SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET *Charadrius alexandrinus*

English name: **Kentish plover**	Scientific name: ***Charadrius alexandrinus***	
Taxonomical group: Class: Aves Order: Charadriiformes Family: Charadriidae	Species authority: Linnaeus, 1758	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: –	Generation length: 6 years	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 code): Tourism (G01), Alien species (I01), Competition and predation (I02), Unknown (U)	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Tourism (G01), Alien species (I01), Competition and predation (I02), Unknown (U)	
IUCN Criteria: **D1**	**HELCOM Red List Category:**	**CR Critically Endangered**
Global / European IUCN Red List Category (BirdLife International 2004): LC / LC	Annex I EU Birds Directive yes Annex II EU Birds Directive no	
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: *Subject of special conservation measures in the EU Member states (Birds Directive, Annex I)* Denmark: EN, Estonia: NA, Finland: –, Germany: 1 (Critically endangered), Latvia: –, Lithuania: –, Poland: –, Russia: –, Sweden: RE		

Range description and general trends

The Kentish plover is a widespread breeder in the coastal areas of western and southern Europe. The north-western European population is small and amounts not more than 1 300 bp. It has been declining for several decades (Berndt *et al.* 2002, Thorup 2006). At the Wadden Sea coast of Schleswig-Holstein, the Kentish plover has been declining from 600 bp in 1993 to 200 bp in 1999 (Berndt *et al.* 2002). In the Danish Wadden Sea – in particular on the beaches of the islands Fanø and Rømø – the population has fluctuated without a clear trend since the first countrywide survey in 1969 (Dybbro 1970); the breeding pair numbers were 36–120 during the period 1998–2010 (Nyegaard & Grell 2005–2009, Nyegaard & Willemoes 2010, Thorup & Laursen 2010).

Charadrius alexandrinus. Photo by Christoph Moning.

The range of the north-western European population covers the western Baltic, where the numbers of breeding pairs probably always have been rather low. However, in the 20th century the Baltic Sea breeding population declined further and after 2000 only a few breeding attempts have been recorded in the HELCOM area.

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

In **Sweden**, during the 20th century the Kentish plover was breeding in low numbers on different sites of the west coast (Skälderviken, Halmstad, Landskrona), but also on Öland (1947–1949). During the 1990s, south-west Scania was the main breeding area with 2–4 bp between 1996 and 1999 and 1 bp in 2000–

2001. In 2004 a breeding attempt was recorded in the southwest part of Scania and the two following years (2005 and 2006) saw successful breeding. There have also been breeding attempts in 1992 and 1997 in Halland (Swedish west coast). On Öland, one pair bred successfully in 2008 and 2011; in 2010 a breeding attempt was recorded (ArtDatabanken 2010).

For **Poland**, one single breeding record has been reported in 1992 from the Vistula mouth (Tomiałojć & Stawarczyk 2003).

In **Germany**, the species disappeared from the Baltic coast of Schleswig-Holstein already around 1930. In Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania it was a rare breeding bird. The last more or less stable breeding site were the Werder Islands between Hiddensee and Zingst peninsula, where breeding has been recorded until the mid-1920s (Robien 1928). During the second half of the 20th century only a few breeding attempts have been recorded: 1975 and 1979 on the sandy spit Bessin (island Hiddensee, Stübs 1987), and from 2000–2003 on sandy banks of the Bock region south of Hiddensee with the following records: 2000 – 2 pairs with territorial behaviour; 2001 – 2 clutches found; 2003 – 1 clutch found (Eichstädt 2006).

In **Denmark**, a countrywide survey of Kentish plover was performed in 1969 (Dybbro 1970). Additional data were collected during the first Danish Atlas 1971–1974 (Dybbro 1976), and most (former) breeding sites in the Danish Baltic were surveyed 1993–1996 (Grell 1998). A Wadden Sea programme surveys the entire Wadden Sea population annually since 1996 (Thorup 2010 and unpublished).

In 1969, 48 pairs were found in the Baltic Denmark on sandy beaches in northeast Jylland, Læsø and around Sjælland. Dybbro (1976) describes a rapid decline during the period 1955–1975 in all regions of Denmark except the Wadden Sea. The last breeding in the Baltic took apparently place in the late 1970s or early 1980s. Since the mid-1990s the only area with breeding Kentish plovers in Denmark is the Wadden Sea.

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Distribution map

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Habitat and ecology

The species breeds on sandy coasts and brackish inland lakes on sites with sparse vegetation. It nests in a ground scrape and lays three to four eggs.

Description of major threats

The main reason for the decline is the increase of disturbances of the breeding sites by visitors. Visitors prevent that Kentish plovers can use their anti-predator strategies, *e.g.* by choosing different breeding sites from year to year and to establish territories and nests furthest away from areas frequently visited by mammalian predators.

Assessment justification

The Kentish plover has bred regularly in the Baltic Sea area in former times, but after a long-term decline it has become a very rare breeder during the last decade. There have been no breeding records in 2002, 2007, 2009; however, it is assumed that the species still breeds regularly with 1-2 breeding pairs. It classifies as *Critically Endangered (*CR) according to the criterion D1.

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

Since the disappearance of the Kentish plover from the Baltic Sea area is obviously related to the population and range decline of the north-western European population, special conservation measures in the Baltic Sea area are not very promising. The focus has to be put on the conservation of the population in its core area, *i.e.* the North Sea. However, suitable breeding habitats in the Baltic Sea area, especially on those sites where the species has bred during the last decade, should be conserved.

Common names

Denmark: Hvidbrystet præstekrave, Estonia: Mustjalg-tüll, Finland: Mustajalkatylli, Germany: Seeregenpfeifer, Latvia: Jūras tārtiņš, Lithuania: Juodakojis kirlikas, Poland: Sieweczka morska, Russia: Морcкой зуёк, Sweden: Svartbent strandpipare

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