

# THE ASIAN SONGBIRD TRADE CRISIS

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# GEOGRAPHY

## SOUTHEAST ASIA



Asia is home to ~3,800 songbird species, of which ~1,500 are found in Southeast Asia – a region of high levels of biodiversity and endemism

Southeast Asia – source, consumer and entrepot – increasingly high levels of demand and volume, involving 100s of species and 100,000s of individuals

The illegal and unsustainable capture for the songbird trade is recognised to be one of, if not, the largest threats to many Asian species

Songbird population decline is further threatened and exacerbated by habitat loss and degradation – leading to silent forests and loss of ecosystem services



# SPECIES OVERVIEW

Approximately half of bird seizures in SEA  
>1000 songbird seizures

~80% of confiscated birds in SEA  
>500,000 seized songbird

Demand –  
Beyond Asia’s  
shores

USA, Europe

Top confiscated passeriformes species across Southeast Asia  
Number of birds of taxa >3999 | 2014-2023 | source: TRAFFIC

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cisticolidae	Cisticolidae					6.0K					
	Orthotomus					4.2K					
	Orthotomus ruficeps										
	Prinia					5.6K	8.9K				
	Prinia familiaris						2.3K				
Muscicapidae	Copsychus malabaricus		2.3K	3.2K	2.5K		2.6K				
	Copsychus saularis			1.4K	7.2K		2.7K				
Zosteropidae	Zosteropidae					6.2K	2.1K				
	Zosterops					4.7K	4.6K				
	Zosterops japonicus										
Sturnidae	Acridotheres javanicus					3.6K	2.5K				
	Gracula religiosa										
Pycnonotidae	Pycnonotus goiavier					4.3K	2.0K				
	Pycnonotus jocosus										
	Pycnonotus plumosus					3.0K					
Nectariniidae	Leptocoma brasiliana						1.9K				
	Nectariniidae					4.3K	5.9K	5.2K	3.3K	1.0K	19.8K
Paridae	Parus cinereus					6.8K	2.6K	10.0K			2K
Chloropseidae	Chloropsis sonnerati		2.0K			3.5K		2.7K			3K
Estrildidae	Lonchura oryzivora							1.6K			3K
	Taeniopygia guttata										4K
Alaudidae	Mirafra javanica										6K
Laniidae	Lanius schach										9K
Ploceidae	Ploceus manyar					1.6K	2.0K	1.3K			6K
Platylophidae	Platylophus galericulatus					3.0K					4K
Dicruridae	Dicrurus					3.0K					6K
Turdidae	Geokichla interpres										4K
Oriolidae	Oriolus chinensis									1.2K	0K





# HISTORY AND DRIVERS





# TRADE DYNAMICS



- Very variable – living animals and non-living parts and derivatives (opportunistic & targeted)
- Legal and illegal trade exists – domestic and international
- Species protection varies, enforcement and penalties/regulations can be improved
- Corruption and misinformation exist
- Poor welfare coupled with high mortality and disease transmission
- Trends in birds/prices and shifts from physical to online space (increasingly organised)
- Lucrative – low risk/high profit



# OTHER IMPACTS

Introduction of non-native songbird species (and disease)

Captive colour preferences and hybridisation:

- Wild (Chinese and Taiwan hwamei)
- Under human care (white-rumped shamas)



