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VKM, Katrine Eldegard, Matthew Grainger, Jo S.
Hermansen, Alexander Kopatz, Joost A. M. Raeymaekers,
Eli K. Rueness, Hugo de Boer

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Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food and Environment (VKM)
Postboks 222 Skøyen
0213 Oslo
Norway

Phone: +47 21 62 28 00
Email: vkm@vkm.no

vkm.no

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Non-detriment finding for common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Authors: VKM Panel on CITES member Katrine Eldegard (Norwegian University of Life Sciences). Reviewed and approved by VKM Panel on CITES members Matthew Grainger (Norwegian Institute for Nature Research), Alexander Kopatz (Norwegian Institute for Nature Research), Joost A. M. Raeymaekers (Nord University), Eli K. Rueness (University of Oslo), Hugo de Boer (University of Oslo), and VKM Secretariat member Jo S. Hermansen.

Competing interests: The authors declare no competing interests in relation to this NDF.

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Scientific name: *Buteo buteo*

Common name: Common buzzard, Eurasian Buzzard

Norwegian name: Musvåk

Type of permit: CITES Appendix II (Norwegian CITES Regulation Annex I, List B).

Country of Export: Norway

Country of Import: Sweden

Purpose and source: The proposal concerns the export from Norway to Sweden of one taxidermied individual (purpose-of-transaction code P) of common buzzard (source code W).

For Appendix II species (Norwegian Cites Regulation Annex 1, list B) it is required to establish that such export will not be detrimental to the survival of that species, in compliance with CITES Article IV.

VKM has adopted the definition of detriment, cf. Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) suggested by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Scientific Authority:

1. Harvest that is not sustainable.
2. Harvest that harms the status of the species in the wild.
3. Removal from the wild that results in habitat loss or destruction, or that interferes with recovery efforts for a species.

Conclusion

VKM concludes that the export of one taxidermied individual of *Buteo buteo*, from Norway to Sweden for personal purposes, will not be detrimental to the survival of the species.

The species is categorized as Least Concern (LC) on the global, European, and Norwegian Red Lists. Estimated global, European, and Norwegian population sizes of common buzzards are robust, the numbers of the global and European populations are increasing, and there is no indication of population decline in Norway.

1. Biological information

Distribution

Buteo buteo is among the most common and widely distributed Palearctic birds of prey (Birdlife International, 2021a; Orta et al., 2022). The breeding population of common buzzards is distributed from Atlantic islands (Canary, Azores, and Cape Verde Islands), across most of Europe, with its northern limits in central Scandinavia (only a few records of breeding buzzards in Trøndelag; Stokke et al., 2021) and northeastern Russia, extending east to south-central Russia and northwestern Mongolia, and south to Kyrgyzstan and northwestern China, northern Iran, southern Turkey, and central Israel (Orta et al., 2022). Its overwintering range includes much of western Palearctic (north to southern Scandinavia), eastern and southern Africa, and also the Indian subcontinent (Orta et al., 2022).

Life history

The species is migratory in Scandinavia (but wintering in southern Sweden) and in most of Russia; partially migratory in central Europe; mostly resident year-round in Britain, southern Europe, Turkey, Caucasus, and in island populations (Orta et al., 2022). Most of the common buzzards that breed in Norway overwinter in Western Europe, some also in North Africa (Stokke et al., 2021). The generation time (mean age of all reproducing individuals in the population) is 9 years (Stokke et al., 2021).

Role in the ecosystem

The common buzzard mainly feeds on a range of small mammals from small rodents and shrews up to rabbit size (Orta et al., 2022). The diet typically consists of >90% mammalian prey items but can also include medium sized birds up to corvid size, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrate prey (Orta et al., 2022). The common buzzard occurs in highly variable habitats, but some extent of tree cover is required for nests and roost sites (Orta et al., 2022).

2. Population trend

In the absence of evidence for any declines or substantial threats, the global (BirdLife International, 2021a) and European (BirdLife International, 2021b) populations are assumed to be stable. The common buzzard is the second or third most common raptor in Europe, with increasing population trends since at least the 1980s (Orta et al., 2022). The population of common buzzards in Norway is assumed to be stable because there is no indication of population decline, but there is a need for knowledge about both population size and trends (Stokke et al., 2021).

3. Conservation status

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species – Global assessment (Birdlife International, 2021a): Least Concern (LC).

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species – Europe assessment (Birdlife International, 2021b): Least Concern (LC).

Norsk Rødlister for arter 2021 (Stokke et al., 2021): Least Concern (LC).

4. Threats

The common buzzard has historically been directly persecuted in Europe, and historical population declines were also caused by the use of poisoned baits and pesticides (Orta

et al., 2022). The species is dependent on prey availability, and the major limiting factor today is habitat availability (Orta et al., 2022).

5. Conservation and Management measures:

International legislation

CITES, Appendix II.

EU regulation of trade of fauna and flora, Annex A.

EU Birds Directive, General Protection.

Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats (Bern Convention), Annex II.

CMS Appendix II and Raptors MoU Category 2.

National legislation

The common buzzard has been protected by law in Norway since 1981 (Direktoratet for naturforvaltning, 2005) and is currently protected under the Wildlife Act (Lovdata, 1981) and the Nature Diversity Act (Lovdata, 2009).

Conservation measures

Common buzzard occurs in protected areas throughout its entire range, e.g., in Europe it occurs in 1,187 Natura 2000 sites (Birdlife International, 2021a). It is one of the most monitored species in Europe, with 16 European countries monitoring breeding efforts out of the 42 that it occurs in (Birdlife International, 2021a).

6. Trade/use

Legal

The CITES Trade Database provides the official trade records as reported by Parties to CITES in their annual reports. Focusing on wild-caught common buzzard specimens (source code W) from 2000 to 2023 and all countries, the data indicates a limited trade, totalling 153 specimens. The purpose-of-transaction categories comprise Scientific (S) with 45 specimens, Commercial (T) with 40 specimens, Personal (P) with 27 specimens, Circus and travelling exhibitions (Q) with 15 specimens, Educational (E) with 12 specimens, Medical (M) with 5 specimens, Unknown (NA) with 5 specimens, Hunting trophy (H) with 3 specimens, and Zoo (Z) with 1 specimen. The trade term categories comprise bodies (69), specimens (38), feathers (14), trophies (12), live (8), skins (6), skeletons (2), carvings (1), feet (1), skulls (1), and unspecified (1).

Illegal

There is a lack of quantified evidence on the extent and impact of the illegal trade in common buzzards. Notably, even when the killing of raptors is no longer legal, a substantial number of raptors are still killed illegally, for example due to deeply rooted cultural traditions of predator control (Newton, 2021). For example, in Britain, the common buzzard is both the most common raptor and also the species that seems to be illegally killed in the largest numbers (Newton, 2021).

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