AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

A. PROPOSAL

Inclusion of Eudocimus ruber in Appendix I.

B. PROPONENT

The French Republic.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Aves

12. Order: Ciconiiformes, suborder Ciconiae

13. Family: Threskiornithidae

14. Species: Eudocimus ruber (Linnaeus, 1758)

15. Common Names: English: scarlet ibis
French: ibis rouge
Spanish: Corocoro colorado, Corocoro rojo

16. Code Numbers: A-11-005-004-003 (ISIS)

2. Biological Data

21. Distribution: Colombia, Venezuela, Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, Brazil.

Accidental occurrences: Ecuador, U.S.A. (Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Florida), Jamaica and Grenada.

COLOMBIA: Lagoons in the lower Magdalena and marshes in the llanos east of the Andes in Arauca and Meta (Meyer de Schauensee, 1964).

VENEZUELA: Coast (Puerto Cabello, Unare, Margarita Island); Orinoco Delta (Pedernales, Isla de Mariusa, Isla Corocoro).

TRINIDAD: Caroni swamp (not breeding since mid 1970's) (Luthin, 1984b).

GUYANA: Occurs along the coast. The species has not bred since mid-1970's, probably because of lack of suitable habitat (De Jong, 1983).

SURINAME: Coastal area, north of Wageningen and Burnside, Coppename Rivermouth Reserve, Wia-Wia Reserve (breeding, ...) and Matapica swamps (non-breeding) (De Jong and Spaans, 1984)

FRENCH GUIANA: North of Sinnemary and on both sides of Kourou (De Jong, 1983).

BRAZIL: The mouth of the Amazon River (Marajó Island) and probably locally distributed in the states of Pará and Maranhão (Luthin, 1984; Spaans, 1975 and 1982).

FLORIDA: Scarlet ibises were artificially introduced by letting white ibises (Eudocimus albus) breed eggs of scarlet ibises. Hybridization of both species occurs.

22. Population: Total numbers are unknown, rough estimates vary from 70,000 to maximally 100,000 breeding pairs.

In 1983 and 1984, censuses were flown along the entire northern South American coast, from the Colombian/Venezuelan border to the French Guiana/Brazil border. Ground censuses were completed in Trinidad and on the coast of Colombia. Fairly complete aerial censuses were flown in the greater part of the scarlet ibis' range in the western llanos of Venezuela, as part of the ICBP/IWRB Neotropical Wetland Project.

These censuses were co-ordinated by the ICBP Specialist Group on Storks, Ibises and Spoonbills. The results of these censuses are incorporated in the text and marked with an asterisk (*). (Given numbers are number of breeding pairs)(Luthin, 1984a).

COLOMBIA: Numbers are not known to the proponent.

VENEZUELA: - Coast: 315 in 1983, 0 in 1984(*)(2,300 in 1972, Spaans, 1975).

- Orinoco Delta: 1,000 in 1983; 1,200 in 1984(*)(1,100 in the outer delta in 1972, Spaans, 1975).

- Llanos: 64,423 in 1983 (22 colonies), 1984: 46,000 pairs, but this was a partial census of the area. However, all major colonies of 1983 were revisited in 1984(*)(Ramo et al., 1983 and 1984).

TRINIDAD: c. 10,000 individuals roost in the Caroni swamp, no breeding has occurred since mid 1970's (Luthin, 1984b, Ffrench and Haverschmidt, 1970).

GUYANA: 0 in 1983; 0 in 1984(*)

Former breeding estimates: 600 in 1972; 300 in 1976 (Spaans, 1982).

SURINAME: 1,850 in 1983; 10,930 in 1984(*).

Numbers vary considerably: 13,500 in 1970, going down to 9,200 in 1972, 8,450 in 1975, 6,100 in 1976, 6,650 in 1977, 4,000 in 1980, 3,900 in 1981 then up to 17,000 in 1982; 1,850 in 1983; 10,930 in 1984 (Spaans, 1975; Spaans and De Jong, 1982; Luthin 1984a; De Jong and Spaans, 1984).

FRENCH GUIANA: 0 in 1983; 300 in 1984(*).

Earlier estimates: 3,200 in 1971, 2,600 in 1976 (Spaans, 1975 and 1982). Recent data: Alauda 53(4):287-294, 1985.

BRAZIL: 0 in 1983; no census in 1984(*).

In the early 1960's c. 1,100 pairs bred in extreme north-eastern Brazil (Spaans, 1975).

Approximately 9,000 non-breeding individuals were sighted in the Amazon Delta in 1982 during aerial censuses by the Canadian Wildlife Service (Luthin, 1984a).

Breeding in the delta is probably not possible, because of the lack of suitable Avicennia mangroves.

The scarlet ibis occurred formerly in southern Brazil, but has almost certainly vanished since late 1960's (Sick, 1972; Spaans, 1982).

