

Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

2008 International Marbled Teal Species Action Plan Implementation Report

Coverage

This report evaluates the implementation of the EU Species Action Plan from 2004 in the EU range states of the species.

The evaluation covers all 25 range states of the species (14 with breeding populations, 4 with stop-over sites and 7 with a wintering population) and 2 EU countries. The implementation of non-country specific actions hasn't been evaluated.

Replies have been received from national experts from EU countries.

Status

The species is classified as “vulnerable” on the IUCN red list of globally threatened species due to large population losses in the past and the current very small area of occupancy.

In 2007, the breeding population was 73-97 breeding pairs in the EU countries. Including Turkey and Russia the population in Europe is approximately 223-311 breeding pairs.

The world wintering population is estimated at 14,000–26,000. The West Mediterranean and West Africa wintering population is estimated in 3,500-5,000 individuals. The biggest wintering population is in the Southwest of Asia estimated in 5,000-15,000 wintering individuals (Wetlands International 2006). In Spain in 2006 the wintering population was estimated in 175-250 individuals, more than 50% in El Hondo wetland.

The current breeding population estimate is lower than at the time of writing the EU action plan and of the first review. The evolution of the population is very oscillating, but with some decreasing trend. It should be borne in mind that the quality of census has been variable, being higher since 1992. The species is typically fluctuating and according to the opinion of the national experts the overall trend was negative.

Country	Population in SAP	Year	Last SAP review	Year	Current population	Year
Italy	0	n/a	1 – 2 p.	2001 - 2002	2 – 3	2006-2007
Spain	30 – 250	1985 - 1994	31 – 204	1994 - 2001	73 – 97	2007

In Italy the populations were stable in the last year, but only with 3 breeding pairs. However in Spain the population has suffered an important decline, mainly in the south. In the East of Spain, in Valencia and Balearic Islands the populations are stable, but in the South, in Andalusia the species is decreasing.

Country	Region	Year	Min (pairs)	Max (pairs)	Trend
Italy	Western Sicily	2006-2007	1	2	stable
	South Eastern Sicily	2006-2007	1	1	new breeding
Spain	Valencia	2004	51		stable
	Valencia	2005	62		
	Valencia	2006	30		
	Valencia	2007	55		
	Balearic islands	2004	1		slowly increasing
	Balearic islands	2005	1		
	Balearic islands	2006	2	3	
	Balearic islands	2007	3	3	
	Balearic islands	2008	1	3	
	Andalusia	2004	75	81	decreasing
	Andalusia	2005	27	32	
	Andalusia	2006		31	
	Andalusia	2007	13	36	
	Murcia	2007	1		stable
	Canary islands	2007	1	2	no breeding

Targets

In the short term to maintain the current population and area of occupancy throughout its range. In the medium term, to promote the population increase of the species within its current range. In the long term to promote the expansion of the breeding population to other suitable areas.

Evaluation against target

After 4 years and after the first review of the SAP which concluded that at least short-term goals have been achieved if, in response to population size, we can conclude that have not achieved the objectives of the action plan, nor short or long term. His occupancy area remains the same today in eastern Spain, however, in southern this area has reduced, and the species doesn't breed in some wetlands where it was breeding in the past.

Protection Status

The species is fully legally protected in all EU member states. Outside the EU, the species isn't protected in some countries in the north of Africa (Egypt, Lebanon and Syria) and Armenia, but is fully protected in Algeria, Azerbaijan, Israel, Morocco, Russia, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

National and regional species action plans

Only Italy has approved National Species Action Plan, but Action Plan implementation is still partial. There are draft action plans in Spain, at the last meeting of National Working Species Group in Spain in 2007, under the Wild Fauna and Flora Committee, the Environmental Ministry representative committed to drafting a first draft of the National Strategy for the

Conservation of Marble Teal in Spain. There is a regional recovery action plan in Balearic Islands and in Andalusia there is a draft recovery plan for the species, as was done in 1998 and never was approved. Since 2002 until June 2007 has carried out a conservation programme at the Marble Teal in Andalusia.

The Marbled Teal Working Group has met annually since 1994 coordinated by the Ministry of Environment, with the attendance of the regional governments, Ministry of Environment and experts.

