

Transfer of Blue-headed Macaw *Ara couloni* from Appendix II to Appendix I. Proponent: Germany (on behalf of the Member States of the European Community).

Summary: The Blue-headed Macaw *Ara couloni* is a small parrot restricted to eastern Peru, extreme western Brazil and north-western Bolivia. The species is not currently listed as threatened by BirdLife International or IUCN, although it is generally considered uncommon, having reportedly become very rare in Bolivia and is regarded as 'endangered' in Peru. No population monitoring has been undertaken and the only population estimate available, based on anecdotal information, is of 10 000 individuals in 1990. Habitat destruction is considered a threat, but to an unknown extent, in Bolivia and Peru, and a potential future threat in Brazil. Despite being protected from harvest in all range States, the species is commonly found in domestic markets in Brazil, being valuable and in high demand owing to its perceived rarity. Of the range States, only Peru has reported exports, which total 16 wild birds for non-commercial purposes. Reported international trade is at a low, but apparently growing level with almost all birds reported as captive-bred. The species is being bred in captivity but it is questioned whether all birds reported in trade as captive-bred are in fact so, and illegal trade has been documented. The species has a very low reproductive output and continued illegal harvest is thought likely to pose a serious threat to its survival. No specific management measures for the species are known to be in place, although a small part of its range lies within protected areas. The proposal seeks to transfer *A. couloni* from Appendix II to Appendix I in accordance with Annex 1, criteria D, whereby the status of the species is such that if not included in Appendix I, it is likely to satisfy the Appendix I biological criteria within five years.

Analysis Following Resolution Conf. 9.24, there is insufficient information to determine whether the species currently meets the biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I. However, it is generally regarded as uncommon and is probably affected by habitat loss. It appears in international trade in relatively small numbers but is evidently in high, and reportedly increasing, demand and a large proportion of the trade is known or suspected to be illegal.

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<u>Taxonomy</u>	
Synonym: <i>Propyrrhura couloni</i>	The correct generic name for <i>Ara couloni</i> is now <i>Primolius couloni</i> (BirdLife International, 2002; Collar, 2002); <i>P. couloni</i> is listed as a synonym of <i>A. couloni</i> according to Anon. (2002).
<u>Range</u>	
Bolivia, Brazil, Peru.	
<u>IUCN Global Category</u>	
Not listed	BirdLife International (2002) classifies the species as of Least Concern as it does not meet the IUCN criteria for Threatened or Near Threatened status.

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

The population was guessed to be around 10 000 individuals in 1990; no other population estimates are available. The Brazilian Official List of Endangered Species is being revised and the status of *A. couloni* is being evaluated. The species has always been considered uncommon or rare, only locally common around settlements, and is suggested to have become very rare in Bolivia.

A. couloni has a very low reproductive output, with a clutch size of two to four eggs in captivity.

The 1990 population estimate was based on anecdotal field information (Lambert et al., 1993) and seems likely to be a very general estimate.

A. couloni was listed in 1999 as being in danger of extinction in Peru (CITES Management Authority of Peru, 2002).

In Brazil, the species has been recorded only in the Rio Juruá basin of Acre, where Whittaker and Oren (1999) considered it common at Restauração and uncommon at Boca do Tejo, being reasonably common and widespread in western Acre along the

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	<p><i>upper Rio Juruá and its tributaries.</i></p> <p><i>There have been a few anecdotal reports of this species in the north of Bolivia (mainly Pando), but A. couloni has not been observed in the last eight or nine years despite a number of ornithological studies within its Bolivian range (Herzog, 2002).</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>The species has a limited distribution with almost no recent records from its northern distribution.</p> <p>Much of the species' habitat in Peru is reported to be in "good shape". However, the Bolivian forest is threatened by expansion of the logging industry, although it has also been suggested that the species might benefit from patchwork clearance.</p>	<p><i>Deforestation has decreased the area of potential habitat within the range of the species in Peru (CITES Management Authority of Peru, 2002).</i></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>No data are available on population trends although in 1990 its population was considered stable. Reports from Bolivia suggest it has become very rare.</p>	<p><i>Although seasonal movements may account for the scarcity of records, it is possible that the species has become extremely rare, or even extirpated from Bolivia (Herzog, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>Junipar and Parr (1998) believe the status of the species to be local and erratic in occurrence, but fairly common in places.</i></p>
<p><u>D) Status suggests inclusion in Appendix I within 5 years</u></p> <p>Price increases for specimens since 1999 suggest that capture pressure will increase. Although total trade numbers are not high, the collection of nestlings and the capture of potential breeding birds will further decrease an already low reproductive output. There is a danger that whole populations might be removed from the wild.</p>	<p><i>Collar (2002) believes that this is the most sought-after parrot in the aviculture community, with an iconic status as a rarity. He concurs with the SS that the species may be seriously affected by international trade in the future.</i></p>

Trade criteria for inclusion in Appendix I

The species is or may be affected by trade

Listed in CITES Appendix II in 1981, the species was virtually unknown in international trade before 1995. Peru has reported exporting a total of 16 wild-caught birds from 1983-1999. The proportion of reportedly captive-bred or first generation specimens in trade has steadily increased, accounting for all trade in 2000 according to CITES Annual Reports. In 1997, it was thought that virtually all captive specimens in Europe, and possibly globally, were illegally obtained. CITES Annual Reports detail a total of 40 imports and 28 re/exports of seized/confiscated specimens from 1995-1999, mostly in 1998 and 1999. Overall, German authorities have seized approximately 30 specimens in 2001. In the early to mid 1990s, a minimum of 50 additional birds were illegally exported through Russia to the Czech Republic, and some re-exported to Western Europe.

