

Annotate the taxa *Agapornis* spp., *Platycercus* spp., *Barnardius* spp., *Cyanorhamphus auriceps*, *C. novaezelandiae*, *Psittacula eupatria*, *P. krameri* and *Padda oryzivora* with the following text:

Colour morphs produced by captive breeding are considered of being a domesticated form and are therefore not subject to the provisions of the Convention.

Proponent: Switzerland.

Summary: Three bird genera and three bird species named in this proposal are listed in Appendix II; one species, *Cyanorhamphus novaezelandiae*, and one subspecies (*Cyanorhamphus auriceps forbesi*) are listed in Appendix I. *Psittacula krameri* is not listed in Appendix I or Appendix II, but is listed in Appendix III by Ghana. All except *Padda oryzivora* are members of the parrot family or Psittacidae. *Padda oryzivora* (the Java Sparrow) is a member of the family Estrildidae. *Agapornis* comprises nine species of lovebird. In the CITES standard taxonomic references for birds (Sibley and Monroe, 1990 and 1993), *Barnardius* is considered a part of the genus *Platycercus*, which comprises nine species of ringneck and rosella. *Cyanorhamphus auriceps* is the Yellow-crowned Parakeet, *C. novaezelandiae* the Red-crowned or New Zealand Parakeet, *Psittacula eupatria* the Alexandrine Parakeet and *P. krameri* the Rose-ringed Parakeet. The genus *Cyanorhamphus* contains two other extant species, one of which (*C. cookii*) is listed in Appendix I, and the genus *Psittacula* twelve, one of which (*Psittacula echo*, also referenced as *P. krameri echo*) is also listed in Appendix I.

The species listed individually in the proposal, and at least some of the species in the three genera, are frequently traded in large volumes in the form of captive-bred individuals of colour forms that are rarely, if ever, found in the wild. The CITES Nomenclature Committee, in the belief that significant government resources are currently committed to managing this trade with little conservation benefit, recommended the adoption of an annotation to exempt the colour morphs from the provisions of the Convention. As support for such an annotation, the Nomenclature Committee pointed to annotation °602, which exempts the domesticated forms of several mammals, and annotation °608, which exempts artificially-propagated specimens of several cactus hybrids and/or cultivars.

Analysis: The proposal raises a number of issues concerning enforcement, and whether such an annotation might allow illegal trade in wild-caught birds to increase. The annotation does not define the term colour morph, list those that might be expected to be found only in captive-bred populations, or set out how it might be determined that any given morph has been produced by captive-breeding. At least some of the species (e.g. some *Agapornis*) are or have recently been in trade in significant numbers as wild-collected birds.

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<p>At the first European Regional Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee (November 2001), Switzerland submitted a discussion paper about the issue of colour morphs. On a recommendation from the Animals Committee, the issue was raised at the Nomenclature Committee where it was recommended that the issue be solved with the assistance of the Secretariat, through the annotation to the species stating that colour morphs produced by captive breeding are considered to be of a domestic form and therefore not subject to the provisions of the Convention. The Nomenclature Committee pointed out that precedents were set by Annotation °602 and °608 where several domesticated mammal species and plant species, distinguishable from their wild form respectively, are not subject to the provisions of CITES.</p> <p>Colour morph specimens of the taxa <i>Agapornis</i> spp., <i>Platycercus</i> spp., <i>Barnardius</i> spp., <i>Cyanorhamphus auriceps</i>, <i>Cyanorhamphus novaezelandiae</i>, <i>Psittacula eupatria</i>, <i>Psittacula krameri</i> and <i>Padda oryzivora</i> are</p>	<p><i>The proposal is vague as to what constitutes a "colour morph" (Ross, 2002). In Europe the word "morphs" is often used in place of "mutations" (Jordan, 2002). It is important that these terms are clearly defined. Jordan (2002) defines a colour mutation as a mutation that is genetically managed by captive breeders to manipulate colours through combining alleles to form new colour mutations, while colour morphs may be found in the wild.</i></p> <p><i>For <i>Agapornis</i> spp. and <i>Platycercus</i> spp. the range of wild phenotypes is not well known. These genera exhibit extensive variability as birds of different species sometimes hybridise in the wild (Trail, 2002). All colour morphs are ultimately derived from genomes of wild stock, and arise either by new mutation or, more commonly, by recombination that reveals recessive traits that may also arise in wild populations (Ross, 2002). Such naturally occurring colour morphs are often found only in isolated populations. These population may be of value to traders and collectors and may also</i></p>

