Currently, avian pox is a new conservation problem in threatened bird species in the Canary Islands (Medina and others 2004) (Burhinus oedicnemus is listed in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive). The disease could be an important factor in the decrease in populations of affected species of birds in the Canary Islands, as has been reported on island ecosystems such as Hawaii for other bird species (Tripathy and others 2000). Poxvirus particles are very persistent in the environment, and cutaneous infection can occur by direct contact with infected individuals or by mechanical transmission of the virus to broken skin (Docherty and others 1991).

The presence of avian pox in endemic stone curlews should be considered as a conservation problem in this endangered species, and possibly a problem for management and conservation of other endemic and threatened bird species in the Canary Islands ecosystem.

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