

Introduction – Silent Forest & EAZA Conservation Campaign 2017-2019¹



TRAFFIC
the wildlife trade monitoring network



**SILENT
FOREST**

**ASIAN
SONGBIRD
CRISIS**



European songbird trade - history

- **Long history** of bird-keeping
- Finch trade
 - o Canary x Red Siskin hybridization since early 20th century²
 - o Goldfinches (painting from **1654** (Fabritius))
- FEDIAF (2025) >48 million birds kept in EU³
- **Historically, EU main global importer of birds.**
 - o Data biased towards CITES listed species.
 - o Songbirds rarely available at species level in TRACES database³
- Post EU Wild Bird Import Ban 2005: a **shift towards a transit and export region** with lower diversity
- **Highest diversity of songbird** species for any region kept and traded⁵



370 years later

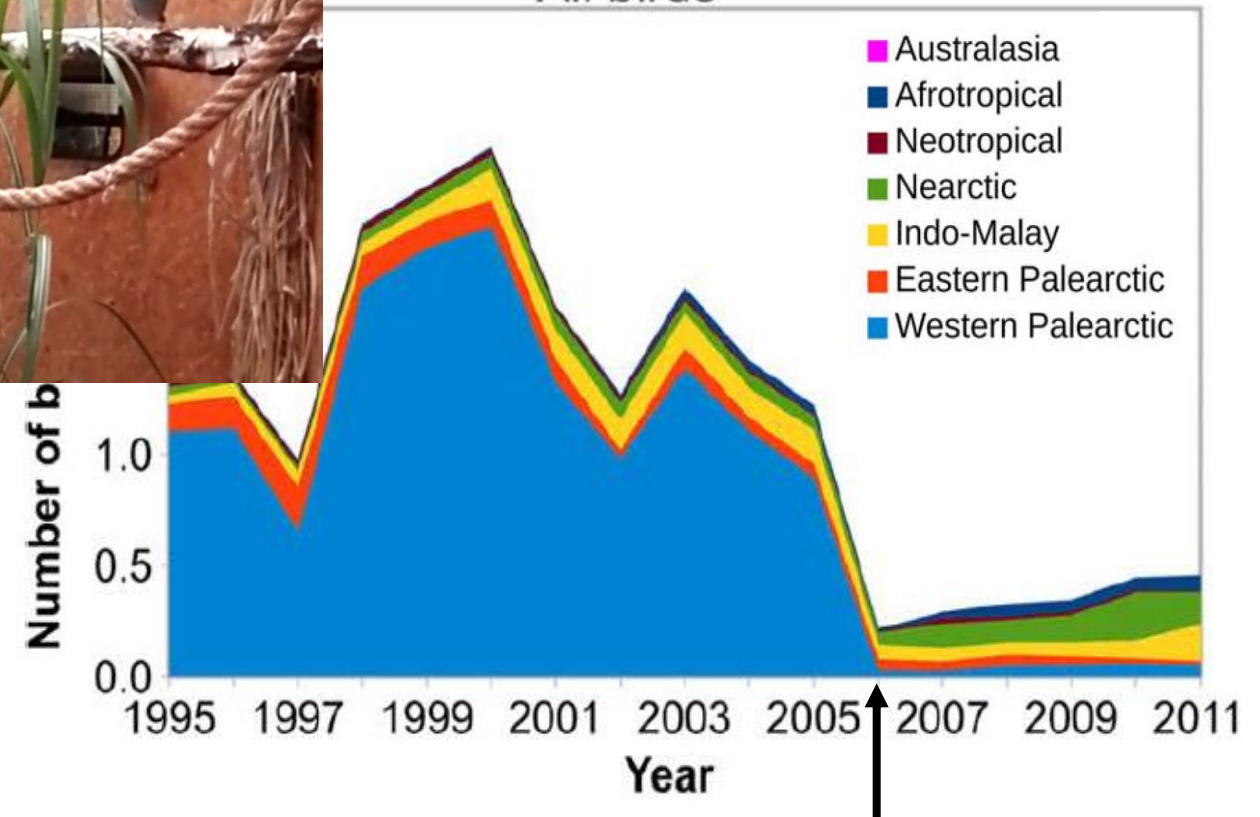


European songbird trade - legislation

- **EU Bird Directive**
 - o Council Directive 79/409/EEC (Directive 2009/147/EC)
- **EU Wildlife Trade Regulations**
 - o Council Regulation (EC) No. 338/97
 - o Commission Regulation (EC) No. 865/2006
- **EU Wild Bird Import Ban**
 - o Commission Decision 2005/759/EC
 - o Commission Decision 2007/25/EC
 - Avian influenza
 - Ban on all commercial imports of wild birds
 - Global bird trade declines (?)
- Delisting of 114 songbirds from Appendix III by Ghana in 2007⁶



