites à colonies du goéland d'Audouin ou encore parce que des colonies s'installent à proximité de secteurs conchylicoles où les oiseaux se livrent à de graves déprédations. Les oiseaux morts sont collectés, comptabilisés et étudiés avant d'être détruits.

En faveur du goéland d'Audouin dont le statut est encore très précaire, des actions sont menées à l'encontre des autres laridés ainsi que de campagnes de dératisation sur les îlots colonisés par le rat noir.

Les partenaires associés autour de ce programmes sont le CNRS, la station biologique de la Tour-du-Valat, le Parc naturel régional de Corse, le Parc naturel d'Armorique, l'Université de Brest, de Lyon, de Montpellier, de Paris VI, l'EPHE, la SEPNE, le MNHN, l'ONC, les FDC.

Les moyens mobilisés proviennent de ces partenaires, de certaines collectivités concernées et du ministère de l'Environnement.

4.5 Greece

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Progress report on the implementation of Recommendation No. 48 of the Standing Committee on the Conservation of European Globally Threatened Birds

Referring to Recommendation No. 48 of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention and with regard to the Action Plans on European globally threatened birds, suggested by BirdLife International, a short presentation follows on action undertaken in Greece, for those species occurring in this country and listed in the Appendix of the Recommendation.

- Four out of the 23 bird species of the Appendix of Recommendation No. 48, DO NOT OCCUR in Greece, namely:

Marmaronetta angustirostris
Acrocephalus paludicola
Crex crex
Otis tarda

I. GENERAL PROVISION MEASURES

1. Hunting is prohibited for all the species.
2. Mid-winter counts, for all the water fowl (migrant) species, have been carried out since 1982, by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Hellenic Ornithological Society, the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature and the Greek Ringing Centre in cooperation with Wetlands International.
3. Legal conservation and management measures are under elaboration by the Ministry of the Environment-Physical Planning and Public Works, for all the Ramsar sites and some other key areas.
4. Contractual Agreements have been signed by the Ministries of the Environment, Agriculture and Local Authorities for the Organised Operation of the Information Centres and other infrastructures (property of the Ministry of the Environment) for promoting nature conservation awareness, information and education.

II. SPECIES ORIENTED PROJECTS

1. *Numenius tenuirostris* - Slender-billed curlew

A multinational/partner project (1996-1998) is being carried out, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Hellenic Ornithological Society, the Greek Biotope-Wetland Centre and FACE, in six areas, namely:

Evros delta, Porto Lagos lagoon, Axios delta, Amvrakikos Gulf, Kalamas delta and Ismaris lake. All these areas have been designated as Specially Protected Areas (SPAs/Bird Directive) and Ramsar sites and have been included in the national list of the proposed sites for the NATURA 2000 network.

The MAIN ACTIVITIES of the project are:

- Monitoring of the population study on the migration and emigration patterns.
- Technical proposal for conservation measures and preparation of the appropriate legal provisions, with target groups (hunters, farmers) and local services.
- Experimental satellite tracking, in one site only (Kerkini) on curlews, but not on the slender billed curlews.
- Information, education, public awareness.

2. ***Pelecanus crispus*** - Dalmatian pelican

It is the case for a long conservation effort in three sites in Greece, namely:

Kerkini lake (wintering site), Prespes lake (breeding site) and Amvrakikos Gulf (breeding site). All sites are SPAs, Ramsar sites and candidate NATURA 2000 sites.

Due to the legal conservation measures, the conservation actions, as well as to appropriate technical works, the wardening carried out by the Hellenic Ornithological Society and the Conservation Prespes Society, the information and awareness campaigns, a considerable increase of population is noticeable, i.e. from 20 to 40 pairs in Amvrakikos now and over 400 pairs in Prespes.

Ringling is carried out in Amvrakikos Gulf and Prespes lake and the population dynamics are examined and recorded in the frame of the International Project for Amvrakikos "Ecology of the Dalmatian Pelican and the White Pelican in the Palaearctic Region"; it is an ongoing long-term project since 1985.

Technical measures, with respect to electric power lines, have been planned for the Amvrakikos Gulf and photovoltaic arches have been installed, in order to cover the needs of fishermen.

For all the three key sites, studies for the frame of management schemes are being carried out under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment with the active participation (supervision) of the Ministry of Agriculture.

3. ***Phalacrocorax pigmeus*** - Pygmy cormorant and
Anser erythropus - Lesser white fronted goose

A project for these two species with positive side effect on the protection of *Branta ruficollis* (Red-breasted goose) is being carried out by the Hellenic Ornithological Society and WWF-Greece,

with the active support of the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture and with EU cofinancing, through the LIFE Regulation.

The project, covering a three-year period of time (1996-1999), is at the beginning and covers 10 key sites (SPAs, NATURA 2000 and Ramsar sites): Kalamas delta, Prespa lake, Petron lake, Kastoria lake, Axios delta, Kerkini lake, Nestos delta, Porto Lagos lagoon, Ismaris lake and Evros delta.

The main actions of the project are, mostly, covering the relevant BirdLife International Action Plans; surveillance, wardening with the participation of volunteers, public information awareness and education, plus some immediate technical conservation measures.

The elaboration of National Action Plans and of appropriate legal conservation measures, will be the expected outcome of the project.

Ringling on an experimental scale for pygmy cormorant only in Kerkini Lake is also provisioned within the project. In general, ringling is chosen very carefully so that no disturbance is induced.

4. *Oxyura leucocephala* - White-headed duck

The key site of this species is the Vistonis Lake (SPA, NATURA 2000 and Ramsar site) and 2,300 individuals have been recorded. No specific project is provisioned at present. However, conservation and management measures, in the context of action (mentioned previously in part I.3 of this report) are expected to have a positive reflection on this species.

The occurrence of this species is questionable in the Lesvos island.

5. *Aegypius monachus* - Cinereous vulture

The successful conservation action in Dadia forest area (Thrace, Northern Greece) resulted in the increase of the population of this species from 20 individuals in 1979 to 100 individuals in 1997.

The Dadia area has been designated as a Specially Protected Area (SPA/Bird Directive) and is a candidate site for inclusion in the NATURA 2000 network. It is also a protected forest area according to the national legislation.

Almost for all the measures listed in the relevant BirdLife Action Plan, satisfactorily positive action is being recorded in respect to:

- Implementation of recovery plan.
- Qualified staff in place.
- Completion of an integrated management plan for the raptors, the amphibians and reptiles, in the frame of an ACNAT funded project (1993-1996) carried out by the WWF-Greece, with the cooperation of the Ministry of the Environment and the local Forest Services.
- Forestry works in the area, compatible to the species conservation needs, whilst the strictly protected nesting sites have been defined.
- Operation of feeding places and monitoring of the population on a permanent base.

The entire legal protection will be provided by means of a Presidential Decree, whose elaboration is at a final stage.

Infrastructures for public awareness, information, education and ecotourism have been created

by the Ministry of the Environment and is in operation with the cooperation of the Dadia Community and WWF-Greece.

6. *Aquila heliaca* - Imperial eagle

The last pair of this species disappeared from the Dadia forest area some years ago. To our knowledge, one pair is nesting in the border area, between Greece and Albania. At present the Hellenic Ornithological Society is searching the distribution in the past, as well as for the aforementioned pair of birds. During the last ten years, unfortunately, eight wounded individuals (four of them shot) were found, and have been treated in the Hellenic Wildlife Hospital (operated by a Greek non-governmental organisation). Five of the wounded individuals came from Hungary and Slovakia, their rings being the appropriate proof.

The need for further public sensitisation is obvious and steps are being taken to this end.

7. *Falco naumanii* - Lesser kestrel

This species has a great range in Thessalia (Central Continental Greece) where the Hellenic Ornithological Society and an ornithologist (individually) have estimated the population at between 2,500 to 3,000 pairs.

However, the designation of protected area, as it has been proposed by the respective BirdLife Action Plan, seems not to be realistic, taking into consideration the occurrence of this species, on the roof of buildings, in residential areas. The Hellenic Ornithological Society has tested artificial nests in many cases.

8. *Larus audouinii* - Audouin's gull

Greece holds the largest population of *Larus audouinii* in the Eastern Mediterranean (at least 250 pairs), which is a largely distinct and isolated population from the Western Mediterranean one. It is dispersed in 13 colonies with strongholds in Dodecanese (10 colonies ca. 150 pairs) and Kithera (1 colony ca. 60 pairs). All colonies are tiny islets close to larger islands. These colonies are found within sites, candidates for inclusion in the NATURA 2000 network.

The species is threatened in Greece mainly during the breeding season by disturbance, depletion of fish stocks, competition with *Larus cachinas* and habitat degradation mainly because of grazing. Fishing activities and tourism are the two main factors from which most threats originate.

A three-year (1996-1999) special project, cofinanced by the Life Regulation and the Ministry of the Environment, is being carried out by the Hellenic Ornithological Society, covering all five aforementioned areas.

The project aims, in the short term, to tackle with the main limiting factors by wardening the colonies, translocating the goats, fencing off two colonies, providing artificial cover to reduce predation on the chicks and banning the open refuse dumping to prevent *Larus cachinas* expansion. At the beginning of the project breeding success, population size, quantification of the threats etc. will be determined, as reference points, also for future assessment of the project success.

The project aims, in the long term, at the conservation of *Larus audouinii* and the other important species in the five areas and the basic preparatory actions for the management of protected areas will be undertaken i.e. 1. Ecological description and mapping of species and habitats distribution,

2. Evaluation of threats and first statement of management objectives, 3. Collaboration with local groups and authorities and lobbying for the acceptance of the management perspectives, 4. Definition of zones, land uses and activities and 5. Preparation of the management plans and management policies for species and habitats. The preparation of the appropriate legal conservation and management measures for each protected area will be the outcome of the project.

Sustainable fishing and tourism practices will be supported by specific contracts during the execution of the project.

Public awareness campaign and environmental education will be materialised by the use of information material, the operation of two information centres, seminar for teachers, and international meeting on *Larus audouinii* and sustainable fishing and tourism.

In all cases, *Larus audouinii* will be the flagship species, presenting the conservation value of the insular, coastal and marine habitats and the importance of the small Aegean islands and the results of this project will help towards the formation of the action strategy for the species.

4.6 Hungary

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REPORT ON NATIONAL PROGRESS OF GLOBALLY THREATENED BIRDS

(Implementation of Recommendation No. 48 of the Standing Committee
of the Bern Convention)

Note: This report is restricted to those species which breed or occur as migratory or occasionally in Hungary

Waterbird Species

Slender-billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*): Eastern Hungary is a traditional staging place during migration of this species. All places (fishponds, soda lakes) are under protection, and the species is *strictly protected*.

Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*): Occasionally appears in Hungary mainly in fishponds. It is a *protected species*.

Pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*): Breeding population is 20-25 pairs, with increasing tendency. Conservation status: *strictly protected*, its breeding sites are under protection.

White-headed duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*): Extinct as a breeder, attempts have been made to re-introduce the species in the eighties. Rare, it has some records yearly. Conservation status: *strictly protected*.

Marbled teal (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*): It has only five accepted records. Conservation status: *protected*.

Red-breasted goose (*Branta ruficollis*): It regularly migrates through Hungary in spring and autumn with increasing numbers. Conservation status: *strictly protected*, staging sites are almost (90%) completely protected.

Lesser white-fronted goose (*Anser erythropus*): Its most important regular autumn and spring staging sites are located in the eastern part of Hungary. Number of migrating geese is decreasing. Both Red breasted and Lesser white-fronted geese are threatened by hunting, because it is difficult to distinguish them among flying geese. Conservation status: *strictly protected*.

Non-waterbird species

Imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*): Breeding population in Hungary is 45-46 pairs, increasing tendency, it starts to occupy its traditional lowland breeding habitats. The Imperial Eagle Conservation and Monitoring Project has been implemented and continued for 15 years. Conservation status: *strictly protected*.

Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*): It breeds in Hungary accidentally. Conservation status: *protected*.

Cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*): It has few records but it had not been observed 30 years ago. Conservation status: *strictly protected*.

Great bustard (*Otis tarda*): A strong population of 1200-1300 can be found in Hungary, conservation projects have been working for 22 years. Conservation status: *Strictly protected*.

Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*): A large population with 450 pairs breed in the Hortobagy National Park. Their number is increasing because of proper changes in the habitat. All breeding sites are under protection (in the Hortobagy National Park). Conservation status: *strictly protected*.

Corncrake (*Crex crex*): Declining because of loss of suitable habitat. A national survey is trying to discover its distribution and help the protection of this bird. Conservation status: *strictly protected*.

Several points of the "Globally threatened birds in Europe Action plans" should be reconsidered to plan more practical actions.

Budapest, 24 February 1997

4.7a Poland

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Information concerning implementation of the Action Plans for globally threatened species in Poland

In Poland only four globally threatened species breed: Great Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*, Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*, Corncrake *Crex crex* and Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*. Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* is a passage visitor.

All of the species indicated above are protected under the Nature Conservation Law. Great Spotted Eagle enjoys zone protection (breeding sites and other occupied sites). Many important breeding sites of these four species are protected in National Parks, Landscape Parks and Nature Reserves.

Great Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*

Listed in the Polish Red Data Book for Animals as an endangered species (G_owaci_ski 1992). According to the published data breeding population is estimated at 15-30 pairs (but without a detailed study). In 1980-84 eight pairs and four single birds were observed. According to the most recent data from KOO (Eagle Protection Committee) in 1996 10-13 pairs were found. The max. number of pairs is 15 (Mizera & Maciorowski 1996). In 1966, in 11 controlled sites, six pairs and one single bird were found (seven nests are known) (M.Rodziejewicz pers. comm.).

Ten sites (six with nests) are in Biebrza National Park and one (with known nest) is outside the Park. One of these nests is in a private forest.

Breeding success for three nests in 1996 is known. Breeding success for all 32 nests studied in recent years is 63%. Mortality causes were mainly natural, but some human activity (photography, birdwatching, forestry and shooting) also had some influence (Maciorowski et al. 1996).

Monitoring and nest searches in the Biebrza Marshes are continued by KOO; almost all information referring to the species has been recorded by KOO. In 1993 part of the forest with two Great Spotted Eagle nests was guarded by KOO (the area is well known to birdwatchers and others). This work has not continued because of organisational and financial problems.

A radio telemetry project undertaken by Dr. Meyburg and Dr. Mizera continues.

Great Spotted Eagle is listed in two IBAs.

(map *Aquila clanga*)

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

Not listed in the Polish Red Data Book for Animals as an endangered species (Głowaciński 1992). At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, and also after World War II, it was one of the common ducks on many ponds and lakes in Poland. According to Tucker et al. (1994) at the end of the 1980s the population size was 400-500 pairs.

M. Wieloch estimated the breeding population for 1993-96 was 250-300 pairs. Breeding and probable breeding sites, in number ca. 80, are spread across the whole country. Decline in this species is still observed but the reasons are unknown.

According to the Ferruginous Duck Action Plan Group studies are undertaken on numbers, distribution and habitat selection in part of the Milicz Fishponds (SW Poland, internationally important breeding site). These studies are to be conducted by OTOP (Polish Society for the Protection of Birds). Some support will come from the Ornithological Section of the Polish Zoological Society. On this same area in 1980, the breeding biology of

map *Aythya nyroca*

Ferruginous Ducks was studied by T. Stawarczyk (1995), who wishes to continue it in the near future. They used to breed in Poland on fishponds, lakes, ox-bow lakes and marshes, some of which have suffered change in recent decades. Because of economic changes in Poland, some ponds could be lost, as has happened elsewhere due to over-intensive exploitation or abandonment.

Ferruginous Duck is listed in 22 IBAs.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

Not listed in the Polish Red Data Book for Animals as an endangered species (Głowaciński 1992). According to Tucker et al. (1994) the population size is estimated as 6600-7800 pairs. Recent observations suggest that the number could be even higher. Its breeding range covers the whole country, but the greater concentrations are in eastern Poland. Most of the important breeding sites are situated in protected areas (National Parks: Biebrza, Narew, Białowieża, Kampinos, Polesie, Wolin; Landscape Parks; Nature Reserves). Some very good breeding sites (150 pairs), e.g. Tymienica Valley (SE Poland) are still not protected. The most important Corncrake breeding sites are indicated as Important Bird Areas (Gromadzki et al. 1994).

map *Crex crex*

Ca. 300 calling males were found in 1996 in Kampinos National Park. In 1997 work will continue on the census of males in first and second broods, then females with young, on 50 sq. km. of the Kampinos National Park. This project is conducted by Dr. Bogumi_a Olech from Institute of Ecology PAS.

In Kombinat Wizna (NE Poland) a radio telemetry project funded by the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, UK) was carried out to study the post-breeding failure dispersion of birds. It was found that the number of birds is declining as mowing progresses and many of them disperse to more favourable, extensive grasslands nearby. Future research and survey is planned in the Biebrza Marshes in 1997 (N. Schaeffer and Prof. A. Dyrz).

A national Corncrake survey based on randomly chosen plots is to be conducted by OTOP in 1997.

Corncrake is listed in 64 IBAs.

map *Acrocephalus paludicola*

Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*

Listed in the Polish Red Data Book for Animals as an endangered species (Głowaciński 1992). According to Tucker et al. (1994) the number of breeding pairs was estimated at 2500-7500. In 1993 and 1995 studies of numbers and habitat selection were undertaken in many breeding sites in Poland (coordinated by OTOP, [A. Dyrz, J. Krogulec, R. Czeraszkiewicz]). The number of singing males found was ca. 3000, but only part of Biebrza Marshes was censused. A national survey of numbers and habitat selection at the eight most important breeding sites will be undertaken by OTOP in 1997.

Aquatic Warbler breeding sites are distributed mainly in the northern and eastern parts of Poland, but some small sites are found also in the middle and southern parts.

Studies on reproductive ecology have been conducted for some years by Prof. A. Dyrz in the Biebrza Marshes, and will be continued in 1997.

The most important breeding sites of Aquatic Warbler are in protected areas (National Parks, Landscape Parks and Nature Reserves) and are indicated as Important Bird Areas (Gromadzki et al. 1994).

A common project - OTOP, LTO, IUCN-Poland, Che_m Nature Conservation Officer and Ekofundusz - to elaborate a management plan for the Che_m Carbonate Marshes was completed in the early 1990s.

Aquatic Warbler is listed in 16 IBAs.

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anas erythropus*

A nonbreeding species, very rare during spring and autumn migration. According to the Rarities Committee of the Polish Zoological Society it has been observed in the past 10 years only a few times in the western and northern parts of Poland in spring and autumn, as one or two birds in mixed flocks of other geese.

Thanks to a satellite study started by Norwegian and Finnish ornithologists we know that some birds from northern Scandinavia migrate to the south of Europe through the western part of our country. Cooperation with this study should be undertaken.

Some information about nature protection in Poland

NATURE PROTECTION IN POLAND

31.12.1996

KIND OF PROTECTION	NUMBER	% OF AREA IN POLAND
SPECIES PROTECTION		
NATIONAL PARKS	22	0,9
NATURE RESERVES	CA.1200	0,6
LANDSCAPE PARKS	105*	6,2
LANDSCAPE PROTECTED AREA		CA.22,0
SPECIES PROTECTION AND INDIVIDUAL PROTECTION: NATURE MONUMENT ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE ROUND DOCUMENTED ECOLOGICAL/PHYSIOGRAPHICAL SITES		<0,1

* 36 in plan

Eight areas are protected as Ramsar Sites (five more in preparation) totalling 99,400 ha.

In theory ca. 30% of Poland is protected, but more or less real protection is in National Parks and nature reserves, which cover 1,5% of area.

Progress in implementing of the recommendations of the action plans

Analysing recommended conservation actions for Poland (for Corncrake and Aquatic Warbler) (Globally threatened birds in Europe. Action plans by Heredia et al. 1996) I have satisfied myself that some works were done or are undertaken, but others are impossible to introduce because of economic problems.

Biebrza Landscape Park is now Biebrza National Park, the management plan for which is now completed.

Wolin National Park has been enlarged to include an important Aquatic Warbler breeding site.

A management plan for the proposed International Park "Lower Odra" is being prepared by the Polish and German sides, but the financial position is completely different between us.

Illegal and legal drainage in the upper basin of the Biebrza River will not now be done according to the Department of Nature Protection MEPNRF. A group of international experts is preparing a report about the influence of water management changes in the middle Biebrza basin.

The Dept. of Nature Protection does not see any possibility to implement controlled burning during the winter in habitats where vegetation succession has taken place, because it is illegal in Poland. I think that in future it will be necessary to do this in some areas.

In Che_m voivodship five new nature reserves have recently been established. 47% of this voivodship is protected in different ways, but it is impossible to protect all the marshes.

