



Aceh Bulbul (photo by James Eaton)

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The IUCN SSC Asian Songbird Trade Specialist Group: Priority Taxa List

Priority Taxa List

The IUCN SSC Asian Songbird Trade Specialist Group (IUCN SSC ASTSG) has released an updated Priority Taxa List, highlighting the most threatened songbird taxa impacted by trade in Asia (with the main focus currently on the passerines of Southeast Asia). This list serves as a crucial tool to guide conservation interventions, research priorities and funding efforts aimed at mitigating the impacts of the songbird trade. The IUCN SSC ASTSG is using a Taxa List (instead of Species List) to recognise distinct conservation units (subspecies and subpopulations) threatened by trade, even if they are not threatened at the species level or are not officially

recognised to be a separate species. It is worth noting that research and monitoring of all songbird taxa remains important to flag any changes in the status and therefore identify urgent conservation actions, even if a species is not currently on the priority list.

To be included in the list, each taxon must meet the following criteria:

1. Trade is/has been a main threat to the survival of the taxon - this list therefore excludes threatened taxa encountered in trade if their primary threat is something else;
2. Populations of the taxon are known or believed to be declining, experiencing local extirpations, or already very rare in the wild - this list therefore excludes taxa traded at sustainable levels;
3. Taxon do not currently have significant established introduced populations outside its natural range - this list therefore excludes taxa not at risk of extinction globally.

Two tiers differentiate how serious the situation for each taxon is:

- Tier 1 – Taxa survival is urgently impacted by trade; high priority for conservation actions as extinction may be imminent if no conservation actions are taken.
- Tier 2 – Evidence that wild populations are threatened by trade, but impacts on wild populations are not as urgent or severe as Tier 1.

2025 Update: Key Changes and Insights

The latest revision of the Priority Taxa List reflects emerging trends of the Asian Songbird Crisis and new research insights. After reviewing the latest monitoring and research data, several taxa have been reassessed, leading to 49 taxa currently listed in Tier 1 and 24 taxa listed in Tier 2.

- Four Tier 2 taxa were uplisted to Tier 1 - all experienced recent dramatic declines or are now extremely rare in the wild due to trapping for trade, and are in high and targeted demand.
 - Blue-masked Leafbird (*Chloropsis venusta*)
 - Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus superciliosus*)
 - Van Hasselt's Sunbird (*Leptocoma brasiliana brasiliana*)
 - Aceh Bulbul (*Pycnonotus snouckaerti*)

- One Tier 1 taxon was downlisted to Tier 2.
 - Bare-throated Whistler (*Pachycephala nudigula*) - trade levels have dropped dramatically in recent years and wild populations appear stable
- Two new taxa were added to Tier 1 - both now extremely rare in the wild and face continued declines and threats from trapping for trade.
 - Orange-breasted Laughingthrush (*Garrulax annamensis*)
 - Black-throated Laughingthrush (*Pterorhinus chinensis germani*)
- Five new taxa were added to Tier 2 - all experiencing population declines and decreased sightings in known locations, coupled with emerging or concerning levels of trade demand.
 - Indochinese Green Magpie (*Cissa hypoleuca (concolour and chauleti)*)
 - Simeulue Oriental Magpie-robin (*Copsychus saularis zacnecus*)
 - Black-hooded Laughingthrush (*Garrulax milleti*)
 - Long-tailed Shrike (*Lanius schach bentet*)
 - Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush (*Lanthocincla konkakinhensis*)
- Six taxa were removed from the list due to insufficient evidence that trade is currently negatively impacting wild populations.

To more accurately reflect taxonomic updates and the situation for each taxon, the current list includes newly assessed distinct conservation units (subspecies and subpopulations) that may previously have been assessed at higher levels.

The list will be updated periodically as new evidence becomes available and /or there are taxonomy changes. For future Priority Taxa List updates, the IUCN SSC ASTSG aims to improve the process by including more detailed criteria definitions and additional guidance on what differentiates between a taxa belonging to Tier 1 or Tier 2.

The Priority Taxa List is publicly available on the IUCN SSC ASTSG's website: <https://www.asiansongbirdtradesg.com/taxa-list>

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For further inquiries, please email asiansongbirdtradesg@gmail.com