The species is considered as "endangered" by the Spanish official list of threatened species. AWEA was signed by Spain in 1998 and ratified in 1999. A regional evaluation in Spain in 2002 (following the IUCN guidelines version 3.1) considered the species to be Critically Endangered. Italy ratified AWEA on 6th February 2006 (Law no. 66/06) and formally joined it on 1st September 2006 and the species is fully protected since 1992 (Law no. 157/92).

No separate National Wetland Conservation Strategies have been developed in any country, and they are not considered necessary with other tools being available.

Site protection

There have been 11 Important Bird Areas identified for the species; all in Spain. All of these sites are classified as SPAs, totally 16. There are five IBAs supporting non-breeding populations of the species. But not all the areas are protected, in Andalusia aren't protected Laguna de Los Tollos (Cádiz), el Codo de la Esparraguera (Cádiz), La Cañada de Las Norias (Almería), and Salobrar de Campos (Mallorca).

In Italy all the sites are SPAs, but two important sites are not included in natural reserves; Leone Marsh in Western Sicily and Pachino Marshes in South Eastern Sicily.

Management plans

In Spain seven protected areas have management plans that all address the species requirements and are partially implemented.

Prevention of damage to sites has often failed. Whereas Environmental Impact Assessment procedures necessary for many major projects have been effective in avoiding damage, for smaller projects not subject to EIA it has been more difficult to prevent damage. There are many damaging projects and consents for water exploitation that affect water level and water quality. Agriculture practices surrounding wetlands cannot be judged as sustainable, which means that the impact of many activities is not properly evaluated. Most important sites have management plans, but these do not avoid many of the problems.

In Italy any management plan is approved.

Habitat conservation

In Italy two restoration projects are currently ongoing in Sicily, taking into account Marble Teal habitat requirements; also the Italian Ministry of the Environment is planning the creation of about 200 ha of new wetlands in the Natural Reserves of "Biviere di Gela" and "Oasi del Simeto".

In Spain:

- Valencia, two important habitats have been restored, and in
- Murcia, some older pools to irrigate are concentrate now aquatic birds species like Marble Teal.
- Andalusia has created a new artificial wetland not exclusive for the species but very important for it.

Prevent hunting and lead poisoning

In Italy hunting is forbidden only in the key sites in Western Sicily, while it is allowed in the Pachino Marshes (South Eastern Sicily). A national Decree (17 October 2007) restricted the hunting season in all SPAs, posticipating the hunting opening to 1st October in the Pachino Marshes; in the Mazara del Vallo hunting district the look-alike European Common Teal has been protected in order to avoid the accidental killing of the Marled Teal.

In Spain hunting has been banned at important sites (El Hondo SPA since 1997), but it still is practiced at other sites that regularly hold the species in Andalusia (Marismas del Guadalquivir surrounding Doñana National Park) and the Valencian Community (Salinas de Santa Pola SPA and partially in El Hondo SPA). However, effective wandering and other methods to reduce the chance that Marbled Teals are shot are not implemented, despite the fact that funds are available for enforcement of hunting legislation.

Lead shot are not allowed at key sites

In Italy, a national Decree (17 October 2007) phased out the use of lead shots in all the SPA wetlands - including the Pachino Marshes - since the 2008-09 hunting season. And in Spain the Law 42/2007 ban use lead shots in all the wetlands, but more control to verify the effective performance is necessary.

Reducing other mortality factors

Only in Spain in two regions some measures has been carried out to reduce other mortality factors, the same measures that have been assessed in the last SAP implementation revision. In Valencia the concrete slopes of an irrigation channel, and adjacent road, were modified at El Hondo SPA to prevent nestling casualties, and in Andalusia two rules regulating fishing gear (net width of tunnel fishing traps) and fishing period were established at the Marismas del Guadalquivir, so that fishing activity does not affect teal reproduction. Effectiveness varies by sites.

Research and Monitoring

All the breeding sites in Spain and Italy are regularly survey. Coordinated counts are carried out periodically at all known and possible breeding sites, in Italy some possible breeding sites in Sicily are regularly monitored on a volunteer basis. All sites where the species is recorded are covered by the Mid-winter counts are also survey. But in Italy the important sites aren't surveyed simultaneously.

