

Transfer of the Helmeted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus melanops cassidix* from Appendix I to II

Proponent: Australia

Summary: The Helmeted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus melanops cassidix* is the largest and most brightly coloured subspecies of the Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, a bird endemic to Australia. It was previously distributed in an area of 2000-3000 km² in south-central Victoria but it is now limited to a small section of creek in an area of less than 5km². Because of conservation measures its population has been growing since 2011 but still remains at under 100 mature individuals. The small population size and limited range make the subspecies vulnerable to natural events and disease. Other adverse factors include poor habitat, predation and harassment by Bell Miner *Manorina melanophrys*, which reduces breeding success and competes for food.

The subspecies is listed as critically endangered under Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999, which regulates trade in CITES-listed and Australian native wildlife and their products. Export of a live Australian native mammal, bird, reptile or amphibian is strictly prohibited for commercial purposes but they may be exported for specific non-commercial purposes (e.g. for research, education, exhibition or a pet bird). Permits are required for import and export. The taxon is one of the most intensively managed in Victoria, Australia. The long term objective of management is to increase the population to a minimum of 1000 individuals.

The subspecies was included in CITES Appendix I in 1975. No other *Lichenostomus* is included in the CITES Appendices. Very limited trade in specimens for scientific purposes is recorded in the CITES trade database, the most recent of which (of non-viable eggs) was for research to enhance the conservation prospects of the taxon. There have been no reports of illegal trade. The species was included in the Periodic Review.

Analysis: The Helmeted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus melanops cassidix* has a restricted range and a population, which although increasing is very small. On this basis it would appear still to meet the biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I in Annex 1 of Res. Conf 9.24 (Rev. CoP16). However, the only reported trade has been in specimens for scientific purposes and there are no indications of illegal trade of any commercial demand. It is highly unlikely that its transfer to Appendix II would stimulate trade in it or any Appendix-I listed species. In the event of a transfer to Appendix II, no commercial trade would be permitted under Australian legislation. The anticipated risks to the taxon of such a transfer would appear to be negligible.