

# Global Assessment of Songbirds in Trade

Prepared by BirdLife International for  
the CITES Secretariat

Ideas that fly.



# CITES Decisions 18.256-18.259

- **Decisions 18.256 to 18.259** on Songbird trade and conservation management,
  - a) 'within 12 months of the conclusions of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties, commission a preliminary study on the scale and scope of international songbird trade to consider the management and conservation of priorities of songbird taxa involved in such trade;
  - b) consult with appropriate technical experts in the preparation of documents on the conservation, trade management, enforcement and regulatory priorities of the songbird taxa identified,
  - c) convene a technical workshop to consider the findings of the study and reports referred to in paragraph b)
  - d) Invite the members of the Animals and Standing Committees, representatives from range, exporting, transit and consumer States, and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations to participate in the workshop; and.
  - e) make the results of the study and workshop, together with recommendations, available to the Animals Committee for consideration'

- Report 1 - Global Assessment of Songbirds in Trade
- Report 2 - Global Assessment of Songbirds in Trade “A prioritisation of songbirds in global trade”

# Data Sources

Abbreviated name	Full name
<b>CITES</b>	CITES Trade Database
<b>LEMIS</b>	United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS)
<b>Market Surveys</b>	A digitised dataset of market survey reports and other sources of information on birds in trade (Donald <i>et al.</i> , 2023)
<b>SiTDB</b>	The Songbirds in Trade Database (Juergens <i>et al.</i> , 2021)
<b>EU TWIX</b>	The EU Trade in Wildlife Information Exchange (TWIX)
<b>WiTIS</b>	The Wildlife in Trade Information System (TRAFFIC)

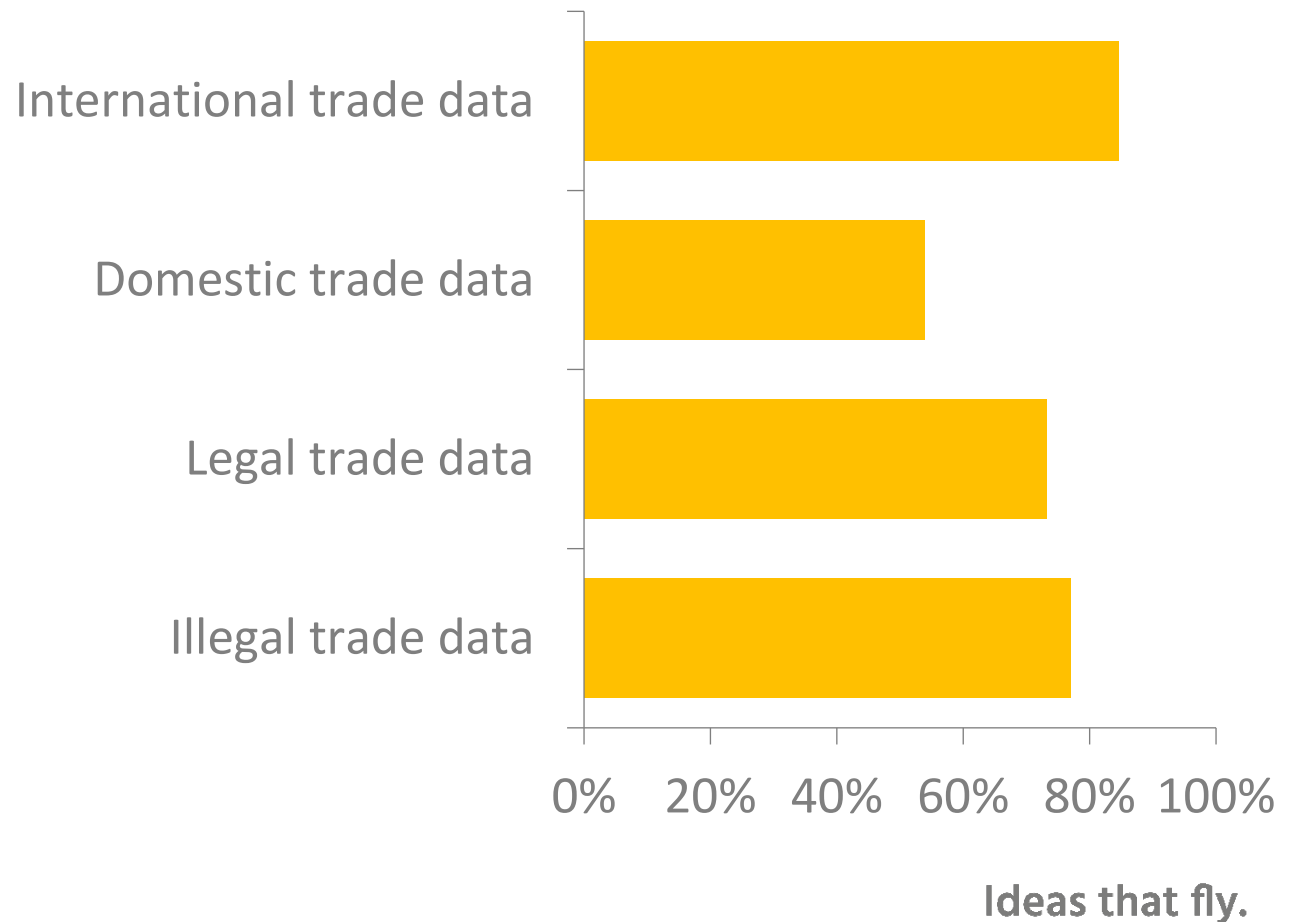
## Additional data sources

- Literature review conducted for this study including single-species and multi-species studies from the grey and academic literature
- Notification sent to Parties requesting for information to supplement the report e.g., on trade routes and species present in trade.

