1999

Annual Review of the World Pheasant Association 1998/1999

World Pheasant Association

ANNUAL REVIEW

OF THE WORLD PHEASANT ASSOCIATION

1998/99

THE WORLD PHEASANT ASSOCIATION REVIEW 1998/99

A REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD PHEASANT ASSOCIATION (Registered Charity No 271203)

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President's message

Keith Howman

I am not a great believer in looking back but I can certainly do so at the end of my first year as President of WPA with a lot of pleasure - not at what I have done, but what a new and younger team, led by Nicola Chalmers-Watson, has achieved.

With our finances looking better than they have ever been and a year with the highest recruitment of new members in the UK since our very early days, there is much cause for satisfaction. There is also much to look forward to in the millenium year which is also, by a happy coincidence, WPA's 25th anniversary. It is also the year in which by another happy coincidence we will be returning to Kathmandu, Nepal for our next International Symposium for pheasant, partridges, quail and francolin. For Nepal is where, with great trepidation, we held our first international symposium 20 years ago.

If memory serves me right, only one paper was given by an Asian field scientist the other field research papers being contributed by scientists from the west. At next year's symposium the balance is totally reversed, which is cause for much celebration and indicates strongly that WPA's policy of acting as a helper and catalyst to local scientists rather than trying to do the work using western scientists, has paid handsome dividends – I congratulate all those and there are many of you who have achieved BScs, MScs and PhDs for work on galliformes in the intervening years.

That 1979 symposium was entirely organised at the Nepal end by the late Colonel Jimmy Roberts. This one will be very much held in his memory and will include a post symposium trek to 'Pipar' and the schools in the valley below, which we have supported since 1979 and which, with the help of the Colonel Jimmy Roberts Memorial Fund (see page 6) we will continue to support. The symposium will be a great oportunity for those who have never been there to get to know this beautiful country with its lovely people. If the deliberations of the scientists and field workers is not for you there is plenty to see and do in Kathmandu. I hope I will see many of our members from all over the world there.

Photo: Jean Howman

Keith Howman was awarded the Order of the Golden Ark by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands for dedicating his life to nature conservation. Here he is pictured receiving the award from Mr Van Roijen, the Ambassador of the Netherlands, on 27 January 1999.

Chairman's report

Richard P Howard

The past twelve months have, without any doubt, been one the most rewarding periods for WPA for some considerable time.

I think we have known for a number of years that we had to change: we needed a better focus on what we are and the direction in which we should be going – ie a future strategy. This, with the help of several dedicated individuals, is now going to be in place very soon. We will then be able to go out into the market place with a message condensed into a few bullet points. It will enable us to recruit new members with enthusiasm, knowing that we are at the forefront of the conservation of all game birds and, equally important, their endangered habitat. It will in turn give us the materials and confidence to approach foundations and industry to raise funds for the future.

Since 1995, when WPA produced the first three Action Plans for any group of birds, for the pheasants, partridge, quail and francolins and for the megapodes, WPA has been guiding galliform conservation action throughout the world. As the terms of these three plans come to an end this year, we have identified their evaluation and revision as vital in shaping the future of this important group of birds. By not only revising these plans, but also ensuring the completion of the remaining two, for grouse and cracids, by the end of the century, WPA will remain a forerunner in this field.

I was very sorry not to be able to attend the International Convention in

Photo: Keith Howman

(L to R) Our Chairman, Richard Howard and our Administrator, Nicola Chalmers-Watson talking with new members Penny and Robert Privett.

Edinburgh in September – I have heard that it was a huge success, attended not only by UK based members, but several other nationalities as well. Congratulations to all concerned.

The international attendance at the Harewood weekend in February made it possible for WPA Council to put its thoughts for the future to a broad spectrum audience of our members, and out of that has come positive action. Thank you all for the input at that meeting.

Membership is paramount to the well-being of WPA, and I would like to thank all those who have helped in this area, particularly at the Scottish Game Fair and Stratfield Saye. I now hope that we can continue to increase on our ever-stronger membership, and encourage more people to join this year.

It is through increased membership and generous donations to the Association that we have been able to bring together the world's experts more often than ever before. WPA continues to achieve so much with relatively little turnover – just think how much more we could do with a little more help from each of our members. As always we need your help to help us to raise more funds!

Thinking of individuals to thank for all the sustained work over the past year is never difficult, as there are so many! As Chairman I feel truly grateful to all members who see WPA as a most worthwhile Association to belong to, and of course those individuals who give so much of their time and energy to the Association.

