



The trade in songbirds and conservation management in Suriname

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Common songbirds species in Suriname and their conservation status



- *Cyanocompsa cyanides* – Cage species
- *Tangara punctata* – Cage species
- *Sporophila schistacea* - Cage species
- *Sporophila americana* - Cage species
- *Sporophila lineola* - Cage species
- *Sporophila bouvronides* - Cage species
- *Sporophila minuta* - Cage species
- *Sporophila plumbea* - Cage species
- *Sporophila castaneiventris* - Cage species
- *Caryothraustes canadensis* - Cage species
- *Oryzoborus angolensis* – 2nd Most popular songbird within Suriname - Cage species
- *Oryzoborus crassirostris* – Protected species by the State Order on Game 2002 – Most popular songbird in Suriname



Law and Trade

- According to the Game Law the cage species have an open- and closed hunting season.
- Trappers with a license of the Suriname Forest Service are granted permission to trap the cage species. In the game State Order of 2002 a bag limit was established. Except of the wildlife exporters, there is no possession limit regulated for the common trapper/ hunter.
- The *Oryzoborus angolensis* (cage species) and the *Oryzoborus crassirostris* (protected species) are not on the export quota list (wild taken) of Suriname.



Trade destinations



- The common trade (export) destinations of the songbirds on the export quota list are:
- The USA
- Kuwait
- Czeck Republic
- Uzbekistan

Import:

- With purpose “B” (Breeding) some *Oryzoborus crassirostris* were imported from the USA and from Brazil.



Illegal trade



- There is an annual demand for songbirds from mostly Surinamese origins in the Netherlands.
- According to EU legislation the applicants are referring to EU regulations that they are allowed to ship 5 (five) birds for personal purposes. However there are veterinary requirements from the EU on which the applicants can not met, mainly because of their relative short stay in Suriname.
- There is a demand in the Netherlands of songbirds from Suriname and annual by the end and after the spring season, some smugglers are being caught in Suriname as well in the Netherlands.
- The smuggled species are not listed in the CITES Appendices, however there is a national (domestic) protection of these bird species.



Domestic demand

- There is demand on national level. This demand is driven by a national trade, for which the consumers are the following groups of persons:
- Hobbyist
- Songbirds competition participants
- Occasionally songbirds breeders
- Pet shop holders
- Indigenous and tribal communities members.



Captive breeding of songbirds in Suriname



- The songbirds culture is something that started more than a century ago and is now recognized as a sport within Suriname. According to our findings this started with the first immigrants from China to Suriname in 1858.
- Right now we have 3 organized songbirds competitions in Suriname, which occurs under the auspices of the “Songbird Association”, “Songbird Association Nickerie” and the “Association of Bird Lovers”.
- Since 2002 we have registered more than 30 breeders of songbirds within Suriname.
- The breeders are mostly interested in breeding the *Oryzoborus crassirostris* and the *Oryzoborus angolensis*. These species are the most attractive because of the whistle sound they can produce, as well for the economic value.



Some problems within the captive breeding sector



- Because of not being able to sell their birds on the domestic and international market, the traders are not letting their birds mate as they were doing a couple of years ago.
- They can not travel with their birds to international songbirds competitions (e.g. the Netherlands and Italy), due to restrictions set by the EU and implemented by the airlines.





Management of songbirds in trade



- The management of the songbirds is done mainly by the Game Law and the Game State Orders 2002 and 2009 and the Nature Protection Law. Nature reserves are being established according to the Nature Protection Law. Within the nature reserves of Suriname it is strictly prohibited to hunt, fish, collect plants, seeds, stones etc. Meanwhile de Game Law is based on categories of species with species which are totally protected and species for which there are an open- and closed hunting season.
- For the bred in captivity, the breeders need to get a special license from the Suriname Forest Service in doing so. For getting this special license they need to submit a request letter, the location where the breeding activities will take place and a business plan. The Suriname Forest Service will start with the required inspections (this could take a couple of months before the application is approved. Finally if all the boxes are ok the applicant will get a special license with general conditions and if the circumstances are requiring it they will get some special conditions as well.
- The bred results are submitted at the Bred in Captivity unit within the Permit Section of the Suriname Forest Service. The submitted data is being inspected by the officials of the “Bred in Captivity unit”, when approved these data are being registered within the Permit Section.



Enforcement



- The Suriname Forest Service used to have field stations along all arterial roads which are leading to the interior. Right now there are only a few stations which still exist and also be staffed. However this is not happening on a permanent basis.
- The game wardens who are the first liners for the enforcement are as much as possible doing the patrolling on the arterial roads and markets.
- At the border stations and the international airports we have Port Health Inspectors (interdepartmental), who are mainly focused on the smuggle of wildlife species.
- The general police also enforce these laws if they encounter such cases.
- A violation of these laws is also an economic offense. The offender is being jailed and a fine is being paid in most of the cases.



Regulatory priorities



- To do an NDF of the wild populations of songbirds.
- To do a new inventory of the birds which are in stock at the breeders and the pet shops.
- Conduct a workshop with the breeders of songbirds.
- Establish a possession limit for keeping songbirds.
- Use the results obtained from the workshop to adjust our policy where necessary.
- Only bred in captivity individuals of the *Oryzoborus angolensis* and the *Oryzoborus crassirostris* will be subject of the international trade, meanwhile for the other songbirds species the wild caught will be allowed for the trade.
- Create the preconditions that only hatched F2 and F2+ songbirds of especially the *Oryzoborus angolensis* and *Oryzoborus crassirostris* may be traded internationally.
- Guidance is required in releasing confiscated/ seized songbirds into the nature.



Thank you for your attention!

(Some pictures of a songbird competition)

