

CITES LISTING PROPOSAL**A. Proposal**

Inclusion of Hwamei (*Garrulax canorus*) in Appendix II in accordance with Article II 2 (a) and Resolution Conf. 9. 24.

B. Proponent**C. Supporting Statement**

The People's Republic of China

1. Taxonomy

- 1.1 Class: Aves
- 1.2 Order: Passeriformes
- 1.3 Family: Muscicapidae
- 1.4 Genus, species, subspecies: *Garrulax canorus* Linnaeus 1758
 - G. c. canorus* Linnaeus 1758
 - G. c. owstoni* Rothschild 1903
 - G. c. taewanus* Swinhoe 1859

1.5 Scientific synonyms: *Turdus canorus*

1.6 Common names:
 English: Hwamei, Melodious Laughing Thrush?
 Chinese: Huamei

1.7 Code numbers: 021850618 (China)

2. Biological Parameters**2.1 Distribution**

The species of of Hwamei is restricted to the south of Yellow river in China and at limited areas in the north parties of Vietnam and Lao. China owns the significant part of the population in the global level. Subspecies of *G. c. canorus* distributes widely at regions of hills and low mountain areas in provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Anhui, Zhejiang, Guandong, and also is in the south parties of Gansu, Shaanxi and Henan provinces. Subspecies *owstoni* and *taewanus* are restricted in each Islands of Hainan and Taiwan respectively (Cheng 1987, Fig. 1).

2.2 Habitat availability

The subspecies of *canorus* can be found in all kinds of habitats under the forests in the foothills. The altitude distribution ranges are varied from sea level at flatlands to 1500 meters in mountain areas. Suitable habitat for the subspecies of *taewanus* is shrubs and meadows below 700 meter above sea level in the Island of Taiwan (Sun 1999, Personal communication).

The Hwamei is a famous song bird and often seen at branches of trees and makes a beautiful song. The birds breed one or two times a year depending on the geographical distribution. Nests were found at ground and also in shrubs and small trees 3 cm to 2 meters above the ground in the period of April to July (Wu et al. 1986, Luo et al. 1989). There were 3 to 5 eggs in each nest and 58.8% of eggs were successfully hatched, among them only 75% of the nestlings could be raised to the age of flying. The ratio of chicks to adults at postnesting period was 1:1.24 in Qingling mountain, Shaanxi province (Luo et al. 1989).

2.3 Population status

According to the data provided by authority of Hubei province, the population size of Hwamei there is estimated about 1.0 to 1.2 millions. No any reliable data on the population sizes are reported in its other distribution regions. Most wildlife biologists got the feeling that Hwamei was relative common bird from their casual field observation. The population size of subspecies *taewanus* is relatively stable for years and is estimated over 10,000 individuals (Sun 1999, Personal communication).

2.4 Population trends

Hwamei was described very common at the year of 1960s to 1970s in its distribution regions in the published local Avifauna. At present the bird is still in a good number in some of its distribution regions and it is not threatened from extinct. However, the wild population of Hwamei is faced a great hunting pressure produced from both domestic and international requirement of trade. It is estimated that about one million birds of Hwamei were kept in cages in China.

Usually, adults were capture by nets near their nest sites and chickens were picked up from nests. Most adult females captured by nets would be killed and sold as meat in markets since bird keepers preferred males to females. It was estimated that about 80 females would be killed whenever 100 males were capture from field. About 25% to 30% of the captured birds would die in the duration of raising, transporting, and selling, and mortality of birds in cages would be reached to 50%.

2.5 Geographic trends

The geographic distribution region of Hwamei in China was not changed very much by provinces, but the local distribution regions of the birds in each province would be reduced since the suitable habitat was shrunk due to the process of deforests and agricultural encroachment.

2.6 Role of the species in the ecosystem

No any scientific research on roles played by Hwamei in the ecosystem has been conducted. Previous observation on food habit revealed that Hwamei fed on many food items of insects and plant seeds. The birds mainly fed on insects in the duration of crops growing. Then they switched their food habit to plant seeds after crops were harvested. Insect items composed the most proportions in their food habit (Zheng et al. 1993).

Total 43 stomachs of the birds were checked in Qinling mountain area, Shaanxi province from April to October. Insects and plant seeds composed 70% and 30% of the contents. Beetles were counted as the most items among the insects (Cheng et al. 1973). Moreover, 63 stomachs were checked by biologists in the other distribution region of the birds. Again insects were the most proportions of contents (Cheng et al. 1993).

The conclusion that Hwamei will certainly play some roles in the maintenance of ecosystem can be deduced from their food habits. The bird can help plant to spread their seeds and produce a benefits to both crops and forests by feeding on many species of insects.

2.7 Threats

Hwamei is threatened by both habitat reduction and commercial hunting caused by domestic and international trade. The trend of habitat reduction will be improved by the practice of "Project of Nature Forest Protection" which is stated by the State Council. Domestic market requirement for Hwamei is predicted to increase as the proportion of aged people increasing and family size reducing. Hwamei is still threatened by over hunting .

