

Asian Songbird Crisis
Campaign InfoPack 2017-2019

SILENT FOREST



TRAFFIC
the wildlife trade monitoring network







FOREWORD

EAZA and its member institutions have been contributing to conservation of endangered species and ecosystems for several decades. An EAZA Conservation campaign is a unique tool to attract attention, create momentum and to motivate institutions and individuals to act. In order to be able to make a significant change, the EAZA SILENT FOREST conservation campaign brings us to Asia with the Greater Sunda region as epicentre and highlights a particular group of animals, songbirds. Some of the most spectacular songbird species have been brought to the edge of extinction. You are now literally holding in your hands a guideline on how to reverse these threats. The Asian songbird crisis offers all EAZA member institutions a unique opportunity to show that keepers and curators skills in breeding and population management are true conservation tools. These unique skills are essential for the success of conservation breeding programmes and, for some species, the last chance to survive.

Biodiversity is something worth protecting and I hope the next generations will be able to read: *“This species was brought back from the edge of extinction by the EAZA community and partners”*.

Thank you for making this happen.

Tomas Ouhel, M.Sc, Liberec Zoo
Chairman of EAZA Silent forest campaign core group

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SILENT



FOREST



CAMPAIGN OUTLINE AND AIMS

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. Comprising of Brunei, western Indonesia (Bali, Java, Kalimantan and Sumatra), Singapore, Malaysia, southern Myanmar and southern Thailand, the Greater Sundas are an ecologically diverse region, home to more than 850 bird species, and globally recognised as a biodiversity hotspot with high levels of endemism. Currently, Indonesia has one of the highest number of bird species assessed as threatened with global extinction in the world and the highest one in Asia (Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable; IUCN Red List, 2017).

So why here?

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 status. However, 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. There is a myriad of bird clubs, while songbird competitions are major “sporting” events, making them a lucrative business. Although there are many legitimate captive breeders in Indonesia, there are still an alarming number of trappers, wholesalers and shops illegally trading in wild-caught birds. 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.

Why now?

The degree of pressure on songbirds in Asia is devastating and has long been grossly underestimated. Our understanding of the status of wild populations is not developing as fast as particular bird species are disappearing, and IUCN categories are having to change much faster than usual to reflect the actual situation. Moreover, only a small number of the affected species are currently protected under national (range countries) and international regulations, and enforcement is regrettably deemed insufficient for many of the priority species, despite their being locally protected.

The aims of the campaign are to address and mitigate the ongoing songbird extinction crisis in Asia and increase awareness within and beyond the zoo community. Achieving these aims means ensuring the zoo community has the capability to scramble the resources needed in manpower, know-how and funding to save a growing number of Asian songbird species from imminent extinction.

The campaign focuses on the following activities:

Within the EAZA region:

- Increase awareness in the general public and within the zoo community.
- Fundraise for conservation efforts to prevent extinctions.
- Provide ideas and information to enable environmental education in zoos.
- Provide expertise, mentorship and manpower to support conservation breeding programs and related ex-situ research activities.

Within the natural range:

- Increase regional awareness and implement environmental education strategies in cooperation with local and international stakeholders.

- Develop regionally relevant husbandry guidelines for all focus species, and support their legal and scientifically managed breeding in-region.
- Build awareness and capacity for law enforcement within the region.
- Initiate, develop and support in-region conservation breeding centres where this is deemed necessary.
- Support research initiatives designed to improve the scientific basis of reintroduction programmes

The campaign will run from 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2019.

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Chair

Tomáš Ouhel (ZOO LIBEREC)

Campaign vice chair

Simon Bruslund (ZOO HEIDELBERG)

Passerine TAG chair/liaison

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Politics and strategy

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Taxonomy & IUCN red-listing

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Matyáš Adam (ZOO LIBEREC)

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Constanze Mager (BURGERS' ZOO)

Charlotte Smith (ZOO CHESTER)

Nikolina Rupic (ZOO HEIDELBERG)

Maike Franzen (ZOO HEIDELBERG)

Relevant species advice by TASA (Threatened Asia Songbird Alliance) working group under the EAZA Passeriformes Taxon Advisory Group and the current breeding program leaders.

HOW TO JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

If you represent an EAZA member institution, or another seriously interested facility, you can use the form on the campaign website to register your institution as an official campaign participant. Once you have registered, your pro-active participation, on behalf of your institution, is expected. All participants are provided with a password to access campaign materials via the campaign website.

Non-EAZA facilities that register will be verified with the campaign core group, and after acceptance will also be provided with a password to access the campaign materials.

Participating institutions are expected to, as a minimum, organise activities and/or display information panels that raise awareness of the campaign issues for your visitors. We hope all participants will pledge to raise at least €2,000 for the Silent Forest Conservation Campaign over the two years, but are of course challenged to pledge more if possible.

