

Somateria spectabilis -- (Linnaeus, 1758)

ANIMALIA -- CHORDATA -- AVES -- ANSERIFORMES -- ANATIDAE

Common names: King Eider;

European Red List Assessment

European Red List Status

LC -- Least Concern, (IUCN version 3.1)

Assessment Information

Year published:	2015
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Assessor(s):	BirdLife International
Reviewer(s):	Symes, A.
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Assessment Rationale

European regional assessment: Least Concern (LC)

EU27 regional assessment: Not Applicable (NA)

This species has a very 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 is not known, but the population is not believed to be decreasing sufficiently rapidly to approach the thresholds under the population trend criterion (30% decline over ten years or three generations). For these reasons the species is evaluated as Least Concern in Europe.

The bird is considered a vagrant or passage species in the EU27 and is assessed as Not Applicable (NA) for this region.

Occurrence

Countries/Territories of Occurrence

Native:

Denmark; Greenland (to DK); Iceland; Norway; Svalbard and Jan Mayen (to NO); Russian Federation

Vagrant:

Belarus; Belgium; Czech Republic; Finland; France; Germany; Hungary; Ireland, Rep. of; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Spain; Sweden; United Kingdom

Population

The European population is estimated at 37,500-45,500 pairs, which equates to 75,000-91,000 mature individuals. The species does not occur in the EU27. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

Trend

In Europe the population size trend is unknown. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

Habitats and Ecology

The species breeds on dry Arctic tundra near freshwater lakes, pools, bogs (Carboneras and Kirwan 2014), marshes (Kear 2005), streams (Madge and Burn 1988) and small rivers (Carboneras and Kirwan 2014) on the coast or up to 50 km (rarely up to 100 km) inland. It shows a preference for shallow fresh waters with emergent vegetation for initial brood rearing, afterwards moving to more saline waters where the young fledge. The species generally moults in sheltered fjords and bays with high densities of benthic fauna (Kear 2005), and winters at sea on deep offshore waters (Kear 2005, Carboneras and Kirwan 2014) close to the edge of sea ice or in coastal areas with shallow waters (Kear 2005). It breeds from late-June onwards (Madge and Burn 1988) usually in well-dispersed (Kear 2005) solitary pairs (Carboneras and Kirwan 2014), although in some areas it may also form loose colonies (Madge and Burn 1988). The nest is a slight hollow on dry ground and is usually positioned near water in the open or under the cover of driftwood, grass hummocks or rocks (Flint et al. 1984). Its diet consists predominantly of animal matter such as benthic molluscs, crustaceans, larval insects, echinoderms and other marine invertebrates, although the seeds and the vegetative parts of

tundra plants, sedges and aquatic plants may also be taken on the breeding grounds (Kear 2005, Carboneras and Kirwan 2014), and algae, eelgrass *Zostera* spp. and *Ruppia maritima* may be taken at sea (Johnsgard 1978). It breeds from June onwards in solitary pairs. This species is fully migratory (Carboneras and Kirwan 2014).

Habitats & Altitude		
Habitat (level 1 - level 2)	Importance	Occurrence
Grassland - Tundra	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Macroalgal/Kelp	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Macroalgal/Kelp	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Seagrass (Submerged)	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Seagrass (Submerged)	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Loose Rock/pebble/gravel	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Loose Rock/pebble/gravel	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Rock and Rocky Reefs	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Rock and Rocky Reefs	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Sandy	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Sandy	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Sandy-Mud	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Sandy-Mud	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Oceanic - Epipelagic (m)	suitable	non-breeding
Wetlands (inland) - Tundra Wetlands (incl. pools and temporary waters from snowmelt)	major	breeding
Altitude	Occasional altitudinal limits	

Threats

The species is threatened by chronic coastal oil pollution (Nikolaeva et al. 2006) and future oil spills (Nikolaeva et al. 2006), especially where it forms large aggregations on the sea during the moult period, on migration or in the winter (Carboneras and Kirwan 2014). The species is also threatened by the degradation of food resources as a result of oil exploration and by human disturbance when moulting and on migration, and is threatened by disturbance from uncontrolled shipping (e.g. oil transportation) on its wintering grounds (Nikolaeva et al. 2006).

Threats & Impacts					
Threat (level 1)	Threat (level 2)	Impact and Stresses			
Climate change & severe weather	Habitat shifting & alteration	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Future	Whole (>90%)	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
Ecosystem degradation; Indirect ecosystem effects					
Energy production & mining	Oil & gas drilling	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Negligible declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
Ecosystem conversion; Indirect ecosystem effects; Species disturbance					
Pollution	Oil spills	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Future	Majority (50-90%)	Causing/Could cause fluctuations	Low Impact
		Stresses			
Ecosystem conversion; Species mortality					

