Report on the Conservation Status of the Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*)

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Wild Birds Regulation Unit
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Key to conservation status codes

Category	European species of global conservation concern	Conservation status in Europe	Global population or range concentrated in Europe
SPEC 1	Yes	–	–
SPEC 2	No	Unfavourable	Yes
SPEC 3	No	Unfavourable	No
Non-SPEC^{E}	No	Favourable	Yes
Non-SPEC	No	Favourable	No

Source: BirdLife International (2004: xiii)

Categories of Species of European Conservation Concern (SPECs) and Non-SPECs

Each species is initially assessed against the IUCN Red List Criteria (IUCN 2001) at a European level, and then against the additional criteria derived mainly from Birds in Europe I (Tucker and Heath 1994). All population size thresholds refer to minimum population estimates. In descending order of threat, a species is evaluated as:

Critically Endangered (CR)	if its European population meets any of the IUCN Red List Criteria (A to E) for Critically Endangered. Such species have an Unfavourable conservation status in Europe because they are considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild (IUCN 2001).
Endangered (EN)	if its European population meets any of the IUCN Red List Criteria (A to E) for Endangered. Such species have an Unfavourable conservation status in Europe because they are considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild (IUCN 2001).
Vulnerable (V)	if its European population meets any of the IUCN Red List Criteria (A to E) for Vulnerable. Such species have an unfavourable conservation status in Europe because they are considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild (IUCN 2001).
Declining (D)	if its European population does not meet any IUCN Red List Criteria, but declined by more than 10% over 10 years (i.e. 1990–2000) or three generations, whichever is longer. Such species have an Unfavourable conservation status in Europe because they are unable to maintain their populations and/or natural ranges in the long-term. [Birds in Europe I classified species as SPECs if the size of their population or range declined between 1970–1990 by **20%** or more in 33–65% of the population (or by 50% or more in 12–24% of the population). Given the shorter time period covered by Birds in Europe II, an overall decline exceeding **10%** is comparable with this approach.]
Rare (R)	if its European population does not meet any IUCN Red List Criteria and is not Declining, but numbers fewer than 10,000 breeding pairs (*or* 20,000 breeding individuals *or* 40,000 wintering individuals), and is not marginal to a larger non-European population. Such species have an Unfavourable conservation status in Europe because the small size of their population renders them more susceptible to accelerated declines as a result of: • break-up of social structure; • loss of genetic diversity; • large-scale population fluctuations and catastrophic chance events; • existing or potential exploitation, persecution or disturbance by humans.
Depleted (H)	if its European population does not meet any IUCN Red List Criteria and is not Rare or Declining, but has not yet recovered from a moderate or large decline suffered during 1970–1990, which led to its classification as Endangered, Vulnerable or Declining in Birds in Europe I. Such species have an Unfavourable conservation status in Europe because they have already undergone a population decline of the type that various directives, conventions and agreements intend to prevent, and have not yet recovered.

Localised (L)	if its European population does not meet any IUCN Red List Criteria and is not Declining, Rare or Depleted, but is heavily concentrated, with more that 90% of the European population occurring at 10 or fewer sites (as listed in Heath and Evans 2000). Such species have an Unfavourable conservation status in Europe because their dependence on a small number of sites renders them more susceptible to accelerated declines as a result of: • large-scale population fluctuations and catastrophic chance events; • existing or potential exploitation, persecution and disturbance by humans.
Secure (S)	if its European population does not meet any of the criteria listed above. Such species have a Favourable conservation status in Europe.
In addition, a species is considered to be:	
Data Deficient (DD)	if there is inadequate information to make a direct, or indirect, assessment of its risk of extinction based on its distribution and/or population status. A species in this category may be well studied, and its biology well known, but appropriate data on its abundance and/or distribution in Europe are lacking. Data Deficient is therefore not a category of threat (IUCN 2001).
Not evaluated (NE)	if its European population has not yet been evaluated against the criteria.
Source: BirdLife International (2004: 8)	

Species trends in Birds in Europe (2004)

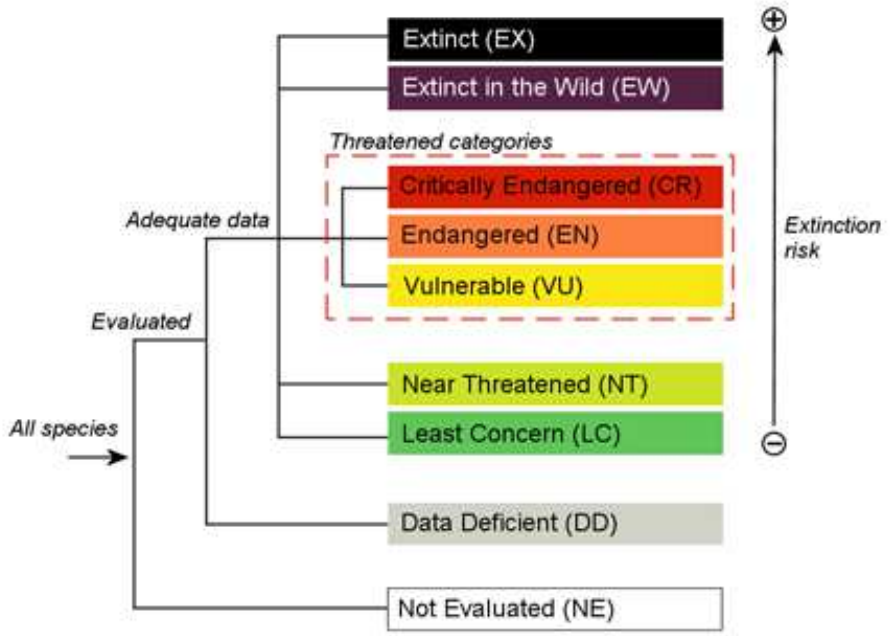
'Worst case' trend scenario 1990–2000	1990–2000 trend category	Criteria met
>30% decline	Large decline	IUCN Red List Criteria
10–29% decline	Moderate decline	Declining
<10% decline and <10% increase	Stable	-
10–29% increase	Moderate increase	-
>30% increase	Large increase	-
Unknown (insufficient data)	Unknown	-