Some reserves are partly controlled by volunteer-wardens.

Constructing a new water supply system for the city of Che_m is a dream of different authorities, but is not possible in the near future.

The new ownership situation at Kombinat Wizna is unclear, but it is well understood how Corncrakes use the site and recommendations can be made.

Two years ago a seminar on traditional grassland management was organised by the Nature Conservancy Officer in Che_m. In 1996 a seminar "Agriculture and nature conservation in Central and Eastern European Countries" was held in Poland, where results of Aquatic Warbler census were presented and many actual practical problems were discussed.

New National Parks, Landscape Parks, Nature Reserves, Landscape Protected Areas have been established in Poland in recent years.

Some new sites have also been identified as Important Bird Areas.

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4.7b Poland

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27 February 1997

Responding to your request for information concerning implementation of the Action Plans for globally threatened birds, it should be indicated that in Poland occur only four globally threatened species:

Great Spotted Eagle
Ferruginous Duck
Corncrake and
Aquatic Warbler

All these species became the target species of some special research started by some NGOs or individual persons, in some cases in cooperation with BirdLife International. There was no, so far, special governmental programme to study or to preserve these species.

Great Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*)

This species is on the list of big raptors regularly monitored by the members of our Committee for Protection of Eagles. All presently known breeding pairs (c. 8) are under regular control.

Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*)

New attempts to organise the Polish census of this species have been undertaken by the Polish Ornithological Station in Gda_sk (Dr Maria Wieloch). So far the results are far from being complete, because the species appeared to be extremely secretive, very difficult to find and to prove its breeding status in an area. The project in this season will be supported by the Ornithological Section of the Polish Zoological Society.

The presently available data suggest a further dramatic decline in the population of this species, even in its strongholds. There are attempts to reveal the reasons for such a decline, but in spite of very detailed study of the breeding biology on Milicz fishponds (by Dr Tadeusz Stawarczyk) no clear indications were found.

Corncrake (*Crex crex*)

This species in Poland is still fairly numerous and widespread, chiefly in the eastern part. Therefore a whole-country census has appeared too costly in a sense that it would need involvement of too many of our people. Instead, the regional ornithological centres of western and central Poland started to accumulate quantitative data aimed at estimating the distribution and total abundance of the species in particular regions.

In eastern Poland, in its strongholds like those in Biebrza and Wizna Marshes the species is under intensive research and censuses conducted by Dr M. Schäffer (from Germany) with his Polish co-workers.

Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)

This species is constantly under intensive research of its reproductive ecology conducted for years by the small team of Prof. Andrzej Dyrz (Wrocaw University). Some publications have already appeared in foreign ornithological journals.

Recent attempts of repeating the censuses of this species gave some new results, but not complete so far. These were:

In 1993 - its census was performed in NW Poland by R. Czeraszewicz from the OTOP, which is a partner-organisation of BirdLife International.

In 1996 - the census was repeated in the southern half of the Biebrza Marshes, the Polish stronghold of the species, by Dr J. Krogulec, though the season was atypical (owing to very high water level),

In 1997 - the species will be censused in the northern part of Biebrza Marshes, to complete the result (also Dr J. Krogulec).

This is the main information.

I can add that a new project on Birds of Poland has been accepted for funding by the Polish Research Committee, which means that new field data will be accumulated and summarised within a period of three years.

4.8 Portugal

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12 March 1997

Action Plans for globally threatened birds

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

Monitoring and annual counts have been carried out since 1980 ensuring accurate data on number and population trends. Two surveys of Great Bustard frontier populations were carried out by ICN-Portugal and ADENEX-Spain in 1994-1995.

Habitat use and selection are being studied in the most important sites. Monitoring of the effects of habitat protection measures have been carried out.

The most important Great Bustard site in Portugal, Castro Verde, has been included in a Zonal Programme under EU Regulation 2078/92. It includes a land management programme with incentives to farmers in the way to preserve traditional land uses favourable to the Great Bustard. In this area the afforestation is conditioned. Grazing levels on pasture lands and the use of agrochemicals are regulated. The timing of agricultural practices has been adapted to the breeding cycle of the species. Life fundings have been used to initiate a pilot programme coordinated by Liga para a Protecção da Natureza.

Several educational actions have been carried out by NGOs for local people. Specific campaigns providing information on the biological characteristics of the Great Bustard and the importance of preservation of the species have been made for farmers associations.

Some of the main Great Bustard sites including Castro Verde, Campo Maior and Mourão/Barrancos, with areas of 79 252 has, 9 355 ha and 84 291 ha respectively, are now considered by the Portuguese Administration for designation as SPA under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/CEE).

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

The stronghold for this species in Portugal is at Mértola, a village well known for its historical buildings and extensive uses in agricultural areas nearby. This colony has been monitored for some years by ICN staff and local conservationists and it is now a prime target for conservation actions coordinated by Parque Natural do Vale do Guadiana.

Castro Verde is the second most important area for the species. Here, a Zonal Programme is in operation under European Union Regulation 2078/92. It includes a land management programme with payment of subsidies for agricultural extensification. Belver, the site of the most important colony at Castro Verde, has been purchased by an NGO, Liga para a Protecção da Natureza, with financial assistance from the European Union (Life funds).

In recent years, surveys of breeding areas and research on habitat requirements have been carried out in Mértola, Castro Verde and São Mamede. Artificial nests have been provided and the young have been ringed.

Castro Verde and Mértola sites, with areas of 79 252 ha and 73 876 ha respectively, are now considered by the Portuguese Administration for designation as SPA under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/CEE).

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*

The Cinereous Vulture was considered to have become extinct as a breeding species some years ago. However, it occurs regularly in the eastern part of the country near the Spanish frontier, from Reserva Natural da Malcata to south Mértola in Alentejo. The number of birds spotted during the breeding season has increased in recent years and new areas are used. Artificial nests were set up at Reserva Natural da Malcata and Contenda. In 1996 two breeding attempts occurred although not successfully. Other measures taken to promote the settlement of birds involved the setting up of artificial feeders.

In 1996, together with two NGOs (SPEA and CEAI) ICN submitted to Life funding a project for the reestablishment of the Cinereous Vulture's breeding population in Portugal. The approval of this candidature was conditioned by the fact that part of the management areas were not classified as SPA under EU Birds Directive 79/409/CEE.

The chief areas for the species recovery are now considered by the Portuguese Administration for designation as SPA under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/CEE).

Priôlo (Azores Bullfinch) *Pyrrhula murina*

The Priôlo is the rarest bird in Europe with a population between 80 and 150 couples. It is found only in the Laurisilva forest of the SPA Pico da Vara on S. Miguel Islands. With destruction and degradation of Laurisilva and human persecution, the population of the bird declined dramatically and was confined to a remote and mountainous area where Laurisilva relicts exist.

This remaining area has been destroyed by plantation of *Criptomera japonica* and by highly invasive species like *Pittosporum undulatum*, *Clethra arborea*, *Acacia melanoxylon* and *Hedychium gardnerianum*, reducing the food supply for this particular bird, completely dependent on Laurisilva forest.

The survival of Priôlo needs two urgent actions:

- the control of the invasive plants,
- reintroduction of Laurisilva forest.

The intervention has been made in an area of about 30 ha of mountainous land with the following actions:

- to collect seeds from *Prunus lusitanica* ssp. *azorica*, *Vaccinium cylindraceum*, *Rubus hochstetterorum*, *Ilex perado* ssp. *azorica*, *Juniperus brevifolia*, *Picconia azorica* and *Frangula azorica* (1994-95)

- removal of *Acacia melanoxylon*, *Clethra arborea*, *Pittosporum undulatum* nad *Hedychium gardnerarum*.
- construction of 3 km trails (1995-96)
- reintroduction in two main areas, zone A at 400-600 m altitude and zone B at 300-400 m. In the two zones were planted 5020 plants from seed origin and 6400 more plants collected in the wild. 10 kg of *Ilex perado* spp *azorica* were also sown (1995-96).

This work was partly supported by funds from Life Program, which finished in 1996, but a new proposal has already been submitted to the EU.

Along with this action it is proposed to increase the food supply throughout the year with the future expectation of a larger population of *Pyrrhula murina*.

Monitoring and behavioural studies have been carried out.

Maderia Laurel Pigeon *Columba trocaz*

Policy, legislation and habitat protection

The Madeira Natural Park is preparing a reassessment of their protected areas network, in terms of increasing the protection status of some key areas. This work was partly supported by funds from a Life Program, which will end in July 1997. A new proposal has already been submitted to the EU.

Since 1992 information has been compiled on the distribution, actual condition and composition of the Laurel Forest in Madeira Island. Very detailed information was obtained on these aspects and all important areas are carefully mapped and fully characterised. This information is available to the general public as a high-quality, fully illustrated book on the Laurel Forest of Madeira.

An expert group was set up in March 1997 in order to propose baseline legislation for access of tourists to forest key sites within Madeira Natural Park jurisdiction areas.

Species and habitat protection and public awareness

Contact with local farmers has been maintained, enabling a more accurate assessment of damage to crops. Efforts to change people's attitude towards the Madeira Laurel Pigeon have been carried out.

Several scaring devices and physical barriers have been tested in study plots holding different crops, in order to prevent damage to agricultural fields. These efforts contribute to promote the status of Laurel Pigeon with farmers.

Cost/efficiency studies were carried out in relation to scaring devices and solutions are currently being evaluated. Physical barriers include (coloured) nylon strands covering the fields and automatic inflating devices have also been used. Inflating devices were connected to a timer and so were randomly activated, to minimise habituation effects.

Several educational actions were carried out and many are programmed under Life Program funding.

Monitoring and research

Monitoring and systematic counts in the Laurel forest have been carried out, ensuring data on number and distribution.

Habitat use and habitat selection has been studied since 1995. Diet studies started in 1996 and are still ongoing. These studies are currently conducted in close association with Manchester University (UK) and La Laguna University (Canary Islands, Spain).

No studies on reproduction are currently carried out.

In 1996 a study on the effects of rats on breeding of Laurel Pigeon was started. Continuity of this study depends on funding from the Life Program.

FREIRA CONSERVATION PROJECT 1996 REPORT

The winter of 95/96 was extremely wet with almost continuous rain from November onwards. The first months of 1996 saw above average snow falls in the mountains, with snow lying on the ground for periods of up to six weeks, which is very rare in Madeira.

Such a severe winter augers well for the breeding colony of *Pterodroma madeira* as logically it should diminish the population of rats in the breeding grounds.

Probably also related to the severity of the winter and the lack of prey, we caught an above average number of cats. Up to the time of writing this report we have caught 10 cats in a very limited area, using only seven traps. Despite the large number caught we know from spores found in the area that there are still too many cats about.

The first *Pterodroma madeira* observed was on 28.03.96 by Duarte Camara, at sea, whilst making observations on *Puffinus puffinus*.

A limited number of night visits were made and the results were both disappointing and a little alarming. We were unlucky not to catch a bird in the nets as there were some near misses, but what was much more of a worry was the fact that the number of bird calls heard seems to have diminished over the years. The area above the 1987 ledge has not recovered since the 10 dead birds were found on the ledge, presumably killed by cats, in 1992. There are now hardly any calls in the vicinity. We have moved our observation post to above the main ledge, but even so the number of calls counted over 15 minute periods is on the decline. Calls are heard in the distance and we should search the area of Pico do Cedro, Pico do Cidrão and parts of Torres with care.

Visits to the ledges were not possible for lack of climbers in the early part of the season. This was not a cause of great concern as there were no rat takes in any of the boxes surrounding the area. When we eventually reached the Main ledge in August the results were horrendous. We found three chicks eaten by rats, one of which was only days old, a dead adult and an abandoned egg. This is unacceptable. It is interesting to note that when the ledge was revisited on the 12th October there were relatively few rat takes, which leads one to believe that only a few rats had done all the damage. Only at the end of August were rat takes recorded off the ledge, for the first time in months.

The second visit to the Main ledge and the other known breeding ledges was made possible by the help given to the project by the team from "Wildlife Management", a team of New Zealanders working on Deserta Grande with the Parque Natural da Madeira. On the 12th October we visited the

1987 ledge and the Main ledge and on the 14th October the Spanish ledge and the Small ledge. Sadly no other evidence of breeding was found, except for an abandoned egg on the Spanish ledge. This egg had been chewed by rats. This ledge is only slowly recovering from having had a sheep on it last year which managed to strip it of all vegetation.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Breeding

Attempted breeding was recorded only on the Spanish and Main ledge.

There appears to have been no successful breeding on the Spanish ledge, where the only evidence was an abandoned egg, predated by rats.

On the Main ledge we have firm evidence that seven pairs initiated breeding as we have an abandoned egg, three chicks eaten by rats and three chicks known to have hatched. Of the three chicks that hatched two were ringed and hopefully fledged and the third was not found on the final visit. It may have fledged, but the fact that an adult was found in the nest makes it doubtful.

2. Cats

The area where the birds breed seems to be infested with feral cats as do all the mountains of Madeira. This is a major problem and whilst we have been successful in our trapping of cats, they are quickly replaced by others from the surroundings. There would appear to be no easy solution to this problem and we must just continue trapping round the breeding area.

3. Rats and mice

Mice are abundant, but do not appear to cause major damage. The rats continue to cause problems. The fact that a rat appears to have got through our "cordon sanitaire" is cause for concern. Hindsight is always 20/20, but in the future we must make regular trips down to the ledges regardless of the rat takes in the boxes around the ledges. Alan Buckle from Zeneca in UK, who has been a tower of strength for the project, suggested moving all the boxes a metre or so and provided us with Klerat pellets to add to the boxes which already have Klerat wax blocks. All boxes are now baited with Klerat wax blocks and pellets.

4. Birds ringed and rings controlled

No birds were caught in the nets.

The following **New Rings** were applied:-

15.08.96 Nest 3 - PM0052 - Juvenile
12.10.96 Nest 16 - PM0053 - Adult
12.10.96 Nest 14 - PM0054 - Juvenile

The following ring was **Controlled**:-

15.08.96 Nest 8 - PM0049 - Adult ringed in same nest 01.10.95

SUGGESTIONS FOR 1997

1. Rat study

There is some interest shown by a student to come and study rat behaviour in the breeding area. This project should be given every encouragement and the Freira Conservation Project can provide data on rat takes over the last 10 years.

2. Baiting of boxes

Some of the boxes have reached the end of their useful life and should be replaced. At the same time the overall number of boxes should be increased with new boxes placed on the Spanish ledge, 1987 ledge and the Small ledge.

All boxes should have both wax blocks and pellets so as to offer alternative baits to the rats. The boxes around the ledges should continue to be visited by João de Gouveia at weekly intervals. The boxes on the ledges must be visited at more regular intervals (see under Climbers below) and certainly early in the season all poison should be replaced. It may be an idea to move the boxes just a little at monthly intervals.

3. Trapping cats

We have been very successful in trapping cats, but are fully aware that the surrounding countryside is still full of more cats. In order to keep numbers, within the breeding area, to a minimum, it is probably worthwhile increasing the number of traps.

4. Night visits

Every attempt should be made to increase the number of night visits, especially in May and June when there are most calls. Records of call numbers must continue to be made as this is a good method of comparison. A student volunteer may be used for this purpose, but netting and ringing of birds should only take place when selected members of the project are present.

5. Climbers

Getting on and off ledges is a complex matter with a degree of risk. The assistance of an experienced climber makes all the difference. The project should make every effort to employ a climber who can help not only on the ledges, but who can spend time searching for new nest sites.

We had problems with transport to the Bugio in 1996 and this was the first year in eleven that we did not manage to ring some of the juveniles. The problem of transport has now been overcome with the help of Dr Manuel Jose Biscoito of the Museu Municipal do Funchal and a new protocol has been signed with the Portuguese Air Force. This will be a great help and we have already had one flight to Bugio this year. The population would appear to be stable and with the transport available this year we hope to be able to carry out some of the plans we have laid in the past.

4.9 Romania

Edmund Ballon

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Tulcea, Romania

27 February 1997

The new hunting law, nr. 103/1996 includes a total hunting ban on shooting for the Red breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*), this species has been mentioned in appendix 2 among the species with a total hunting ban. The punishment for shooting an animal mentioned in appendix 2 is between 5,000,000 and 25,000,000 lei (\$1000-5000) with a compensation of 50,000 lei for each shot bird.

The same law shortens the annual shooting season in winter for geese by two weeks (the former permitted shooting season was between 15 August and 15 March, and the actual permitted shooting period is from 15 August to 28 February).

The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, the Romanian Ornithological Society and the NGO Pro Delta are carrying out a campaign in the Dobrogea region to raise the level of self awareness in matters of bird protection and prevention of the deliberate poisoning of birds.

Since 1995 we have been organising once monthly coordinated winter counts between Romania and Bulgaria, the action is continuing this winter too. The data gathered during the winter count period show that the Red breasted Geese leave the northern Dobrogea during the very cold period, usually in January, being found in great numbers in Bulgaria during this period.

Actions concerning the conservation of the Pygmy Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*) and the Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) in the Danube Delta were not carried out but very soon a section for ecological survey and monitoring will be founded, capable of dealing with this specific problem.

4.10 Russia

Globally threatened birds in European Russia.

International Projects: being implemented and proposed.

Prepared by Alexander Mischenko and Vladimir Galushin
SRI of Nature Conservation

Conservation of globally threatened birds species is one of the highest priorities of nature protection in Russia. Four special projects on the research and protection of globally threatened species in the guide-lines of Action Plans are being realized in European Russia: *Numenius tenuirostris*, *Aquila heliaca*, *Crex crex* and *Acrocephalus paludicola* (projects on the last two species were finished in 1996). Four new projects on *Aquila clanga*, *Falco naumanni*, *Circus macrourus* and *Anser erythropus* are planned to begin in 1997.

Unfortunately the Russian government has not signed the Bern Convention yet and governmental financial support of the above-mentioned activity is completely absent as well as the implementation of Action Plans at the state level. All projects are carried out by the non-governmental organisation Russian Bird Conservation Union (RBCU) with the support of international non-governmental conservation organisations. The project on the *Anser erythropus* will be done by the joint efforts of the Goose Study Group and Wetlands International.

Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris*

The project on the Slender-Billed Curlew was started in 1996 with the examination of Dr Victor Belik's hypothesis about the possibility of Slender-billed Curlew breeding in wet habitats among the steppe zone. The project was supported by Vogelbescherming Nederland (BirdLife partner). Large steppe areas between the rivers Volga and Ural within South Russia and North Kazakhstan were surveyed. During the first project year the Slender-billed Curlew was not found. In 1997 the searches are planned on the peatbogs and wetlands of South Siberia.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

The large-scale project on evaluation of Corncrake numbers in European Russia was implemented in 1995-1996 under the financial support of RSPB (BirdLife Partner). The main tasks of the project were:

1. To get the recent data on the species numbers and distribution in the whole vast area of European Russia.
2. To search the Corncrake IBAs - the most important places with high number and density of the breeding Corncrakes, and to assist in their protection on the local level.

Surveys were made in 18 regions of European Russia which comprise in total about 40 percent of the species range in this area. The results of counts on the random sampled plots in different habitats were extrapolated to the whole regions by the special methods. Results of the project enabled to get estimates of real species numbers throughout its breeding range in European Russia: it ranges from 1 to 1.5 millions calling males. Also nine Corncrake IBAs with the number up to 600 calling males on one area were found in six regions. Special conservation recommendations for each area are preparing. Considering above mentioned data Corncrake undoubtedly should be excluded from the list of Globally Threatened Species. It is also certain, that this species should be left in the list of threatened birds of Western and Central Europe. As there no serious human-caused limiting factors for Corncrake no

special actions are needed now for species conservation throughout the whole range in Russia. However, taking into account the fact, that major part of global species population is concentrated in Russia, and in many areas agriculture can switch to modern technologies already in the coming decade, special attention has to be paid to inventory and protection of Corncrake Important Bird Areas which form the "key frame" of species breeding range. Another important objective which follows from the results of this project is the study on the impact of different agricultural activities on Corncrake breeding success in these key areas, and definition of allowed limits in timing and methods of haying and grazing in these key sites to protect the areas from habitat degradation. Maintenance of Corncrake IBAs is the only warranty of the favourable conservation status of this species.

Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*

The project on the Aquatic Warbler was begun and finished in 1996. In that year the project was supported by Vogelbescherming Nederland (BirdLife partner), but we could not find a sponsor for the continuation and completion of this project. In 1996 were surveyed nine regions of European Russia. In these regions 40 potentially most suitable areas were carefully examined during the breeding season. Only in Kaliningrad Region four singing males were found. The additional surveys are very necessary for the evaluation of the species numbers for the whole range in European Russia, searches and protection of the main local populations.

