



**IUCN SSC Asian Songbird Trade
Specialist Group**



Conservation Success Stories

**Simeulue Hill Myna and
Barusan Shama Conservation
Breeding and Reintroduction**



Simeulue Hill Myna and Barusan Shama Conservation Breeding and Reintroduction

IMPLEMENTED BY

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TARGET

Establish an assurance conservation breeding population of Barusan shamas (T-027); Establish an assurance conservation breeding population of Barusan island hill myna spp. (T-028)

THREAT ADDRESSED

The songbird trade of highly threatened endemic taxa and regional extinctions.



SUCCESS LEVEL

Partially successful



**A new wild population
from an ongoing
reintroduction project**

Success category:

Increase in population viability

Success story:

At the first Asian Songbird Trade Crisis Summit in 2015, which led to the formation of the IUCN SSC Asian Songbird Trade Specialist Group (IUCN SSC ASTSG), the Common Hill Myna (*Gracula religiosa*) and Barusan Shama (*Copsychus malabaricus* ssp. *melanurus*) were identified as a 'species of high conservation priority' and listed the species in Tier 1 of the "12 taxa identified as of highest priority and in need of immediate action". Although Simeulue Hill Myna remains classed as a subspecies, much like the Nias Hill Myna, now recognised as a species and – which is as such is listed as Critically Endangered – Simeulue Hill Myna (*G. religiosa miotera*) is a genetically and morphologically 'highly distinct' population within the Hill Myna complex that may well warrant endemic species-level recognition. The threat to both Simeulue Hill Myna and Barusan Shama was then reaffirmed within the IUCN SSC ASTSG's most recent list of priority taxa which was published in 2022, with both taxa being recognised at the subspecies level and listed as within Priority Tier 1.

Simeulue Hill Myna and Barusan Shama are widely considered extinct in the wild. Although some research suggests there are small remnant wild populations remaining in the remote and unpopulated northern parts of Simeulue. However, even if such populations do exist, the taxa are undeniably on the brink of extinction with likely only small captive populations remaining. Ecosystem Impact Foundation's (EcosystemImpact) breeding and reintroduction project is thus imperative for the survival of the taxon and procuring birds marks a significant positive development in the project. The availability of Simeulue Hill Myna is considerably less than Barusan Shama, which points to them being possibly in even greater danger of extinction than the Simeulue taxon of Barusan Shama.

The project has three purpose-built ranges of aviaries, two for Barusan Shama and one larger aviary for Hill Myna. There is ongoing successful breeding of Barusan Shama, two of which are pairs of F2 birds bred through the project. With a fairly constant number of chicks being bred, we are again at a stage where we are reaching maximum capacity, but through an ongoing reintroduction project, these birds are forming the foundations of a new wild population at our secured reintroduction site, protected and monitored by a community ranger project.

The next phase of the project will be to focus on achieving breeding success for Simeulue Hill Myna. We currently house three pairs. However, given that this is the only known conservation breeding project focused on the taxa, we aim to obtain further breeding pairs. Once a sustainable captive breeding population of Hill Myna is secured, we will work to create a secure wild population.

■ TOM AMEY, ELFIRA SEPTIANSYAH, SILVI DWI ANASARI



REASONS FOR SUCCESS

Ongoing successful conservation breeding of Barusan Shama; Simeulue Hill Myna procured through a legal breeding permit, with a nest built but no successful breeding; early stages of a reintroduction project for Barusan Shama with a number (exact details restricted from public) of reintroduced individuals.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

<https://www.ecosystemimpact.com/saving-the-last-of-simeulues-endemic-birds;>
<https://www.asiansongbirdtradesg.com/astsg-publications>

Vulnerable Northern River Shark,
(*Glyphis garricki*)
Photo: Grant Johnson

Interviews about human wildlife
interactions with local inhabitants
Photo: Kiran Thapa Magar

Vicuña management by Cooperativa
Agroganadera de Santa Catalina and Comunidad
Aborígen Atu Shapi de Morritos.
Santa Catalina, Jujuy Province, Argentina
Photo: Yanina Arzamendia

Story photo credits

The male Barusan Shama with mealworm
Photo: Ecosystem Impact Foundation

Barusan Shama egg
Photo: Ecosystem Impact Foundation

Community songbird monitoring and
protection, Indonesia
Photo: Asian Songbird Trade SG archives

Cacti from genera *Copiapoa* and *Eriosyce*
confiscated in Italy and repatriated to Chile in 2021
Photo: Andrea Cattabriga