

Acrocephalus paludicola -- (Vieillot, 1817)

ANIMALIA -- CHORDATA -- AVES -- PASSERIFORMES -- SYLVIIDAE

Common names: Aquatic Warbler; Phragmite aquatique

European Red List Assessment

European Red List Status

VU -- Vulnerable, (IUCN version 3.1)

Assessment Information

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Assessor(s):	BirdLife International
Reviewer(s):	Symes, A.
Compiler(s):	Ashpole, J., Burfield, I., Ieronymidou, C., Pople, R., Wheatley, H. & Wright, L.

Assessment Rationale

European regional assessment: Vulnerable (VU)

EU 27 regional assessment: Vulnerable (VU)

In Europe this species has undergone rapid population declines, as a result of the destruction of its habitat, which qualify it as Vulnerable. In the EU27 region it has a small, declining population within a small breeding range, and it also qualifies as Vulnerable. The decline in the central-European core population has recently been stopped owing to intensive management and conservation projects, but the population is still widely conservation-dependent. The genetically distinct and isolated Pomeranian population is still declining and at a critical level, while the population in Hungary recently declined to extinction, and that in Lithuania continues to decline.

Occurrence

Countries/Territories of Occurrence

Native:

Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Hungary; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Montenegro; Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Switzerland; Ukraine; United Kingdom

Origin Uncertain:

Andorra

Vagrant:

Cyprus; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; Greece; Ireland, Rep. of; Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of; Malta; Norway; Sweden; Turkey

Population

The European population is estimated at 9,000-13,800 calling or lekking males, which equates to 18,000-27,600 mature individuals. The population in the EU27 is estimated at 3,300-3,400 calling or lekking males, which equates to 6,600-6,700 mature individuals. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

Trend

In Europe the population size is estimated to be decreasing by 30-49% in 13.2 years (three generations). In the EU27 the population size is estimated to be decreasing by at least 10% in the same period. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

Habitats and Ecology

This species breeds in large open lowland marsh habitats with low grassy vegetation (mostly sedge fen mires) with water mostly less than 10 cm deep (Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team 1999). On migration, it favours coastal habitats with low stands of sedge and reed near open water (Flade et al. 2011). The species has an unusual reproductive system close to promiscuity, the female raising young without male help. This strategy is possibly explained and facilitated by high density of potential prey (Hagemeijer and Blair 1997). Nests are

often concentrated in loose clusters at places where food resources are rich. The nest is a cup constructed of grass, plant stems and leaves, spider webs and plant down and lined with finer material, placed 3–30 cm above swampy ground or water, often under roof of dead sedges. Clutch size ranges from three to six eggs. In studies in north-east Poland, the earliest clutch started 9th May and the mean first-egg date in consecutive years was between 15th and 22nd May. Second broods are less synchronous. It feeds on a wide variety of species of spiders and insects as well as small water snails (Dyrz et al. 2013). The species is migratory. Central European populations migrate south-west in the autumn to wintering grounds in western Sahelian wetlands, from Senegal and Mali to Ghana, but extent of wintering area poorly known (Hagemeyer and Blair 1997). Departure from breeding grounds begins in Poland in late July and continues during August (Dyrz et al. 2013).

Habitats & Altitude			
Habitat (level 1 - level 2)		Importance	Occurrence
Artificial/Terrestrial - Pastureland		suitable	breeding
Artificial/Terrestrial - Pastureland		suitable	non-breeding
Wetlands (inland) - Bogs, Marshes, Swamps, Fens, Peatlands		major	breeding
Wetlands (inland) - Bogs, Marshes, Swamps, Fens, Peatlands		major	non-breeding
Altitude	0-200 m	Occasional altitudinal limits	

Threats

The most important threats are loss of breeding habitat owing to drainage for agriculture and peat extraction, damming of floodplains, unfavourable water management and the canalisation of rivers. Habitat degradation is widespread where traditional fen management has ceased allowing succession to unsuitable overgrown reedbed, scrub or woodland (Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team 1999). Commercial reed cutting can maintain suitable breeding habitat for the species in central Europe, but this is threatened by changes that are likely to occur along with the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (Tanneberger et al. 2009). Uncontrolled fires in spring and summer pose a direct threat to birds and nests, and can burn out the upper peat layer of fens (Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team 1999). In the wintering grounds, agricultural cultivation and irrigation, drought, wetland drainage, intensive grazing, succession to scrub, desertification and salinisation of irrigated soils are all potential threats (Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team 1999, M. Flade and L. Lachmann in litt. 2007).