# Notification Summary

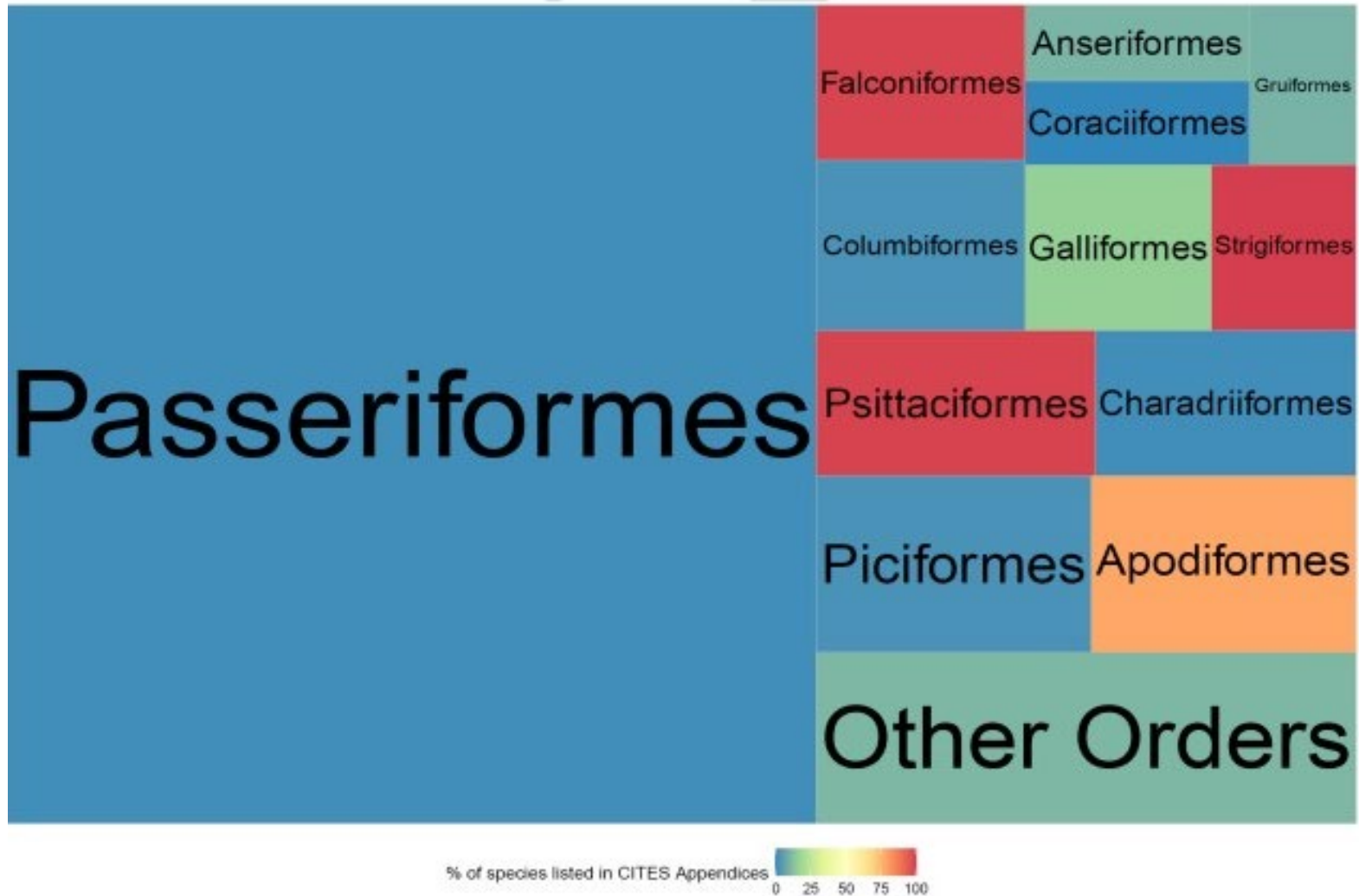
- Notification to gather data on
  - The availability and coverage of trade data
  - The availability and coverage of songbird analyses
  - Domestic and international legal trade
  - Domestic and international illegal trade

