



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

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Manila, Philippines, 23 - 28 October 2017  
Agenda Item 25.1

**PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF  
THE YELLOW BUNTING (*Emberiza sulphurata*)  
ON APPENDIX II OF THE CONVENTION**

Summary:

The Government of the Philippines has submitted the attached proposal\* for the inclusion of the Yellow Bunting (*Emeberiza sulphurata*) on Appendix II of CMS.

\*The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CMS Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

**PROPOSAL FOR INCLUSION OF  
THE YELLOW BUNTING (*Emberiza sulphurata*) ON APPENDIX II OF  
THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF  
WILD ANIMALS**

**A. PROPOSAL**

Inclusion of Yellow Bunting *Emberiza sulphurata* in CMS Appendix II. *Emberiza sulphurata* is considered Vulnerable (IUCN) on account of a moderate and ongoing population decline. This population decline is due to habitat loss, pesticide use and hunting, and inclusion in the CMS Appendices can help progress reduction in all these threat categories.

**B. PROPONENT:** Government of the Republic of the Philippines; Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Biodiversity Management Bureau

**C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

**1. Taxonomy**

- 1.1 Class: Aves
- 1.2 Order: Passeriformes
- 1.3 Family: Emberizidae
- 1.4 Genus, species or subspecies, including author and year  
*Emberiza sulphurata* Temminck & Schlegel, 1848
- 1.5 Scientific synonyms: No known synonyms
- 1.6 Common name(s), in all applicable languages used by the Convention
  - English: Yellow Bunting, Japanese Yellow Bunting
  - French: Bruant du Japon
  - Spanish: Escribano japonés

**2. Overview**

The population of *Emberiza sulphurata* is showing a moderate and ongoing decline, resulting from habitat loss, pesticide use and hunting. Tighter protection and implementation of species specific action plans across the home ranges could be used to reduce these threats.

**3. Migrations**

**3.1 Kinds of movement, distance, the cyclical and predicable nature of the migration**

*Range:* *Emberiza sulphurata* breeds in Japan, and is thought to winter mainly in the Philippines, where its stronghold may be Ilocos Norte or other areas of north Luzon (D. Allen *in litt.* 2012, R Hutchinson *pers. comm.*), only small numbers have been found wintering elsewhere, in Fujian and Taiwan (province of China), in the past (BirdLife International 2001, Brazil 2009). Birds on passage have been recorded from North Korea, South Korea, Hong Kong (China) and the coast of mainland China and Taiwan, province of China.

**3.2 Proportion of the population migrating, and why that is a significant proportion**

Only small numbers have been found wintering in Fujian and Taiwan, Province of China, and it is likely that the vast majority of the population winters in the northern Philippines, specifically the north-west of Luzon, where they are found October-April (Kennedy 2000).

**4. Biological data (other than migration)**

**4.1 Distribution (current and historical)**

Breeding; Japan. It is generally uncommon in its restricted breeding range in Japan, and it appears to have declined significantly during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Migration; China; Hong Kong, South Korea, North Korea, China, Taiwan (Province of China)  
 Wintering; Philippines; Taiwan (Province of China), Japan

#### 4.2 Population (estimates and trends)

IUCN data: The global population is roughly estimated to be in the band c.2,500-9,999 mature individuals (BirdLife International 2001). This equates to 3,750-14,999 individuals in total, rounded here to 3,500-15,000 individuals. National population estimates include: < c.1,000 individuals on migration and < c.1,000 wintering individuals in China; c.50-1,000 individuals on migration and < c.50 wintering individuals in Taiwan, Province of China and < c.100,000 breeding pairs and < c.1,000 individuals on migration in Japan (Brazil 2009).

*Trend Justification:* A moderate and ongoing population decline is suspected to be occurring, as the species has become scarcer on its breeding grounds in Japan. Declines are likely to be occurring owing to habitat degradation and loss through agricultural intensification, as well as trapping for the cage-bird trade.