Raptor species

The World list of threatened birds (Colar *et al.*, 1994) includes six raptor species of various categories from European Russia. They are: three Vulnerable species - Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*), Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*); and three Near-threatened species - White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*), Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*). Action Plans for three species are published (Heredia *et al.*, 1996): Cinereous Vultures, Imperial Eagle and Lesser Kestrel. An Action Plan for the Greater Spotted Eagle is under development. One more Action Plan, namely for the Pallid Harrier, has to be urgently developed. As for the last species, namely the White-tailed Eagle, its population state and trends are rather positive in Russia.

As for international or joint efforts to study and protect the above threatened raptors within European Russia the present position is:

- (1) one Action Plan - for the Imperial Eagle - is being implemented;
- (2) the Project of World Working Group on Birds of Prey for population survey and satellite telemetry of the Greater Spotted Eagle is proposed for implementation from 1997;
- (3) an international or joint project for implementation of the Lesser Kestrel Action Plan in Russia and neighbouring countries is extremely desirable due to rapid disappearance of this species here;
- (4) the Action Plan for study and protection of the Pallid Harrier has to be urgently developed because of 100% of its declining European population breeds within Russia and north-western Kazakhstan.

Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*

On the basis of International Action Plan for the Imperial Eagle (Heredia *et al.*, 1996) an International Programme Contract between BirdLife International and Vogelbescherming Nederland on the one hand and Russian Bird Conservation Union on the other was signed on 12 February 1996. Its aim was "To outline and update the breeding range and to assess the population of the Imperial Eagle within European Russia in order to work out appropriate measures for effective conservation of the species and its habitat". The Project is being implemented by surveys in summer seasons of 1996 and 1997. Survey

methodology: raptor distribution studies (Bibby *et al.*, 1992). Census techniques comprises a combination of automobile transects with stop-overs at places with potentially nesting habitats. During the 1996 survey 18 forest units were studied and 26-35 Imperial Eagle nesting areas were located. Application of these data on large-scale forest maps with consideration of previous publications and all available verbal information provided by local people have allowed preliminary assessment of the Eagle population upon the whole surveyed area of about 350,000 sq.km in seven regions between 150-200 breeding pairs with density of about two pairs per 1,000 sq.km. It looks higher than presumed 150-300 pairs for the whole European Russia (Tucker and Heath, 1994; Galushin, 1994, 1995; Heredia *et al.*, 1996). Within the surveyed area two Eagles' concentrations have been noted. One population of about 100 pairs inhabits over 40,000 sq.km of the Privolzhskaya Hills within the Penza, Uljanovsk and Saratov regions. One more population of about 50 pairs is concentrated along the middle Don river. Other pairs are dispersed in a steppe strip. General population trends of the Imperial Eagle in the Don river basin look promising: their local populations were found either relatively stable or slightly increasing. 1997 survey will comprise the eastern part of the Imperial Eagle breeding range in European Russia mostly east of the Volga river.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*

The Greater Spotted Eagle (GSE) is inadequately studied in European Russia. Its population decline is proved for majority of regions except probably the North-Western Region. A total population in European Russia is roughly estimated as 800-1000 breeding pairs. New dangers to the species are free cutting of forests and high cost of stuffed eagles. A joint international Project to study and protect the GSE is the first priority.

The most favourable nesting habitats of the GSE are wet or even bogged forests with opens like flooded meadows or swamps. However in the past those eagles inhabited more variable habitats including more dry watersheds. Under anthropogenic pressure and environmental changes Greater Spotted Eagles have been driven to wet forests and meadows round peat bogs. Data on numbers of the Greater Spotted Eagle in European Russia are incomplete because of its special survey was never performed upon vast areas. The above assessment, i.e. 800-1000 breeding pairs, looks underestimated because of difficulties in location of nesting territories of this highly shy species in inaccessible places. At the same time nothing is known of comparative population distribution and numbers within a zone of overlapping of two close species namely the Greater and Lesser Spotted Eagles. Even the precise eastern line of the breeding range of the Lesser Spotted Eagle within Russia and Ukraine is still unknown. We believe these two Spotted Eagles are to be studied comparatively at least within an overlapping of their ranges.

The GSE is included into some regional Red Data Books and into the list of the second edition of Red Data Book of Russia. Shortage of precise data on population status and trends as well as on ecology of the GSE hampers its efficient conservation. At the same time free cutting of forests and increasing cost of stuffed raptors including any eagles on the black market are a real danger for the species. To prevent further decline of the Greater Spotted Eagle population in Russia and neighbouring countries joint Projects with international organisations like WWGBP, BirdLife International, WWF, Council of Europe are desirable.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

The European Lesser Kestrel population is between 15-20 thousand pairs (Biber, 1996) of which about 100 pairs only left in Russia (Galushin, 1994). Populations in Russia and Ukraine are under heavy decline for the last 20-30 years. Better situation is in neighbouring Kazakhstan and Caucasus countries. A purposeful survey of the species was never conducted in this large region. Particular causes of continues population decline are unknown. To save the rest of dispersed Lesser Kestrel population here an international or joint project under existing Action Plan has to be urgently initiated for immediate

implementation in Russia and some neighbouring countries. Ornithologists in Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and other countries are prepared to cooperate with any international or national organizations in drafting of appropriate project proposals. The species is also included into the BirdLife International list of project priorities for Russian Bird Conservation Union.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

The breeding range of the species in Europe lies entirely within Russia and north-western Kazakhstan. Its population in Russia could be roughly assessed as one to two thousand pairs while in the European part of Kazakhstan west of the Ural river there are probably two to three thousand pairs (Galushin, 1994). Population is quite dispersed and still declining. To survey and protect its only European population the Pallid Harrier Action Plan has to be developed as the very first stage. Russian ornithologists are ready to participate in development of both Action Plan and Project as well as in their implementation.

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*

Project on the researches and protection of Lesser White-fronted Goose will begin in 1997 as the joint project of Goose Study Group of Eastern Europe and North Asia (attached to Menzbir Ornithological Society) and Wetland International. Not only Russian ornithologists but specialists from Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan are also involved in this activity. The main tasks of this project are monitoring of populations of this rare goose and establishing the net of protection areas in the most important areas of breeding, migration and wintering.

4.11 Slovakia

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26 February 1997

Action plans for globally threatened birds

Following guidelines for European action plans, **four bird species** have been identified that need to have such a plan:

Otis tarda
Aquila heliaca
Crex crex
Aythya nyroca

Currently there are no action plans finished, one action plan is under elaboration and three have not been started.

I hope this brief information is enough for you. If more data are necessary, be so kind as to contact us.

Otis tarda

Present status is 30-40 individuals

The populations remains are located at Danube lowlands in southwestern part of the country.

At least 2 sites are known, 1 site south of Bratislava, at the border with Hungary and Austria - a proposed protected area and another site at Danube lowlands.

1995 - 1 breeding was proved/ 2 chicks fledged

1996 - 2 breedings were proved/ 5 chicks fledged

Main threats:

- habitat loss, land-use change and consequently food-shortage
- predation (foxes)

Mistakes from the past: long-term habitat loss due to intensive agricultural production, in designed nature reserve for special protection of Great Bustard majority of the population had been lost due to high mortality of birds on high voltage power lines (lead directly through the reserve). EIA was avoided in case of building of highway crossing the territory of one of the last remains of the population at Rusovce (occurrence of Great Bustard was not taken into consideration in process of planning the site for the highway). Long-term efforts for artificial breeding of Great Bustards at Zlatná na Ostrove had no success.

Action taken:

Coordinator of the Great Bustard project in Slovakia is Jozef Chavko (employee of SA_P in Bratislava)

- monitoring of the population - in spring and autumn in 1995, 1996 (project done by SOVS and SA_P-Environmental Protection Agency), supported by Regional Environmental Center, Schweizer Vogelschutz and National Bank of Slovakia).

- site protection (one natural reserve without any special management suitable for Great Bustard and one

suggested protected site and IBA with a good management scheme)

- legal protection of the species
- habitat management - done at the site south of Rusovce in frame of the project mentioned above, involving the local agricultural cooperatives
- public awareness - poster and leaflet prepared by SOVS, presentations in the media
- research/implementation of knowledge in frame of the international BirdLife working group for Great Bustard, studying the breeding success of the remaining population
- policies - at site close to Rusovce:
 - reduction of disturbance in breeding season
 - winter food supply
 - wardening of nests from the tower constructed for this purpose
 - need of paying subsidies to farmers for loss of production due to special protection measures.

Urgent action:

- site protection of "Dropie" at Rusovce
- necessity of special management of areas, where the birds still breed including financial funds for this management
- provide manpower and funds for continual monitoring of the whole Slovakian population.

Aquila heliaca

In monitoring of Imperial Eagle in Slovakia good results were achieved by the Expert Group for the Protection of Raptors and Owls led by Štefan Danko for almost 20 years, from 1996 the group has been led by Jozef Chavko, and the same expert group was organised also in the frame of SA_P.

The population in Slovakia is stable, 30-35 pairs. Some nests were wardened, the population is continually monitored, including the breeding success, which is good.

Main threats:

- habitat loss (reduction of old, mature forests, and pastures)
- land-use change - reduction of available food (European souslik, dependent on pasture-land)
- threat caused by electrocution at power lines 22 kW
- possible threat of poisoning by misuse of rodenticides
- disturbance - at nests in open agricultural land

Action taken:

- monitoring
- site protection
- legal protection of the species
- avoiding disturbance at nests in open country (SA_P and volunteers)
- habitat management (repairing of nests, consultation of seasonal forest work with forestry authorities)

Urgent action:

- site protection (some key breeding sites are not protected - eg Slanské vrchy mts.)
- prevent loss of birds by electrocution on power lines
- public awareness - find solutions for appropriate management of agricultural and forested areas used by Imperial Eagles as breeding and feeding habitat

Crex crex

The estimate for Slovakia was 600 breeding pairs, but the survey in 1996 showed that the numbers would be twice as high as the old estimate.

Coordinator of the public campaign and the survey prepared and done by the SOVS and SA_P is Miroslav Demko.

Main threats:

- habitat loss
- land-use change (destruction of wet meadows in middle and higher altitudes - 300-900 m elevation)
- disturbance and mortality caused by agricultural mechanisms
- predation
- poisoning by use of chemicals in agriculture

Action taken:

- survey - in 1996, prepared for 1997
- legal protection
- public awareness - poster and information leaflet prepared by SOVS
- initiation of ways of implementing proper management schemes (mowing by hand, mowing from the middle of the meadow)
- special management of one selected key site at Orava/Kysuce region prepared for summer 1997

Urgent action:

- continue monitoring
- identify key sites
- site protection (proposed IBAs)
- special management of the key sites
- continue research/implementation of the knowledge from international expert group of BirdLife

Aythya nyroca

The Ferruginous Duck was recently found a globally threatened species due to critical decline in numbers worldwide. Also in Slovakia the trend is the same, as in the rest of its range. Present status of the species in Slovakia is little known. The estimate of breeding pairs is 20-40 and their distribution is limited to fishponds, and remains of natural habitats, as oxbows and marshes.

Main threats:

- habitat loss - changes in Danube watershed, destruction and degradation of natural habitats
- hydrological changes (rapid decline of groundwater levels in east Slovakian lowlands due to reduction of marshes, and due to loss of water - keeping capacity of forests in upper parts of the watersheds)
- intensive management of fishponds
- hunting disturbance

Action taken:

- legal protection of the species
- national survey initiated by SOVS
- research of habitat demands of the species on fishponds (coordinated method by BirdLife International) in 1997 in 7 countries, including Slovakia

Urgent action:

- continue monitoring
- research on fishponds
- ensure appropriate management on fishponds
- ecological restoration projects on degraded habitats
- public awareness
- prevent hunting disturbance

4.12 Spain

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March 1997

Dark-tailed Laurel Pigeon *Columba bolli* and White-tailed Pigeon *Columba junoniae*

Both species have benefited from a LIFE project which started in 1994 and was renewed in 1996. It includes surveys and monitoring habitat protection, habitat restoration, wardening and predator control.

Blue Chaffinch *Fringilla teydea*

The subspecies from Gran Canaria (*polatzeki*) has also received funding from the EU in 1994. The main objectives of the project are habitat management and captive breeding. A captive breeding centre exists in Gran Canaria. The subspecies from Tenerife (*teydea*) is not threatened.

Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata*

The subspecies *fuerteventurae* from Fuerteventura and Lanzarote, in the Canary islands, is regularly monitored and remains stable. Breeding has recently been confirmed in La Graciosa island, near Lanzarote. In 1996 birds bred in captivity for the first time at the breeding facilities in La Oliva (Fuerteventura).

Spanish Imperial Eagle *Aquila adalberti*

The Spanish Imperial Eagle is the subject of a continuous conservation effort, with the support of the EU through a LIFE grant. During the period 1974-1994 the population has tripled at a growth rate of five occupied territories per year, reaching 148 pairs in 1994. Mortality due to electrocution continues to be the most frequent cause of death, although poisoning has increased notably in recent years. Thirty three per cent of the territories are included in protected areas (L.M. González (1996) Tendencias poblacionales y estatus del Aguila Imperial ibérica en España durante los últimos veinte años. *Biología y Conservación de las Rapaces Mediterráneas*. Monografías n° 4, SEO, Madrid). Two captive breeding facilities exist, but captive breeding has not been achieved yet.

Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris*

This species is extremely rare in Spain. There are a number of recent records from the Doñana area which have not been accepted by the Rarities Committee. Spain has signed a Memorandum of Understanding and an Action Plan for this species under the Bonn Convention.

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*

The population continues to recover and some new breeding localities have been found in 1996.

Captive breeding has been very successfully achieved in Doñana National Park and a number of released birds have been found breeding in the wild in recent years. The main threat for this species continues to be the expansion of the Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*. During the winter of 1996-1997 ruddy ducks have been recorded in several Spanish wetlands, sometimes as many as 11 birds together. The policy in Spain is to eradicate this non-native bird as the only way to prevent hybridisation with the White-headed Duck; the eradication campaigns are carried out by the regions with the collaboration of staff from Doñana National Park. Urgent cooperation from the countries of origin of ruddy ducks in Europe is required to prevent the expansion of this exotic species.

Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

In 1996 there were 41-51 pairs in Spain, mainly in Valencia and Andalucía. The species is in a very delicate state. The highlight last year was the ban on hunting at the Hondo wetlands, a key site for Marbled Teal, after an international campaign. A LIFE proposal was put forward for all the Spanish population in 1996, but it was only approved for the region of Valencia. The main components of this project are habitat use, habitat restoration, population survey, actions in the Marjal del Moro marshes, compensation to fish-farms, and environmental education.

Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus*

The Black (Cinereous) Vulture has shown a spectacular recovery in Spain, going from 200 pairs in 1973 to 1027 pairs in 1996. The population seems to be stable now, although the threat of poisoning is now increasing. As many as five birds were found poisoned in a single state near Madrid in 1996. This problem needs to be very carefully addressed and prevented. Conservation projects for the Black Vulture are going on in Baleares, Castilla-León, Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura and Andalucía. Injured birds have been successfully rehabilitated and reintroduced into the wild by GREFA, an NGO which specialises in rehabilitation.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

A survey has been carried out in Andalucía showing some population recovery. The team of scientists at the Doñana Biological Station has been doing thorough research on this species, which is now one of the best known birds of prey in Europe. An international LIFE project for Lesser Kestrel, Great Bustard and Little Bustard was approved in 1996, including actions in Extremadura (Spain), France and Italy. Agricultural intensification continues to be the main threat.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

Population size has been recently reviewed in Spain and the estimate now is 17,000-19,000 birds (J.C. Alonso & J. Alonso (1996) The Great Bustard in Spain: present status, recent trends and an evaluation of earlier censuses *Biological Conservation* 77: 79-86). Since 1980, when the Great Bustard was legally protected, numbers have probably remained stable in most areas, while the smallest marginal groups have tended to disappear. The species has benefited from agri-environmental measures in the framework of the EU Common Agriculture Policy. A LIFE project has been recently granted to Castilla-León for Great Bustard in Villafafila.

Audouin's Gull *Larus audouini*

This species has also seen a spectacular population increase. The number of breeding pairs in 1995 was 14,657 (excluding Menorca), with 10,325 pairs at the Ebro Delta and 2,124 at the Charafinas islands. The rest are spread among the Balears islands, Columbretes islands, Isla Grosa (Murcia) and Alborán island. A very thorough research project has been carried out during the period 1993-1996, funded by ICONA, including such aspects as feeding ecology, breeding ecology, population dynamics and interactions with other species (X. Ruiz *et al.* (1996) *Ecología y dinámica de población de la Gaviota de Audouin*. Universidad de Barcelona). As a result of this project 18 scientific papers have been published or are now *in press*.

4.13 Sweden

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21 April 1997

Action Plans for globally threatened birds

Following the conclusions in Recommendation No. 48 of the Bern Convention, the Secretariat has requested information on the progress of action plans for preserving European globally threatened birds. The Swedish species concerned are *Anser erythropus* and *Crex crex*. The Swedish EPA is supporting international projects on both species;

Anser erythropus

The lesser white-fronted goose, *Anser erythropus*, is subject to a national action plan including reintroduction of goslings using barnacle geese, *Branta leucopsis*, as foster parents.

The Project has been successful and new breedings have been registered the last few years. The breeding population in the country is probably less than 10 pairs, but the number of nonbreeding birds including young of the year, migrating from the country in 1996, were estimated at about 50 birds.

The project is administered by the Swedish Sportsmens' Association and is supported by funds from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and WWF Sweden. The future of the project is presently uncertain, but it has been recommended by the Wetlands International Working Group on Lesser white-fronted geese, that it be continued.

Crex crex

The corncrake, *Crex crex*, is not subject to any national action plan. The species was subject to a national survey arranged by the Swedish Ornithological Society in 1994, which resulted in estimates of 400 calling males. Of these approximately 250 were found on the large islands Öland and Gotland in the Baltic sea. Presently one research project; with its main focus on reproductive behaviour is running on Öland.

4.14 Switzerland

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12 April 1997

Switzerland is concerned by the conservation of the following bird species which are endangered worldwide

Corncrake *Crex crex*

At the beginning of the century the Corncrake was still one of the bird species frequently breeding in Switzerland. A new publication about the distribution of the Corncrake shows that the last proof of breeding was in 1978 and that only one to 15 singing males were still observed each year (Orn. Beob. **93**: 169-175, 1996).

Based on the European Action Plan, in 1995 the Swiss Association for the Protection of Birds SVS - BirdLife Switzerland collected the elements which are needed for a Swiss Action Plan in favour of the Corncrake. The federal authorities concerned requested that no definitive plan of conservation be made, but 1996 was the pilot phase for this issue. The programme of conservation has been drawn up by SVS together with the Swiss Institute of Ornithology and with the support of the Federal Office for the Environment, Forests and Countryside (BUWAL/OFEFP).

The conservation project concerns the areas described hereafter. For 1996, the following results were obtained (conforming to the recommendations of the European Action Plan published by the Council of Europe):

1. Basic studies: The available data about the distribution of the Corncrake in Switzerland were completed. Field ornithologists were asked to report their observations of singing males within 24 hours. The most important areas were controlled by SVS staff (Recommendation 3.1.2).

An additional proof of breeding could be established in Lower Engadine (1984/85). In 1996, seven to nine singing males were seen in sites suitable for breeding. In one of the protected sites, breeding was confirmed in 1996 (the first one since 1978 and 1984/85).

2. Information: The information which was transmitted to the cantons and the federal authorities (for nature protection, hunting and agriculture) was decisive in involving them, as well as the farmers, in the practical application of the project. A coloured leaflet, several practical guides and two circular letters provide information about this project and the requirements of the conservation of the Corncrake. The general public was informed by a press release which raised a widespread interest in the media, in particular in the agricultural media (Recommendation 2.3/4.1.2).

3. Co-ordination: Based on the information, the cantonal authorities concerned by the pilot areas and all the areas showing the presence of singing males were immediately contacted and asked to take concrete measures of conservation. The important co-ordination of this work was successful, in particular in the cantons of Vaud and Grisons where the authorities reacted very quickly.

The project of conservation in Switzerland was also co-ordinated with the efforts in other countries. It is

worth noting the strong relations which were established with Norbert Schäffer, the organiser of BirdLife, and with the Italian and French BirdLife partners.

