

Threatened Birds of Asia:

The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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VICTORIA CROWNED-PIGEON

Goura victoria

Critical —

Endangered —

Vulnerable ■ A1a,c,d; A2b,c,d; C1



This species is categorised as Vulnerable, given estimates of a small population inferred to be declining through hunting. However, there are few quantitative data and new information may lead to reclassification.

DISTRIBUTION AND POPULATION The Victoria Crowned-pigeon occurs on Biak (where it may have been introduced) and Yapen islands, and northern New Guinea from Geelvink Bay, Papua (formerly Irian Jaya), **Indonesia**, to Astrolabe Bay, with an isolated area around Collingwood Bay in easternmost **Papua New Guinea** (Coates 1985, Beehler *et al.* 1986, King and Nijboer 1994). Its absence between Astrolabe Bay and Collingwood Bay may be natural or indicate a historic extirpation (King and Nijboer 1994, B. M. Beehler *in litt.* 2000), but it remains locally common in some remote undisturbed areas (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 1994).

ECOLOGY This species is found in lowland forest, including swamp forest, mostly in the extreme lowlands, but sometimes to 600 m, feeding on the ground in small groups of 2–10 birds and roosting in trees (Coates 1985, del Hoyo *et al.* 1997). Captive birds start breeding from 15 months old, lay a single egg, and tend to the fledgling for some months after hatching (King and Nijboer 1994).

THREATS It is prized by hunters for meat and, to a lesser extent, feathers, and nestlings are taken to be reared for food (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 1999). Hunting has extirpated it around populated areas including some transmigration settlements in Papua; it survives only in forests many hours or days walk away from the nearest village (Beehler *et al.* 1986, K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 1994, King and Nijboer 1994). Lowland forests, particularly on the flat terrain favoured by this species, are threatened by logging, and logging roads open up access to hunters (I. Burrows *in litt.* 1994, P. Gregory *in litt.* 1994, King and Nijboer 1994). Capture for trade may also be significant (King and Nijboer 1994).

MEASURES TAKEN It is protected by law in Papua New Guinea. There is a captive breeding programme in some zoos (King and Nijboer 1994). It is listed on CITES Appendix II.

MEASURES PROPOSED • Survey suitable habitat between Astrolabe Bay and Collingwood Bay. • Determine populations in study areas such as the Wapoga river. • Assess hunting levels through discussion with local hunters. • Investigate population trends through discussion with local hunters. • Ascertain tolerance of logged forest. • Monitor numbers traded. • Establish more wildlife protected areas in lowlands. • Enforce protection in uninhabited reserve areas. • Launch public awareness programmes to reduce hunting. • Utilise as a flagship species in ecotourism ventures.