



Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 209 (2020) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 4 December 2020, on the eradication of the ruddy duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in the Western Palaearctic by 2025

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, AEW 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 countries in the Western Palaearctic;

Recalling the Bern Convention Action plan for eradication of the ruddy duck (2011-2015) drafted by the Wildfowl & Wetland Trust [document T-PVS/Inf (2010)21];

Recalling recommendations No. 149 (2010) and No. 185 (2016) of the Standing Committee, on the eradication of the ruddy duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in the Western Palaearctic and noting that their implementation has contributed to lower the numbers of ruddy ducks in the wild to around 250 individuals in Europe;

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 the lack of concerted and timely efforts for the implementation of recommendations No. 149 (2010) and No. 185 (2016) delayed the control programmes which may result in a rise in the number of ruddy ducks, thus increasing their threat to the white-headed duck;

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 European 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 a revised Action Plan for 2021-2025*” by the Wildfowl & Wetland Trust [document T-PVS/Inf (2020)11];

Conscious that an active and appropriately targeted control programme as implemented in the United Kingdom can reduce a large population of ruddy ducks, spread across many sites, to be functionally extinct;

Conscious that a rapid-response approach as implemented in Spain can very quickly eliminate small numbers of birds arriving from elsewhere for relatively low cost;

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;

Reiterating the overriding need for collective, coordinated and synchronous actions in order to effectively address the problem for Europe as a whole,

Recommends that:

1. *All Contracting Parties implement without delay the actions specified in the “Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the Western Palaearctic, 2021-2025” enclosed as an appendix to this recommendation;*
2. *All Contracting Parties actively review and adaptively manage the implementation of the eradication plan:*
 - Review progress annually;
 - Assess the likelihood of meeting the plan’s targets;
 - Identify reasons for delays;
 - Determine and report actions to address delays to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention to ensure tangible progress can be achieved by the next Review;
 - Actively seek advice from other Parties that have addressed similar problems;
 - Report to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on the results of the annual Review;
3. *Authorities in Contracting Parties move with speed and flexibility to address issues that limit the activities of control teams, particularly access to sites:*
 - Ensure that possible problems of private ownership or potential conflict with conservation objectives of protected sites do not become an impediment to control;
 - Seek the advice of other Parties that have successfully overcome such problems;
 - Identify and rapidly implement tangible solutions to site access problems;
4. *All Contracting Parties move quickly to fulfil their obligations under the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation for ruddy ducks, or adopt equivalent measures:*
 - Provide, as a priority and with urgency, representative information on numbers of birds in captivity to clarify the risk of further accidental introductions;
5. *Belgium continues to ensure a coordinated and synchronous control programme across all regions;*

6. *France seeks and uses all support, advice and active participation from other Parties to support and empower the national control teams to meet their targets;*
7. *Germany reports on numbers of ruddy ducks nationally, and on numbers controlled, as a matter of urgency and no later than December 2021, and ensures that appropriate control measures are underway no later than December 2022;*
8. *The Netherlands ensures a coordinated and synchronous control programme across all regions;*
9. *Spain maintains its reactive response to control and rapidly eliminate any ruddy ducks which appear;*
10. *The United Kingdom maintains its active control of ruddy ducks and strives for functional extinction by 2023.*

Annex

ACTION PLAN FOR THE ERADICATION OF THE RUDDY DUCK IN THE WESTERN PALAEARCTIC, 2021–2025

Tiers

The eradication plan identifies targets and actions for Contracting Parties according to different Tiers.

Tier 3 – Contracting Parties with breeding and/or significant numbers of ruddy ducks
Belgium, France, Germany (until and unless monitoring data show that Germany should be in Tier 2),
the Netherlands, the United Kingdom

Tier 2 – Contracting Parties at significant risk of ruddy ducks arriving from Tier 3 countries
Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Spain,
Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland

Tier 1 – all other Contracting Parties in the Western Palearctic

Goal, outcomes, targets, and actions

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Ruddy ducks¹ stop being a threat to the white-headed duck</i>
<i>Aims</i>	<i>Ruddy ducks are eliminated in the wild in the Western Palearctic No ruddy ducks are held in captivity in the Western Palearctic, and no new introductions to the wild occur in the interim</i>

I. Actions concerning eradication of ruddy ducks in the wild

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>The ruddy duck is functionally extinct in the wild in the western Palearctic by 2025</i>
<i>Targets</i>	
Tier 3	Undertake active control to reduce the Contracting Party's ruddy duck population to be functionally extinct by 2025
Tier 2	Undertake rapid reactive control to eliminate any ruddy duck in the Contracting Parties' territory
<i>Actions</i>	
All Contracting Parties	Monitor the status and distribution of ruddy ducks in the wild annually Provide sufficient resources to effectively monitor numbers of ruddy ducks in the wild Provide sufficient resources to meet national control targets Rapidly identify and resolve any problems that delay or undermine national control measures (e.g. site access, public perception)

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.

II. Actions concerning ruddy ducks in captivity

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>The risk of accidental introductions of ruddy ducks in the Western Palaearctic is understood and minimised</i>
<i>Targets</i>	The numbers of ruddy ducks in captivity is understood by 2022 The risks of accidental introduction are assessed by 2024 No new introductions of ruddy ducks occur
<i>Actions</i>	Prevent the importing, selling and breeding of captive ruddy ducks Identify the number of individual birds, and the keepers of all ruddy ducks Assess the risk of release (e.g. from poor biosecurity) Identify and implement mitigation for major risks of release (e.g. establish secure facilities to which keepers could give their birds)

III. Actions concerning adaptive management and international co-ordination

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Progress towards achieving the plan's outcomes and targets is regularly assessed and adaptively managed</i> <i>Contracting Parties coordinate their activities to collectively achieve the plan's outcomes and targets in a timely and cost-effective manner</i> <i>The plan is updated in 2025</i>
<i>Actions</i> All Contracting Parties Tier 3	Report annually to the Convention – Regarding wild ruddy ducks – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the status of non-breeding and breeding wild ruddy ducks • progress towards and the likelihood of achieving national control targets • problems encountered to achieving control targets and the solutions identified to address these Regarding captive ruddy ducks – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the status of ruddy ducks in captivity • an assessment of risk of new introductions Experts (from all Tier 3 Contracting Parties as a minimum) meet to review progress against control targets, identify impediments to control, agree solutions, and report to the Convention annually