Conservation

Conservation Actions Underway

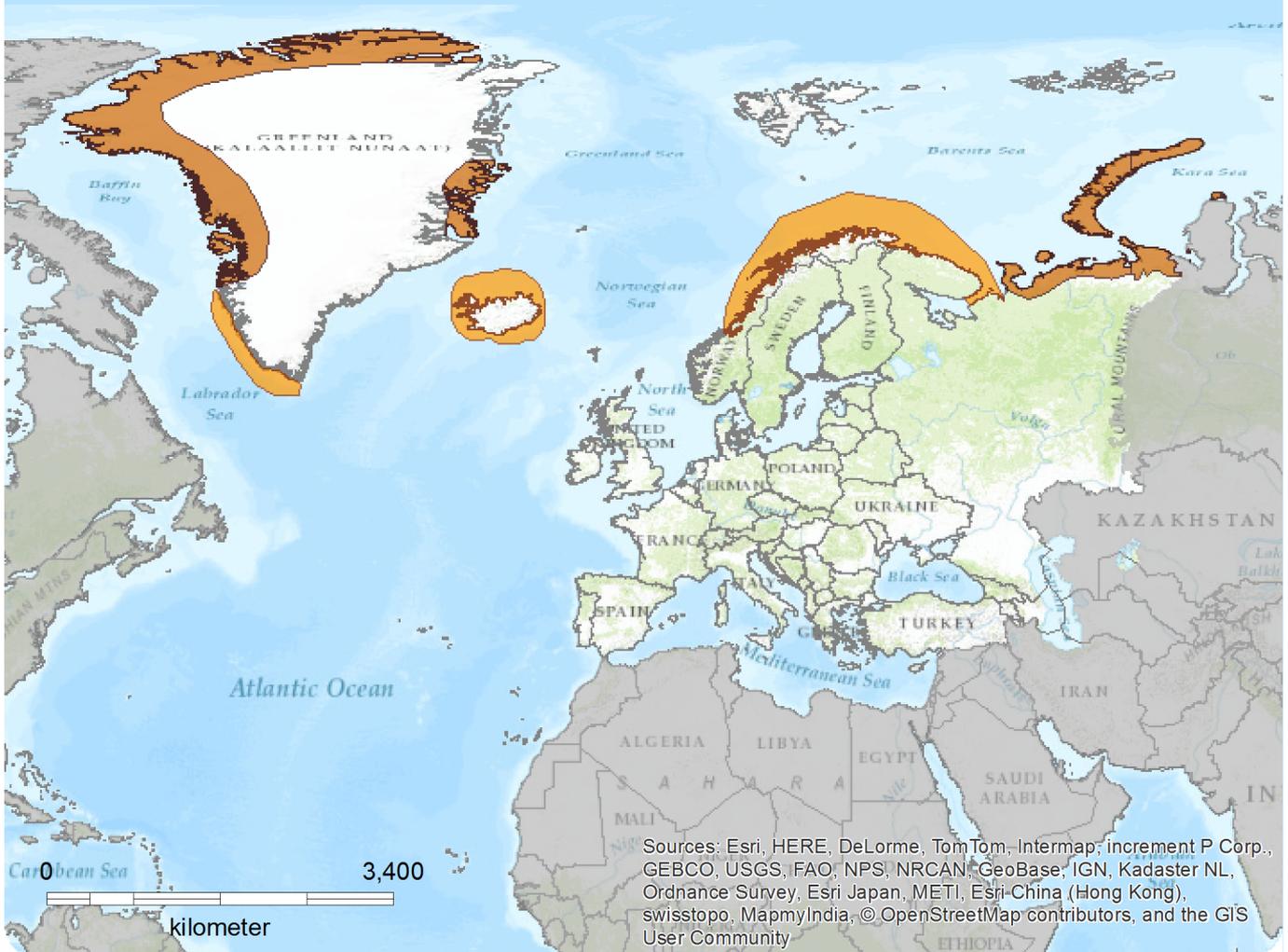
Bern Convention Appendix II. CMS Appendix II. There are currently no known conservation measures for this species.

Conservation Actions Proposed

Strict legislation on oil exploration and transportation is needed as well as protection of key sites. Research into the species's ecology and population dynamics will help future conservation measures.

- Carboneras, C. and Kirwan, G.M. 2014. King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*). In: del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., Sargatal, J., Christie, D.A. and de Juana, E. (eds.) 2014. *Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive*. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. (retrieved from <http://www.hbw.com/node/52915> on 27 February 2015)
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- Johnsgard, P.A. 1978. *Ducks, geese and swans of the World*. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London.
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- Nikolaeva, N.G., Spiridonov, V.A. and Krasnov, Y.V. 2006. Existing and proposed marine protected areas and their relevance for seabird conservation: a case study in the Barents Sea region. In: Boere, G., Galbraith, C. and Stroud, D. (ed.), *Waterbirds around the world*, pp. 743-749. The Stationary Office, Edinburgh, UK.
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European Regional Assessment



Somateria spectabilis

NE DD **LC** > NT VU EN CR EW EX

LEAST CONCERN

Range

- Extant (breeding)
- Extant (non breeding)

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

Map created 05/13/2015



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