4. Concrete measures of conservation: In one area in the Jura mountains (canton of Vaud) in which the Corncrake is seen each year, the communal authorities and the farmers were informed by the Service de la Faune before the breeding season and prepared for the application of measures of conservation. Two singing males were observed and two areas were put under protection for them (mowing after the 1st of September). In Lower Engadine (canton of Grisons), in two areas the harvest was delayed to the 1st of August because of the presence of two to three singing males. On one of those the first breeding for many years was observed. At these Corncrake nesting sites, a total of 13 hectares was harvested later than usual (Recommendation 2.1.2).

Two Corncrakes were observed in a nature reserve which is mown after the 1st of September. In other reserves with favourable conditions for this species, the attempt was made to attract migratory Corncrakes during the night with sound recordings. Except in the Jura areas where these birds are usually present, so far this method has not induced Corncrake to settle.

5. Agricultural policy: For several years the agricultural policy of Switzerland has undergone profound modifications and is now more directed towards extension. Within a new forum which implies the nature conservation organisations, among them SVS, the authorities and the agricultural organisations, direct ecological payments are provided to satisfy the requirements of endangered species such as the Corncrake (Recommendation 1.2.3).

The programmes which are specific to each area and to promote the different species are specially examined. Within the Corncrake conservation project, the farmers who mowed their meadows later received supplementary direct payments in the cantons of Vaud and Grisons.

6. Further action: SVS - BirdLife Switzerland will go on with the project in 1997-98 within a larger operation. This campaign calls for the conservation of extensively cultivated meadows. There will also be a campaign for the elaboration of an Action Plan (Recommendation 1.2.1).

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*

In Switzerland the White-headed Duck is not a regular visitor. The last one was observed in December 1993.

To ensure the preservation of the European population of the White-headed Duck, the European population of the Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*, which was introduced in Europe, should be reduced or even suppressed.

In 1994, two observations of the Ruddy Duck were effected; in 1995, none and in 1996, at least two, 1997 until now one.

According to the federal hunting law, the Ruddy Duck can be hunted. But some cantons allow the hunting of only a few ducks. The Ruddy Duck is therefore under protection in part of Switzerland. Until now we have no data on the hunting of the Ruddy Duck in Switzerland.

In October 1996, SVS - BirdLife Switzerland organised a meeting between the main Swiss organisations of nature conservation and the concerned federal authorities. The decision of principle was reached by the participants to ask the cantonal hunting authorities to suppress the Ruddy Ducks in Switzerland. This request will be linked to the condition that the countries which introduced this species in Europe

and where it breeds presently in large numbers, particularly Great Britain, take measures towards its elimination. SVS - BirdLife Switzerland was asked to elaborate concrete recommendations which will be once more discussed by the organisations.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

No European Action Plan has been published until now for this species which is endangered worldwide.

The Ferruginous Duck was observed to breed in Switzerland for the first time in 1991 and 1992 (one couple in a small marsh near Frauenfeld TG). This bird is a regular winter visitor and its population is small (total 15-30 individuals in winter).

On the national level, hunting of the Ferruginous Duck is opened from the 1st of September to the 31st of January. Some cantons allow the hunting of some species of ducks only. Therefore the Ferruginous Duck is under protection in part of Switzerland.

Presently, by the revision of the Federal Ordinance on Hunting, the federal authority has made the proposal to the Swiss Federal Government to protect this species on the national level. The revision of the Ordinance will be completed in 1997.

4.15 Turkey

In the last fifteen years, Turkey has made important progress in nature conservation.

New policies and strategies have been developed for the protection of species and their habitats. Important legal adjustments have been realised and the institutional framework strengthened. The most important legal adjustments were the Law for National Parks, the Law for Environment, the Regulation for the Control of Water Pollution, the Regulation for Environmental Impact Assessment and the Regulation for the Protection of Air Quality.

The hunting of endangered, rare or threatened species was banned, and their habitats were protected on a large scale.

International cooperation was developed and Turkey became a Contracting Party to the conventions of Bern, Barcelona, Ramsar, CITES and Biological Diversity.

The establishment of the Ministry of Environment has strengthened the coordination and cooperation between the related governmental organisations and also provided a great contribution for the development of NGOs as well as for the arousement of public awareness.

In early 1997, a Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity in Turkey was completed. This strategy and action plan was prepared with the combined efforts of experts, scientists and NGOs.

For the implementation of this action plan, four sites with different ecological characteristics were chosen. Two of these sites are important bird areas. With the help of this action plan, which is supported by the World Bank, pilot management plans will be developed for similar sites. This study will be carried on with the participation of the Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the NGOs through the coordination of the Ministry of Environment.

Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*)

The ratio of the protected areas for this species is approximately 72% of its total habitats.

The hunting of the species was banned in 1974 over all the country.

A Master Plan was prepared by the General Directorate for National Parks, Hunting and Wildlife of the Ministry of Forestry for the Menderes Delta (an important breeding area) and for Lake Ku_.

A similar study for the Gediz Delta will start in June 1997.

The factors which are threatening the species are:

- the deterioration of the water cycles and water quality of the wetlands,
- destruction of the reed beds, and
- disturbance at the breeding sites (fishing, bird watching, etc).

At Lake Ku_ (Manyas) a study has been started to determine the levels of pollution.

Almost all of the industrial settlements at the site have waste treatment facilities.

White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*)

The ratio of the protected areas for this species is approximately 80% of its total habitats.

Hunting was banned in 1984 all over the country.

At Lake Burdur, which is an important wintering area for the species, with the combined efforts of the Burdur Municipality, the Fund for Game and Wildlife Protection and the General Directorate for National Parks, Hunting and Wildlife, the pressure of illegal hunting was decreased on a great scale.

Preparation of a Management Plan for Lake Burdur, takes place in the investment programme of 1997. Studies will be started in June.

For the Organised Industrial Settlements (OIS) near Lake Burdur, permission was given under the following conditions:

- Afforestation shall be realised around the OIS,
- Waste water shall be released after being highly treated, and
- Permission shall not be given to establishments which may cause over-pollution.

Pygmy Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*)

The ratio of protected areas for this species is approximately 60% of its total habitats.

Hunting was banned in 1975 throughout the country.

Efforts have begun to declare the Gediz Delta and Lake Uluabat as Ramsar Sites which are both important breeding and wintering areas of the species.

The threats are: the deterioration of the water quality and the water cycles of the wetlands, habitat destruction, fishing nets and disturbance.

The actions to be taken are: creation of convenient habitats for building nests at known and potential sites, research and monitoring, rehabilitation of degraded wetlands.

Marbled Teal (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*)

The ratio of the protected areas for this species is approximately 80% of its total habitats.

Hunting was banned in 1984 all over the country.

The most important factor of threat is the loss and destruction of the wetlands. Special efforts are required to protect these sites.

A planning study was completed in 1996 which covers the whole Seyhan and Ceyhan Deltas which are the important breeding areas of the species.

Through the application of this plan, the wetland ecosystem and the ecological characteristics of the related habitats of this ecosystem will be protected.

Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*)

Hunting was banned over all the country in 1977.

In 1993, the Alt_anta_ Plain of Kütahya Province, which is an important feeding and breeding area for Great Bustard, was declared a "Wildlife Protection Area" by the General Directorate of National Parks, Hunting and Wildlife of the Ministry of Forestry. An efficient protection is provided at the area, with the contributions of the Hunters and Shooters Association of Kütahya.

The actions required are: protection of the breeding areas such as the steppes around Lake Sodal_ and the Aliken Plateau, education of the local people and monitoring the success of reproduction.

Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*)

Hunting was banned throughout the country in 1975.

The main factors which are threatening the species are: the loss of habitats, the lack of food and human disturbance. Especially, destruction of forests for afforestation with exotic species and wood cutting in the breeding season are causing habitat losses and disturbance for the breeding pairs.

The mass wood cutting application has been abandoned since 1996.

Actions required are: a wide research for the species, protection of the aged trees of the breeding areas, and forestry applications to be realised beyond the breeding season.

Imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*)

Hunting was banned in 1987.

A nation wide survey must be done in order to determine its range in the country, the existing and potential breeding areas must be regularly monitored and evaluated.

Educational activities must be realised against illegal hunting and trading and controls must be done more frequently.

Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*)

It is estimated that 30-50 pairs of Audouin's Gull exist on the Mediterranean coasts of Turkey. A detailed research is needed. After this research, an action plan must be prepared and applied.

The important breeding areas must be protected and the activities such as fishery, tourism and animal husbandry realised in these areas must be controlled and if necessary such activities must be banned.

Slender-billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*)

It is a very rare species for Turkey. In between the years 1946 and 1996, 29 certified records were made.

In 1982, hunting of this species and in 1992, hunting of the other Curlew species in Turkey was banned.

Corncrake (*Crex crex*)

There is no special study for this species in Turkey. But it is known that they incubate in the south Marmara region, the inner parts of the Aegean region and central Anatolia.

A detailed research must be made at their breeding and stop-over areas.

Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)

Little is known about this species in Turkey. Aquatic warbler can be rarely found in Turkey as a summer immigrant in the Marmara region, west Mediterranean and North-East Anatolia.

A research must be made in these regions.

Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)

In Turkey, in winter, the species can be seen rarely in northern wetlands.

Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)

In Turkey, particularly during the years with severe winters, the species can be seen rarely in western Anatolia and Thrace and unusually in eastern Anatolia. Therefore, Turkey has not much importance for the life cycle of this bird.

4.16 Ukraine

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24 June 1997

Progress in implementation of the recommendation of the international action plans

Introduction

Ukraine is well-known as a country with relevant activity on conserving and protecting birds, organisation of relevant training and seminars, etc., in particular with its activities related to the Black Sea Region. Ukraine supported the Odessa meeting (October 1992) held within the framework of the International Black Sea Action Plan, hosted a training seminar "Restoration and Integrated Management of the Danube Delta Reed Bed "Stensovsko-Zhebriansky Plavni" (August, 1995, Odessa), and the first and second workshops on implementation of the TACIS project on inventory of the Black Sea wetlands (Kyiv, September 1995 and Odessa, March 1996).

Upon ratification by the Ukrainian Government of the Convention on Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (February 1994), a new stage of protection and management of the coastal zone began. Besides, in autumn 1996, Ukraine signed the "Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea". The region is tremendously important to biodiversity conservation because of the great concentration of waterbirds, especially during migration time, among which there are many species from the African-Eurasian Flyway, including many waders.

Ukraine also participates in the GEF and TACIS projects which aim to protect biodiversity and the coastal zone. In 1994 Ukraine ratified the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (adopted by the Supreme Council Decree in November 1994). At present the Ukrainian environmental authority along with the scientists and NGOs develop a national action plan on conservation biological diversity. It is quite possible that in May 1997 the Cabinet of Ministries of the Ukraine will sign the Decree on Conception for Biodiversity Conservation in Ukraine.

In 1995 in The Hague, Ukraine signed the Agreement on the Protection of *Numenius tenuirostris* and agreed to support the AEWA of the Bonn Convention as soon as possible.

Ukraine always planned that the Ramsar Convention would be ratified and this event has been realised. On 29 October 1996 Ukraine ratified three documents: Ramsar and Bern Conventions and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Nuclear Safety of Ukraine, NGOs, local authorities also initiated implementing new Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan 1997-2002.

The state authorities are developing two national documents, which will be important also in the future for management of animal and plant habitats: the Draft programme on Land Conservation for 1997-2010 and the Draft Programme on Development of Agircultural Complexes and Villages Rebirth

for 1997-2005.

Two volumes of the Red Data Book were printed in 1994 (Animals) and 1996 (Plants). Many new authors made original proposals about conservation of threatened birds (table).

Ukrainian scientists and amateurs continue their field work on monitoring birds every year and in all regions. Many new pieces of information have been collected which prove that the birds depend very much upon human (agricultural) activity. Thus, a good base exists for continuing the implementation in Ukraine of the Action Plans requirements. There are 12 relevant species of the 23 (table).

European Globally Threatened Birds UKRAINE	
Species	State of the populations
<i>Pelicanus crispus</i>	1-12 "breeding" couples (unsuccessful)
<i>Phalacrocorax pigmaeus</i>	720 breeding couples (max)
<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>	0 (= no information)
<i>Branta ruficollis</i>	567-5500 ind.
<i>Anser erythropus</i>	15-30 ind.
<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	50 breeding couples
<i>Numenius tenuirostris</i>	+ (= 4 records)
<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	15 breeding couples + 4 ind. in the amateurs' zoos
<i>Falco naumanni</i>	3-5 breeding couples
<i>Crex crex</i>	15 000 - 55 000 calling males
<i>Otis tarda</i>	20-40 breeding couples
<i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>	250-325 breeding couples (in 1996)

Slender-billed Curlew - *Numenius tenuirostris*

Population (April 1997)

During the year of 1960 it was noticed in Northern and Southern Ukraine and after 1960, in Southern Ukraine only; in spring of 1975 in the Crimea region 48 individuals were noted (the Red Data Book, 1994). In 1985-96 in the Ukrainian part of the Danube Delta, it was noted on 20.X.85, 18.VIII.84, 17.IX.96, 16.X.96 (M. Zmud, pers. inf.)

Direct action plan requirements

2.1.2 Encourage an increase in the penalty for shooting a Slender-billed curlew to the maximum level, and that for shooting other curlews to a more significant amount. Protect Godwits, and ensure that all such laws are well publicised and enforced.

2.1.1 Encourage the effective protection of a network of major wetland sites along the northern shores of the Black and Azov Seas.

3.2.2 Identify key sites used by the species. Satellite-tracking would greatly facilitate this process, but with international cooperation and funding substantial ground survey efforts could be made. Any sites thus identified should be fully protected (see 2.1.1) and total hunting bans should be

introduced at these sites.

4.3 Publicise the plight of the species with hunters.

Results of work

2.1.2 The penalty for shooting of birds included Godwits is increased in the context of the current laws concerning non-hunted species and the Red Data Book species, including new additions to the hunting laws.

2.1.1 Is being provided as well as possible.

3.2.2 Other key sites outside the border of the protected territories have not been identified through the method of satellite-tracking. Taking into account the number of records (four during 1985-96) it is impossible to identify other "key sites" by another method.

4.3 Was provided by the Ukrainian NGOs in 1996, headed by BirdLife International.

Comments, remarks, new proposals

There are no registered cases of shooting. For the last 11 years the species was noted and registered on the protected territories only. The new hunting laws are very strict. Thus, it appears illogical to speak about theoretical dependence of the casual shooting records upon the number (density) of hunters living on the potential flyway points in Ukraine. (See Globally Threatened Birds in Europe, 1996, p. 280).

Dalmatian Pelican - *Pelicanus crispus*

Population

In recent years it has been a typical but not numerous bird (up to 100-110 ind.) as a resident of the Ukrainian part of the Danube Delta, more seldom - on the other parts of the Azov-Black Sea Regional coastal zone (the Red Data Book, 1994). One to twelve "unsuccessful nesting" pairs annually were known on the territory between the Kugurluj and Kartal Lakes; the wintering birds were very seldom noted (M. Zmud, pers. inf.).

Direct action plan requirements

1.3/2.2.3 To promote measures to stop drainage and water extraction and/or water diversion at the remaining wetlands occupied by breeding colonies.

2.1.1. To encourage the designation of the Kugurluj Lake as a protected area.

2.1.2 To encourage establishment of a non-intrusion zone around all colonies during the breeding period.

3.1 To organise a census of the breeding colonies.

3.2 To undertake midwinter counts.

3.3 To monitor ecological change at the key wetland sites.

4.1/4.2 To undertake public awareness campaigns and training at all key sites, aimed mainly at hunters, fishermen and local communities.

Results of work

1.3/2.2.3 The work is going on at the level of the State Committee on Water Management, MEPNSU, local authorities. Partly the task is managing, under the umbrella of GEF project, other programmes and with participation of the Danube Plavni Natural Reserve. In addition, the MEPNSU is in process of looking for other partners for implementing other respective long-term projects. The problem has not been solved fully.

2.1.1 The Kugurluj Lake is included in the list of wetlands of international importance of Ukraine by

the Cabinet of Ministries Order N 935 of 23 September 1995.

2.1.2 The activity is provided annually as effective as possible by the Danube Plavni Natural Reserve, the MEPNSU local divisions, etc.

3.1 Is provided.

3.2 Provided by local authorities, NGOs and ornithologists within the framework of the annual winter census of waterfowl.

3.3 Provided by local authorities.

4.1/4.2 Is provided as well as possible within the framework of relevant national activity.

Comments, remarks, new proposals

The Danube Plavni Natural Reserve proposals (M. Zmud, pers. inf.):

- To provide as soon as possible the strong protection regime near the Kugurluj and Kartal Lakes;
- To research the cause of unsuccessful breeding and try to resolve the problem;
- To work out a programme of renaturalisation of the species for the purpose of learning requirements necessary to encourage the birds nesting on the reserved territory.

Pygmy Cormorant - *Phalacrocorax pigmaeus*

Population

Typical resident of the Danube/Dniester Deltas coastal zone and Crimea; until 1988 there were noticed breeding (40-50 b.p. - the Red Data Book, 1994) and wintering species (1720 ind. in 1995/96 and 246 ind. in 1996-97 - Rusev et al., 1997). The Ukrainian and Romanian parts of the Danube Delta are one of the largest breeding areas - up to 720 pairs; in Ukraine they are the Stentsovsko Zebryanskee Plavni, Kugurluj et Kagul Lakes, Lebedinka Island, for recent years - on Daller Island (M. Zmud, pers. inf.)

Direct action plan requirements

2.2 To promote establishment of a non-intrusion zone around all colonies during the breeding period.

2.1.2 To prevent drainage and water extraction and/or water diversion at wetlands.

3.1 To undertake surveys of breeding colonies and midwinter counts.

3.3 To monitor habitat changes at the key sites.

3.2 To monitor the movements of the ringed birds.

3.5 To undertake studies of feeding ecology, especially in the light of potential conflicts between Pygmy Cormorants and commercial fishermen, and to assess the impact of the birds on the fish community.

4.1 To undertake public awareness campaigns and training at all the key sites, aimed mainly at hunters, fishermen and local communities.

Results of work

2.2 Is provided as well as possible by local authorities.

2.3.2 See position N 1.3/2.2.3 for the Dalmatian Pelican.

3.1 Is provided.

3.2 Is provided.

3.3 Is provided in Ukraine as well as possible within the framework of total monitoring ringed birds.

3.5 As of today, there is misunderstanding between Pygmy Cormorants and commercial fishermen. The problem has not been solved fully.

Comments, remarks, new proposals

The proposals of the Red Data Book authors:

- To include the Limba Island in the list of protected areas (the Red Data Book, 1994, p. 307).

The Danube Plavni Natural Reserve proposals (M. Zmud, pers. inf.):

- To include the Stentsovsko Zebryanskye Plavni in the future Biosphere Reserve territory; to provide a stricter protection regime on the Kugurluj and Kagul Lakes, as well as on the Daller Island, and to include it in the reserve's territory in future.
- To provide quick measures on preventing mortality of the cormorants in the handmade fishnet named "ventor".

White-headed duck - *Oxyura leucocephala*

Population

It is quite possible that in the last (XIX) century, the species was typical for Ukraine as a whole. Until 1970 is nested sporadically on the Dnipro River and after 1970 along the sea coastal zone only (the Red Data Book, 1994). Has in fact been noted in Ukraine, in the Azov Sea Region, on 12.VI.82 (Lysenko, Siokhin, 1991, p. 73).

Direct action plan requirements

3.3.4 Autumn and spring surveys should be conducted to identify passage sites for the birds moving to and from Romania, Bulgaria and Greece.

Results of work

Recommendation N 3.3.4 is not so urgent because the species has not been observed during migrating periods for the last 15 years. In practice, it will be useful in Ukraine to continue publishing relevant illustrated leaflets and posters for hunters.

Comments, remarks, new proposals

Scientists should also take into account the experience of monitoring endangered waterfowl casual shooting by collecting tail feathers of the shot waterfowl (Pridatko, Grachov, 1979).

Red-breasted Goose - *Branta ruficollis*

Population

The species is well known as a typical migrant and a wintering bird which was numerous for several years along the coastal zone - from 60 to 40 000 individuals (the Red Data Book, 1994). In recent years the number has fluctuated during winter census on the Azov-Black Sea coast:

1990/91 - 4 ind. (Rusev et al., 1997), rare birds (M. Zmud pers. inf.); 1992/93 - 500 (M. Zmud, pers. inf.); 1993/94 - 500 (M. Zmud, pers. inf.); 1994/95 - 5500 (Rusev et al., 1997); 1995/96 - 1472 (Ardamatskaya, 1997); 1996/97 - 567 (Rusev et al., 1997; Ardamatskaya, 1997).

It is quite possible that there are 16 000 - 20 000 ind. in total during the migration period in Ukraine (Rusev, 1997, p. 14-18).