Although the total number of breeding scarlet ibises indicates their abundance, c. 87% of the total known population live in 4 colonies in the Venezuelan llanos.

Its entire breeding distribution has been reduced considerably, and remaining coastal populations suffer from habitat loss and disturbances. Disturbance of a breeding colony often results in the desertion of the colony for the whole season.

23. Habitat: Breeding in coastal populations occurs only in young black mangrove (Avicennia germinans), which locally (Venezuela coast, French Guiana, Guyana) vanishes rapidly. When the trees grow too high (over 10 m.), the colony moves. If no suitable nesting habitat can be found, it seems possible that the colony skips one or more breeding seasons. Nesting usually occurs in mixed colonies, with other ibises, herons and egrets.

3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization: Hunting and poaching of birds for meat and for fun is supposed to exist (Luthin, in litt. 1985), but the extent of this phenomenon is not well known (as is poaching by definition). Since the publication of decrees on the protection of the French Guianese fauna (see 4), the retail sale, utilization, offer for sale, sale or buying of scarlet ibis is banned in the whole French territory.

The ibis does not seem to be directly persecuted in Venezuela, but they are disturbed by boaters and fishermen in coastal areas where they are found (which is possibly the main reason for no breeding on the Venezuela coast).

The llanos populations are mainly threatened by agro-development, drainage and gallery-forest cutting, which are proceeding at accelerated rates. This means a certain decline in colonies of Eudocimus ruber in the llanos can be predicted in the near future.

Hunting of scarlet ibises in order to get their feathers existed on a large scale at the beginning of this century, when, for example, during the breeding season large numbers of young scarlet ibises were offered dried or salted on Suriname markets, their feathers were used in the plume trade (F.P. and A.P. Penard, 1908).

32. Legal International Trade: Only few institutions are able to provide captive bred specimens for zoo collections. American zoos interested in obtaining scarlet ibises look to European sources, since the scarlet ibis, listed as a migratory species, is given full protection in the U.S.A. Vogelpark Walsrode (FRG) is the largest supplier of captive bred scarlet ibis in the world. Each year, over 100 young birds are being bred and sold to zoos all over the world. The species is known to breed in captivity since 1968 (Risdon, 1969 and 1970).

By the end of 1984, over 130 scarlet ibises were exhibited in seven major zoos in the Netherlands. The major part of these birds are captive bred, no live ibises have been imported into the Netherlands in recent years. It happened that ibises transited through the Netherlands; they were shipments from Suriname or Colombia to Japan and Taiwan.

33. Illegal Trade: Non-existant or not known to the proponent.

34. Potential Trade Threats: The population as a whole may not be threatened, but a number of colonies, such as the coastal populations, are currently under threat. Any disturbance may lead to disruption of breeding and to an eventual disappearance from the site. Possibilities to find alternative suitable nesting sites are decreasing.

4. Protection Status

41. National:

COLOMBIA: Fully protected.

VENEZUELA: Fully protected by law. Hunting of the scarlet ibis is banned, and collection (for scientific purposes or zoos) is quite strongly restricted and enforced.

TRINIDAD: The species is listed as a legal game species, with a limit of 5 birds/day/gun for a six month season (November 1 to March 31), and a closed hunting season from April 1 to October 31. However, during the hunting season, rarely are more than a few birds ever taken. Poaching and night hunting are frequent in the roosting colony in the Caroni swamp, which is in a wildlife preserve (sanctuary). Plans to make the Caroni swamp into a National Park have existed since 1979, but there seems to be no movement for its declaration (Luthin, 1985).

GUYANA: There exists a closed hunting season for the scarlet ibis from April 1 to August 1. Commercial trade is only allowed to licensed dealers.

SURINAME: Fully protected.

FRENCH GUIANA: Since the publication of a specific regulation to protect the French Guianese fauna, the scarlet ibis is fully protected under the decree of 15 May 1986 establishing on all or part of the national territory protective measures for the birds occuring in the Guiana Department.

BRAZIL: Fully protected and listed as an endangered species.

42. International: Some of the ibis' habitats are protected by the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention).

43. Additional Protection Needs: All disturbance of birds in vulnerable and endanged populations should be discouraged. (The most endangered populations are the coastal population of Venezuela, Guyana, French Guiana and the Trinidad population). Capture of specimens should only be allowed outside the breeding season and from safe populations.

5. Information on Similar Species

The only other Eudocimus species is Eudocimus albus, the American white ibis, occurring abundantly in the eastern part of the United States and in a number of colonies in Mexico, Panama and Venezuela. In the latter country, the species appears to be expanding its range, competing and hybridizing with the scarlet Ibis (Luthin, 1984a). The hybrid has been proposed as a subspecies (Ramo and Busto, 1983).

6. Comments from Countries of Origin

7. Additional Remarks

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