As usual with EAZA conservation campaigns, certificates will be awarded to institutions that reach particular fundraising goals. For the EAZA Silent Forest campaign, the following awards will be made:

2000 € – Bronze Award

3000 € – Silver Award

5000 € – Gold Award

10.000 € – Platinum Award

Current and ongoing commitments, as long as they are they are officially entered in the EAZA Conservation Database www.eazaconservation.org and earmarked Silent Forest (in the title or project information), will also be rewarded.

WHAT CAN YOU DO

As an EAZA member:

Raise awareness and knowledge in your institution.

For all visitors:

- **INFORMATION PANELS.** The EAZA campaign teams provide you with open source information panels, which you can deploy in your zoo. Use them as they are, or take them as a starting point to have a designer change the panels more in a way that fits your own zoo's house style.
- **KEEPER TALKS.** Think about integrating the campaign theme into one of the keepers' talks. Or why not starting up your own, special campaign keeper talk at an enclosure of threatened Asian birds... or of other animals threatened by pet trade? The section with information on the different bird species in this campaign, targets and projects will make it easier for you to work out a good storyline for the keepers' talk!
- **ACTIVITY DAYS.** Pick a weekend or just a day and set threatened Asian birds in the spotlight in your zoo. In most zoos, birds are underrepresented when it comes to special days or activities – grab the chance to get people interested in birds! We will provide you with ideas and resources. Recruit zoo-volunteers of all ages to be songbird advocates and to help you with campaign promotion marketing and education activities.

Schoolchildren:

- **POWERPOINT PRESENTATION.** Many zoos offer outreach education programs to local schools. Here is a link to a PowerPoint presentation, which you can use during a 45-minute session on Asian songbirds and their threats. Your zoo's education team is free to use it during outreach programs as they see fit; but you can also put it on your website as resource material for children looking for information for their presentations at school. Just don't forget to remove it from the website after the campaign is closed in 2019!
- **SONG ON SONGBIRDS.** Many elementary schools have nature themes and work on endangered species. Chester Zoo has written

a very catchy song on threatened Asian songbirds, www.youtube.com/watch?v=f__X_LN1uWw.

Season card holders, zoo club members:

- In a lot of zoos there are regular guided tours, children's tours or children's clubs for season card holders. Integrate the Asian songbird campaign in those activities! For the real zoo-fans it might even be a nice idea to participate in a tour looking back on all EAZA's nature conservation campaigns; who remembers what they were about, what has been achieved in conservation since then?
- **LECTURES.** Evening lectures attract faithful and eager-to-learn season card holders in many zoos. A lecture on the theme of the campaign might be a surprisingly interesting topic! Is no one in your zoo able to talk on Asian songbirds and the campaign's background for an hour or so? Check out the section on what the members of national zoo federations and individual zoos could do for each other!
- Or use Birdmike. This 'birdvoice pen' can recognize patterns on e.g. paper and give the correct bird's voice of over 270 European birds. You get software for free so that you can upload the songs of exotic birds as well! www.birdmike.co.uk. Sound fragments of the campaign species are provided here: www.silentforest.eu/about/flagship-species.

Public relations

- **SOCIAL MEDIA.** Whether you very actively engage in the Silent Forest campaign or not, it might be nice to share 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.
- The campaign team produced a **SHORT ANIMATED FILM** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qmwmvg7Q5hQ>) on the campaign issue, thanks to Zoo Liberec. Put the film on your website and/or share it on your social media.
- **PRESS.** Don't forget good old classic press releases. Whenever there is a suitable chance due to an animal species arriving, a bird hatching, or an activity taking place, please have your communication department include the EAZA campaign.

Scan QR code,
stay tuned and get
fresh information



- **CAMPAIGN INFOCARD.** Promote using InfoCard by placing the QR code with related information how to use it on your promotional print materials, Facebook and websites. It is very fast and easy-to-use digital solution helping to raise awareness about the Silent Forest campaign. All the people need is a smartphone. You can find more information on www.silentforest.eu.

- Bring the topic of the trade in endangered Asian species to wider attention by promoting the '**WILDLIFE WITNESS**' app. With this easy-to-use app, travellers can alert TRAFFIC by reporting the animals they see in Asian markets. The app combines engaging citizens in conservation, reporting wildlife crime and helping trafficked animals. You can download this app from www.wildlifewitness.net.

- **BIRD BREEDERS.** Try to get in touch with bird keepers or bird breeder clubs in your neighbourhood. These people are interested in birds and bird conservation far more than average; they might get involved in a useful way, or at least publish an article on campaign issues in their magazine.

- It is a great opportunity to develop relationship to your local BirdLife Partner organisation (find yours at: www.birdlife.org/worldwide/partnership/birdlife-partners) and highlight its activities to your visitors. The organisation will help you promote awareness on the Asian Songbird Crisis within your country and get people involved in citizen science activities for local songbirds as well.

Curators, Biologist or Zoological managers

- Review your institutional collection plan and see if you have more space for threatened Asian songbirds. 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 focusing on breeding with some of the (flagship) species.

- Make off-show aviary space available to keep more pairs and increase the chances of breeding success.

