

Globally Threatened Bird Forums

Threatened Asian Birds discussion topics

Downloaded off BirdLife website: 16 November 2005

Rufous-backed Bunting (*Emberiza jankowskii*): information needed

Rufous-backed Bunting *Emberiza jankowskii* is currently listed as Vulnerable (C2ai) because it is estimated to have a small and declining population numbering 2,500-10,000 individuals, with all subpopulations numbering <1,000 individuals. D. Wilson (in litt. 2005) has sent the following comments:

“On 1-2 June 2005 I went to look for this species at a known site near Baicheng, Jilin Province, NE China. In total, I saw one male (carrying food and clearly close to a nest), and a pair and c.3 other males at a nearby site. As far as I am aware, this is the only area in which it is being seen these days. I would describe the two sites as steppe grassland with scattered small shrubs of apparently one species. The grass was about knee high with no sign of grazing. One site was flat, the other gently undulating, rolling down to a broad marshy valley. Both areas were surrounded by ploughed fields or closely cropped sward grazed by sheep, and we didn't see any other natural grassland habitat anywhere else in the Baicheng area. The “flat” site is presumably the same military area described by Bjorn Anderson in his 2003 report. It appears to be a vast firing range: we saw no sign of military activity, although we were escorted by uniformed Chinese who we assumed were military. Great Bustard breeds here and our escorts indicated that we should stay on the roads to prevent disturbance. They were clearly interested when they learned that we had located a bunting carrying food, asked to be shown where, and entered the location in a GPS. ...the undulating site...is presumably a reserved area of some sort, given the intensity of agriculture elsewhere in the area. On a more general note, the site where birders looked for the species in the 1990s was Xianghai National Nature Reserve, where it was apparently quite common and easy to see. This is still visited by several bird tour groups each year but, as far as I am aware, no buntings have been seen here for several years...it is surely worrying that at least one substantial population has apparently disappeared within the space of a few years. According to Jesper Hornskov there has been rapid expansion of agriculture in the region, and these sites are the only ones where Jankowski's Bunting is being seen anywhere within its range. This may well reflect a lack of effort to look elsewhere, but equally might indicate a species in severe decline....a logical step is to survey the species's range for suitable habitat. The historical range is vast (extending into southern Siberia and N Korea), and it would perhaps be more feasible to concentrate on the Jilin / Nei Mongol border region.”

This new information is of great cause for concern, and may imply that the species needs uplisting on the basis of its currently small known range. Any information and comments on its status would be welcome.

For information: Amami Thrush (*Zoothera major*): no longer recognised as a full species.

Until 2005, BirdLife International recognised Amami Thrush *Zoothera major* as a full species and treated it as Critically Endangered. Following a recent review of some of the members of the *Zoothera dauma* complex by Collar (2004), BirdLife will treat *major* as a subspecies of Scaly Thrush *Zoothera dauma*, and it will no longer appear on the IUCN Red List. For further information on the taxonomic sources used by BirdLife, see <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/species/taxonomy.html>

Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) downlist to Least Concern?

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* is currently listed as Near Threatened (almost meeting criterion C1) on the basis of its small and declining population. The global population is estimated to number 7,200-10,000 pairs, with 1,800-1,900 pairs in Europe (BirdLife International 2004) and 5,500-8,000 pairs in Asia. Numbers in the European stronghold of Spain increased by 20-29% during 1990-2000 (BirdLife International 2005). Although the population in eastern Europe declined, this was outweighed by the large increase in Spain, and the European population underwent a large increase (possibly >30%) overall. Great efforts have been made in recent years to learn about the large population in Mongolia, but data from large parts of eastern Europe and central and eastern Asia are still deficient (Conclusions of the First International Symposium on the Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus* held at Cordoba, Spain, on 21-23 October 2004). Is there any evidence that the Asian population is declining? If not, this species may warrant downlisting to Least Concern. Comments and relevant information would be welcome.

[operations](#) - 20 July, 2005 3:14 pm (#1 Total: 4)

Reply

Wolfgang Fremuth posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds forum:

I have severe concerns for the down listing of Cinereous Vulture. A recent trip to the steppe ecosystem of Kazakhstan has revealed the vulture populations in this Central Asia country are in severe decline due to the fact the main food resource, the Saiga antelope (*Saiga tartarica*), is also at the brink of extinction. Ten years ago over one million of Saiga antelopes inhabited the steppe ecosystems in Kazakhstan and adjacent countries. Today only 30-40.000 animals are left. In the past Saiga antelopes have been the main food resource for predators and scavengers. The Institute of Zoology in Almaty holds data that during hard winters several hundreds thousand Saiga antelopes have died (Maximum 400.000 animals!). This food resource for vultures is lost at present. Moreover the people have moved out from the steppes to the booming cities of Kazakhstan. Almost no livestock is present in the steppe areas which could compensate the food shortage by natural ungulates.

All in all the vultures (Griffons and Black vultures) are in heavy decline in Central Asia. Therefore my recommendation is not to down list the Black (Cinereous) Vulture.

Wolfgang Fremuth

Frankfurt Zoological Society

[operations](#) - 21 July, 2005 12:11 pm (#2 Total: 4)

Reply

Alvaro Camiña has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds forum:

Please let's be cautious before any downlisting of European vulture species. It is always argued that "in Spain the species has increased by...". However, recent regulations on carcass disposal in the European Union are highly restrictive (and totally against vulture ecology). This means that food for vultures is not ensured and is slightly decreasing in some areas (pers. obs.). Feeding stations is not the only solution so we MUST attend to the second factor affecting raptor distribution such as food availability (Newton, 1979).

Alvaro Camiña

Biologist

Vulture specialist

[operations](#) - 26 July, 2005 8:45 am (#3 Total: 4)

Reply

Todd Katzner has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds Discussion Forum:

Downlisting the Cinereous Vulture based on stability in Asian populations of this species is likely unwarranted. While populations of breeding birds appear stable, in the past 15 years two events have occurred which have caused great instability in the behavior, ecology and demography of these birds. These include the increasing use of diclofenac in India and the

massive declines in food resources (both domesticated and wild ungulates). Diclofenac in India is important because other vultures travel between north Asian breeding grounds and Indian wintering grounds. Furthermore, the numbers of individuals of this species wintering in northern India appears to be increasing. The massive changes in the number of ungulates is important because, while the birds may not be food limited, change in food resources changes ecology and behavior in ways that may have impacts on breeding (this is especially true for subadults that are regularly observed far from breeding range; what happens to them during the subadult period may strongly impact their ability to breed or their success at breeding). Furthermore, it has been hypothesized that the decline in northern food resources during winter is the driving force behind the increase in number of birds in India in winter. If true, then these two factors could be interacting, each making the other worse.

Thus, although there may be little evidence that the Asian population is declining, there is good evidence that the behavior, ecology, and demography of its birds have probably changed in recent years and it is likely prudent to wait a few years until the local situation has stabilized before re-evaluating the status of this species.

[operations](#) - 26 July, 2005 8:47 am (#4 Total: 4)

Reply

Mike McGrady has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds Discussion forum:

The cinereous vulture seems to be doing good in Spain and Mongolia, and recently I visited Azerbaijan where the population seems to be large relative to the populations in neighbouring countries. However, in Armenia and Georgia the breeding populations are limited to very small numbers in reserves. In Kazakhstan the numbers appear to be small and clustered. Seemingly the main cause for this limitation is the lack of food, and the change in herding after the breakup of the Soviet Union. So, in Georgia, Armenia and Kazakhstan, numbers seem to have declined since the 1980's. In Azerbaijan and Mongolia, where numbers of sheep have remained high the numbers of cinereous vultures have remained high. Elchin Sultanov in Azerbaijan and Nyamba Batbayar in Mongolia, and A. Gavashelishvili for Georgia could give better details. The existence of sheep, or rather the shepherds that tend them can also be a problem. Access to nests by shepherds, and destruction of their nests seems to be a problem in Georgia (Gavashelishvili and McGrady In press). M Ghasabian of the Armenian Society for the protection of Birds who has studied cinereous vultures in Khosrov reserve for many years says he never sees fledglings once they disperse after November, despite these being wing marked. This too may suggest that the populations in areas like Armenia are not recruiting replacement vultures.

Although I believe that we must use the status of birds to good effect in promoting the efficient use of rare conservation funds, I think that the lowering of the status of the cinereous vulture is as yet unwarranted, especially since the places where they are doing well are isolated from one another. It'd be a shame if the breeding range of cinereous vulture would come to look like that of the Azure-winged magpie for no other reason than we were hasty.

Alvaro's point is also important. Until we know the extent to which carcass disposal legislation in Europe will be implemented, and the impact on scavengers, including cinereous vultures, it seems premature to lower the conservation status of this bird.

White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) downlist to Vulnerable?

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* is currently classified as Endangered (A2b,c,d,e) because the global population is estimated to have declined by c.60% over the last ten years. These declines are based largely on mid-winter counts in Turkey. New information from BirdLife International (2004) reveals that these were simply large fluctuations in numbers rather than declines. In the absence of a decline in the wintering areas, there is no reason to assume a decline in the breeding areas of south-west Asia. The population breeding in the east Mediterranean and in south-west Asia up to north-west China forms the majority of the global breeding (75-95%), but trends are not known. The small European breeding population (550-1,400 pairs) underwent a moderate increase during 1990-2000, despite declines in the small Turkish population. To be retained as Endangered, declines of >50% in the last ten years would have to be inferred or estimated for the central Asian population. Can this be justified? What were trends in the Middle Eastern and Indian Subcontinent wintering areas during the period? Comment and relevant information would be welcome.

BirdLife International (2004) Birds in Europe: population estimates, trends and conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (Conservation Series No. 12).

