

# Species Fact Sheet

## Orange headed thrush

(*Geokichla citrina*)







Species Name (synonyms):	Orange Ground-thrush, White-throated Thrush, Zoothera citrina		
French:	German:	Spanish:	in-region if known
Grive à tête orange	Damadrossel	Zorzal citrino	Indonesian: Anis Merah Vietnamese: Chim Hoét vàng Thai: nók doen-doj hũa-sĩi-sôm
Subspecies:	<p>11 subspecies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>G. c. citrina</i></li> <li>- <i>G. c. cyanota</i></li> <li>- <i>G. c. gibonshilli</i></li> <li>- <i>G. c. innotata</i></li> <li>- <i>G. c. melli</i></li> <li>- <i>G. c. courtoisi</i></li> <li>- <i>G. c. aurimacula</i></li> <li>- <i>G. c. adamanensis</i></li> <li>- <i>G. c. albogularis</i></li> <li>- <i>G. c. aurata</i></li> <li>- <i>G. c. rubecula</i></li> </ul> <p>Nominate sub-species <i>G. c. citrina</i> and <i>G. c. melli</i> are the only sub-species that have been commonly held in EAZA populations. <i>G. c. rubecula</i> (Javanese) sub-species is at risk due to harvesting for the songbird trade</p>		



Short description/behaviour:	<p>Sub-species appearance can vary greatly, particularly around the face. Males have a slate grey mantle, back and wings. The female is similar, but has a dull green/brown mantle, back and wings (see photo of male and female <i>G. c. melli</i>).</p> <p><i>G. c. citrina</i> lacks any eye stripes while both male and female <i>G. c. melli</i> have two dark eye stripes over a slightly buff-coloured face.</p> <p><i>G. c. cyanota</i> have white faces and dark eye stripes.</p> <p><i>G. c. rubecula</i> does not appear to have much distinguishable sexual-dimorphism, with both males and females displaying the grey colouration.</p> <p>Birds can be found on the undergrowth on the forest floor, sifting through leaf litter looking for insects, worms and other invertebrates or probing for grubs. They are sometimes found higher in trees feeding on fruits.</p>	
Size/Weight:	Smaller than a song thrush. 47 to 67 grams	
Age:	Average life expectancy 8 years. Sexual maturity at 9 months.	
Distribution:	<p><b><i>G. c. citrina</i></b> - N E India, E Himalayas, W and N Myanmar. Non-breeding in Sri Lanka and S India</p> <p><b><i>G.c. melli</i></b> – Partially migratory. Breeds in S.China and often winters in Hong Kong</p> <p><b><i>G. c. rubecula</i></b> – Non-migratory and endemic to Java and Bali</p>	
Link to HBW entry:	<a href="#">Orange-headed Thrush - Geokichla citrina - Birds of the World</a>	
Habitat preference:	Tropical or sub-tropical lowland forest, often near an inland, moving body of water. They prefer damp shady areas and forest understorey.	

Diet:	Insects, termites, grubs, slugs, fruit, and seeds.	
Natural enemies:	Humans - captured for use in the songbird trade and locally trapped for food. Predation from cats and snakes.	
IUCN Status:	Least Concerned (June 2019) - whilst the population is in decline, the large range and relatively large population prevents this species reaching the threshold of Vulnerable. <a href="#">Geokichla citrina (Orange-headed Thrush) (iucnredlist.org)</a> <a href="#">Orange-headed Thrush (Geokichla citrina) - BirdLife species factsheet</a>	
Conservation concerns:	Trapping for cage birds, particularly in the <i>G. c. rubecula</i> population. The situation in Bali is particularly complex, as habitats are managed to benefit the species and then chicks are harvested from wild nests and sold into the trade. Kristianto and Jepson (2011) found 116,000 chicks were harvested from wild nests in one season. More work is needed to understand the impact this trade is having.	
Links to in-situ projects:	Prigen Conservation Breeding Ark - <a href="#">Songbird (prigenark.com)</a> : This in-region breeding centre is carrying out great work with the threatened <i>G. c. rubecula</i> sub-species, successfully breeding the species and gaining a better understanding of the different behaviours they exhibit.	
Conservation recommendation for EEP:	Maintain a sustainable ex-situ population in captivity and gain a good understanding of which sub-species are housed. Separate the population in to correct sub-species where possible. Develop links with in-region facilities and assess the potential to establish an EAZA population of threatened <i>G. c. rubecula</i> . Consider a Head Start program in declining areas.	
IUCN Status History:	Continually Least Concern (LC), population declining.	
Population purpose/status:	This species is a model of understory life. The population helps show plight of songbirds in Asia and the complexity of the threats they face.	
Total individuals:	Total institutions:	Current trend:
13.11	11	Interest waning

