

planned for 2017, in another region of Africa so as to facilitate attendance from other nations.

New data are already being received. In 2005 a possible spotted-necked otter spraint was found at Lake Manyara, Tanzania, and the occurrence of the species there has now been confirmed by a sighting in 2015. Spotted-necked otters have also been seen at Lake Kivu in Rwanda, and otter signs have been found at Liparamba Game Reserve, Tanzania, although as yet the species has not been confirmed.

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HUGUES AKPONA *Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Cotonou, Benin*

JAN REED-SMITH *African Otter Outreach Project, Lake Odessa, Michigan, USA*

GRACE YOXON *International Otter Survival Fund, Skye, UK*  
Email [grace@otter.org](mailto:grace@otter.org)

### **Increasing exploitation of grey parrots in eastern DRC drives population declines**

In 2012 the grey parrot *Psittacus erithacus* was categorized as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as a result of ongoing population declines driven by the global captive bird trade and habitat loss. Although the majority of range states have now ceased export of grey parrots, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) maintain export quotas agreed under Annex II of CITES.

DRC has emerged in recent years as the largest exporter of wild-caught grey parrots. Data from Maniema and Orientale provinces indicate surging levels of exploitation since 2010, with increased trapping driving population declines. The trade in parrots is solely for export. Numbers of birds shipped indicate that CITES export quotas are probably being dramatically exceeded.

Monitoring of grey parrot aggregations in the region's Tshuapa-Lomami-Lualaba landscape was initiated by the Lukuru Foundation and the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation in 2010. Monitoring includes surveys of communal nesting areas, roosts and forest clearings where birds descend to ingest soil and water. Interviews with 20 trappers and traders have been conducted to date, with 56 direct observations of trapping, purchase and transport of captured birds. Since 2013 air shipment data have been collected at the provincial trading hubs of Kisangani and Kindu.

Since 2010, 12 of 18 known parrot aggregations within the monitored area have been exploited by trappers. Parrot

numbers have declined at five of these aggregations since 2012. Trappers abandoned three exploited sites, first monitored in 2013, after parrot numbers collapsed. This includes a nesting area that had previously been lightly harvested by local communities for 35 years.

The recent increase in trapping is driven by the arrival of trappers and traders from outside the area. In 2015 six aggregations were exploited for the first time. All were exploited by teams coming into the area from other provinces, where they reported declining yields in previously exploited areas. This suggests that increasing exploitation in eastern DRC is part of a wider phenomenon of unsustainable harvesting in the region.

Parrots are shipped from Kisangani and Kindu to agents based primarily in Kinshasa who then export the birds. Shipping records suggest that exports probably exceed the annual national CITES quota of 5,000 individuals. Recorded air shipments from Kindu and Kisangani over a 4-month period (May–August) in 2015 indicate a minimum of 6,632 birds were shipped from the two cities, averaging > 400 per week.

Current regulations are failing to control trade and are leading to unsustainable exploitation. Although some of the country's wildlife regulations are propagated at the national level, management of fauna is decentralized to the provinces. Maniema and Orientale provinces were unprepared for the massive increase in parrot exploitation. They have responded, however, to reports on the impact of the trade. On 7 August 2015 Maniema's environment ministry imposed a 6-month moratorium on captures, including a ban on all air shipments from Kindu. Both Maniema and Orientale have asked for assistance to monitor aggregations, and both provinces are considering proposals to protect important aggregations.

Provincial efforts to manage parrots will require significant international support. Management is unlikely to be effective if international demand for wild-caught parrots remains unchecked. There is a need for an immediate moratorium on exports of grey parrots from DRC.

JOHN HART, TERESE HART, LEON SALUMU, ANDREW BERNARD and ROBERT ABANI *Lukuru Foundation, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo*

ROWAN MARTIN *World Parrot Trust, Hayle, Cornwall, UK, and Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa*  
E-mail [rowan.o.martin@gmail.com](mailto:rowan.o.martin@gmail.com)

### **Recent advances in combating illegal ivory trade in China**

Illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, in particular ivory trafficking, continues to pose a threat to the survival