

IUCN SSC Asian Songbird Trade Specialist Group

2016-2017 Report



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Chair

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Location/Affiliation

⁽¹⁾ Jersey, Channel Islands, British Isles

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Number of members

9



Mission statement

The IUCN Asian Songbird Trade Specialist Group (ASTSG) exists to prevent the imminent extinction of songbirds threatened by unsustainable trapping and the trade in wild-caught passerines. In addition, it seeks to address the impact of the trade and to find solutions through which the growing threat to an ever increasing number of songbird species can be reversed and improve the conservation status of all species involved.

Main activities by Key Priority Area (2016 & 2017)

Barometer of life

■ Conservation activities

i. To have conducted trial releases of Black-winged Myna (*Acridotheres melanopterus*) to establish protocols and identify conditions necessary for successful reintroduction. Currently a trial is underway at Taman Safari, Bogor. (KSR #24)

■ Research activities

i. The *Myzomela* from Rote Island (Eastern Nusa Tenggara) has been identified as a distinct species, *Myzomela irianawidoeae*. These findings have been reported in a published paper in which it recommends the species should be listed as Vulnerable by IUCN. (KSR #43)

Conservation action

■ Communication

i. Best Practice Guidelines have been produced for the Endangered Sumatran Laughingthrush (*Garrulax bicolor*). These document the requirements for their successful captive management and will support the captive programme that has been established for the species. (KSR #28)

■ Conservation activities

i. Develop International Advisory Board to assist and advice, Indonesian Government of the reintroduction of the Bali Myna (*Leucopsar rothschildi*). Two workshops were held during 2017, in Bogor and Bali. (KSR #24)

ii. Populations of Black-winged Myna (*Acridotheres melanopterus*) set up at two conservation breeding centres in Java and International Studbook published. (KSR #25)

Acknowledgements

ASTSG would like to acknowledge Wildlife Reserves Singapore for organising and funding the two Asian Songbird Crisis Summits which directly led to our coming into being. They continue to support our activities and act as our host institution, for which we are most grateful.

Targets for the quadrennium 2017-2020

Barometer of life

Research activities: (1) field study of Black-winged Myna and Bali Myna; (2) conduct socio-economic research on cage bird keeping in Java; (3) re-survey Javan White-eye (*Zosterops flavus*); (4) survey Java mountains targeting Critically Endangered Songbirds; (5) survey Mt. Slamet for Critically Endangered subspecies of the Rufous-fronted Laughingthrush (*Garrulax rufifrons slamatensis*); (6) conduct captive breeding trials on Greater Green Leafbird (*Chloropsis sonnerati*); (7) publish papers that provide data on the trade in Asian songbirds and its effects.

Javan Green Magpie (*Cissa thalassina*), Critically Endangered
Photo: Andrew Owen



Sumatran Laughingthrush (*Garrulax bicolor*), Endangered
Photo: Andrew Owen

Communications

Communication: publish articles that draw awareness to the conservation crisis facing Asian Songbirds and the existence of the ASTSG.

Synergy: partner with the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) conservation campaign "Silent Forest" to raise awareness and funds in support of the Asian Songbird Crisis.

Conservation action

Communication: (1) compile Best Practice Guidelines for Rufous-fronted Laughingthrush; (2) compile Best Practice Guidelines for Bali Myna.

Conservation activities: (1) establish captive population of Javan Green Magpie (*Cissa thalassina*); (2) support conservation breeding centres in-country; (3) establish captive population of Straw-headed Bulbul (*Pycnonotus zeylanicus*).

Projected impact for the quadrennium 2017-2020

The ASTSG gained official approval in mid-2017 (thanks to the help and support of Rachel Hoffmann in the SSC Chair's Office and Nigel Collar, BirdLife International). This gave additional impetus to activities aimed at addressing the threat faced by a number of species as a result of the caged bird trade. As an outcome of the Songbirds Crisis Summits, hosted by Wildlife Reserves Singapore in October 2015 and February 2017, the Group had an existing framework allowing it to target and prioritise activities. The up-listing in the 2016 Red List of a number of the songbirds within the Group's focus, several to Critically Endangered, underlined the urgency of implementing measures to address their conservation needs. In September 2017, EAZA launched a new conservation campaign, "Silent Forest" <http://www.silentforest.eu/>, which will raise much needed awareness and funding in support of the Asian Songbird Crisis. We, along with TRAFFIC and Birdlife, have signed as partners to the campaign. The resulting funds will go directly to projects that the group sees as priorities and therefore will directly support our activities.

Summary of activities (2016-2017)

Key Priority Area ratio: 2/7

Key Priority Areas addressed:

- Barometer of life (2 activities)
- Conservation action (3 activities)

Main KSRs addressed: 24, 25, 28, 43

KSR: Key Species Result