- Adopt the new or updated Best Practice Guidelines (as soon as

these are published) for all focus species under ex-situ management and support and promote in-situ projects or in-region breeding programs.

- Explain to visitors about ethical issues related to keeping tropical birds as pets, and promote keeping domesticated species instead.

Institutions not actually keeping Asian songbirds may still participate by using educational material. On the Silent Forest website you can download a range of new or updated resources during the campaign period which you are invited to use.

Every human being

Helping is easy. Here are a few tips.

- While you are on vacation in the Asian region, help detect illegal wildlife trade by using the smartphone app Wildlife Witness. This app allows tourists and locals 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 spread information about the crisis among other tourists and locals in your home area. Even wild bird populations in Europe are collapsing due to the trade in Asia (see the story of the Yellow-breasted Bunting on the campaign website). But not just for the trade in Asia, even in France and Mediterranean region songbirds such as Ortolan Buntings and Blackcaps are illegally captured and eaten. Support the campaign against bird killing (www.birdlife.org/campaign/stop-illegal-bird-killing).
- Record wild birds on vacation or at your home using birding smartphone apps, such as eBird by Cornell Lab (ebird.org). These apps provide an opportunity to share your bird data with researchers and other birders directly from the field, making your birding more valuable to conservation and helping you track your observations over time.
- Although Southeast Asian songbirds seem to be so far away and you don't travel much beyond your backyard, you can still help conserve local bird populations. Join the citizen science projects organised by birdwatching clubs and get involved in local bird surveys.

- Help us to collect binoculars! Give your old binoculars to the zoo or organize a binocular collection at school or at your company or club. The binoculars will be sent to the campaign office in Zoo Liberec twice a year (June and December) where they will be collected. In order to advertise “birding” we will provide your discarded (but still functional!) binoculars and inspire local people in Asia to develop empathy towards the environment and stimulate them to protect it. The binoculars will be distributed to eco-centers across Indonesia via the NGO Green-books.org, which helps to raise awareness about nature and sustainable practices in communities using children’s education and books as a starting point. Furthermore, well-guided birdwatching tours are in vogue and tourists pay for them, so this is a good opportunity for local guides to earn money. You will find more information on the resources page.

Bird-friendly garden

- It is quite simple to create a bird-friendly garden with just a little time and effort. Many songbirds that used to be commonly seen in European gardens are decreasing in numbers. By turning your garden into a small-scale, bird-friendly reserve, you can make a difference to local bird populations. It is a great chance to teach children to take care of the environment by involving them in planning and making your garden bird-friendly. For more information you can also visit previous EAZA campaign Let it Grow websites: www.letitgrow.eu.
- In winter, of course, you can install a bird-feeder, which is a great way to enjoy wildlife at its best. Prepare winter food for birds together with kids and you may sell it to gather money for the campaign. Before spring put up your own nest-box and help increase the breeding success of local birds.
- Prevent bird collisions by reducing the transparency and reflectivity of dangerous glass areas. See: www.abcbirds.org/program/glass-collisions or www.windowcollisions.info or www.wua-wien.at/images/stories/publikationen/wua-vogelanprall-muster.pdf.
- Keep your domestic cat indoors and encourage friends and family who keep cats to do the same.
- Engage with your local BirdLife partner organization in your area, join guided tours and learn about local threats and needs for songbirds.

CAMPAIGN PARTNERS

TRAFFIC www.traffic.org



TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, works to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature. TRAFFIC has an enviable reputation as a reliable and impartial organisation, a leader in the field with a unique role as a global specialist supporting efforts to identify and address conservation challenges involving trade in wild animals and plants around the world. TRAFFIC's global network is research-driven and action-oriented, committed to delivering innovative and practical conservation solutions based on the latest information.

TRAFFIC's Southeast Asia presence was established in 1992, with a regional headquarters in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. The modest but dedicated team works in a region that is considered one of the world's biggest centres of wildlife trade. This office has, over the years, called much-needed attention to the problem of wildlife trafficking and unsustainable use of wild plants and animals through its numerous initiatives and publications.



IUCN Asian Songbird Trade Specialist Group

The IUCN SSC Asian Songbird Trade Specialist Group is an international network of dedicated wildlife trade and songbird experts concerned with the illegal, as well as unsustainable, songbird trade. Songbird-keeping is a pastime that is firmly entrenched in local culture and tradition in many parts of Asia. The demand for songbirds is high, involving hundreds of species and millions of individual birds every year. Capture for the songbird trade is recognized to be the primary threat for many species in Asia, particularly in the Southeast Asian region. Through the development of a regional conservation strategy for Asian songbirds in trade, this group is committed to the overarching goal of songbird conservation by working together effectively to reduce the threat of the trade to, and to ensure the survival of, songbirds in Asia.



FLAGSHIP SPECIES

The following threatened Asian songbird species are campaign 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. An updated Bali Myna conservation strategy is being developed and recently an international advisory board that will assist in improving in-situ and ex-situ management programmes was established. Anti-poaching units at reintroduction sites are also required.

