

from Bahrain. Given the unlikelihood that hornbills are being bred in captivity, the relatively high proportion of trade in purportedly captive bred hornbills should have sent warning signs, and led individual CITES authorities from importing countries to question this trade (Nijman and Shepherd, in press). TRAFFIC encourages Parties engaged in trade in hornbills to increase co-operative efforts and to enhance implementation of national regulations to ensure wild-caught hornbills are not being laundered into the international market falsely declared as captive-bred.

TRAFFIC congratulates the organizers and the Government of the Philippines as the host country of the 6th International Hornbill Conference and encourages all range States to put measures in place that will ensure hunting and trade is not a threat to the conservation of hornbills.

The 7th International Hornbill Conference is likely to be held in Malaysia, in the State of Sarawak. The emblem of Sarawak is the magnificent Rhinoceros Hornbill *Buceros rhinoceros*, making this State, which is also home to seven other hornbill species, a suitable host for the meeting.

Protection urgently needed for the endemic Sumatran Laughingthrush

The illegal and unsustainable cage bird trade in Indonesia is a serious threat to many birds in that country, with some species now close to extinction. According to BirdLife International (2013), Indonesia has 122 Globally Threatened bird species—more than any other country in South-east Asia—with trade a critical threat to many. The Sumatran Laughingthrush *Garrulax bicolor* is one of these.

Until recently, the Sumatran Laughingthrush was considered a subspecies of the White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax leucolophus*, but was recently elevated to a full species (Collar, 2006). The White-crested Laughingthrush is native to the north and north-eastern Indian subcontinent, south-eastern Tibet Autonomous Region and south-western China, Myanmar, Thailand and parts of Indochina, while the Sumatran Laughingthrush is endemic to the Indonesian island of Sumatra, where it is found in the mountainous regions (van Marle and Voous, 1988; BirdLife International, 2012). It is seriously threatened by capture for the domestic trade in cage birds (Shepherd, 2007; Shepherd, 2010; BirdLife International, 2012; Collar *et al.*, 2012). The Sumatran Laughingthrush moves about in groups and is attracted to decoys, making it easy to trap (Collar *et al.*, 2012). Recent evidence suggests that this species has undergone a considerable decline and is now known to be present at only a small number of sites (BirdLife International, 2012). While it is not included in the list of protected species in Indonesia, there is no quota for this species and therefore harvest and trade is not permitted (Shepherd, 2010). Currently, the Sumatran Laughingthrush is assessed as being Vulnerable by the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* (BirdLife International, 2012).

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Market surveys in Medan and Jakarta

During the course of 65 surveys carried out by TRAFFIC between 1997 and 2008 in Medan and Jakarta, trade in Sumatran Laughingthrushes was observed being carried out at alarming levels (Shepherd, 2006; Shepherd, 2007; Shepherd, 2010). Some 82 individuals were observed during two spot checks in 2008. In June 2012, TRAFFIC visited the three largest bird markets in Jakarta, and noted a total of seven Sumatran Laughingthrushes being offered for sale for IDR500 000–750 000 (USD50–75 each). In 2013, a reliable source reported to TRAFFIC observing a combined total of approximately 80 specimens on four occasions at Pramuka Bird Market during January to March. Jatinegara and Barito bird markets in Jakarta were visited on 29 March but no Sumatran Laughingthrushes were observed. While turnover was not measured, bird dealers indicated that sales were brisk.

Regulatory framework needed to monitor trade

In March 2013, TRAFFIC received a report, complete with photographs, of two Sumatran Laughingthrushes in a zoo in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, representing the first documented evidence of this species being displayed in a South-east Asian country outside Indonesia. As there is no quota for the capture of this species, it is likely these birds were illegally trapped in Sumatra and exported in violation of Indonesia's regulations.

While it is well documented (BirdLife International, 2012) that the Sumatran Laughingthrush is seriously threatened by unregulated harvest for commercial trade, too little is being done to address such practices. Efforts to close down the illegal bird trade in Indonesia have been minimal, as exemplified by the presence of vast numbers of birds, often illegally obtained and fully protected by

law, being openly displayed in their thousands in large bird markets in most Indonesian cities, including the capital, Jakarta. Awareness of the plight of the Sumatran Laughingthrush and many other bird species in Indonesia similarly threatened by trade, remains poor at both national and international levels.

Specific conservation efforts for the Sumatran Laughingthrush are urgently needed. First and foremost, TRAFFIC encourages the Indonesian Government to provide full legal protection for the Sumatran Laughingthrush under the *Act of the Republic of Indonesia No. 5 of 1990 concerning Conservation of Living Resources and their Ecosystems (Undang-undang Republik Indonesia No. 5 Tahun 1990 tentang Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam Hayati dan Ekosistemnya)*. It further urges the government to reduce levels of capture of wild birds and to increase efforts to close illegal bird trade in markets and elsewhere. Confiscated birds could be used as founder stock in the existing ex situ conservation breeding programme. Efforts should also be taken to increase awareness of bird conservation in Indonesia and the need to reduce demand for wild-caught birds, as well as to instil a sense of pride and stewardship of this species.



SUMATRAN LAUGHINGTHRUSHES: FLORIAN RICHTER / CIKANANGA INTEGRATED CONSERVATION SOCIETY

THE SUMATRAN LAUGHINGTHRUSH IS SERIOUSLY THREATENED BY CAPTURE FOR THE DOMESTIC TRADE IN CAGE BIRDS, A PLIGHT FACED BY AN INCREASING NUMBER OF INDONESIAN BIRD SPECIES.

Ex situ conservation actions are under way. By mid-2012 there were 20 males and 17 female Sumatran Laughingthrushes in European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) institutions, and a few more in private hands, and between October 2011 and September 2012, 10 birds were reared from four different pairs at the Cikananga Integrated Conservation Society centre, in West Java, Indonesia (Collar *et al.*, 2012). These captive birds may very well play an important role in the conservation of this species in the future.

Long-term monitoring to measure trade volumes, values and demand for the Sumatran Laughingthrush, and impact of trade on the species, is essential to guide future conservation efforts. Further investigation into the movement of Sumatran Laughingthrushes out of Indonesia is also recommended, and if this proves to be a threat, steps to monitor the trade by listing the species in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) should be taken into consideration.

In addition to publishing observations of trade in this species, TRAFFIC has contributed to the IUCN Red List assessment. Furthermore, in 2011, TRAFFIC produced an identification sheet on the Sumatran Laughingthrush, in both English and Indonesian, in order to assist enforcement officers in identifying this species. The sheet is available from: www.traffic.org/general-pdfs/Asian-identification-sheets-unrestricted-Nov-2012.pdf.

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