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<p>bred and traded in high volumes. Under their current CITES-listing managing this trade requires the input of significant resources due to the permitting work and border control that enforcement requires.</p> <p>The proposal states that the management of these colour morphs is of little or no relevance to the conservation of wild populations of the species.</p>	<p><i>be regarded as important for conservation (Ross, 2002).</i></p> <p><u>Trade</u> <i>A review of US FWS trade data for 1998-2001 reveals that of the taxa under consideration that were imported or exported into the USA, six included individuals of wild origin (TRAFFIC North America, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>Import figures from CITES annual report data show that between 1991 and 2000, 1 655 413 specimens of the taxa named in the proposal were imported. Of those, 1 465 727 (88.5%) were recorded as bred in captivity, 106 293 (6.4%) were recorded as of wild origin and 77 713 (4.7%) had no source code. It is important to note that trade in several species consisted primarily or exclusively of wild caught birds. Out of the 24 898 A. canus, 5 892 A. pullaris, and 75 A. swindernianus traded, 92.2%, 78.8% and 100% respectively, were of wild origin (TRAFFIC North America, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>Adoption of the annotation could increase the avenues through which illegal trade could occur, therefore leading to an increase in the poaching pressure for parrot species around the world (Gilardi, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>Trail (2002) voices concern that on accepting the annotation there may be misunderstanding and a false belief arise that the trade in wild-caught specimens of these taxa is in fact legal. De Soye (2002) believes the annotation would open the trade control system to additional fraud.</i></p> <p><i>Dollinger (2002a) believes that adoption of the proposal would not have a negative impact on wild populations and Trail (2002) states that trade in mutants would probably be the form of wildlife trade that is least likely to threaten wild populations. Jordan (2002) also fully supports the proposal.</i></p> <p><u>Captive Population</u> <i>Easing of trade controls, as proposed, would be expected to promote the breeding of such colour morphs. This might lead to a captive population almost entirely consisting of such colour morphs, and very few 'wild forms', an undesirable situation in terms of conservation of the taxa should reintroduction ever be required (Jordan, 2002, de Soye, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>Captive-bred birds are already subject to special provisions of the Convention irrespective of whether their colour is different from that expected in the wild. Extending the exemption on the basis of colour, without any other provisions for establishing their origin is scientifically unsound and may have negative impacts on the wild population (Ross, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>Resolution Conf. 11.21 recommends, as a general rule, that Parties avoid making proposals to adopt annotations that include live animals or trophies, and that annotations relating to specified types of specimens</i></p>

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	<p><i>should be used sparingly.</i></p> <p><u>Enforcement</u></p> <p><i>Extensive training would be required for staff to effectively implement the annotation (Gilardi, 2002), but Dollinger (2002b) states that he does not think that this is a reason to reject the proposal.</i></p> <p><i>Specialist avicultural organisations dedicated to specific taxa often publish identification guides for use in judging bird shows. These standards could be used in drawing up a guide to the proposed colour morph exceptions (Trail, 2002). However, the problem of identification might be further complicated by the practice of dying or bleaching the feathers of birds in trade, to conceal their identity (Gilardi, 2002).</i></p>

Reviewers: Y. de Soye, P. Dollinger, J.D. Gilardi, P. Ross, TRAFFIC International, TRAFFIC North America.

References:

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