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. Trapping pressures for the songbird trade have led to its massive decline. Surveys have determined that the species survives on only a few last remaining islands where ongoing conservation efforts are needed to prevent its extinction. There is an urgent need to build up an ex-situ population and start a scientifically run conservation breeding program. There is still an ageing population of cage birds especially within parts of its original range.

Javan Green Magpie (*Cissa thalassina*)



This Javan endemic with special habitat requirements was recently recognized as a separate species from the commoner Bornean Green Magpie (*Cissa jefferyi*). It is therefore not currently protected under Indonesian law. 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. However, very small numbers

of birds continue to be found for sale in markets. Field surveys are required to ascertain the presence of any remnant wild populations and to facilitate their protection. Additional birds to supplement existing captive breeding programmes could be acquired through confiscated birds from trade if the species is given legal protected status.

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. Field surveys are required to ascertain the presence of wild populations. Legal protection of this species is urgently required in Indonesia. Existing captive breeding programmes require expansion. Its IUCN status has only recently been up-graded to Endangered.

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). Field surveys are needed in Malaysia, Kalimantan, Myanmar and Brunei to establish the status of wild populations. Due to high demand, continued monitoring of trade in this species is needed across its range, and as some are claimed to be of captive-bred origin it is necessary to determine the extent of commercial captive breeding across its range, and how this is being regulated. Improved protection is required through in-situ site protection and CITES. Captive breeding programmes should be initiated as the species continues to decline. Anecdotal evidence from breeders suggests that populations in Borneo may be distinct from those in the rest of its range and genetic studies are required to clarify this.

White-rumped Shama (*Kittacincla malabarica*)



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 (*C. m. stricklandii*, *C. m. barbouri*, *C. m. melanurus*, *C. m. hypolizus*, *C. m. opisthochrus*, *C. m. mirabilis*, *C. m. nigricauda*, *C. m. omissus*, *C. m. suavis*). Urgent field survey work is needed to establish the existing wild population status of these subspecies across Sumatra, Java and surrounding islands, accompanied by genetic studies building on existing work to include all Indonesian forms that are under immediate trapping pressure. The establishment of captive breeding programmes for some of these forms may be necessary, especially within Indonesia. Market surveys should also attempt to distinguish between the different forms. In this species anecdotal reports from breeders suggest that the rare subspecies are targeted and that they are purposely interbred to attain certain characteristics for songbird contests. Improved husbandry guidelines based on the EAZA zoo population may aid in establishing functioning breeding programs in the region.

You can find and download detailed factsheets about Asian threatened species on the resources page.





SILENT  FOREST

ASIAN SONGBIRD CRISIS

Many threats face the birds in Southeast Asia, most particularly habitat loss, which has been devastating across the region, but wildlife trade is widely recognised as another major conservation threat in the region. Indonesia especially is a global conservation priority in this regard, with the second highest number of threatened bird species in the world and the highest number in Asia. Many of these species are threatened by widespread illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade. Market traders openly sell illegally trapped and protected birds without being punished (Chng and Eaton 2016).

Keys to the trade are the social aspects of bird-keeping in Indonesia, particularly Java. Keeping birds has a very long tradition in Javanese culture where ownership of a pet bird is almost considered an obligation for a settled, adult Javanese man, and a house with a large collection of songbirds will be considered prestigious. Moreover, increasingly popular singing competitions have raised the demand for certain species, and individuals with the very best singing ability are highly valued. This huge business in Indonesia ranges from the village level to the district, region, city and national levels. The dynamics and socioeconomics of the trade are still poorly understood but it is known to be a massive industry (BirdLife International 2010). Some birds in the trade in Indonesia have a survival span of just few days. These are mainly colourful nectar- or insect-eaters which have been nick-named “cut-flower birds” by conservationists because they are something alive and beautiful from nature which you put in your house accepting that they will soon wither away. A shift in mentality is badly needed while respecting and taking advantage of the natural appreciation for birds that moves ordinary people to keep them in their houses.

Low public awareness is a major issue in the songbird crisis; others are deficits in legislation and law enforcement. Related to this are the many significant differences in conservation status between the IUCN Red List and the species given protection under Indonesian law. Some threatened songbirds species have yet to be incorporated into Indonesia law and clearly such species are exposed to greater risks. Recent developments in our knowledge of avian taxonomic

relationships have led to a number of species being treated as several species. This means that what were once considered to be subspecies without any specific legal status are in some cases now considered separate species which are subject to review by IUCN, CITES and local authorities. Some subspecies, which are quite distinct and may represent “conservation-worthy biological units”, have no protected status under law, which poses a special problem.

Songbird crisis summit

In September 2015, a group of concerned experts came together for the first Asian Songbird Trade Crisis Summit, held in Singapore, to begin the process of co-ordinating a response to the alarming numbers of songbirds trapped from the wild in Southeast Asia for domestic and international trade. This unprecedented meeting in the region led to the development of the much-needed Conservation Strategy for Southeast Asian Songbirds in Trade (see the document on the resources page).

