



Ten key facts about the African Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus*

1. *The Grey Parrot has a large range in tropical Africa*
The African Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* has a wide range in the lowland rainforests of tropical Africa, covering 23 countries in all*.
2. *It occurs as two subspecies which may be separate species*
Two subspecies are currently recognised that may warrant specific status: *P. e. erithacus* and *P. e. timneh*, the latter occurring in the western part of its range only, from Guinea-Bissau to western Côte d'Ivoire.
3. *The species still has a large population overall, but one subspecies is scarcer*
Originally the Grey Parrot was a very common species and, although less numerous today, it still has a large population, estimated by BirdLife to lie somewhere between 680,000 and 13,000,000 individuals (but note that the population of the subspecies *timneh* is relatively small, estimated at only between 120,000 and 259,000 birds).
4. *Large numbers of Grey Parrots are captured for trade & exported with CITES permits*
The species is heavily traded owing to its remarkable ability to mimic the human voice: over 359,000 wild-caught birds were reported in trade by CITES Parties from 1994 to 2003, with major exporting countries being Cameroon (44% of the reported trade during this period), Democratic Republic of Congo (33%), Congo (9%), Côte d'Ivoire (5%), Liberia, Sierra Leone (both 3%) and Guinea (2%).
5. *Actual numbers captured are higher than those reported owing to mortality & illegal trade*
Officially recorded numbers in international trade are *minimum* levels, owing to mortality caused by capture and pre-export confinement and reported high levels of illegal trade in many range states. For example, pre-mortality estimates across several countries have been estimated at usually around 30-40%, before taking into account mortality on export flights and in quarantine in importing countries.
6. *The species is declining in the majority of range countries*
The species is reported to be declining across much of its range including Burundi (now very rare and no reported exports), Cameroon, Ghana (much reduced population and no reported exports), Guinea, Guinea-Bissau (mainland populations extirpated and negligible exports), Kenya (no viable population and negligible exports), Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda (very rare and no reported exports), São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda (rare and negligible exports) and parts of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo (15 countries, 65% of range states).
7. *The species may now be globally threatened*
Although the species is currently evaluated as "Least Concern" on the IUCN Red List by BirdLife International, overall population declines may now be steep enough to warrant at least Near Threatened status.
8. *Trade & habitat loss are the key threats*
Trapping for the international wild bird trade has been implicated in the majority of reported declines in range countries, with habitat loss also having significant impacts in the western and eastern edges of the range.
9. *There appears to be no systematic monitoring in any of the range countries*
No range country is known to have a systematic population monitoring system in place to support non-detriment findings and hence quota allocations. This is despite significant trade volumes, reported widespread declines, and concern regarding the effects of international trade on this species since a previous CITES Significant Trade Review in 1988.
10. *Current trade levels are not sustainable*
Preliminary calculations by BirdLife International indicate that the current trade levels for the Grey Parrot are unsustainable, and therefore likely to be causing significant detriment to the species. Sustainable export levels may be only around 10% of current mean annual reported exports, with the majority of range states having potential sustainable harvests too low to be economically exploitable.

BirdLife International is concerned that the African Grey Parrot may now be globally threatened as result of on-going declines. BirdLife urgently recommends a variety of measures to halt these declines and offers to work with the CITES Secretariat and Parties to save this species from extinction.

1. *Consider a moratorium or quota reduction & export suspensions in some countries*
Consider a full moratorium on international trade in the Grey Parrot or, at least, significant quota reduction in Cameroon (the biggest current exporter) with export suspension in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (all major exporters and considered as of "Urgent concern" by the CITES Significant Trade Review in 2006), until scientific research and monitoring can demonstrate sustainable exportable levels.
2. *Establish monitoring & scientifically justified export quotas in all major exporting countries*
Establish systematic population monitoring and scientifically justified export quotas in all major exporting states, including those listed above and Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo (considered "Possible concern"), and Equatorial Guinea (also "Possible concern") where there has been a recent increase in exports.
3. *Routinely curtail quotas if exceeded*
If necessary, routinely curtail quotas to compensate for levels exceeded in previous years.

* Range countries where the Grey Parrot occurs = Angola, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, São Tomé and Príncipe, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda.

