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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

36th meeting
Strasbourg, 15-18 November 2016

**RECOMMENDATION
ON THE ERADICATION OF THE RUDDY DUCK
(*OXYURA JAMAICENSIS*) IN THE WESTERN
PALAEARCTIC BY 2020**

*Document
prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Governance*



Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 185 (2016) of the Standing Committee, examined on 18 November 2016, on the eradication of the ruddy duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in the Western Palaearctic by 2020

The Standing Committee to 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 flora and 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 Contracting 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 still 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 American ruddy ducks (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) introduced in Europe;

Noting that the ruddy duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) has been recognised as an invasive alien species of Union concern under Article 4 of the EU Regulation 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species;

Conscious of the need to arrest the expansion of the ruddy duck in Europe and Northern Africa;

Recalling Recommendation No. 48 of the Standing Committee, adopted on 26 January 1996, on the conservation of European globally threatened birds;

Recalling the International Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of the white-headed duck, prepared by BirdLife International, Wetlands International and the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust and adopted by CMS, AEWa and the European Union;

Recalling Recommendation No. 61 (1997) on the conservation of the white-headed duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) which asked Contracting Parties to develop and implement without further delay national control programmes which could include the eradication of the ruddy duck from all the countries in the Western Palaearctic;

Recalling the Bern Convention Action plan for eradication of the ruddy duck (1999-2002) drafted by the Wildfowl & Wetland Trust [document T-PVS/Birds (99) 9];

Recalling recommendation No. 149 (2010) of the Standing Committee, on the eradication of the ruddy duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in the Western Palaearctic and noting its implementation has contributed to lower the numbers of ruddy ducks in most European States, in particular in the United Kingdom where effective controls have reduced ruddy ducks in the wild to a few tens of individuals;

Noting that the Bern Convention Action Plan for the eradication of the ruddy duck is an integral part of the International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the white-headed duck;

Regretting, however, that delayed, insufficient action or operative difficulties in some states following the Bern Convention's eradication plan, has allowed the establishment of populations in mainland Europe and thereby made eradication more costly and difficult;

Noting that very little action has been taken to address the issue of ruddy ducks in captive collections;

Welcoming the entry into force and implementation by the EU and its member states of Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species and noting with satisfaction that the ruddy duck has been included in the list of invasive alien species of European Union concern;

Referring to the document "*Eradication of the Ruddy Duck (Oxyura jamaicensis) in the Western Palaearctic: a review of Progress and revised Action Plan 2011-2015*" by the Wildfowl & Wetland Trust [document T-PVS/Inf (2016) 16];

Conscious that, following present culling efforts, and increasing them in Belgium, France and the Netherlands it is realistic to achieve a full eradication of the ruddy duck in the wild in the Western Palaearctic in the coming years;

Noting, however, that this commendable goal will only be reached if all states concerned collaborate in a common action plan for eradication of the species;

Noting that failure to act effectively and immediately will increase the threat to the white-headed duck and increase the complexity and financial cost of eradication;

Recalling also Resolution 4.5 of AEWA, which, amongst others, strongly urges all countries with ruddy duck populations to establish or step up complementary eradication measures in order to prevent the spread of the species in Europe and towards its complete eradication in the AEWA area,

Recommends that:

All Contracting Parties:

1. Implement without delays the actions specified in the "Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the Western Palaearctic, 2016-2020" enclosed as appendix to this recommendation;

Priority States:

- *Belgium*

2. continue its current policy to eradicate every single ruddy duck or hybrid detected in its territory, outline and implement a rapid response protocol to improve reaction time;

- *France*

3. finalise and implement the national action plan for the eradication of Ruddy Duck; intensify winter controls - especially in Lac de Grand Lieu - and provide the necessary human and financial means to intensify birds culling, increasing also monitoring of breeding and moulting birds in Loire-Atlantique and neighbouring departments;

- *The Netherlands*

4. continue the present efforts to eradicate the remaining ruddy ducks;

- *Spain*

5. continue its current policy to eradicate every single ruddy duck or hybrid detected in its territory;

- *United Kingdom*

6. continue present efforts to eradicate the remaining populations of ruddy duck;

All priority states listed above

7. engage joint projects aimed to facilitating the eradication of ruddy ducks in their territories and fulfilling their obligations under the Convention, including through implementation of Regulation (EU) No. 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species concerning this alien species of Union concern;

Other States:

8. Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland: monitor and eliminate systematically all ruddy ducks appearing on their territories particularly in the breeding season and inform regularly the Standing Committee on actions taken;

9. Morocco: control systematically ruddy ducks and hybrids on its territory and inform regularly the Standing Committee on actions taken;

10. Tunisia monitor white-headed duck and eliminate systematically ruddy ducks and hybrids on its territory and inform regularly the Standing Committee on actions taken;

Invites Algeria to monitor white-headed duck and eliminate systematically ruddy ducks and hybrids on its territory and inform regularly the Standing Committee on action taken;

Invites BirdLife International and all concerned BirdLife partners organisations in Europe, the Wildfowl & Wetland Trust, as well as other relevant NGOs, to support the implementation of the eradication action plan as a way to promote the long-term conservation of the native white-headed duck, helping with observations of ruddy ducks or hybrids in the wild and explaining to their members the rationale and conservation benefits of the eradication.

APPENDIX

Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the Western Palaearctic, 2016-2020

Goal Ruddy ducks¹ stop being a threat to the white-headed duck
Target Long-term eradication of the ruddy duck in the Western Palaearctic and avoidance of new introductions of the species.

I. Actions concerning eradication of ruddy ducks in the wild

General target Eradication of the ruddy duck in the wild in the Western Palaearctic by 2020

- Action 1 Eliminate ruddy ducks in the wild mobilising the necessary resources for culling operations
- Action 2 Continue monitoring the distribution of ruddy duck in the wild
- Action 3 Keep active the existing national working groups guiding the implementation of this eradication strategy, drafting as necessary national eradication strategies
- Action 4 Remove legal barriers that may hinder the control of ruddy ducks

II. Actions concerning ruddy duck in captivity

Goal Avoid any new escape of ruddy ducks to the wild in the Western Palaearctic

General target Phase out all captive populations of ruddy ducks

- Action 5 Fully implement legislation which prohibits the trade and release of ruddy ducks kept in captivity, such as Regulation (EU) No. 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species
- Action 6 Devote supplementary efforts to monitor the status of ruddy ducks in captivity
- Action 7 Encourage the sterilisation and/or elimination of ruddy ducks in captivity and consider compensating owners for voluntary elimination, thus avoiding possible accidental escape or release of birds

III. Actions concerning public awareness, reporting and international co-ordination

Goal Improve understanding by the public of the problem thus and create a favourable opinion for eradication

Goal Follow the progress of the eradication plan and update it as necessary

- Action 8 Implement public awareness activities on the need to control ruddy ducks.
- Action 9 Report annually to the Bern Convention on national action and collaborate with other States, the Bern Convention, AEWA and other appropriate bodies in the implementation of this updated eradication plan and the Action plan for the conservation of the white-headed duck.

¹ In the framework of this action plan the term « ruddy ducks » refers both to ruddy ducks and to the hybrids of ruddy ducks and white-headed ducks.