Direct action plan requirements

2.1/3.5 To encourage a review of hunting regulations and activities. Where necessary, disturbance and mortality caused by hunting should be monitored and regulated.

2.5 An ornithologist from a Ukrainian agency (possibly the Shevchenko University) should be formally selected to represent Ukraine in the multinational Red-breasted Goose Working Group.

3.1 Coordinated winter counts between Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Azerbaijan should be conducted once to twice monthly on a formal and annual basis.

3.2.1 Surveys of location, goose numbers and habitat use should be made on staging areas.

3.3.1 Ecological and behavioural studies of Red-breasted Geese at the staging sites should be initiated.

Results of work

2.1/3.5 Is provided as well as possible by scientific publications. In addition the penalty for shooting is increased in the context of current laws concerning species not hunted and species of the Red Data Book including new additions to the hunting laws.

2.5 Printed information on providing the above-mentioned is not available in the MEPNSU.

3.1 Ukrainian local authorities (like Odessa University, Melitopol Ornithological Station, ECCU, Chernomorsky Biosphere Reserve) provide annual winter census.

3.2.1 Is provided as well as possible in 1996/97 during census work (Rusev et al., 1997).

3.3.1 No information.

Comments, remarks, new proposals

Since the risk of mortality occurs mostly in the hunting season, it is reasonable to elaborate and carry on educational programme for hunters.

Special research should be organised on the grazing role of the Red-breasted Goose.

Danube Plavni Natural Reserve proposals (M. Zmud, pers. inf.):

- To forbid hunting adjacent to the key area territories like the Stentsovsko Zebryansky Plavny; to continue work on including adjacent areas to the key territories into a new biosphere reserve.
- To forbid mammals hunting in January adjacent to the key area territories (in connection with the problem mentioned above).
- To precipitate taking protection measures on the key areas near the Danube Delta Natural Reserve including the Stentsovsko Zebryansky Plavny and Ermakov Island; to protect territories in the Upper Sasyk Reservoir and Alubey and Burnas Leemans.

The Red Book authors' proposals:

- To create a zakaznyk in the Davydovska Bay of the Utuluksky Leeman (the Red Data Book, 1994, p. 312).

Lesser White-fronted Goose - *Anser erythropus*

Population

Not numerous but typical migrant, known for the coastal zone of Ukraine during autumn or winter time. Potential key area is similar to *Anser albifrons*. Population has not increased for the last 20

years: 1977 - 182 ind.; 1985/86 - >30 (Lysenko, Siokhin, 1991); 1985 - 11 (Grischenko et al., 1994); 1986 - 12 (Fesenko, Arkhipov, 1996); 1996/97 - >15 (Beskaravajny, Kostin, 1997; Rusev et al., 1997).

Direct action plan requirements

Proposals have not been defined for Ukraine.

Comments, remarks, new proposals

Main proposals should be similar to those of the Red-breasted Goose.

Imperial Eagle - *Aquila heliaca*

Population

Not numerous but typical nesting species in Ukraine with a tendency of population to decrease. In total nearly 50 breeding pairs are known in Sumy, Cherkassy, Kyiv, Odessa, Kirovograd, Dnepropetrovsk, Mykolaiv and the Crimea regions (Vetrov, 1996).

Direct action plan requirements

- 1.2 Promote the development of a new legislation for nature conservation.
- 2.1.1 Promote the designation as protected area IBAs containing Imperial Eagles.
- 3.2 Undertake a national survey and initiate a monitoring programme.
- 3.5 Review and update the existing IBA inventory.

Results of work

- 1.2 Is provided, for example, by implementing initiatives on biodiversity conservation as a whole, through laws on land and water protection, etc.
- 2.1.1 Is provided by the BirdLife International branch.
- 3.2 Is provided as a whole while taking forest regulation measures, including information support by the local authorities, NGOs and ornithologists.
- 3.5 Is in process. Provided by the BirdLife International branch.

Cinereous Vulture - *Aegypius monachus*

Population

It is a very rare species in modern Ukrainian scientific literature of today. There were nearly 15-20 ind. in the Crimean population in the 60s. In 1980, 5-8 breeding pairs were known; in 1988 - 4-5 b.p.; in 1990 - 6 b.p. and 13 non-breeding ind. (the Red Data Book, 1994, p. 335; Globally Threatened Birds in Europe, 1996, p. 152). There are some breeding pairs in the zoos of Kharkiv, Mena and Odessa (the Red Data Book, 1994). Only 15 b.p./potentially b.p. are known as of today in the Karalaksy Local Zakaznik of 5900 ha in the Crimea; besides there are four ind. in local zoological farms (M. Chepurko, pers. inf.). According to data of recent years the Crimean population has non-successful sex/age index (the Red Data Book, 1994).

Direct action plan requirements

- 2.2.3 A feeding station should be set up in the Crimea Game Reserve and supplied regularly.
- 3.1 Being the only population in Ukraine it is essential that monitoring of numbers, breeding success, causes of mortality and population trends is carried out yearly.

Results of work

- 2.2.3 A feeding station functions under the responsibility of the Karalaksy Local Zakaznik near Simpheropol (pers. inf., M. Chepurko, Crimea).
- 3.1 Is protected in the Crimean and Yaltinsky mountain-forest nature reserves (the Red Data Book, 1994).

Comments, remarks, new proposals

It is intended to create the Kazantipsky Reserve in the Crimea Region, which will also help to protect birds' habitats.

There should be provided purposeful scientific work on improving sex/age index of the Cinereous Vulture Crimean population.

Lesser Kestrel - *Falco naumanni*

Population

In the 60s it was typical in mountain territories like Zakarpattye and Crimea and lived in colonies of up to 400 pairs; in 1988 - 100 breeding pairs (the Red Data Book, 1994). In 1983 - 1 b.p. in "Melova Flora Reserve" (Pisarev, 1996); in 1986 - 4/5 b.p. in Donetsk Oblast (Vetrov, Belik, 1996); in 1990 - 3 b.p. on the Changar Island (Kinda, 1995); 1995 - 3 b.p. in the Mykolaiv Oblast (Rodionov, 1996).

Direct action plan requirements

- 1.3 Promote the legal protection of the species.
- 3.1 Carry out a national survey and identify key areas.

Results of work

- 1.3 Is provided as for the Red Data Book species.
- 3.1 Special "national programmes" were not elaborated. The monitoring is provided successfully by

local authorities, the reserves' staff, NGOs and amateurs.

Great Bustard - *Otis tarda*

Population

At the end of the last century it was a numerous breeding species as a whole including the northern territories - in the Lviv Oblast (Koshelev et al., 1991; Ardamatskaya, 1991; Basta, 1996; other). Southern territories: at present in the Odessa Oblast more than 50 pairs breed (Koshelev et al., 1991, p. 23); several nests were known annually in the Chernomorsky Biosphere Reserve (Ardamatskaya, 1991) as well as in the Kerch Peninsula and in adjacent key areas where there were 120 nests (Grynchenko, 1991, p. 78-90); in 1991/95 - 30-35 b.p. (Kinda, Stadnichenko, 1995). It is well known in the winter period along the coastal zone: in 1950 - 400 or 600 ind. (Klimenko, 1950 - by Ardamatskaya, 1991); in 1963 - 150 id. (Ardamatskaya, 1991); in 1970/84 there were 7-20 ind. (Panchenko; Balacky, 1991); in 1983/84 - 900-1288 ind. were observed and nearly 500 ind. died in the steppe (Koshelev et al., 1991); in 1996 several birds were noted near Melitopol (Gorlov, Nikolaenko, 1997).

According to the Red Data Book (1994) there were nearly 2000 ind. in the winter time and 270-300 adults during the nesting period. Thus, the number continues to decrease dramatically.

Direct action plan requirements

- 2.1.2 Encourage the extension of the ongoing set-aside and habitat management schemes to other regions; promote the establishment of an ornithological reserve on Kerch Peninsula (Crimea).
- 2.1.6 Consider the feasibility of creating a Great Bustard breeding and rearing centre.
- 2.2.1 Collaborate with local hunting organisations to prevent illegal hunting at wintering sites and provide supplementary feeding.

Results of work

- 2.1.2 Is provided as well as possible.
- 2.1.6 No information.
- 2.2.1 Illegal hunting is forbidden. The penalty is increased in context of the current laws on non-hunted species and on the Red Data Book species including new additions to the hunting laws. No information about supplementary feeding at wintering sites.

Comments, remarks, new proposals

The Red Data Book authors' proposals:

- To create the ornithological zakazniks in the Kerch Peninsula. To organise artificial eggs, incubating and introduction of birds to nature (the Red Data Book, 1994, p. 343).

Corncrake - *Crex crex*

Population

The population has a slow tendency to fall in many places of Ukraine due to habitat loss by about 20% to 100% on average for the last 30 years (Bokotey, 1995; Bulahov, Gubkin, 1996; Bashta, 1996; Pisarev, 1996; Gulay, 1996; Legeyda, 1996; other). Nevertheless, the species is typical for some protected territories, parks, towns, surroundings, etc. It is quite possible that there are 55 000 singing males (Mikitiuk, 1996; Globally Threatened Birds in Europe, 1996). According to more pessimistic calculation, there could be about 15 000 singing males.

Direct action plan requirements

- 1.2.2 Promote the inclusion of the Corncrake in the National Red Data Book.
- 2.1.2 Encourage the protection and appropriate management of important Corncrake areas.
- 3.1.1 Undertake a national census to provide a national population estimate, and identify key areas.
- 3.1.2 Monitor Corncrake habitats.
- 3.2.1 Conduct research to determine population structure (sex ratio, etc.) and breeding success.
- 4.1 Raise awareness of the Corncrake, with nature protection and agricultural organisations as well as the general public, and through secondary and higher education institute.

Results of work

- 1.2.2 The species was not included in the Red Data Book but is protected by a series of laws (see below). Besides, the MEPNSU also keeps control by elaborating annual orders on hunting.
- 2.1.2/3.1.1/3.1.2 Is provided in reserves and national parks. The relevant inventory work is going on by some hunting societies, NGOs, ornithologists, amateurs.
- 3.2.1 Is undertaken at some sites.
- 4.1 The species is protected by a series of laws and documents, including new strict additions to the hunting laws. Hunting is forbidden. The penalty for shooting is \$US 40 eqv. or more (under the Decree of 25 January 1996 N 123).
Some hunting societies and NGOs carry out activities on raising awareness of the Corncrake.

Comments, remarks, new proposals

The population decreases in Ukraine because both "protecting" and "feeding" habitats are being lost simultaneously (Legeyda, 1996). Thus, the measures on conservation should include actions on creating ecological corridors in addition to the creation of protected "key areas".

Aquatic Warbler - *Acrocephalus paludicola*

Population

During the last 55 years it was noticed several times only (Zezerin, 1969; Afanasyev et al., 1992; Khlebesko, 1992; Bulakhov, Gubkin, 1996; Guzin, 1996; Gorban, 1985 - for Bashta, 1996; others). It bred permanently along small rivers in the Dnepropetrovsk Oblast (Gubkin et al., 1996). In 1995 there were 105 nesting pairs between the Dnipro et Supoy River (Gavrys et al., 1996, p. 222-223); in 1996 there were 300-400 breeding ind. (A. Poluda, pers. inf.). In addition, new large nesting plots were disclosed in 1996 by an international ornithological expedition in the Volyn Oblast.

Direct action plan requirements

- 1.1.2 Promote the preparation of a national wetland action plan.

3.1.2 Undertake a national survey to clarify distribution and numbers.

4.1 Promote a strong bird conservation NGO with financial support from international organisations.

Results of work

1.1.2 Work is continued on preparation of the draft national plan on conserving wetlands of international importance.

3.1.2 Is provided by professional ornithologists and NGOs at local level.

4.1 The Ornithological society was supported by BirdLife International.

Comments, remarks, new proposals

Small grants monitoring should be provided for the purpose of supporting annual scientific international expeditions to the key areas in Ukraine.

There should be created a series of protected territories in key areas.

The National Ringing Centre proposals:

- To organise the ringing of the species in key areas with the aim of researching the flyways and wintering areas.

Notes

Abbreviations: b.c. - breeding couples; b.p. - breeding pairs, MEPNSU - Ministry for Environmental Protection and Nuclear Safety of Ukraine.

Remarks: New list of laws on hunting regulations in Ukraine include also the following: the Law of Ukraine "On Alterations to the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Delinquency on Strengthening Administrative Amenability through Penalties" (N 55/97 - VR, 07.02.97); the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministries of Ukraine "On Confirmation of Provision Prosigne on Exchanging Payment for the Purposed Use of Wild Animals" (N 123, 25.01.96); the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministries of Ukraine "On Confirmation of the Regulation Hunting Industry and Hunting Order" (N 780, 20.07.96); the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministries of Ukraine "On Alterations on Supplements to the Regulation on Hunting Industry and Hunting Order" (N 245, 19.03.97).

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4.17 United Kingdom

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Action Plans for Globally Threatened Birds in Europe

White-headed Duck - *Oxyura leucocephala*

Report under specific actions:

(Main plan actions in **bold**, UK-specific action in *italics*)

1.1.3 Promote national legislation in all western Palaearctic countries which prohibits the escape or release of Ruddy Ducks from captivity.

The UK Government should ensure enforcement of section 14(1.b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which prohibits the release or escape of Ruddy Ducks into the wild.

It has been an offence to release or allow to escape ruddy ducks in Great Britain since 1981 (Northern Ireland 1985). The UK Government has made a continuing effort to inform people of offences under section 14 regarding the release of non-indigenous species. In 1996 the Department of the Environment produced a publication *Wildlife Crime - A Guide to Law Enforcement in the Conservation and Protection of Wildlife in the United Kingdom*. This book is a practical guide to those involved in investigating offences under wildlife legislation, and includes information on section 14 offences.

Information on the current controls on the release of non-native species in Great Britain was strengthened by the Department of the Environment publication - *The Regulation and Control of the Release of Non-Native Animals and Plants into the Wild in Great Britain*. The document outlines the problems caused by the release of non-native species, and provides information on the scope of the 1981 Act in controlling the release of non-native species, including the ruddy duck, in Great Britain.

1.1.4 To develop strategies to prevent the escape of Ruddy Ducks from collections.

The UK Government should consider adding the Ruddy Duck to Schedule 4 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which requires the ringing and registration of birds kept in captivity.

Consideration is currently being given to amending the 1981 Act to include the Ruddy Duck on Schedule 4. Before the addition to Schedule 4 can be carried out, consultation is required with interested bodies. It is envisaged that consultation will take place later this year.

2.1.1 Reduce the size of the UK Ruddy Duck population as quickly as possible.

The UK should undertake its planned regional control trial as soon as possible. This control trial will attempt to control two different regional populations of Ruddy Ducks. If the results suggest that it is possible to control ruddy ducks on a large scale, the UK should undertake country-wide control measures for Ruddy Ducks as soon as possible.

Over the last few months the Government, with its statutory scientific advisors, reassessed whether a control trial should go ahead. As the outcome of the proposed control trial could not be guaranteed and the likely impact on the population and range of the species would be difficult to determine, the UK Government decided that the proposed control trial should not take place, at least for the time being.

The UK Government will be assessing what other measures could contribute to reducing the population of Ruddy Ducks in Great Britain. Consideration is being given to whether the Ruddy Duck should be added to the list of those species which can be legally hunted under domestic legislation.

3.2 To monitor and improve the effectiveness of suitable control measures for Ruddy Ducks.

The current UK Ruddy Duck research programme should proceed and the process of making the results available to all countries considering should continue.

The research contract into the feasibility of control measures for the North American Ruddy Duck in the United Kingdom, carried out by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust under contract to the UK Department of the Environment was completed in 1996. The report, and a synopsis, was published by the Department of the Environment in June 1996 and was widely distributed amongst UK and international organisations.

3.5 To monitor the number of stifftails kept in captivity.

The UK Government should consider whether there should be monitoring of captive Ruddy Ducks if the option of placing the birds on Schedule 4 is discounted.

The UK Government is still considering whether to add the Ruddy Duck to Schedule 4 (see 1.1.4). If this option is not taken forward, then other means of monitoring will be assessed.

4.1 To increase awareness of the need to control the spread of the Ruddy Duck.

The UK RDWG should continue its public relations strategy to inform the British public of the necessity for Ruddy Duck control.

The UK Government is aware of the need for continuing publicity to inform people of the dangers posed to the conservation status of the White-headed Duck by the spread of the Ruddy Duck.

Publications

Bradley Taylor M. 1996, Wildlife Crime - A guide to Wildlife Law Enforcement in the United Kingdom. London UK; Department of the Environment.

Anon. 1997. The Regulation and Control of the Release of Non-native Animals and Plants into the Wild in Great Britain. London UK; Department of the Environment.

Hughes B. 1996. The feasibility of control measures for North American Ruddy Ducks *Oxyura jamaicensis* in the United Kingdom. London UK; Department of the Environment.

Aquatic Warbler - *Acrocephalus paludicola*

Report under specific action

(Global action in **bold**, UK-specific action in *italics*)

1.1.2 Promote the full protection of the Aquatic Warbler and its habitat through national and international legislation.

Promote the preparation and implementation of a national action plan.

A national action plan for the Aquatic Warbler was published in 1995. The lead partner responsible for the delivery of the actions in this plan is the RSPB. Others responsible for certain actions include the Countryside Council for Wales and English Nature.

The initial phase of the work is to quantify the importance to Aquatic Warblers of the known migration sites, and to research the habitat requirements of the species on passage. Occurrence is almost exclusively during autumn passage, being estimated at about 40 individuals. Over 90% of birds trapped for ringing are juveniles. The number varies according to autumn weather conditions, however, and this figure is likely to be an underestimate in "good" years, when hundreds could pass through.

Constant-effort ringing at the main sites will be used to quantify the importance of the main sites to this species. Tape-lures are sometimes used and this can increase the number of birds caught for ringing. Research is also planned to examine the habitat preferences of the species. Most occurrences are associated with reedbeds on the south coast of England, with birds occurring in *Phragmites*, but also in associated *Juncus* and *Schoenoplectus*. 1996 was a poor year for the species (probably reflecting autumn weather conditions) so insufficient birds were ringed or observed to assess habitat preferences.

Some of the main sites are reserves. Pending the results of habitat preference research, management focuses on prevent of scrub encroachment and, at the main site (Marazion Marsh), maintenance by RSPB of discrete clumps of *Schoenoplectus* where the species is frequently observed.

Other measures

A biodiversity action plan has been developed for this species (appended).

AQUATIC WARBLER (*ACROCEPHALUS PALUDICOLA*)**5. PROPOSED ACTIONS WITH LEAD AGENCIES****1. CURRENT STATUS**

1.1 The aquatic warbler is a regular autumn migrant to sites in southern Britain, particularly to wetlands along the south coast from Kent to Cornwall. Although there is no accurate record of numbers, it is estimated that hundreds of individuals pass through Britain each year, comprising between 1% and 25% of the world population of this globally threatened species.

1.2 The aquatic warbler is listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive and Appendix II of the Bern Convention.

2. CURRENT FACTORS CAUSING LOSS OR DECLINE

2.1 Wetland habitat deterioration in a number of important sites where the aquatic warbler regularly occurs. During migration through Britain it has a very localised distribution and is therefore very susceptible to factors affecting even a small number of sites.

3. CURRENT ACTION

3.1 Known key passage sites are designated as nature reserves or SSSIs.

3.2 RSPB is currently assessing historic records to confirm all likely key sites.

3.3 EN promote habitat management for this species through action plans for reedbed birds.

4. ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

4.1 This is a globally threatened species which passes through the UK on migration in autumn *en route* between eastern Europe and Africa. We do not know what proportion of the world population passes through the UK but it may be significant (>10%). Further research is needed to assess the importance of the UK for this species but in the meantime its parlous global status means that the UK should ensure that the few sites known to be used (mostly reedbeds) are protected and appropriately managed.

