

Strasbourg, 15 November 2010  
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**T-PVS (2010) 23**

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Group of Experts  
on Ruddy Duck eradication**

Madrid (Spain), 11 November 2010

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**REPORT**

*Document  
prepared by  
the Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage*

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The Group of Experts on the eradication of the Ruddy Duck met in Madrid on 11 November 2010. On 10<sup>th</sup> November, Spanish Conservation authorities had hosted a European Workshop on progress towards Ruddy Duck eradication.

The meeting of the Group of Experts was aimed to examine a revised Action plan (2011-2015) for the eradication of the Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in the Western Palearctic elaborated by the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust (WWT) and financed by France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the Bern Convention.

The Standing Committee is invited to:

1. Thank France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom for their voluntary contributions to this activity;
2. Thank Spain for the excellent hosting of the meeting;
3. Examine and, if appropriate, adopt the draft recommendation in appendix 3 to this report.

## **1. INTRODUCTION BY THE SECRETARIAT**

The Secretariat welcomed participants (list in appendix 2 to this report) and thanked the General Directorate of Nature of Spain and Fundación Biodiversidad for the hosting of the meeting.

## **2. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The Group elected Ms Elaine Kendall (United Kingdom) Chair of the Group and adopted the agenda as it appears in appendix 1 to this report.

## **3. BERN CONVENTION ACTION IN ERADICATION OF THE RUDDY DUCK**

The Secretariat recalled that, following the adoption by the Standing Committee of a Recommendation No. 48 (1996) on the conservation of the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) and other globally threatened birds, and the adoption of Recommendation No. 61 (1997) asking Contracting Parties to develop national programmes to control the Ruddy Duck, a Bern Convention Action Plan for its eradication [document T-PVS/Birds (99) 9] was endorsed in 1999.

In the following years the European Commission funded a very positive and effective LIFE project to eradicate Ruddy Ducks in the United Kingdom but at the same time the species created relatively important populations in Belgium, the Netherlands and France. Meanwhile France implemented an eradication programme and Spain continued successfully its policy to eradicate all Ruddy Ducks and hybrids arriving in its territory.

As the United Kingdom population passed from around 4,4,500 birds to less than 200, the opportunity was seen to update the Bern Convention action plan for eradication and increase European collaboration in the control of this invasive alien bird. With funding from France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, a report was prepared by Ms Colette Hall and Mr Peter Cranswick, from the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust (WWT).

## **4. PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT BY THE CONSULTANT**

[Document T-PVS/Inf (2010) 21]

Mr Peter Cranswick presented the report, based on varied number of sources, including questionnaire sent to all relevant countries.

The main conclusions were summarised as follows:

- Reporting progress was difficult (many data were lacking or were not standardised);
- Positive progress was recorded, but the plan was only partially implemented;
- Distribution of Ruddy Ducks expanded to most of Europe;
- Possibly the species was under-recorded in eastern and northern Europe;
- Main success was that decrease of birds in the United Kingdom was mirrored by decreases in many countries;
- Breeding populations in France and Netherlands (and seemingly Belgium) are well established and increasing;
- The threat posed by Ruddy Duck are no longer contained within United Kingdom;
- Further expansion is inevitable without increased control;
- Control is feasible
- There are no major barriers to implementation;
- Eradication must be implemented immediately to achieve full success;

- Activities must be co-ordinated and synchronised internationally;
- There is significant risk that efforts to date will be rendered useless unless the new plan is implemented.

Several delegations expressed satisfaction to the quality of the report and made a number of comments of detail. Delegations were asked to submit comments in writing at the shortest notice.

The general impression was that the very positive controls and the good progress in the United Kingdom had to be accompanied by increased efforts in a number of countries, mainly Belgium, the Netherlands, and France.

The eradication plan presented was realistic. Following targets set up in Nagoya at COP-10 of CBD it was thought appropriate to set a general target for the eradication of Ruddy Ducks in the wild by 2015, which is also the date specified for eradication in Europe in the CMS Single Species Action Plan for White-headed Duck. This is easily achievable if all states were successful in halving their population each year.

## **5. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND PROPOSALS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE TO THE BERN CONVENTION**

The Group discussed and proposed the main action for the eradication plan as they appear in the draft recommendation in appendix 4, which also has a number of urgent proposals for a number of states.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair proposed to inform the ORNIS Committee on the progress of the eradication plan in the United Kingdom and on the proposals made by the eradication plan.

The Group accepted the proposal with satisfaction.