[operations](#) - 25 July, 2005 8:23 am (#2 Total: 6)

Reply

Mehmet Ali Tabur has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds Discussion Forum:

Observations were performed in between October-April because White-headed Duck come to Lake Burdur in November and leave on March. Station I, IV and V was determined poorer than the Station II and III in relation to the number of bird (Table 1). In Station III, the food resources in the coastline were not enough for bird population. However, the coastline was preferred by all species when the weather was rather bad in the lake. Table 1. The number of White headed-Duck counted various studies in Lake Burdur

Years The number of White-headed Ducks

1992 4478 (Anonymous A., 2000)
1993 3000 (Anonymous A, 2000)
1994 3337 (Green at al., 1996)
1995 2805 (Green at al., 1996)
1996 1706 (Tabur & Ayvaz, 1997); 1300 (Anonymous A, 2000)
1997 1322 (Tabur & Ayvaz, 1997)
1999 2575 (Anonymous A, 2000)
2000 592 (Tabur and Ayvaz, 1997); 791 (Anonymous B, 2000))
2001 653 (Tabur, 2002)

Discussion

In this study, the highest number of *Oxyura leucocephala* was counted in the Station III in 1996, 2000 and 2001. This station was preferred by the birds due to its distance from settlement area, less traffic on the road near the station and unsuitability for hunting. Although the station is poor in most food sources, it is rich in *Acrtodiptamus burduricus*. and *Aphanius burduricus* species which play an important role in the feeding of birds. Anatidae species were also observed in this area as reported by Baran & Yılmaz (1984) and Green at al. (1996).

Yarar (1991) reported that the dependence of White-headed Duck wintering in Lake Burdur can be explained by freezing of neighbouring lakes. Apart from its chemical and biological properties, not freezing in winter is another reason for the presence of birds in Lake Burdur. Kizirođlu et al. (1995) also reported that White-headed Duck prefer lakes of 50-100 m. depth especially with fresh, shallow waters rich in food source and far from the coast. These data were supported by our findings as well.

Baran & Yılmaz (1984) and Kizirođlu (1989) confirmed that White-headed Ducks live with other ducks in Lake Burdur. Various researchers reported the reduction in the number of birds in time. The bulletin of Wildlife Protection Club, "Kelaynak (December1996)" reported counts performed in January 1996 and registration of 1273 individuals.

In our study, 1706 individuals were registered in March 1996. One year later in January 1997, 1322 individuals were counted. The differences between counting are normal and may have resulted from climatic conditions, the difference of dates, and decreasing of the species number.

Timur et al. (1988) reported that sewage of Burdur province and factories surrounding factories flow into Lake Burdur. This factor causes increasing of pollution in the lake. Thus, it is important for the lake and its fauna. In addition, there is still continuing hunting and new construction in the area. It is inevitable that the food source and the birds will be damaged by these factors.

Kaya & Raynal (2001) reported natural ecosystem degrade and decline rapidly as human populations increase. Due

to the rapid population increase in Turkey within the last few decades many natural habitats have been fragmented, reduced in size, degraded or destroyed. This data were supported by this study.

The number of the bird in the lake shows fluctuation every year. One reason for the fluctuation is pollution; the other is the climatic condition. Also, hunting in the lake can affect this fluctuation. It is believed that hunting is not important for this species because hunter dislike eating their meat. Also, during our observations, dead birds were not seen. But, hunters were seen rarely during the study.

In relation to the lake and its ornithofauna, recommendations are given below:

1. Industrial complex and airport at the end of the lake should be stopped, or at least subject to a very through Environmental Impact Assessment prior to approval.
2. All factories and buildings in the lake surroundings threats significantly the future of Lake Burdur and its fauna. The factories and the settlement areas must have modern sewage systems.
3. Studies of the hydrology of the watershed must be made by Turkish Government.
4. Hunting and hunters must be controlled in the lake.
5. The government must made management plan.
6. Measurements of water chemistry should be taken on a regular basis to allow long-term monitoring of changes in nutrient levels and other parameters.
7. Loss of habitat and species diversity must be controlled by the government.
8. Creating monitoring programs and building quantitative databases for conservation programs will be essential to assess future success in maintaining biodiversity.

[operations](#) - 26 July, 2005 8:42 am (#3 Total: 6)

Reply

Elena Kreuzberg-Mukhina has posted the following comments in the Threatened Waterbird Discussion Forum:

Dear members of discussion,

I just looked the results of winter survey for White-headed Duck in Uzbekistan this winter. The total amount was 1227 birds, among them the biggest number (1094) was counted on Dengizkul lake. There is a trend in the distribution of the White-headed Duck on the small saline wetlands in Amu-Darya river basin, but number of observed birds on other wetlands are insufficient - from 1 to 70-75. During spring expedition the White-headed Duck was observed only on Zekry lake in Bukhara province of Uzbekistan, and there are two records about breeding from Sudochie wetland (one female with egg was caught by net and one nest was found in the reeds. This is first conformed find of nest from Uzbekistan. At the same time, it is necessary to note that even 10 years ago there was no any information about White-headed Duck in Uzbekistan, it was not found during survey conducted within the wetlands of Aral see and around on the area of Uzbekistan in 1980th- 1990th. So, it is evident the fact of extreme number fluctuation with peak 2-3 years ago. Now we can expect and we observe again that White-headed Duck is disseminating very widely. So, I think that it is early to downgrade the species status in IUCN list before careful survey and understanding the nature of fluctuations. By the way, in Uzbekistan the main wintering place of White-headed Duck - Dengizkul lake - has very unstable status now, its water-regime also fluctuate as the wintering bird accumulations. If we'll look at the national strategies for wetlands, they are still not elaborated for many countries as for species.

[operations](#) - 27 July, 2005 8:36 am (#4 Total: 6)

Reply

Ohad Hatzofe has posted the following comments in the Threatened Waterbird Discussion Forum:

I don't want to present here any opinion on this matter, but to present some reliable data from the waterfowl counts in Israel (15th of Jan). The trend is, surprisingly, a clear increase. But of course it may indicate a lose of wintering grounds somewhere else in the Middle East:

1997-127
1998-72
1999-62
2000-102
2001-274
2002-408
2003-659
2004-552
2005-1261

[operations](#) - 2 August, 2005 8:38 am (#5 Total: 6)

Reply

Nicky Petkov has posted the following comments on the Threatened European Birds Discussion Forum:

From the posted data so far on the discussion about the White-headed Duck I see only decreases and uncertain status in Asia, as Elena is suggesting. The increase in Israel can not cover the significant decrease at Burdur lake where the decrease is as much as several thousand birds probably within the last 10-20 years. And again is there any information about what portion of the Spanish population is actually hybrids including F1,2,3 generations? That is a key aspect to be considered when thinking of downgrading the species from Endangered to Vulnerable. I hope that we'll see more information posted on this topic along with other data from Asia to support the claim of the increase in Asia population which I doubt very much.

Here is what Dr. Kashif Sheikh has posted regarding my request about info on the WHD

Dear Dr. Petkov,

Thanks for the opportunity to comment. Unfortunately, I have not been in the field very recently as I am located in north-america these days, but I do get the impression regularly from various colleagues that are active in the field about various wintering and breeding populations within south-west asia and south asia.

I have never observed or heard of any increase in the wintering population. The white-headed has always been on the decrease owing to a combination of factors including environmental, ecological reasons and or due to the lack of adequate protection.

I consider that the species should be maintained as such in the same category of 'Endangered' unless we have more well defined studies and surveys completed throughout its breeding and wintering range. Otherwise downgrading the species to 'Vulnerable' may simply highlight the impression that it is doing ok in the wild. Sometimes, psychologically this category is very important within our line department and wildlife protection/ law enforcement agencies/ personnel.

You may like to share my comments with other members of the team. I hope you found this useful. Best regards,

Kashif M. Sheikh PhD

[operations](#) - 24 August, 2005 11:04 am (#6 Total: 6)

Reply

Süreyya Isfendiyaroglu posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds forum:

"Both breeding and wintering populations of white headed duck have undergone a dramatic decline in Turkey. Most of the breeding sites of the species disappeared in Central Basin, due to cultivation projects and dam constructions.

The Changes in the wintering population have to be monitored more carefully. The Report of Doga Dernegi (Turkish Birdlife Affiliate) on the this year's Midwinter Waterfowl Census states that the species total wintering numbers have undergone a huge decline by the beginning of 90's and keeps declining in 2000s.

Here is the total number of White- headed ducks wintering in Turkey per year:

Oxyura leucocephala
1986 4900
1987 6700
1988 9200
1989 7000
1990 7500
1992 4478
1996 1300
1999 2575
2002 1378
2005 1006

This may give some opinion some I think."

Serendib Scops Owl (*Otus thilohoffanni*): newly described and Vulnerable?

Serendib Scops Owl *Otus thilohoffanni* was recently described by Warakagoda and Rasmussen (2004). The species is known from five sites in lowland rainforest at 30-530 m in the wet zone of Sri Lanka. The currently known sites are Kitugala, Sinharaja, Morapitiya-Runakanda, Kanneliya and Eratna-Gilimale, which have a total area of c. 230 km². Using these data, Warakagoda and Rasmussen (2004) recommended classifying the species as Endangered (B1a+b). However, it is likely to occur in all suitable areas within the wet zone and it should be probably classified as Vulnerable B1a+b(i,ii,iii,iv,v); C2a(ii), with a small, declining and fragmented extent of occurrence, and a small and declining population (numbering <10,000 individuals, with <1,000 individuals in any one subpopulation), as with other lowland wet zone endemics, such as Green-billed Coucal *Centropus chlororhynchus*. Comment and information on this proposed assessment would be welcome.

Warakagoda, D. H. and Rasmussen, P. C. (2004) A new species of scops-owl from Sri Lanka. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* 124: 85-105.

Chestnut-winged Whistling-thrush (*Myophonus castaneus*) newly split and Near Threatened?

Sunda Whistling-thrush *Myophonus glaucinus* has been recently split by Collar (2004) into Javan Whistling-thrush *M. glaucinus*, Bornean Whistling-thrush *M. borneensis* and Chestnut-winged Whistling Thrush *M. castaneus* (which occurs on Sumatra). Bornean and Javan were judged by Collar (2004) to be sufficiently common that they probably merit Least Concern status. However, Chestnut-winged Whistling-thrush appears to be more restricted to watercourses, perhaps having a more limited niche owing to competition with Shiny Whistling-thrush *M. melanurus*, which is also endemic to Sumatra. Chestnut-winged appears to be scarce, and may therefore merit Near Threatened status. However, information and comment on its possible population size and trend are needed.