In Spain breeding population size and inter and intra-annual population size changes are well known, although there is need for improvement in quality of counts and involvement of

volunteers. There is an Andalusian plan of coordinated counts with dates that coincide with those of the national censuses. One of the periodical counts coincides with the mid-winter counts and covers all sites used by the species.

Some studies on the species' ecology and habitat requirements, relevant for conservation, have been carried out in Spain (especially Andalusia and Valencia) and Morocco. However, there has been very little research activity since 2001.

In Italy, where the population is so small and located just using data phenology and breeding success are currently available but not on ecology and habitat requirement.

At present the movements of the species are not well known, and relatively few ringing activities has been carried out on the species in order to avoid disturbance. In Spain some birds have been marked with winged tags, providing useful information about mortality rates. The experts recommend tagging with satellite transmitters to study long-distance movements.

Many threats have been identified and assessed by the above studies; like water level management, habitat degradation, poaching and human disturbance in the breeding season are the main limiting factors, however, some limiting factors remain to be understood (e.g. competition with other aquatic birds or predation for invasive exotic species like carps).

Networking and awareness raising

An environmental campaign, that has been carried out in the framework of the Life project in Valencia, was finished at the same time that the Life project and any specific campaign about the species has been carry out. Some reports and document have been published in internet but without public information related.

In Italy the National Action Plan was distributed among Local Administrations, Hunting and Conservation Associations and Clubs.

No specific campaign targeted at hunters.

Community financial support

Any specific Life project has been carry out during the last four years. For the first review two Life project have addressed (LIFE96 NAT/E/003105, LIFE03 NAT/E/000055) that have been ended.

Conclusions

There hasn't been so much progress in the implementation of the action plan (Average IS=2,4), from the first review SAP implementation.

International conservation agreements such as AEWA can play an important role, but Turkey has not signed up to this yet.

The species is fully protected but national and regional actions plans aren't developed nor implemented.

However some additional measures have taken at in Spain; Andalusian Wetlands Plan adopted in 2002, through which are being carried out actions as:

- * Control of invasive alien species - Inside the Andalusia Plan to control de Invasive alien species, started in 2005 and outgoing.
- * Studies on the effectiveness of grit to decreasing the impact of spent lead shot in wetlands – In some areas in Cadiz province.
- * Monitoring network and evaluation of wetlands – In all Andalusia Region, inside the Wetland Conservation Andalusia Plan.
- * Water regulation project in the Nature Reserve Brazo del Este (Seville) – Started in 2003 and coordinate by Andalusia Regional Government.
- * Regulating water levels in La Cañada de las Norias (Almeria) – From 2006 until now the Andalusia Regional Government is working in this aim.
- * Control of overgrazing in Nature Reserve Brazo del Este, Dehesa de Abajo and Doñana National Park (Seville) – From 2004 until now the Andalusia Regional Government working in this aim.

But some actions must be implemented in Spain:

- To protect the breeding and wintering areas that still are not. Declare SPA all breeding and wintering locations that haven't decelerated yet.
- Approve the National Action Plan and Recovery Plans of different Autonomous Communities, maintain the Working Group and make a coordinated plan with North Africa.
- To promote the fishing management plans and reduces fishing pressure in some areas like Almenara. We need a fish management plan all species localities.
- Habitat restoration to amplify the breeding and feeding possibilities for the species, altought in Parque Natual de El Hondo, Salinas de Santa Pola, Veta la Palma, Brazo del Este, Codo de la Esparraguera, Marisma de Adventus, Cañada de las Norias, Laguna de las Moreras.
- Local cleaning of lead shots in areas of high concentration (especially in the Parque Natual de El Hondo).
- Ban the species introductions from captivity to avoid genetic and veterinary risk. Carry out genetic studies to characterize the different populations in the world. Develop a genetic stock follow the IUCN recommendations.