All birds



Reino et al. 2017

2006 EU import ban +
global HPAI concerns

European songbird trade – legal and illegal trade

- **Monitor Songbird Lab**, collaborative research effort
- Songbirds are brought into the Europe from:
 - o The Americas (including North America & *Sporophila* spp.)
 - o Asia
 - o Africa
 - o **Species diversity since 2006 exceeds 1000 species**
- Legal and illegal (imports into EU primarily illegal in terms of volume of wild songbirds)
- Illegal
 - o Nationally protected spp. traded freely within the EU (non-CITES)
 - Laughingthrushes (Indonesia, Vietnam)
 - o Smuggling of CITES and non-CITES species in contravention of EU Wild Bird Import Ban, CITES
 - Slovakia
 - Morocco
 - Ghana delisting



Ref.: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 20

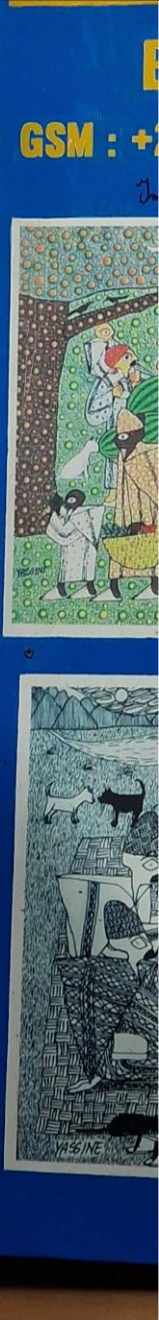
- **Seizure details**
 - Initiated June 2024 – ongoing investigation
 - Hundred of birds (more than half songbirds) in transit to other EU countries and UK
 - CITES and non-CITES specie (300+ CITES listed specimens valued of at least 300.000 Euro)
 - More than a thousand birds confiscated, several hundred found dead
 - Severe hygiene and welfare issues on site
- This case confirmed the Monitor Songbird Lab predicted trade route (Eastern land route into EU via Turkey, Syria, Ukraine and Balkan: Primarily species from Asia (Vietnam, Myanmar, Indonesia), South America (Guianan shield) as well as West Africa (Guinea, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria) were detected.



Morocco – Goldfinches and more



الوكالة الوطنية للمياه والغابات
+٠٥١٥٠٦٦ +٠٥٤٥٠١ | ١١٤٤٠١ ٨٦٥٨٤٤
AGENCE NATIONALE DES EAUX ET FORETS



Species deleted from Appendix III by Ghana in 2007

Deletion of 114 bird species by Ghana in 2007

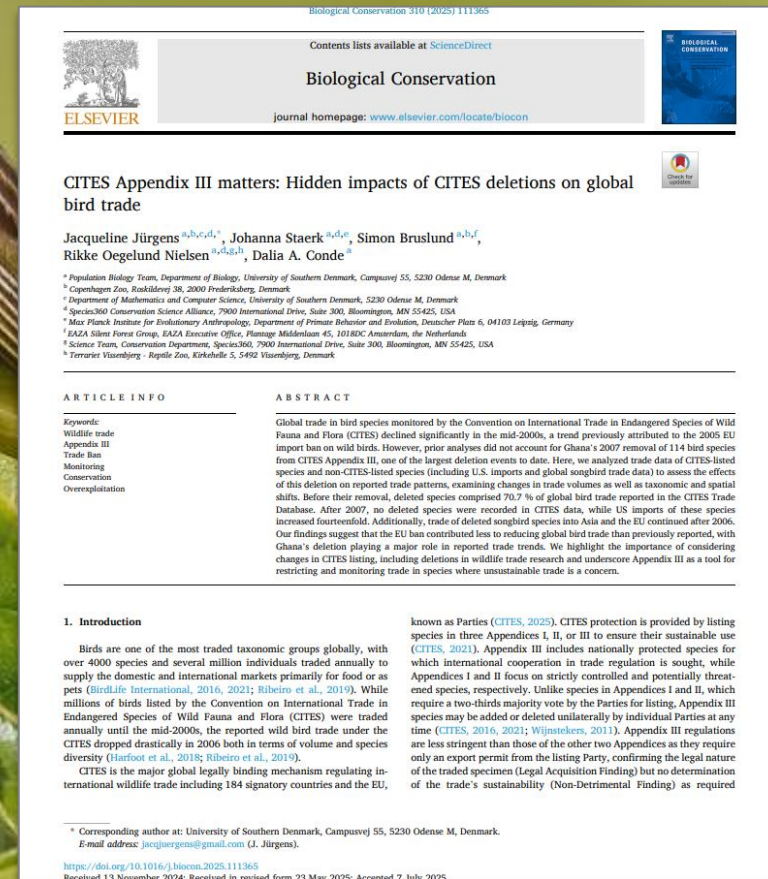
Passeriformes 71 spp deleted / 85 remained in CITES

