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# Observations of trade in Spotted Crocias *Laniellus albonotatus* in Java, Indonesia

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## INTRODUCTION

The Spotted Crocias *Laniellus albonotatus* is endemic to the island of Java, Indonesia, where it is restricted to a few remaining broadleaved montane forests (900–2,400m) in West Java Province (BirdLife International, 2017). The species is currently classified as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Although thorough assessments have not been made, Spotted Crocias populations are thought to be in decline due to habitat loss, and trapping for trade has been suspected to play a role as well (BirdLife International, 2017). The species' Red List entry suggests that trade monitoring efforts are needed to establish a comprehensive understanding of the species' presence in Indonesian markets.

Here we report on five Spotted Crocias trade observations made during market surveys in Java, conducted between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018. The first observation occurred on the 7<sup>th</sup> October during a visit to Yogyakarta's Pasar Satwa dan Tanaman Hias market and involved a single individual (Fig. 1). The other observations were made on the 13<sup>th</sup> October during a visit to Jakarta's Pramuka bird market. Here, four Spotted Crocias were found across an equal number of stalls. No price data were collected during these visits. As part of the survey, twelve more markets were visited across five other Javan cities (Bandung, Bogor, Malang, Semarang and Surabaya), but no additional Spotted Crocias were found.

We searched published market surveys between 2006 and 2018 for other Spotted Crocias trade observations in Indonesia and found a total of eight; during a survey of Jakarta's three main bird markets (Barito, Jatinegara and Pramuka) between the 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 2014, seven birds were found across four stalls (Chng et al.,

2015). On the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2016, one individual was found for sale on the Sukahaji market in Bandung (Chng et al., 2016).

These observations show that Spotted Crocias are traded and confirm suspicions regarding the trapping of these birds. Online videos of caged Spotted Crocias, posted by hobbyists, confirm that the species is kept for its singing abilities (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3Mbd1f9JuE>). Current demand for the species does not appear to be high, as reflected by the low number of trade observations. However,



**Figure 1.** Spotted Crocias *Laniellus albonotatus* observed on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2018 in Pasar Satwa dan Tanaman Hias in Yogyakarta. (Photograph: Monitor)

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while montane species such as the Spotted Crocias were previously absent from markets, they are now increasingly observed. It is likely that the increasing scarcity of lowland species, resulting from habitat loss and over-exploitation, is causing trapping efforts to shift towards these montane birds (Chng and Eaton, 2016; Chng et al., 2015). As Spotted Crocias habitats continue to disappear, increasing exposure will render the species even more vulnerable to shifting trade trends.

The Spotted Crocias is protected under Indonesian law, making all observed trade strictly illegal. The illicit and unsustainable songbird trade in Indonesia is rampant and poses a threat to many species. In Java, the keeping of songbirds remains deeply entrenched in society (Bergin et al., 2018; Jepson and Ladle, 2005, 2009; Jepson et al., 2011), sustaining a demand that is driving a growing number of species towards extinction (Bergin et al., 2018; Eaton et al., 2015; Shepherd et al., 2015). All too often, conservation actions are taken too late.

Systematic trade monitoring is necessary to detect trade trends, including potential trade increases in lesser-known species such as the Spotted Crocias. The species' limited distribution and endemism are likely to increase its vulnerability to over-exploitation and warrant extra vigilance. As proposed in its Red List entry, steps should be taken to assess further the potential threats to this species and implement appropriate conservation interventions.

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