

Transfer of Yellow-naped Amazon *Amazona auropalliata* from Appendix II to Appendix I. Proponent: Costa Rica.

Summary: The Yellow-naped Amazon is a popular parrot which occurs from south-eastern Mexico south through El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua to north-western Costa Rica. Preferred habitat includes woodland, wooded savannah and to a lesser degree secondary, high forest or agricultural zones. There are widespread, though mostly anecdotal, reports of population declines throughout its range, particularly during the last 20 years or so. The species is reported to have been extirpated from some areas and is regarded as in danger of extinction in most countries in its range. Population estimates are available for Honduras (122 942 individuals in 1992) and Nicaragua (178 770 in 1995, 85 000 in 1999); the Nicaraguan estimates appear to indicate a decline, but are based on small samples and the difference between them is not statistically significant. Habitat loss is identified as the primary threat to the species throughout its range. The species is also in high demand within range States and internationally; illegal harvest to satisfy these markets is reportedly widespread and believed to constitute a significant threat. Available evidence indicates that the domestic trade within range States is much larger than international trade. Nicaragua is the only range State permitting exports of the species and has set export quotas for between 600 and 800 live birds for each of the years 1993-2000, exporting a total of almost 7 500 wild or ranched birds for commercial purposes during 1991-2000. The proposal seeks to transfer the Yellow-naped Amazon from Appendix II to Appendix I in accordance with Annex 1 criteria Ci).

Analysis Following Resolution Conf. 9.24, based on the population estimates for Honduras and Nicaragua alone, the population of the species cannot be considered small, nor thought to qualify as having a restricted distribution. There are widespread reports of decline, both historic and projected for the future. Given the relatively long generation time of *Amazona* species, it is possible that the population has declined by 50% over two generations, however, concrete data are lacking and it remains unclear whether the species meets the decline criteria for inclusion in Appendix I. Despite protective measures, *A. auropalliata* is harvested for international and domestic trade and demand is likely to remain high.

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<u>Taxonomy</u>	
<i>A. auropalliata</i> was recognised as a distinct species from <i>A. ochrocephala</i> in 1983.	
Synonyms: <i>Amazona ochrocephala auropalliata</i> and <i>Amazona auropalliata auropalliata</i> .	
<u>Range</u>	
Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua.	
<u>IUCN Global Category</u>	
	<i>BirdLife International (2002), as the IUCN Red List Authority for birds, follow Lousada and Howell (1996) in regarding auropalliata as a subspecies of A. ochrocephala; this species is not considered globally threatened and is therefore assessed as being of Least Concern.</i>

Biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I

A) Small wild population

(i) Population or habitat decline; (ii) small sub-populations; (iii) one sub-population; (iv) large population fluctuations; (v) high vulnerability due to biology or behaviour

According to national legislation, the species is considered in danger of extinction throughout its range, with the exception of Costa Rica where it is considered a "species with reduced population". In Guatemala, the species has been considered almost