## What types of trade data does your government/organisation hold on trade of songbirds?



# Songbirds and CITES

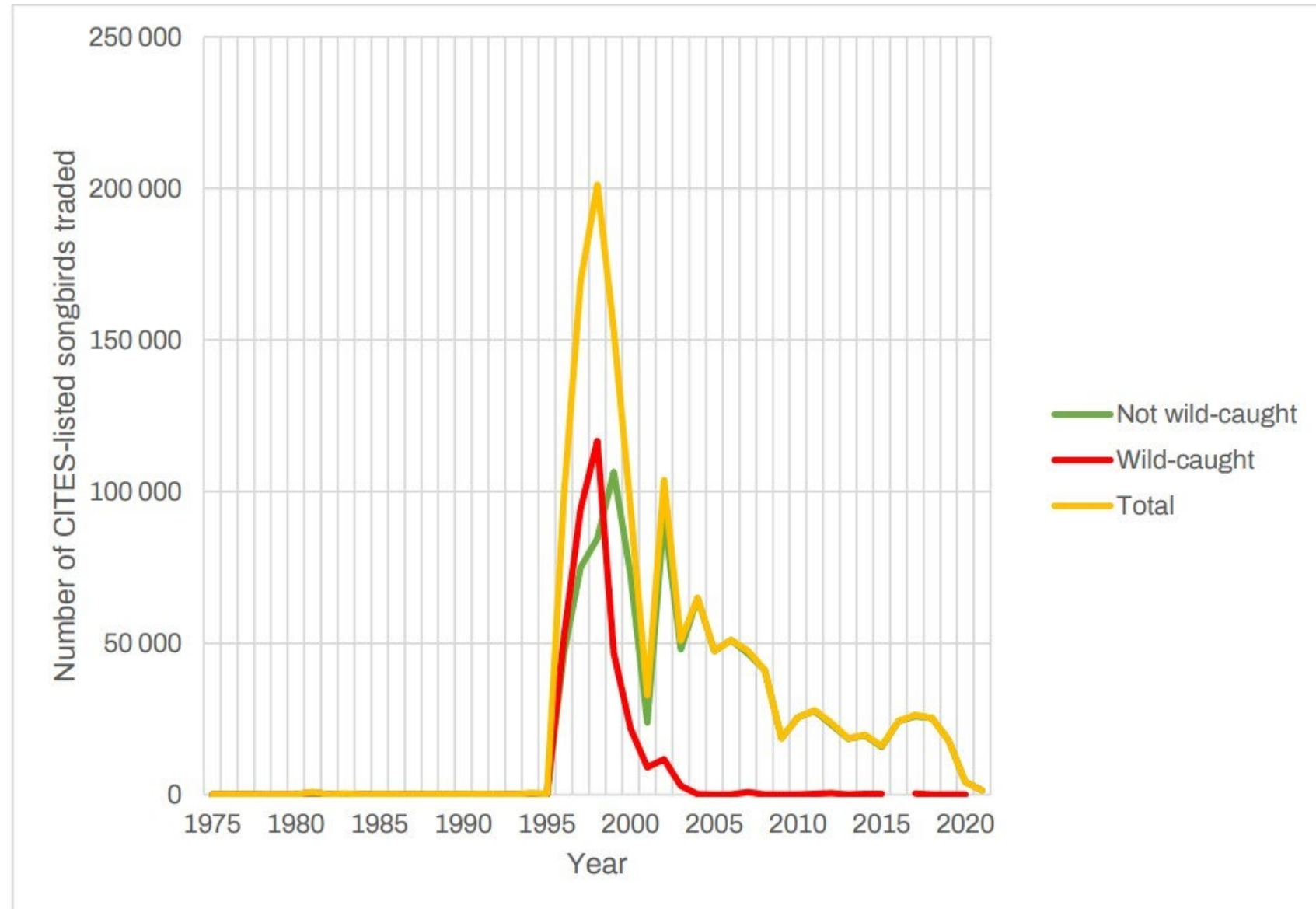
- Songbirds (Passeriformes) make up 60% of all extant bird species.
- Songbirds have low proportional representation on CITES appendices



# Volumes of trade in Songbirds

## Legal trade

- Sources: CITES
- Trade in CITES-listed songbirds declines through time

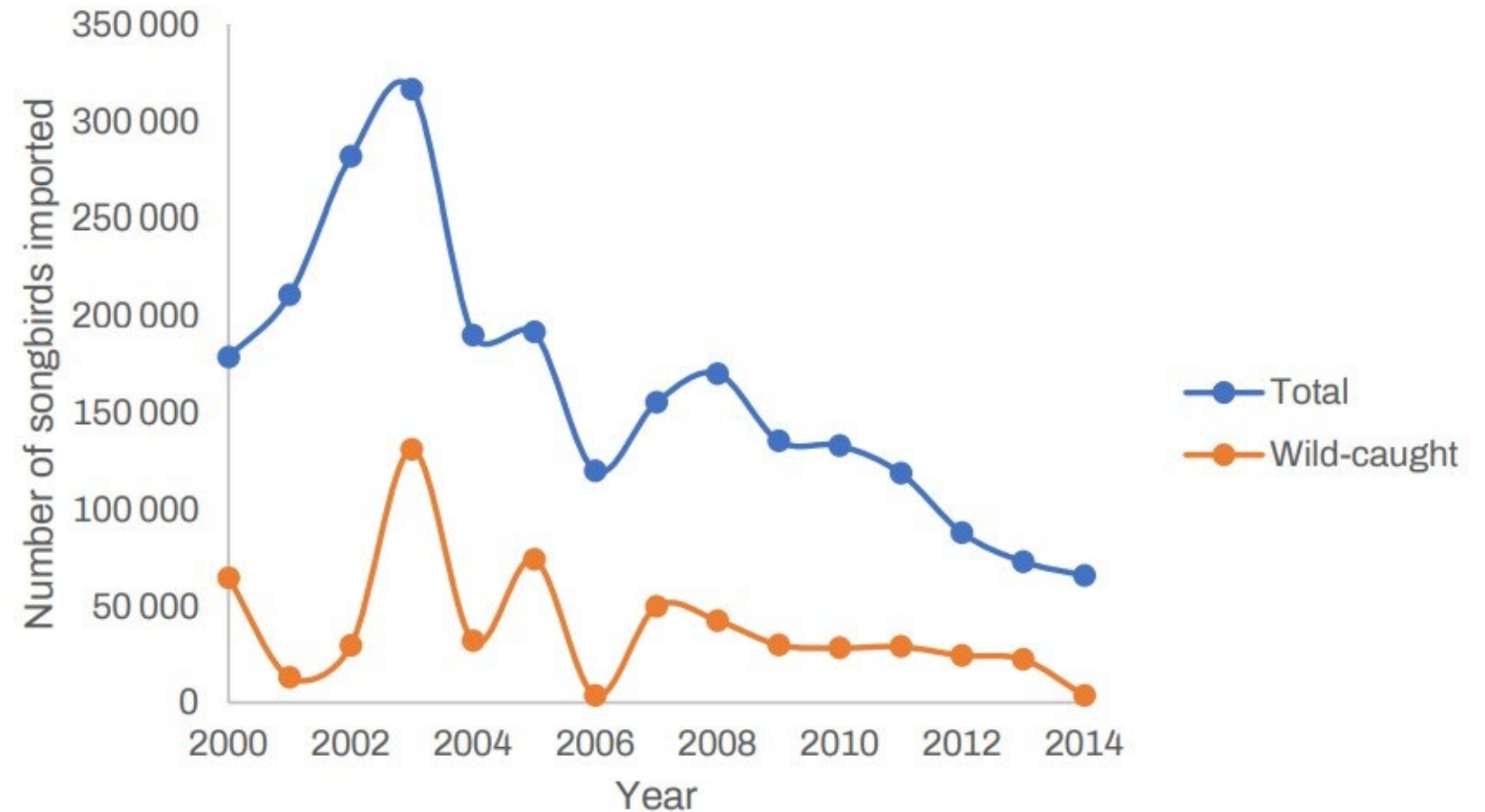




# Volumes of trade in Songbirds

## Legal trade

- Sources: CITES and LEMIS
- Number of import events shows little change; total numbers of songbirds imported declines





