

# AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

## Other Proposals

### A. PROPOSAL

- a) Inclusion of the population of Sao Tome and Principe of *Psittacus erithacus* in Appendix I in lieu of *Psittacus erithacus princeps*; or
- b) Transfer of *Psittacus erithacus princeps* from Appendix I to Appendix II.

### B. PROPONENT

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

### C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

#### 1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Aves
12. Order: Psittaciformes
13. Family: Psittacidae
14. Species: *Psittacus erithacus princeps* Alexander 1909
15. Common Names:

English:	Principe grey parrot
French:	Jacquot de Fernando Poo
Spanish:	Loro gris de Fernando Poo
Portuguese:	Papagaio-do-Principe

#### 16. Code Numbers:

#### 2. Biological Data

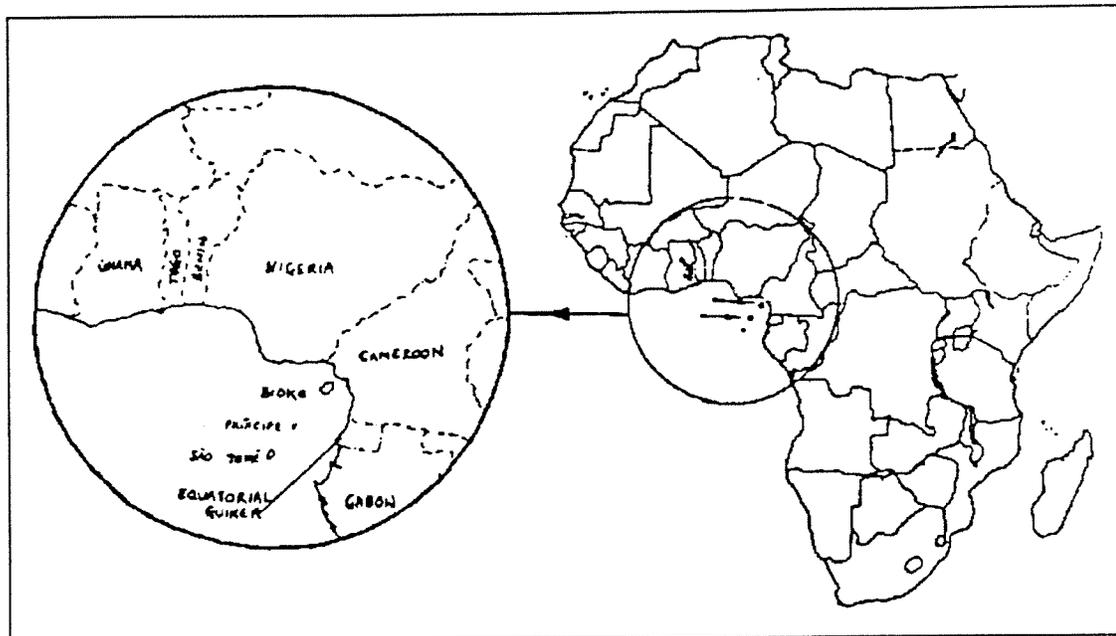
21. Distribution: Because of the fact that this subspecies is impossible to distinguish from the nominate subspecies (see Section 5), the extent of the distribution is not clear. Birds of this 'subspecies' have been reported from three islands in the Gulf of Guinea: Sao Tome and Principe (Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe) and Bioko (Republic of Equatorial Guinea).

When originally described (as a full species) the habitat was said to be "Princes Island, W. Africa" (= Principe) (Alexander 1909). Bannerman (1914) mentioned that he was unable to separate birds from Principe and Fernando Po (= Bioko) and it appears to be on this basis that Sclater (1924), whilst relegating the birds to subspecies status, gave the distribution as "Principe and Fernando Po Islands". This distribution description was then followed by Bannerman (1931), Peters (1937), Fry *et al.* (1988) and Forshaw (1989), although Bannerman (1953) changed his earlier view in giving the distribution as limited to Principe and this was followed by Snow (1978).

