



NDF WORKSHOP CASE STUDIES  
**WG 6 – Fishes**  
**CASE STUDY 3**  
*Cacatua galerita*  
Country – **NEW ZEALAND**  
Original language – English

## **SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO *CACATUA GALERITA*, EXPORTS FROM NEW ZEALAND, CASE STUDY**

**AUTHOR:**

Rod Hay

New Zealand CITES Scientific Authority

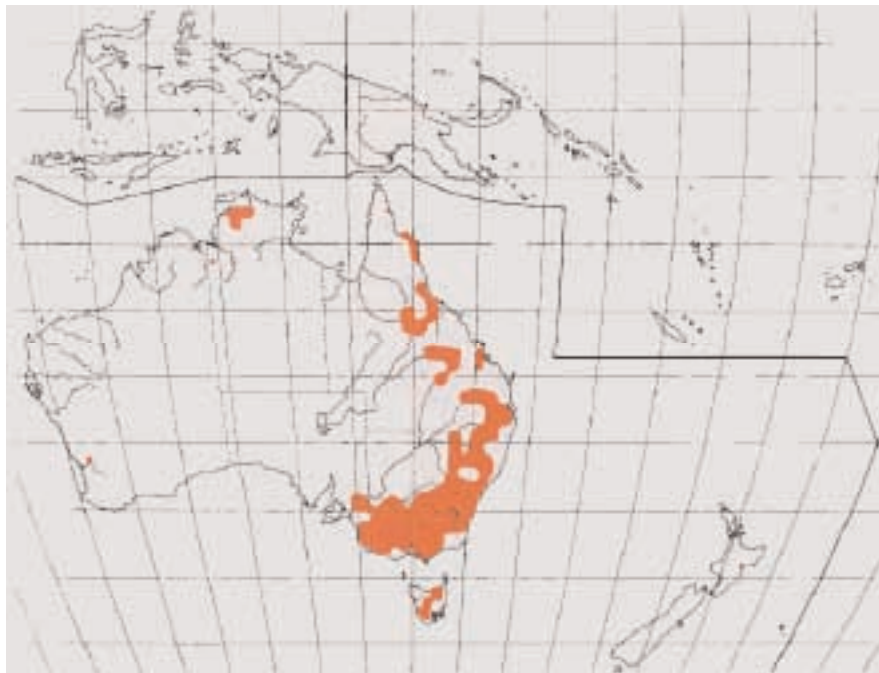
### **I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE TAXA**

#### **1. BIOLOGICAL DATA**

##### **1.1 Scientific and common names**

*Cacatua galerita*

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, White Cockatoo, Greater Sulphur-crested  
Cockatoo



## 1.2 Distribution

From Higgins (Ed.) 1999.

Widespread in north, east and south-eastern Australia (including Tasmania) with feral populations in south-western Australia. Also across most of New Guinea and nearby island groups (West Papuan islands, islands in Geelvink Bay, Kai Is., Aru Is., D'Entrecasteaux and Louisiade Archipelagos, Trobriand Is. and Woodlark Is.).

Introduced to New Zealand as a result of cage escapes but there is also evidence of genuine vagrants arriving from Australia. Scattered established populations are found in the North Island in the Auckland region, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay, Wellington and particularly in the Wanganui district, but birds are occasionally observed throughout. In the South Island there is an established population around Banks Peninsula and occasional records in the Nelson, West Coast and Otago regions (Robertson et.al. 2007).

Also introduced into Singapore.

## 1.3 Biological characteristics

### 1.3.1 *General biology and life history*

This is a gregarious and highly visible species, often seen in pairs, small groups, or flocks of up to hundreds of birds in its Australian range, though flocks are generally much smaller in NZ.

### 1.3.2 *Habitat types*

In Australia, the species generally occurs in wooded areas, including tropical and temperate rainforests, wet and dry woodlands, and shrublands. They also inhabit plantations of *Araucaria* and *Pinus*. In New Zealand they are found in a range of forest types from rainforest to remnant woodlands and pasture.

### 1.3.3 *Role of the species in its ecosystem*

Feed mainly on seeds of grasses and herbs, including cereal and oilseeds, but also fruits, flowers, bulbous roots and insect larvae. Consume significant quantities of crops such as cereals in some areas.