Source: BirdLife International (2004)

IUCN Categories

EXTINCT (EX)	A taxon is Extinct when there is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died. A taxon is presumed Extinct when exhaustive surveys in known and/or expected habitat, at appropriate times (diurnal, seasonal, annual), throughout its historic range have failed to record an individual. Surveys should be over a time frame appropriate to the taxon's life cycle and life form.
EXTINCT IN THE WILD (EW)	A taxon is Extinct in the Wild when it is known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalized population (or populations) well outside the past range. A taxon is presumed Extinct in the Wild when exhaustive surveys in known and/or expected habitat, at appropriate times (diurnal, seasonal, annual), throughout its historic range have failed to record an individual. Surveys should be over a time frame appropriate to the taxon's life cycle and life form.
CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (CR)	A taxon is Critically Endangered when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of the criteria A to E for Critically Endangered (see Section V), and it is therefore considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.
ENDANGERED (EN)	A taxon is Endangered when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of the criteria A to E for Endangered (see Section V), and it is therefore considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.
VULNERABLE (VU)	A taxon is Vulnerable when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of the criteria A to E for Vulnerable (see Section V), and it is therefore considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.
NEAR THREATENED (NT)	A taxon is Near Threatened when it has been evaluated against the criteria but does not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable now, but is close to qualifying for or is likely to qualify for a threatened category in the near future.
LEAST CONCERN (LC)	A taxon is Least Concern when it has been evaluated against the criteria and does not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened. Widespread and abundant taxa are included in this category.
DATA DEFICIENT (DD)	A taxon is Data Deficient when there is inadequate information to make a direct, or indirect, assessment of its risk of extinction based on its distribution and/or population status. A taxon in this category may be well studied, and its biology well known, but appropriate data on abundance and/or distribution are lacking. Data Deficient is therefore not a category of threat. Listing of taxa in this category indicates that more information is required and acknowledges the possibility that future research will show that threatened classification is appropriate. It is important to make positive use of whatever data are available. In many cases great care should be exercised in choosing between DD and a threatened status. If the range of a taxon is suspected to be relatively circumscribed, and a considerable period of time has elapsed since the last record of the taxon, threatened status may well be justified.
NOT EVALUATED (NE)	A taxon is Not Evaluated when it has not yet been evaluated against the criteria.

Structure of IUCN categories



Source: IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria Ver. 3.1 2nd edition. Available at: https://portals.iucn.org/library/efiles/documents/RL-2001-001-2nd.pdf

IUCN CRITERIA FOR CRITICALLY ENDANGERED, ENDANGERED AND VULNERABLE TAXA

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (CR)	A taxon is Critically Endangered when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of the following criteria (A to E), and it is therefore considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild: A. Reduction in population size based on any of the following: 1. An observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of ≥90% over the last 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the causes of the reduction are clearly reversible AND understood AND ceased, based on (and specifying) any of the following: (a) direct observation (b) an index of abundance appropriate to the taxon (c) a decline in area of occupancy, extent of occurrence and/or quality of habitat (d) actual or potential levels of exploitation (e) the effects of introduced taxa, hybridization, pathogens, pollutants, competitors or parasites. 2. An observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of ≥80% over the last 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible, based on (and specifying) any of (a) to (e) under A1. 3. A population size reduction of ≥80%, projected or suspected to be met within the next 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer (up to a maximum of 100 years), based on (and specifying) any of (b) to (e) under A1. 4. An observed, estimated, inferred, projected or suspected population size reduction of ≥80% over any 10 year or three generation period, whichever is longer (up to a maximum of 100

	years in the future), where the time period must include both the past and the future, and where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible, based on (and specifying) any of (a) to (e) under A1. B. Geographic range in the form of either B1 (extent of occurrence) OR B2 (area of occupancy) OR both: 1. Extent of occurrence estimated to be less than 100 km^2, and estimates indicating at least two of a-c: a. Severely fragmented or known to exist at only a single location. b. Continuing decline, observed, inferred or projected, in any of the following: (i) extent of occurrence (ii) area of occupancy (iii) area, extent and/or quality of habitat (iv) number of locations or subpopulations (v) number of mature individuals. c. Extreme fluctuations in any of the following: (i) extent of occurrence (ii) area of occupancy (iii) number of locations or subpopulations (iv) number of mature individuals. 2. Area of occupancy estimated to be less than 10 km^2, and estimate indicating at least two of a-c: a. Severely fragmented or known to exist at only a single location. b. Continuing decline, observed, inferred or projected, in any of the following: (i) extent of occurrence (ii) area of occupancy (iii) area, extent and/or quality of habitat (iv) number of locations or subpopulations (v) number of mature individuals. c. Extreme fluctuations in any of the following: (i) extent of occurrence (ii) area of occupancy (iii) number of locations or subpopulations (iv) number of mature individuals. C. Population size estimated to number fewer than 250 mature individuals and either: 1. An estimated continuing decline of at least 25% within three years or one generation, whichever is longer, (up to a maximum of 100 years in the future) OR 2. A continuing decline, observed, projected, or inferred, in numbers of mature individuals AND at least one of the following (a-b): a. Population structure in the form of one of the following: (i) no subpopulation estimated to contain more than 50 mature individuals, OR (ii) at least 90% of mature individuals in one subpopulation. b. Extreme fluctuations in number of mature individuals. D. Population size estimated to number fewer than 50 mature individuals. E. Quantitative analysis showing the probability of extinction in the wild is at least 50% within 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer (up to a maximum of 100 years).

