

Lanius minor -- Gmelin, 1788

ANIMALIA -- CHORDATA -- AVES -- PASSERIFORMES -- LANIIDAE

Common names: Lesser Grey Shrike; Pie-grièche à poitrine rose

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
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Assessment Rationale

European regional assessment: Least Concern (LC)

EU27 regional assessment: Least Concern (LC)

In Europe 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 stable, 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 in Europe.

Within the EU27 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 the EU27.

Occurrence

Countries/Territories of Occurrence

Native:

Albania; Armenia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Estonia; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of; Malta; Moldova; Montenegro; Poland; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine

Vagrant:

Belgium; Denmark; Faroe Islands (to DK); Finland; Ireland, Rep. of; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Norway; Portugal; Sweden; United Kingdom

Population

The European population is estimated at 331,000-896,000 pairs, which equates to 662,000-1,790,000 mature individuals. The population in the EU27 is estimated at 87,700-165,000 pairs, which equates to 175,000-330,000 mature individuals. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

Trend

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

Habitats and Ecology

This species occurs in open lowlands and hills in steppe and forest-steppe and Mediterranean zones. Suitable breeding habitats in Europe include orchards, groves, parks, woodland edges and overgrown ditches even if close to human settlement or cultivation (Tucker and Heath 1994). Tall trees are necessary for nesting. It is found up to 700 m, rarely to 900 m in central Europe and to 1,500 m in Russia. It arrives at its breeding grounds from late-April to mid-May and egg-laying occurs May to early June.

The nest is built by both sexes. It is a well-made structure with a loose foundation of twigs, grass, rootlets, string, etc., often with high proportion of green plants and lined with rootlets, feathers and hair but occasionally it is unlined. Clutch size can be from three to seven eggs but usually five or six. It is a specialized insectivore, although it also feeds on spiders and very rarely vertebrates (Yosef et al. 2008). Prey is taken from the ground and air, although the species requires few perches and often hovers. Unlike other shrikes food hoarding is rare (Tucker and Heath 1994). The species is a long distance migrant and spends less than four months on its breeding grounds. European birds depart in the autumn and overwinter in southern Africa before beginning to return in late February or early March (Hagemeijer and Blair 1997).

Habitats & Altitude

Habitat (level 1 - level 2)		Importance	Occurrence
Artificial/Terrestrial - Arable Land		suitable	breeding
Artificial/Terrestrial - Pastureland		suitable	breeding
Artificial/Terrestrial - Rural Gardens		suitable	breeding
Grassland - Subtropical/Tropical Dry		suitable	breeding
Grassland - Temperate		suitable	breeding
Shrubland - Mediterranean-type Shrubby Vegetation		suitable	breeding
Shrubland - Subtropical/Tropical Dry		major	breeding
Shrubland - Temperate		suitable	breeding
Altitude	max. 1500 m	Occasional altitudinal limits	

Threats

Agricultural intensification and an increase in monocultures have driven declines in western and central Europe (Tucker and Heath 1994). Heavy use of fertilizers since the middle of the 20th century has led to an increase in vegetation cover, causing wetter and colder micro-climates close to the soil, this, in turn, has negative effects on the large arthropod fauna on which this species relies (Yosef and International Shrike Working Group 2008). The use of insecticides has also contributed to a decline in prey for this species. Climatic fluctuations, causing wetter conditions in some areas of Europe and drier in others, are also thought to be a serious threat. The species suffers high losses due to predation by natural predators and human disturbance and in central Europe it is persecuted as a predator of song birds (Tucker and Heath 1994).

Threats & Impacts

Threat (level 1)	Threat (level 2)	Impact and Stresses			
Agriculture & aquaculture	Agro-industry farming	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Negligible declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem conversion; Ecosystem degradation			
Biological resource use	Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals (persecution/control)	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Negligible declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem degradation			
Climate change & severe weather	Temperature extremes	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Whole (>90%)	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Indirect ecosystem effects			
Human intrusions & disturbance	Recreational activities	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Negligible declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Species disturbance			
Invasive and other problematic species, genes & diseases	Unspecified species	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Negligible declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Species disturbance			
Pollution	Agricultural & forestry effluents (nutrient loads)	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Negligible declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem degradation			

Threats & Impacts					
Threat (level 1)	Threat (level 2)	Impact and Stresses			
Pollution	Herbicides and pesticides	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Negligible declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem degradation			

Conservation

Conservation Actions Underway

EU Birds Directive Annex I. Bern Convention Appendix II. A conservation programme in Spain has shown some success through monitoring, habitat management and the release of captive bred birds (Martínez 2011). Agri-environment schemes have been implemented successfully as seen in France, in Languedoc-Roussillon where in 1996 as special wine was even produced and sold with some of the proceeds going to habitat management for this species (LeFranc and Worfolk 1997).

Conservation Actions Proposed

This species would benefit from a decrease in use of agricultural pesticides and from the maintenance of traditional, mosaic farming methods, with old orchards (Tucker and Heath 1994, Yosef and International Shrike Working Group 2008), the development of protected areas in suitable habitats and favourable habitat management (LeFranc and Worfolk 1997). Studies should be undertaken into the influence of predators such as corvids on nesting success and post-fledgling survival and censuses and monitoring should be improved in eastern and south-east Europe (Tucker and Heath 1994).

Bibliography

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Map (see overleaf)

European Regional Assessment



Lanius minor

Range

Extant (breeding)

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



Map created 05/12/2015

