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VKM assessment: Non-detriment finding for Palawan peacock-pheasant

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Scientific name: *Polyplectron napoleonis*

Common name: Palawan peacock-pheasant

Norwegian name: Påfuglfasan

Type of permit: CITES Appendix I (Norwegian CITES Regulation Annex I, List A).
Country of Re-export: Norway (NO)
Country of Import: Switzerland (CH)

Purpose and source: The proposal concerns the re-export (purpose-of-transaction code Z) from Norway (Kristiansand Dyrepark AS) to Switzerland (Zoologischer Garten Basel AG) of one live male Palawan peacock-pheasant (source code C). The individual was born in captivity in Jersey at the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust in 2016 and exported to Norway with source code C and purpose-of-transaction code Z in 2017. The individual is transponder tagged.

For Appendix I species (Norwegian Cites Regulation Annex 1, list A) it is required to establish that exports will not be detrimental to the survival of that species, in compliance with CITES Article III. In the Norwegian CITES regulation (Lovdata 2018) the criteria for re-export to Norway is described in Chapter 2, Section 4.

VKM has adopted the definition of detriment, cf. Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) suggested by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Scientific Authority:

1. Harvest that is not sustainable.
2. Harvest that harms the status of the species in the wild.
3. Removal from the wild that results in habitat loss or destruction, or that interferes with recovery efforts for a species.

Conclusion

VKM concludes that the re-export from Norway to Switzerland of one individual Palawan peacock-pheasant that was bred in captivity will not be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild.

The conclusion is based on the following factors:

- The individual was bred in captivity at the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and the re-export does not involve harvest or removal from the wild.

1. Biological information

Distribution

The Palawan peacock-pheasant is endemic to the Philippines occurring on the Island of Palawan (BirdLife International, 2024).

Life history

The species prefers old growth forest but can persist in secondary forest although there have been no records of the species in cultivated areas (Mallari et al., 2011). It is found from sea-level to 800 m elevation. Palawan peacock-pheasants are monogamous breeders where both adults take an active role in rearing chicks and juveniles (up to 2 years). Females incubate for 19-20 days (Jeggo, 1975) and males defend nest sites from predators (Kennedy, 2000).

Role in the ecosystem

Palawan peacock-pheasants feed on a variety of seeds, fruits, invertebrates, and small vertebrates on the ground (Kennedy 2000).

2. Population trend

There are limited recent data on the Palawan peacock-pheasant population. Mallari et al. (2011) suggested that previous estimates by McGowan & Garson (1995, 10,000 adults) were likely to be too low based on extrapolation to the amount of available habitat. However, there is considerable uncertainty in the quality of habitat and the occupancy of the species so Birdlife (2024) suggested a population estimate of 20,000 to 49,999 individuals.

Despite this, the Palawan peacock-pheasant is still suspected of undergoing rapid decline resulting from habitat loss, hunting and the pet trade (BirdLife, 2018).

3. Conservation status

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (BirdLife, 2018): Vulnerable (VU).

4. Threats

Extensive deforestation in Palawan (11 % decline between 2000 and 2005; Mallari et al., 2011), along with mining and hunting and trapping for live trade (peaking between 1960-1980). The Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park is an important strong-hold for the species, but the protected area was (and potentially continues to be) impacted by agricultural encroachment and harvest of non-timber products (Mallari et al., 2011).

5. Conservation and Management measures:

International legislation

Palawan peacock-pheasant has been listed on CITES Appendix I since 1975 and listed under EU Wildlife Trade Regulations Annex A since 1997.

National legislation

Philippines have imposed stricter domestic measures with regard to CITES-listed species restricting the collection and export of wild individuals for commercial purposes and captive-bred specimens (excepting from breeders authorized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources) (CITES Notif.NO.2010/038,

<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/notif/2010/E038.pdf>)

Conservation measures

The entirety of Palawan is classified as a Biosphere Reserve where hunting is illegal (from 1990). The species occurs in two National Parks, El Nido Marine Reserve and Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park. The species was promoted as an "Ambassador" species for the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park with activities to raise awareness of the species and build capacity in the National Park staff (WPA, 2006).

6. Trade/use

Legal

Legal trade involves live individuals born in captivity in zoos or other facilities.

Illegal

There is limited information on the extent of illegal trade. However, between 2000 and 2006, 22 individuals were confiscated by wildlife authorities in Palawan (Cruz et al., 2007).

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