## 1.4 Population

### 1.4.1 *Global population size*

The population has not been formally estimated but, because it inhabits a range between 1,000,000 and 10,000,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and is in much of that range abundant, the population is regarded as substantial.

#### 1.4.2 *Current global population trends*

Probably increasing, as some contractions in range in parts of Australia have been offset by substantial increases in other areas, including in New Zealand

increasing     decreasing     stable     unknown

### 1.5 **Conservation status**

#### 1.5.1 *Global conservation status*

Critically endangered                       Near Threatened  
 Endangered                                       Least concern  
 Vulnerable                                         Data deficient

#### 1.5.2 *National conservation status for the case study country*

Legally protected, but not of conservation concern

#### 1.5.3 *Main threats within case study country*

No Threats  
 Habitat Loss/Degradation (human induced)  
 Invasive alien species (directly affecting the species)  
 Harvesting [hunting/gathering]  
 Accidental mortality (e.g. Bycatch)  
 Persecution (e.g. Pest control)  
 Pollution (affecting habitat and/or species)  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unknown

Natural factors such as periodic drought may cause substantial fluctuations in population in the range states, but the most significant threat in NZ is its pest status in some regions of the country.

## 2. **SPECIES MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE COUNTRY FOR WHICH CASE STUDY IS BEING PRESENTED**

### 2.1 **Management measures**

#### 2.1.1 *Management history*

As an introduced species, with the potential to have damaging effects on agricultural production or on native species they are, in a number of regions of the country, included in statutory Pest Management Strategies.

### 2.1.2 *Purpose of the management plan in place*

Regional pest management strategies in New Zealand are established under the Biosecurity Act 1996 to monitor populations of the species and, where necessary, to regulate or control them in order ensure they do not reach serious pest status.

### 2.1.3 *General elements of the management plan*

In Auckland, for example, they may be controlled as part of integrated site-led pest management programmes. In Manawatu, which covers probably the largest population of the species, it is identified in the Horizons (the Regional Council) Pest Management Strategy as a 'non-statutory problem animal'. This means that it is an undesirable animal, but has not met all the criteria for inclusion as an animal pest. Where values in High Value Conservation Areas (HVCA) are at risk and in other exceptional circumstances these animals may also be controlled by Horizons. HVCA's are important areas of native bush and wildlife habitat in the Region. In the Wellington Strategy, they are listed as a "key native ecosystem pest". In Canterbury they are on a list of "potential pests", for which there is a surveillance project run jointly by the Environment Canterbury (the Regional Council) and the Department of Conservation (government conservation agency).

### 2.1.4 *Restoration or alleviation measures*

No restoration or alleviation measures are in place in NZ.

## 2.2 **Monitoring system**

### 2.2.1 *Methods used to monitor harvest*

The only monitoring carried out in New Zealand is in the context of the pest or potential pest programmes referred to above.

### 2.2.2 *Confidence in the use of monitoring*

While the populations are classified as non-protected, the requirement for robust monitoring programmes is determined according to the species' pest status. While there is a potential for cockatoos to become significant pests in parts of NZ, they have not yet done so to any great degree. The low level surveillance activities that are undertaken are therefore appropriate.

## 2.3 **Legal framework and law enforcement**

Sulphur-crested cockatoos are not protected in New Zealand. They are listed in the 5th Schedule of the Wildlife Act 1953 as "Wildlife not Protected". The Biosecurity Act 1993 enables Pest Management

Strategies (PMSs) to be developed for each of the important pests. These PMSs are to be developed at the regional level (RPMSs) or at the national level (NPMSs).

Under the Trade in Endangered Species Act 1989, which implements CITES in New Zealand, a permit is required for each consignment exported from the country.

### **3. UTILIZATION AND TRADE FOR STATE**

#### **3.1 Type of use and destinations**

Commercial use of this species in NZ is exclusively for the pet trade. A proportion is traded domestically and the rest (probably more than half) are exported. Over the period from 1989 until 2006 a number of countries have imported birds from NZ, with the greatest numbers going to Europe, Japan and the United States of America in that order.

