

# *Rehabilitation of Confiscated Sumba Cockatoo and Other Parrots on Sumba Island, Indonesia*

## Publication Report

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*The entire Yellow-crested Cockatoo species (all of the sub-species including Sumba Cockatoo. Critically endangered in the BirdLife International's Threatened Birds of Asia. The main threat to the species is catching for trade. There is a local demand, and increasing demands from market in-country and internationally for pets or zoo animals (PHKA/LIPI/BirdLife International, 1998).*

Sumba Island is the third largest island in East Nusa Tenggara Province, with an area of 10 902 km<sup>2</sup>. It is one of Indonesia's driest and least developed areas. The remaining forest covers only about 6.5% of the island. Sumba has been identified as a priority area for global biodiversity conservation by virtue of its high level of endemism. It is one of 221 Endemic Bird Areas worldwide, and has eight species of birds found in nowhere else in the world including the Sumba Hornbill *Aceros everetti*. As well as *Cacatua sulphurea citrinocristata* the island has 4 parrot species: The Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus fortis*, Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus cornelia*, Red-cheeked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi floresianus*, and Great-billed Parrot *Tanygnathus megalorynchos sumbensis*.

*Cacatua sulphurea citrinocristata*, referred as "Sumba Cockatoo" is one of 4 sub-species of the critically endangered Yellow-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua sulphurea*, and is only found on Sumba Island. Decline of population due to loss of nesting habitat and catching of birds for trade, gives cause for concern that sub-species will not survive.

In year 2003, with the support from Stewart Metz, BirdLife Indonesia worked together with SSKSDA to rehabilitate confiscated birds and release them back into the wild, training staff in maintenance and care, and provided basic running costs for the first year. This activity has a direct relation with one of the activities that supported by ZGAP, i.e patrol in trapping locations, which is conducted by BirdLife Indonesia and SSKSDA Sumba team.

Up until this period, BirdLife Indonesia together with Sumba KSDA have been carrying out the rehabilitation of 5 cockatoos, 3 Eclectus Parrot, 1 Rainbow Parakeet and 1 Hill Myna (*Gracula religiosa*). 3 cockatoos and 4 Eclectus parrot were released in

Praingkareha village on the 21th August 2003. The event was witnessed by the institutions involved in environmental issues: Bapedalda, KSDA Sumba and Forestry Agency of East Sumba District and BirdLife Indonesia. On the 8th February 2004, 2 Cockatoos were released in the same village and with the same witnesses.

Training to increase the capacity of Sumba SSKSDA staff in handling care and release of the confiscated birds has been done on year 2003. The training was including how to feed, rehabilitate birds, how to build a healthy aviary and prevent introduction of avian diseases.

KSDA (the Natural Resource Conservation Unit) Sumba has participated in every activity conducted by BirdLife Indonesia including patrolling and investigating. The police and forestry service in East and West Sumba have done the same thing. KSDA has shown it ready to act decisively in the field and been ready to monitor the progress of investigations both at Criminal level and Prosecutor level, thus preventing procrastination in handling the case.

There have been also several real examples of the community playing an active role in conserving the Sumba cockatoo and its habitat. Interesting examples are:

- Providing information about the whereabouts of decoy cockatoos or captured cockatoos, cockatoo trappers and traders, and logging activity in the forest. This is a direct result of the awareness activity performed in villages.
- Manurara and Watumbelar Village Conservation Groups, have several times confiscated timber being transported from the National Park area and have confiscated tools such as saw and chainsaw used by illegal logger when logging in the forest. Several villages have also forbidden outsiders from passing through their village to extract timber.
- In some villages Village Conservation Groups carried out activities to plant local trees on their land
- Partner NGOs have also participated in the effort to conserve birds and their habitats on Sumba Island by providing information about activities which will damage bird habitat and by resolving issues in relation to the conservation of bird habitat through assisting village groups of each Partner NGO.

Annual events are usually implemented by Local Government in West Sumba and East Sumba and BirdLife Indonesia seeks opportunities to participate and to encourage public involvement in protecting birds and their habitats such as celebration of World Environment Day every year, the independence day of Republic of Indonesia and carnival held by Local Government of East Sumba Region. BirdLife staff joined a walk for 10 km, from 15.00 - 20.00, carrying a banner reading "Maukah Anda dikurung seperti Burung?" (Do you want to be caged like a bird?). To attract more attention, one staff member rode on a cart built like a cage and distributed posters with the slogan "Stop Penangkapan Kakatua Sumba" (Stop Trapping of Sumba Cockatoo) to people who were watching the carnival along the way. Almost of all section of the public, both children and adult, took part in this carnival, including school children, government agencies, groups from community, arts, religious, sports and special interest groups .

Collaboration with local mass media to promote the release of confiscated birds to the public on Sumba was also implemented by BirdLife Indonesia. 3 articles have been published in local newspapers Wunang Pos and Pos Kupang. The articles were about the legal case, in which 4 cockatoos and 1 Eclectus were confiscated from a bird trader in Waingapu who was sentenced to 7 months in prison and a 5 million rupiah fine. This is the first successful prosecution of a trader on Sumba and the first time such a heavy sentence has been given for a Parrot trading offence in Indonesia. The prosecution was the result of a joint patrol conducted by BirdLife Indonesia KSDA and the police. BirdLife Indonesia organized a petition to support the case, and provided expert witnesses. Other articles were about the condition of birds and the environment in Sumba.

#### 5. Conclusion, recommendations for future actions:

1. KSDA Sumba is expected to continue the work of monitoring and acting on cases of Cockatoo trapping and trading. BirdLife Indonesia has undertaken to assist them in particularly important cases. The challenge is limited budget to for patrolling and the ongoing running costs of the rehabilitation centre.
2. Through the continued strengthening of community forest protection groups, BirdLife Indonesia will encourage involvement of communities in monitoring, reporting and stopping Cockatoo trapping.
3. Training and awareness work will continue, with an emphasis on developing the capacity of communities themselves to promote awareness rather than depending on the projects inputs.
4. The small rehabilitation center will continue to be supported, including releases of birds back to the wild. Sustainability of funding needs to be considered.
5. A central government proposal to build a road through the National Park (which is not supported by local Government) will be resisted through compilation of data on the potential impact.