- Columbiformes 17 / 7
- Anseriformes 12 / 18
- Pelecaniformes 7 / 7
- Musophagiformes 3 / 14
- Ciconiiformes 2 / 4
- Galliformes 1 / 49
- Psittaciformes 1 / 353

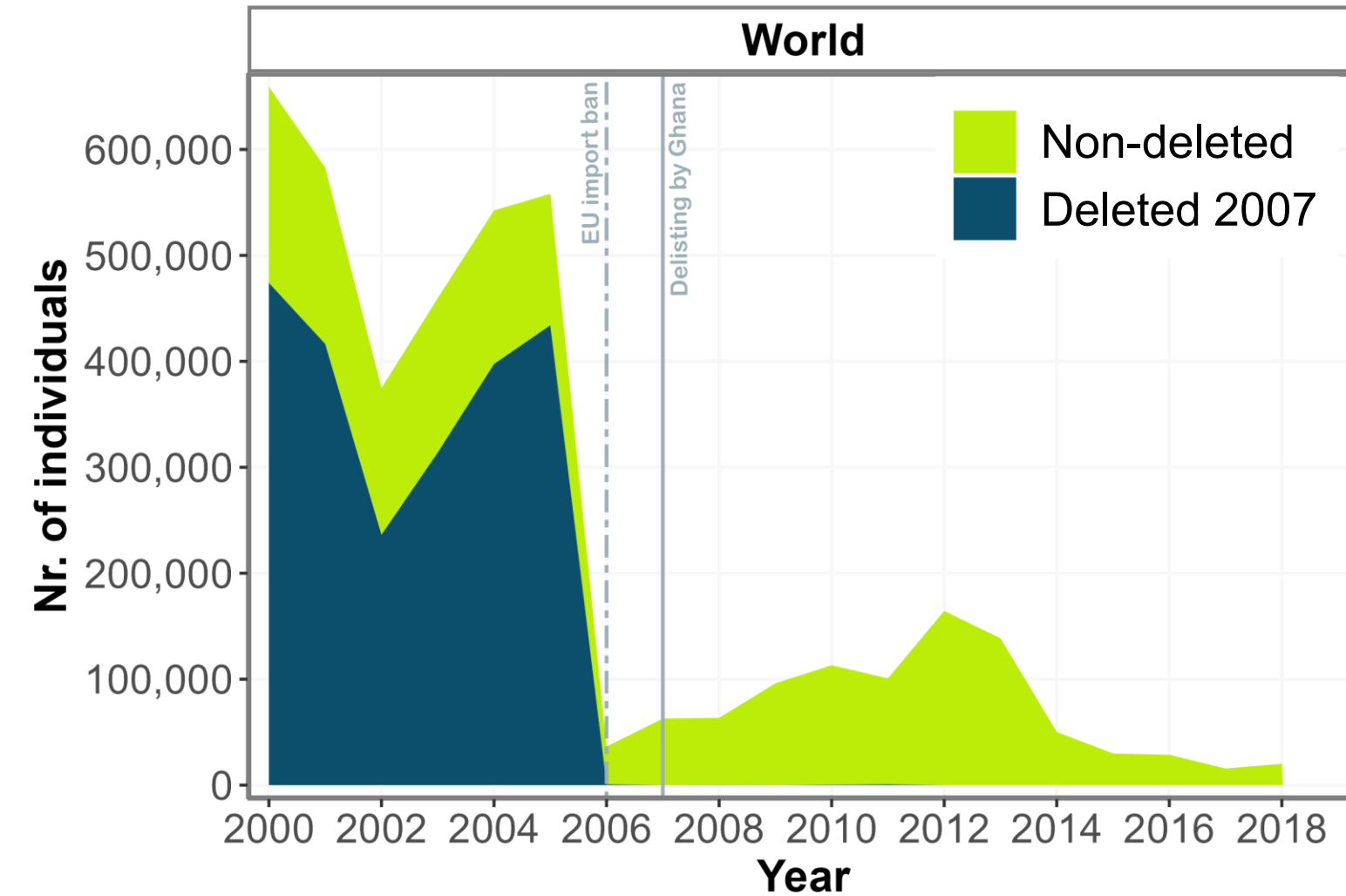
Trade from Ghana only represented 0,6% of trade in these species