3. Utilization and Trade

As a song bird, Hwamei can make beautiful songs with different melodies. That is why Hwamei become a famous cage bird and is purchased as pet by people. In Beijing about 90% of bird keepers raise more than 2 birds of Hwamei in cages. Surveys on Hwamei trade were made at two large markets named Longtanhu and Guanyuan in Beijing by Bird Society of in 1998 and 1999. Total of 51,625 birds of Hwamei were sold there in 1998. Females made 8-10% of them and chickens were counted to 7000 individuals; 23,900 more birds of Hwamei were traded by June 5th, 1999 (Wang

1999, Personal communication). Considering the birds sold in other small pet bird markets, the numbers of Hwamei traded each year in Beijing were estimated over 100 000 conservatively. Most of the birds sold in Beijing came from provinces of Sichuan, Jiangxi, Hunan, Hubei, Zhejiang.

Shanghai is another big domestic market of Hwamei. Around 100,000 birds of the species are traded there each year (Shanghai Office of CITES, China, 1999). There are thirty cities in which the population are over one million in China. Assuming the trade amounts of Hwamei in each of the cities were only one quarter of 100,000, the total trade birds would reach to 700 000-800 000. The requirement of Hwamei in the domestic markets would be roughly estimated one million individuals. Plus 25% of the captured birds died in the handling process, and females sold as meat, total of 1.7 to 1.8 millions of the birds would be taken from wild population each year. Moreover, China also provided an amount of Hwamei each year to meet the international market requirement.

Hwamei sold at two bird markets in Beijing in 1998 - 1999 by months

year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1998	21	317	460	9400	8200	482	410	365	310	520	225	940
	9	5	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	
1999	21	408	420	6020	5400	210	?	?	?	?	?	?
	00	0	0			0						
	50	725	880	1542	1360	692	410	365	310	520	225	940
	00	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

3.1 National utilization

Huamei as by far is the most widespread bird in trade in China. The bird market could be seen in each cities in China. In Hubei province the trade amount of Hwamei at local markets were estimated 10000 to 20000 birds each year (Authority Agency of Wildlife Administration 1999). At present no data are available about the numbers of Hwamei that captured and trade in each provinces. Not all the birds sold in the market were necessarily legal hunted.

3.2 Legal international trade

Hwamei is an international popular pet, especially in the southeast Asia. TRAFFIC made a market survey recently in Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore. More than 250 individuals of Huamei were counted in 72 pet shops. The price was varied from \$20 in Indonesia to \$1170 in Singapore depending on its song ability (Information provided by R. Parry-Jones, 1999). China authorized exports since 1990 and total of 125,526 birds were authorized to export to the United States, Belgium, and Singapore by the end of August, 1998. After then no any permits were issued for exports. China authorized exports in recent years as follows:

Year	1990	1991	1992	1994	1995	1996	1997	Total
Amounts	2	78301	30261	5002	11450	750	60	125826

Nash (1993) reported that Hong Kong provided AFD health certificates for 42,206 birds for re-export in the duration from 1990 to 1992. Again health certificates were authorized for 144,448 more bird from 1993 to 1996 (Data provided by AFD Health Certificates for Re-export of *G. canorus*). In some cases not all the birds certified health were successfully exported. However, the health certificates could be an index of trade in Hong Kong. Belgium, France, Indonesia, Italy and Thailand were the countries which imported the large numbers of Hwamei from Hong Kong.

3.3 Illegal trade

Hwamei is not legally protected, therefore it is hardly to find any records of illegal international trade. There is a possibility that the individuals of Hwamei were mixed with other species and exported abroad.

3.4 Actual or potential trade impacts

As a heavily traded species, the Hwamei's status may be affected. The requirement of international pet markets may have caused the possibility of illegal trade. Moreover, females killing during capture will produce negative influence on the wild populations.

3.5 Captive breeding (outside country of origin)

No any captive breed of Hwamei were reported yet.

4. Conservation and Management

4.1 Legal status

4.1.1 National

A quota system for capture is under the consideration by the authority of China to provide protection for the species. Hwamei is protected in Henan and Hubei provinces.

4.1.2 International

No any protective measures have been taken, yet.

4.2 Species management

4.2.1 Population monitoring

Not any effective system has been established for wildlife population monitoring in China, yet. However, field survey for wildlife resources is conducting in China right now, and monitor system for wildlife resources will be considered after that. The authority of China will consider the possibility to integrate the population monitor program of Hwamei to the monitor system.

4.2.2 Habitat conservation

The State Council has decide to initiate the Project of Natural Forest Conservation. That will improve the trend of habitat loss.

4.2.3 Management measures

Law enforcement will be conducted to detect the illegal trade in China. In the meanwhile, captive breeding is encouraged to provide quantitative birds for the requirement of both domestic and international trade as soon as possible.

4.3 Control measures

4.3.1 International trade

China has no longer issued any permits for exports of Hwamei since August, 1998. In the meantime efforts are taken to detect any smuggle. China suggests that all the countries which import Hwamei should enforce their regulations to stop smuggling.

4.3.2 Domestic measures

As listed above.

5. Information on Similar Species

No comments.

6. Other Comments

None.

7. Additional remarks

None.

8. References

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