Ting-Wei Hung



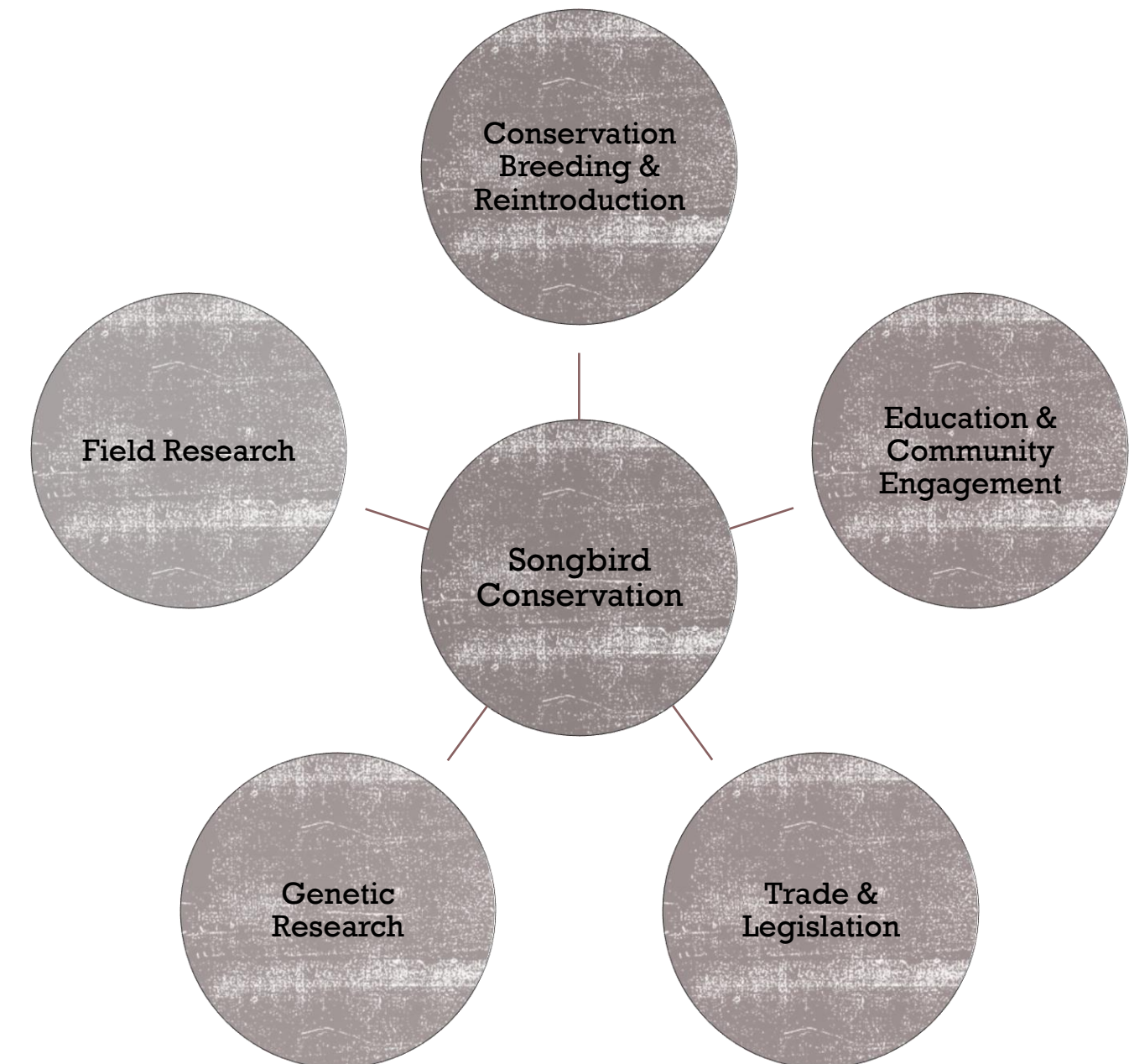
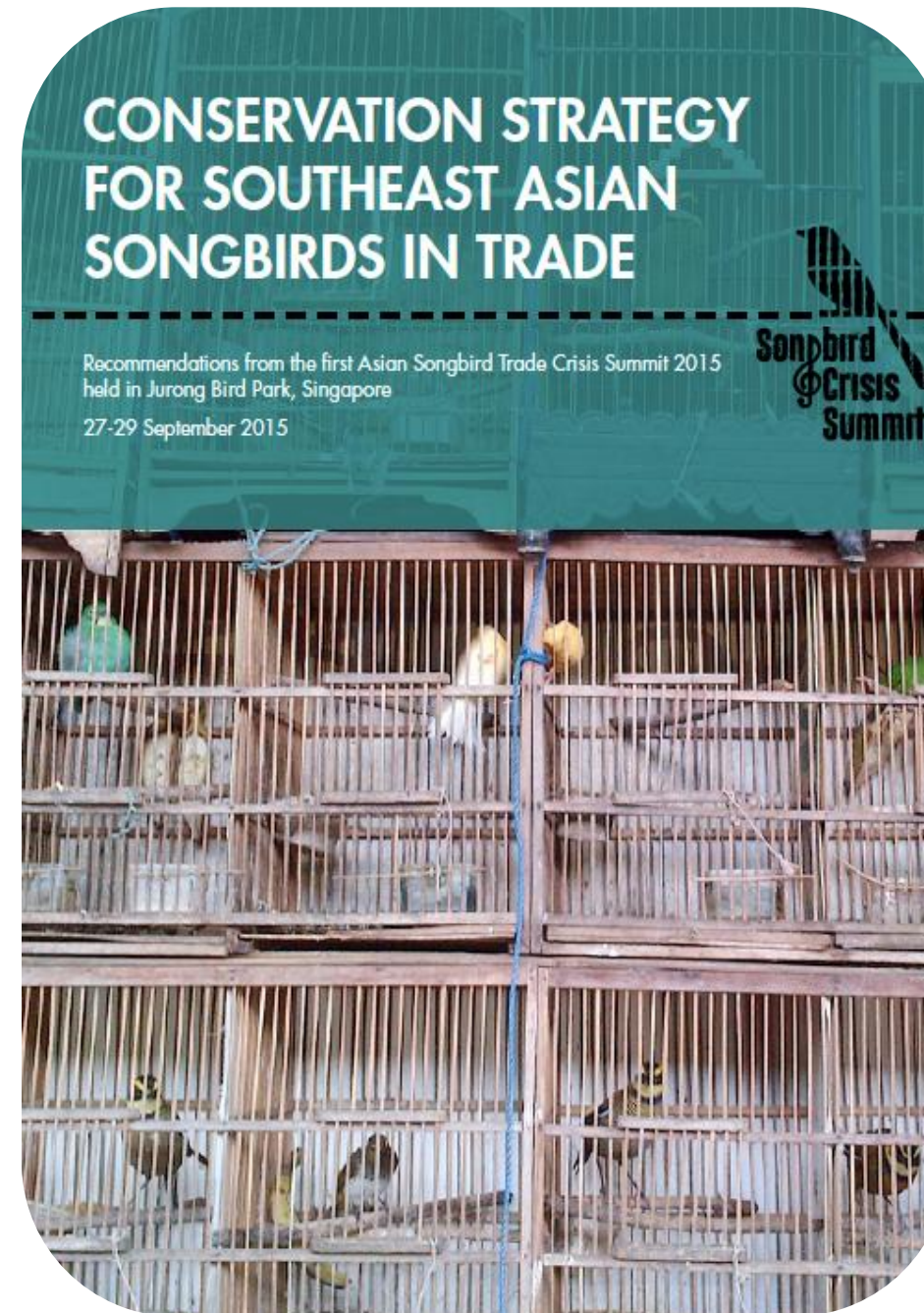
Sam Zhang