Avicultural and commercial breeding interest is reported to have increased since 1999. The species is valuable, prices quoted per individual vary from USD

According to CITES Annual Report data, all trade has been in live birds. Peru is the only exporting range State and all 16 birds recorded as exported from Peru were reported to have been traded for scientific or educational purposes.

Based on exports/re-exports reported in CITES trade data and including all specimen sources and trade purposes, overall trade has increased from three specimens in 1993 to 55 specimens in 2000, totalling 150 birds for the whole period. Of these, just over two-thirds have been traded for commercial purposes and as many as 50 were reported to have been seized/traded illegally.

During the last five years, there have been reports of illegal exports of A. couloni from Peru using forged permits destined for Russia (CITES Management Authority of Peru, 2002).
At USD 3 500, A. couloni was the most expensive psittacine species offered for sale on a list of species

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<p>3 500 in Peru in 2000, USD 12 500 in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, USD 4 000-7 000 in Europe in 1999, compared with approximately USD 15-20 in 1991 and 1995 in Bolivian markets.</p> <p>The species appears well known on Bolivian markets (20-30 specimens were sold to foreign traders in 1995), and is offered in Brazilian markets in the hundreds, possibly originating from Peru.</p>	<p><i>offered by a wild animal trader based in Peru; CITES export permits / relevant documentation were stated to be obtainable (TRAFFIC South America, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>This species first appeared in Europe within the last 10 years. The number of A. couloni specimens traded in the Czech Republic and other Eastern European countries has been increasing in the last few years (TRAFFIC Europe – Italy, 2002). In 1998, six specimens were seized in the United Kingdom (Anon., 1999).</i></p>

Other information

Threats

Habitat destruction caused by logging is considered a threat in Bolivia. Trade may become a threat given the low reproductive output of the species. Little is known about national utilisation, although it is hunted for meat.

The northern and eastern part of the range in Peru is affected by deforestation, mainly as a result of agricultural development and soil erosion (CITES Management Authority of Peru, 2002).

Although habitat availability does not appear currently compromised in Brazil, expansion of the logging industry in the medium-lower Rio Juruá, the apparent stronghold of the species in Brazil, may present a future threat. Additionally, the region of Placido de Castro (one of the definite localities for the species in Brazil) is the focus of land-reform programmes; in general, such programmes have resulted in widespread habitat destruction (Olmos, 2002).

The species is linked to riverside areas where most of the human population also occurs. Thus, any increase in the human population may reduce available habitat (Olmos, 2002).

Conservation, management and legislation

Little of the species' range occurs within protected areas, with most of such areas occurring in the southerly part of its range.

A. couloni is protected by the Brazilian Legislation for Fauna and Flora, which prohibits all Brazilian species from being harvested for commercial purposes.

The species is not protected in Peru or Bolivia. *A. couloni* is not included on the list of tradable species in Peru.

An EU import suspension has been in place for this species from Bolivia since 1986 and Brazil since 1988. The species was included in Annex B of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulation in 1997.

A. couloni has been legally protected from commercial harvest in Peru since 1973, although the hunting, capture, and export for scientific purposes was permitted until the end of 1999. As of 1 January 2000 any such specimens must come from zoos or wildlife management areas authorised by the CITES Management authorities (CITES Management Authority of Peru, 2002).

There is an indefinite ban on the export of all Bolivian species of wild fauna and flora under Supreme Decree No.s: 21774 of 1986; 22641 of 1990; and 25458 of 1999 (CITES Management Authority of Bolivia, 2002).

*The US Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992 bans all imports of CITES Appendix-II species, including *Ara couloni*, unless the government is satisfied that a scientifically based management plan exists for the species (TRAFFIC South America, 2002).*

Similar species

A. couloni is closely related to *A. auricollis* and *A. maracana*. However, all three species have distinct plumage colouration.

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<u>Captive breeding</u>	
<p>Few data are available regarding commercial captive breeding and most birds are held in private collections. Commercial breeding centres exist in the Philippines and Tenerife (Spain) which produced a total of 37 birds during 1998-2001 and six birds were reportedly raised in Germany in 1998. There are plans to establish a captive breeding programme for conservation purposes.</p>	<p><i>The species is difficult to breed in captivity and therefore the increase in availability of specimens declared as captive bred in the last few years is questionable (TRAFFIC Europe – Italy, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>The Czech Republic and South Africa have reported exports of captive-bred specimens for commercial purposes in their CITES Annual Reports.</i></p>
<u>Other comments</u>	
<p>Bolivia and Brazil support the proposal.</p>	<p><i>Peru supports the proposal (CITES Management Authority of Peru, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>Herzog (2002) and Collar (2002) both support the proposal.</i></p> <p><i>It is possible that listing the species in Appendix I could further heighten the demand for the species (TRAFFIC Europe – Italy, 2002).</i></p>

Reviewers: N. Collar, S. Herzog, F. Olmos, TRAFFIC Europe - Italy, TRAFFIC South America.

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