



Botaurus stellaris stellaris

W Europe, NW Africa (bre)

Annex I	Yes-HTL
International action plan	SAP

Eurasian Bittern, *Botaurus stellaris*, is a species of heron found in wetland and river and lake ecosystems. It is a widespread breeder across much of Europe, with a continuous range in the Eastern parts and more patchily distributed across the rest of Europe. It shows a strong preference for quiet lowland marshes around lakes and rivers (less than 200 m Asl) with extensive dense young reedbeds of *Phragmites spp.* that are flooded but are fairly shallow (less than 30 cm deep), have few fluctuations in waterlevel, have low acidity and are surrounded by clear open areas of deeper water, which is maintained into the driest part of the breeding season. The species frequents a more varied range of habitats outside of breeding season, foraging on rice-fields, watercress beds, gravel pits, fish farms, ditches, sewage farms, small ponds and wet grassy areas as well as marshes and reedbeds (European Red List 2015).

Botaurus stellaris has a breeding population size of 10900-18600 calling males and a breeding range size of 896000 square kilometres in the EU27. The breeding population trend in the EU27 is Increasing in the short term and Stable in the long term.

The EU population status of *Botaurus stellaris* was assessed as Secure, because the species does not meet any of the IUCN Red List criteria for threatened or Near Threatened, or the criteria for Depleted or Declining (the EU27 population or range has not declined by 20% or more since 1980).

This factsheet was produced for *Botaurus stellaris stellaris* [W Europe, NW Africa (bre)] population. Also other subspecies/populations of the same species occur within the EU27. The assessment of status at the European level and the introductory text were done at the species level in line with the criteria for assessment of the EU population status.

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Assessment of status at the European level

Breeding population size	Breeding population trend		Range area	Breeding range trend		Winter population size	Winter population trend		Population status
	Short term	Long term		Short term	Long term		Short term	Long term	
10900 - 18600 cmales	+	0	896000						Secure

See the endnotes for more informationⁱ

The population status assessment at the EU level was carried out at the species level. The EU status assessment covers following subspecies/populations: *Botaurus stellaris stellaris* [C & E Europe, Black Sea & E Mediterranean (bre)], *Botaurus stellaris stellaris* [W Europe, NW Africa (bre)] (each of them presented in a separate factsheet).

The EU trends were assessed at the species or subspecies level following BirdLife International's current taxonomy. The EU trends assessment covers more former subspecies or populations: *Botaurus stellaris stellaris* [C & E Europe, Black Sea & E Mediterranean (bre)], *Botaurus stellaris stellaris* [W Europe, NW Africa (bre)] (each of them presented in a separate factsheet).

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■ Species distribution

■ EU Member States

■ Outside data coverage

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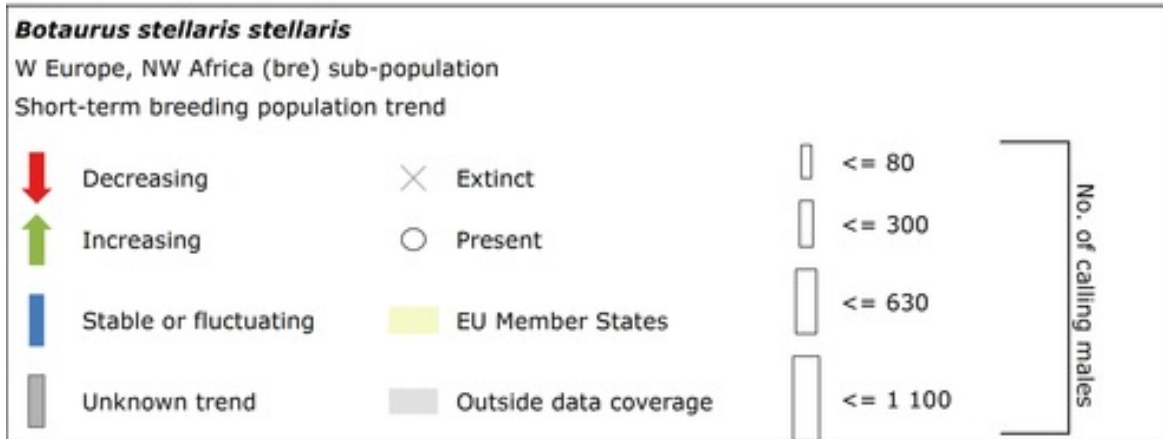
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Trends at the Member State level