## Appendix 1



### **Bern Convention Group of Experts on Ruddy Duck eradication 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting**

Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs (MARM) Auditorium  
(Plaza San Juan De La Cruz, S/N, Madrid, Spain), 11 November 2010  
9.30am – 14.00 pm

**NB Kindly note the meeting will be preceded by a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November of the LIFE project on Ruddy Duck**

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### **DRAFT AGENDA**

- 1. Opening of the meeting by the Secretariat**
- 2. Election of the Chair and Adoption of the Draft Agenda**
- 3. Council of Europe action on Ruddy duck control**
- 4. Presentation of draft report on Ruddy Duck Status and Eradication Strategy by WWT**  
*[document T-PVS/Inf (2010) 21]*
  - Presentation of report by WWT
  - Comments by states
  - Discussion on measures proposed
- 5. Priorities for action and Proposals to the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention:**
  - Possible draft recommendation
- 6. Other business**



**Bern Convention Group of Experts  
on Ruddy Duck eradication  
2<sup>nd</sup> meeting**

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### Appendix 3



## Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

### Standing Committee

#### **Draft Recommendation No. ... (2010) of the Standing Committee, adopted on ... December 2010, on the eradication of the Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in the Western Palaearctic**

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 flora and fauna and its natural habitats;

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

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

Noting that the species *Oxyura leucocephala*, listed in Appendix II of the Convention, is 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 need to arrest the expansion in Europe and Northern Africa of the Ruddy Duck;

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

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

Recalling Recommendation No. 61 (1997) on the conservation of the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) which asked Contracting Parties to develop and implement without further delay national control programmes of the Ruddy Duck in all the countries in the Western Palaearctic;

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

Welcoming the very effective control carried out in the United Kingdom, in the framework of the LIFE project, to drastically reduce the number of Ruddy Ducks in its territory;

Welcoming also the commendable efforts to control the species in the wild in other contracting parties;

Regretting, however, that lack of action in some states following the Bern Convention eradication plan, has made eradication more costly and difficult;

Referring to the document “*Eradication of the Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in the Western Palaearctic: a review of Progress and revised Action Plan 2011-2015*” by the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust [document T-PVS/Inf (2010) 21];



Conscious that, following present culling efforts, it is realistic to achieve a full eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the wild in the Western Palearctic in the next five years;

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

Recommend that:

*All Contracting Parties:*

1. Implement without delay the actions specified in the “Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the Western Palearctic, 2011-2015”; enclosed as appendix to this recommendation;

*Priority States:*

2. Belgium urgently implement an action programme aiming at achieving the common target of eliminating annually at least 50 % of Ruddy Duck national population to achieve total eradication in its territory no later than 2015;
3. France intensify present efforts to eradicate Ruddy Duck and carry out a vast public awareness campaign;
4. The Netherlands urgently implement the existing eradication plan, providing the resources needed for its completion; and as a matter of urgency establish the national co-ordination foreseen in the plan so as to facilitate its implementation, taking into account that delays will increase costs;
5. Spain continue its present policy to eradicate every single Ruddy Duck or hybrid detected in its territory;
6. United Kingdom continue present efforts to eradicate the remaining populations of Ruddy Duck and pursue them after the end of the very effective and positive LIFE project;

*Other States:*

7. Denmark, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland eliminate systematically all Ruddy Ducks appearing in their territory;
8. Morocco control systematically Ruddy Ducks and hybrids in its territory, in particular in the Dayet and Sidi Bou Ghaba wetlands;
9. Tunisia monitor White-headed Duck and eliminate systematically Ruddy Ducks and hybrids in its territory;

Invites Algeria to monitor White-headed Duck and eliminate systematically Ruddy Ducks and hybrids in its territory.

## Appendix 4

**Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the Western Palearctic, 2011-2015**

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Ruddy Ducks <sup>1</sup> stop being a threat to the White-headed duck</i>
<i>Target</i>	<i>Long-term eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the western Palearctic and establishment of measures to avoid new introductions of the species.</i>

**I. Actions concerning eradication of Ruddy Ducks in the wild**

<i>General target</i>	<i>Eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the wild in the western Palearctic by 2015</i>
<i>National targets</i>	<i>Annual reduction of at least 50 % of the national wintering population</i>
Action 1	Remove legal barriers that may hinder the control of Ruddy Ducks
Action 2	Monitor the status and distribution of Ruddy Duck in the wild
Action 3	Eliminate Ruddy Ducks in the wild following the national target
Action 4	Establish, as necessary, national working groups to guide the implementation of this eradication strategy and appoint a national focal point for international co-ordination.

**II. Actions concerning Ruddy Duck in captivity**

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Avoid any new escape of Ruddy Ducks to the wild in the Western Palearctic</i>
<i>General target</i>	<i>Phase out all captive populations of Ruddy Ducks, if possible by 2020</i>
Action 5	Prohibit the release of Ruddy Ducks from captivity
Action 6	Prohibit trade in Ruddy Ducks by 2013
Action 7	Monitor the status of Ruddy Ducks in captivity
Action 8	Encourage the sterilisation and/or elimination of Ruddy Ducks in captivity

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

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Improve understanding by the public of the problem</i>
<i>Goal</i>	<i>Follow the progress of the eradication plan and update it as necessary</i>
Action 9	Implement public awareness activities on the need to control Ruddy Ducks.
Action 10	Report annually to the Bern Convention on national action and collaborate with other states, the Bern Convention, AEWA and other appropriate bodies in the implementation of this eradication plan and the Action plan for the conservation of the White-headed Duck.

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<sup>1</sup> In the framework of this action plan the term « Ruddy Ducks » refers both to Ruddy Ducks and to the hybrids of Ruddy Ducks and White-headed Ducks.