In February 2017, the second Asian Songbird Trade Crisis Summit, organized by Wildlife Reserves Singapore and TRAFFIC, took place at Jurong Bird Park, Singapore. Approximately 60 experts came together to discuss this progress and to look ahead to the implementation of the strategy. Participants discussed a variety of future actions ranging from regulation of bird markets, motivating enforcement actions, breeding highly threatened species in captivity for eventual release in the wild, and the need for further research and monitoring of trade and wild populations. Opportunities to raise global awareness of this crisis through campaigns by zoos were also discussed at length (see TRAFFIC Bulletin 29(1):3-4).



Participants at the second South-east Asian Songbird Crisis Summit, Jurong Bird Park, Singapore (Febr. 2017).

Recommendations from the first Songbird Crisis Summit (Lee et al. 2016)

- Conduct research on wild populations, in order to determine distributions, population sizes and trends and hence understand better the status of taxa; and identify genetically distinct lineages deserving of protection as separate conservation units.
- Reduce the threat of illegal and unregulated trade through monitoring of markets and other trade hubs/forums, especially in key bird markets, and lobby for and support increased effective enforcement actions at national and international levels.
- Establish and expand, where necessary, ex-situ assurance breeding populations, and develop studbooks and health and husbandry protocols for each taxon identified as needing ex-situ management.
- Strengthen community outreach for a bottom-up approach involving participants in the trade, raise awareness of the issues and key conservation efforts ultimately to reduce demand for songbirds, through a strategic communications and behavioural change strategy.

This would enable a balance to be maintained between the cultural practice of bird-keeping in Indonesia and the conservation of threatened bird populations. Traders and bird-keeping hobbyists need to understand that compliance is in their best interests in the long term.

Ethical consideration:

Also in European zoos the time where zoos can just replace mortalities with new birds from the trade is over. It is now essential to focus and nourish our skillsets to become better in breeding songbirds in a sustainable fashion, to make sure we can maintain healthy populations in the long term, based on the birds currently available in captivity. So these populations can fulfil their educational/conservation role and could function as a healthy back-up population when required. Nowadays, once commonly kept species like the Hill Myna and White-rumped Shama are not doing terribly well in EAZA zoos and need more attention and dedicated focus to make their populations self-sustaining. Unless we take their husbandry needs more seriously we may lose these and other species in our zoos very soon.

EAZA zoos need to continue to ensure ethical acquisition of birds in accordance with the policies and procedures written in the Population Management Manual and EAZA Code of Ethics. Birds should only be accepted when there is certainty about the legality of their provenance. This campaign has the potential to go hand-in-hand with many of the goals set by the EU Action Plan on Wildlife Trafficking in 2016 (see resources), so we should use this opportunity provided by the campaign to actively follow up on this and as a community show that we can make a difference.

WHAT WE WANT TO DO

Our aim is to improve the situation of Asian songbirds in their natural habitat and to develop an increased knowledge and understanding of the threats to these birds and how zoos can contribute to their conservation. We will cooperate with campaign partner organisations on increasing pressure on government agencies in-region. We want to establish and support awareness campaigns in-region and promote birdwatching as an alternative pastime, for example by establishing used binocular collection points in zoos for shipment to local birdwatching initiatives in Southeast Asia. We also want to improve awareness within EAZA through the Passerine TAG, breeding programs and available EAZA media (newsletter, presentations at all conferences, magazines, websites). We aim to publish husbandry Best Practice Guidelines, establish functioning ex-situ safety populations of all key species, and motivate more than 150 EAZA institutions to continue keeping relevant taxa of songbirds after the campaign. Our goal is to gain a much clearer picture of the current status (taxonomic and conservation) of all the key and secondary species mentioned.

In order to be able to make a difference we need to apply just that skillset which is already available in EAZA member zoos, and we have the chance to make the world more aware of the conservation value of zoos in general. By celebrating 25 years of the Bali Myna EEP we can clearly demonstrate that it is possible to save a songbird species through a zoo-based conservation breeding program.

All funds raised will go to the pre-selected conservation projects and grant scheme.

CAMPAIGN PRE-SELECTED PROJECTS

The following projects have been pre-selected by the campaign core-group and endorsed by the TASA working group as priorities in the kind of work that will be supported by the Silent Forest

Campaign:

1. Prigen Conservation Breeding Ark: Songbird breeding facilities
2. Sumatran Songbird Sanctuary
3. Save Magiao: Nias Hill Myna Conservation Breeding Center
4. Treasure Island: Saving the hidden avian treasures
5. Searching for the birds: Field surveys to locate two of Javas rarest Songbirds
6. Bali Myna Fieldwork: Improving the introduction and monitoring methods

Prigen Conservation Breeding Ark: Songbird breeding facilities

Applicant:	KASI Foundation
Project coordinators:	John Sumampau, Stephan Bulk
Location:	East Java, Indonesia
Pledged amount:	€ 30.000
Flagship species:	Straw-headed bulbul



Over 60 experts participating in the first Songbird Crisis Summit held in Singapore in 2015 and the second one in 2017 identified the most endangered species in the Greater Sunda region and recommended to strengthen their captive breeding. KASI Foundation of Taman Safari Indonesia response with a program to start maintaining and breeding these endangered Indonesian songbirds.