ENDANGERED (EN)	A taxon is Endangered when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of the following criteria (A to E), and it is therefore considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild: A. Reduction in population size based on any of the following: 1. An observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of ≥70% over the last 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the causes of the reduction are clearly reversible AND understood AND ceased, based on (and specifying) any of the following: (a) direct observation (b) an index of abundance appropriate to the taxon (c) a decline in area of occupancy, extent of occurrence and/or quality of habitat (d) actual or potential levels of exploitation (e) the effects of introduced taxa, hybridization, pathogens, pollutants, competitors or parasites. 2. An observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of ≥50% over the last 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible, based on (and specifying) any of (a) to (e) under A1. 3. A population size reduction of ≥50%, projected or suspected to be met within the next 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer (up to a maximum of 100 years), based on (and specifying) any of (b) to (e) under A1. 4. An observed, estimated, inferred, projected or suspected population size reduction of ≥50% over any 10 year or three generation period, whichever is longer (up to a maximum of 100 years in the future), where the time period must include both the past and the future, AND where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible, based on (and specifying) any of (a) to (e) under A1. B. Geographic range in the form of either B1 (extent of occurrence) OR B2 (area of occupancy) OR both: 1. Extent of occurrence estimated to be less than 5,000 km^2, and estimates indicating at least two of a-c: a. Severely fragmented or known to exist at no more than five locations. b. Continuing decline, observed, inferred or projected, in any of the following: (i) extent of occurrence (ii) area of occupancy (iii) area, extent and/or quality of habitat (iv) number of locations or subpopulations (v) number of mature individuals. c. Extreme fluctuations in any of the following: (i) extent of occurrence (ii) area of occupancy (iii) number of locations or subpopulations (iv) number of mature individuals. 2. Area of occupancy estimated to be less than 500 km^2, and estimates indicating at least two of a-c: a. Severely fragmented or known to exist at no more than five locations. b. Continuing decline, observed, inferred or projected, in any of the following: (i) extent of occurrence (ii) area of occupancy (iii) area, extent and/or quality of habitat (iv) number of locations or subpopulations

	(v) number of mature individuals. c. Extreme fluctuations in any of the following: (i) extent of occurrence (ii) area of occupancy (iii) number of locations or subpopulations (iv) number of mature individuals. C. Population size estimated to number fewer than 2,500 mature individuals and either: 1. An estimated continuing decline of at least 20% within five years or two generations, whichever is longer, (up to a maximum of 100 years in the future) OR 2. A continuing decline, observed, projected, or inferred, in numbers of mature individuals AND at least one of the following (a-b): a. Population structure in the form of one of the following: (i) no subpopulation estimated to contain more than 250 mature individuals, OR (ii) at least 95% of mature individuals in one subpopulation. b. Extreme fluctuations in number of mature individuals. D. Population size estimated to number fewer than 250 mature individuals. E. Quantitative analysis showing the probability of extinction in the wild is at least 20% within 20 years or five generations, whichever is the longer (up to a maximum of 100 years).
VULNERABLE (VU)	A taxon is Vulnerable when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of the following criteria (A to E), and it is therefore considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild: A. Reduction in population size based on any of the following: 1. An observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of ≥50% over the last 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the causes of the reduction are clearly reversible AND understood AND ceased, based on (and specifying) any of the following: (a) direct observation (b) an index of abundance appropriate to the taxon (c) a decline in area of occupancy, extent of occurrence and/or quality of habitat (d) actual or potential levels of exploitation (e) the effects of introduced taxa, hybridization, pathogens, pollutants, competitors or parasites. 2. An observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of ≥30% over the last 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible, based on (and specifying) any of (a) to (e) under A1. 3. A population size reduction of ≥30% projected or suspected to be met within the next 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer (up to a maximum of 100 years), based on (and specifying) any of (b) to (e) under A1. 4. An observed, estimated, inferred, projected or suspected population size reduction of ≥30% over any 10 year or three generation period, whichever is longer (up to a maximum of 100 years in the future), where the time period must include both the past and the future, AND where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible, based on (and specifying) any of (a) to (e) under A1. B. Geographic range in the form of either B1 (extent of occurrence) OR B2 (area of occupancy) OR both:

	1. Extent of occurrence estimated to be less than 20,000 km^2, and estimates indicating at least two of a-c: a. Severely fragmented or known to exist at no more than 10 locations. b. Continuing decline, observed, inferred or projected, in any of the following: (i) extent of occurrence (ii) area of occupancy (iii) area, extent and/or quality of habitat (iv) number of locations or subpopulations (v) number of mature individuals. c. Extreme fluctuations in any of the following: (i) extent of occurrence (ii) area of occupancy (iii) number of locations or subpopulations (iv) number of mature individuals. 2. Area of occupancy estimated to be less than 2,000 km^2, and estimates indicating at least two of a-c: a. Severely fragmented or known to exist at no more than 10 locations. b. Continuing decline, observed, inferred or projected, in any of the following: (i) extent of occurrence (ii) area of occupancy (iii) area, extent and/or quality of habitat (iv) number of locations or subpopulations (v) number of mature individuals. c. Extreme fluctuations in any of the following: (i) extent of occurrence (ii) area of occupancy (iii) number of locations or subpopulations (iv) number of mature individuals. C. Population size estimated to number fewer than 10,000 mature individuals and either: 1. An estimated continuing decline of at least 10% within 10 years or three generations, whichever is longer, (up to a maximum of 100 years in the future) OR 2. A continuing decline, observed, projected, or inferred, in numbers of mature individuals AND at least one of the following (a-b): a. Population structure in the form of one of the following: (i) no subpopulation estimated to contain more than 1,000 mature individuals, OR (ii) all mature individuals in one subpopulation. b. Extreme fluctuations in number of mature individuals. D. Population very small or restricted in the form of either of the following: 1. Population size estimated to number fewer than 1,000 mature individuals. 2. Population with a very restricted area of occupancy (typically less than 20 km^2) or number of locations (typically five or fewer) such that it is prone to the effects of human activities or stochastic events within a very short time period in an uncertain future, and is thus capable of becoming Critically Endangered or even Extinct in a very short time period. E. Quantitative analysis showing the probability of extinction in the wild is at least 10% within 100 years.

1. Conservation Status of the Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*)

1.1 The Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) is a species of gamebird found in cropland and grassland ecosystems. BirdLife International (2016)[1] notes that **this species has an extremely large range, and hence does not approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the range size criterion** (Extent of Occurrence <20,000 km^2 combined with a declining or fluctuating range size, habitat extent/quality, or population size and a small number of locations or severe fragmentation). Despite the fact that the population trend appears to be decreasing, the decline is not believed to be sufficiently rapid to approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the population trend criterion (>30% decline over ten years or three generations). **The population size is extremely large, and hence does not approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the population size criterion** (<10,000 mature individuals with a continuing decline estimated to be >10% in ten years or three generations, or with a specified population structure). For these reasons the species is evaluated as **Least Concern** at Global level (BirdLife International, 2016).

