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## STATUS OF THE SALMON-CRESTED COCKATOO AND RED LORY ON AMBON ISLAND, MALUKU

by

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The Salmon-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua moluccensis* is endemic to the islands of Seram, Ambon, Haruku and Saparua (White & Bruce 1986) and listed as vulnerable in Collar *et al.* (1994). The Red Lory *Eos bornea* is endemic to these same islands together with Buru and the Kai islands, and several small islands between Seram and Kai (White & Bruce 1986). The population of the lory on Ambon, Haruku and Saparua, nominate *bornea*, is considered to be a separate sub-species from *E. b. rolhschildi* of Seram by Stresemann (1912) and Arndt (1990), on account of its larger size, however Forshaw (1989) and White & Bruce (1986) question the validity of this taxon.

The status of the Salmon-crested Cockatoo on Ambon has always been uncertain, Stresemann (in White & Bruce 1986) states that the species does not occur on Ambon. However, van Bemmelen (1948) included Ambon in the species' range, with a footnote that it is introduced there. Forshaw (1989) and Smiet (1985) follow the view that it was introduced. The latter author did not record the species during nearly two years residence on the island (1980-81), but reports information that it had been common up to ten years previously. Arndt (1990) considers the nominate sub-species of the Red Lory to be extinct. We confirm that wild populations of both species still occur on Ambon and that the lory still occurs on Haruku.

The authors visited forested hills behind Hila on the north coast of the Hitu peninsula on Ambon

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on 28 May and 11 June 1995. On each occasion, 6-8 Salmon-crested Cockatoos and 30-60 Red Lorries were observed, overlooking a forested valley at *ca.* 300m asl and in forest edge round shifting cultivation at *ca.* 500m asl. Also common in the area were Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*. Red-checked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi* and Great-billed Parrot *Tanygnathus megalorhynchos*. According to local people, the cockatoo is present throughout the hills of the Hitu peninsula from Hila to Wakasihi (*ca.* 25 km) but is absent from other parts of Ambon island.

The senior author has also observed the Red Lory in a mosaic of forest and cultivated areas in other parts of Ambon and on Haruku, as follows: 18-20 birds in the south-east part of the Hitu Peninsula above Laha in February and May 1995, four birds in the north-west above Morela in November 1995, two birds in the north-east on the lower slopes of Mount Salahutu behind Waai in August 1995, and one bird in north-west Haruku in March 1996. The species was recorded several times on Haruku during 1994, with 60 on 18 July as the largest number in a single day (K Heij *in litt.* 1996).

The Red Lory (and formerly the Salmon-crested Cockatoo) is traded in significant numbers and birds entering the trade originate from Seram and Buru. Although shipments transit through Ambon and there have undoubtedly been escapes, there appears no sound reason to assume that these species have previously gone extinct on Ambon and that new populations have become established from escaped birds. The reported populations occur in remaining natural forest in the more remote regions of the island.

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