

AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

Other Proposals

A. PROPOSAL

Transfer of Amazona tucumana from Appendix II to Appendix I.

B. PROPONENT

The Kingdom of Denmark.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Aves
12. Order: Psittaciformes
13. Family: Psittacidae
14. Species: Amazona tucumana Cabanis, 1885
15. Common Names: English: alder amazon, Tucuman amazon
French: amazone de Tucuman
Spanish: Amazona tucumana
16. Code Numbers:

2. Biological Data

21. Distribution: The alder parrot is restricted and endemic to the montane forest of the East Andean slope from Chuouisaca in Bolivia to Tucuman in Argentina descending to adjacent lowlands from August to October or November. After a strong recent decline it may presently occur only in southern Salta and in Catamarca and Tucuman Provinces in Argentina. Although further survey is needed to verify its disappearance from the northern part of its range.

Bolivia: Found breeding in 1938 at 2,500 m, 25 km East of Padilla in Chuouisaca. One collected in 1925 at 1,700 m on Sierra de Condor in Tarija. Eight taken in 1936 at 350 m at Fortin Campero and one at Rio Lipeo in Tarija. No definite records since, despite recent visits by ornithologists in the area (Krabbe, unpubl.). 1,375 birds were exported from Bolivia in 1978-84, but may well have originated in Argentina (Krabbe, unpubl.).

Argentina: In Jujuy, the alder parrot was collected in 1901 and 1956 at Calilepua and in 1906 at 500 m at Libertador General San Martin. The species may never have been common in this province, and the species could not be found during visits to Yala area (Nores & Yzurieta, 1984). In Salta Province flocks have been reported to come down in numbers from the mountains early October to the vicinity of Oran (Hoy, 1968: however label data on a specimen collected near Salta city suggests that Oran by mistake is mentioned instead of Salta). The stronghold of the

species appears to be in Parque Nacional Finca del Rey in Cerros de la Cresta del Gallo in Salta, where 1,500 birds were counted in September 1976, and apparently equally many in 1977 (Nores & Yzurieta, 1984). In Tucuman Province it has been collected in 1906 on the East side of Sierra de Medina, and at a number of sites on the East slope of Nevados del Aconouija (Raco, Taficillo, San Javier, Villa Nounues, Cumbre San Pablo); and in El Clavillo in the adjacent Catamarca Province. In the lowlands it has been collected from August to October at Inpenio Santa Ana (1902) and Concepción (1925, 1929). Recent records are from along the road to Tafi del Vale, West of Monteros, at ca. 1,000 m. (many scattered pairs in December, 1982; R.S. Ridgely), Raco (40 seen), San Javier (50-60 seen in one afternoon) and El Calvillo (200 seen in December 1983) (Nores & Yzurieta, 1984 and pers. comm.).

22. Population: The bird is certainly rare today, within its restricted range (Fjeldsa & Krabbe, 1989). Krabbe (unpubl.) places it in the category "Endangered?". If, indeed this parrot is extinct in Bolivia and in Jujuy and North Salta Provinces in Argentina, and if it, like the closely related red-spectacled amazon Amazona pretrei gathers in one or a few large roosts containing the entire population in non-breeding season (Belton, 1984), then the 15,000 birds counted in September 1976 in Parque Nacional Pinca del Rey may comprise the entire population of Salta Province. At Finca del Rey, 300-400 or perhaps more were seen in November 1984, while in November 1986 over several dozens were seen at the same site (R.S. Ridgely in lit. to ICBP). It is not known whether many still are found on Sierra de Medina in Tucuman. On the East slope of Navados de Aconquiija certainly no more than a few thousand birds are found at most.
23. Habitat and Ecology: The alder parrot is normally found in dense alder Alnus acuminata forest at elevations of 1,500-2,600 m, but during the non-breeding season it often descends to 1,000 m or even down to 350 m where it may raid mulberry trees Morus sp. in October and November, sometimes even entering cities (Hoy, 1968; Fjeldsa & Krabbe, 1989; Krabbe, unpubl.). The species has also been reported from a flat area with burned forest in September (Bond and Meyer de Schauensee, 1943) and frequenting coniferous Podocarpus trees (R.S. Ridgely in litt.), which seem to be rather local in the range. It is shy and seldoms allows a close approach. Data from the closely related (conspecific) red-spectacled amazon Amazona pretrei (Belton, 1984), and an observation of 1,500 individuals in September (Nores and Yzurieta, 1984), suggests that the entire population may gather in one or a few roosting sites during the non-breeding season. Although not specified in any publication, it appears that the principal food source of the alder parrot is seeds of alder (Alnus acuminata). Forshaw & Cooper (1978) note that its food consists of fruits, seeds, berries and probably blossoms and leaf-buds, obtained in the treetops.

The breeding season is presumably January to March: since no specimens have been collected in this period, and the birds are presumed to breed in areas of difficult access in the Alnus forest towards 2,600 m; however, flocks have been seen in April. A record from Misiones is undoubtedly erroneous (Ridgely, 1981).

24. Threats: The alder parrot used to be very rare in captivity and was not favoured as a cage-bird, even in its range area. Its possible disappearance from Bolivia may be related to habitat destruction (Ridgely, 1981). In Argentina it was thought to be safe, as there is much habitat left, and as several former nesting areas are protected as national parks (Ridgely, 1981).

However, its tendency to gather in communal roosts clearly renders it vulnerable, and with nearly 7,500 birds caught for the cage-bird trade in 1984, 1985 and 1986 (Anon. 1988, Inskipp et al. 1988) it may be seriously threatened.

3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization:

32. Legal International Trade: In 1984, 1985 and 1986 no less than 7,465 individuals were exported from Argentina. This total is so high that it necessarily must have had a strong impact on the population status. Most probably, the taking of birds for the cage-bird market is the main cause of the species decline.

Import into EEC in 1986 was 950 alder parrots (A. tucumana) and in 1987 the number was 633 (not all countries have yet supplied data). In 1988 Denmark imported 83 alder parrots.

33. Illegal Trade

See under 41. National Protection status.

34. Potential Trade Threats:

4. Protection Status

41. National: Several areas where the species nests in Argentina have been protected as national parks (Ridgely, 1981). Large roosts also occurred in at least one of these parks, namely Parque Nacional Finca del Rey in Salta Province (Nores & Yzurieta, 1984). Furthermore, the species is not included in a recent Argentinian list of species which are considered harmful, effective from 14 March 1986 (CITES Notification to the Parties, No. 412, 28 November 1986). It is now protected in Bolivia, where exports have been banned since May 1984 (Inskipp, et al., 1988).

42. International:

43. Additional Protection Needs: The species' occurrence in Bolivia needs investigation, and Bolivia's last Podocarpus forest should be protected (Ridgely, 1981). In view of its serious recent decline for the cagebird industry ICBP's Parrot Specialist Group strongly recommends the transfer from Appendix II to I.

5. Information on Similar Species

Amazona tucumana was treated as a subspecies of A. pretrei until they were reported to occur sympatrically in Misiones Province, Argentina (Zotta, 1937). However, with no other records from the ornithologically well-known Misiones Province, it seems plausible that this record is erroneous (Ridgely, 1981), so they could still be conspecific

according to the long-persisting tendency for lumping in ornithology. Awaiting a clarification of the present dispute over the species concept, the biochemical evidence, the alder parrot retains its status as a full species. Red-spectacled parrot and alder parrots resemble one another, but can safely be told apart by the coloration on forehead and tail.

6. Comments from Countries of Origin

Not yet received.

7. Additional Remarks

8. References

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