We have a great team in Nicola in the office, with untiring help from Jane - how you both put up with me, I don't know and congratulations to you both in getting out for us a brand new WPA News.

Finally I would like to thank all those who sit on committees - you are a very important part of our decision process, and particularly to Council members, who make my job a real pleasure. I am truly enthusiastic for WPA's future in the new millennium.

Photo: Keith Howman

David Coles (centre), the curator of Beale Park giving new WPA members a conducted tour.

Annual Report of Council 1998/99

1998-99 has been a very progressive year for WPA: the Association continues to support tremendous amounts of work, and have a substantial influence in the global conservation efforts, in spite of our relatively small turnover.

The best example of this is through the Action Plans: initial evaluation of those printed in 1995 have been very successful in encouraging increased work on the galliformes, and guiding the direction of this work. This success is strengthened by the commitment to ensure that all five Action Plans for the galliformes are up to date by the end of 1999. This will mean that WPA not only produced the first three Action Plans to be written for groups of birds, but that we will be the first organisation to have produced revised plans for birds - quite an achievement!

Back at base in the UK, the huge amount of work that has been put in by various committed members of WPA, is beginning to pay off, and put us on the path to greater financial stability, allowing us to support more 'conservation projects'.

Changes in Officers

New Vice-Presidents: Han Assink and Roland van Boecxstaele
Re-elected Vice-Presidents: John Brown, William Chaplin, Tim Lovel and Gary Robbins

Membership

1998/99 was a record year for WPA's membership, thanks to the help and enthusiasm of Trevor Gunton, with whom we developed a membership recruitment programme. However, at the Game Fairs we surpassed even his hopes, making over 100 new members in the total five days! Membership administered through the UK totalled 810 at the end of April 1999 compared to 725 the previous year, which in addition to the members of our Chapters and Affiliates, makes a world-wide total of approximately 1,800, which is higher than for a number of years.

In April 1999, a Members Day was held at Beale Park, to which all new members were invited. This was a lovely day, allowing members to meet and hear about some of the activities of the Association. We hope next year that some volunteers may organise and host similar events in their area.

During 1998, only one of our Affiliation Agreements required renewal, and we are pleased to continue our formal link with the Northern Ireland Ornamental Pheasant Society. The WPA-Benelux Affiliation Agreement will be signed after the document has been simplified.

Events

The major fundraising and publicity events attended and/or organised in the UK by WPA in 1998/99 were the CLA Game Fair which was held at Stratfield Saye, near Basingstoke; the Game Conservancy's Scottish Fair and a WPA Charity Clay Pigeon Shoot, held at the Holland & Holland Shooting Grounds in north west London. Each of these three events was once again generously sponsored by The Famous Grouse.

The WPA International Convention in 1998 was held in Edinburgh, Scotland, and was attended by around 80 members

from the USA, the Netherlands, South Africa, Germany and all over the UK.

General Publications

In February 1999 WPA introduced a new colour, A4 format newsletter. The Association also continues to assist three of the IUCN SSC/BirdLife/WPA Specialist Groups with the printing and distribution of their newsletters. These are *Grouse News*, the *Cracid SG bulletin*, and the *newsletter of the Partridge, Quail and Francolin SG*.

The WPA Publications Fund continued to make a major contribution to the general funds. It also published a new book this year: *Partridges and Francolins: their conservation, breeding and management,* written and compiled by one of our Vice-Presidents, Gary Robbins.

Committees

There has been no activity of the Conservation Policy and Programmes Committee during 1998/99, particularly because of the resignation of the Chairman, Simon Tonge, due to increased work commitments at London Zoo. During the year there has been discussion of a proposed new committee, the Conservation Committee, which will replace this committee, and become the principal advisory committee of WPA.

The Development Committee has met twice during the past year to discuss predominantly UK fundraising events as mentioned above. Each of the events has been a success, and this committee's target budget of £10,500 of unrestricted funds was surpassed thanks to the commitment of a few key helpers.

The Conservation Breeding Advisory Committee has also not held a full committee meeting over the past 12 months – much of the work and correspondence is now organised electronically. This committee continues to oversee the progress of a few predominantly conservation breeding projects, such as WesTrag 2000 in Pakistan and the Indochina project, as well as liaising with the different regional zoo organisations throughout the world.