Threats

1.2 BirdLife International (2016) maintains that this species is declining owing to netting of migrating birds[2] and that local declines may be caused by changing agricultural practices, especially increased use of pesticides.

Breeding Population in Europe

1.3 In Europe, the breeding population is estimated to number 2,800,000–4,700,000 breeding pairs, equating to 8,400,000–14,100,000 individuals. Europe forms 5–24% of the global range, so a very preliminary estimate of the global population size is 35,000,000–300,000,000 individuals, although further validation of this estimate is needed (BirdLife International, 2016). The European Environment Agency (EEA, 2014)[3] notes that in the EU27, *Coturnix*

[1] http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/speciesfactsheet.php?id=194

[2] It should be noted that large scale practice of trammel netting in Egypt accounts for several million quails trapped each year during migration. See materials presented during CMS Convention Mediterranean Task Force on the Illegal Killing of Birds meeting in Cairo in July 2016:

- http://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/unep_cms_mikt1_doc-12b_Legal_Review.pdf;
- http://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/Reducing%20Illegal%20Trapping%20of%20Migrating%20Birds%20in%20Northern%20Egypt%20-%20Mr.%20Waheel%20Salama%20Hamied%20.pdf

[3] http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/article12/summary?period=1&subject=A113

coturnix has a breeding population size of 1,260,000–2,980,000 calling males and a breeding range size of 2,950,000 km^2.

1.4 The EU Management plan for Common Quail 2009-2011 (Perennou 2009) aims *inter alia* to "**restore the species to a favourable conservation status through reversing the declines in SE Europe and maintaining its natural genetic diversity"**. The Management Plan notes that the conservation status of Common Quail within the EU Territory is favourable (Perennou 2009:10), with the EU Common Quail population numbering some 884,000–1,912,000 calling males. Perennou (2009) also notes that the analysis of the population estimates and trends for Common Quail is imprecise, resulting in large differences between minimum and maximum numbers which are due to a combination of reasons, including:

- methodological difficulties, which stem from the fact that breeding females are very difficult to detect and because, once paired, the males stop crowing. This often leads to broad ranges for national estimates, most of which do not actually rely on any field census at all. Therefore, national population estimates cannot be reliably summed up at the European level.

- inadequacy of large-scale compilations, due to the fact that the breeding pair in this species is an ephemeral phenomenon and consequently the number of singing males is widely considered by specialists to be a much more practical index of population abundance than the number of breeding pairs. Broad-scale compilations (e.g. Birdlife International 2004, Tucker & Heath 1994) often use the latter index, and also combine data relating to pairs (though inaccessible in practice, with rare exceptions) with data on calling birds (by nature unpaired).

1.5 There are also high inter-annual fluctuations in breeding numbers for any given country, which do not necessarily reflect the actual variability in the total population size for Common Quail, but rather a variability in the amplitude of the pre-breeding migration northwards. Perennou (2009) further states that Common Quail numbers seem to be growing strongly in Arabia and Morocco and probably in all the Maghreb countries. These birds do not constitute separate populations, but are part of the population that breeds in Europe in variable proportions from one year to the next. According to Perennou (2009), an overall analysis of Common Quail population trends in fact indicates that, following a decline in the 1970s (the precise quantitative amplitude of which is

unknown because of the lack of earlier, reliable pan-European estimates or indexes), the overall population trend of sedentary and short migrants seems to be increasing over that of the long migrants in the Palearctic region, leading to an overall population trend which is now "likely increasing in the EU" with the exception of south-eastern Europe.

1.6 Similarly, Guyomarc'h (2003) states that figures for breeding pairs in different countries are considered inaccurate because these estimates are replicated from year to year without revision. They ignore variables such as: exchanges between the Maghreb and Europe; high mobility; possible multiple-breeding attempts; and successive pairs. Thirdly, counts of couples or pairs (a very ephemeral phenomenon in this species) are mixed with data from counts of singing males (by nature "unmated" single males). The author also states that there was a decrease in the Common Quail population in the 1970s north of ca. 45º, but that in the 1990s an overall population increase seems to have taken place.

1.7 Guyomarc'h (2003) calculated a population range of 697,000 to 2,298,710 breeding pairs, based on information obtained from 26 countries (including Russia and Turkey, but excluding Former Yugoslavia) and between 3,749,000 and 7,725,000 calling males, based on data obtained from 19 countries. Perennou (2009) gives an estimate of approximately 2.7–4.6 million breeding pairs across a total of 30 countries, including Russia (European part), Turkey (estimate for Turkey being 300–800 thousand pairs) and Ukraine. He also gives an estimate of 2.8–5.3 million calling males, based on data from just 17 countries.

1.8 The European Commission's *Guide to Sustainable Hunting under the Birds Directive* (EC 2008) listed the Common Quail as a huntable species with an unfavourable conservation status (SPEC 3: Vulnerable, Large Decline) (EC, 2008:90). The most recent European Bird Census Council (EBCC) report presents updated population trends and indices of 169 species for the time period 1980–2014, published by the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS) in 2016[4]. However, **EBCC does not include the Common Quail in its pan-European index**. Hence, no evaluation of the population trends for this species could be obtained through the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme.

[4] http://www.ebcc.info/index.php?ID=612

1.9 Article 12 reports for the reporting period 2008–2012 (EEA, 2014)[5] provide the latest information on the short-term and long-term trends of bird species at the EU27 level (viz. all Member States, excluding Croatia). The previous dataset, provided by Birds in Europe II [BirdLife International (2004)] had shown that the Common Quail population within the current territory of the European Union (EU 28, including Croatia) is Stable, with a change in the minimum number of pairs of -1.81% and a change in the maximum number of pairs of -0.56% (Table 1). According to EEA (2014), the breeding population trend in the EU27 is **Decreasing** in the short term and **Unknown** in the long-term. EEA (2014) maintains that the EU population status for *Coturnix coturnix* is **Unknown**, as the data reported were not sufficient to assess the population status of the species. The assessment carried out as part of this update has shown that, on the basis of Article 12 reports (EEA, 2014) (Table 2), at EU28 level, the Common Quail is **Increasing** in the long-term trend (Min. Pairs: +23.49%; Max. Pairs: +27.40%). **However, this percentage increase should be interpreted with caution given that it is based on data pertaining to 74% of Common Quail population within EU28—the remaining 26% have an Unknown long-term trend**.