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<p>extinct since 1999.</p> <p>In 1992, the population in Honduras was estimated at 140 290 individuals; southern Pacific provinces (where the species is believed almost extirpated) were excluded from the estimate. The population of Nicaragua was estimated at 178 770 individuals in 1995, and 85 000 individuals in 1999.</p> <p>Although locally the species may appear common, sightings probably relate to a population of ageing birds with low recruitment rates due to raiding of nests.</p>	<p><i>Wiedenfeld (1993) estimates the Honduras population as 122 942 rather than 140 290 individuals, with lower and higher confidence estimates of 59 086 and 258 497.</i></p> <p><i>Wiedenfeld (1995) produced an estimate of 287 070 birds for Nicaragua, with lower and higher confidence estimates of 178 770 and 460 980.</i></p>
<p><u>B) Restricted area of distribution</u></p> <p>(i) Fragmented or localised population; (ii) large fluctuations in distribution or sub-populations; (iii) high vulnerability due to biology or behaviour; (iv) decrease in distribution, population, habitat or reproductive potential</p> <p>Deforestation is believed to be the primary threat throughout the range. The species is not common in disturbed habitat, and local reports from Nicaragua suggest that it has disappeared from areas in proximity to human settlements. In El Salvador, only minimal forest remnants remain. In 1998, a conservative estimate of the potential habitat in Costa Rica, gave an area of 6 871 km² of which 1 085 km² (16%) is under state protection. The forested area of Costa Rica has been reduced by 50% since 1940.</p> <p>The species is believed to be declining in north-eastern Honduras, and predicted to decline with habitat conversion for agriculture in Nicaragua.</p>	
<p><u>C) Decline in number of wild individuals</u></p> <p>(i) Ongoing or historic decline; (ii) inferred or projected decline</p> <p>Before the 1970s, when <i>A. auropalliata</i> was still considered to be a subspecies of <i>A. ochrocephala</i>, the Yellow-naped Amazon was considered common and locally abundant, populations are reported to have declined throughout its range, particularly during the past two decades, due principally to habitat destruction. As early as the 1990s, it was recognised as a distinct species, and the population decrease became evident. The species has been extirpated from some areas in most range States primarily on the Pacific slopes (Costa Rica, Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua).</p> <p>The 1995 population estimate in Nicaragua of 178 770 and the 1999 estimate of 85 000 appear to indicate a decline; however the researchers noted that the results were not statistically different. However, in these studies, <i>A. auropalliata</i> was considered the <i>Amazona</i> species whose population was most severely reduced.</p> <p>During the early 1980s the species was inexpensive in Honduran markets, but in 1985 the price rose substantially, a trend that is thought to reflect decreasing abundance. In Mexico, illegal harvesting is thought to have reduced the population by 90% in 20 years.</p>	<p><i>A. auropalliata generally matures at between three and five years and is thought to live for 30 to 50 years (Renton, 2002). A generation time of 10-15 years is therefore a reasonable conservative estimate of generation time for this species.</i></p> <p><i>It is not clear that the references to former abundance when the species was considered part of the Amazona ochrocephala complex necessarily refer to this species (TRAFFIC North America – Mexico, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>Wright (2002) notes there are many cases where the species has vanished from large portions of its range.</i></p> <p><i>Wiedenfeld's 1995 and 1999 Nicaraguan estimates, quoted in the SS, were based on limited samples (405 and 154 individuals respectively observed at different times of the year) which were extrapolated to calculate the national population estimates. Variation in the number of psittacines counted at different times of the year was observed in Honduras, during a similar survey which included <i>A. auropalliata</i>.</i></p>

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D) Status suggests inclusion in Appendix I within 5 years

In the mid-1990s, it was estimated that the Guatemalan population would be bought to the point of extinction in less than 20 years due to the ransacking of nests and habitat loss.

Trade criteria for inclusion in Appendix I

The species is or may be affected by trade

The Yellow-naped Amazon is one of the most sought-after parrots due to its ability to imitate human speech. Wild specimens in international trade derive from both legal and illegal sources.

The only range State permitting *A. auropalliata* to be harvested from the wild is Nicaragua, with young wild birds being raised on farms until they are exported. The average annual exports for 1984 to 1994 was 733 birds, with roughly 942 birds exported in 1995, 822 in 1996, 815 in 1997, and 661 in 2000. From 1993 to 2000, Nicaragua had an annual export quota of 800 live birds, which was reduced in 2000 to 600 live birds.

An annual average of 8 388 birds were exported from Honduras from 1987-1989, primarily to the USA. Exports were banned in 1990.

From 1990 to 1993, *A. auropalliata* was the parrot species seized in the greatest numbers on the Mexico-Texas (USA) border, totalling 648 specimens. International illegal trade of Yellow-naped Amazons harvested from Guatemala were destined for Germany, Japan and the USA as of 1993.

According to CITES Notifications, Nicaragua has set annual export quotas of 600 ranched birds for 2001 and 650 for 2002. Reported exports have on average met the quotas for the period 1993-2000 (slightly over or under each year). According to CITES Annual Report data, Nicaragua has reported exporting a total of 7 479 live birds for commercial purposes from 1991-2000; 5 315 ranched specimens; 1 543 wild specimens; and 621 specimens from an unknown source (presumably wild or ranched). Of this, the vast majority were destined for Europe (approximately 3 900 birds to 10 countries, mainly the Netherlands, Germany and Italy) and Asia (approximately 3 150 birds to ten countries, mainly to Japan). A total of 300 captive-bred and 20 first generation specimens were exported during this period.