#### 4.3 Habitat (short description and trends)

It breeds from c.600-1,500 m asl, in deciduous and mixed forests, on wooded slopes and in high valleys, around woodland edges and in park-like areas with shrubs and thickets. It nests in bushes or on the ground. On migration, it occurs in shrubby clearings in open woodland, in low secondary growth and open cultivated land with bushes and thickets, and sometimes in open grasslands (IUCN, Brazil 2009). In winter in the Philippines it prefers agricultural fields, particularly corn fields, or disused rice fields c.0-300 m asl (R. Hutchinson *pers. obs.*)

#### 4.4 Biological characteristics

Breeding starts second half of May. Males congregate on areas of snow-free vegetation, awaiting later arrival of females.

#### 4.5 Role of the taxon in its ecosystem

### 5. **Conservation status and threats**

#### 5.1 IUCN Red List Assessment (if available)

Red List Category & Criteria: Vulnerable

Year Published: 2016

Date Assessed: 2016-10-01

*Justification:* This bunting qualifies as Vulnerable because it has a small and declining population, probably resulting from a combination of habitat loss, pesticide use and hunting throughout its range.

#### Previously published Red List assessments:

2012 – Vulnerable (VU)

2008 – Vulnerable (VU)

2007 – Vulnerable (VU)

2004 – Vulnerable (VU)

2000 – Vulnerable (VU)

1996 – Vulnerable (VU)

1994 – Vulnerable (VU)

1988 – Threatened (T)

#### 5.2 Equivalent information relevant to conservation status assessment

#### 5.3 Threats to the population (factors, intensity)

Its decline has probably been a result of a combination of habitat loss, high levels of pesticide use and trapping for the bird trade.

#### 5.4 Threats connected especially with migrations

Trapping for the bird trade.

#### 5.5 National and international utilization

### 6. Protection status and species management

#### 6.1 National protection status

It is legally protected in Japan, North Korea and Hong Kong.

The species is also protected in the Philippines' via Republic Act 9147, otherwise known as the Wildlife Resources Protection and Conservation Act which provides general prohibition of the wildlife hunting.

#### 6.2 International protection status

None

#### 6.3 Management measures

None

#### 6.4 Habitat conservation

It occurs in some National Wildlife Protection Areas in central Honshu, Japan, including Asama (Gunma and Nagano prefectures), the North Alps (Toyama, Nagano and Gifu prefectures) and Katano Duck Pond (Ishikawa prefecture). Some of its breeding and staging grounds are also protected as prefecture protection areas, such as Nikko (Tochigi prefecture), Myoko-san (Niigata prefecture), Nojiri-ko (Nagano prefecture), Matsunaga-wan (Hiroshima prefecture) and Kakara-jima (Saga prefecture).

#### 6.5 Population monitoring

In Japan, the species for monitoring purposes is banded annually during migration. Volunteer, irregular population assessments take place in an overwintering core area in North Luzon, Philippines.

### 7. Effects of the proposed amendment

#### 7.1 Anticipated benefits of the amendment

Inclusion of *Emberiza sulphurata* in the CMS Appendices would encourage more stringent monitoring of both breeding and wintering populations, encourage enforcement of current law preventing hunting or capture, and increased protection of both breeding and wintering habitats.

#### 7.2 Potential risks of the amendment

None.

#### 7.3 Intention of the proponent concerning development of an Agreement or Concerted Action

The intention is to collaborate with the Government of Japan on a concerted action plan which would include a) standardized monitoring within the species' breeding range to further document population development trends and b) within sample areas of the core overwintering area in the Philippines to conduct standardized monitoring and c) to establish habitat protection dialogues with land-owners in core overwintering area.

### 8. Range States

Breeding; Japan

Migration; China; Hong Kong, South Korea, North Korea, China, Taiwan (Province of China)  
Wintering; Philippines; Taiwan (Province of China), Japan

## 9. Consultations

Initial dialogue has taken place with Dir. Kiyooki Ozaki, Division of Avian Conservation, Yamashina Institute for Ornithology, Japan

## 10. Additional remarks

None

## 11. References

- BirdLife International. (2016). *Emberiza sulphurata*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2016:e.T22720996A94694052. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.20163.RLTS.T22720996A94694052.en>. Downloaded on 03 April 2017.
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