4.2 Ensure all key passage sites are, and remain, protected.

4.3 Develop monitoring methodology to assess and monitor numbers and distribution of birds in the UK.

4.4 Undertake research to identify habitat requirements.

5.1 Policy and legislation

5.1.1 Encourage the uptake of schemes such as ESA and Countryside Stewardship to manage wetlands and watersides for the species. (ACTION: MAFF, WOAD)

5.1.2 Support initiatives, where appropriate and identified in the international Action Plan, which safeguard and enhance populations in other countries. (ACTION: DoE, JNCC)

5.2 Site safeguard and management

5.2.1 Seek to designate any sites regularly supporting qualifying numbers of warbler as SPAs. (ACTION: CCW, WO)

5.2.2 Seek to oppose any development proposal which would adversely affect key sites for this migrant species. (ACTION: CCW, EN)

5.2.3 Following further research to identify the ecological requirements of this species, ensure that the needs of this species are taken into account in management plans for any SSSI used regularly by this species. (ACTION: CCW, EN)

5.3 Species management and protection

5.3.1 Consider this species for protection under international legislation. (ACTION: CCW, DoE, EN, JNCC)

5.4 Advisory

5.4.1 Ensure land owners and managers with regularly occurring migratory populations are aware of the importance of their land to the species; and appropriate methods of habitat management; when known. (ACTION: CCW, EN)

5.5 Future research and monitoring

5.5.1 Identify and implement a method for monitoring aquatic warbler numbers on passage through the UK. (ACTION: CCW, EN, JNCC)

5.5.2 Survey to identify sites which regularly hold significant numbers of aquatic warbler. (ACTION: EN)

5.5.3 Research habitat use and ecology of species to provide habitat management advice for regularly used sites. (ACTION: EN)

5.5.4 Pass information gathered during survey and monitoring of this species to JNCC or

BRC so that it can be incorporated in national databases. (ACTION: CCW, EN)

5.5.5 Provide information annually to BirdLife International on the UK status of the species to contribute to maintenance of up-to-date global red lists. (ACTION: JNCC)

5.6 Communications and publicity

5.6.1 No action proposed.

Corncrake - *Crex crex*

Introduction

The corncrake continues to receive high priority in the UK, with conservation efforts yielding encouraging results. It is one of eight species for which a national action plan was published in 1995. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department (SOAEFD) are the lead partners responsible for the delivery of the actions contained in the plan, although a variety of other agencies and organisations contribute. These include Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Environment and Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland (EHS), Scottish Agriculture College, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Scottish Crofters Union (SCU), National Trust for Scotland and Scottish Wildlife Trust. RSPB has received EU funding for conservation work on Corncrake through the LIFE fund (1994-96).

The population in the core area of the Scottish Islands has stabilised and is now increasing as a result of conservation work. By 1996, the sampled population was around 30% higher than the low recorded in 1993, and 8% higher than that recorded in the last full census in 1988. This trend has been achieved through a high level of investment, though continued investment is necessary to consolidate this success and encourage an eventual re-colonisation of former areas of occurrence.

Report under specific actions:

(Main plan actions in **bold**, UK-specific action in *italics*)

1.2.3.3 Encourage the allocation of funding to pay farmers to Corncrake-friendly management, targeted at key areas.

Continue the Corncrake Grant Scheme until it can be integrated into agri-environment measures.

The Corncrake Grant Scheme run by the RSPB, SNH and Scottish Crofters Union since 1992 has continued to offer payments throughout the range to delay grass cutting and employ corncrake-friendly mowing techniques. Uptake is high, with £63k paid in grants in 1996. During 1996, SNH and RSPB also operated the Skye Grassland Scheme aimed at increasing the areas managed in a corncrake-friendly manner on the Isle of Skye.

A grant scheme in Northern Ireland ended in 1993, with no corncrakes breeding in 1994. The facility for payments has been retained, however, and the species recolonised in 1995. In 1996 payments were made by DoE/NI on Rathlin Island, which held the only corncrake recorded in Northern Ireland that year. During 1997, RSPB and DoE/NI will be undertaking work to establish early cover on Rathlin.

The intention is to operate separate incentive schemes for corncrakes until corncrake-friendly measures are effectively incorporated into agri-environment measures (see below).

Promote wider adoption of agri-environment measures to promote late-cut grass and reduce sheep numbers, increasing low-intensity beef.

The majority of the Scottish Corncrake population occurs within Environmentally Sensitive Areas and incentives for corncrake-friendly management are available, though take-up of these options has so far proved slow.

The Scottish Countryside Premium Scheme will be launched in Spring 1997 and the Corncrake is a high priority. This scheme will cover non-ESA areas, including Orkney, Skye, Lewis and Harris.

2.1.3 Acquire and appropriately manage nature reserves for Corncrakes.

Consider establishing further reserves in core areas.

Scottish Natural Heritage is actively considering a suite of SPA classifications for corncrakes. There is a complementary need, however, to establish wider recovery areas, through agri-environment programmes if the species is to increase further in numbers and range. The RSPB continue to make a major contribution to this action, acquiring a further three suitable areas in 1996 and managing a total of 165 hectares for the species.

3.1.2 Develop and implement an agreed pan-European monitoring strategy

Undertake annual surveys in the main areas

The next full survey is due in 1998. Annual monitoring takes place over the core areas of Scottish Islands, covering almost all of the population. Outside this area, publicity and contacts result in a number of additional records each year. Results for the last four years are compared with the results of the last full census (1998) below:

	<i>Number of singing males</i>				
	<i>1988</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>
Core area (Scottish Islands)	531-572	449	461	540	584
Rest of Britain	20-24	30	n.c.	n.c.	n.a.
Northern Ireland	122-133	8	0	1	1
Total*	551-596	479	c.490	c.570	c.615

* totals adjusted to take account of corncrakes not recorded during survey.

3.2.2 Determination of timing of reproduction and incidence of double-brooding across the corncrake range.

3.2.3 Correlation of population trends with habitats and the timing and method of mowing.

Continue radio tracking studies of timing of breeding and habitat selection.

RSPB have been undertaking research in this area: a PhD thesis was accepted in 1996 and scientific papers will appear in due course. The RSPB publishes and distributes advice to landowners on corncrake-friendly mowing techniques. RSPB fieldworkers have worked with farmers and crofters to protect Corncrakes from injury during mowing in the core area of its range including Lewis, Orkney, Uists, Tyree, Skye and Canna.

There are also schemes to reduce losses to predation including Feral Cat control on Coll, Mink control in the Western Isles and a Ferret bounty scheme on Shetland.

RSPB has also undertaken research into use of vegetation on plots established to provide early and late cover. More information is needed in particular on the best ways to establish an early cover for corncrakes.

Quantification of movements between geographical regions

Continue studies of movements

Trapping, using tape luring has been undertaken by RSPB in Scotland and Ireland. 167 males were trapped in Scotland and Ireland during 1996, including 5 ringed as adults in previous years. Most adult males return to within about 10 km of where they hatched or where they settled the previous year, though some movement up to 50 km has been detected. This indicates that management of whole areas, rather than small sites, is necessary to maintain populations. No movement between Scotland and Ireland has been detected.

RSPB is also undertaking movement studies in Russia, Latvia and Poland.

Other measures

The UK has developed a biodiversity action plan for this species (appended).

Publications

Baha El Din, S.M., Salama, W., Grieve, A. and Green, R.E. 1996. Trapping and shooting of Corncrakes *Crex crex* on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt. *Bird Conservation International*, 6: 213-218.

Green, R.E. and Rayment, M.D. 1996. Geographical variation in the abundance of the Corncrake *Crex crex* in Europe in relation to the intensity of agriculture. *Bird Conservation International*, 6: 201-212.

Green, R.E. 1996. Factors affecting the population density of corncrake *Crex crex* in Britain and Ireland. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 33: 237-248.

Tyler, G.A. 1996. The ecology of the Corncrake, with special reference to the effect of mowing on breeding production. PhD thesis. University College Cork.

CORNCRAKE (*CREX CREX*)

1. CURRENT STATUS

1.1 Over the past 100 years the corncrake has shown a sustained decline in numbers in the UK and a contraction in range. By the early 1970s there were only 3,250 calling males, falling to 478 in 1993. Over 90% of calling males are located in the Hebrides, with the remainder mainly in Orkney. There are very few in England and Wales and, in recent years, few calling males in Northern Ireland.

1.2 The corncrake is a globally threatened species. It is listed on Appendix II of the Bern Convention and Annex I of the EC Birds Directive. In the UK it is protected under Schedule 1 of the WCA 1981 and the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

2. CURRENT FACTORS CAUSING LOSS OR DECLINE

2.1 Loss of traditional grassland habitat mosaics, especially tall vegetation throughout the breeding season.

2.2 Changes in grass management and cutting techniques (e.g. earlier cutting).

2.3 Predation and disturbance may be contributing to the decline in some localities.

3. CURRENT ACTION

3.1 Approximately 10% of the British corncrake population is protected on RSPB reserves.

3.2 Corncrake grant schemes, funded by DoE(NI), RSPB, SNH and Scottish Crofters' Union under their joint Corncrake Initiative, provide incentives for corncrake-friendly grass cutting and management to protect corncrakes, but it is hoped to supersede this approach by improved ESA prescriptions with advice to land managers.

4. ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

4.1 The corncrake is a globally threatened species which was once found throughout the UK, but it now mostly restricted to north and west Scotland. The reasons for decline of this species have been elucidated by an excellent programme of research, and the means of reversing the decline and providing an increase in numbers are now known. This species responds rapidly to favourable management of meadows and an increase in numbers and range

is perfectly feasible. The UK can lead the global recovery of this species.

4.2 Halt the decline in UK corncrake population and range.

4.3 Maintain the numbers of corncrakes in the UK at or above the 1993 level (478 singing males).

4.4 Maintain the range of corncrakes in the UK at or above the 1993 level (82 occupied 10 km squares).

4.5 By 1998, increase the range of the corncrake in Britain to at least the same number of 10 km squares occupied in 1988 (90 squares).

4.6 In the longer term, re-establish corncrakes in parts of its former range in the UK.

5. PROPOSED ACTION WITH LEAD AGENCIES

5.1 Policy and legislation

5.1.1 Support and promote the uptake of corncrake grant schemes for this species in Scotland and Northern Ireland. (ACTION: DoE(NI), SOAEFD)

5.1.2 Support and promote the uptake of ESA agreements and review the effectiveness of existing ESAs for this species in Scotland, i.e. the Outer Hebrides machair, Argyll Islands and Shetland. Seek to improve where necessary. (ACTION: SNH, SOAEFD)

5.1.3 If existing ESAs are effective as conservation measures, consider designating remaining core corncrake areas in the Western Isles, Inner Hebrides and Orkney as ESAs, to encourage continued hay production and sympathetic management. (ACTION: SOAEFD)

5.1.4 Develop and promote measures for traditional crofting land management in areas supporting this species. (ACTION: SOAEFD)

5.2 Site safeguard and management

5.2.1 Seek to secure favourable management on all suitable land within designated sites, and in all non-designated areas supporting populations of corncrake. (ACTION: DANI, DoE(NI), SNH, SOAEFD)

5.2.2 Consider designating sites of particular importance as SSSI. (ACTION: SNH)

5.3 Species management and protection

5.3.1 Seek to reduce damage to nests and mortality of adults and young from mowing operations by wardening and promoting corncrake-friendly techniques. (ACTION: DANI, DoE(NI), SNH, SOAEFD)

5.3.2 Ensure crofters and small farmers are advised of risks to species from predation by domestic cats, and support local mink and ferret control, preventing their spread to new areas. (ACTION: DANI, DoE(NI), SNH, SOAEFD)

5.4 Advisory

5.4.1 Provide advice to agricultural advisors, and to all those managing corncrake areas on corncrake-friendly cutting methods and other beneficial management practices. (ACTION: DANI, SOAEFD)

5.4.2 Provide advice on corncrake-friendly management techniques to agricultural colleges to aid their inclusion in land management courses. (ACTION: DoE(NI), SNH)

5.5 Future research and monitoring

5.5.1 Conduct a full survey of the breeding population of corncrake in Britain and Northern Ireland every three years. (ACTION: DoE(NI), SNH)

5.5.2 Study economic, technical and agronomic aspects of modifying grassland

management in key corncrake areas to benefit the species. (ACTION: DANI, DoE(NI), SNH)

5.5.3 Investigate the responses of corncrakes to approaching mowing machinery, and conduct "after mowing" surveys to assess the density of nests and broods, and the mortality rate. Seek to identify the least damaging time for mowing. (ACTION: DoE(NI), SNH)

5.5.4 Investigate levels of mortality due to cat, mink and feral ferret predation and assess the possibility of reducing mortality. (ACTION: DoE(NI), SNH)

5.5.5 Encourage annual monitoring of breeding numbers and periodic surveys of habitat at key sites. (ACTION: DoE(NI), SNH)

5.5.6 Review the factors affecting corncrake migration and wintering grounds. (ACTION: DoE(NI), JNCC, SNH)

5.5.7 Pass information gathered during survey and monitoring of this species to JNCC or BRC so that it can be incorporated in national databases. (ACTION: DoE(NI), SNH)

5.5.8 Provide information annually to BirdLife International on the UK status of the species to contribute to maintenance of up-to-date global red lists. (ACTION: JNCC)

5.6 Communications and publicity

5.6.1 Consider projects to develop controlled "green tourism" based on the species. (ACTION: SNH, Tourist Authorities)

5.6.2 Consider publishing a Code of Practice for birdwatching to reduce the pressure on this species from birdwatchers in sensitive areas. (ACTION: DoE(NI), SNH)

4.18 Programme LIFE

Protection et restauration de l'habitat du râle des genêts (*Crex crex*)
en Belgique

Bescherming en herstel van de leefgebieden van de Kwartelkoning (*Crex crex*) in België

(Life 94/B/A211/B/01516/MLTRG)

Résumé

Le râle des genêts (*Crex crex*) est une des espèces d'oiseaux les plus rares et les plus menacées de la Belgique.

De 1994 à 1996, un programme Life pour la conservation du râle des genêts et de son habitat a été mené en Belgique par les Réserves Naturelles et Ornithologiques des Belgique/Belgische Natuur- en Vogelreservaten (RNOB/BNVR).

Au cours de ce programme, cinq périmètres d'actions ont effectivement bénéficiés de mesures de conservation. Pour la Flandre, il s'agit des Ijzerbroeken, des Kalkense Meersen, du Demervallei et du Maasvallei. En Wallonie, un seul grand périmètre d'action a été désigné : la dépression schisteuse de la Fagne-Famenne, entre Chimay et Hotton.

La Fagne-Famenne, région à vocation herbagère, est la seule région de Belgique où la présence du râle des genêts est encore régulièrement constatée. Toutefois, les données qui y ont été récoltées au cours des quinze dernières années indiquent (1) que la plupart des mâles chanteurs s'installent seulement à partir de la mi-juin, (2) qu'il y a une faible taux de retour aux territoires occupés l'année précédente et (3) qu'il y a une importante fluctuation interannuelle des postes de chant (entre 5 et 50 chanteurs selon les années), corrélée de façon positive avec la pluviométrie en mai-juin. Toutes ces informations indiquent qu'il n'y a plus de population autosuffisante et stable en Fagne-Famenne. Les oiseaux qui s'installent de façon plus ou moins régulière dans les herbages de la Fagne-Famenne sont donc essentiellement issus de populations plus prospères localisées ailleurs en Europe.

A l'occasion du programme Life, un recensement de l'espèce a été organisé pour l'ensemble du territoire de la Wallonie. Ce recensement, auquel ont principalement participé une cinquantaine d'ornithologues amateurs des RNOB et de la Société Ornithologique AVES ainsi que les agents de la Division Nature et Forêts de la Région Wallonne confirme le statut précaire du râle des genêts en Wallonie. 17 et 10 chanteurs furent respectivement notés en Wallonie en 1995 et 1996, dont plus de la moitié (11 et 6) en Fagne-Famenne.

A l'occasion du recensement, un suivi individuel des mâles chanteurs a été tenté grâce à une analyse des chants enregistrés. Ainsi, en 1995, la comparaison des oscillogrammes de trois enregistrements récoltés à quelques jours d'intervalle sur une même prairie a permis de déceler la présence de trois mâles chanteurs différents sur le site. Aucun déplacement d'un oiseau entre deux sites ne fut par contre constaté. Le risque d'un double comptage est donc exclu. Cette expérience intéressante n'a pu être poursuivie en 1996 étant donné les très courtes périodes de chants des oiseaux repérés (un seul jour de chant sur la plupart des sites) ! A cet égard, 1996 était donc une année moins bonne que 1995.

En Région Flamande, aucun recensement systématique ne fut organisé vu la rareté des observations des dernières années. Toutefois, l'installation nouvelle d'une petite population de 2 - 3 mâles

chanteurs fût notée en 1995-96 à Kessenich, dans la vallée mosane (périmètre de Maasvallei).

Des actions de sensibilisation et d'information ont été menées dans les périmètres du programme Life. Des journaux "toutes-boîtes" ont été distribuées aux habitats des cinq périmètres concernées. Parallèlement deux numéros du "Courrier du Rôle", journal d'information destiné aux agriculteurs, ont été envoyés à quelques 1100 personnes en Fagne-Famenne.

Le volet le plus important du programme Life concernait les acquisitions de terrains. Dans les zones précédemment identifiées comme étant prioritaires pour une conservation du rôle des genêts, quelques 235 ha, essentiellement constitués de prés de fauche, ont pu être acquis. Le cofinancement de ces acquisitions a été assuré par les Régions Wallonne (129,03 ha) et Flamande (105,39 ha). Il convient de noter que tous ces terrains sont achetés libres de bail et que la gestion peut donc immédiatement être réalisée de façon optimale pour le rôle des genêts.

En Fagne-Famenne, une quinzaine d'agriculteurs assure désormais la gestion de quelques 120 hectares de prés de fauche destinés à la conservation du rôle des genêts. Les contrats de gestion signés stipulent les dates de fauche, l'interdiction de tout amendement des prairies et l'aménagement de zones refuges non fauchées. Des conventions spéciales ont également été signées avec plusieurs fermiers afin que ceux-ci puissent bénéficier de primes agri-environnementales.

D'autre part, sur un site d'environ 7 ha contenant des coupes à blanc d'épicéas, des fourrés de saules et des prairies humides, une gestion par le pâturage a été démarrée à l'aide de quelques bovins rustiques (Galloways). Cette gestion vise à la restauration d'un habitat propice au damier de la succise (*Euphydryas aurinia*), papillon repris en Annexe II de la Directive Habitat.

En Flandre, la gestion des prés de fauche est également réalisée par des agriculteurs, mais des superficies considérables sont également pâturées par des bovins appartenant à l'association elle-même, notamment dans les Demerbroeken.

La politique de l'acquisition foncière et de la gestion des prés de fauche sous forme de contrats d'entreprise assure une maîtrise à long terme de la gestion des sites. Le programme Life constitue à cet égard un solide point de départ pour assurer une récupération des populations du rôle des genêts. Des acquisitions foncières supplémentaires viendront s'ajouter dans les années à venir, de telle façon que le réseau de sites puisse être consolidé et que la gestion de plus grands blocs de pré de fauche d'un seul tenant redevienne possible.

Dans des réserves situées dans des zones alluviales de cours d'eau tels que l'Hermeton et l'Eau Blanche en Fagne-Famenne ou encore le Demer et le Zwarte Beek en Flandre, la maîtrise de la plus grande partie des zones inondables est envisagée à l'avenir, de telle façon qu'une gestion plus intégrale, incluant une dynamique naturelle et spontanée du cours d'eau, devienne possible.

APPENDIX 5.1

BirdLife WORKSHOP ON SPECIES ACTION PLANS

4 MAY, IZMIR, TURKEY

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIES ACTION PLANS

This report gives a brief overview of what progress has been made in the implementation of the first set of 23 BirdLife Species Action Plans up to now, mostly focusing on activities carried out by BirdLife Partners during 1995 and 1996. Planned actions for 1997 and beyond are also mentioned, if known. This information was gathered from recent reports and other published material and through correspondence with Partners and other species experts.

GENERAL ISSUES

Launch of 'Globally Threatened Birds in Europe: Action Plans'

The book was published by the Council of Europe in English in October 1996. It was officially launched at the Frankfurt Book Fair at the beginning of October. All BirdLife Partners received a press release and a copy of the book to prepare their own launch nationally. Several Partners took this opportunity to raise the profile of the species programme. Especially good media coverage was achieved in the UK, Turkey and Austria.

Free copies of the publication were distributed to the authors and compilers of the Action Plans, members of the Steering Committee of the project and BirdLife Partners and Partner Designates. The Council of Europe has agreed to distribute 150 copies free of charge for advocacy and media contacts all over Europe. It is planned that a small number of contributors to the Action Plans will also receive a free copy to honour their efforts.

Translation of Species Action Plans

The Council of Europe is currently preparing the French translation of the Action Plans publication which will be published by May (and distributed at the meeting). The Spanish translation of the relevant Action Plans has been prepared by SEO/BirdLife. There are plans to translate the Action Plans of all the relevant species in Russian by RBCU.

New action plans

In 1996 BirdLife International has embarked on a new project to prepare Action Plans for a further 8 species of birds in Europe. Three of these, Ferruginous Duck, Steller's Eider and Spotted Eagle, are globally threatened species according to the new IUCN criteria (Collar et al. 1994), which were not covered by the first set of Action Plans published in October 1996. The other five species - Bittern, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Lammergeier, Bonelli's Eagle, Little Bustard - are all priority species for conservation within the European Union. The project is funded by the European Commission and RSPB (the BirdLife Partner in the UK). Project coordinator is Mr. Norbert Schäffer.

