

## **Gavia immer -- (Brünnich, 1764)**

ANIMALIA -- CHORDATA -- AVES -- GAVIIFORMES -- GAVIIDAE

**Common names:** Common Loon; Great Northern Diver; Great Northern Loon

### European Red List Assessment

#### European Red List Status

VU -- Vulnerable, (IUCN version 3.1)

#### Assessment Information

Year published:	2015
Date assessed:	2015-03-31
Assessor(s):	BirdLife International
Reviewer(s):	Symes, A.
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#### Assessment Rationale

**European regional assessment: Vulnerable (VU)**

**EU27 regional assessment: Vulnerable (VU)**

This diver has a small wintering population in both Europe and the EU27, which has apparently shown a rapid recent decline that has been estimated at between 30-49%. It is therefore classified as Vulnerable (A4abce; C1) for both regions.

### Occurrence

#### Countries/Territories of Occurrence

##### Native:

Belgium; Denmark; Faroe Islands (to DK); Greenland (to DK); France; Iceland; Ireland, Rep. of; Netherlands; Norway; Svalbard and Jan Mayen (to NO); Portugal; Spain; United Kingdom

##### Origin Uncertain:

Austria; Bulgaria; Czech Republic; Germany; Italy; Romania; Slovakia; Slovenia; Sweden; Switzerland; Ukraine

##### Vagrant:

Albania; Croatia; Estonia; Finland; Greece; Hungary; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Montenegro; Poland; Serbia; Canary Is. (to ES); Turkey; Gibraltar (to UK)

### Population

In Europe the breeding population is estimated at 700-1,300 pairs, which equates to 1,400-2,600 mature individuals. The minimum European population in winter is estimated at 5,100-6,300 individuals, which equates to 3,400-4,200 mature individuals. The species occurs in the EU27 only in winter and the minimum population is estimated at 4,000-4,300 individuals, which equates to 2,700-2,800 mature individuals. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

### Trend

In Europe and the EU27 the population is estimated and projected to be decreasing by 30-49% between 2000, when the declines are estimated to have begun and 2029 (three generations), and by at least 20% in 19.6 years (two generations). For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

### Habitats and Ecology

This species is strongly migratory. The species breeds on large, deep freshwater lakes in coniferous forest or on open tundra (Carboneras et al. 2014). Some individuals remain in Iceland year-round, although most winter on sea coasts or on larger lakes across the North East Atlantic coast from Finland and Norway to Portugal and in the western Mediterranean. During the winter the species occurs singly, in pairs or in small loose flocks in marine habitats (Godfrey 1979, Snow and Perrins 1998). A pursuit diver, its diet consists predominantly of fish, including cod (*Gadus morhua*), haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*), herring (*Clupea harengus*), trout (*Salmo*), suckers (*Catostomidae*), minnows (*Cyprinidae*) and perch (*Perca*) as well as crustaceans, molluscs, aquatic insects, annelid worms, frogs, other amphibians and plant matter (e.g.

Potamogeton spp., willow (Salix spp.) shoots, roots, seeds, moss and algae) (Carboneras et al. 2014).

<b>Habitats &amp; Altitude</b>		
Habitat (level 1 - level 2)	Importance	Occurrence
Marine Neritic - Estuaries	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Macroalgal/Kelp	major	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Pelagic	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Seagrass (Submerged)	major	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Loose Rock/pebble/gravel	major	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Rock and Rocky Reefs	major	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Sandy	major	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Sandy-Mud	major	non-breeding
Wetlands (inland) - Permanent Freshwater Lakes (over ha)	major	breeding
Wetlands (inland) - Tundra Wetlands (incl. pools and temporary waters from snowmelt)	major	breeding
Altitude	max. 500 m	Occasional altitudinal limits

### Threats

When breeding the species is threatened by fluctuating water levels (e.g., due to the building of dams) (Rimmer 1992), acidification of breeding lakes (Piper et al. 2002, Carboneras et al. 2014), heavy metal pollution (Rimmer 1992, Carboneras et al. 2014) (e.g. methylmercury contamination) (Piper et al. 2002) and lead poisoning from ingested lead fishing weights (Scheuhammer et al. 2003). It is also highly sensitive to human disturbance (Carboneras et al. 2014) such as shoreline development and human recreation (Piper et al. 2002), and may desert lakes after increases in human presence and activities (Carboneras et al. 2014). During the winter the species is highly vulnerable to coastal oil spills, especially in areas where large congregations form (Carboneras et al. 2014), and entanglement in monofilament fishing lines (used for sport fishing) and commercial fishing nets causes significant mortality at sea and on larger lakes (Carboneras et al. 2014).

<b>Threats &amp; Impacts</b>					
Threat (level 1)	Threat (level 2)	Impact and Stresses			
		Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
Biological resource use	Fishing & harvesting aquatic resources (unintentional effects: (large scale) [harvest])	Ongoing	Unknown	Causing/Could cause fluctuations	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Species mortality			
Human intrusions & disturbance	Recreational activities	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Species disturbance			
Natural system modifications	Abstraction of surface water (commercial use)	Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem degradation; Indirect ecosystem effects			
Pollution	Industrial & military effluents (type unknown/unrecorded)	Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Species mortality			
Pollution	Oil spills	Ongoing	Unknown	Rapid Declines	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Species mortality			

### Conservation

#### Conservation Actions Underway

The species is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on Migratory Species and is listed under the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement. It is listed in Article I under the EU Birds Directive. It occurs in 20 IBAs, including in Iceland, Norway (Svalbard and mainland Norway), Ireland, the United Kingdom and in Spain. It is a listed species in 83 Special Protection Areas in the EU Natura 2000 network.

### **Conservation Actions Proposed**

Protect Important Bird Areas across range states and identify and designate additional important sites. Identify sites and areas where high gillnet bycatch is occurring, and develop effective mitigation solutions. Manage coastal and inland developments surrounding important breeding areas. Develop rapid and trans-boundary response plans to coastal oil spills.

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### **Bibliography**

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**Map (see overleaf)**

# European Regional Assessment



## *Gavia immer*

### Range

- Extant (breeding)
- Extant (non breeding)

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

NE DD LC NT VU EN CR EW EX  
VULNERABLE

Map created 05/12/2015



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