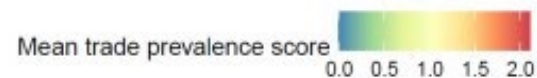
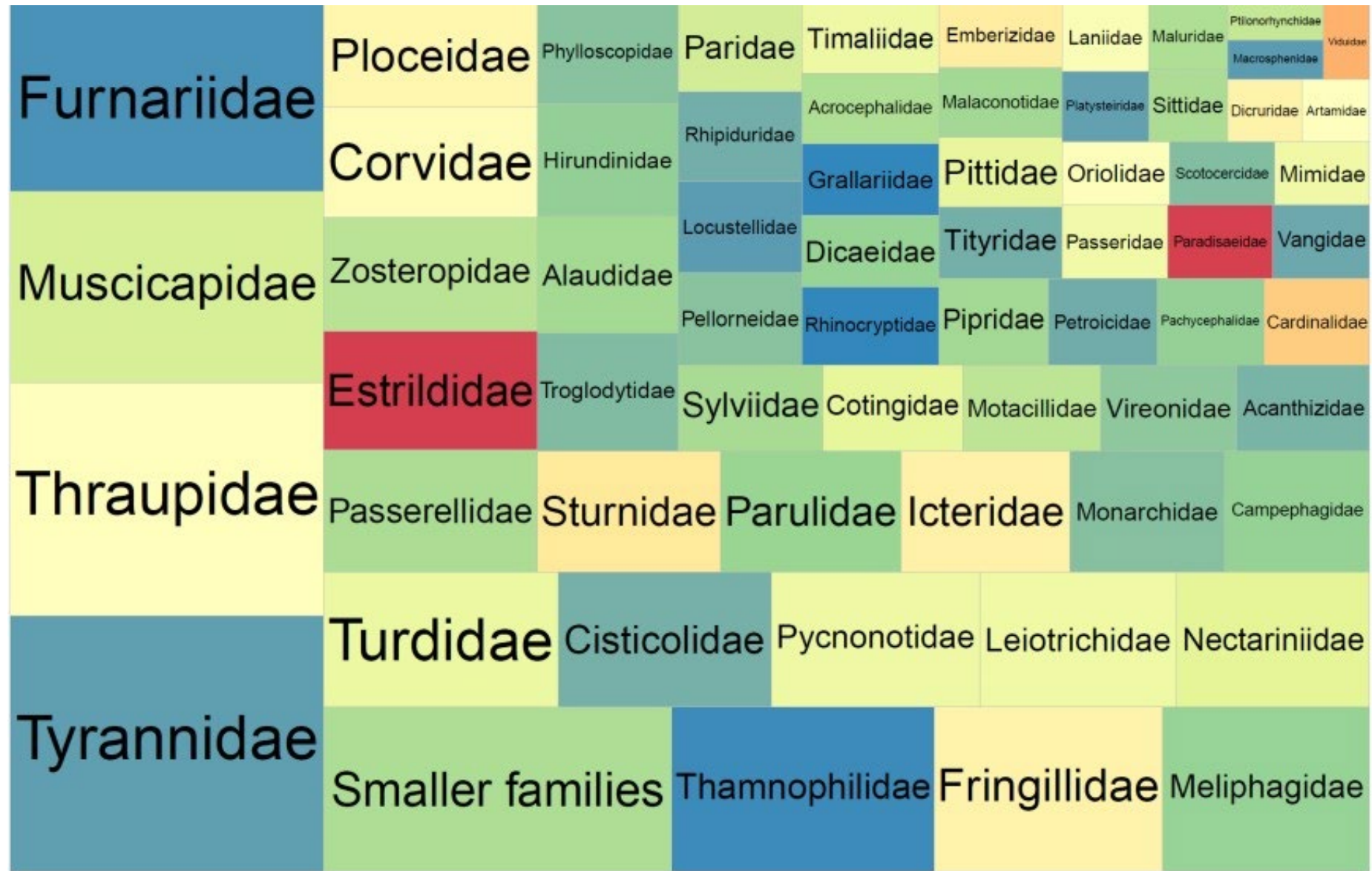
# Volumes of trade in Songbirds

## Illegal trade

- Illegal trade data sources only show a snapshot of the wider picture
- Estimates of captive populations and seizure data indicate a thriving illegal trade