The procedure to prepare the Action Plans is very similar to the previous one. Each action plan has a compiler whose task is to contact experts of the species in all range states in Europe or the European Union. They collected preliminary information on the species to prepare a first outline of the plan for

discussion. Experts from all range states of the species in Europe are then brought together in a workshop to share their expertise and make the action plan as comprehensive as possible. After the workshop the a draft action plan is prepared and sent for consultation among those who attended the meeting. Comments are incorporated in the subsequent version of the text by the compiler and sent for wider consultation afterwards. The final versions of the Action Plans are expected to be prepared in May 1997.

Seven workshops were planned (the two *Aquila* species were treated under one workshop because of the similarities between the relevant aspects of their life history, threats and recommendations) during the preparation of the plans. All seven workshops have been completed on the following timetable:

- **Bittern *Botaurus stellaris***: 14--18 April 1996 in Hilpoltstein/Germany organized by Landesbund für Vogelschutz in Bayern. The action plan for this species is now completed.
- **Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca***: 9--14 October 1996 in Szerencs/Hungary organized by MME (BirdLife Partner in Hungary).
- **Steller's Eider *Polysicta stelleri***: 1--4 November 1996 in Kuressaare/Estonia organized by the Estonian Ornithological Society (EOS, BirdLife Partner Designate in Estonia) and Vilsandi National Park.
- **Spotted & Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* and *A. pomarina***: 14--18 November 1996, Kemeris/Latvia organized by the Latvian Ornithological Society (LOB, BirdLife Partner Designate in Latvia) and World Working Group on Birds of Prey and Owls.
- **Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus***: 12--15 December 1996 in Anso Village, Huesca/Spain organized by the Spanish Ornithological Society (SEO/BirdLife, BirdLife Partner in Spain).
- **Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraetus fasciatus***: 9--12 January 1997 in Madrid/Spain organized by SEO/BirdLife.
- **Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax***: 23--26 January 1997 in Trujillo, Caceres/Spain organized by SEO/BirdLife.

The Action Plans follow the same format as the ones produced in the first set: background information (distribution, population, life history, feeding and habitat requirements, threats and limiting factors, conservation status and recent conservation measures), aims and objectives and recommended conservation actions by country. There is a comprehensive list of references provided in each plan.

It is expected that the new set of Action Plans will receive the same level of acceptance by the European Union member states and members of the Council of Europe as the first 23 plans. BirdLife International will officially present these plans at the next meeting of the Standing Committee of the Berne Convention for discussion and approval.

Slide set and illustrations for BirdLife

A slide set to promote the Species Action Plans and the Species Programme has been prepared by the BirdLife Secretariat and is being distributed to the European Partnership in April. BirdLife Partners can use this set to promote BirdLife's species work in publications or in presentations. A Spanish artist, Mr. Juan Varela has been commissioned to prepare black-and-white line drawings of all globally threatened species and other species covered by the Action Plans by June 1997. A set of these drawings will also be distributed to BirdLife Partners in Europe.

Bonn Convention: addition of species to Appendix I and II

At the meeting of the Contracting Parties of the Bonn Convention in April several proposals were considered to add species to Appendix I and II of the Convention. Amongst these there was a BirdLife proposal (presented by the Hungarian Government) to add nine European globally threatened species to Appendix I. There were additional proposals from the Czech Republic and Spain to add the remaining two migratory globally threatened species (Corncrake and Marbled Teal, respectively) to Appendix II and I. All these proposals were accepted by the Conference. This means that now all migratory globally threatened bird species are included in Appendix I of the Convention (with the exception of Corncrake which is listed only in Appendix II). Hopefully this additional layer of international legal protection will translate into practical conservation in the future.

BirdLife WORKSHOP ON SPECIES ACTION PLANS**4 MAY, IZMIR, TURKEY****REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIES ACTION PLANS****INDIVIDUAL SPECIES****Fea's Petrel**

Deserta Grande LIFE project 1996-98: aimed mostly at removal of herbivores and restoring natural flora, which will benefit the species.

Zino's Petrel

Only two juveniles are thought to have fledged in 1996, three chicks were eaten by rats. Predator (rat, cat) control operations were ongoing during the breeding season. The few night visits paid during 1996 indicates further decline in the population.

Pygmy Cormorant

Albania: extensive survey was carried out in 1996. There is no confirmation of breeding in the country, probably because of high level of disturbance at key sites.

Greece: WWF/HOS LIFE Project has been approved for 1997-99 (together with Lesser White-fronted Goose). The main elements of the project include monitoring, habitat conservation, wardening and public awareness.

Hungary: species has become regular breeder in Cormorant colonies.

Bulgaria: Preparation of management plans for the most important Black Sea coastal wetlands was carried out within the framework of the Swiss Biodiversity Project, which was finished in 1996. Annual mid-winter counts of the wintering population carried out by BSPB with support from RSPB, latest counts put number at 4,000 birds.

Italy: the species is a new breeder. A total of 7 pairs are breeding in Punte Alberete reserve, another 1-3 pairs are suspected at Venice Lagoon. The Po Delta management plan, produced by LIPU is also taking into consideration of the conservation needs of this species.

Dalmatian Pelican

Albania: population is increasing, now at 72 pairs.

Greece: A two-year project started in 1996 at Amvrakikos, the main issues being conservation and public awareness/education. A full-time staff is employed for 6 months each year to coordinate the project. There is an ongoing project at Prespa by a local NGO, which have various elements including management, habitat restoration, awareness and green tourism.

Bulgaria: There is a proposal for protection of an island on the Danube, where there is a new wintering congregation of Pelicans, and where breeding is possible in the future. Annual midwinter counts carried out by BSPB with support from RSPB.

Romania: the Danube Delta colony is now split into four, two of which are mixed with White Pelicans. Population is 80-100 pairs.

Lesser White-fronted Goose

International: Working Group met during November 1996 and reviewed progress in implementing the Urgent Action Plan. There is funding from WWF Sweden and Swedish government to organise expedition to Taymir and Yamal during 1997, where 7 transmitters will be attached to birds. The follow-up will still need funding.

Norway: Satellite-tracking experiment was carried out in 1995 with important results gained. 4 birds were tagged in Norway, of which three were lost subsequently, probably to hunting. One female travelled through Russia, Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria to arrive at the Evros Delta in Greece. The bird was seen back in Norway in spring 1996. Illegal shooting of birds is clearly the biggest problem. There is ongoing monitoring and research of the species at the Valdak marshes, an important pre- and post-breeding stopover site.

Russia: The Kanin-peninsula was identified as a very important post-breeding moulting site for the Fenno-Scandian population by the satellite tracking experiments. As a result of quick actions by WWF and the local authorities, in January 1997 the Shoybinski State Nature Reserve was designated, which covers 16,400 ha of the most important area for the species. Perhaps most importantly, shooting is prohibited in the entire reserve (unless for scientific purpose).

Romania: The species was given legal protection in the new hunting law adopted in October 1996.

Bulgaria: a field survey was carried out in winter 1995/96 and 1996/97 at Shabla and Dorankulak lakes in the framework of the Swiss Biodiversity Programme (in the latter also by Norwegian team of experts), but only a small number of birds was estimated. A poster depicting the species is in preparation.

Greece: field surveys were carried out at the most important IBAs (Lake Kerkini, Evros Delta) in 1995/96 and 96/97. There is a new LIFE project approved for 1997-1999 (WWF/HOS). Main areas of the project: monitoring, habitat conservation, wardening, public awareness (same as for Pygmy Cormorant).

Finland: Satellite-tracking experiments are also carried out here. In 1995 one bird was tagged and subsequently shot in Kazakhstan (with other birds from the same family). There is an ongoing monitoring and research work (similar to the one in Norway). There is a LIFE proposal (for 1998 and beyond) currently in consideration.

Azerbaijan: a field survey was carried out in the winter of 1995/96. About 1,000 bird was estimated in the country but a few key sites could not be visited and the weather was not favourable. Excessive waterfowl hunting was found at all key sites visited.

Hungary: regular monitoring started during winter 1996/97, data is collected also on habitat use of the species.

Kazakhstan: 7,400 birds were found at a staging area with heavy hunting pressure last winter. There is a plan to visit the area during winter 1997/98 to help setting up a protected area.

Red-breasted Goose

Romania: Legal protection was accorded to species in new hunting law adopted in October 1996. A project on monitoring numbers and research on habitat selection of species was carried out in winter 1996/97 in Dobrudja (supported by RSPB). A PHARE project proposal for 1998-2000 on further research and introduction of extensive management schemes is under development. ROS has published a leaflet in Romanian and English on the species with support from RSPB.

Bulgaria: monitoring and research is regularly carried out in key sites in NE-Bulgaria. Management plans were developed for important Black Sea wetlands within the framework of Swiss Biodiversity Project. A sub-project in the framework of the above mentioned project was started on the winter biology and conservation requirements of the species. A leaflet for hunters in Bulgarian, French and Italian was produced and spread and postcards with the species were printed and distributed to increase public awareness for the species.

Greece: there are plans to include the species in LIFE project on Lesser White-fronted Goose and Pygmy Cormorant (sites and problems are the same).

Marbled Teal

Azerbaijan: The waterbird survey in winter 1995/96 (aimed at Lesser White-fronted Goose) found important numbers of this species at some sites. However, hunting pressure on all these sites is very high, in some places subsistence hunting, in others foreign hunters.

Spain: As a result of national and international protest, a temporary hunting ban was enacted on a part of El Hondo, one of the most important wintering sites for the species in Spain. As a result, numbers of Marbled Teal were permanently high at the site during the winter 1996/97. Three LIFE project proposals were submitted of which only one in Valencia (1997-) was approved during 1996. A national survey was done.

White-headed Duck

France: a Ruddy Duck was shot in the Camargue in February 1997.

Turkey: All year round monitoring at Burdur Gölü should start in 1997 (funded by RSPB).

UK: During 1996 a film was shot in Spain for the species, which will be available (probably in various languages) in 1997 from RSPB. Within the UK government no clear decision has been made to step up control efforts of Ruddy Duck, despite all hard lobbying by the Ruddy Duck Working Group and others.

Netherlands: the necessary regulations for culling of Ruddy Duck has been passed during 1996 but no sign of control efforts yet.

Switzerland: SVS organised a meeting in October 1996 with concerned federal authorities to remove Ruddy Ducks (there are only a few records every year). However, this decision will be dependent on culling activities carried out by main source countries in Europe, most notably by the UK.

Italy: LIPU has sent a letter to the Sardinian Regional Government not to carry out a proposed reintroduction project of the species. The authorities were also asked to take all actions necessary to reduce the numbers of Ruddy Ducks, which regularly appear in autumn in the region.

Spain: During census in November 1996 900 - 1,000 birds were found throughout the country. There

have been an increased number of Ruddy Duck records, the majority of which were shot (not all).

Tunisia: first (unconfirmed) record in April 1997.

Morocco: Ruddy Duck/W-h. Duck hybrids were found for the first time during 1996.

Cinereous Vulture

France: a LIFE project for 'Vultures in Les Causses' (including 4 pairs of reintroduced Cinereous Vultures) has been proposed by FIR (Fonds d'Intervention pour les Rapaces) to manage the SPA near Millau, Southern France.

Turkey: Surveys were carried out in 1995 and 1996 in potential breeding areas in W-Turkey. Some major forest IBAs were identified and the population in the area is estimated at 20-50 pairs. Some evidence on the effect of disturbance on the population was found.

Bulgaria: Artificial feeding and erection of artificial nest-sites continued in the Eastern Rodopi mountains. A publicity poster for the species was prepared. Regular monitoring of the species was ensured during the period 1994-97 in the framework of the Swiss Biodiversity Project.

Italy: LIPU is preparing a feasibility study on the reintroduction of this species to Sardinia, where the species last bred in 1961.

Spain: Population was estimated at 1,027 pairs in 1996. There was a national conference in 1996 on poisoning, which is still a big problem for this and other species in Spain. There is a meeting planned later this year by the Spanish government to review the international Action Plan. National LIFE project is submitted for funding and has good chance to succeed.

Imperial Eagle

Russia: Preliminary survey was carried out in 1996 along the Don river in European Russia (supported by Vogelbescherming). Within the surveyed area the population is estimated at 150-200 pairs. A few IBAs and two major concentrations were identified. The population trend was found to be rather stable in the regions surveyed. Another survey is planned for 1997.

Ukraine: Preliminary survey was carried out in 1996 (supported by Vogelbescherming). The species was found missing in several suitable areas and declining in others. More surveys are needed in 1997.

Bulgaria: Within the framework of the Eastern Rodopi Project (Swiss Biodiversity Project) the following activities were carried out: artificial feeding, monitoring, research and preparation of a publicity poster for the species. A nation-wide monitoring started with funding from RSPB. A new project for supporting the species in the Eastern Balkan mountains started with funds from Nos Oiseaux Société Romande pour l'Etude et la Protection des Oiseaux and from private donors in Switzerland.

Hungary: joint project with Slovakia during 1995 and 1996. 20,000 km of powerlines were identified as dangerous for the species, 2,000 km is now being insulated by power company.

Greece: Limited funds are available to survey border areas for the species, a few pairs might be found.

Spanish Imperial Eagle

A national LIFE-project is currently being carried out by the Spanish Government. Satellite-tracking has proved that this species migrates as far as Senegal during winter.

Lesser Kestrel

France: a LIFE application has been submitted by the FIR (Fonds d'Intervention pour les Rapaces) for the protection of the species in the south of France, in the Crau, where the largest remaining population (42 pairs) lives.

Spain: There is a LIFE project approved during 1996 for the region of Extremadura, together with other steppe species (Little Bustard, Great Bustard).

Italy: There is a LIFE project proposal for 1998 for nest-site protection to be decided in 1997.

Bulgaria: A national survey is going on for the species. A publicity poster is prepared for the species.

Russia/Kazakhstan: A steppe survey (supported by Vogelbescherming) was carried out by Russian experts (mainly for Slender-billed Curlew) during 1996 and some interesting observations were made on this species. A survey is planned for Kazakhstan for 1997 in the form of an international expedition.

Turkey: species is now fully protected.

Corncrake

International: A LIFE project proposal (involving UK, Ireland, France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Finland and Austria) was prepared for 1998-2000, submitted by the German federal government in 1997, which eventually failed. An International Corncrake Working Group meeting was held in June 1996. A Multi-country PHARE project proposal is under development for 1998-2000 for several species, including this one. An international workshop is planned for 1997 to discuss coordination and implementation issues.

Poland: A radio telemetry project was carried out to follow post-breeding failure dispersion of birds at Kombinat Wisna, NE-Poland in 1996. It was found that the number of birds is declining as mowing progresses and many of them disperse to more favourable, extensive grasslands nearby. A research is planned in Biebrza marshes and a national survey are planned for 1997 (supported by RSPB).

Latvia: National survey was carried out in 1996 (supported by RSPB). The total population is estimated at 26,000-38,000 calling birds in the country.

Russia: Large-scale surveys were carried out at randomly selected sites in European Russia in 1995 and 1996 (supported by RSPB). The total population there is now estimated at 1-1.5 million calling birds, although even this may be an underestimate. Floodplain meadows were found to be the most important habitat for the species. Most important concentrations were identified and management plans are now being developed for all of these.

Bulgaria: National survey was carried out in 1995 (supported by RSPB). Public awareness campaign is under way for the species. A radio telemetry survey to map altitudinal movements of individuals was also conducted.

Romania: National survey is planned for 1997 (supported by RSPB).

Switzerland: during 1996 a pilot project was completed by SVS in cooperation with the Swiss Institute for Ornithology with support from the Federal Office for the Environment, Forests and Countryside. Data on the distribution of the species in Switzerland was collected. A colour leaflet, several practical guides and two circular letters was published about the project and conservation requirements of the species. Good cooperation was established with authorities in areas with Corncrakes and some practical results were obtained. The project will be expanded to include the conservation of extensively managed meadows and the preparation of an Action Plan for the species during 1997-98.

Italy: Research on the ecology and a survey on the species was carried out by the Museum of Natural History of Trento in collaboration with LIPU. A conference on the species will be organised in 1997. A ringing study of calling males is ongoing in the region since 1994.

Ireland: The Corncrake Conservation Project, supported by RSPB, National Parks and Wildlife Service and EU LIFE, aims to increase Corncrake breeding success in three core areas by offering incentives to farmers to implement Corncrake-friendly management practices. As a result of the project Corncrake numbers have increased in the country in 1995 and 1996.

UK: there is an ongoing conservation project by RSPB in Scotland and Northern Ireland, aiming at promoting Corncrake-friendly management schemes to farmers. The campaign was very successful and Corncrake numbers have increased in recent years.

Slovakia: national survey was done in 1995/1996 and will continue in 1997 as well. Population estimate has been doubled. A habitat management project started in NE-Slovakia.

Projects are also undertaken in Belgium, Czech Republic, France and Germany.

Great Bustard

International: a European Great Bustard Project is being prepared by CIC and IIMA. A first step of this initiative is to organize a European census of the species by standard methodology to achieve comparable results.

Spain: There are LIFE projects approved during 1996 for two regions (Extramadura, Villafafila) for 1997 and beyond. SEO has prepared a complaint against a golf course development at Villafafila.

Slovakia: Conservation project in SW Slovakia in 1995 and 1996 with the aim of monitoring, research, habitat conservation, introduction of Bustard-friendly land-use techniques and public awareness.

Russia: Steppe surveys during 1996 (for S-b. Curlew) gave some interesting results on this and other steppe species as well.

Hungary: conservation/awareness campaign is still ongoing in key area. Plans were developed for special protection areas for the species where Bustard-friendly management schemes should be introduced. A project in the NW part of the country, which started in 1993, resulted in doubling the population there.

Bulgaria: winter surveys found two sites with 5 and 10 birds, respectively.

Turkey: there is a project proposal to identify key sites for species and to develop proposals for

designation of these sites.

Slender-billed Curlew

International: New theory on where to find breeding grounds was put forward by Dutch and Russian experts in 1996 at the Wader Study Group Conference. 22 sites with the largest likelihood of finding the species were identified and it is proposed that field surveys are conducted at these sites.

Albania: the only site where the species was observed has been proposed for protected area designation.

Greece: LIFE project 1996-98: monitoring, research, satellite-tracking, public awareness. Both in 1996 and 1997 birds were recorded in the Evros Delta, confirming the importance of Greece for the species. Tagging experiments were conducted on Eurasian Curlews in 1996 but no movements of the birds could be detected. Effort was made in spring 1997 to catch and satellite-tag Whimbrels in Evros Delta but they proved unsuccessful as only one bird was caught during a one-week period when the transmitters were available.

Romania: New game law adopted in October 1996 provides protection to this and look-alike species.

Russia: Field surveys were conducted in the steppe regions and in the Tara region in 1996, without success (supported by Vogelbescherming). More field surveys are planned for 1997.

Italy: surveys are regularly carried out by INFS and LIPU at key sites for the species. LIPU has formally proposed the designation or enlargement of all key sites as Ramsar sites.

Bulgaria: all key sites are now protected, for some of these management plans have been prepared within the framework of the Swiss Biodiversity Project.

Audouin's Gull

International: A questionnaire was sent out by the compiler in 1997 about population, trends and implementation of the SAP. A workshop is organised in Spain to up-date Action Plan in June 1997.

Greece: Field surveys were conducted in 1995 and '96 on the islands of the Aegean Sea. These resulted in the identification of new breeding colonies and the preparation of a LIFE project for 1997-99, which was approved during 1996. The Greek population is now estimated at 400 pairs. Colour-ringing scheme is introduced in 1997.

Spain: New LIFE projects are approved for the Ebro Delta in 1996, one of which is to improve the conditions of the breeding colony. Research and monitoring project on the species is under way, first results are now published.

Madeira Laurel Pigeon

There is a LIFE project on the species on Madeira.

Dark-tailed Laurel Pigeon **White-tailed Laurel Pigeon**

A LIFE project is finished in 1996 which had the following elements: habitat management, reserve purchase, public awareness. A new LIFE project was approved in 1996 to continue conservation efforts for the two species.

Aquatic Warbler

Belarus: New surveys were conducted in 1995 and 1996 by German and Belarus experts which resulted in the identification of several very important sites for the species and a significantly revised national and global population estimate. Currently it seems that Belarus holds the largest population in the world and the site with the highest density. Polesia floodplain conference, focusing on the main sites, is to be held in May 1997.