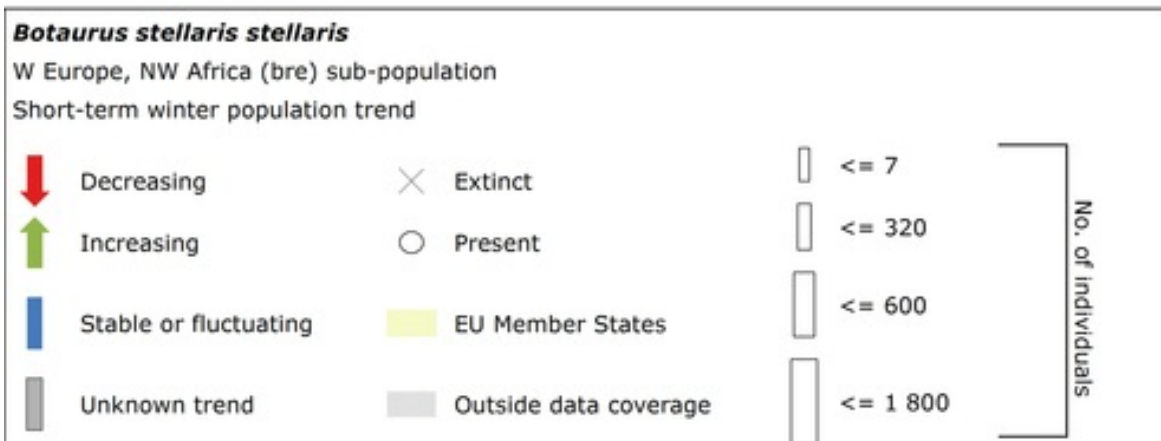
MS/Ter.	% in EU27	Breeding population size	Breeding population trend		Range area	Breeding range trend		Winter population size	Winter population trend	
			Short term	Long term		Short term	Long term		Short term	Long term
BE	1.3	15 - 28 cmales	+	-	1645	+	-	100 - 1000 i	x	x
DE	32.5	950 - 1100 cmales	+	0	64853	+	0			
DK	5.6	300 - 300 cmales	+	+	16400	+	+			
ES	0.6	39 - 40 cmales	0	0	1501	0	0			
FR	4.2	250 - 350 cmales	-	-	12100	-	-	1000 - 3000 i	x	x
LU								5 - 8 i	F	+
NL	10.2	250 - 300 cmales	-	+	32038	+	+			
PT		1 - 5 cmales	0	0		x	x			
SE	39.4	490 - 810 cmales	0	+	138300	0	x			
UK	6.2	80 - 80 cmales	+	+	8200	+	+	600 - 600 i	+	+

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Main pressures and threats reported by Member States

For the bird species triggering SPA classification Member States were asked to report the 20 most important pressures and threats using an agreed hierarchical list which can be found on the Article 12 Reference Portal (http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Reporting/Article_12/reference_portal). Pressures are activities which are currently having an impact on the species and threats are activities expected to have an impact in the near future. The table below only contains information from Member States, where a species triggers SPA classification. Pressures and threats were ranked in three classes 'high, medium and low importance', the table below only shows pressures and threats classed as 'high', for some species there were less than ten pressures and threats reported as highly important.

Ten most frequently reported 'highly important' pressures and threats

Code	Activity	Frequency
J02	Changes in water bodies conditions	30
J03	Other changes to ecosystems	22
K02	Vegetation succession/Biocenotic evolution	13
A01	Agricultural cultivation	9
M01	Abiotic changes (climate change)	9
F03	Hunting and collection of terrestrial wild animals	4
G01	Outdoor sports, leisure and recreational activities	4
H01	Pollution to surface waters	4
H06	Excess energy (noise, light, heating, electromagnetic)	4

Proportion of population covered by the Natura 2000 network

For the bird species triggering SPA classification Member States were asked to report the size of a species population occurring within the Natura 2000 network. The percentage of species population covered by the network was estimated by comparing the population size within the network and the total population size.

Percentage of coverage by Natura 2000 sites

MS/territory	season	SPA trigger	% coverage
BE	breeding	YES	94.49
BE	winter	YES	x
DE	breeding	YES	56.86
DK	breeding	YES	73.26
ES	breeding	YES	15.19
FR	breeding	YES	88.64
FR	winter	YES	x
LU	winter	YES	100
NL	breeding	YES	x
PT	breeding	NO	

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MS/territory	season	SPA trigger	% coverage
SE	breeding	YES	23.33
UK	breeding	YES	56.25
UK	winter	YES	15.83

See the endnotes for more informationⁱⁱⁱ

Most frequently reported conservation measures

For the bird species triggering SPA classification Member States were asked to report up to 20 conservation measures being implemented for this species using an agreed list which can be found on the Article 12 Reference Portal. Member States were further requested to highlight up to five most important ('highly important') measures; the table below only shows measures classed as 'high', for many species there were less than ten measures reported as highly important.

Ten most frequently reported 'highly important' conservation measures

Code	Measure	Frequency
6.1	Establish protected areas/sites	21
4.2	Restoring/improving the hydrological regime	18
6.3	Legal protection of habitats and species	14
4.0	Other wetland-related measures	11
4.1	Restoring/improving water quality	11
7.4	Specific single species or species group management measures	11
4.3	Managing water abstraction	7
6.4	Manage landscape features	7

This information is derived from the Member State national reports submitted to the European Commission under Article 12 of the Birds Directive in 2013 and covering the period 2008-2012. More detailed information, including the MS reports, is available at:
<http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/article12/summary?period=1&subject=A688-A> .

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ⁱ **Assessment of status at the European level:** The EU assessments of birds population status was made by the European Red List of Birds Consortium (under contract with the European Commission)

The EU27 population trends were assessed using these categories: '+' Increasing, '0' Stable, 'F' Fluctuating, '-' Decreasing, 'xu' Uncertain and 'x' Unknown. The breeding population size is estimated in majority of the cases as 'p' number of pairs. Alternative population units used are: 'males' number of males, 'i' number of individuals, 'cmales' number of calling males and 'bfem' number of breeding females. The winter population size is estimated as number of individuals.

ⁱⁱ **Species trends at the Member State level:** The percentage of the EU27 species population occurring in the Member States (% in EU27) is calculated based on the population size reported by the Member States.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Percentage of coverage by Natura 2000 sites:** In some cases the population size within the Natura 2000 network has been estimated using a different methodology to the estimate of overall population size and this can lead to percentage covers greater than 100%. In such case the value has been given as 100% and highlighted with an asterisk (*). The value 'x' indicates that the Member State has not reported the species population and/or the coverage by Natura 2000. No information is available for Greece and for non-Annex I species in the Czech Republic.