Collar, N. J. (2004) Species limits in some Indonesian thrushes. Forktail 20: 71-87.

Red-and-black Thrush (*Zoothera mendeni*): newly split and Threatened?

Red-and-black Thrush *Zoothera mendeni* has been recently split from Red-backed Thrush *Z. erythronota* (Collar 2004), which is listed as Near Threatened owing to declines inferred from habitat loss. Red-and-black Thrush is known from Peleng in the Banggai Islands and Taliabu in the Sula Islands, and it is apparently rare. The total land area of this EBA is 7,200 km², so the species has a small range, and may be suffering from ongoing habitat destruction (and perhaps trapping for the cage-bird trade). If it is estimated to have a population that is declining >30% in ten years, or that is fewer than 10,000 individuals (with <1,000 individuals in each subpopulation) it would qualify as Vulnerable. Any information or comments on status and trends would be welcome.

Collar, N. J. (2004) Species limits in some Indonesian thrushes. Forktail 20: 71-87.

Enggano Thrush (*Zoothera leucolaema*): newly split and Near Threatened?

Enggano Thrush *Zoothera leucolaema* has been recently split from Chestnut-capped Thrush *Z. interpres* (Collar et al. 2004). It is restricted to the small (450 km²) island of Enggano off the south-west coast of Sumatra. At least one specimen label describes the species as “common and not at all shy”. Forest cover on the island was reported to be fairly intact in the mid-1990s, although proposals for agricultural development caused the relatively scarce Enggano Scops-owl to be listed as Near Threatened on the basis of its small and potentially declining population and range. Should Enggano Thrush also qualify as Near Threatened? Comments and information would be welcome.

Collar, N. J. (2004) Species limits in some Indonesian thrushes. Forktail 20: 71-87.

Seram Thrush (*Zoothera joiceyi*): newly split and Near Threatened?

Moluccan Thrush *Zoothera dumasi* (currently treated as Near Threatened, almost meeting criteria A2c,d; A3c,d owing to fairly rapid population declines driven by habitat loss) has been recently split into Seram Thrush *Zoothera joiceyi* and Buru Thrush *Z. dumasi* (Collar 2004). In surveys in 1996, Seram Thrush was only recorded a few times in the limited areas of level forest, and it may be restricted to such areas within the remaining forest on Seram. It may also be impacted by the heavy trade in *Zoothera* thrushes that occurs elsewhere in Indonesia. Up-to-date information and comments on the status of this species would be welcome, in particular, estimates from Seram of its population and trends. If the population is estimated to fall below 10,000 individuals (and to be severely fragmented and declining), or if it is estimated to be declining at a rate exceeding 30% in 10 years, then the species would warrant listing as Vulnerable.

Collar, N. J. (2004) Species limits in some Indonesian thrushes. *Forktail* 20: 71-87.

Buru Thrush (*Zoothera dumasi*): newly split and Near Threatened?

Moluccan Thrush *Zoothera dumasi* (currently treated as Near Threatened, almost meeting criteria A2c,d; A3c,d owing to fairly rapid population declines driven by habitat loss) has been recently split into Seram Thrush *Zoothera joiceyi* and Buru Thrush *Z. dumasi* (Collar 2004). Buru Thrush was described as “not very rare” in 1922, but may be restricted to areas of suitable habitat within the remaining forest on Buru (perhaps requiring level areas as may be the case for Seram Thrush *Z. joiceyi*). It may also be impacted by the heavy trade in *Zoothera* thrushes that occurs elsewhere in Indonesia. Up-to-date information and comments on the status of this species would be welcome, in particular, estimates from Buru of its population and trends. If the population is estimated to fall below 10,000 individuals (and to be severely fragmented and declining), or if it is estimated to be declining at a rate exceeding 30% in 10 years, then the species would warrant listing as Vulnerable.

Collar, N. J. (2004) Species limits in some Indonesian thrushes. *Forktail* 20: 71-87.

Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*) declines accelerating?

Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri* is currently listed as Vulnerable (A2c,d; A3c,d) because it is undergoing rapid declines. It is thought that hunting and wetland destruction are the key causes. The following is summarised from recent correspondence on the Oriental Birding list-serve.

M. Barter (in litt. 2005) reported that the 2005 WWF waterbird survey of the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze in Feb 2005 recorded only eight Baer's Pochards (out of 636,000 waterbirds).

P. Round (in litt. 2005) noted that "About 15 years ago, one could rely on there being 100 or more Baer's Pochards in Bung Boraphet, Nakhon Sawan Province, Central Thailand, at any point in the winter (and our largest count was, I seem to remember, 426 at Bung Boraphet with another 170 at a second site in January 1988). I'd be hard pushed to find any Thai sightings of more than 20 birds from any Thai site in the last decade (and numbers per site are usually much lower, now: 4 or 5 at the most".

J. Hornskov (in litt. 2005) commented: "Regular birding on the Hebei coast, China, now hardly ever yields sightings of Baer's Pochard on migration; it would be reasonable to assume that even if the ducks had gone into hiding on the wintering grounds they would still be using the old migration routes. My own best count for Beijing's Summer Palace, then more than now a key site for ducks, was 116 in March 1988. The 2003 China Bird Report list no Baer's Pochards at all for Beijing or Hebei Province.... Much of its breeding range has suffered prolonged draught... On visits to Manchuria in search of Jankowski's Bunting in October 2003 and May 2004 it was evident that little remained of the formerly extensive wetlands in the reserve we visited. In October 2003 we visited a nice little reedy pool where we were told 1-2 pairs of Baer's Pochard still bred - something to look forward to, but by May 2004 it had completely dried up. On the reserve, measures were under way to remedy the draught by artificially flooding one section, for starters. This had attracted an enjoyable diversity of birds, including 550 Baikal Teal (their presence a surprise to reserve staff), but we didn't find a single Baer's Pochard."

N. Moores (in litt. 2005) commented "Although probably always a rather scarce species in South Korea, Baer's Pochard appears to be getting even scarcer. Despite a great increase in observer activity here over the past few years (with now several records annually of Red-crested Pochard and three records of Ferruginous Duck in the past 4 winters for example), there has been no corresponding rise in observations of Baer's, rather the species is now barely recorded annually. If they are shifting their wintering distribution and/or migration routes, it seems not to be through South Korea at least."

P. Thompson noted "The evidence from the other main wintering area - here in Bangladesh - seems to support the views on a serious decline. There are two main wetland complexes in NE Bangladesh where they were recorded in good numbers in 1992 (about 700) and 1993 (about 1700) - Hakaluki Haor and Tangua Haor and neighbouring beels. In both this winter and last I counted some of the main beels in Hakaluki Haor without finding any, total duck numbers were also down on some of the earlier years. However, I haven't been to the Tangua area for some time. Recent duck counts there during surveys have been much higher than the early 1990s.... there are no significant alternative wetlands in the country that are suitable that they could have moved to."

These reports are of great concern. If the global population declines are now estimated to exceed 50% in the last ten years, then this species would warrant uplisting to Endangered (A2c,d; A3c,d). Recent information from elsewhere in the species's range, particularly the breeding grounds in SE Russia and NE China and wintering grounds in north-east India and Myanmar, would be welcome.

[Duckworth](#) - 5 August, 2005 8:14 am (#1 Total: 1)

Reply

Some not particularly conclusive information from two countries that might potentially support numbers of the species.

In much birding in DPR Korea during 1999-2004 I never certainly found the species (although I had one inconclusive sighting, which was probably not this species). This was despite checking one reservoir which sounded like good habitat, and supported flocks of other *Aythya* species, regularly over two autumns and one spring (it is frozen in winter), and over a hundred duck counts, in all months, of a significant length of the Taedong river in Pyongyang. This is not ideal habitat but I recorded almost all other non-marine ducks previously known from DPRK while so doing, and I think the lack of Baer's Pochard records from these two sites indicates they are not at all common in inland west-central Korea, although this should not be considered proven. There are few past records from DPRK but it is not reasonable to infer this necessarily indicates a previous scarcity there, given the very low levels of collection and observation over all time.

Secondly in Lao PDR the species was not recorded before 1999 but very little suitable observation had ever been carried out. John Parr recorded one at Ban Sivilai, near Vientiane capital city, in about 2000, but despite several trips to this site in 2003-2005, and frequent searches of other superficially suitable pools in this period, I have not seen the species. This is adjacent to the area of Isaan Thailand where surveys in the 1980s found significant numbers of the species, and it is difficult to see why they would not also be in similar Lao sites.

Will Duckworth, Yangon.

Falcated Duck (*Anas falcata*): information needed from China

Falcated Duck *Anas falcata* is currently listed as Least Concern, with a large breeding range in Mongolia, north-east China and south-east Siberia to Hokkaido and the southern Kuril islands. Its total population is estimated to be 35,000 individuals (9,000 in Japan, 2,000 in Korea, and the remainder in China: Wetlands International 2002). S. Chan in litt. 2005 has commented that numbers seem to be declining in southern China. "In the last two years I have tried to collect information on this species in their wintering grounds in China, but so far it seems they are only common in Dongting Hu, Hunan Province. It is not a common bird in many well-known wetland sites (This is reconfirmed by the WWF survey in lower Yangtze in 2004. 18,364 birds were counted but almost all of them were from Dongting Hu, not from other wetland sites in lower Yangtze). From Korean and Japanese sources, the population is stable or slightly declining (these two countries are relatively well covered by censuses)." Further information on this species in China would be welcome. If total population declines approach 30% in the last ten years then the species may warrant uplisting to Near Threatened.

[operations](#) - 20 July, 2005 3:18 pm (#1 Total: 1)

Reply

Mark Barter has posted the following comments in the Threatened Waterbirds Forum:

We counted 14,763 Falcated Duck in the 2005 WWF survey, 13,605 in Hunan Province and 970 in Hubei Province.

At end November 2004, we had 4,010 at Da Hu Chi in Poyang Hu NNR. Only 55 were recorded at the nature reserve during the 2005 WWF survey.

Anatidae distributions were quite different between 2004 and 2005 due to different water levels. So, I don't think too much should be read into the change between 2004 and 2005.

Mark Barter

Sulawesi Eared-nightjar (*Eurostopodus diabolicus*): downlist to Near Threatened?