Ukraine: New surveys carried out in 1996 resulted in population estimate revised upwards and several key sites found. More surveys are planned in 1997.

Poland: Research project in Biebrza and national survey is planned for 1997. Species is found at 16 IBAs, most of which is under protection.

Russia: a survey was undertaken during 1996 in those areas of European Russia where the species had previously been recorded (supported by Vogelbescherming). Very few birds were found and it was concluded that the Russian population may be smaller than previously thought.

Blue Chaffinch

There is a LIFE project, a main element of which is captive breeding.

Azores Bullfinch

No information.

APPENDIX 5.2

BirdLife International

Report on the development of 8 new species action plans

Dr. Norbet Schäffer, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Under LIFE-Nature contract B4-3200/93/773 plans for twenty-three species were prepared. These 23 plans were published by the Council of Europe in 1996. Co-funding for this programme came from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

This project excluded five European species of global concern. The population of *Chettusia gregaria* is almost entirely outside Europe, and it was agreed that this species would not be included. *Loxia scotica* is already subject to detailed conservation planning and action and, since it occurs in no other country, is dealt with under RSPB's UK action planning programme and the UK government's Biodiversity Strategy. The remaining three species had not been recognised as such when the project started, and have therefore been covered in a second phase - the present project - during 1996 and 1997. They are *Polysticta stelleri*, *Aythya nyroca* and *Aquila clanga*.

In addition, five species of particular concern within the European Union are covered in this project:

Botaurus stellaris, *Gypaetus barbatus*, *Aquila pomarina*, *Hieraaetus fasciatus* and *Tetrax tetrax*. For these species, action plans cover the EU range states only unless there is a compelling reason to include other countries.

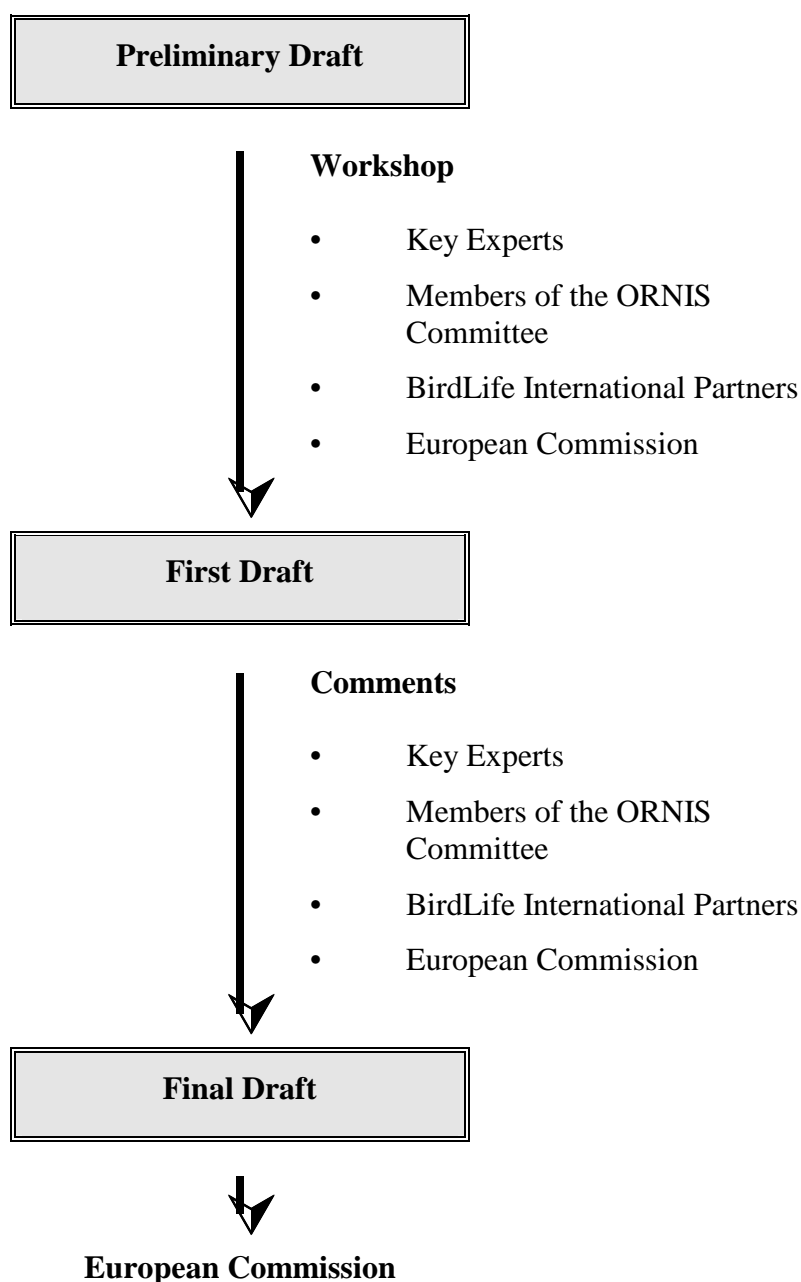
Table 1: List of species

species	range of the action plan
Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i>	all European Countries
Steller's Eider <i>Polysticta stelleri</i>	all European Countries
Spotted Eagle <i>Aquila clanga</i>	all European Countries
Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	EU Countries
Lammergeier <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	EU Countries
Lesser Spotted Eagle <i>Aquila pomarina</i>	EU Countries
Bonelli's Eagle <i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i>	EU Countries
Little Bustard <i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	EU Countries

Procedure in the development of the action plans:

As with the 23 earlier plans, workshops of experts and interested parties from as many range states as possible was held. This ensured that the latest information on the status, distribution, limiting factors, threats and other key data concerning the species was readily available. This report lists the workshops and their participants. Successive draft plans bring together all the information obtained at the workshop and are circulated to workshop participants, other known experts and relevant NGO and public bodies.

Table 2: Development of Species Action Plans



Agenda of the workshops and chapters of the action plan:

The action plans are drawn up to essentially a common format. The agenda of the workshop is following the chapters of the action plans. The agenda of the workshops and the chapters of the action plans are:

Background information

Distribution and population

Life history

- Threats and limiting factors

Conservation status and recent conservation measures

Aim and objectives

Aims

Objectives

- Policy and legislation
- Species and habitat protection
- Monitoring and research
- Public awareness and training

Annex: Recommended conservation actions by country

People involved in the development of the action plans:

Following groups of people are involved in the development of the action plans:

key experts on the species were invited to participate in the action plan workshop

other key experts were consulted to get information on the species and comments on the draft of the action plan

BirdLife Partners / BirdLife Partners Designate in all range countries of the species were consulted

- members of the ORNIS Committee of all range countries of the species were invited to participate in the workshop and give comments on the draft of the action plan

As before, we sought to involve governmental agencies in the planning process, since it is largely they who have to approve, fund, and often carry out the action.

Tab. 3: Report on the development of 8 new species action plans (I)

species	Compilers of the action plan	Organisation of the action plan workshop	Venue of the action plan workshop	Date of the workshop	N° of countries represented in the action plan workshop	State of the action plan
Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i>	Des Callaghan, Wetlands International, Netherlands	Szabolcs Nagy, MME, Hungary Norbert Schäffer, RSPB, UK	Szerencs, Hungary	9 - 13 October 1996	participants from 16 countries	final draft available
Steller's Eider <i>Polysticta stelleri</i>	Stefan Pihl, NERI, Denmark	Stefan Pihl, NERI, Denmark	Kurassaare, Estonia	1 - 4 November 1996	participants from 7 countries	final draft available
Spotted Eagle <i>Aquila clanga</i> *	Bernd-Ulrich Meyburg, Germany László Haraszthy, MME, Hungary Norbert Schäffer, RSPB, UK	Maris Strazds, LOB, Latvia Norbert Schäffer, RSPB, UK	Kemeri, Latvia	14 - 18 November 1996	participants from 16 countries	final draft: July 1997

Report on the development of 8 new species action plans (II)

species	Compilers of the action plan	Organisation of the action plan workshop	Venue of the action plan workshop	Date of the workshop	N° of countries represented in the action plan workshop	State of the action plan
Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	Peter Newbury, RSPB, UK Norbert Schäffer, RSPB, UK Ken Smith, RSPB, UK	Norbert Schäffer, RSPB, UK Andreas v. Lindeiner, LBV, Germany	Hilpoltstein, Germany	14 - 18 April 1996	participants from 7 countries	final draft available
Lammergeier <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	Borja Heredia, Spain Rafael Heredia, Spain	Juan Criado, SEO/BirdLife, Spain	Ansó, Huesca, Aragón, Spain	12 - 15 December	participants from 4 countries	final draft: July 1997
Lesser Spotted Eagle <i>Aquila pomarina</i> *	Bernd-Ulrich Meyburg, Germany László Haraszthy, MME, Hungary Norbert Schäffer, RSPB, UK	Maris Strazds, LOB, Latvia Norbert Schäffer, RSPB, UK	Kemeri, Latvia	14 - 18 November 1996	participants from 16 countries	final draft: July 1997
Bonelli's Eagle <i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i>	Bernardo Arroyo, Spain Ernesto Ferreiro, Spain	Juan Criado, SEO/BirdLife, Spain	Madrid, Spain	9 - 12 January 1997	participants from 4 countries	final draft: July 1997
Little Bustard <i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	Carmen Martinez, Spain Eduardo de Juana, Spain	Juan Criado, SEO/BirdLife, Spain	Trujillo, Cáceres, Extremadura, Spain	23 - 26 January 1997	participants from 6 countries	final draft: July 1997

* The action plan workshop of Spotted and Lesser Spotted Eagle action plan were combined.

APPENDIX 6

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLANS FOR GLOBALLY THREATENED BIRDS IN EUROPE

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 48 (1996) on the conservation of globally threatened birds in Europe;

Recommends that Contracting Parties and Invites observer states as appropriate urgently to:

General

1. include key sites for the relevant species in their national networks of protected areas; consider designating appropriate key sites in the European networks of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (Bern Convention Emerald Network) and / or Special Areas of Conservation (Natura 2000 Network), and, where relevant, to other international networks, such as those under the Ramsar and Barcelona Conventions;
2. promote collaboration with the relevant Non Governmental Organisations and scientific institutions in the implementation of the 23 Action Plans mention in Recommendation No. 48 of the Standing Committee, so as to be able to mobilise all possible available knowledge and energies;
3. promote appropriate agricultural practices in areas supporting internationally numbers of globally threatened species (Red-breasted Goose, Corncrake, Great Bustard, Aquatic Warbler) in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe;
4. enforce existing hunting and conservation regulations so as to stop mortality caused by the use of poison baits and illegal shooting (measures may include the increase of forestry wardens, the strict implementation of legal sanctions for offenders and the setting up of awareness programmes for hunters, farmers and forestry wardens);

Pygmy Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*)

Albania

5. carry out the appropriate management for the newly designated Strict Nature Reserve of Velipoja-Buna river outlet);

Albania

6. improve the conditions for the successful breeding of the species around the Shkodra's lake protecting, by the most appropriate way potential breeding sites;

Greece

7. monitor water level fluctuation in Lake Kerkini in order to ensure appropriate water levels during the period March-August (a maximum water level of not more than 35 m a.s.l. was suggested in the relevant Action Plan);

Turkey

8. protect by the most appropriate way the Lake Uluabat Güllük Delta and Milas Tuzla area;

Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*)

Albania

9. continue wardening the colony at Karavasta Lagoon between February and late July every year;

Bulgaria

10. build an artificial island in order to provide nesting sites at Srebarna Lake;

Greece

11. monitor water level fluctuation in Lake Kerkini in order to ensure appropriate water levels during the period March-August (a maximum water level of not more than 35 m a.s.l. was suggested in the relevant Action Plan);

Turkey

12. consider extending the Ramsar boundaries of the Manyas Lake to include the whole areas of the lake, so as to prevent the pollution coming through the Si_irci stream.

Lesser white-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)

Relevant Parties

13. prevent from human disturbance, in particular from accidental shooting of birds and disturbance associated with hunting activities, key staging and wintering areas (eg in the Turgai Depression - Kazakhstan, Kyzyl-Agach-Azerbaijan, Galenbecker See and buffer zone - Germany);

Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)

Bulgaria

14. provide evening and morning wardening during the hunting season at Shabla and Durankulak;

Marbled Teal (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*)

Spain

15. continue present policy banning hunting at El Hondo, key breeding and wintering site for the species;

Turkey

16. consider declaring Akyatan Lagoon and Tuzla Lake as Ramsar sites;

White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*)

Bulgaria

17. protect by the most appropriate means the Uzungeren Bay;

Greece

18. maintain the ecological characteristics of Lake Vistonis, including marshes in the southeast part;

Turkey

19. extend the Ramsar boundaries of the Burdur Lake to include the whole wetland area, so as to prevent pollution and secure the sustainability of the natural ecosystem of the lake;

Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*)

Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia

20. ensure the reduction of mortality from electrocution by power lines through modification/neutralisation of existing dangerous pylons in key areas; prevent further problems through amendments of existing legislation/standards on new pylons' design and avoid constructing power lines at most sensitive breeding and dispersion areas;

Bulgaria

21. provide wardening of the nests at Sredna Gora, Eastern Rhodopi, Sakar and Strandzha;

Spanish Imperial Eagle (*Aquila adalberti*)

Spain

22. ensure the reduction of mortality from electrocution by power lines through modification/neutralisation of existing dangerous pylons in key areas; prevent further problems through amendments of existing legislation/standards on new pylons' design and avoid constructing new power lines at most sensitive breeding and dispersion areas;

Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*)

Greece

23. consider launching appropriate programmes on agricultural areas that may improve the habitat of the species in Greece;

Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and Ukraine

24. undertake appropriate actions to identify the last remaining breeding sites;

Corncrake (*Crex crex*)

Poland

25. develop and implement a management plan for the former Kombinat Wizna aimed at the long term protection of the species;

Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*)

Russia

26. ensure the conservation of the ecological characteristics and value of the natural reserve of Stepnoj Saratoarskiy, preventing degradation from oil extraction activities;

Spain

27. protect by the most appropriate way key grassland areas and pseudosteppes, specially La Serena, Monegros and Bardenas Reales;

28. search an alternative settlement of the proposed golf course outside the Villafáfila Great Bustard reserve;

Turkey

29. take every appropriate measure to protect the species population in Altuntas Plain;

Ukraine

30. protect by the most appropriate way key areas for the species in the Kerch Peninsula;

Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)*Ukraine, Belarus*

31. protect by the most appropriate way key areas for the species in Pripjat marshes;

Ukraine

32. assess the conservation of the species in this state;

Houbara Bustard (*Chlamydotis undulata fuertaventurae*)*Spain*

33. adopt and implement a formal recovery plan, as required by Spanish Conservation law for endangered species, taking into account, in particular, the Action Plan for Globally Threatened Birds in Europe;

34. protect, by the most appropriate means, key areas for the species, in particular Lajares and Esquinzo in the Island of Fuerteventura and Soo and Playa Quemada in the Island of Lanzarote;

Canarian Laurel Pigeons (*Columba bollii*, *Columba junoniae*)*Spain*

35. draft and implement appropriate plans on both species, as required by the National and Regional conservation laws;

36. implement a programme of alternatives to present commercial forestry practices (applying, for instance the results of the relevant study financed by a LIFE grant);

37. reinforce existing controls on illegal shooting;

Blue Chaffinch (*Fringilla teydea*)*Spain*

38. draft and implement the appropriate plan on the species, as required by National and Regional conservation laws;

39. propose reafforestation with Canarian pine, so as to enlarge as far as feasible the very scarce habitat of the species;

40. consider carrying out a captive breeding programme;

Furthermore invites other conventions and governmental international organisations with responsibility for species conservation in Europe (Ramsar Convention, Barcelona Convention, Bonn Convention and its AEWa agreement, Bucarest Convention, Community European, IUCN, etc.) to collaborate with the Standing Committee and the concerned states, as appropriate, in the promotion, review and implementation of the Action Plans.

APPENDIX 7

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION ON THE CONSERVATION OF THE WHITE-HEADED DUCK (*Oxyura leucocephala*)

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the convention,

Having regard to the aims of the convention to conserve wild fauna and its natural habitats,

Recalling that Article 11, paragraph b, of the convention requires parties to strictly control the introduction of non-native species,

Recalling that Article 1, paragraph 2, of the convention requires parties to give particular emphasis to the conservation of endangered and vulnerable species,

Noting that the species *Oxyura leucocephala*, listed in Appendix II of the convention, is endangered,

Recognising the efforts of Contracting Parties in preserving the populations of this species,

Noting, however, that the main threat to the long-term survival of the species is its hybridisation with the American Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*,

Conscious of the critical importance of the continued expansion over Europe of the introduced Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* on the future of the native endangered *Oxyura leucocephala*,

Noting the large extent of populations of *Oxyura jamaicensis* in the United Kingdom, where this non-native species was first introduced in Europe,

Conscious that only a very firm control policy by the United Kingdom to halt and reverse the increase in population and range of the non-native *Oxyura jamaicensis* to a level that prevents spread to other countries can result in the long term survival of the endangered *Oxyura leucocephala*,

Desirous to avoid a further loss of biological biodiversity in the continent,

Aware of the obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Bonn Convention (and article 11 of the Birds Directive) to control and eradicate introduced species in order to prevent damage to threatened species,

Recalling Recommendation R (84) 14 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which calls on the member States to prohibit the introduction of non-native species into the natural environment,

Recalling the report of the Group of Experts of the Council of Europe (de Klemm, 1995) on Introductions of non-native organisms into the natural environment,

Recalling Recommendation No. 48 of the Standing Committee, adopted on 26 January 1996, on the conservation of European globally threatened birds,

Recalling the International Action Plan for the White-headed Duck in Europe, prepared by BirdLife International and Wetlands International with the support of the European Commission,

Welcoming the important steps made by the United Kingdom government in undertaking research into the feasibility of control measures for North American Ruddy Duck in the United Kingdom,

Believing, therefore, that international coordination is essential for the conservation of the White-headed Duck,

1. Recommends that Contracting Parties to the convention or observer states, as appropriate, develop and implement without further delay, national control strategies to eradicate the Ruddy Duck from all countries of the Western Palaearctic; [national control strategies which could include eradication of the Ruddy Duck from all the countries in the Western Palaearctic;]
2. Further recommends the United Kingdom to implement urgently a control programme for Ruddy Duck in the wild.

APPENDIX 8

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION ON THE CONSERVATION OF REGIONALLY THREATENED BIRDS IN THE MACARONESIAN AND MEDITERRANEAN REGIONS

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats, acting under Article 14 of the convention,

Having regard to the aims of the convention to conserve wild fauna and its natural habitats,

Having regard to Article 1, paragraph 2, of the convention which states that particular emphasis is given to endangered and vulnerable species, including endangered and vulnerable migratory species,

Having regard to Article 3 which requires parties to pay particular attention to endemic species,

Noting that its Recommendation No. 48 on the conservation of globally threatened birds in Europe deals only with species which are threatened at world level,

Conscious of the need to promote also the conservation of birds which may be threatened at the regional level and taking into account the conservation needs of subspecies, varieties or forms at risk locally,

Aware that two biogeographical zones in Europe, the Mediterranean region and the Macaronesian region and particularly rich in species and that bird conservation in these two regions is of particular relevance to the maintenance of European biodiversity,

Recommends that Portugal and Spain:

1. identify, if they have not already done so, Macaronesian endemic birds which are vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered;
2. consider drawing up and implementing action plans for the species identified in point 1;

Recommends that relevant Contracting Parties, and invites Mediterranean observer states as appropriate,

3. Promote the drafting and implementation of Action Plans for Mediterranean most threatened species which are not globally threatened.

APPENDIX 9

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON BIRD CONSERVATION

Terms of reference:

To review current problems of bird conservation in the Convention's area, and to suggest appropriate action.

To advise the Standing Committee and Bureau on matters related to bird conservation, receiving papers and written consultation and responding accordingly.

To monitor the implementation of Bird Action Plans, particularly those covered by Recommendation No. 48 of the Standing Committee, by receiving and reviewing biennially reports on their implementation and by informing the Standing Committee on the progress made and the points where urgent action is required. The Group may review results of monitoring activities into the status of globally threatened birds, suggest species that may require Action Plans and propose new monitoring activities. The Group may make proposals to the Standing Committee on possible amendment of the appendices and the need for special studies to be included in its working programme and present draft recommendations. Additionally, the Group may liaise with other expert groups on threatened species, (linking with them into the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy theme 11 processes), disseminate information on threatened birds and propose other measures and activities which might be appropriate for the conservation of threatened birds.

The Group of experts will have a bureau made up of a chairman, one representative of BirdLife and one from the Secretariat.