

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats



Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 61 (1997) on the conservation of the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*)

(Adopted by the Standing Committee on 5 December 1997)

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

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

Recalling that Article 11, paragraph b, of the Convention requires parties to strictly control the introduction of non-native species;

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

Noting that the species *Oxyura leucocephala*, listed in Appendix II of the Convention, is endangered;

Recognising the efforts of Contracting Parties in preserving the populations of this species;

Noting, however, that the main threat to the long-term survival of the species is its hybridisation with the American Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*;

Conscious of the critical importance of the continued expansion over Europe of the introduced Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* on the future of the native endangered *Oxyura leucocephala*;

Noting the large extent of populations of *Oxyura jamaicensis* in the United Kingdom, where this non-native species was first introduced in Europe;

Conscious that only a very firm control policy by the United Kingdom to halt and reverse the increase in population and range of the non-native *Oxyura jamaicensis* to a level that prevents spread to other countries can result in the long term survival of the endangered *Oxyura leucocephala*;

Desirous to avoid a further loss of biological biodiversity in the continent;

Aware of the obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Bonn Convention (and article 11 of the Birds Directive) to control and eradicate introduced species in order to prevent damage to threatened species;

Recalling Recommendation No. R (84) 14 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which calls on the member States to prohibit the introduction of non-native species into the natural environment;

Recalling the report of the Group of Experts of the Council of Europe (de Klemm, 1995) on Introductions of non-native organisms into the natural environment;

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

Recalling the International Action Plan for the White-headed Duck in Europe, prepared by BirdLife International and Wetlands International with the support of the European Commission;

Noting that eradication of *Oxyura jamaicensis* is just one instrument in the conservation of *Oxyura leucocephala* and that other conservation measures need to be taken;

Welcoming the important steps made by the United Kingdom government in undertaking research into the feasibility of control measures for North American Ruddy Duck in the United Kingdom;

Believing, therefore, that international coordination is essential for the conservation of the White-headed Duck;

Recommends that Contracting Parties to the convention or observer states, as appropriate, develop and implement without further delay national control programmes which could include eradication of the Ruddy Duck from all the countries in the Western Palearctic.