1.10 During the current (2008–2012) Article 12 reporting period, the EU28 population of Common Quail had a **Stable maximum number of calling males** (-9.23%) but a **Decreasing minimum number of calling males** (-13.65%) in the short-term. The short-term trend classifications for the minimum and maximum number of calling males are based on 98% of the EU28 population since two Member States reported an Unknown short-term trend, namely Belgium and Greece (the latter surrogate data was provided by the Hellenic Ornithological Society, as specified by EEA, 2014)[6].

1.11 The Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) is classified by IUCN as Least Concern at both the EU27 and European scale (BirdLife International, 2015a: 38). The Common Quail population within the territory of the European Union (EU27) constitutes 41% of the total European population (BirdLife International, 2015b).

[5] http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/article12/summary?period=1&subject=A113

[6] It should be noted that removal of the Croatian (2004) data returns the same trend classifications at both the short-term and long-term.

Table 1 Common Quail EU Breeding Population (pairs) in 2004 (Bold = Ring Recoveries)

Country	EU Ring Recoveries in Malta (n=19) ∫	Breeding Pairs (Min - Max)		Trend	Mag. % (Max - Min)		Max % Change (Min Pairs)	Max % Change (Max Pairs)	Max % Change (Average Pairs)
Austria		5,000	15,000	Increase	20	29	1450	4350	2900
Belgium		2,400	5,700	Stable	0	19	-	-	-
Bulgaria		8,000	15,000	Decline	0	19	-1520	-2850	-2185
Croatia		10,000	15,000	Increase	50	79	7900	11850	9875
Cyprus		1,000	4,000	Stable	0	9	-	-	-
Czech Rep.		5,000	10,000	Increase	50	79	3950	7900	5925
Denmark		200	600	Increase	80	80	160	480	320
Estonia		10	50	Stable	0	19	-	-	-
Finland		10	100	Increase	500	500	50	500	275
France		100,000	500,000	Fluctuating	20	29	-	-	-
Germany		12,000	32,000	Increase	0	19	2280	6080	4180
Greece		2,000	5,000	Decline	0	19	-380	-950	-665
Hungary	**8%**	**70,000**	**94,000**	**Stable**	**0**	**19**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Rep. Ireland		0	20	Fluctuating	20	29	-	-	-
Italy	**92%**	**5,000**	**20,000**	**?**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Latvia		20	500	Increase	80	80	16	400	208
Lithuania		1,000	2,000	Increase	30	49	490	980	735
Luxembourg		10	25	Stable	0	19	-	-	-
Malta		1	3	Decline	30	49	0	-1	-1
Netherlands		2,000	6,500	Increase	64	64	1,280	4,160	2,720
Poland		100,000	150,000	Increase	?	?	-	-	-
Portugal		5,000	50,000	Stable	0	19	-	-	-
Romania		160,000	220,000	Decline	0	19	-30,400	-41,800	-36,100
Slovakia		2,000	6,000	Stable	0	19	-	-	-
Slovenia		1,000	2,000	Stable	0	19	-	-	-
Spain		320,000	435,000	?	-	-	-	-	-
Sweden		10	40	Fluctuating	20	29	-	-	-
UK		5	450	Stable	0	1	-	-	-
Totals	**100%**	**811,666**	**1,588,988**				**-14,724**	**-8,897**	**-11,811**
				Percentage change			**-1.81%**	**-0.56%**	**-0.98%**
				Trend (EU Population)			**Stable**	**Stable**	**Stable**

Data sources: BirdLife International (2004); ∫ Raine (2007).

Table 2 **Common Quail EU28 Breeding Population (calling males) in 2014** (Bold = Ring Recoveries)

Country	EU Ring Recoveries in Malta (n=19)∫	Calling Males (Min - Max)		Short-term Trend	Mag. % (Max - Min)		Long-term Trend	Mag. % (Max - Min)		Short-term		Long-term	
										Max % Change (Min)	Max % Change (Max)	Max % Change (Min)	Max % Change (Max)
Austria		5,000	10,000	Fluctuating	-	-	Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belgium		2,700	3,400	Unknown	-	-	Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bulgaria		15,000	35,000	Decline	40	60	Decline	20	40	-6,000	-21,000	-3,000	-14,000
Croatia*		10,000	15,000	Increase	50	79				5,000	11,850	-	-
Cyprus		2,000	5,000	Stable	0	9	Increase	10	30	-	-	200	1,500
Czech Rep.[1]		4,000	8,000	Fluctuating			Increase	6863	6863	-	-	274,520	549,040
Denmark		1,830	1,830	Increase	100	1000	Increase	1000	10000	1,830	18,300	18,300	183,000
Estonia		100	3,000	Fluctuating			Fluctuating			-	-	-	-
Finland		150	500	Stable	-	-	Increase	1635	4082	-	-	2,453	20,410
France		100,000	300,000	Increase	6.1	33.9	Decline	21.38	36.08	6,100	101,700	-21,380	-108,240
Germany		26,000	49,000	Fluctuating	-	-	Increase	96	190	-	-	24,960	93,100
Greece[2]		2,000	5,000	Unknown	-	-	Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hungary	**5%**	**29,000**	**37,000**	**Decline**	**54**	**54**	**Unknown**			**-15,660**	**-19,980**	**-**	**-**
Rep. Ireland		1	20	Stable	-	-	Stable	-	-	-	-	-	-
Italy	**95%**	**15,000**	**30,000**	**Increase**	**70**	**80**	**Unknown**	**-**	**-**	**10,500**	**24,000**	**-**	**-**
Latvia		589	956	Fluctuating	-	-	Increase	489	4680	-	-	2,880	44,741
Lithuania		2,000	5,000	Increase	20	50	Increase		50	400	2,500	0	2,500
Luxembourg		50	100	Fluctuating	-	-	Decline	20	50	-	-	-10	-50
Netherlands		1,284	15,467	Increase	47	104	Increase	62	284	603	16,086	796	43,926
Poland		85,000	135,000	Decline	30	50	Unknown	-	-	-25,500	-67,500	-	-
Portugal		100,000	500,000	Stable	-	-	Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal (Azores)		11,000	21,000	Stable	-	-	Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal (Madeira)		500	1,000	Stable	-	-	Stable	-	-	-	-	-	-
Romania		575,000	1,150,000	Fluctuating	-	-	Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovakia		2,000	6,000	Decline		20	Decline		20	0	-1,200	0	-1,200
Slovenia		1,000	2,000	Decline	10	30	Decline	20	40	-100	-600	-200	-800
Spain		285,000	640,000	Decline	53.32	53.32	Decline			-151,962	-341,248	0	0