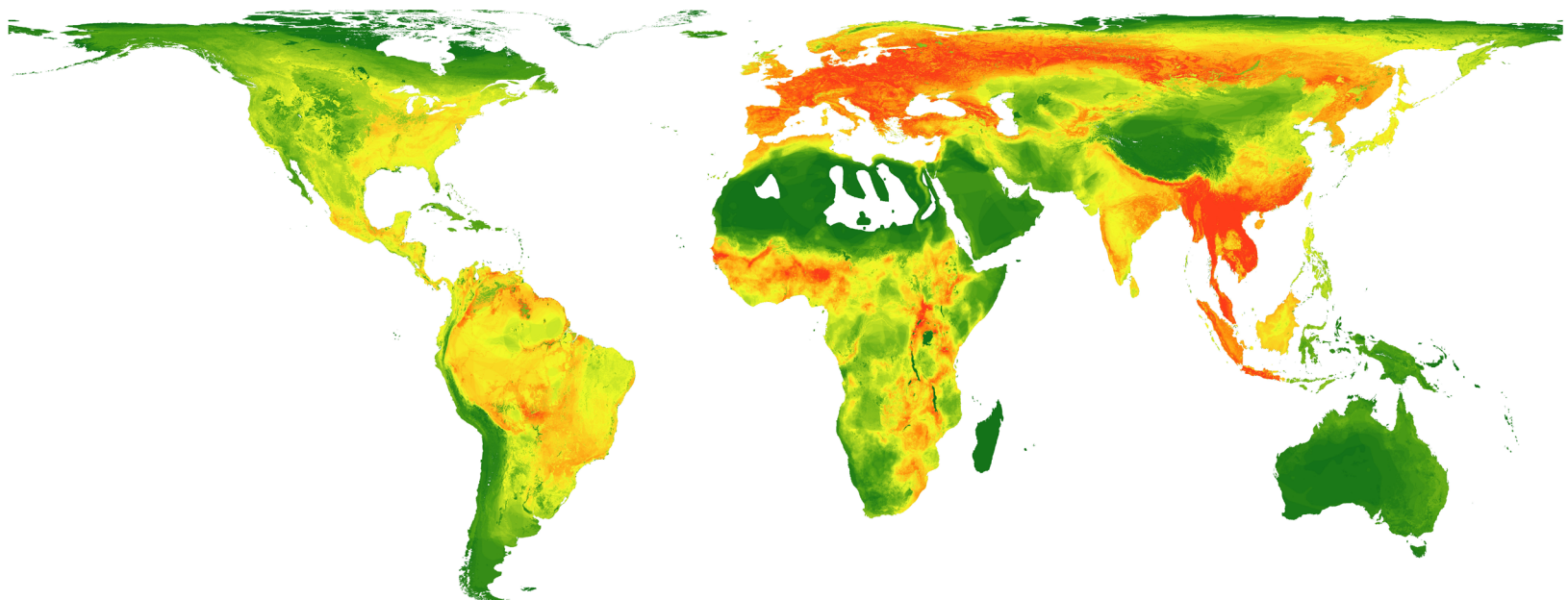


# Taxonomic patterns



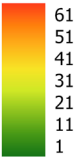


# Geographic distribution of heavily traded species



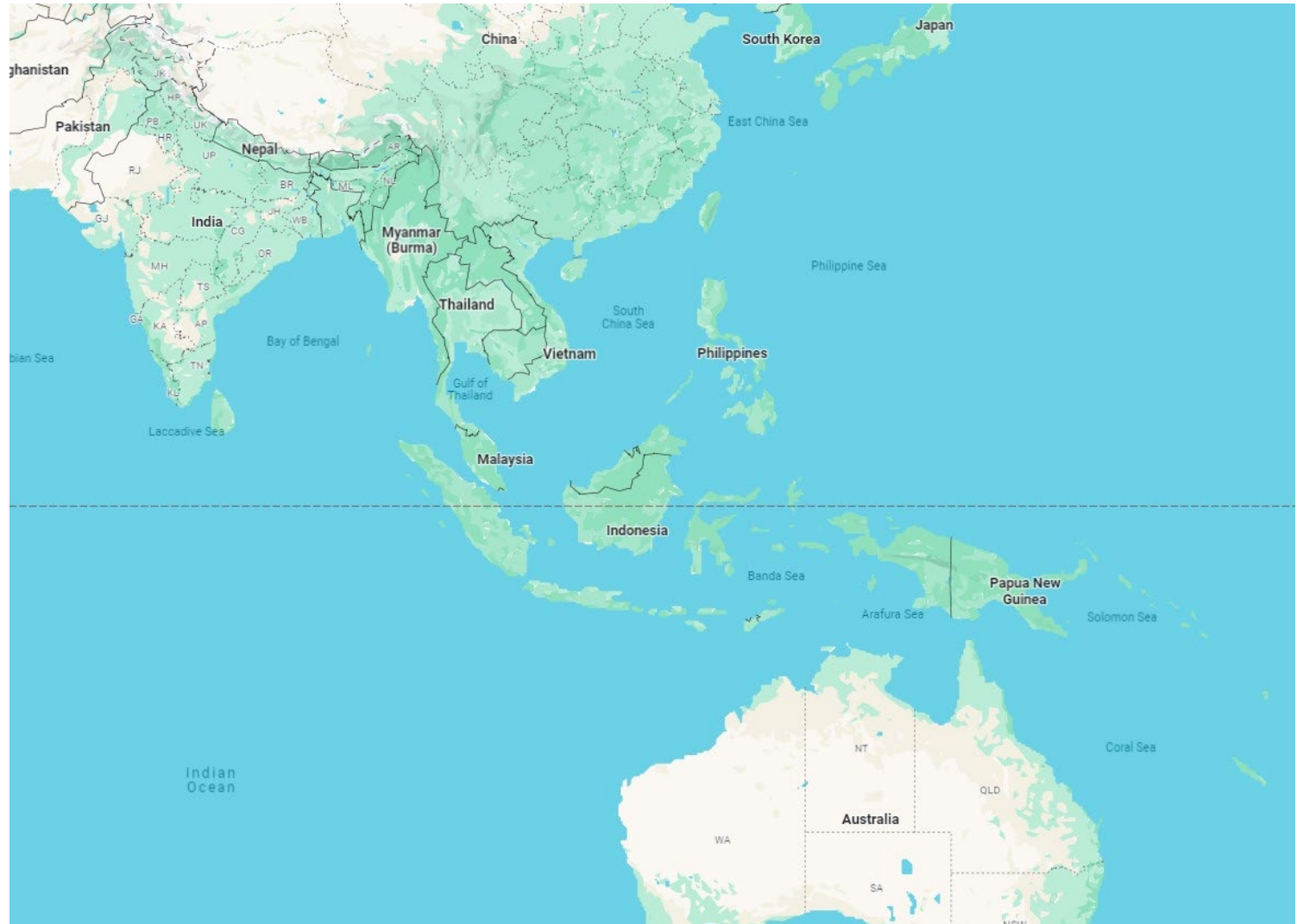
b. Passerines, scores 3-7 (n = 423)

