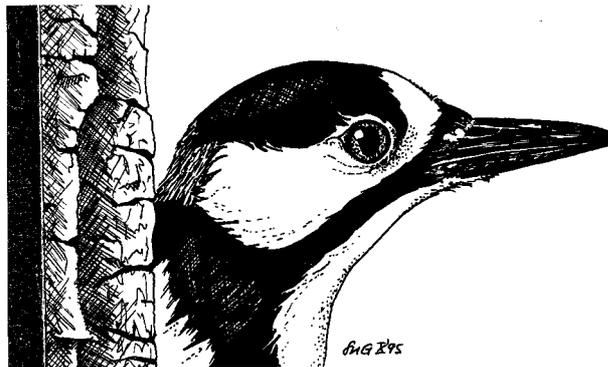


Management Statement

Tenerife Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major canariensis*



Final Draft, December 1999

**Prepared by BirdLife International on behalf of the
European Commission**

Management Statement for the Tenerife Great Spotted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos major canariensis

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Timetable

First Draft: 15 July 1999
Workshop: 6-7 November 1999
Final version: 15 December 1999

Reviews

This management statement should be reviewed and updated every five years. An emergency review will be undertaken if sudden major environmental changes, liable to affect the population, occur within the species range.

Geographical scope

The action plan needs active implementation in Tenerife (Spain)

Current Status

1.1 Distribution

The subspecies *Dendrocopos major canariensis* is only present in Tenerife Is. Another Woodpecker subspecies in the Canary Islands is distributed in Gran Canaria Island (*D. m. thanneri*).

The species is mainly distributed in the South, Southeast of the island of Tenerife, where the best preserve pinewoods, the habitat to which the species is closely linked to, are found. In 1985 a survey located the subspecies in 14 5x5 km units with a continuous distribution up to San Juan de La Rambla. Martín; this gave clear indications of an ongoing extension toward the pine areas in the north of the island. The population estimate at that time was less than 100 pairs.

Recent data (1998) confirm the extension of the species with the colonisation of Los Realejos, La Orotava, Candelaria and El Rosario pinewoods. The subspecies is now covering 17 5x5 km units. A higher sampling effort resulted in an estimate of 125-166 pairs (Delgado, 1998).

1.2 Population and trend

The subspecies seems to be in a favourable conservation status with a positive population trend. Recent studies show the expansion of the species to new areas and a clear increase of the population.

Furthermore, most of the pinewoods of the Tenerife island are protected, indicating the possible increase or at least stability of the population of the Tenerife Great Spotted Woodpecker.

1.3 Habitat requirements

The subspecies is very much linked to woodlands of *Pinus canariensis*, with a preference to natural woods with a medium to low pine density (Delgado, 1998).

It has also started to colonise small areas of afforested Canarian Pine, with a good development and a high density (Delgado, 1998). The species was not present in these localities in the 1980s (Martín, 1985), (Carrascal, 1987).

Delgado (1998) found a correlation between dead trees availability and nest numbers, suggesting that nesting availability can be one of the limiting factors for the species.

1.4 Conservation status

The species *Dendrocopos major* is listed under Annex II of the Bern Convention and Annex II of the National Catalogue of Threatened Species. It is also included, as a subspecies (*D. m. canariensis*), in Annex I of the Birds Directive.

Furthermore, the subspecies is classified as Vulnerable in the Canaries' Red List of Terrestrial Vertebrates (Martín, *et. al.* 1990).

1.5 Record key sites for the sub-species by country

Most of the habitat for the subspecies is statutorily protected under different figures, like Nature Reserves and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). In addition, although no statutorily recognised, most of the suitable habitat has been identified as Important Bird Area (IBA).

Threats and limiting factors

Habitat Destruction.

This factor must have been the main threat for the subspecies in the past, given the intensive forestry undertaken in the Tenerife pine woodlands, mainly for coal, firewood, material for shipping, building, etc...

Afforestation in the island with Canary Pine and other conifers (*Pinus radiata*, *Pinus pinaster*, etc.) started in the 1940s-50s. Nevertheless, these pinewoods are not yet suitable for the species because they are not fully developed and the structure is not adequate for the species habitat requirements.

Importance: low/medium

Loss of suitable nesting sites

Although no specific research has been carried out on this particular issue, several authors have pointed out that the loss of suitable nesting sites for the subspecies due to the use of dead wood is a limiting factor (Martín, 1990). The traditional belief that it is a source of forest disease (plagues) and increases the risk of forest fires has further contributed to scarceness of dead wood in Tenerife.

Importance: medium/high

Illegal hunting

This subspecies has been subject to illegal hunting and scientific collection during the last decades (Martín, 1990). This factor could play an important role in the extinction of the Tenerife Great Spotted Woodpecker in some pinewoods, such as Aguamansa-Santa Úrsula (Blanco & González, 1992). Although the degree to which the subspecies is currently affected is not known, it is thought to be low.

Importance: unknown, probably low.

Current conservation Actions

1988: The designation of SPAs for Annex I species under the Birds Directive takes place. So far, 1 SPAs have been classified where the Tenerife Great Spotted Woodpecker is present, namely SPA n° 107 Corona Forestal de Tenerife. This SPA contains almost all the habitat where the species is present.

A experimental programme to study the biology of the species and the use of nest boxes (Estudio de diversos aspectos de la Biología del Pico Picapinos *Dendrocopos major* y las aplicaciones al uso de las casetas-nido en la isla de Tenerife) is funded by Regional Government (Dirección General del Medio Ambiente y Conservación de la Naturaleza del Gobierno de Canarias), (Oramas & Moreno, 1991).

1989: Approval of the Spanish Nature Conservation Act (Ley 4/89 de Conservación de los Espacios Naturales y de la Flora y Fauna Silvestres), and classification of the Woodpecker as species of Special Interest in the National Catalogue of Threatened Species (Royal Decree 439/90).

1994: Approval of the new Canaries' Nature Protection Act, which includes the Corona Forestal Natural Park, covering most of the habitat for the subspecies.

1997: A three-year Programme for the Conservation of the Tenerife Great Spotted Woodpecker starts with the support of LIFE funds. An environmental education campaign, a study on the subspecies conservation (elaboration of an atlas, population estimation, abundance, etc...), and some habitat management measures are implemented.

1998: SEO/BirdLife publishes the review of the Spanish IBA inventory (Viada, 1998). Three of these areas are of particular importance for the Woodpecker: Barranco de Tágara (nº 338), Pinar de Vilaflor (nº 369) y Pinar de Arico (nº 370).

Aim and Objectives

Aim

The aim of this management statement is to maintain the current protection status for the species and improve its habitat.

1. Policy and legislation

1.1.

Management plan of the SPA

The management plan for the Corona Forestal Natural Park de Tenerife, should be developed. This plan should take into consideration the ecological needs of the subspecies, regulating the removal of dead wood which represent a limiting factor for the breeding of the species and the removal of all exotic tree species.

1.2

Forestry plan

A Canary Island Forestry Plan should be developed. Such plan should address the substitution of the exotic pines with *Pinus canariensis*.

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