The project goal is to support the Indonesia songbird population in the wild against extinction by ensuring their captive

breeding following husbandry guidelines, building awareness in local government and communities about the existing and growing threats and about the importance of conservation action, and by gaining support from other stakeholders to contribute to the conservation program.

Project objectives:

- Create a good standard aviary complex that will support the successful breeding program of the listed species of songbirds in healthy, genetically sound populations to ensure the release of captive-bred birds in their natural habitat.
- Establish husbandry guidelines in collaboration with government, associations and universities.
- Develop and maintain a captive population of songbirds with other parties concerning songbird species conservation to ensure viable songbird population in the wild against extinction.
- Collaborate with all related parties to develop public awareness programs in having a more effective, comprehensive, and significant conservation result.
- Fulfil the local demands for these threatened songbirds through captive populations and transfer some of the above-listed species of songbirds to other institutions and zoos involved and supporting this global program, technically as well as financially.

Link to website: www.silentforest.eu/projects/songbird-arch-of-southeast-asia/

Sumatran Songbird Sanctuary

Applicant:	Yayasan Ekosistem Lestari
Project coordinators:	Ian Singleton
Location:	North Sumatra, Indonesia
Pledged amount:	€ 70.000
Flagship species:	Sumatran laughingthrush



Recent efforts have been made to provide a safeguard against the extinction of some of the most threatened species through the establishment of ex-situ breeding populations. This project

seeks to establish such a programme in Sumatra, provisionally entitled the Sumatran Songbird Conservation Programme (SSCP). It will be entirely consistent with the policy and recommendations of the TASA, within EAZA, and the conservation strategy and recommendations of the first Asian Songbird Trade Crisis Summit held in Singapore in 2015 (Lee et al. 2016), namely “To establish well managed ex-situ populations on a global/international scope and develop rigorous reintroduction programmes whenever possible”.

The new facility will be located in North Sumatra Province. The site itself will be on land currently owned and being developed by Yayasan Ekosistem Lestari (YEL) and its Swiss-based partner, the PanEco Foundation, as the “Orangutan Haven”, a project of YEL and PanEco’s long-established Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme. This project will be greatly assisted by the bird department of the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust as part of a wider collaboration between the two organisations. Durrell staff will take a leading role providing technical assistance, advising on facility design and husbandry protocols and training both keeping staff and veterinary personnel. They will take a leading role in designing all facilities and husbandry protocols, and in training both keeping staff and veterinary personnel.

Project objectives:

- Establish a new facility consisting in the first instance of 24 carefully designed aviaries, and associated supporting infrastructure
- Develop and maintain a captive population of Sumatran Laughingthrush and Nias Hill Myna
- House and breed other Sumatran threatened species as recommended by TASA in the second instance
- Establish education programs to strengthen the engagement of local communities
- Collaborate with all related parties to establish research programs for local and international researchers
- Develop strategies for release and post-release monitoring and management

Link to website: www.silentforest.eu/projects/sumatran-songbird-conservation-programme/

Save Magiao: Nias Hill Myna Conservation Breeding Center

Applicant: **Nias Heritage Museum**
Project coordinators: **Nata'alui Duha, Simon Bruslund**
Location: **Nias Island, Indonesia**
Pledged amount: **€ 25.000**
Flagship species: **Nias Hill Myna**



Throughout the island of Nias, located off the west coast of Sumatra, there still are a considerable number of singly kept pet Hill Mynas to be found with private owners. However, the availability of further birds from the wild is dwindling due to the depletion of the populations on satellite islands. Therefore, it can be assumed that the remaining captive birds on Nias are ageing and that time is of the essence to establish an ex-situ breeding population. The Nias Heritage Museum runs the only publicly open animal collection on the island and is the only organisation to provide structured environmental education on the threatened plant and animal species of Nias. There is a strong interest in furthering this work in cooperation with the KASI Foundation, Heidelberg Zoo and the local, regional and national authorities.

Project objectives:

- Develop staff skills for the modern husbandry and management of wild animals and in particularly songbirds in cooperation with Taman Safari Indonesia (supported by Heidelberg Zoo)
- Develop spaces for holding and eventually breeding any Magiao (Nias Hill Mynas) which become available through cooperations, donations or confiscations, with holding and breeding aviaries in a safe conservation breeding centre
- Start a campaign promoting the Magiao as the symbol of Nias and encourage holders and owners to stop any poaching and trafficking activities that harm this species and to place valuable birds in the care of the project
- Finalise a legal framework MOU with relevant authorities and all partner organisations
- Establish the daily care and security of the breeding centre,

involving management protocols and practices in cooperation with the KASI Foundation and Heidelberg Zoo