Ref.: 6



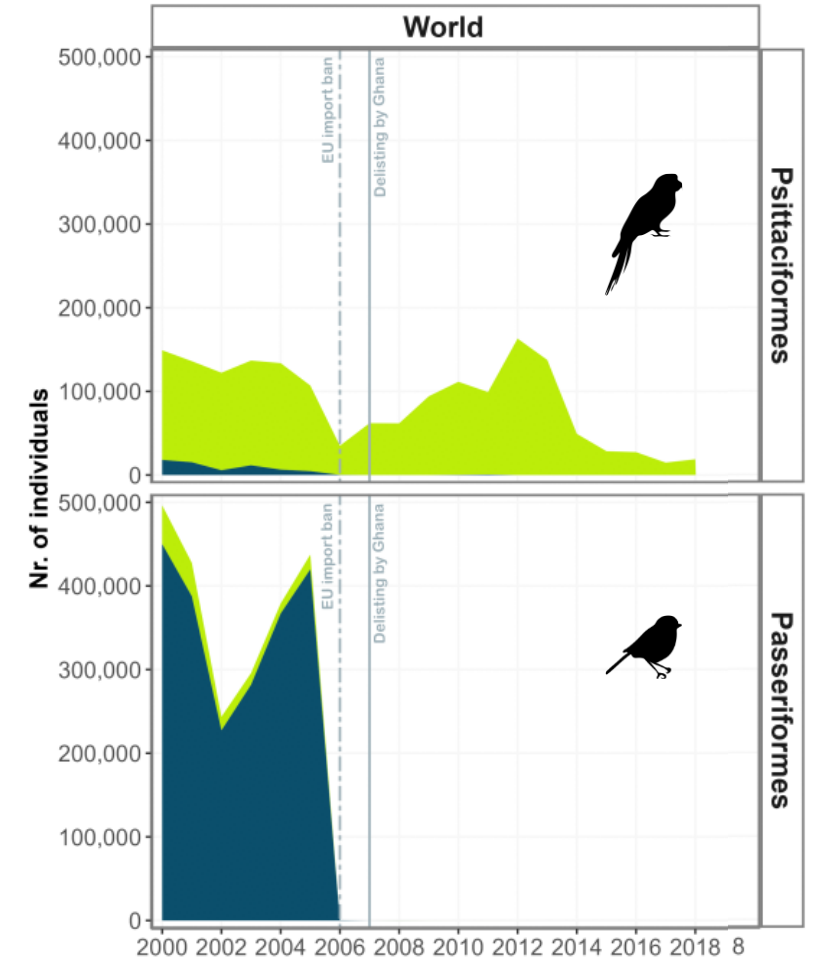
Deleted species in the global wild bird trade