Alexander (1903) stated clearly that *Psittacus erithacus* is a migrant to Bioko and therefore the population is contiguous with the mainland population. The avian biogeographic

background of the area (Amadon 1953) mitigates against a subspecies confined to Bioko and Principe. While the latter is noted for its endemic forms, the former has an avifauna essentially similar to the mainland, to which it was connected in the not too distant past, and from which, even now, it is separated by only 32 kilometres.

Recently, birds have been found on Sao Tome. These are likely to be similar to the population of Principe (See 22.).



## 22. Population:

Principe (Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe):

Historically this species has been common on Principe. In 1865 specimens of this species were numbered in thousands and it was still reported "fairly numerous" in 1909 but "no doubt decreased" due to forest clearance (Bannerman 1914). It was described as very abundant everywhere and never out of sight or hearing in 1949 by Snow (1950). De Naurois (1983b) remarked on the abundance of the species; however, in another paper the same author (de Naurois 1983a) also noted that the abundant population had declined after 1968 due to habitat loss and perhaps pesticide usage. The species was described as still one of the commonest birds on the island in 1987 (Anon. 1987), being common to very abundant wherever there were tall fruiting trees (Jones and Tye 1988). In early 1989 the species was reported "reasonably common" but in their view likely to decline as a result of hunting pressure (Harrison and Steele undated).

Sao Tome (Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe):

The occurrence of the species on this island has long been in doubt. Lopez de Lima, quoted in Hartlaub (1850) mentioned the species as occurring on Sao Tome but this was doubted by subsequent authors (Salvadori 1903, Bannerman 1915). However, de Naurois (1983b) quotes a letter by A. Newton in 1890 that suggested that storm blown birds did occur on Sao Tome but that these were quickly predated. More recently, de Naurois (1983b) reported that in 1972 two or three small colonies existed in the North of the island. Günther and

Feiler (1985) suggested that breeding conditions for this species are less favourable on Sao Tome than Principe but do not expand on this point.

Bioko (Republic of Equatorial Guinea):

First recorded by Newton in 1894/1895 who found it abundant (Barboza du Bocage 1895). Constantly observed in large flocks (Alexander 1903). Wolff-Metternich and Stresemann (1956) reported that in 1939/40 birds were found at altitudes up to 1900 m and the species was quite frequent in some areas. In 1987, the Equatorial Guinea Commission of experts on Flora and Fauna put the total population of *Psittacus erithacus* in the country at "no less than 2,500,000" (Obama 1987) but this would equate to 90 birds per km<sup>2</sup> across the whole country and therefore seems barely credible. In 1987/8, Antor-Castellarnau and Camacho-Fumanal (1989) found the species in rain forest at altitudes between 400-800m on Pico Basile in the North of the island. More recently Pérez del Val (1993a) reported that during 1988-1992 the species had a wide distribution from lowlands up to 1200-1500 m and was locally abundant in the undisturbed southern third of the island, an area of some 500 km<sup>2</sup>.

23. Habitat: The species as a whole inhabits primary and secondary lowland forest, mangroves, oil palm plantations, gardens, wooded savannahs and cultivated land (Fry *et al.* 1985), but has a preference for forest habitat.

On Principe, Snow (1950) reported the birds present in all habitats; coastal and mountain plantations, forested mountain sides and mist forest above 5000 feet (1538 m). In the evenings birds on Principe flew to roost on Pico de Papagaio and Pico Negro (Snow 1950). This wide habitat usage may account for the abundance of the species on the island. A feature of the occurrence of the species on Bioko is the bird's broad habitat tolerance, occurring in plantation areas as well as undisturbed forest. Wells (1968) speculated that the birds might have evolved this tolerance under island conditions.

### 3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization: *Psittacus erithacus* has been exploited on Principe for many years. Keulemans (1866) noted that adult birds were caught in nooses and sold to whites and strangers. He stated that fledging birds were never taken because it was thought by local people that the nest holes were too hot for the human hand to be placed inside. Little utilization nationally has been recorded recently. Most internal trade in Sao Tome and Principe is probably to supply the tourist market, but this is likely to be small (Harrison and Steele undated). Tail feathers are used by the people of Bioko for ritual purposes (Pérez de Val 1993a).
32. Legal International Trade: It seems that there may have been some international trade in this species from Principe in the 1860s (Keulemans 1866). Fry (1961) mentioned a brisk cage bird trade between Sao Tome, Bioko and mainland Equatorial Guinea but did not list this species amongst the five he specifically named as being involved.