Number of species



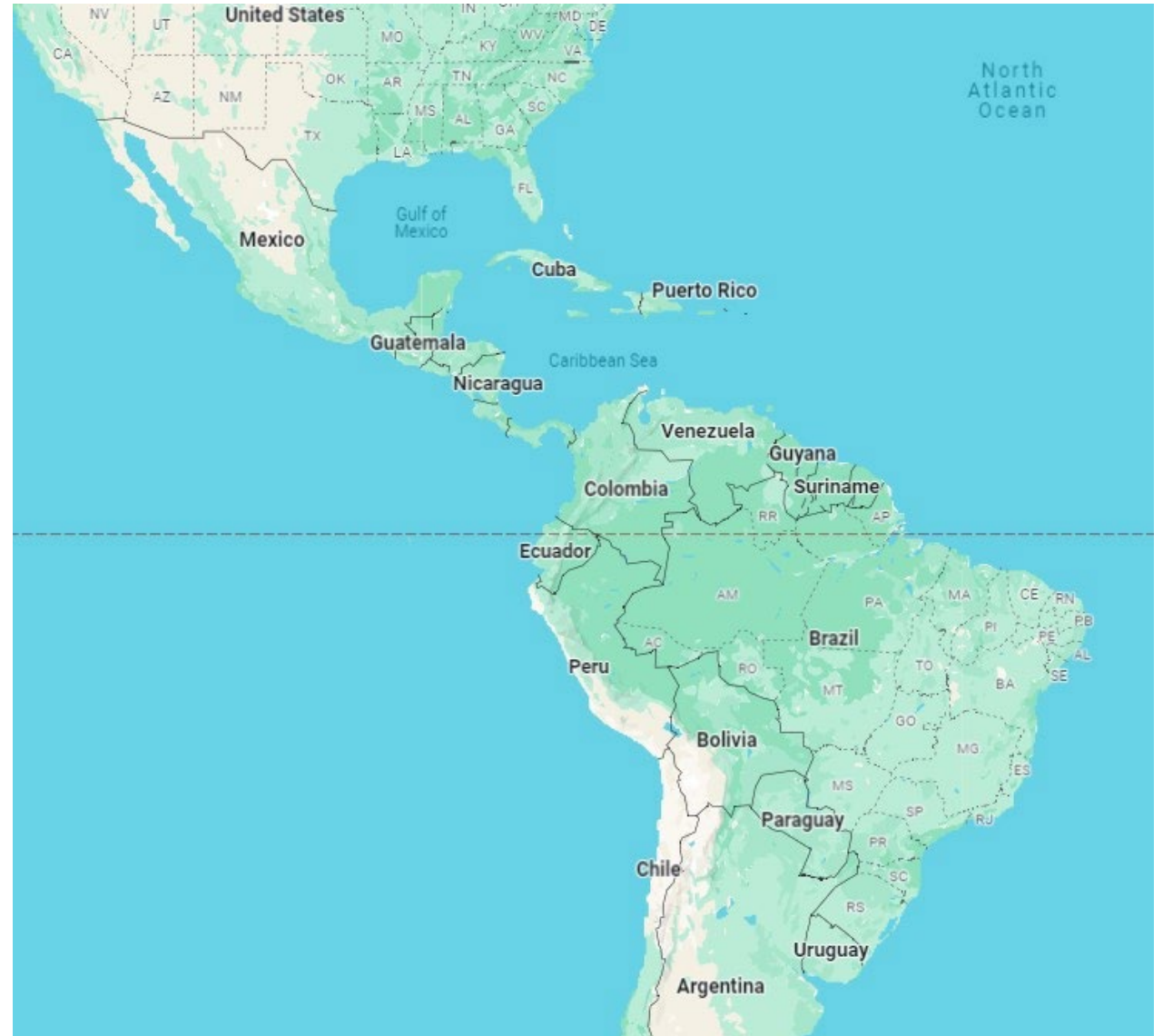
# Songbird trade in the Asia-Pacific Region

- Asian Songbird Crisis
- Major source and sink in international trade
- Thriving regional trade between and within countries
- Trade driven by activities such as song contests and merit releases



# Songbird trade in the Americas

- Significant regional trade whilst also connected to global trade
- Several key trading hubs including Guiana Shield and the Southern Cone
- Trade driven by activities such as song contests and fighting competitions



# Songbird trade in Africa

- West Africa historically a major export hub
- Some domestic trade mainly for medicine
- Maghreb currently a significant trade hub
- Global trade happening but under-reported





# Songbird trade in Europe and the Middle East

- Large-scale illegal killing – connected to trade to varying extents
- Trade in Middle East under-reported





# Trends in sourcing of songbirds in trade

- Wild-caught individuals dominate international trade
- Captive-bred individuals appear to be increasing in legal trade.
- Captive-breeding not necessarily positive for conservation outcomes