Sulawesi Eared-nightjar *Eurostopodus diabolicus* is currently classified as Vulnerable [C2a(i)] because it is estimated to have a population of <10,000 individuals which is declining, with all subpopulations numbering <1,000 individuals. A recent paper by Riley and Wardill (2003) [Kukila 12: 3-11] reports sightings of the species in northern Sulawesi. The authors argue that the species is probably overlooked rather than rare, it is likely to be continuously distributed in remaining suitable forest habitat, possibly extending into southern and south-eastern Sulawesi, it tolerates disturbed forest, and hence they recommend that the species be downlisted to Near Threatened. Should the population estimate now be revised upwards (>10,000 individuals) and hence the species downlisted? Opinion and comment would be welcome.

[nigel collar](#) - 11 February, 2005 5:03 pm (#1 Total: 1)

Reply

There is no doubt that nocturnal birds on little-studied islands are always assumed to be rarer than they really are. It is very likely that this is one such case. One way in particular that the Vulnerable criteria might be foiled is for a subpopulation to prove to be greater than 1,000 individuals, even if the total population does not exceed 10,000. I think this is very likely, so would not strongly oppose downlisting. On the other hand, a precautionary position would be to ask for a little more fieldwork to be conducted to test R&W's hypothesis, even locally, so that an extrapolation could be made; it is, after all, possible that their encounters with the species were just lucky. I think I would prefer this approach at present.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*): uplist to Near Threatened or Vulnerable?

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* is currently listed as Least Concern. The status of the European population (99,000-140,000 pairs, occupying 50-74% of the global breeding range) was recently reassessed in Birds in Europe (BirdLife International 2004). Following a large decline in Europe during 1970-1990 (Tucker & Heath 1994), the species continued to decline during 1990-2000, when up to 35% of birds were lost (including many from key populations in the Netherlands and European Russia). Overall, the European population may have declined by a rate equivalent to >30% in three generations (15 years). Although the species is believed to have increased in Iceland and in some parts of central Asia, recent trends in the rest of its Asiatic breeding range are unknown (Wetlands International 2002). If these populations are declining at a similar rate to those in Europe, then the species would warrant uplisting to Vulnerable. Even if these non-European populations are stable, the magnitude of the decline in Europe suggests that the species' global status may need to be revised to at least Near Threatened. Any comments or new information – particularly on recent trends outside Europe – would be very welcome.

BirdLife International (2004) Birds in Europe: population estimates, trends and conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (Conservation Series No. 12).

Tucker, G.M. and Heath, M.F. (1994) Birds in Europe: their conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (Conservation Series No. 3).

Wetlands International (2002) Waterbird Population Estimates: Third Edition. Wageningen, The Netherlands: Wetlands International (Global Series No. 12).

[Simba Chan](#) - 9 February, 2005 9:42 am (#1 Total: 6)

Reply

This species doesn't seem to be declining in Asia. According to the mid-winter census results from 1997 to 2001 (Li and Mundkur 2004), the population in Asia seemed to be stable (min 5,872 birds in 2000. Max 24,502 birds in 2001)

Of course we need to be careful to interpret the results of the census as sites covered in different years are not exactly the same. It's just the census result does not show a trend of decline,

chrisz@unep-wcmc.org - 14 February, 2005 11:03 am (#2 Total: 6)

Reply

Again, a similar story as with the Ruff. I think the nominate race is declining heavily, strong declines from its strongholds in the Netherlands, Germany and European Russia. Not so in Iceland, which I think is due to different migration route (islandica is migrating to France and Spain, whereas the others to Sahel Africa (see also Zöckler 2002b, ref, as for ruff!))

Siberian population unknown trends. Asian population seemed to have increased (Balachandran pers. com. At Lake Chilika at mid January 2005 at least 3,000 possibly 5,000 BTG, and at Bitakarnika another 800, which already surpasses the Max quoted by Simba in previous message. Publication in prep. (Balachandran et al.)

[operations](#) - 7 March, 2005 11:29 am (#3 Total: 6)

Reply

David Stroud has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds forum:

"1. You state above that the islandica race is "believed to have increased". This is actually pretty well-documented (see WSG populations review: www.waderstudygroup.org) and not much doubt that it is a real increase. See <http://blx1.bto.org/webs/alerts/national-accounts/maps/blacktailedgodwit.htm> for long-term trends at UK wintering sites for this race. But note that numerically this race makes up a small proportion of total species numbers.

2. Re Simba Chan's comment, note that totals counted by AWC are actually a small proportion of the total in the area. Depending on how one does the sums, WPE3 indicates probably 300,000 birds in the area of the AWC, so overall coverage is small and ?? representative (as noted)."

[operations](#) - 7 March, 2005 11:31 am (#4 Total: 6)

Reply

Alexander Mischenko of the Board of Russian Bird Conservation Union has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds forum:

"At drafting of offers for species inclusion in the List of the Globally Threatened Birds (GTBs) and the IUCN Global Red List categories, we judged from their conditions and trends in the global, instead of the European population. It is the main principle to which should be guided in this work, there is the European IUCN Red List for Europe.

Decrease of numbers of this species is recorded only in Europe. Fragmentary data from the Asian part of Russia testify to the stable numbers. Within last decades the breeding range expanded to the north and numbers increased in some districts. Inclusion in the GTBs and the IUCN Red List is not required."

[operations](#) - 14 June, 2005 8:39 am (#5 Total: 6)

Reply

The following topic had been previously posted by Stephen Garnett in the Threatened Australian Birds forum under proposals to revise the regional status of subspecies. It is of global significance now given the European declines noted above.

Are Black-tailed Godwits in the east Asian flyway Near Threatened?

The reporting rate of the Black-tailed Godwit has declined by 35% from 1977-1981 to 1998-2001 despite the discovery of the importance of the Broome mudflats during that period increasing the reporting rate in that bioregion. This decline contrasts with the reporting rate of Bar-tailed Godwit and Great Knot, neither of which changed significantly but which might be expected to occur alongside the Black-tailed Godwits. There is corroborative evidence from Peter Driscoll who found far fewer Black-tailed Godwits using the south-east shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria, once thought their major over-wintering site in Australia, than were estimated to be present in the early 1980s. While the species is still relatively abundant, with Wetlands International estimating a flyway population of 160,000, it may be declining at a rate approaching that of Vulnerable category A2 (>30% over the last ten years or three generations). Are there any other observations that would corroborate this suggestion?

[operations](#) - 18 July, 2005 2:23 pm (#6 Total: 6)

Reply

Todd Katzner has commented from Kazakhstan:

"Black-tailed Godwit: number and distribution of this species depends on the water level. In dry periods this species is quite rare in the Kostanay region, and is only regularly found in northern districts of this region. However, when water levels are high, they appear in larger numbers throughout the area. Furthermore, regardless of water levels, after the breeding season they are common everywhere. Trends are difficult to evaluate for this species."

Black-winged Pratincole (*Glareola nordmanni*): information from Asia needed

Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni* is currently listed as Data Deficient. The status of the European population (2,500-5,100 pairs, occupying 25-49% of the global breeding range) was recently reassessed in Birds in Europe (BirdLife International 2004). The most significant European population (in European Russia) declined steeply during 1990-2000, and overall the species declined by more than 50% over ten years (generation length: <3.3 years). Although the population breeding east of the River Volga in northern Kazakhstan was apparently fairly stable until the early 1990s (Tucker & Heath 1994), recent population trends in this region are unknown. The global population was previously estimated at 10,000–25,000 birds, but a flock of 250,000–800,000 birds seen in South Africa in 1991 indicates that it is substantially larger (although it is unclear where these additional birds breed). Given this, the European population represents a fairly small proportion of the global population, and trends in Asiatic Russia are likely to determine the global status of the species. Any comments or new information – particularly on trends outside Europe, and including any data from the African wintering grounds – would be very welcome.

BirdLife International (2004) Birds in Europe: population estimates, trends and conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (Conservation Series No. 12).

Tucker, G.M. and Heath, M.F. (1994) Birds in Europe: their conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (Conservation Series No. 3).

[operations](#) - 7 March, 2005 11:43 am (#1 Total: 2)

Reply

Alexander Mischenko of the Board of Russian Bird Conservation Union has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds forum:

"Within the last decade was observed decrease of numbers in European Russia (supporting the largest breeding population in Europe), and also in Ukraine and Turkey; numbers has reduced to a dangerous feature: 2500-5100 breeding pairs. However in Kazakhstan where the significant part of the world population is concentrated, the data on trends are not present. In our opinion, the Black-winged Pratincole deserves category NT in the Global IUCN Red List."

[operations](#) - 8 March, 2005 12:47 pm (#2 Total: 2)

Reply

Evgeny Bragin (Science Department, Naurzum National Nature Reserve, Kustanay Oblast, Naurzumski Raijon, Dokuchaevka, 459730, KAZAKHSTAN) reports the following:

Black-winged Pratincole is quite a common species in Kustanay Oblast (northern Kazakhstan). In 2004, 7 colonies were found in some areas, with a total number of 420-500 pairs. The population has been stable for the last ten years at least.

Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*): uplist to Vulnerable?

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* is currently listed as Near Threatened (A2c,d,e; A3c,d,e) on the basis of past and projected future declines caused mainly by habitat loss. The status of the European population (310-1,200 pairs, occupying 25-49% of the global breeding range) was recently reassessed in Birds in Europe (BirdLife International 2004). Following a large decline in Europe during 1970-1990 (Tucker & Heath 1994), the species continued to decline during 1990-2000, when up to 30% of birds were lost (particularly from the key population in European Russia), and overall trends were at a rate equivalent to >30% over three generations (18 years). The majority of the global population breeds in the steppes of Asiatic Russia, Kazakhstan and northwest China, and the population is estimated at 20,000 pairs, having shown marked declines and range contractions (in Europe and south-central Siberia). If recent population trends in the Asiatic part of the species' range are similar to those in Europe, then the species would warrant uplisting to Vulnerable. Any comments or new information – particularly on trends outside Europe, and including any data from the African wintering grounds – would be very welcome.

BirdLife International (2004) Birds in Europe: population estimates, trends and conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (Conservation Series No. 12).