Spain (Canary Is.)		2,500	10,000	Decline			Decline			0	0	0	0
Sweden		600	1,400	Increase	25	75	Increase	200	400	150	1,050	1,200	5,600
UK		540	540	Decline	6	6	Decline	10	10	-32	-32	-54	-54
Total	100%	**1,279,844**	**2,991,213**							-174,671	-276,075	300,665	819,473
				Percentage change						-13.65%	-9.23%	23.49%	27.40%
				Trend (EU Population)						**Decline** (>10% change in 10 years)	**Stable** (<10% change in 10 years)	**Increase** (>20% change since 1980)	**Increase** (>20% change since 1980)

Data Sources: European Environment Agency (2014); *BirdLife International (2004); ∫ Raine (2007) and BirdLife Malta (pers. comm., 2015)

[1] In the absence of a report from the Czech Republic for this taxon, surrogate data were provided by ČSO / BirdLife indicating a breeding population of 4000–8000 calling males, with a fluctuating trend during 2000–2012 and an increasing trend (6863%) during 1982–2012.Source: EEA (2014) Audit Trail, available at: http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/article12/summary/audittrail/?period=1&subject=A113 [Accessed 22/11/2016].

[2] In the absence of a report from Greece for this taxon, surrogate data were provided by the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS), the BirdLife Partner in Greece, indicating a breeding population of 2000–5000 calling males, with an unknown trend during 2001–2012 and an unknown trend during 1980–2012. Source: EEA (2014) Audit Trail, available at: http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/article12/summary/audittrail/?period=1&subject=A113 [Accessed 22/11/2016].

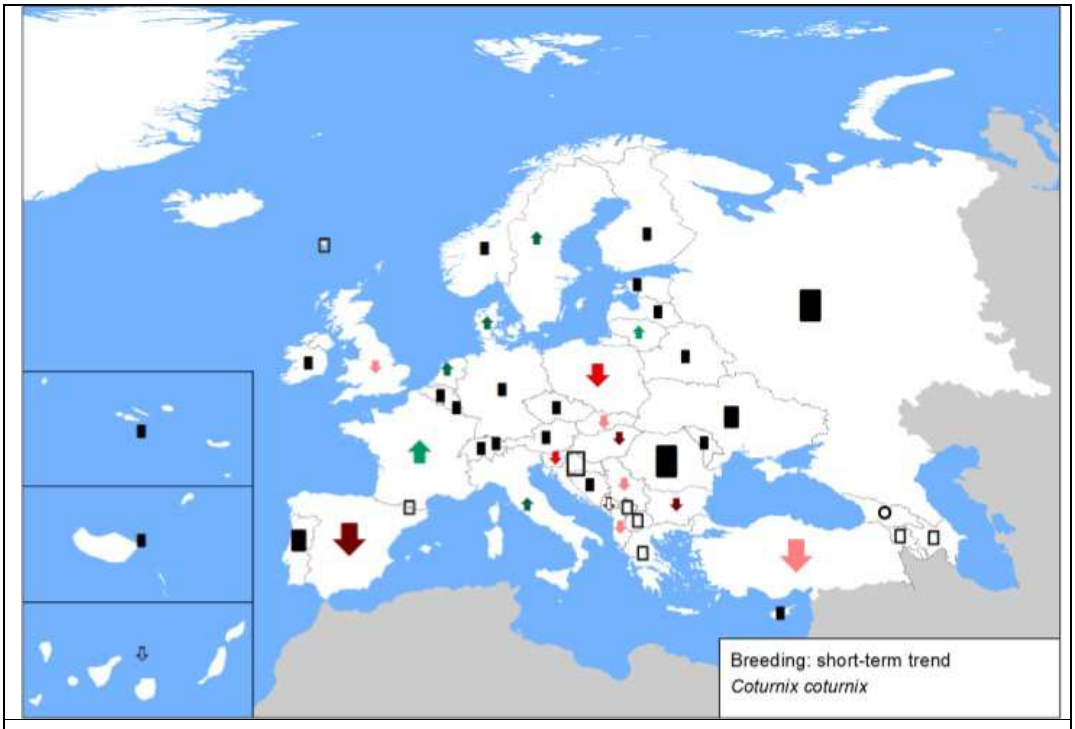


Fig 1: Breeding population sizes and short-term trends across Europe. Source: BirdLife International (2015b).