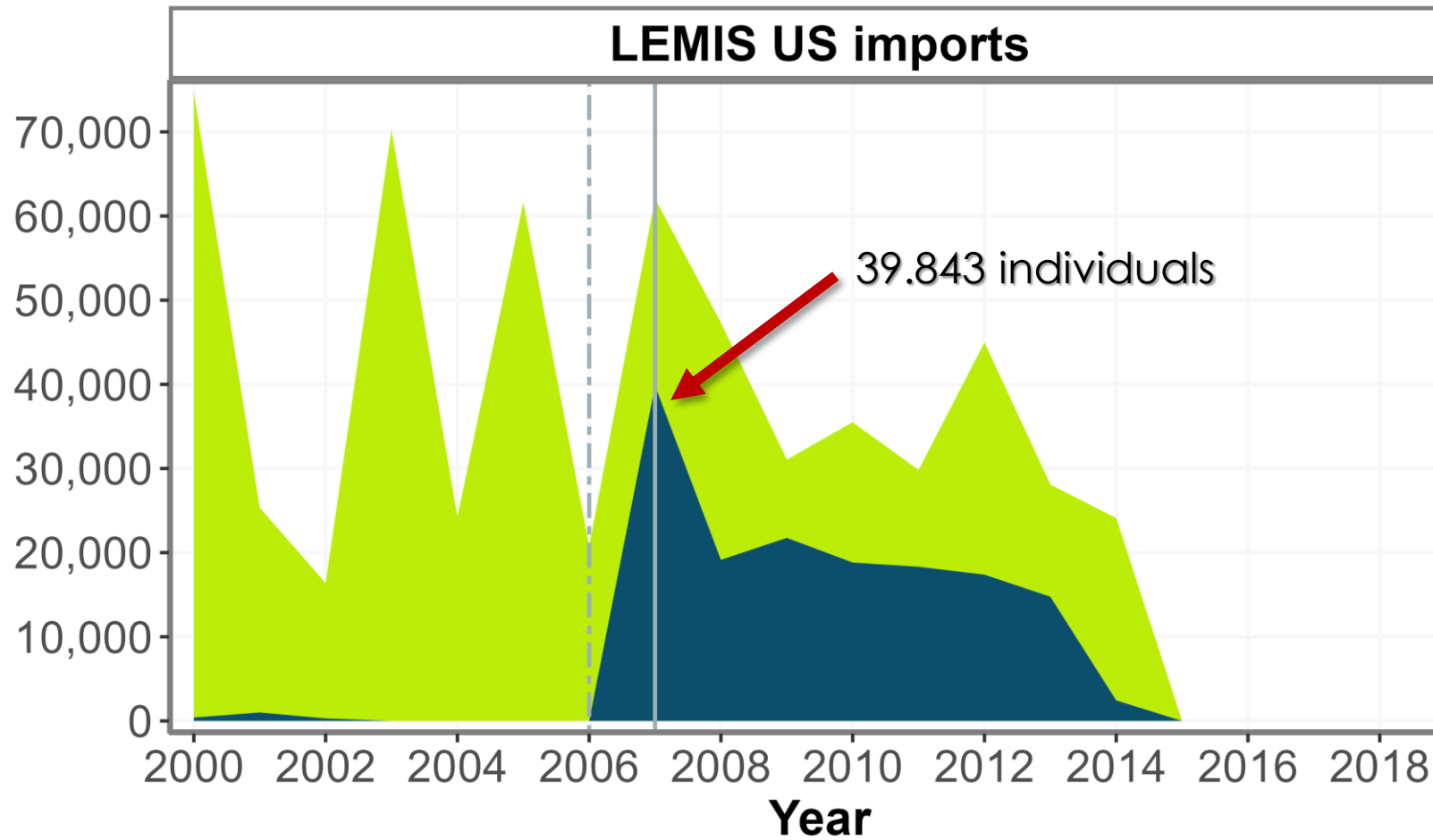
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Non-deleted

