

Action against Asian songbird trafficking

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 good groundwork that IUCN General Assembly Resolution 14.25 *International trade in animals caught in the wild for the pet trade* (Ashkhabad, 1978) and Recommendation 19.49 *International Trade in Wild Birds* (Buenos Aires, 1994) have provided for addressing concerns relating to international trade in animals caught in the wild for the pet trade and international trade in wild birds respectively; and

CONCERNED that many traded Asian 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) and are thus not protected by actions relating to Recommendation 19.49;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France:

1. CALLS ON State, Government Agency and Non-governmental Organisation Members to strengthen regulation and enforcement of existing legislation relating to trade in Asian songbirds by collaboratively developing and implementing systems to:

- a. gain current information on distribution and status in the wild via increased cooperation with countries of origin;
- b. provide technical and financial support for efforts to collect evidence to monitor trade, including online trade;
- c. provide technical and financial support for enforcement efforts at international borders;
- d. share with enforcement authorities scientific expertise on the identification, current status in the wild, and human care of songbird species;
- e. provide advice on suitable facilities for confiscations;
- f. where practical and possible, establish agreements and means to return confiscated specimens to the natural environment of the country of origin; and
- g. develop partnerships with genuine scientifically-run conservation breeding programmes for species on the brink of extinction, to buy time, so that additional conservation measures can be put in place to aid recovery and prevent extinction events;

2. ENCOURAGES those listed above to monitor the effectiveness of the systems developed and to share good practice examples;

3. CALLS ON State, Government Agency and Non-governmental Organisation Members, as well as non-Member Parties to CITES to facilitate improved control of trade in existing CITES-listed Asian songbird species, as well as to support the development of proposals for listing of new species in CITES Appendices where available evidence indicates that these species meet the relevant CITES listing criteria, and to support research to gather such evidence;
4. URGES EU institutions and Member State national authorities to develop tighter controls on licensing of facilities and derogations to private people permitted to import and hold Asian songbirds; and
5. REQUESTS states and government agencies, donors and funding agencies to make more funding available to improve regulation and enforcement of existing legislation relating to trade in Asian songbirds.