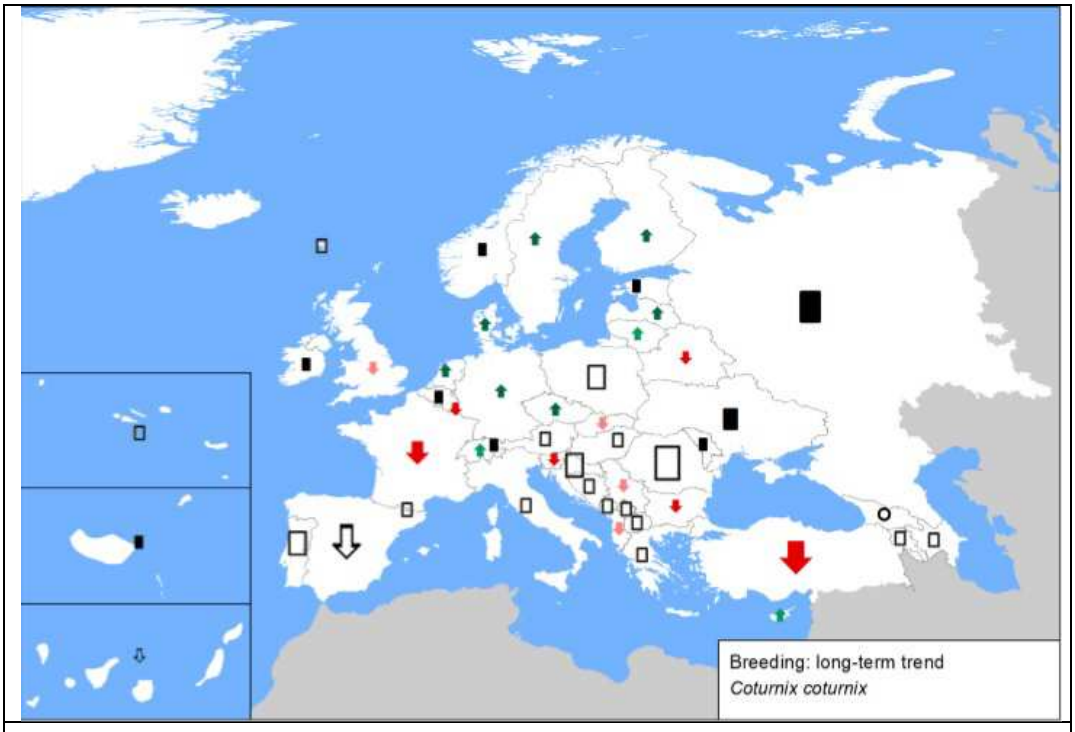


Fig 2: Breeding population sizes and long-term trends across Europe. Source: BirdLife International (2015b).

KEY

- Large increase (≥50%)
- Moderate increase (20–49%)
- Small increase (<20%)
- Increase of unknown magnitude
- Large decrease (≥50%)
- Moderate decrease (20–49%)
- Small decrease (<20%)
- Decrease of unknown magnitude
- Stable or fluctuating
- Unknown
- Present (no population or trend data)
- Extinct since 1980

Each symbol, with the exception of Present and Extinct, may occur in up to three different size classes, corresponding to the proportion of the European population occurring in that country.

- Large: ≥10% of the European population
- Medium: 1–9% of the European population
- Small: <1% of the European population

Source: BirdLife International (2015b).

Ring recoveries in Malta

1.12 Ring recoveries of Common Quail in Malta are provided by Raine (2007), dating from the 1920s up until the end of 2006 (Fig. 1). Following Raine's publication, the only additional ring recovery for this species was recorded by BirdLife Malta in September 2014 (Italy). On average, up to four Quails are fitted with a scientific ring in Malta every year; however none have so far been recovered abroad (BirdLife Malta, pers. comm., 2015).

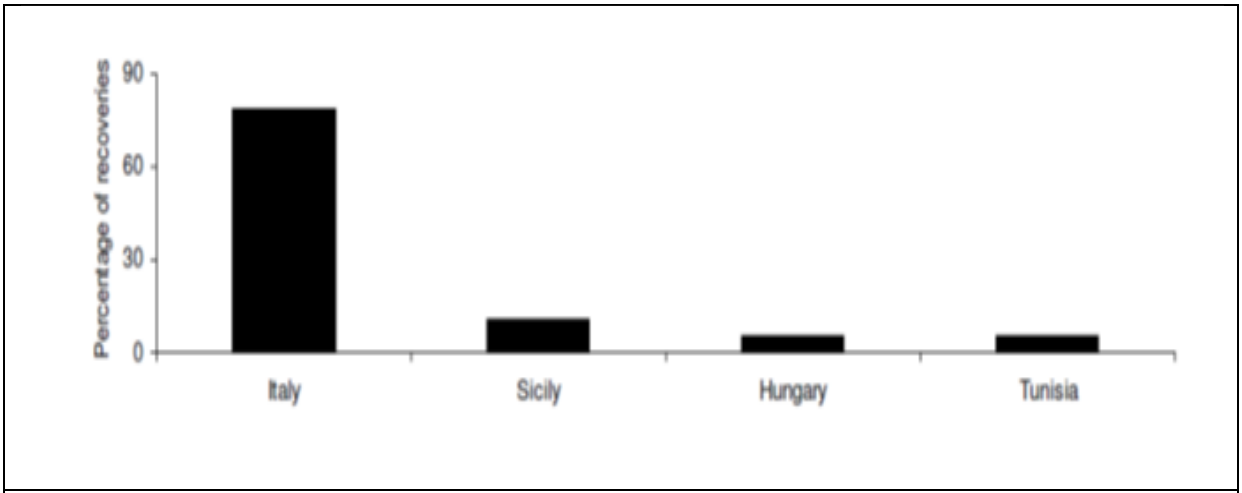


Fig 3: Percentage of ring recoveries for Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*), ringed overseas and recovered in Malta, by country (n=19). Source: Raine (2007: 16)

Common Quail Reference Population (Ring Recoveries)

1.13 Table 3 provides data on Common Quail ring recoveries in Malta (the reference population), the respective number of calling males of the source (reference) population, together with the overall direction of the population trend. Figs. 4 and 5 illustrate the EU population trend categories of this species per Member State. The respective EU source (reference) population trend categories, on the basis of ring recoveries in Malta, are shown in Figs. 6 and 7.

1.14 During the current (2008–2012) Article 12 reporting period, the reference population has a **Stable maximum number of calling males** (+6%) but a **Decreasing minimum number of calling males** (-11.73%). **The long-term trend classification of the reference population is Unknown (Table 3)**. A summary of the population trends at EU27, EU28 and reference population levels is provided in Table 4.

