

What can you do?

Helping is easy. Here are a few tips.

Sign up for the campaign on www.silentforest.eu, help us to raise funding for the preselected projects and educate the public. When you have signed up for the campaign, you can download a range of resources on the Silent Forest website. To support the realisation of a number preselected projects, which are crucial for the survival of the flagship species, an important aim of the the campaign aim is to collect funding.

Review your Institutional Collection Plan and see if there is more space for threatened Asian Songbirds in your collection. Get in touch with the EAZA Passerine TAG or review the new RCP for passerines to review your options. Check the Passeriformes TAG page on the member area of the EAZA website.

Start seriously focussing on breeding with some of the (flagship) species by for example adopting the new or updated Best Practise Guidelines (as soon as these are published) or making off show aviary space available to be able to keep more pairs and increase the chances on breeding success.



Help us to collect binoculars! In order to advertise „birding“ we will provide the discarded (but still functional!) binoculars and inspire local people in Asia to develop empathy towards the environment and stimulate them to protect it.

Help us to promote the use of the smartphone app Wildlife Witness when people are on vacation in the Asian region. This app allows tourists and local people to easily report wildlife trade by taking a photo, pinpointing the exact location of the crime and sending these important details to TRAFFIC, one of the main campaign partners. You can download this app on www.wildlifewitness.net.

Help spreading information about the Asian songbird crisis in your local community. by sharing a few tweets or Facebook messages with your community on the campaign. A great way to stress the common effort of the zoo world for conservation! In the campaign e-newsletter there will be examples of social media messages you can use in as inspiration or just copy-paste.

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SILENT FOREST



EAZA conservation campaign
2017–2019



About the campaign:

Every single day songbirds are being taken in huge numbers from the forest of Southeast Asia, simply to be traded as pets or to take part in singing contests. Many of them do not live more than a few days in the tiny cages they are kept in. Some of the most sought-after species are now at great risk of extinction, and on some islands they have disappeared and can never return. It is time to act now, before the forests fall silent forever!



Songbirds in Southeast Asia have become the subject of an excessive but culturally deep-rooted consumption for trade, singing competitions, pets, status symbols, export, traditional medicine and food. Demand for songbirds in Southeast Asia is extremely high, affecting hundreds of species and involving millions of individual birds, annually. The trade is often illegal and evidently unsustainable; thus it has been recognised as a primary threat for many species in Southeast Asia, particularly the Greater Sunda region.

The problem is cultural. In Southeast Asia, caged songbirds have long been favourite family pets. Bird ownership is a celebrated custom and everyone can buy some kind of bird in the market, regardless of their social stand. But it is not simply about pets. Songbird competitions are also culturally important and provide financial motivation for family income. While the tradition may have evolved and altered over time, the culture of keeping songbirds has endured and turned into a sport and a massive industry that includes all sub-suppliers for cages, food, supplements.

This is mainly because people believe that wild birds sing better and are stronger and more potent. Moreover, it is simply often much easier to catch rather than breed a songbird. Unfortunately, huge numbers of wild-caught birds do not live beyond the first few days in their cages.

Flagship species:



Bali Myna
(*Leucopsar rothschildi*)

Historically an endemic to Bali, populations have been decimated largely due to the incessant capture for trade. All existing birds in the wild are a result of the reintroduction of captive-bred individuals.



Sumatran laughingthrush
(*Garrulax bicolor*)

Endemic to Sumatra, this species is an easy target for trappers due to its noisy, flocking nature and increased accessibility to their montane forest habitat due to deforestation. As a result, it has disappeared from much of its range.



Nias Hill Myna
(*Gracula robusta*)

The Nias Hill Myna is the largest of the all starlings and mynas and is an endemic resident of several islands off the west coast of Sumatra. Surveys have determined that the species survives on only a few last remaining islands where ongoing conservation efforts are needed to prevent its extinction.



Straw-headed bulbul
(*Pycnonotus zeylanicus*)

Confined to the Greater Sunda region, the species has undergone massive decline across its range in response to trapping for trade. It is thought to be extinct in Thailand and locally extirpated in Indonesia (Java and Sumatra).



Javan Green Magpie
(*Cissa thalassina*)

It is now thought to be close to extinction in the wild due to habitat loss and excessive trapping, with no confirmed records in the wild since 2007. Small numbers of birds were found for sale and in the markets.



White-rumped shama
(*Copsychus malabaricus*)

Widespread throughout South and Southeast Asia, the species has at least 14 subspecies. Some are distinct peripheral forms characterized by a narrow geographic distribution which are seriously threatened with extinction.