Deleted 2007

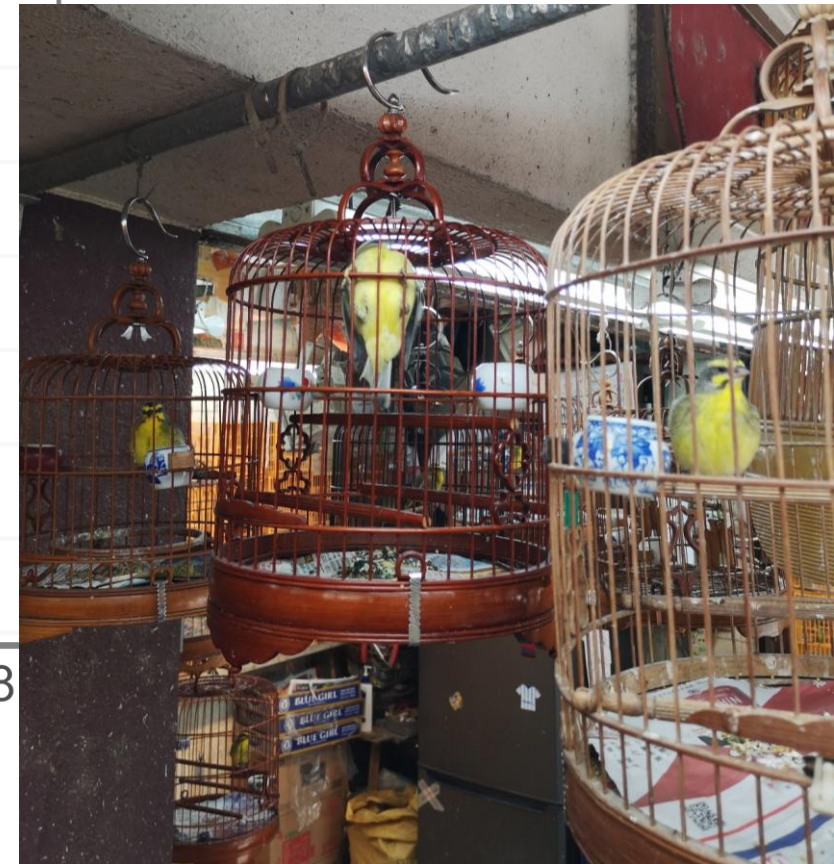


Where did all those birds go?



Ref.: 6

■ Non-deleted ■ Deleted 2007



Which species are traded?



Crithagra mozambica



243,017 (pre-2007)



68,358 (post-2007)



Estrilda troglodytes



189,421 (pre-2007)



No records



Uraeginthus bengalus



396,364 (pre-2007)



82,914 (post-2007)

Ref.: 6

What does this mean?



Delisting amplified the perceived drop in global bird trade



App. III was effective for trade regulation & monitoring



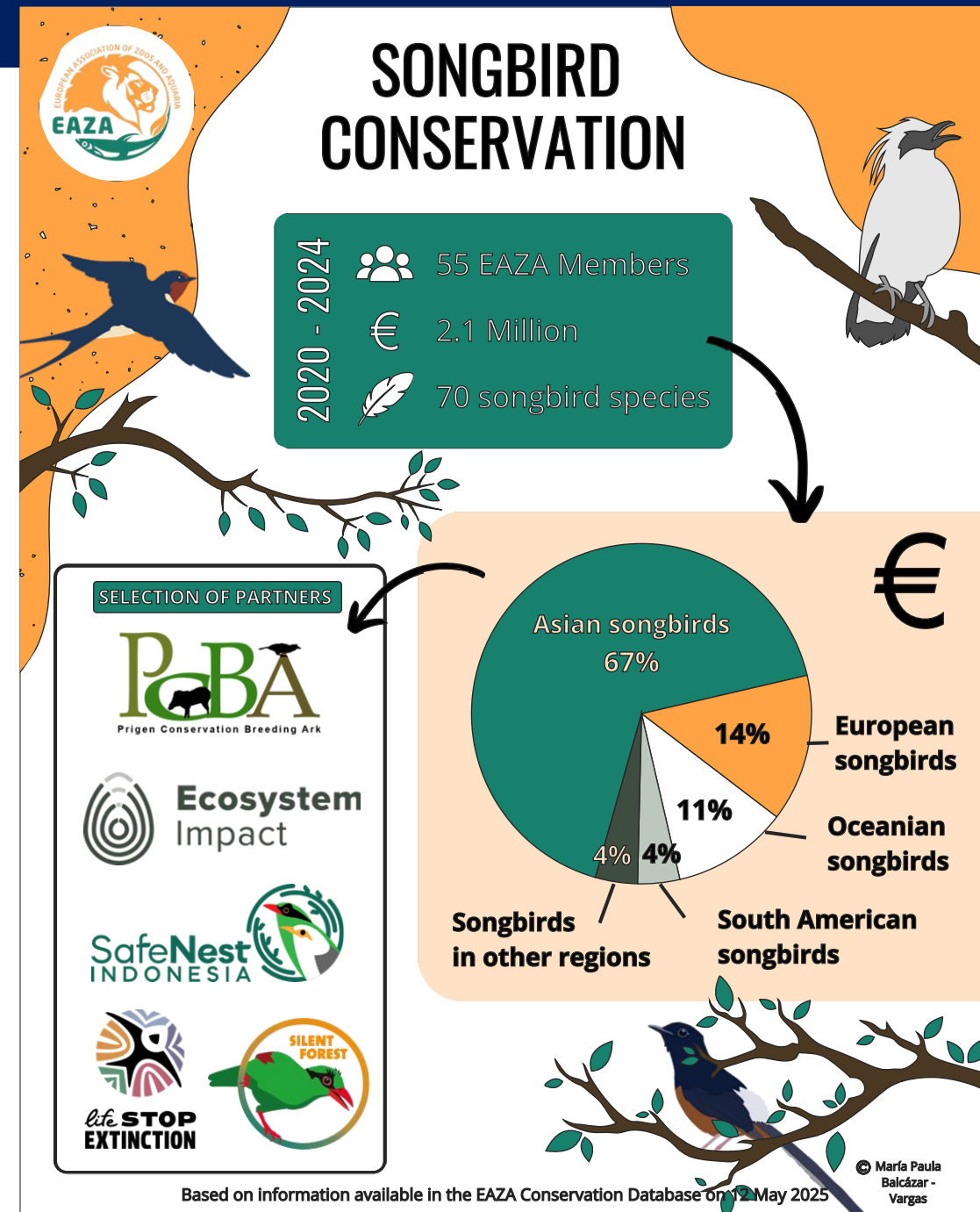
Current need for complimentary databases