The following international trade reported as *Psittacus erithacus princeps* has been supplied by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre from annual reports of the CITES Parties.

Year	Imp.	Exp.	Orig.	IMPORTS	EXPORTS	Purpose (source)
1978	CA	US		1		Circus
	GB	NG		1		-
	US	CA			1	Circus
1980	US	VE		2		Trade
1983	CA	DE		2		- (captive-bred)
	FR	DK	XF		1	Personal
	US	XX	PT	1		-
1984	US	CM		300		Trade
	US	LR		600		Trade
	US	US	ES	1		-
1986	CA	US	GH		12	Trade
	DE	CA			1	Personal
1987	BS	US		1		Personal (captive-bred)
1988	SU	US		20		Trade
1989	US	SA	XX	1		-
1991	ES	MA	XX	2		Personal

It seems probable that the large numbers reported by the United States in 1984, 1986 and 1988 relate to other subspecies of *Psittacus erithacus*. Jones and Tye (1988) mention that the species is caught in large numbers on Principe for export, but the most detailed published account of the trade on Principe is by Harrison and Steele (undated). They estimated that 50-100 hunters, paid USD 30 per chick, taking up to 50 chicks each during the breeding season possibly result in as many as 3000 parrots being exported annually. Official figures showed 297 export permits issued in 1987 and 3 in 1988 followed by an official ban on exports. However, the authors say it was widely recognized that the number of permits issued were an underestimate of the trade and the ban was ineffective. Some parrots were sent to Sao Tome for the tourist market but they conclude that the bulk were sent by sea perhaps to Gabon or Angola. CITES statistics do not support this hypothesis, hardly any commercial shipments are reported as originating in these States. The route by which the birds captured on Principe reach their market therefore remains a mystery.

The following trade in *Psittacus erithacus* reported by CITES Parties lists Equatorial Guinea as the source country. As both *Psittacus erithacus erithacus* and *Psittacus erithacus princeps* may occur there, this trade might relate to Appendix-I birds.

Year	Imp.	Exp.	Orig.	IMPORTS	EXPORTS	Purpose (source)
1987	BB	US	GQ		4	Trade
	DK	SE	GQ	1		Personal
	SE	DK	GQ		1	Personal
	US	GQ		373		Trade
1988	AT	GQ		50		Trade

33. Illegal Trade: Much of the trade reported or deduced by Harrison and Steele (undated) would appear to be illegal but there is insufficient information about the real extent and end market to draw any firm conclusions.

CITES trade records show 1 illegal specimen imported to Italy from Sao Tome and Principe in 1989. In addition 117 specimens arriving from Sao Tome to Portugal have been seized between 1985 and 1993 (Vila Nova *in litt.*).

34. Potential Trade Threats

341. Live Specimens: *Psittacus erithacus* is one of the most popular parrots in the bird trade, valued particularly for its ability to mimic human speech. As the specimens from Sao Tome and Principe are no different from those from other parts of central Africa, no particular extra pressure is envisaged on this population.

342. Parts and Derivatives: There is a demand in certain areas for tail feathers, heads and feet which are used as an aphrodisiac or in fetishes. Such trade may be of an international nature (Dändliker 1992).

4. Protection Status

41. National:

Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe: No information.

Republic of Equatorial Guinea: No information.

42. International: Listed in Appendix I since the inception of CITES (1 July 1975), originally at the request of the delegation of Portugal (Anon. 1973). No supporting proposal was made for the listing.

43. Additional Protection Needs: Birds within the range of *princeps* seem to have a quite high tolerance of habitat change but loss of forest cover is likely to be important. Populations tend to use traditional communal roosts at particular times of year and these should be protected.