- Survey for suitable release sites and lobby for field management to re-establish a wild population of Nias Hill Mynas
- Develop strategies for release and post-release monitoring and management
- Provide/support the socialisation and environmental education of stakeholders and communities
- Involve the Nias Bird Club and the songbird competition communities
- Evaluate the project periodically and investigate its potential expansion to cover other threatened species such as Nias Black-tailed Shama and Straw-headed Bulbul

Link to website: www.silentforest.eu/projects/magiaio-nature-heritage-conservation-breeding-centre/

Treasure Island: Saving the hidden avian treasures

Applicant:	Ecosystem Impact
Project coordinators:	Luke Swainson
Location:	Island off west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia
Pledged amount:	€ 35.000
Flagship species:	White-rumped shama and Nias Hill Myna



The Treasure island is an uninhabited island with large primary forest and extremely difficult access that makes it one of the last remaining bird paradise in Indonesia. It is haven for many birds targeted for illegal trade such as White-rumped shama which is the most traded species for songbird singing competitions. The Island is also home for the last remaining population of Critically Endangered Nias Hill Myna and its survival depends on island sufficient protection. The real name and exact location of the Treasure Island will not be disclosed for security reasons.

A local conservation NGO is the primary organisation focused on the island's protection, and has a legal permit from the relevant

government authority (BKSDA) to manage conservation efforts in the area. In cooperation with other NGOs (Ecosystem Impact & Lestari), this island has been identified as one of the last strongholds for the Nias Hill Myna, and the protection of the bird and its habitat there is a firm project commitment.

So far, songbird protection on the island is carried out by rangers as sideline while they are monitoring sea-turtle nest-sites. The funds will ensure the strengthening of monitoring and protection of threatened birds alongside the existing sea-turtle protection project.

The outcomes of this project are to protect the White-rumped shama, Nias Hill Myna and all other species on the island from poachers and developers. This will be done through following objectives:

Project objectives:

- Increase the rangers' presence on the island and add regular coastal and terrestrial patrolling
- Adapt new strategies to concentrate more on bird poaching whilst still improving the protection of the sea-turtles. This initiative will directly benefit songbird population on the island and will have flow-on benefits for every species in residence.
- Monitor the White-rumped shama and Nias Hill Myna populations to assess species abundance, diversity and changes over time. Binoculars, camera traps, GPS & a satellite phone are required to ensure safety and accurate monitoring.
- Influence community opinions on bird poaching by ensuring their active engagement in the ranger team and education programs.
- Generate direct economic benefits through ecotourism and volunteering.
- Continue in policy and advocacy work at all levels of government to ensure that the island's protection status is strengthened.

Link to website: www.silentforest.eu/projects/treasure-island/

Searching for the birds: Field surveys to locate two of Javas rarest Songbirds



Applicant: **Manchester Metropolitan University and BirdLife International**
Project coordinators: **Stuart Marsden, Nigel Collar**
Location: **West Java, Indonesia**
Pledged amount: **€ 36.000**
Flagship species: **Javan Green Magpie**

The overexploitation of songbirds for the pet trade and singing competitions in Indonesia has involved the near-disappearance of two bird species endemic to Java's montane forests, the Javan Green Magpie and Rufous-fronted Laughingthrush both of which are (a) classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List and (b) subject to intensive but small-scale captive-breeding programmes (led by EAZA's Threatened Asian Songbird Alliance) to ensure that, if the species become extinct in the wild, populations are still available for reintroduction. The magpie has been recorded from a total of nine disjunct montane forest areas, while the laughingthrush has been recorded from the same nine forests but also three others. Many of these forests have not been surveyed in the past half-century, although recent analysis of satellite images at Manchester Metropolitan University shows that all still exist (in varying degrees of condition). However, further analysis also shows that another eight forests (i.e. 20 in total) exist and require investigation. Such investigation is necessary for several reasons: first, it is vital to discover whether (and in what numbers) the two species survive in any of the forests, and second, if the species are gone, we need to determine how suitable the forests are for reintroduction purposes. Moreover, there are many other threatened species in West Java's forests, including three primates, which also require urgent assessment and can be targeted during the survey work.

Project objectives:

- Undertake a systematic biological survey of the two most extensive forests (Gunung Halimun and Gunung Patuha) for all their

threatened wildlife and all endemic bird species and their habitat preferences, using line transects and automatic acoustic recording technology

- Record key environmental parameters (area of different habitats, extent of primary forest, trapping and other anthropogenic pressures) to establish a modern baseline concerning forest condition and provide an index of their conservation value and potential
- Work with Indonesian partners – the BirdLife Affiliate (Burung Indonesia), government authorities and local communities – to determine the official protection status of the forests, the management regimes, and local attitudes to the forests and their wildlife
- Provide strong evidence-based recommendations for improved management (and conservation status) of both forests, especially around strongholds for key traded songbirds, or potential reintroduction sites.