Threats & Impacts					
Threat (level 1)	Threat (level 2)	Impact and Stresses			
Agriculture & aquaculture	Agro-industry farming	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Rapid Declines	High Impact
		Stresses			
Ecosystem conversion; Ecosystem degradation					
Biological resource use	Gathering terrestrial plants (unintentional effects - species is not the target)	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Rapid Declines	Medium Impact
		Stresses			
Ecosystem degradation					
Climate change & severe weather	Droughts	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
Ecosystem degradation					
Natural system modifications	Increase in fire frequency/intensity	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Rapid Declines	Medium Impact
		Stresses			
Ecosystem degradation; Species mortality					
Natural system modifications	Large dams	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Rapid Declines	Medium Impact
		Stresses			
Ecosystem degradation					

Conservation

Conservation Actions Underway

CMS Appendix I and II. EU Birds Directive Annex I. It is legally protected in all countries of its breeding

range except Ukraine and Russia (U. Malashevich in litt. 2012). All key breeding sites in Belarus, Germany, Hungary and Poland are located within protected areas (Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team 1999, U. Malashevich in litt. 2012). Habitat is actively managed in Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania, Hungary and Germany. All breeding range states but Russia have monitoring programmes (Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team 1999, M. Flade and L. Lachmann in litt. 2007). Studies on halting succession have been conducted in Belarus, Poland and Ukraine (M. Kalyakin in litt. 1999). A European action plan was published in 1996 and updated in 1998, 2003 and 2008 (Flade and Lachmann 2008). The species was put into the agenda of the Conference of Parties for the CMS in November 2011, where a special resolution on African-Eurasian landbirds was adopted, which applies to Aquatic Warbler (U. Malashevich in litt. 2011).

Conservation Actions Proposed

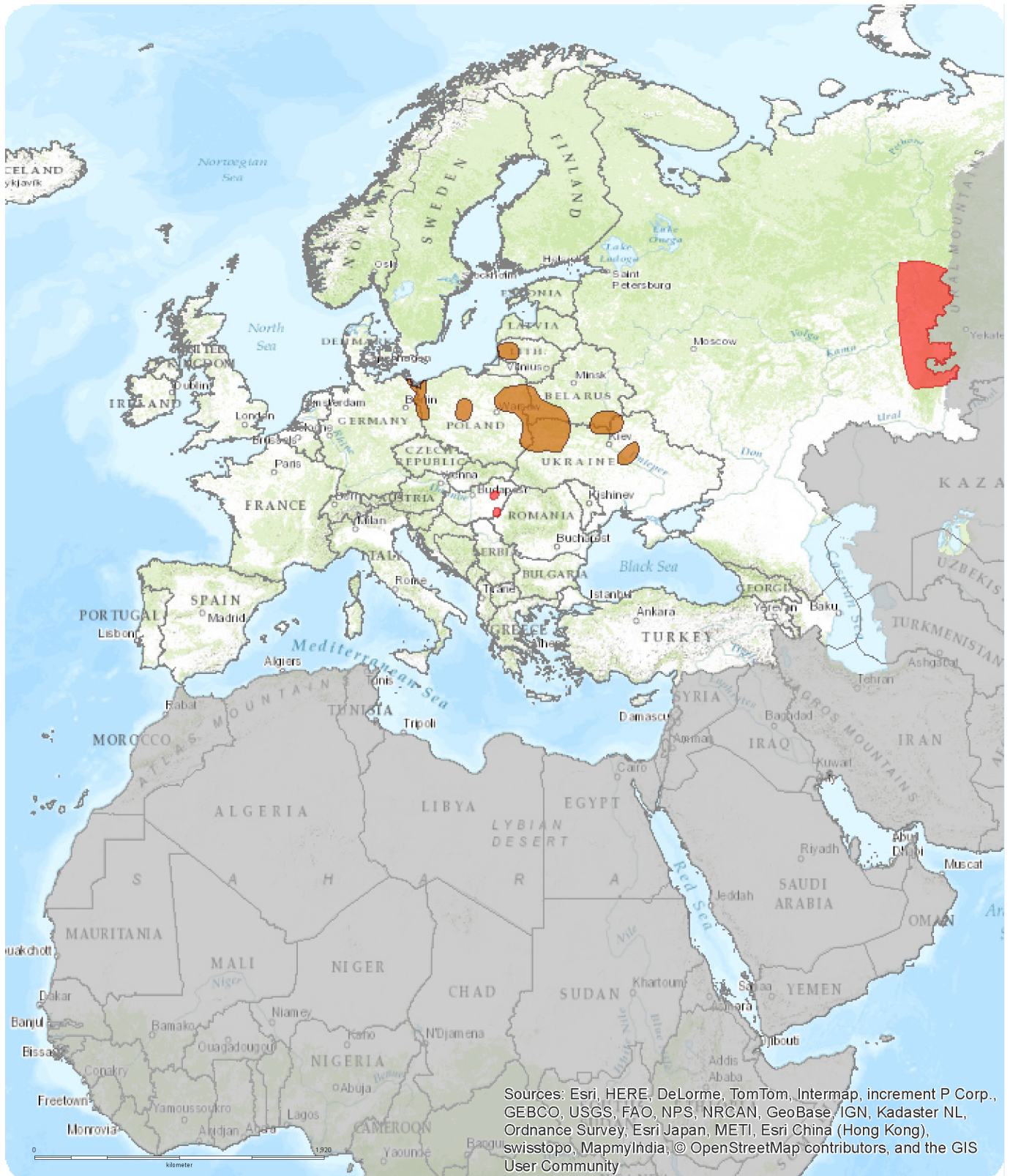
Implement a monitoring programme in Russia. Protect key breeding sites and develop management plans. Promote protection of the species along the migration route. Ensure full legal protection.

Bibliography

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Map (see overleaf)

European Regional Assessment



Acrocephalus paludicola

Range

- Extant (breeding)
- Possibly Extinct

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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