Contributors

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Appendix: Marbled teal action plan implementation scores

COUNTRY WEIGHTING RE. POPULATION RESPONSIBILITY 3.00% 93.00% 4.00%

EU SAP Action No.	Review SAP Action No.	Target	PS Priority EU SAP	Implementation scores (IS)			Average IS		Average Priority Index	
				Italy	Spain	Balearic islands	AIS	AIS weighted	API	API weighted
1.1.1	1.1.1	AEWA signed and ratified.	2	4	4	4	4.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
1.2.1	1.2.1	National or regional action plan developed and implemented	3	3	0	1	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.1
1.2.2	1.2.2	The species is fully protected.	3	4	4	4	4.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
1.2.3	1.2.3	National wetland conservation strategy sets clear	2	1	0	0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
2.1.1	2.1.1	All sites regularly holding the species are declared protected areas.	3	2	3	4	3.0	3.0	1.0	1.0
2.1.2a	2.1.2	Destruction of key sites or degradation of ecological	4	0	2	2	2.0	2.0	2.7	2.7
	2.1.3a	All key sites are declared Ramsar sites	3	0	1	3	2.0	1.1	2.0	2.9
2.2a	2.2	Appropriate management plans are prepared and implemented at all key sites	2	0	2	4	3.0	2.1	0.7	1.3
2.3	2.3	The species requirements are taken into account when new artificial wetlands are designed	1	2	2	1	1.7	2.0	0.8	0.7
2.4.1	2.4.1a	Hunting ban at all sites regularly holding the species	3	2	3	3	2.7	3.0	1.3	1.0
	2.4.2b	Ban trade and possession		1	0	0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
2.4.2		Effective wardening ensures that no Marbled Teal being shot.	3	1	1	0	1.0	1.0	3.0	3.0
2.4.3		Where hunting ban cannot be achieved, all possible	3	1	1	0	1.0	1.0	3.0	3.0
2.4.4		Lack of funds does not hamper the enforcement of	3	1	0	0	1.0	1.0	3.0	3.0
2.5		Lead shot are not allowed at key sites.	2	3	4	4	3.7	4.0	0.2	0.0
2.6		Other mortality factors, such as crayfish nets and	4	0	3	0	3.0	3.0	1.3	1.3
3.1.1		Known breeding sites are regularly surveyed.	3	3	4	4	3.7	4.0	0.3	0.0
3.1.2	3.1.2a	Surveys in possible breeding sites carried out. (España)	4	2	4	4	3.3	3.9	0.9	0.1
3.1.3	3.1.3a	All sites where the species is recorded are covered by the Mid-winter counts (IWC). Spain	2	3	4	4	3.7	4.0	0.2	0.0
3.1.4		All important sites are surveyed simultaneously	2	0	4	4	4.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
3.2.1		Studies on species' ecology and habitat requirement, relevant for conservation, carried out.	4	2	3	3	2.7	3.0	1.8	1.4
3.2.2		Movement of the Marbled Teal understood.	3	1	2	2	1.7	2.0	2.3	2.0
3.2.3		Nature and significance of threats understood at all key sites.	2	3	3	3	3.0	3.0	0.7	0.7
4.1a		Educational booklet on the species produced and distributed.	4	2	2	1	1.7	2.0	3.1	2.7
4.1b		Educational campaign on the species targeted at hunters carried out.	4	1	1	0	1.0	1.0	4.0	4.0
	2.2.1	Fish management plan in breeding and feeding habitats	2							
	2.5.1	Local cleaning of lead shots in areas of high concentration (especially in the Hondo)	1							
	2.7	Habitat restoration to amplify the breeding and feeding possibilities for the species, although in El Hondo, Las Salinas de Santa Pola, Veta la Palma, Brazo del Este, Codo de la Esparraguera, Marisma de Adventus, Cañada de las Norias, Laguna de las Morera	3							
	1.3	Ban the species introductions from captivity to avoid genetic and veterinary risk	2							
	3.3.1	Carry out genetic studies to characterize the different populations in the world	1							
	3.3.2	Develop a genetic stock follow the IUCN recommendations	1							
		Average scores					2.4	2.5		
		NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION SCORE (NIS), EU plan		2.1	2.6	3.0	2.6	2.6		