SiTDB
SONGBIRDS IN TRADE DATABASE

www.SITDB.ORG¹⁵

Efforts and solutions underway

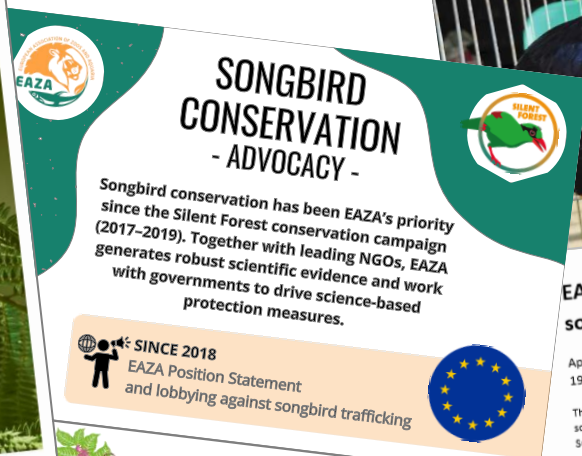
- Collaborative efforts (**Friends of Songbirds** – we invite Party representation)
- **Project “Leafeater”**¹⁶
- Seedeater = Sporophila trade publication in prep.
- Leafbird = Chloropsis trade publication in prep.
- **Understanding the drivers** and dynamics of the trade in our most recent publication on bird aesthetics¹⁷
- Working in the supply regions **engaging local communities** (SafeNest)
- Ex-Situ conservation breeding in range of the rarest species in **order to buy time**.
- **Strengthened priority and enforcement of songbirds** e.g. CITES listings – We offer our support to Parties in developing relevant proposals for more species of songbirds which need this.



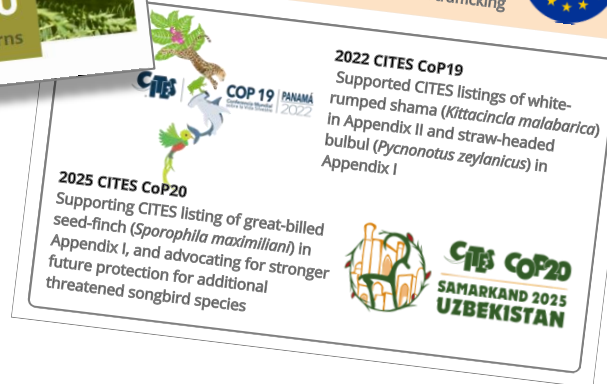
Advocacy work



Ref.: 5



Ref.: 4, 18, 19



EAZA Position Statement on songbird trafficking

Approved by EAZA Council
19 April 2018

This statement presents the position of the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA) on songbird trafficking, and is supported by our partners in the 'Silent Forest Campaign', IUCN Species Survival Commission Asian Songbird Trade Specialist Group, Birdlife International, and TRAFFIC.

