

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate use

Trade of wild African Grey Parrots banned

Johannesburg, 05 October 2016: BirdLife South Africa welcomes the decision by the Congress of the Parties for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP 17) to increase the level of protection afforded the African Grey Parrot from Appendix II to Appendix I.

In a vote that took place on Sunday morning, the Congress voted to support the motion to increase this parrot's level of protection with a majority of 95 for, 35 against, with 5 abstentions.

The motion was primarily supported by the European Union, North America and a number of West African states who have lost their populations of African Grey Parrots. Most notable among these are Nigeria, which has banned the trade or transport of African Grey Parrots for a number of years now.

The motion was opposed by Cameroon (on the basis that they had a workable conservation management plan in place) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (who are host to the largest remaining African Grey Parrot population in the world) as well as South Africa, who were strongly lobbied by the Parrot Breeders' Association of South Africa (PASA), who are concerned that the ban will adversely impact the pet industry. South Africa is a major source of captive-bred birds for the international market.

It is important to note that this listing results in a ban in the trade of wild-caught birds, but does not affect the trade in captive bred individuals. Commercial breeders will be required to register with CITES (likely through the Department of Environmental Affairs) and be able to vouch for the fact that the birds in which they trade have provenance as captive-bred.

Individual pet owners will not be affected. Should they wish to emigrate with their bird, they will be required to apply for a 'Pet Passport' which will enable them to transport their pet bird without undue problem.

BirdLife South Africa is excited by this decision and look forward to working with the parrot breeding industry, the Department of Environmental Affairs and the CITES Secretariat to ensure that South Africa is in full compliance with the new requirements for trade in this charismatic and threatened bird.

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Notes for Editors

- 1.) The vision of BirdLife South Africa is to see a country and region where nature and people live in greater harmony, more equitably and sustainably.
- 2.) BirdLife South Africa's mission is to strive to conserve birds, their habitats and biodiversity through scientifically-based programmes, through supporting the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources and through encouraging people to enjoy and value nature.
- 3.) BirdLife South Africa is a registered non-profit and public benefit environmental organisation and produces its own bird and birdwatching magazine, *African Birdlife*.
- 4.) For more information, visit www.birdlife.org.za.