#### **3.2 Harvest**

##### **3.2.1 *Harvesting regime***

Of the 1733 live birds reported as imported from NZ between 1989 and 2006 for which the source is recorded, 36% were bred in captivity and 64% captured in the wild, mostly as nestlings. Because hand-reared birds attract the best prices, nestlings are generally harvested by traders.

##### **3.2.2 *Harvest management/control***

Given the unprotected and potential pest status of this species in NZ, there is little regulation of harvest, except where it is undertaken on public conservation land (government managed reserves), in which case the operator requires a concession and permit.

#### **3.3 Legal and illegal trade levels**

UNEP-WCMC trade statistics record a total of 1923 imports of birds from NZ in the period 1981 to 2006. Over the same period, New Zealand reported the export of a total of 2971 birds. This is believed to be a relatively accurate figure. As indicated above, 60% of exports are to Europe, with 16% going to Japan, around 10% to the US, and the remainder mainly to Mexico, South Africa and countries in Asia.

#### **3.4 Exports from other range states**

The CITES trade database records significant exports of this species from the three states, Australia, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, that make up the natural range of this species.

The past 25 years have seen some 850 recorded exports from Papua New Guinea, almost all of which were of feathers from wild caught birds. There is no information on the impacts of this trade on the wild population, including whether the sources of the feathers were returned to the wild but, given the size and extent of the species in Papua New Guinea, and the fact that only a small number of birds are recorded as original exports, the trade wild birds is not seen as significant.

The largest volume of exports from a range state is from Indonesia, with over 15,500, mostly live birds, over the same period. By a very large majority, these are sourced from captive populations.

From Australia, which constitutes most of the range of the species, some 1300 exports are recorded over the same period, the majority of which were scientific specimens. The remainder were mainly captive bred and for personal use.

## II. NON-DETRIMENT FINDING PROCEDURE (NDFs)

### 1. IS THE METHODOLOGY BASED ON THE IUCN CHECKLIST FOR NDFs?

No it is not. Given that the species is introduced into New Zealand (and is in some regions regarded as a pest), trade in wild-caught and captive-bred birds is regarded as non-detrimental to the populations of the species in the range states (Australia, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia).

### 2. CRITERIA, PARAMETERS AND/OR INDICATORS USED

In order to minimise the chances of parrots being smuggled from Australia or elsewhere, and being declared as captive-bred or wild-caught in New Zealand, each export application for parrots is assessed by both the Scientific and Management Authorities of NZ.

### 3. MAIN SOURCES OF DATA, INCLUDING FIELD EVALUATION OR SAMPLING METHODOLOGIES AND ANALYSIS USED

Each export application must be accompanied by a declaration on the part of the breeder or supplier to the exporter. In the case of captive-bred birds, the identity and location of the parents must be provided in the event that the DNA tests are requested. If, on the advice of the Scientific Authority, the Management Authority requires validation by way of a DNA test, the applicant bears reasonable costs.

In the case of wild-caught birds, the applicant must provide detailed location information so that the capture site may be verified. In both cases, the information is provided as a legal statutory declaration, witnessed by a Justice of the Peace.

**4. EVALUATION OF DATA QUANTITY AND QUALITY FOR THE ASSESSMENT**

In practice, given the relative ease of breeding this species in captivity or capturing it in the wild, DNA tests and field inspections are not normally undertaken, though breeding facilities may be inspected to ensure that their productivity figures are realistic. In the case of less abundant and higher value species, including Appendix I parrots, DNA tests are more frequently required.

**5. MAIN PROBLEMS, CHALLENGES OR DIFFICULTIES FOUND ON THE ELABORATION OF THE NDF**

The process for elaborating the NDF for species such as this is cost-effective and is designed to practically negate the chances of any impact on the populations within the range states. Indeed, the availability of captive or feral populations suitable for trade can reduce the chances of illegal trade from the range countries.

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The definition of Range State needs clarification where a species is being traded from a population that is well outside its natural range.

**REFERENCES**

- HIGGINS, P.J. (Ed.) 1999. *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. Volume 4. Parrots to Dollarbird*. Oxford University Press. Melbourne.
- ROBERTSON, C.J.R., P. Hyvonen, M.J. Fraser and C.R. Pickard. 2007. *Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004*. The Ornithological Society of New Zealand Inc. Wellington.