Cygnus olor -- (Gmelin, 1789)
ANIMALIA -- CHORDATA -- AVES -- ANSERIFORMES -- ANATIDAE

**Common names:** Mute Swan;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European Red List Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LC -- Least Concern, (IUCN version 3.1)</td>
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</table>

**European Red List Assessment**

### Assessment Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year published:</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date assessed:</td>
<td>2015-03-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor(s):</td>
<td>BirdLife International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewer(s):</td>
<td>Symes, A.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Compiler(s):</td>
<td>Ashpole, J., Burfield, I., Ieronymidou, C., Pople, R., Wheatley, H. &amp; Wright, L.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment Rationale**

**European regional assessment: Least Concern (LC)**

**EU27 regional assessment: Least Concern (LC)**

At both European and EU27 scales this species has an extremely large range, and hence does not approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the range size criterion (Extent of Occurrence 10% in ten years or three generations, or with a specified population structure). The population trend appears to be increasing, and hence the species does not approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the population trend criterion (30% decline over ten years or three generations).

For these reasons the species is evaluated as Least Concern within both Europe and the EU27.

### Occurrence

**Countries/Territories of Occurrence**

**Introduced:**
Faroe Islands (to DK); Iceland

**Native:**
Albania; Armenia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Belgium; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Ireland, Rep. of; Italy; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of; Moldova; Montenegro; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine; United Kingdom

**Vagrant:**
Malta; Portugal; Canary Is. (to ES)

**Population**
The European population is estimated at 83,400-116,000 pairs, which equates to 167,000-231,000 mature individuals. The population in the EU27 is estimated at 67,700-92,800 pairs, which equates to 135,000-186,000 mature individuals. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

**Trend**

In Europe and the EU27 the population size is estimated to be increasing. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

**Habitats and Ecology**
The species inhabits a variety of lowland freshwater wetlands (Carboneras and Kirwan 2013) such as shallow lakes (Kear 2005), ponds (Madge and Burn 1988), lagoons, marshes (Carboneras and Kirwan 2013), reedbeds (Snow and Perrins 1998, Carboneras and Kirwan 2013) and slow-flowing rivers (Kear 2005) (showing a preference for clean, weed-filled streams over larger, polluted rivers) (Johnsgard 1978). It is also common on artificial waterbodies such as reservoirs, gravel-pits, ornamental lakes (Carboneras and Kirwan 2013), ditches (Snow and Perrins 1998) and canals (Scott and Rose 1996), and will graze on grassland and agricultural land.
The species breeds during the local spring as isolated pairs in well-defended territories. The nest is a large mound of aquatic vegetation placed close to or floating on shallow water or amongst reeds (Carboneras and Kirwan 2013). Breeding pairs often re-use nesting sites from previous years if it was successful (Johnsgard 1978). Usually five to seven eggs are laid at two-day intervals. Its diet consists predominantly of leaves and the vegetative parts of aquatic plants and grasses (Carboneras and Kirwan 2013) as well as algae (Johnsgard 1978) and grain, occasionally also taking small amphibians and aquatic invertebrates (e.g. molluscs, insects and worms). Truly wild populations of this species are migratory (particularly where displaced by cold weather) (Carboneras and Kirwan 2013) although European and feral populations are essentially sedentary or only locally migratory or nomadic (Scott and Rose 1996, Snow and Perrins 1998).

### Threats

The species suffers heavy losses from lead poisoning due to ingested lead fishing weights (Kelly and Kelly 2004), lead shot (Spray and Milne 1988) and lead-contaminated sediments from mining and smelting activities (Day et al. 2003). Heavy losses have also been recorded from local incidences of copper poisoning (Kobayashi et al. 1992). The ingestion of or entanglement in fishing lines and/or hooks can also cause severe injury or mortality (Kelly and Kelly 2004) as can collisions with overhead lines (Carboneras and Kirwan 2013) although European and feral populations are essentially sedentary or only locally migratory). The species may be threatened by future oil spills (which can cause death by oil saturation) (Berglund et al. 1963). The species is also susceptible to avian influenza (e.g. strain H5N1) (Melville and Shortridge 2006, Nagy et al. 2007) so may be threatened by future outbreaks of the virus. Significant mortality can occur with prolonged freezing weather in winter which prevents birds from feeding (Carboneras and Kirwan 2013).
### Threats & Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threat (level 1)</th>
<th>Threat (level 2)</th>
<th>Impact and Stresses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate change &amp; severe weather</td>
<td>Temperature extremes</td>
<td><strong>Timing</strong>: Past, Likely to Return <strong>Scope</strong>: Minority (&lt;50%) <strong>Severity</strong>: Causing/Could cause fluctuations <strong>Impact</strong>: Past Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invasive and other problematic species, genes &amp; diseases</td>
<td>Avian Influenza Virus (H subtype)</td>
<td><strong>Timing</strong>: Future <strong>Scope</strong>: Majority (50-90%) <strong>Severity</strong>: Slow, Significant Declines <strong>Impact</strong>: Low Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>Oil spills</td>
<td><strong>Timing</strong>: Ongoing <strong>Scope</strong>: Minority (&lt;50%) <strong>Severity</strong>: Causing/Could cause fluctuations <strong>Impact</strong>: Low Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>Seepage from mining</td>
<td><strong>Timing</strong>: Ongoing <strong>Scope</strong>: Minority (&lt;50%) <strong>Severity</strong>: Slow, Significant Declines <strong>Impact</strong>: Low Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; service corridors</td>
<td>Utility &amp; service lines</td>
<td><strong>Timing</strong>: Ongoing <strong>Scope</strong>: Minority (&lt;50%) <strong>Severity</strong>: Negligible declines <strong>Impact</strong>: Low Impact</td>
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</tbody>
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### Conservation Actions Underway

EU Birds Directive Annex II. CMS Appendix II. In the U.K. management to decrease competition has shown to be successful (Giles 1994).

### Conservation Actions Proposed

Legislation to ban the use of lead weights in fishing and measures to minimise mortality from fishing lines and nets should be introduced. The creation and protection of wetland habitats, particularly from mining waste would also benefit the species. Powerlines should be moved or made more visible.

### Bibliography


Cygnus olor

Range

- Extant (breeding)
- Extant (non breeding)
- Extant (resident)
- Introduced

Citation:
BirdLife International (2015)
European Red List of Birds