5. Information on Similar Species

The species *Psittacus erithacus* is distinctive and can not be confused with any other parrot, but the difference between birds from the subspecies *princeps* and other birds of this species has been questioned for some time.

*Psittacus erithacus* is found in two distinct subspecies: the nominate form *erithacus* is distinguished by its large size (wing length 237-257 mm) bright scarlet tail and upper tailcoverts and black upper mandible. The subspecies *timneh* found from Côte d'Ivoire westwards is smaller (208-228 mm wing length), has a rufous tail with maroon-red edging, dark grey upper tailcoverts, tinged with red and a pale reddish upper mandible tipped with black. The subspecies *princeps* was originally described by Alexander (1909) as "larger and darker (than mainland birds). Entire upper and underparts very dark grey, almost blackish; feathers, especially of the underparts, edged with dark blue, giving the bird when viewed in certain lights the appearance of being strongly washed in inky blue". Although the birds were stated as being larger than the nominate subspecies *erithacus*, the wing measurements taken at the time of description do not support this. Bannerman (1914) therefore remeasured the specimens in question. Other measurements have been given in Forshaw (1989) and Pérez del Val (1993b). A summary table is found below:

<i>P.p. princeps</i>			
Original description (Alexander 1909)			[Principe]
male	235-238 mm		
female	230-235 mm		
Re-measurement of these specimens (Bannerman 1914)			[Principe]
male	240-253 mm	(244 mm)	
female	225-250 mm	(234 mm)	
Forshaw (1989)			[Location?]
10 males	230-250 mm	(241.9 mm)	
10 females	225-251 mm	(234.2 mm)	
Amadon (1953)			
	232-242 mm		[Bioko]
	227-253 mm		[Principe]
Pérez del Val (1993b)			
1 unsexed adult	241 mm		[Principe]
1 male	236 mm		[Bioko]
<i>P. e. erithacus</i>			
Forshaw (1989)			[Location?]
10 males	234-252 mm	(242.5 mm)	
10 females	232-259 mm	(241.6 mm)	
Fry <i>et al.</i> (1988)			[Location?]
7 males	231-253 mm	(242 mm)	
7 females	235-257 mm	(245 mm)	
Amadon (1953)			
	230-250 mm		[Nigeria to Gabon]
	235-264 mm		[Zaire to Kenya]
Pérez del Val (1993b)			
5 males	234-246 mm	(240.4 mm)	[Mainland Equat. Guinea]
3 females	228 mm	(228 mm)	[Mainland Equat. Guinea]
1 male	236 mm		[Gabon]

Peters (1937) thought the subspecies *princeps* doubtfully distinct from *P. e. erithacus*. Amadon (1953) considered the birds from Principe and Bioko as merely part of a size cline in the range of the species and was unable to distinguish the plumage of Sao Tome and Principe birds from those of the nearby mainland. White (1965) did not recognize the subspecies *princeps*. *P. erithacus princeps* was treated as synonymous with *P. erithacus erithacus* by Mackworth-Praed and Grant (1970). Eisentraut (1973) said that *princeps* was not a valid subspecies. Fry *et al.* (1988) stated that British Museum material does not support the claim that *princeps* specimens are larger and darker. De Naurois (1983a and 1983b) treated *Psittacus princeps* as a synonym of *Psittacus erithacus erithacus*. Forshaw (1989) and Low (1992a) believed the subspecies *princeps* is probably not distinct from *P. e. erithacus* and Jones *et al.* (1991) did not recognize the subspecies *princeps*. Low (*in litt.* 19.11.92) states that birds in poor condition illegally brought to Spain by boat have been extremely dark with mauve sheen. This coloration is lost as the birds recover condition and could be explained by dietary deficiencies. Amadon (1953), Low (1992b) and Perez del Val (1993b) also referred to the variability in plumage of this species under normal conditions the last examined museum specimens which showed the 'washed inky blue' characteristic (originally considered diagnostic of *princeps*) in examples from Principe, mainland Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.

In summary, all recent authors who have studied this question have come to the conclusion that *Psittacus erithacus princeps* is not a valid subspecies and that specimens of it can not be distinguished from those of the nominate form.