4. *Conduct investigations in selected countries* Investigate the situation in Togo and São Tomé and Príncipe: although both are considered “Least concern” in the Significant Trade Review, in the case of the former there appears to be no viable population of Grey Parrots yet exports continue at low levels, and in the case of the latter a continuation of exports could lead to significant pressure on already declining populations.
5. *Review the taxonomic & threat status of the Grey Parrot, & treat quotas for 'subspecies' separately* Support a review of the taxonomic status of the subspecies *timneh* and the Red List status of both taxa together and separately and, regardless of the outcome of the taxonomic review, treat *timneh* and *erithacus* separately under CITES regulations (i.e. no export should be allowed without “subspecific” determination as is required under EU legislation) because of their likely differing threat status.
6. *Research the biology of the Grey Parrot* Support independent research on biological parameters and pre-export mortality to inform population estimates and trends, and support scientifically justified quotas.
7. *Investigate exports of wild-caught birds from non-range states* Rescind the export quota from Senegal (not a range country) and investigate trade in “wild-caught” birds from other non-range states, e.g. United States, South Africa, the Netherlands, Belgium and Chad, to determine whether illegal trade or misreporting is involved.
8. *Investigate illegal trade in all range countries* Investigate reputed illegal trade in all range states, but specifically in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo, and notably in Nigeria where illegal exports, and possibly imports, are believed to be substantial and requiring attention.
9. *Increase vigilance in Middle East* Increase vigilance regarding reputed illegal imports in Middle Eastern countries, e.g. Saudi Arabia.
10. *Improve adherence to CITES legislation generally* Improve law enforcement and reporting throughout range states, and adherence to CITES legislation (notably the reported use of fraudulent documentation).

Ten BirdLife contributions

1. *Monitor Grey Parrots at IBAs* Identify Important Bird Areas where the species occurs and establish monitoring at these sites (*African BirdLife Partners*).
2. *Collect field data* Collect field data on biological parameters and pre-export mortality to improve baseline information (*African BirdLife Partners*).
3. *Investigate illegal trade in Nigeria* Contribute to the investigation of the reported illegal trade in range states, notably in Nigeria (*African BirdLife Partners, including Nigerian Conservation Foundation*).
4. *Facilitate collaboration amongst African range states* Facilitate regional collaboration amongst African range states in the management and conservation of the Grey Parrot, including establishing harvest and export quotas cooperatively, tightening border controls, collaborating on research activities, agreeing minimum standards for trappers/exports, harmonizing national legislation, and reviewing progress annually, etc (*African BirdLife Secretariat and Partners*).
5. *Provide information & training in Africa* Provide information and training to government scientific and management authorities in Africa (*African BirdLife Partners*).
6. *Provide information & training in Middle East* Provide information and training to government scientific and management authorities in Middle East (*Middle Eastern BirdLife Partners*).
7. *Review taxonomic & threat status* Undertake a taxonomic review of *timneh* and reevaluation of IUCN Red List status of both taxa together and separately (*Global BirdLife Secretariat*).
8. *Develop a model for estimating quotas* Develop a model for establishing scientifically justified quotas based on pre-existing analyses supplemented by evidence from the field including new survey information, data on illegal trade volumes, demographic data, and data on population densities in deciduous forest, mangroves, and swamp forest for each country (*Global BirdLife Secretariat*).
9. *Collaborate with other organisations* Cooperate and collaborate with other research and conservation initiatives involving the Grey Parrot wherever possible (*African and Global BirdLife Secretariat and Partners*).
10. *Advocate recommendations widely* Publicise the plight of the Grey Parrot worldwide and advocate recommendations developed through the Significant Trade Review process (*African and Global BirdLife Secretariat and Partners*).

BirdLife International is a partnership of people for birds and the environment. Together we are the leading authority on the status of birds and their habitats. Over ten million people support the BirdLife Partnership of national non-governmental conservation organisations and local networks. Partners** work together on shared priorities, programmes and policies, learning from each other to achieve real conservation results. The BirdLife Partnership promotes sustainable living as a means of conserving birds and all other forms of biodiversity. The Partners urge both importing and exporting countries to implement a range of practical, national mechanisms, as well as using the provisions of CITES, to ensure that no bird species is threatened as a result of over exploitation. The BirdLife Secretariat acts as the Red List Authority for birds for the IUCN Red List and coordinates input to annual updates on the status of the world's birds.

** African BirdLife Partners or Affiliates in the range countries where the Grey Parrot occurs = Burundi (Association Burundaise pour la Protection des Oiseaux), Cameroon (Cameroon Biodiversity Conservation Society), Ghana (Ghana Wildlife Society), Kenya (NatureKenya), Liberia (The Society for Conservation of Nature in Liberia), Nigeria (Nigerian Conservation Foundation), Rwanda (Association pour la Conservation de la Nature au Rwanda), Sierra Leone (Conservation Society of Sierra Leone), Tanzania (Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania) and Uganda (NatureUganda).



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