



NDF WORKSHOP
WG 6 – Birds
CASE STUDY 4 SUMMARY
Cacatua sulphurea
Country – **Indonesia**
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CASE STUDY: CACATUA SULPHUREA

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The Yellow-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua sulphurea* is one of Indonesia's most striking and popular parrots, which has had a long association with its people and culture. There are four subspecies of *Cacatua sulphurea*. It is endemic to Indonesia and Timor Leste, where it was formerly common throughout Nusa Tenggara (from Bali to Timor), on Sulawesi and its satellite islands, and the Masalembu Islands (in the Java Sea). *Cacatua sulphurea* is one of the Indonesian parrots threatened by trade and habitat degradation. Although there can be no doubt that habitat loss must have contributed substantially to the overall decline in the species population, the blame for the precipitous drop in numbers in the past quarter of the 20th century lies entirely with unsustainable exploitation for trade whether domestic or international. Inbreeding and stochastic events are likely to threaten very small and very isolated relict populations such as those on Masakambing and Nusa Penida. This bird is currently classified as a *Critically Endangered* species.

For many years *Cacatua sulphurea* was traded in large numbers for international pet market. In 1981 *C. sulphurea* was listed in CITES Appendix II. Indonesia regulates the trade in wild caught birds through the allocation of capture quotas. The total number of birds taken from the wild in the period 1981-1992 could have been as high as 190,000. The actual numbers of individuals caught in the wild during this period must be higher than these figures since mortality, domestic trade and any illegal trade must be added to export and import figures. There are many constraint affecting the making of non-detriment findings by the Scientific Authority (SA) in Indonesia, including a shortage of funds to allow the SA to work more independently and a lack of personnel with a strong biological background. In addition, there is a lack of complete and centralized information on the levels of harvest and use of species. The current system of national export monitoring was likely to be relatively unreliable considering the lack of knowledge regarding levels of illegal trade.

Indonesia subsequently imposed a zero export quota and prohibition of hunting of the species in 1994, backed up in subsequent years by local (regency-level) legislation. Since 1999 all sub-species of *C. sulphurea* is fully protected in Indonesia. However, it cannot be assumed that the problem is solved. Since NDF was implemented and a zero quota caught birds was established in Indonesia, there has been increase of international trade in supposedly captive-bred birds.

Unfortunately, neither the zero quota nor the EU and US import bans for wild specimens and protected by the Indonesian laws appear to be effective. There is substantial evidence that birds still being taken from the wild, with some then passed on as captive-bred birds for international trade. It seems that illegal trade is a major threat to *Cacatua sulphurea*. Therefore, since 2002, it was listed in Appendix I of CITES.