Link to website: www.silentforest.eu/projects/hunting-out-the-birds-intensive-surveys-of-heavily-traded-songbirds-in-two-of-west-javas-most-significant-forests/

Bali Myna Fieldwork: Improving the introduction and monitoring methods

Applicant:	Manchester Metropolitan University and BirdLife International
Project coordinators:	Stuart Marsden, Nigel Collar
Location:	Bali, Indonesia
Pledged amount:	€ 44.000
Flagship species:	Bali Myna



The Bali Myna is a Critically Endangered Asian (specifically Indonesian) songbird and one of the most iconic bird species on the planet. It owes this twin status to its extraordinary beauty, being snow-white in plumage with black primaries and tail-tips, plus a yellow-tipped bill, blue eye-ring and flowing crest. However, it is also regarded with astonishment by biologists because it possesses great evolutionary distinctiveness (the sole member of

the genus *Leucopsar*) and yet is confined to an island (Bali) which is biogeographically so closely linked to Java that no other bird species—and certainly no genus—is endemic to Bali alone.

Trapping for the domestic and international cage-bird trade has played a major and probably principal part in the decline of the Bali Myna to virtual extinction in the wild. While the captive population steadily built up over the past five decades, the single population in the wild inexorably fell until, in around 2006, it may briefly have disappeared altogether. In its native range the species now survives, only as a result of annual supplementations of captive-bred birds, in tiny numbers in Bali Barat National Park (BBNP), north-west Bali, Indonesia. Birds released on Nusa Penida, south-east of Bali (not known to be part of the original range) are conflictingly reported to have disappeared or proliferated, but the most recent evidence suggests that a population at least survives there. In addition to this, a number of private initiatives have sprung up around Bali with the aim of establishing local populations of free-flying birds released from captivity, including the Begawan Foundation, Sibang, southern Bali, and the Menjangan Monsoon Resort, bordering Bali Barat National Park.

This three-year project will support the Indonesian authorities in establishing significant free-flying, safe and sustainable populations of Bali Myna in Bali Barat National Park (BBNP) and other sites. Project activities are diverse and our plan flexible, but a constant is that all activities will be undertaken as knowledge partnerships between relevant authorities within Indonesia and the Bali Myna International Advisory Board (IAB). It includes a major radio-tracking project to monitor post-release birds, and a variety of conservation-relevant studies by an existing PhD student and Indonesian students.

Project objectives:

- Devise robust pre-release, release, and post-release protocols with input and agreement from multiple stakeholders
- Introduce a robust system of monitoring and studying released Bali Mynas in BBNP using standard radio-telemetry tracking to determine the key ecological needs of the species
- Support Indonesian students/ecologists to conduct studies of Bali Myna

Link to website: www.silentforest.eu/projects/evaluating-methods-sites-and-needs-for-the-successful-reintroduction-of-the-bali-myna/

FUNDRAISING

The EAZA Silent Forest Conservation Campaign in cooperation with its partners aims to raise funds to support conservation projects in the region. Our target is to raise at least €400,000. The first raised amount of €240,000 will be divided among six priority projects, which have already been pre-selected to receive funding (see Pre-selected projects chapter). You as members will have an opportunity to choose the project, which you want to support and thanks to the progress bars placed on the Silent Forest websites you will be able to track how much has already been raised for a particular project. After achieving this goal all funding will go into a general grant scheme. In the second half of the campaign, an open call to submit applications for grants from the scheme will be announced.

We believe that this target is achievable if zoos, other organisations and individuals pledge to raise funds. Let's make every effort to have a great campaign and to help reverse the Asian Songbird Crisis!

Account name: European Association of Zoos and Aquaria
Bank: ABN AMRO Bank, Amsterdam, Netherlands
IBAN: NL83 ABNA 0806 6044 09
BIC/SWIFT: ABNA NL2A
Address EAZA: EAZA Executive Office
c/o Amsterdam Zoo
PO Box 20164
1000 HD Amsterdam
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Referring to Silent Forest.

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CAMPAIGN LOGO

The campaign logo was designed by Michael Peterson, graphic designer working for Copenhagen zoo. All campaign participants are encouraged to use the logo on any materials produced for the campaign. You can download the high resolution campaign logo on the resources page of Silent Forest websites.



CAMPAIGN MATERIALS/ RESOURCES

On the Silent Forest website you can access and download a range of resources including the campaign's logo, leaflets and information panels. You are invited to use these resources to inform and engage your visitors. Feel free to use other resources available on the website – use them as they are or translate them, or take them as a starting point to modify them in a way that fits your own zoo's house style.

You can access the resources on the Silent Forest Campaign website here: <http://www.silentforest.eu/resources>

INFO PANELS

Lucia Schröder (Cologne Zoo) and her colleagues made artwork that can be used to create large-scale information panels to be displayed in participating zoos. The artwork is provided in print-ready PDFs and in open files, including all fonts and images, so that the language of the text can be changed and other adjustments made as required.

If any help is needed, you may write to Lucia Schröder: schroeder@koelnerzoo.de or Mirko Marseille: mirko.marseille@eaza.net.





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