Tucker, G.M. and Heath, M.F. (1994) Birds in Europe: their conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (Conservation Series No. 3).

[operations](#) - 7 March, 2005 11:51 am (#1 Total: 5)

Reply

Süreyya isfendiyaroglu has posted the following comments on the Threatened European Birds forum:

"The Pallid harrier is confined to primary Central Anatolian steps in Turkey, the habitat of this species in Turkey is highly endangered and under pressure due to conversion of steps to arable and irrigated lands. The pallid harrier underwent a huge decline (%31-50) in the past ten years. The national redlist status for species is CR. (Kilic & Eken 2004 – IBA Book of Turkey). Therefore we think that the species should have a higher conservation priority globally."

[operations](#) - 7 March, 2005 11:52 am (#2 Total: 5)

Reply

Todd Katzner has posted the following comments on the Threatened European Birds forum:

"I think that with this species it is very important to consider long-term, rather than short-term data. On breeding territories, this species fluctuates in response to environmental conditions - probably numbers of small mammals. Thus, high or low numbers in any given year or two year period may be indicative of change in demographics or they may be indicative of change in local environment (and birds may go elsewhere without their population size changing)."

[operations](#) - 7 March, 2005 11:53 am (#3 Total: 5)

Reply

Alexander Mischenko of the Board of Russian Bird Conservation Union has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds forum:

"We support uplisting, with the category VU."

[operations](#) - 8 March, 2005 12:44 pm (#4 Total: 5)

Reply

Evgeny Bragin (Science Department, Naurzum National Nature Reserve, Kostanay Oblast, Naurzumski Raijon, Dokuchaevka, 459730, Kazakhstan) reports the following:

Kustanay Oblast (northern Kazakhstan) is situated in the centre of the Pallid Harrier's range and includes forest-steppe, steppe, semi-desert and (in the north) desert zones. I worked throughout this region during 1997-2004. The number of Pallid Harriers fluctuated every year in different parts of region. In the central oblast (Naurzum district), the species' occurrence during 1997-2004 changed between 1.2-12.7 individuals (males) per 100 km. The nesting density was 25 pairs per 100 sq km in 2000, 21.4 pairs in 2001, but only 9.4 pairs in 2002. The nesting density in the north-east oblast was 13.3 pairs per 100 sq km in 2000. In the southern oblast, which covers the semi-desert and desert zone, the species' occurrence along the Uli-Jzilanchik river in 2004 was 13.8 individuals (males) per 100 km, and 4.3 on the Chelkar-Nura plateau.

The total number of Pallid Harriers in Kustanay Oblast in 2000 was estimated as 1,500-2,000 pairs. It seems that the population of Pallid Harriers in this region is more or less stable (despite fluctuations), after declining during the 1960s and 1970s.

These data were published in:

E. Bragin, 1999. The changes of fauna and number of birds of prey in Kustanay Oblast (North Kazakhstan) – Kazakhstan zoological journal «Selevivnia» 1998-1999. Àlmaty “Tethys”: p. 99- 105. (in Russian.)

E. Bragin, 2004. Distribution, number and some features of ecology of Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*) in Kustanay Oblast. - Kazakhstan zoological journal «Selevivnia» - Èàçàõñðàíñèèé çñèíàè-:àñèèé àèááíáíèèè «Selevivnia» 2003, Àlmaty “Tethys”: p. 145-149. (in Russian.)

Unfortunately, we have no good data for other regions of Kazakhstan. In the central region (about 100 km north from Astana), the nesting density in 2001 was 2-3 pairs per 100 sq km (Berezovikov, Kovalenko, 2001). In 2003, breeding Pallid Harriers were observed to the south-west of Balkhash Lake (Belalov, 2004), although they had never been registered in this area before. This may possibly have been a response to some very wet summers and a very high number of small mammals.

[operations](#) - 18 July, 2005 2:37 pm (#5 Total: 5)

Reply

Todd Katzner has commented from Kazakhstan:

"Pallid Harrier - this one is very difficult to evaluate because the distribution and number of this species always fluctuates over a wide range. However, it appears that the area of distribution of this species has not decreased in recent years (although this says nothing about population size). Furthermore, the northern border of the distribution of this species in Russia appears to have moved further north. In this past year it has been very common in many parts of the Kostanay region where there are high and dense grasses. It is also true that in the year 2000, the densities of pallid harrier was higher in this region than it had ever been in Evgeny Bragin's 25 years in this region."

Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*): uplist to Near Threatened or Vulnerable?

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* is currently listed as Least Concern. The status of the European population (3,500-5,600 pairs, occupying 25-49% of the global breeding range) was recently reassessed in Birds in Europe (BirdLife International 2004). Following a large decline in Europe during 1970-1990 (Tucker & Heath 1994), the species continued to decline during 1990-2000, when up to 40% of birds were lost (including many from the key populations in Spain and Turkey). Taking into account the species' generation length (14 years), overall declines in Europe were >50% over three generations (42 years). If recent population trends in the rest of the species' range (in Asia and Africa) are similar to those in Europe, then the species would warrant Vulnerable (or even Endangered) status. Even if these non-European populations are stable, the magnitude of the decline in Europe suggests that the species' global status may need to be revised to at least Near Threatened. Any comments or new information – particularly on trends outside Europe, and including any data from the African wintering grounds – would be very welcome.

BirdLife International (2004) Birds in Europe: population estimates, trends and conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (Conservation Series No. 12).

Tucker, G.M. and Heath, M.F. (1994) Birds in Europe: their conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (Conservation Series No. 3).

[operations](#) - 3 March, 2005 1:24 pm (#1 Total: 6)

Reply

Nicky Petkov has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds forum:

"During the implementation of the BSPB project "Urgent Conservation Measures for the Egyptian Vulture in Bulgaria" 257 known nest localities, falling into 167 UTM squares (10x10 km) were visited. The data show that 14 pairs have disappeared for the last 7 years, more than 45 pairs have disappeared since 1980. The threats for 44 pairs were identified as well as the threats in 4 localities where the species has disappeared for the last seven years.

The main threats are:

1. Use of poisonous baits in order to control large predators – this is the most important threat that endangers 6 pairs, but the whole Bulgarian population is potentially threatened;
2. Destroying of the nests- significant threats for 15 pairs;
3. Dangerous power line network – threat for 18 pairs;
4. Disturbance during building activities, mining, human presence close to the nests and extreme sports – threat for 15 pairs;
5. Risky rubbish dams - this is the most important threat that endangers 7 pairs, but the whole Bulgarian population is potentially threatened.

The alarming fact is that some of the pairs did not return last year and obviously the decline continues. The fact that some of the birds and pairs do not return to the breeding grounds suggest that they might be encountering threats in their wintering or staging grounds during migration. I consider that the uplisting of the species to Near Threatened is the least status that could be given to the EV. In my opinion the species should be given a Vulnerable status in view of the large decline in the population and the prospected continuing decline. With the low reproduction typical for the big raptors the species would not recover sufficiently in the short run. Depending on specific feeding like the carcasses and the still wide use of poison baits in many countries in my view the EV will continue to decline steadily in the next years and only very focused and longterm actions could make a difference for the negative population trend. I personally based on the knowledge of the species status and declines in Bulgaria very much favour the uplisting of the species to a Vulnerable status."

[operations](#) - 7 March, 2005 11:54 am (#2 Total: 6)

Reply

Süreyya İsfendiyaroglu has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds forum:

"The species had a major range collapse in Turkey and virtually the entire western breeding population is depleted in the last 10 years. Egyptian Vulture population underwent a 30-49 % decline in Turkey – this rate much higher is

several parts of the country. Egyptian Vulture is listed as EN in Turkish redlist (Kilic & Eken 2004 – IBA Book of Turkey) and the species is likely to decrease further during the next years. We propose that the species is listed as VU globally as it has undergone a very rapid decline that still continues."

[operations](#) - 7 March, 2005 11:55 am (#3 Total: 6)

Reply

Alexander Mischenko of the Board of Russian Bird Conservation Union has posted the following comment on the Threatened European Birds forum:

"We support uplisting, with the category VU. But the data on trends from African population are needed for the final decision."

[operations](#) - 8 March, 2005 12:44 pm (#4 Total: 6)

Reply

Alberto Madroño (Especies Amenazadas, SEO/BirdLife) reports the following from Iberia:

Neophron percnopterus has in Iberia the largest European population, with a minimum of 1.400 breeding pairs (94% in Spain and 6% in Portugal) (del Moral & Martí, 2002). This represents between 40-50% of the minimum European population (considering minimum population estimates for Europe: Birds in Europe II). The evaluation of this species against IUCN criteria in Spain in 2002 (Donazar, 2004), and the information derived from the II National Census (del Moral & Martí, 2002) showed that in just about one generation [13-14 years] (period between 1988-2000) (the species has lost 25% of its territories. Considering the known recent trend and threats affecting the species (notably poison, less availability of carrions, intoxication by biocides and electrocution), it was projected that the species decline (past-future) (A4 IUCN criterion) could be over 50% in three generations, thus qualifying in Spain as Endangered (EN) (Donazar, 2004; Palacios, 2004).

Neophron percnopterus majorensis, a subspecies described for the Canary Islands is Critically Endangered has less than 50 reproductive adults, and threats remain (notably poison and electrocution) (Palacios, 2004).

Sources:

del Moral, J. C. & Martí, R. (Eds.) (2002) El Alimoche Común en España y Portugal (I Censo Coordinado: Año 2000). Monografía Nº 8. SEO/BirdLife. Madrid.

Donazar, J.A. (2004) Alimoche Común *Neophron percnopterus*. In A. Madroño, C. González & J.C. Atienza (Eds.). Libro Rojo de las Aves de España. Dirección General para la Biodiversidad – SEO/BirdLife. Madrid.

Palacios, J. (2004) Alimoche Canario *Neophron percnopterus majorensis*. In A. Madroño, C. González & J.C. Atienza (Eds.). Libro Rojo de las Aves de España. Dirección General para la Biodiversidad – SEO/BirdLife. Madrid.

