

Threatened Birds of Asia:

The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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SOUTHERN CROWNED-PIGEON

Goura scheepmakeri

Critical —

Endangered —

Vulnerable A1a,c,d; A2b,c,d



On the basis of an inferred rapid decline through hunting, this species is categorised as Vulnerable. However, there is an urgent need to research the rate of decline and reassess its status accordingly.

DISTRIBUTION AND POPULATION The Southern Crowned-pigeon occurs in the southern lowlands of New Guinea (**Indonesia** and **Papua New Guinea**), but has not been recorded west of Etna Bay and is absent from much, if not all, of southern Trans-Fly (N. Stronach *in litt.* 1994) but ranges to the far east of New Guinea at Orangerie Bay (Coates 1985, Beehler *et al.* 1986, King and Nijboer 1994). Although it is rare or extirpated around most villages, it is still locally common in remote regions of Papua and Western and Gulf Provinces (Beehler *et al.* 1994, K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 1994, I. Burrows *in litt.* 1994, P. Gregory *in litt.* 1994). Its population has been estimated as more than 10,000 and declining (Toone *et al.* 1994) but any extrapolation of estimates across areas of such varied habitat and human pressure are extremely approximate.

ECOLOGY It inhabits undisturbed dry and flooded forest, often alluvial, in the lowlands to 500 m (Coates 1985, Beehler *et al.* 1986). It feeds on the ground in small flocks of 2–10 birds (historically up to 30) (Ramsay 1879) and roosts in trees. 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 This large species is prized by hunters for meat and, to a lesser extent, feathers, and has been hunted to extinction throughout much of its range in the south-east (Schodde 1978, Coates 1985, G. R. Kula *in litt.* 1988); elsewhere it survives only in forests many hours or days walk away from the nearest village (Beehler 1985, Beehler *et al.* 1986, King and Nijboer 1994, N. Stronach *in litt.* 1994). It has been extirpated around some transmigration settlements in Papua where it had survived constant hunting from indigenous people (King and Nijboer 1994). Lowland forests, particularly on the flat terrain favoured by this species, are threatened by logging, and although its tolerance of logged forest is poorly known, 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 western extreme of range. • Determine populations in study areas such as Lakekamu and Kikori Basins. • Assess hunting levels through discussion with local hunters. • Investigate population trends through discussion with local hunters. • Ascertain tolerance of logged forest. • Monitor numbers traded. • Monitor population in study areas. • Establish more community-based conservation areas in lowlands. • Enforce protection in uninhabited reserve areas. • Launch public awareness programmes to reduce hunting. • Utilise as a flagship species in ecotourism ventures.