Table 3 **Common Quail ring recoveries (reference population) from other EU Member States and corresponding population trend**

Country	EU Ring Recoveries in Malta (n=19)	Breeding Pairs (Min - Max)		Trend	Mag. % (Max - Min)		Long-term Trend	Mag. % (Max - Min)		Short-term Max % Change (Min)	Short-term Max % Change (Max)	Long-term Max % Change (Min)	Long-term Max % Change (Max)
Italy	95%	15,000	30,000	Increase	70	80	Unknown	-	-	10,500	24,000	-	-
Hungary	5%	29,000	37,000	Decline	54	54	Unknown	-	-	-15,660	-19,980	-	-
Total	100%	**44,000**	**67,000**							-5,160	4,020	-	-
				Percentage change						-11.73%	6.00%	-	-
				Trend (Ring Recoveries)						**Decline** (>10% change in 10 years)	**Stable** (<10% change in 10 years)	**Unknown**	**Unknown**

Data Sources: European Environment Agency (2014); *BirdLife International (2004); ∫ Raine (2007) and BirdLife Malta (pers. comm., 2015)

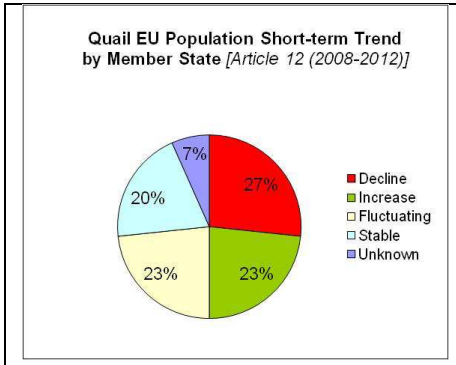


Fig. 4: Common Quail EU28 population short-term trend by Member State

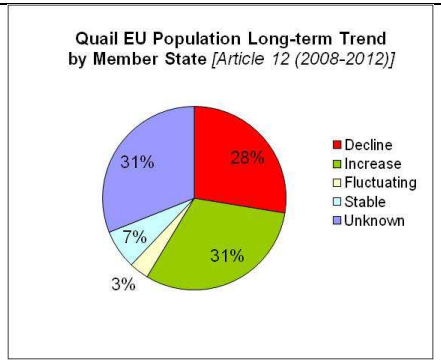


Fig. 5: Common Quail EU28 population long-term trend by Member State

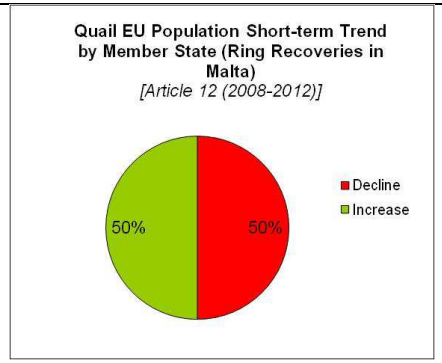


Fig. 6: Common Quail EU population short-term trend (ring recoveries)

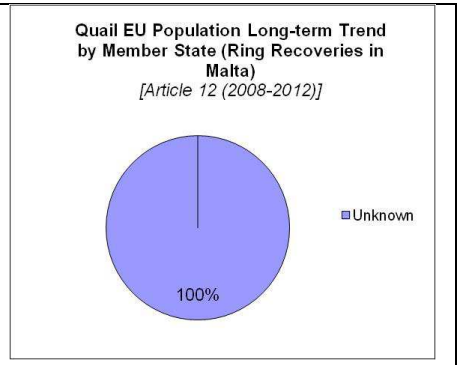


Fig. 7: Common Quail EU population long-term trend (ring recoveries)

Data sources: European Environment Agency (2014); BirdLife International (2004); Raine (2007); BirdLife Malta (pers. comm. 2015)

Table 4	**Short-term and long-term trends at EU and reference population levels**						
Coturnix coturnix	**EBCC**	**EU27 (Article 12)** ‡		**EU28**		**Reference Population***	
Former data† (2004) Population (EU28): 811,666–1,588,988 pairs	N/A	N/A		**Stable** (Min: +1.81%, Max: -0.56%, Geomean: -0.98%)		**Stable** (Min/Max: 0%)	
Current data (2014) Population (EU27): 1,260,000 – 2,980,000 calling males Population (EU28): 1,279,844 – 2,991,213 calling males	N/A	**Short-term** (2004) **Decreasing**	**Long-term** (1980) Unknown	**Short-term** (2004) Min. calling males: **Decreasing** (-13.65%) Max. calling males: **Stable** (-9.23%)	**Long-term** (1980) **Increasing** (Min: +23.49%/Max: +27.40%) *BUT* data based on 74% of EU population.	**Short-term** (2004) Min. calling males: **Decreasing** (-11.73%) Max. calling males: **Stable** (+6%)	**Long-term** (1980) Unknown
Data sources: EBCC (2016); †BirdLife International (2004); ‡European Environment Agency (2014); *Raine (2007) & BirdLife Malta (2016).							

2. Conclusion

2.1 The European Environment Agency (2014) notes that the breeding population trend of the Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) at EU27 level is **Decreasing** in the short-term and **Unknown** in the long-term. The EU population status for Common Quail is **Unknown**, as the data reported were not sufficient to assess the population status of the species (EEA, 2014). The Common Quail has an **IUCN Least Concern classification** at both the EU27 and European scale (BirdLife International, 2015a: 38). The population of Common Quail within EU27 constitutes 41% of the total European population (BirdLife International, 2015b).

2.2 This species is not included in the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme. The assessment carried out as part of this update has shown that, on the basis of Article 12 reports (EEA, 2014) at EU28 level (EU27 Article 12 reports + Croatian data for 2004), the Common Quail is **Increasing** in the long-term trend (Min. Pairs: +23.49%; Max. Pairs: +27.40%). However, this percentage increase should be interpreted with caution given that it is based on data pertaining to only 74% of Common Quail population within EU28—the remaining 26% have an Unknown long-term trend.

2.3 In the short-term, the EU28 population of Common Quail has a **Stable maximum number of calling males** (-9.23%) but a **Decreasing minimum number of calling males** (-13.65%).

2.4 Similarly, the reference population of the Common Quail has a short-term trend classification of **Stable** in the **maximum number of calling males** (+6%) but **Decreasing** in the **minimum number of calling males** (-11.73%). **The long-term trend of the reference population is Unknown**.

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