[operations](#) - 9 June, 2005 12:18 pm (#5 Total: 6)

Reply

Juan Manuel Grande has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds forum:

I think that the most appropriated category for this species should be VU or at least NT. Despite the information coming from all around Europe, with special concern on the data coming from Spain and Turkey (which includes probably more than 80% of the European population, there are evidences of similar declines or even worse in several parts of Africa. During censuses to find Griffon vultures on northern Morocco carried in 2002 (1) the authors did not see any EV. Accordingly in a visit to western Sahara carried in 2001 to search for EV in areas where the species was common in the past according to Valverde, none EV was seen (2). Finally a recent publication shows possible declines of 86% in EV numbers in Western Africa (3). Regarding Asia, despite the actual lack of information, it is probable that the recent crisis of Indian vultures had also affected to this highly opportunistic species.

1 Garrido et al.2005.J.Raptor Res.39:70-74, A. Camiña pers. com.

2 C. Palacios pers. com.

3 Rondeau & Thiollay 2004. Vulture News 51:13-33

[operations](#) - 18 July, 2005 2:42 pm (#6 Total: 6)

Reply

Todd Katzner has commented from Kazakhstan:

"Egyptian Vulture - has always been at relatively low densities in the areas of south Kazakhstan where I work and it is difficult to identify trends. This species does not occur in the north Kazakhstan areas where Evgeny Bragin works."

Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*): what are the trends in Asia?

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* is currently listed as Near Threatened (A2c,d; A3c,d) on the basis of past and projected future declines caused by habitat loss, disturbance and hunting. The status of the European population (12,000-18,000 pairs, occupying 25-49% of the global breeding range) was recently reassessed in Birds in Europe (BirdLife International 2004). Following a large decline in Europe during 1970-1990 (Tucker & Heath 1994), the species continued to decline during 1990-2000, when up to 45% of birds were lost (particularly in south-east Europe). The European population overall declined by >30%. Asia holds the majority of the global population, but population estimates and trends remain poorly known (see attached table). There is some evidence of declines (Wetlands International 2002), but little information is available from the countries where the species seems to be most numerous (Mongolia and China; S. Delany in litt. 2004). Is there sufficient evidence to infer declines of over 30% over the last ten years for the total Asian population? If so, the species would warrant uplisting to Vulnerable. Any comments or new information – particularly on trends outside Europe – would be very welcome.

BirdLife International (2004) Birds in Europe: population estimates, trends and conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (Conservation Series No. 12).

Tucker, G.M. and Heath, M.F. (1994) Birds in Europe: their conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (Conservation Series No. 3).

Wetlands International (2002) Waterbird Population Estimates: Third Edition. Wageningen, The Netherlands: Wetlands International (Global Series No. 12).

Table 2. Numbers and trends for the Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* in individual range states (in alphabetical order). (Grey cells represent periods when the species is probably not present in the country). Source: Robinson & Hughes (2003).

Country	Breeding Season						Winter				
	No. Breeding (pairs)	Quality	Year(s) of Estimate	Trend	Quality	Year(s) of Estimate	No. Migrating or Non-breeding (indivs)	Quality	Year(s) of Estimate	Trend	Quality
Afghanistan	?	-	-	?	-	-	>100	3	2002	?	-
Albania	100-300	2	1994	-2	2	1970-90	100-2,000	3	-	?	3
Algeria	>600	3	2002	?	-	-	<2,000	1	2002	?	-
Armenia	5-30	1	1985	F	1	1990-2000	>500	1	1990-2000	?	?
Austria	50-150	1	1999	-2	2	1970-90	0-5	1	1992-93	?	-
Azerbaijan	3,000	2	1998	0	2		1,000-9,000	-	1996	?	-
Bangladesh							70,000	2	2002	?	-
Belarus	50-200	2	1991-2001	-1	2	1970-90					
Belgium							0-1	1	1985	F	2
Bhutan							1-3	2	1996-2002	?	-
Bosnia and Herzegovina	150-500	3	1996	?	-	-	0-500	3	1997	?	-
Bulgaria	125-230	2	1998-2002	0	2	1990-2000	0-50	2	1998-2002	F	2
Cameroon							<100	3	2002	?	-
Central African Republic							<100	3	2002	?	-
Chad							3,800	3	2000	?	-
China	?	-	-	?	-	-	>2,000	3	2002	?	-
Croatia	1,000-3,000	2	1976-96	0	2	1970-90	0-200	2		F	2
Cyprus							1-100	1	1992-93	?	-

Country	Breeding Season						Winter					
	No. Breeding (pairs)	Quality	Year(s) of Estimate	Trend	Quality	Year(s) of Estimate	No. Migrating or Non-breeding (indivs)	Quality	Year(s) of Estimate	Trend	Quality	
Czech Republic	0-3	1	1985-95	-1	1	1970-90	5-10	1	1992-93	?	-	
Egypt							7,500	3	1996	?	-	
Eritrea							<100	3	1996	?	-	
Ethiopia							<100	3	1996	?	-	
France							5	1	1989	F	1	
Gambia							<100	3	2002	?	-	
Georgia	10-1,000	3	1997	?	-	-	100-200	3	1997	?	-	
Germany	1-5	2	1999-2000	-2	3	1970-90	20-100	2	1992-93	F	2	
Greece	130-250	2	1976-96	0	3	1970-90	50-300	2	1987-91	F	2	
Hungary	585-675	2	1997	0	2	1970-90	1	1	1991	?	-	
India	?	-	-	?	-	-	>3,000	3	2002	?	-	
Iraq							>1,000	3	2002	?	-	
Islamic Republic of Iran	<5	?	1998-2002	?	-	-	1,000-1,300	2	1998-2002	?	-	
Israel							150-300	2	2002	?	-	
Italy	50-100	2	1983-2002	1	2	1983-2002	100-400	2	1983-2002	2	2	
Jordan							?	-	-	?	-	
Kazakhstan	>500	3	2002	?	-	-	>7,500	3	2002	?	-	
Kenya							<50	-	1996	?	-	
Latvia	?	-	-	?	-	-						
Lebanon							<100	3	2002	?	-	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya							?	-	-	?	-	
Lithuania	10-100	3	1985-88	0	3	1970-90						
Mali							7,800-14,300	2	1999-2001	?	-	
Malta							<100	3	2002	?	-	
Mauritania							30-80	2	1998-2001	?	-	
Mongolia	?	-	-	?	-	-	>30,000	2	1999	?	-	
Morocco	?	-	-	?	-	-	>30	3	2002	?	-	
Myanmar							>1,000	2	1995	?	-	
Nepal							?	-	-	?	-	
Niger							200-300	-	-	?	-	
Nigeria							>2,000	2	1999-2000	?	-	
Oman							10-40	3	1995-96	?	-	
Pakistan							1,000-2,000	2	?	?	-	
Poland	30-40	2	1996-2002	-2	2	1970-2002	5-300	2	1980-98	F	2	
Portugal	>2	2	2002	?	?	?	1-10	1	1991	?	-	
Republic of Moldova	20-100	2	1976-96	-2	1	1980-2000	300-1,000	2	1997	?	-	
Romania	2,000-6,000	2	1976-96	-2	2	1970-90	1,000-4,000	2	1992-93	-1	2	
Russian Federation	500-700	2	2002	-1	2	2000-01	350-570	2	2002	?	-	
Saudi Arabia	1-3	3	1994	?	?	-	95	2	1991	?	-	
Senegal							10-50	2	1999-2001	?	-	
Slovakia	3-10	2	2002	-2	2	1970-90	5-15	2	2002	F	2	
Slovenia	5-15	2	1992-93	-1	2	1970-90	0-5	2	1992-93	?	-	
Spain	0-4	2	1976-96	-1	1	1970-90	1-40	2	1992-93	-2	2	
Sudan							5,000	?	2002	?	-	

Country	Breeding Season						Winter				
	No. Breeding (pairs)	Quality	Year(s) of Estimate	Trend	Quality	Year(s) of Estimate	No. Migrating or Non-breeding (indivs)	Quality	Year(s) of Estimate	Trend	Quality
Switzerland	0-1	1	1991	F	1		10-30	1	1981-91	F	1
Syrian Arab Republic							>320	2	2002	?	?
Tajikistan	?	-	-	?	-	-	?	-	-	?	-
Thailand							<100	3	2002	?	-
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3-5	2	1997	-1	3		?	-	-	?	-
The Netherlands				F	2	1970-90	12-55	1	1989-1998	F	1
Tunisia	80	-	1998-2002	?	-	-	10-60	2	1998-2002	1	2
Turkey	600-700	2	2002	-1	2	1970-90	1,000-1,500	2	2002	-1	2
Turkmenistan	?	-	-	?	-	-	21,000	3	2002	?	-
Ukraine	1,000	2	2000-02	-1	1	1970-90	15-20	2	1988	-2	2
United Arab Emirates							<10	3	2002	?	-
Uzbekistan	>30	2-	1997	-2	2	1997	>7,000	3	1992	?	-
Viet Nam							?	-	-	?	?
Yemen							40-60	1	1995-2002	-1	3
Yugoslavia	150-1,500	2	1997	?	-	-	500-1,000	2	1997	?	-

Quality: Data quality is assessed by assigning one of the following categories: **1** Reliable quantitative data (e.g. atlas data or monitoring data) are available for the whole period and region in question; **2** Species generally well known, but only poor or incomplete quantitative data available; and **3** Species poorly known, with no quantitative data available.

Trend: Trend in numbers is assessed by assigning to one of the following categories: **+2** Large increase of at least 50% between 1995 and 2002; **+1** Small increase of 20-49% between 1995 and 2002; **0** Stable, with overall change less than 20% between 1995 and 2002; **-1** Small decrease of 20-49% between 1995 and 2002; **-2** Large decrease of at least 50% between 1995 and 2002; and **F** Fluctuating with changes of at least 20%, but no clear trend since 1995.

[operations](#) - 17 March, 2005 9:31 am (#10 Total: 13)

Reply

Thomas Heinicke has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds forum:

Below you will find comments on the status of Ferruginous Duck in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Not supporting the opinion of Mike Crosby, the species has no favourable conservation status in both countries, but declines further.

The situation for Kyrgyzstan can be judged better, but for both countries only very few information is available. Especially in Kazakhstan, there is still a large amount of "suitable wetland habitats", but the number of breeding pairs in such areas is less than expectable from the potential habitat structures.