EAZA population target:	Encourage institutions to enter correct sub species on ZIMS and increase numbers and holders.	
Target pop. Size (A):	Institutional needs (B):	Genetic targets:
150 of one sub-species	200 including private holders	
Availability for zoos:	Currently low. The species has historically bred well in captivity, however numbers in EAZA are still decreasing whilst new pairs are established.	
Key husbandry issues:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide lots of choice of nesting material.</li> <li>• If pairs are kept in small aviaries, it may be necessary to pull chicks just before fledgling and rear by hand, if there are signs of aggression from adults. Even in larger spaces, males can start to show aggression toward fledglings, so this should be monitored closely, and the young birds removed if necessary.</li> <li>• Aggression between males and females is not uncommon. More space is ideal, but plentiful cover can help reduce incidents.</li> <li>• Plenty of live food is required in the breeding season. Earthworms are relished by pairs with chicks and are considered essential for rearing birds.</li> <li>• Metabolic bone disease has been an issue with fledglings, particularly when housed indoors in tropical houses. In this instance, birds should have access to UV light for basking.</li> </ul>	
Exhibit (compatibility):	Compatible in a mixed exhibit. Species can be kept as a pair in an aviary or can live in groups in a large aviaries or tropical house.	
Reproduction:	<p><b>Nesting:</b> May into August. Nests are often self-built in the forks of trees, birds may also build in open topped low sided containers such as wicker baskets, usually at a minimum height of 1.5m</p> <p><b>Material:</b> Leaves, small sticks, moss and dry grass. The species can be fussy, so provide lots of fresh material and numerous options.</p> <p><b>Clutches:</b> 4 eggs to each clutch and they can lay up to 3 clutches a</p> <p><b>Incubation:</b> 14 days</p>	 <p><i>G. c. melli</i></p>

	<p><b>Fledging:</b> 12 days</p> <p><b>Hand rearing:</b> Usually not required, with not much information recorded on hand rearing methods. However, the species has been noted to be easy to hand rear from 6 days and birds do not appear to imprint.</p>	 <p><i>G. c. melli</i> - WPT S. Gray</p>	 <p><i>G. c. rubecula</i> - Prigen</p>
Training:	Currently unknown		
EAZA ex-situ actions needed:	Monitor currently housed sub species. Build the EAZA population to sustainable numbers and increase knowledge and experience of managing this species. Create Best Practice Guidelines to facilitate this.		
Education potential:	<p>This species is a flagship species for the Silent Forest campaign; therefore, they are vital to help educate about the songbird trade in Asia. This EEP allows us to share relevant research into the species and the songbird trade in Asia.</p> <p>The programme highlights how to maintain a sustainable population in captivity, why it is important to maintain populations that are at risk in the wild and why sub-species should be monitored individually. This species provides a good example of subspecies variation and sexual dimorphism in birds. They are also a useful tool to help educate about habitats and understory life.</p>		
Singing skills (1-5):	<p><a href="http://www.xeno-canto.org/explore?query=Geokichla+citrina">http://www.xeno-canto.org/explore?query=Geokichla+citrina</a></p> <p>Very good singer, very loud call which is particularly immersive when in a tropical house setting. 3.5 out of 5</p>		
Evolutionary uniqueness:	<p>Species recently moved from genus <i>Zoothera</i> (a name of Greek origin, meaning ‘animal hunter’) to <i>Geokichla</i> (meaning ‘ground thrush’), where they sit with 20 other species of ground thrushes. Some populations are migratory, others are sedentary and endemic. The taxonomy of <i>Geokichla</i> species is still debated and worth monitoring.</p>		
Recreation and exhibit value:	<p>This species is a great show species, particularly within tropical houses.</p> <p>It is confident and often very visible, even within well planted understory habitats. Naturally, its loud and distinctive call adds atmosphere and interest.</p> <p>It responds well to invertebrate feeds which can facilitate fantastic educational or visitor engagement opportunities. This makes the species a good ambassador to highlight the Asian songbird crisis.</p>		
Research potential:	Primarily to continue to monitor the ex-situ population, and to keep updated on the status of the in-situ population. There is also potential in for ex-situ research into nutrition, behaviour and UV light use.		
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Important references:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birds of the World: Collar, N and E. de Juana (2020). Orange headed thrush (<i>Geokichla citrina</i>), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (J. del Hoyo, A. Elliot, J. Sargatal, D. A. Christie and E. de Juana, Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY.</li> <li>• BirdLife International. 2019. <i>Geokichla citrina</i>. <i>The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2019</i>: e.T22708375A152676506. <a href="https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2019-3.RLTS.T22708375A152676506.en">https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2019-3.RLTS.T22708375A152676506.en</a>.</li> <li>• BirdLife International (2021) Species factsheet: <i>Geokichla citrina</i>. Downloaded from <a href="http://www.birdlife.org">http://www.birdlife.org</a></li> <li>• Kristianto, I., &amp; Jepson, P. (2011). Harvesting orange-headed thrush <i>Zoothera citrina</i> chicks in Bali, Indonesia: Magnitude, practices and sustainability. <i>Oryx</i>, 45(4), 492-499. doi:10.1017/S0030605310001481</li> </ul>		