#### 6. Comments from Countries of Origin

No reply received from the Democratic Republic of Sao and Tome and Principe. The Management Authority of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea have not specifically commented on this proposal but have agreed that an alternative proposal to transfer *Psittacus erithacus princeps* from Appendix I to Appendix II should be submitted to COP9 and see no problems internationally. However they do see an urgent need for better protection within Equatorial Guinea as the species is subject to legal hunting resulting in serious declines in the northern part of Bioko caused by excessive capture of birds.

#### 7. Additional Remarks

a) This proposal has been prepared at the request of the CITES Nomenclature Committee.

The identification of birds of the 'subspecies' *princeps* is not possible. The range of the 'subspecies' is in doubt although the areas of distribution in the original description certainly includes Sao Tome and Principe. The island of Bioko has an avifauna similar to neighbouring mainland Africa and one author reports migration of *Psittacus erithacus* between the two. As the island is politically part of a Equatorial Guinea inclusion of it in a geographic listing as well as biologically doubtful would make for significant implementation difficulties.

b) This proposal has been prepared at the request of the CITES Nomenclature Committee.

As the identification of birds of the 'subspecies' *princeps* is not possible, it is impossible to delineate the range of this 'subspecies' precisely.

The only range State from which it has been certainly reported is Sao Tome and Principe. Here visiting ornithologists have repeatedly remarked about the abundance of the species. Birds of the kind found in Sao Tome and Principe are intrinsically in no greater demand than specimens from elsewhere in the range of the species.

## 8. References

- Alexander, B. (1903) On the birds of Fernando Po. *Ibis* (8) 3:330-403.
- Alexander, B. (1909) in Ogilvie-Grant, W.R. (ed.) (1990) [Record of 150th meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club 21 April 1909]. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 23: 69-86.
- Amadon, D. (1953) Avian systematics and evolution in the Gulf of Guinea. The J.G. Correia Collection. *Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.* 100: 393-451.
- Anon. (1973) *Plenipotentiary Conference to conclude an international convention on trade in certain species of wildlife.* Doc. 5 (Add. 47).
- Anon. (1987) São Tome and Príncipe birds increase. *World Birdwatch* 9(4): 1-2.
- Antor-Castellarnau R. and Camacho-Fumanal R (1989) Composicion de las Comunidades de aves a lo largo de un gradiente altitudinal en Africa occidental. *Acta biol. mont.* IX: 69-76.
- Bannerman, D.A. (1914) Report on the birds collected by the late Mr Boyd Alexander (Rifle Brigade) during his last expedition to Africa - Part I The birds of Prince's Island. *Ibis* (10) 7: 596-631.
- Bannerman, D.A. (1915) Report on the Birds collected by the late Mr Boyd Alexander (Rifle Brigade) during his last Expedition to Africa - Part II. The Birds of St Thomas' Island. *Ibis* 10(3): 89-121.
- Bannerman, D.A. (1931) *Birds of Tropical West-Africa.* Crown Agents, London.
- Bannerman, D.A. (1953) *The birds of West and Equatorial Africa.* Oliver and Boyd, London.
- Barboza du Bocage J.V. (1895) Aubsidios para a fauna da Ilha de Fernão do Pó. *Journal de Sciencias Mathematicas Physicas e Naturaes.* 2nd Serie. No. 13: 1-15.
- Basilo, A. (1963) *Aves de las isla de Fernando Po* - Editorial Coculsa, Madrid.
- Dändliker, G. (1992) The grey parrot in Ghana: A population survey. A contribution to the biology of the species. A study of its commercial exploitation and management recommendations. CITES Secretariat.
- Eisentraut, M. (1973) Die Wirbeltierfauna von Fernando Poo und Westkamerun. *Bonn. Zool. Monogr.* 3: 428pp.
- Forshaw, J. (1989) *Parrots of the world.* Third (revised) edition. Blandford, Poole, UK.
- Fry, C.H. (1961) Notes on the birds of Annobon and other islands in the Gulf of Guinea. *Ibis* 103a: 267-276.
- Fry, C.H., Keith, S. and Urban, E.K. (eds) (1988) *The Birds of Africa.* Volume III. Academic Press, London.
- Günther, R. and Feiler, A. (1985) Die Vögel der Insel São Tomé. *Mitt. zool. Mus. Berl.* 61. *Suppl.: Ann. Orn.* 9: 3-28.