Comments on the current status of Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan

Kyrgyzstan:

Perhaps an irregular breeding species, regular migrant in low numbers, and irregular winter visitor. A female with young at the western shore of lake Issyk-Kul in 1997 is the only breeding record for Kyrgyzstan. Suitable habitats are very limited, so further possible breeding sites are only on ponds and fishponds in the Chu valley, in the north of the country. An observation of some adults with fledged juveniles at the latter site end of July 2003 may indicate such breeding. The species does not breed at the mountain lakes Son-Kul and Chatyr-Kul. In former times, the species was a more regular migrant especially in the Chu valley, less numerous at lake Issyk-Kul. Further stop-over sites are lakes Son-Kul and Chatyr-Kul. Although not well documented, the numbers of migrants have declined drastically. In the last years, the highest counts were 19 (end of February 2000) and 79 (beginning of August 2002) at Ala Archa fish ponds north of Bishkek, perhaps the most regular used stop-over site in Kyrgyzstan.

Furthermore, OSTASHENKO & DABLETBAKOV (2004) [1] mention >100 for lake Son-Kul and >200 for lake Chatyr-Kul during migration time. Unfortunately, the authors do not give detailed references. Therefore, such high numbers most likely refer to old data and do not represent the current status of the species.

According to KYDYRALIEV (1990) [2], the species was found wintering at lake Issyk-Kul (200-300.). Although no year was given, such high numbers were reached only in former times, most likely in the 1960s and 1970s.

According to results of latest counts of wintering waterfowl at lake Issyk-Kul, the species can now be regarded as an irregular winter visitor in very low numbers. During surveys between 1998 and 2005, only in January 2005 single individuals were found.

Kazakhstan:

According to literature data and own observations, the species breeds still regularly, but very scattered and in the last years, no substantial breeding concentrations were found. The estimate of breeding pairs given by Baz Hughes may be in right dimension, but fits perhaps the upper limit of the breeding population.

The estimation of non-breeders/migrants given by Baz Hughes seems very high and is not proven by published data. In the last years, following counts of large numbers were published:

-Tengiz-Korgalzhin nature reserve (Central Kazakhstan): 338 in September 2002 (KOSHKIN & KOSHKINA 2003) [3]

-Tentek river delta (SE Kazakhstan, Alakol depression): 28.5.-1.6.2003 73 together., end of August 2003 94 (BEREZOVNIKOV & LEVINSKIY 2003) [4]

-Lake Sorbulak (N of Almaty): 20.10.2002 52 (BELYALOV & KARPOV 2002) [5]

-Topar lakes (near river Ili delta in lake Balchash): 5-7. September 2002 133 together (EROCHOV 2002) [5]

-River Ili delta in lake Balchash, near Kokzhide: 7-11. October 2002 about 100 (PANOVA 2002) [5]

The species was also recorded from several other wetlands, but only in very small numbers.

Furthermore, the species winters in very low numbers, but not annually.

Interestingly, in the hunting bag of several hunting companies in SE Kazakhstan 16 *Aythya nyroca* were found in spring 2003 (KARPOV 2003) [4].

References

[1] Ostashenko, A.N. & A. T. Davletbakov (2004). *Sovremennoe sostoyanie avifauny na ozerakh Son-Kul i Chatyr-Kul. Issledovaniya shivoy prirody Kyrgyzstana, vypusk 5.* Bishkek

[2] Kydyraliev, A. (1990). *Ptitsy ozer i gornyx rek Kirgizii.* Frunze

[3] Koshkin, A.V. & O.I. Koshkina (2003). Short review of the status of Red Data Book bird species in Tengiz region (Central Kazakhstan). *Selevinia 2003: Kazakhstan zoological yearbook.* Russian

[4] *Kazakhstanskiy ornitologicheskiy byulleten 2003.* Almaty

[5] *Kazakhstanskiy ornitologicheskiy byulleten 2002.* Almaty

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[operations](#) - 17 March, 2005 2:58 pm (#11 Total: 13)

Reply

Axel Braunlich has posted the following comments in the Threatened European birds forum:

Ferruginous Duck - In dubio pro Vulnerable?

Mongolia In the introduction to this forum "Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*): what are the trends in Asia?" it is stated that "little information is available from the countries where the species seems to be most numerous

(Mongolia and China; S. Delany in litt. 2004).” In the attachment to this forum „Aythya nyroca Hughes Jan05.doc“ – „Table 2. Numbers and trends for the Ferruginous Duck Aythya nyroca in individual range states. Source: Robinson & Hughes (2003)” the incredible number of 30,000 individuals is listed as migrant/non-breeding population for Mongolia. I would like to clarify: Ferruginous Duck is NOT common in Mongolia and the 30,000 individuals are erroneously listed for the country. This number is certainly a mistake and refers to birds recorded in Inner Mongolia, China (apparently the birds mentioned by Mike Crosby for Ulansuhai Nur IBA, see below)! The country Mongolia (“Outer Mongolia”) and the Chinese province of Inner Mongolia are quite often confused in the literature and this apparently happened here too. I had pointed out this mistake to Baz Hughes/TWSG in June 2003 already. Unfortunately the false data is repeatedly presented to the public here in this forum. Ferruginous Duck (FD) breeds in small numbers at scattered wetlands in Mongolia, but to present knowledge nowhere in large numbers. For example: During surveys from early May to mid July 1995 I recorded only 23 ad. birds (10 observations) including one female with pulli in the Great Lakes Basin, western Mongolia. The wetlands in the basin cover several thousand sqkm, including hundreds of sqkm of suitable breeding habitat (redbeds interspersed with lots of channels and lagoon-like open water). In contrast, other ducks (Common Pochard, Red-crested Pochard, Tufted Duck) were recorded as common or even abundant breeders.

Large numbers in Inner Mongolia Mike Crosby states in this forum “At a few sites it has been recorded in very high numbers, including the Ulansuhai Nur IBA in Inner Mongolia, where the breeding population has been estimated at several tens of thousands of pairs,...” This information is based on a communication between Mike and senior Chinese ornithologists. Originally it was stated as “30,000 pairs”. It is not clear actually, if this figure referred to pairs or individuals (M. Crosby pers. comm.). The site has 15,000 ha of potentially suitable breeding habitat, but it is not clear if the very high figure actually refers to a count or to extrapolation of smaller numbers recorded from parts of the wetland. The Chinese ornithologists stated that she was rather uncertain about the accuracy of the estimate because of the difficulty of counting this species (M. Crosby pers. comm.). Additionally it is not clear from what time of the year the count came and it cannot be ruled out that moulting concentrations were involved (N. Petkov in litt.). There is no information on sex ration, flock size, etc. One can assume that Ulansuhai Nur is a wetland of exceptional importance for FD and other waterfowl, but care should be taken when considering the very high numbers, referring to them as “breeding birds” and using them to evaluate the global threat status of the species.

Population estimates in Asia Mike Crosby states in this forum “Wetlands International (2002) estimated the S, E & NE Asian population of Ferruginous Duck at C/D (= 25,000-1,000,000), and my view is that the true figure is likely to be towards the upper limit of this range.” I do not understand how one can deduce a population of something towards a million birds (sic!) from very few migration / winter counts from different wetland in E / SE Asia from different years! I acknowledge that FD is apparently much more common in Asia than in Europe but I can see no proof / hard data which could support the very high population numbers presented here!

Given the additional information above and the facts already mentioned in this forum, e.g.

drastic declines in wetland in Kyrgyzstan
rather small numbers in Kazakhstan
strong declines in the European countries with the largest populations
strong declines or even disappearance from large areas in Russia
evidence for declines in Nepal
declines of 20-29% in Turkey ...I would suggest to upgrade FD to Vulnerable until well supported data helps to prove that FD numbers in Asia are really not declining and high enough to take them off the Red List.

I suggest to scrutinise the AWC data and check if statistical analyses on the population trend of FD in Asia are possible. For the last ten years data could be analysed using a log-linear model which has been successfully used to test such data. Software (including handbook and an introduction) to do this (TRIM - TRends and Indices for Monitoring data) can be found at <http://zeus.nyf.hu/%7Eszept/trim.htm>.

Axel Bräunlich braunlich@ipn.de

[operations](#) - 17 March, 2005 3:00 pm (#12 Total: 13)

Reply

Nicky Petkov has posted the following comments in the Threatened European Birds forum:

"I would like to ask a question

"Does anybody have any evidence of confirmed high number of breeding pairs in Asia at all?"

So far in this forum and elsewhere I have seen records of migration and wintering from various sites but from different years, a lot of extrapolation speculations, but no confirmation of breeding pairs and females with

ducklings. I am not at all convinced in the extrapolated high breeding numbers for Asia at all so little sense does it make for me to look for evidence of decrease in numbers in Asia to prove need of uplisting of the species. The question should be is there such big population of the FD in Asia at all?!"

[operations](#) - 18 July, 2005 2:40 pm (#13 Total: 13)

Reply

Todd Katzner has commented from Kazakhstan:

"Ferruginous Duck - rare to begin with in Kostanay region, but Evgeny Bragin does see them every year and can not say that their number or distribution changes. I have been doing surveys in south Kazakhstan for the past 5 years and have similar sentiments about this species in that area - not too common but we do see them every year."

White Eared-pheasant (*Crossoptilon crossoptilon*): downlist to Least Concern?

White Eared-pheasant *Crossoptilon crossoptilon* is currently listed as Near Threatened (almost meeting criteria C1; C2a(i)). It has a declining population estimated to number 10,000–50,000 individuals (McGowan and Garson 1995), but given the extent of its range it is very unlikely that the population numbers as few as 10,000 individuals (BirdLife International 2001), and indeed Fuller and Garson (2000) estimated that the population may number "as few as 20,000 individuals". Given this, the species may warrant downlisting to Least Concern. Comment on this proposed revision would be welcome.

[operations](#) - 22 February, 2005 10:30 am (#1 Total: 2)

Reply

Peter Garson has posted the following comments in the Threatened Galliformes Forum:

"This requires input from Lu Xin (Wuhan Univ) who has studied Tibetan WEP (*C. harmani*) extensively, as well as Wang Nan (Ph.D. student BNU) who has worked in western Sichuan over the past 18 months, and Han Lian-xian (SW Forestry Univ, Kunming) who is surveying on the fringe of its range in Yunnan now."