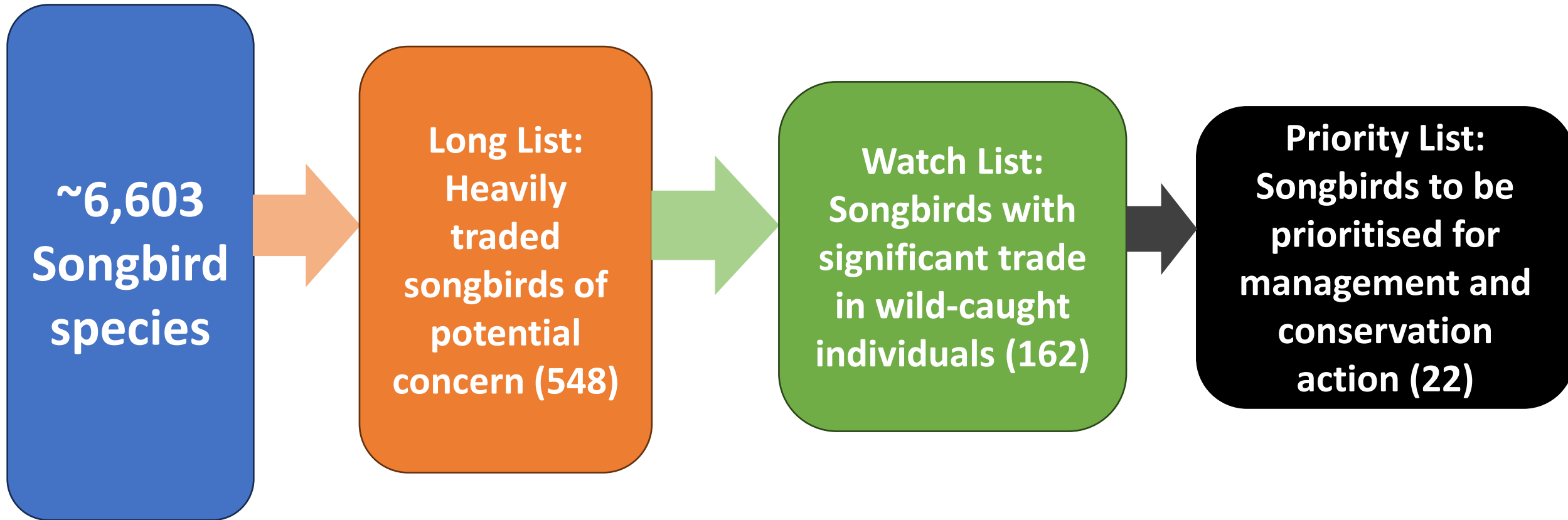


# Examples of unsustainably traded songbirds





# Producing a list of priority songbird species



# Producing a list of priority species

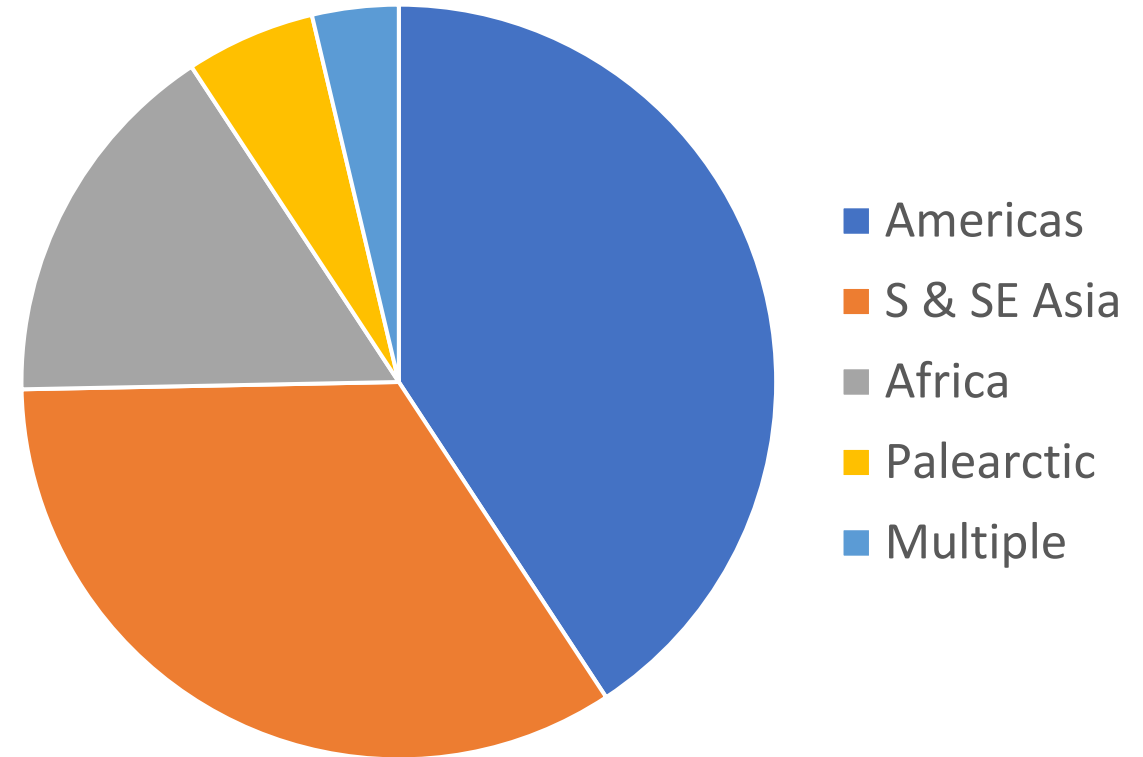
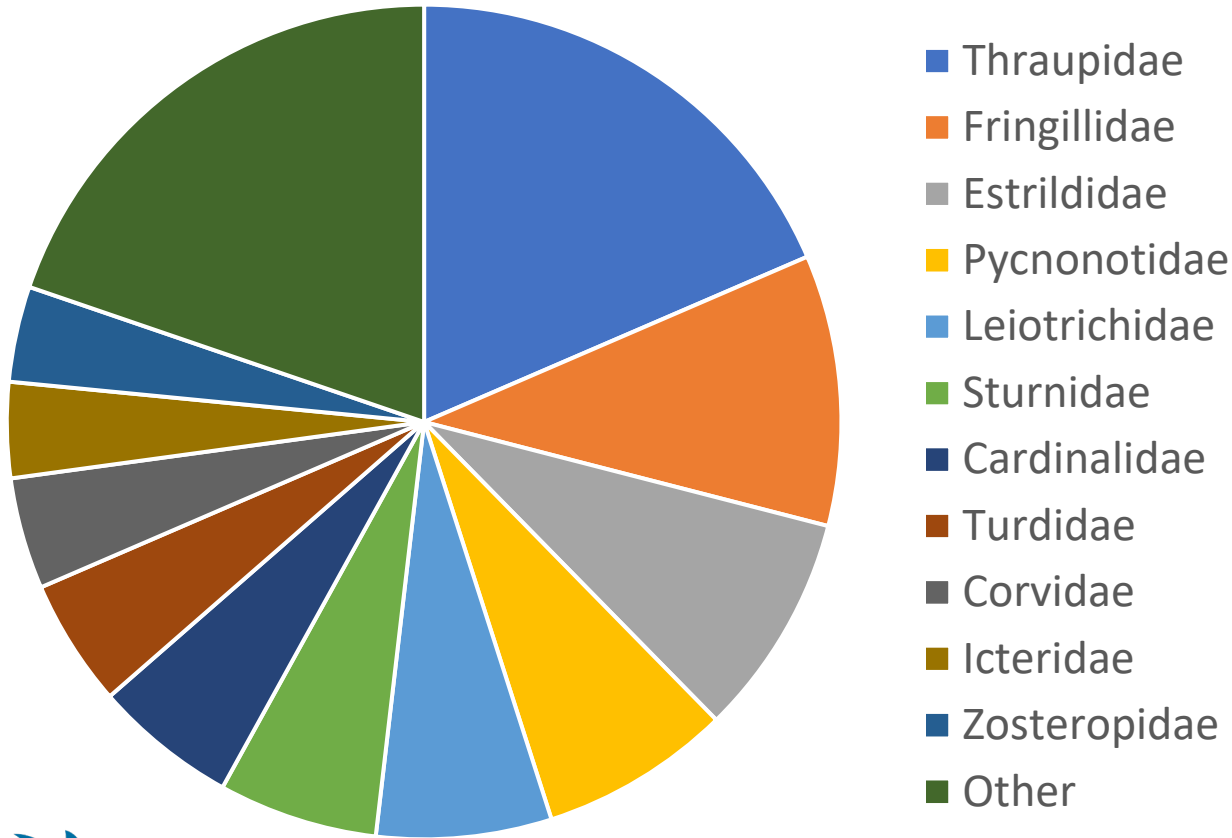
## Creating the long-list