EAZA and its partners recognize the multiple severe threats posed by the global trade in songbirds. The recent International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List update moved many Asian songbird species into increasing endangered status categories (IUCN, 2016), largely as a result of excessive trapping for trade. These up-listings serve as evidence of the negative impacts of trafficking on Asian songbird species survival; sadly, this trend is likely to be replicated for songbirds in other regions of the world.

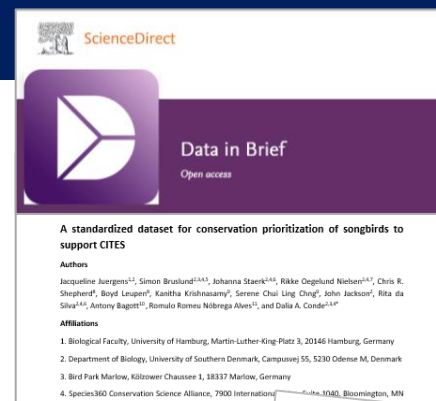
EAZA and its partners recognize that, despite European Union (EU) 319/2013 legislation¹ banning the importation of wild caught songbirds, the numbers and species of birds being offered for sale in the EU indicate that Europe is still a consumer destination. This could indicate that Member State National Authorities which lack capacity and access to specialist knowledge have difficulties in effectively implementing the legislation. Derogations to the legislation, such as the exemption for facilities with a zoo licence to import birds or for private people to import a limited number of birds as pets, could be misused and may provide opportunities for exploitation via onward sale into trade.

In addition, current EU legislation² does not recognise the status of country-of-origin export regulations. This provides further potential loopholes for trade that threatens species. Lastly, many traded songbird species, including threatened species, are not listed in the appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Until these listings are updated, trade will continue to have a detrimental impact on species survival.

EAZA and its partners welcome the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking (COM (2016) 87) as a means to address these challenges. The current EAZA Conservation Campaign 'Silent Forest' means to address these challenges. The current EAZA Species Survival Commission Asian Songbird Trade Specialist Group, Birdlife International and TRAFFIC, commits to undertaking activities that help reduce trafficking of wild caught songbirds and is closely aligned to the following three priority areas outlined in the EU Action Plan:

1. Preventing wildlife trafficking and addressing its root causes
2. Implementing and enforcing existing rules and combating organised wildlife crime more effectively
3. Strengthening the global partnership of source, consumer and transit countries against wildlife trafficking

¹ Defined in the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking in 'International and non-international legal trade in wild animals and plants and derived products, and closely associated offences such as poaching and illegal logging' (COM/2016/87) as a means to prevent wildlife trafficking and rules to combat organised wildlife crime more effectively, and to strengthen the global partnership of source, consumer and transit countries against wildlife trafficking.



A standardized dataset for conservation prioritization of songbirds to support CITES

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Action against Asian songbird trafficking IUCN WCC-2020-Res-103-EN

NOTING the multiple severe threats posed by the global trade in songbird species;
RECALLING that the 2016 update of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species moved many Asian songbird species into increasingly endangered status categories, largely as a result of excessive trapping for trade, and that this group is thus most in need of focused action;
AWARE that 2018 reports show that even more Asian songbird species are under threat;
RECOGNISING that despite European Union (EU) legislation banning the importation of wild-caught songbirds, specifically the Birds Directive and Commission Regulation 139/2013, the high numbers and species of birds being offered for sale in the EU indicate that Europe is still a consumer destination;
CONCERNED that derogations to Regulation 139/2013, such as the exemption for facilities with a zoo licence to import birds, or for private people to import a limited number of birds as pets, could be misused and may provide opportunities for exploitation via onward sale into trade;
FURTHER CONCERNED that Regulation 139/2013 does not recognise the status of country-of-origin export regulations, which provides further potential loopholes for trade that threatens species;
ENCOURAGED by the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking (COM/2016/87) as a means to prevent wildlife trafficking and addressing its root causes, to implement and enforce existing rules to combat organised wildlife crime more effectively, and to strengthen the global partnership of source, consumer and transit countries against wildlife trafficking;
AWARE OF the multiple severe threats posed by the global trade in songbird species;

Thank you!

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SiTDB

SONGBIRDS IN TRADE DATABASE



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