# CONSERVATION

2016 - **Development of a regional strategy** for the conservation of songbirds listing key actions that need to be undertaken, and a list of priority species for conservation

2017 – **establishment of the IUCN SSC Asian Songbird Trade Specialist Group (ASTSG)**, tasked with implementing the strategy and guiding conservation efforts



# CONSERVATION

## Tier 1 - Urgently impacted by trade; high conservation priority

## Tier 2 - Threatened by trade

Tier 1 - Urgently impacted by trade; high conservation priority			Tier 2 - Threatened by trade		
COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	EXPLANATION & RELEVANT REFERENCES	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	EXPLANATION & RELEVANT REFERENCES

1	Black-winged Myna		1	Grey-cheeked Bulbul	<i>Alouatta palliata</i> Faces continued threat from trade
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2	Grey-rumped Kingfisher				Restricted and locally international,
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3	Grey-rumped Kingfisher				
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4	Brown-rumped Kingfisher				
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5	Javan Kingfisher				
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6	Sumatran Kingfisher				Black birds) and on with secure and so
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7	Greater Kingfisher				
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8	Blue-rumped Kingfisher				aller, white less prized by contribute to
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9	Javan Kingfisher				
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10	Marbled Kingfisher				ult to spot in the substitute
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					on declines at multiple known
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					aces, emerging trade demand including internationally.
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					<a href="#">IUCN Red List</a> , <a href="#">BirdLife Datazone</a>
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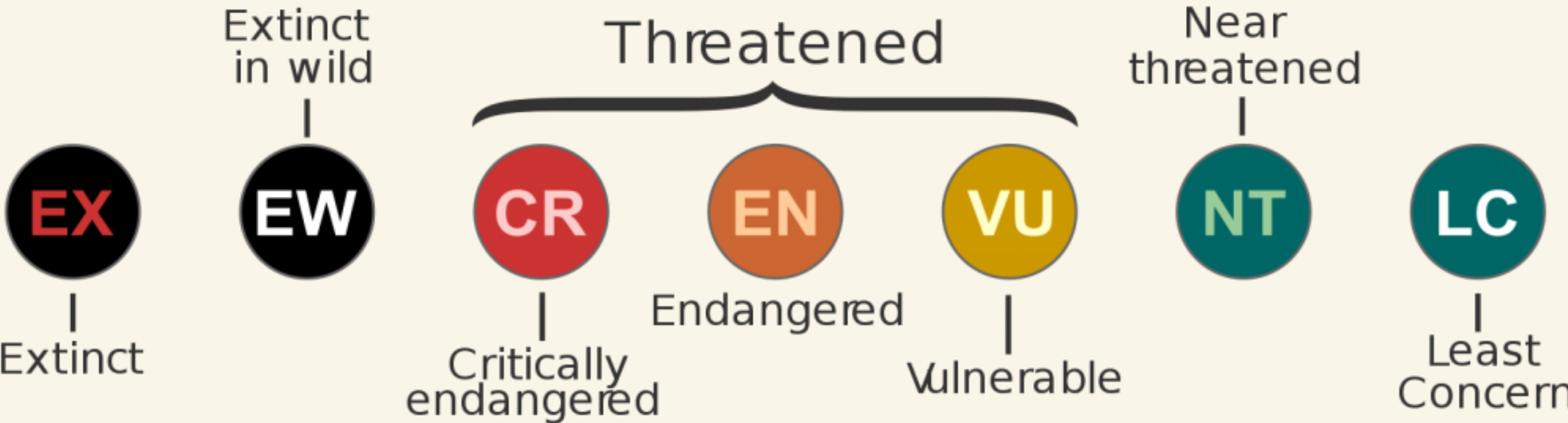
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9 Chestnut-capped Thrush

*Geokichla interpres*

Faces continued threat from trade

[IUCN Red List](#), [BirdLife Datazone](#)



# SOLUTIONS UNDERWAY

## Conservation breeding of highly threatened endemic taxa



Highly threatened  
endemics songbird  
conservation breeding.



Community ranger, anti-  
poaching, data collection  
and monitoring.



local coffee product and avitourism  
Environmental education  
and community  
engagement.



Reintroduction and in-  
situ conservation data  
collection.



# THANK YOU

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