- Hartlaub, G. (1850) Beitrag zur Ornithologie Westafrika's. In: Wiebel K.W.M, *Verzeichnis der öffentlichen und Privat-Vorlesungen, welche am Hamburgischen Akademischen Gymnasium von Ostern 1850 bis Ostern 1851 gehalten werden*, 1-4, 48. Hamburg.
- Harrison, M.J.S. and Steele, P. (undated) *ICBP/EEC forest conservation mission to São Tomé and Príncipe. January-March 1989. Report on conservation education and training.* International Council for Bird Preservation. Cambridge.
- Jones, P.J., Burlison, J.P. and Tye, A. (1991) *Conservação dos ecossistemas florestais na República democrática de São Tomé and Príncipe.* IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.
- Jones, P.J. and Tye, A. (1988) *A survey of the avifauna of Sao Tome and Principe.* International Council for Bird Preservation - Study Report No. 24, Cambridge.
- Keulemans, J.G. (1866) Opmerkingen over de vogels van de Kaap-Verdische Eilanden en van Prins-Eiland in de Bogt van Guinea gelegen. *Nederl. Tijdschr. Dierk. Amsterdam* 3: 363-401.
- Low, R. (1992a) *Parrots. Their care and breeding.* Third (revised) edition. Blandford, Poole, UK.
- Low, R. (1992b) Keeping grey parrots. *Cage & Aviary Birds* 24 October 1992: 12-13.
- Mackworth-Praed, C.D. and Grant, C.H.B. (1970) *Birds of west central and Western Africa.* 2 Vols. Longman. London.
- De Naurois, R. (1983a) Les oiseaux reproducteurs des Iles de São Tomé et Príncipe: Liste systématique commentée et indications zoogéographiques. *Bonn. zool. Beitr.* 34(1-3): 129-148.
- De Naurois, R. (1983b) Falconidae, Psittacidae et Strigiformes des îles de São Tomé et Príncipe (Golfe de Guinée) *Bonn. zool. Beitr.* 34(4): 429-451.
- Obama, C.N. (Jefe de Negociado de Administración Forestal de la Dirección General Forestal del Ministerio de Aguas, Bosques y Repoblación Forestal) *Certificate number 2513.* 28 December 1987. Unpublished.
- Pérez del Val, J. (1993a) *In litt.* to JNCC 29 August 1993.
- Pérez del Val, J. (1993b) *In litt.* to JNCC 7 November 1993.
- Peters, J.L. (1937) *Check-list of Birds of the World.* Volume III. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Salvadori, T. (1903) Contribuzioni alla ornithologia delle isole del Golfo di Guinea II. Ucelli dell'Isola d. S. Thomé. *Mem. Accad. Sci. Torino* (2) 53:1-45.
- Sclater, W.L. (1924) *Systema Avium Ethiopicarum. A Systematic List of the Birds of the Ethiopian Region. Volume I.* British Ornithologists' Union, London.
- Snow, D.W. (1950) The birds of São Tomé and Príncipe in the Gulf of Guinea. *Ibis* 92: 579-595.
- Snow, D.W. (1978) *An atlas of speciation in African non-passerine birds.* British Museum (Natural History) London.

Vila Nova A (1994) *In litt.* to UK CITES Scientific Authority. 28 February 1994.

Wells, D.R. (1968) Zonation of bird Communities on Fernando Poo. *Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc.* 5: 71-87.

White, C.M.N. (1965) *A revised check-list of African non-passerine birds.* The Government Printer, Lusaka.

Wolff-Metternich, G.F. and Stresemann, E. (1956) Biologische Notizen über Vögel von Fernando Po. *J. Orn.* 97(3): 274-290.