According to US trade data, 29 birds were seized during the period 1998-2001 upon import from Mexico and five seized upon import from Nicaragua (TRAFFIC North America - Mexico, 2002). Seizure information for Mexico provided by PROFEPA (Attorney General of Environmental Crime) clearly show that illegal trade in the species is an ongoing activity, with a total of 54 birds being seized from 1996 to 2000. It was not known whether the seizures reported by Mexico were made domestically or at the point of export. The USA also seized 23 specimens from Costa Rica in 1994. Much of the illegal trade is undetected (TRAFFIC North America - Mexico, 2002).

Given the size of domestic markets within Central America, it is conceivable that there is significant illegal cross-border trade.

Other information

Threats

The primary threat to the species in all range States is habitat destruction. The secondary threat is the raiding of nests and capture of adults to supply live individuals for both domestic and international markets.

The species is kept as a pet in all range States. For example, despite being illegal in Costa Rica up to an estimated 22 700 birds are thought to be kept as pets in Costa Rica alone, with an estimated 7 020 to 9 100 birds extracted illegally each year to supply this demand. In Nicaragua, legal supply for one domestic market alone was estimated in 2000 to result in the annual harvest of 1 303 to 1 862 birds without accounting for mortality resulting from harvest and transport.

Illegal domestic trade occurs in all range States. One report notes that in Mexico, 90% of the population of

Renton (2002) states that the species is unable to prosper in disturbed habitats.

*During the last ten years, Africanised honeybees have been known to take over nesting cavities of *A. auropalliata* and other psittacine species in Guatemala and Mexico, and on several occasions have killed the chicks and fledglings (Iñigo-Elias, 2002; Renton, 2002).*

*Juniper and Parr (1998) describe *A. auropalliata* as formerly common but probably declining throughout its range owing to conversion of habitat to agricultural uses and trapping for local and international trade.*

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A. auropalliata is reported to have disappeared due to illegal harvest for trade.

In a study in Guatemala, the percentage of nests of *A. auropalliata* raided increased from 32% in 1993 to 51% in 1995 despite the fact that the nests were guarded. In the previous two years no successful recruitment took place at all owing to nest-raiding.

Conservation, management and legislation

Only Nicaragua currently permits commercial harvest of the species for international trade, which supplies the vast majority of specimens in international trade.

In 2000, the Project for the Conservation, Management and Sustainable Utilization of Parrots in Mexico was established, including the monitoring of populations, and the repatriation of specimens confiscated from trade.

There are several protected areas within the range of the species.

Reviewers believe that the current legislation is generally not effective (Renton, 2002; Wright, 2002).

Even though the capture of this species in Mexico was prohibited in 1983, the option to use and trade the species exists through the UMAs scheme (Unidades de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) and other articles described in the Mexico's General Wildlife Law (Ley General de Vida Silvestre, D.O.F. 2000) (TRAFFIC North America – Mexico, 2002).

Similar species

The species could potentially be confused with *A. oratrix* and *A. ochrocephala*.

*Although confusion may arise with *A. oratrix* and *A. ochrocephala*, neither of these has the distinctive yellow nape feathers found in *A. auropalliata* (Renton, 2002).*

Captive breeding

As of 1995, no more than 40 birds were thought to be held in breeding facilities in Mexico. Since 1992 at least four exporters in Nicaragua have attempted to begin breeding the species in captivity. In 1993 and 1994, none of them was producing substantial numbers of young.

The species is well known to breeders in the USA while it is seldom bred in Europe.

*In Mexico, 11 breeding centres stock *A. auropalliata*, with breeding centres also existing in the USA and European countries (Renton, 2002).*

The Yellow-naped Amazon is readily available through captive breeders in the USA and is one of the most expensive Amazon species with prices ranging from USD 450-1 500 (TRAFFIC North America – Mexico, 2002). At least 12 countries are reported in CITES Annual Report data as producing captive-bred birds for commercial purposes. According to the Mexican Environmental Ministry there are 25 registered UMAs in 13 Mexican states who undertake some form of use of the species as pets, breeding stock, exhibition, research or re-population (Anon., 2002).

*In a 1991 captive breeding survey of breeders based in the USA, the species (referred to as *A. ochrocephala auropalliata*) was considered one of the eight most commonly bred Amazon species, with 184 established pairs and 78 proven breeding pairs (Johnson, 1992).*

Reviewers: K. Renton, TRAFFIC North America – Mexico, T. Wright.

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