[operations](#) - 22 February, 2005 10:31 am (#2 Total: 2)

Reply

During the recent years we made different journeys in search for White Eared Pheasants throughout its distribution area. In big numbers we only met the birds around monasteries where the populations develop well under the umbrella of Buddhism. Vice versa is the situation in other localities. In forests or other remote suitable habitats we have only observed family groups which cover a huge area.

For everyone who try to find WEP in its natural surrounding it will be soon clear that these birds are isolated in patches between high bare altitudes and alpine meadows. According to our experience an estimation of 20.000 mature individuals is much to optimistic! Keeping in mind the huge areas which do not offer suitable habitats we can, base upon our countings and experiences, only calculate with one bird within 50Km² and this already include the above mention monasteries! Given the range according to ancient literature (meaning an optimistic extent of occurrence) one can find out an extent of approximately 250.000km². This means even 10.000 bird are a high number. Criteria Vulnerable C2a(i) is fully met.

Because there are simply no data about total numbers of this species and its change it does not meet the criteria C1. Although we sure that the fast economical development in China will cause a decline within the „next three generations“ of these birds, we only can estimate and mention our concern.

Despite we are very carefully with our estimation and not insist for the single above reason in an uplisting (although two subspecies, *dolanii* and *lichangense*, meet Endangered D !) we cannot accept a downlisting to Least Concern.

Alexander Pack-Blumenau
Karl-Heinz Grabowski

Black-bellied Tern (*Sterna acuticauda*): upgrade to Vulnerable?

Black-bellied Tern *Sterna acuticauda* is currently classified as Near Threatened, almost meeting criteria A2c; A3c,d because its population decline is suspected to approach >30% in three generations (27 years, assuming a generation length of nine years based on data extrapolated from similar sized congeners). Riverine specialists such as this appear to be particularly susceptible (see posting by R. Timmins below). South-East Asian populations have declined catastrophically (e.g. "fairly common" along the Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers in the 1960s, only one pair found in 2000; C. Poole in litt. 2002). The Indian subcontinent population was believed to still be healthy, but F. Cuthbert noted severe declines in Nepal between the 1970s and 2001 (per C. Poole in litt. 2002). The species was discussed during the 2002-2003 update (see postings below), but it was felt that further information is required from the Indian subcontinent. Any information or comments, particularly from the Indian subcontinent, would be welcome.

[GopiSundar](#) - 27 February, 2003 9:54 am (#3 Total: 8)

Reply

This is some information on the Black-bellied Tern numbers in the Uttar Pradesh portion of the National Chambal Sanctuary in India. The length of the river of this part of the Sanctuary is c.120km. In Jan 2002, I surveyed the entire stretch by boat and counted 173 individuals of *Sterna acuticauda*. There are no previous surveys from this part of the Sanctuary and I cannot say if the numbers have declined or increased. Local fishermen and the Sanctuary staff feel that the breeding has dropped of all the island nesters in the Sanctuary due to reduced water flow over the past five-six years, but feel that the Black-bellied terns may not have reduced in this period.

The information from Nepal and the Mekong is dismal indeed. The Chambal river is sometimes called the last living north-Indian river. To avoid the repetition of the scenario reported by Francie and Will, the pressures in the National Chambal Sanctuary need to be maintained at low levels.

K.S. Gopi Sundar

[operations](#) - 14 March, 2003 11:12 am (#4 Total: 8)

Reply

Colin Poole has sent a message noting that two pairs have returned to the same site on the lower Sesan in Cambodia. The site is a large island with a range of habitats and supports, in addition to the Black-bellied Terns, two pairs of River Lapwing, two pairs of River Tern, one of Great-knee and a bunch of Small Pratincoles and Little Ringed Plover.

[operations](#) - 16 April, 2003 4:28 pm (#5 Total: 8)

Reply

Pete Davidson has posted the following comments:

"I agree with Will and Colin's comments: this bird is doomed east of India, and doesn't sound much better off there. The two pairs Colin recently reported on are very likely the only remaining breeding pairs in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam combined by the way."

[Arun P.Singh](#) - 11 July, 2003 12:44 pm (#6 Total: 8)

Reply

Black-bellied Tern *Sterna acuticauda*.: Status and latest update from Dehra Dun valley, Uttaranchal, Northern India: the lower Garhwal Himalayas

by Arun P.Singh

Asan Barrage (30°25'N & 77°40'E) and adjoining areas (Yamuna and Asan rivers) that lie on the western part of the valley bordering Uttaranchal and Himachal Pradesh states of northern India, have been regularly monitored for

birds every winter ,since last one decade. Black-bellied Terns (1-2 individuals) have been regularly observed over here during winter flying over the reservoir and along the Asan and Yamuna rivers. Population of this species has remained stable over here. Last winter 1-2 individual were commonly recorded during my fortnightly visit to the Asan Barrage (from 5 January to 1 March 2003). However, on 1 March 2003, 4 individuals (2 inbreeding and 2 in non-breeding plumage) were observed (and photographed) in groups of 2 and 4. They flew over Yamuna river bed close to the Asan Barrage and also hovered over small pools with shallow and slow running water to catch small fish from besides also chasing each other. This for the first time that 4 individuals have been recorded together at this place. Other wise the river habitat at this place is under threat from mining for sand and gravel along with presence of humans and trucks but no bird hunting.

Past records show that this species was an 'uncommon bird' in the valley¹. Besides this place, it species has also been recorded an another site, the reservoir Bhingora Barrage located on the river Ganges at Haridwar town , lying on the other (eastern) end of the valley²

All these observations suggest that the population of the species in Dehra Dun valley (which has 50% of its land area under protected forest cover)has remained stable (if not increased) since last many decades despite habitat loss at some smaller riverlets in the central part of the valley which is going rapid urbanization.

[Reference cited

1. Osmaston,B.B. (1935) Birds of Dehra Dun and adjacent Hills. Indian Military Academy Journal Supplement .

2. Pandey,S., Joshua J., Rai, N.D., Mohan.D., Rawat,G.S., Sankar,K., Katti,M.V., Khati, D.V.S.and Johnsingh, A.J.T. (1994) Birds of Rajaji National Park, India. Forktail 10: 105-113.]

[operations](#) - 19 January, 2004 10:49 am (#7 Total: 8)

Reply

A final evaluation of the new information here suggests that as yet, there may be insufficient information from south Asia to be confident that the species is declining at rates exceeding 30% in three generations. Regular surveys in India should be a priority for getting a better picture of trends in the subcontinent. The species will therefore remain Near Threatened at present, with the proviso that it may well warrant upgrading as soon as there is better evidence of declines in the Indian Subcontinent.

Stuart Butchart & Mike Crosby, BirdLife International

[operations](#) - 3 February, 2004 12:11 pm (#8 Total: 8)

Reply

Rob Timmins has sent the following comments:

'Maybe I'm a little behind the times here! Anyway I thought I'd add my tuppence. It strikes me that declines generally don't get noticed until a species range (localities of occurrence) actually start declining. Thus generalised status assessments based heavily on extent of range occupied, appear to me as a very crude way of assessing status, and should be weighted less than evidence that can indicate number changes (whether it be from a large or small geographical area). It strikes me that the onus on using range data, that indicates no range change, in an assessment, is to provide complementary evidence that declines in numbers are NOT taking place (or at least that the rate of decline is below the thresholds for all three of the Threatened categories). In the absence of such supportive data one is left with great uncertainty.

To turn to an analogy I would have no qualms about describing Green Peafowl or Lesser Adjutant as a "widespread and locally common bird" over northern and eastern Cambodia (in fact I'd say that both were probably more than locally common). But at the same time although it is very difficult to detect a decline in numbers of either species in this very same area, I have no qualms in assessing the likely decline (current and future) of these populations as meeting the threshold for at least Vulnerable (based on inference to a number of indirect factors). The number of birds elsewhere in Indochina is so small, and the declines have occurred in many cases several decades ago, that you might argue that they would not influence the assessment. The same could be said for Sarus Crane in Indochina, there is very little direct evidence for a current or recent (last decade or so) decline, however no one is arguing that there hasn't been a decline, or that the species isn't highly threatened in Indochina.

I know less about B-b Tern in South Asia than the rest of you, or the South Asian threats to riverine species, but to me the crucial issue is not whether the species is still a "widespread and locally common bird", but rather what is happening with the numbers. Are there reasons to suspect that the same factors at operation in SEAsia might be at work in South Asia (dams, human/domestic animal disturbance, persecution in the form of egg/chick/adult collection). How much positive data is there to support the assessment of a "widespread and locally common bird" that numbers are not declining; has anyone shown or argued for stability of numbers over recent decades, and or presented evidence that likely threats are minor? For me the status of skimmer, plus the documentation of a localised decline in B-b Tern makes me think that there must be some shared threats (and other similarities)

between the two regions, and if this is the case I would want evidence that these threats are somehow greatly reduced and or very localised in South Asia before being happy to assess B-b Tern as only near-threatened.

A further issue that I and I suspect several of you have is the intrinsic vulnerability of riverine species, compared to many other wildlife communities. While I realise Green Peafowl is currently under tremendous pressure and the population at least in Indochina will be at least halved before the decline is stabilised, I do not have any long-term fear for the species future, it is not a species that is going to become extinct. Likewise although many Indochinese forest species may be declining perhaps at a rate in many cases at or above the threshold for Vulnerable, simply because of current and future rates of forest loss, in the most part I'm fairly certain that their trends will become stabilised at some point (or at least that they can be guaranteed to persist for decades to come, to be left for another generation of conservationists to worry over). In contrast I have no similar hopes for riverine communities in Indochina, I do not have a hard time believing that River Lapwing might become globally extinct in my lifetime, and certainly the likes of Masked Finfoot will become extinct in my lifetime (unless the world radically changes). Although there is no easy way to incorporate such foresight into the Red List assessment process, I believe that it is certainly worthy of consideration, particularly as a fudge factor for species on the borderline. Whether highlighting the plight of riverine species will ever make a difference to their long term future I have no idea (maybe the world can radically change)!