Atlas
of Breeding Birds
in Bulgaria

Спонсориран от:
Sponsored by:

Холандското дружество за защита на птиците
BirdLife/Vogelbescherming Nederland

u/and

Национална пощенска лотария
Dutch Nationale Postcode Loterij
Ardea cinerea
Purple Heron

**Category of Conservation Concern**
- In Bulgaria: SPEC 3 Endangered
- In Europe: SPEC 3 Declining

**Legal status**
Priority for conservation threatened species (Biodiversity Act, Annex 2), protected over the whole territory (Biodiversity Act, Annex 3).

**Population size:** 150–250 pairs

**Trends**
- Distribution: probably increasing
- Numbers: probably increasing

**Distribution pattern**
Dispersed in the lower parts of the country. Nesting localities more numerous and clearly grouped along the Danube and Black Sea coast (Durankulak and Shabla Lakes, Burgas Wetlands, Alepu, Ropotamo River and rivers to the south of it) and in the western part of the Danubian Plain. Single inland nesting localities in Sofia Plain and along the bigger rivers – Maritsa, Iskar, Lom, Ogosta and others.

**Density pattern**
Relatively even and low, at most of the nesting localities – several pairs at each.

**Historical changes in the population**
At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century sporadically distributed, mainly along the River Danube and the Black Sea coast. Recorded at Srebarna Lake (02.07.1890 and in 1893), near Svishtov (1893) and in Karabooz Marsh (bred there around 1930); along the Black Sea coast – at Mandra and Vaya Lakes (1938). Observed at Sindel (02.07.1890) and Kumanitsa Marshes (01.06.1893) (FINSCH 1859; ELWES and BUCKLEY 1870; RADAKOFF 1879; HODEK 1882; HRISTOVICH 1890; REISER 1894; LORENZ-LIBURNAU 1893; BOETTICHER 1927; STRIBARNY 1930; HARRISON 1933; JORDANS 1940). According to some authors breeds sporadically everywhere (RADAKOFF 1879), and even in 1932 occurs wherever suitable marshland is found (HARRISON 1933). Around the middle of the 20th century numbers severely reduced owing to the mass draining of the marshes and extermination of fish-eating birds. In 1950–1960 nested in small numbers mainly along the River Danube and the Black Sea coast, probably – at some places inland the country. Along the River Danube in 1960 more numerous than Ardea cinerea (MOUNTFORT and FERGUSON–LEES 1961). In June 1958 four nests were found at Srebarna Lake, in 1960 – at Garvan Marsh, in 1968 – at Bogdan Island near Vadin. Numerous in some years at Belene Island (1968 – four; 1969 – eight, 1971 – 70, 1977 – 15, 1979 – 20 and 1983 – one pair) and Vardem Island. Along the Black Sea coast in 1950–1955 nested at Shabla and Durankulak Lakes; in 1956–1970 – at Mandra, Roda and Vaya Lakes (nests in 1956 u 1957); in 1962–1967 seen many times near the Balata Forest, at the mouth of Kamchiya River and at Varna Lake; nests at Arkutino (1974 – three,

Местобитания

(Гнезд в 5 Блат (53 Растителност по периферията на водоеми) и 44 Алувнали и много Влажни гори и краставци)

Надморска височина
0–300 м н.в., по изключение – и до около 900 м н.в

1979 – пети пари) и Алеу Marshes (PETROV and ZLATANOV 1955; PASPALE–VA–АТОНОВА 1963; MOUNTFORT and FERGUSON–LEES 1961; PROSTOV 1964; FERIANC et al., 1965; PESHEV 1967; GEORGIEV 1976; MICHEV and RAYKOV 1980; IVANOV 1985а; MICHEV 1985). Locally inland (10.07.1960 near Dinkata, Pazardzhik Dist. – BOEV et al. 1964, 1967, non-breeding juvenile near Krumovgrad – NATIONAL BIRD DATABASE with BSPB, 06.07.1972 and 04.07.1974 at Sokolitsa fishponds – DONCHEV 1977). Around 1980 the national population estimated to be not more than 100 pairs (MICHEV 1985). Breeding localities and numbers of pairs increased during the following decades, probably owing to the conservation measures taken and to the improvement of the general condition of the habitats, caused by the overall decline in the econo- my of the country. This process has continued during the period of the present mapping.

Habitats

Nests in 5 Bogs and marshes (53 Water-fringe vegetation) and 44 Tem- perate riverine and swamp forests and brush.

Altitude

0–300 m a.s.l., as an exception – up to about 900 m a.s.l.