

Munias of India in the illegal bird-trade

India is home to eight species of munia, belonging to the family Estrildidae. All are protected in the wild in India. Their small size (≤ 10 cms), beautiful colouration, melodious calls and easy upkeep make them highly sought after cage birds, often resulting in their illegal capture for the pet trade in India.



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Munias and avadavats are listed in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Hunting, trapping or trade in these species is prohibited and is a punishable offence. Often these species are dyed in various colours by traders to make them look attractive and exotic and to prevent their detection as wild birds by enforcement agencies. The Green Avadavat *Amandava formosa* is a globally threatened species listed as 'Vulnerable' in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and is also included in Appendix II of CITES which strictly regulates its international trade.

TRAFFIC India carries out research and provides analysis, support and encouragement to efforts aimed at ensuring that wildlife trade is not a threat to the conservation of nature in India.

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