- Frequency and volume in trade databases
- Literature evidence of trade
- Reporting by parties

## Creating the watch-list

- Not on CITES appendices
- Evidence of international trade
- Evidence of high levels of trade
- Evidence of wild-sourcing of individuals in trade

# Breakdown – Songbirds with significant trade in wild-caught individuals



Common English name	Scientific name	Family	Region	Red List category	Trade score
Oriental Magpie-robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	Muscicapidae	S & SE Asia	LC	13
Yellow-fronted Canary	<i>Crithagra mozambica</i>	Fringillidae	Africa	LC	13
Greater Green Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis sonnerati</i>	Chloropseidae	S & SE Asia	EN	12
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu	<i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>	Estrildidae	Africa	LC	11
Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	Pycnonotidae	S & SE Asia	LC	10
Javan Myna	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>	Sturnidae	S & SE Asia	VU	8
Orange-cheeked Waxbill	<i>Estrilda melpoda</i>	Estrildidae	Africa	LC	8
Zebra Waxbill	<i>Amandava subflava</i>	Estrildidae	Africa	LC	8
Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>	Pycnonotidae	S & SE Asia	LC	8
Javan Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i>	Chloropseidae	S & SE Asia	EN	8
Double-collared Seedeater	<i>Sporophila caerulescens</i>	Thraupidae	Americas	LC	8
Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>	Oriolidae	S & SE Asia	LC	7
Sooty-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus aurigaster</i>	Pycnonotidae	S & SE Asia	LC	7
Green-winged Saltator	<i>Saltator similis</i>	Thraupidae	Americas	LC	7
Javan White-eye	<i>Zosterops flavus</i>	Zosteropidae	S & SE Asia	EN	6
Great-billed Seed-finch	<i>Sporophila maximiliani</i>	Thraupidae	Americas	EN	6
Brown-cheeked Bulbul	<i>Alophoixus bres</i>	Pycnonotidae	S & SE Asia	EN	4
Aceh Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus snouckaerti</i>	Pycnonotidae	S & SE Asia	EN	4
Sumatran Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax bicolor</i>	Leiotrichidae	S & SE Asia	EN	4
Rufous-fronted Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax rufifrons</i>	Leiotrichidae	S & SE Asia	CR	4
Chestnut-capped Thrush	<i>Geokichla interpres</i>	Turdidae	S & SE Asia	EN	4
Ruby-throated Bulbul	<i>Rubigula dispar</i>	Pycnonotidae	S & SE Asia	VU	3

# Key questions

- How can Parties better monitor songbird trade in their countries?
- Where might new songbird trade sectors emerge?
- How might criteria for identifying sustainable trade be developed?
- How can CITES address the under-representation of songbirds?



# Key questions

- Does the long-list omit any heavily traded species?
- What other filters and/or data could be applied to identify priority songbird species?
- What conservation actions would these priority species most benefit from?
- How can CITES mechanisms best be used to enhance conservation efforts for these species?