Travel

In order to further the aims of the Association, trustees have travelled to Malaysia (John Corder, Philip McGowan and Richard Howard), India (Philip McGowan), Pakistan (Ian Wright) and the USA (Nick Worth). Other members of Council who have travelled on behalf of WPA are Keith Howman (USA), Gary Robbins (USA and Malaysia) and Han Assink (Vietnam).

Again this year, WPA has received tremendous support from British Airways Assisting Conservation, allowing the following to travel on behalf of WPA:

Han Assink : Holland – Thailand (Vietnam) - Advisory visit to ensure continuation of Indochina project; including developing education programme at Hanoi Zoo.

Dr Dan Brooks (CSG Chair) : UK (from USA) - Strategy and Action Planning meetings with WPA.

Stuart Butchart : Indonesia - Project on the status of the Maleo on Sulawesi

Dr John Carroll (PQFSG Chair) : UK (from USA) and Uganda - Strategy and action planning meetings with WPA and other Specialist Groups; liaison in Uganda to develop a training workshop for African biologists.

John Corder : Malaysia - Liaison with the Wildlife Department of Malaysia, concentrating on areas of mutual interest and future collaboration.

Dr Peter Garson (PSG Chair) : Pakistan - Tailored advisory visit, to ensure report production on two gamebird conservation projects.

Owen Joiner : Pakistan - Establishment of breeding centre for WesTrag 2000 project.

Dr Rahul Kaul : UK (from India) - Strategy and Action planning meetings with WPA, allowing for review of South Asia Regional Office.

Philip McGowan : India - Liaison with SARO, especially design of WPA projects database, conservation strategy and discussion of SARO conservation projects

Philip McGowan : Malaysia - Liaison with the Wildlife Department of Malaysia, concentrating on areas of mutual interest and future collaboration.

Our Administrator, Nicola Chalmers-Watson, has also been invited to and been present at the meetings of WPA-Germany, WPA-Benelux, and WPA-USA, as well as attending the initial meeting of the DNA-research project in Bologna, Italy.

Strategy

As conservation must reflect change in the environment, the aspirations of people and the resources that can be called upon, WPA has identified the requirement for a "strategic plan" for the next few years, which will identify key organisational and conservation targets for this period. A meeting was held at Harewood Bird Gardens in February 1999 to discuss the proposals, and all the members present agreed on the need for this. A plan will be developed during 1999/2000.

Projects supported

In addition to the projects that WPA supports by simply giving its endorsement through its joint parenting of the five Specialist Groups, projects that have been supported financially by the Association, include:

Pipar: WPA continues to support this, the longest running project of the organisation, by sending funds to support a schoolteacher and a guard in this part of the Annapurna Conservation Area in Nepal. In addition, WPA managed to procure funding from a very generous member, James Goodhart, to support a project put together by WPA's South Asia Regional Office and our Affiliate in Nepal, Bird Conservation Nepal, to survey the area.

A fund has been established by the Association in memory of Jimmy Roberts, to continue this work, which he initiated, and to raise capital funds for improvements to the schools, and to promote further Galliformes conservation in Nepal.

Grouse Action Plan: WPA has continued to support the compilation of the Grouse Action Plan, with money received from the Martin Wills Trust.

Action Plan Revision: WPA has recognised the importance of Action Plans in identifying priorities and guiding conservation actions. We are committed to ensure that the three existing Action Plans that are nearing the end of their term, are revised before the end of 1999. In March, the organisation employed

Richard Fuller to ensure the rapid completion of these plans.

Chinese Grouse: Studies on the ecology of the Chinese Grouse in Lianhuashan continue to be carried out by Sun Yue-hua and Fang Yun, and were supported in 1998/99 by WPA, with a donation from the Martin Wills Trust.

We recently received the excellent news that this project was in a fact a runner up in the Threatened Species category of the BP Conservation Award, which should provide the funding required for a further three years. Mr Sun attended the awards ceremony in London, and took part in a week-long training course in field techniques and analysis, which included visits to institutes such as Kew Gardens and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge.

WesTrag 2000: The WesTrag project aims to introduce into captivity the threatened western tragopan, within its indigenous habitat in the western Himalayas in order to encourage local knowledge of its behaviour and ecology and to compliment the current ex situ conservation work.

Owen Joiner travelled to Pakistan in October 1998 in early October, courtesy of BAAC, to begin the project: he has since completed construction of the aviaries at the breeding centre, and has held useful discussions with locals and others involved in the project.

Wattled curassow project: WPA supported this important pilot project investigating whether viable populations of the threatened Wattled Curassow still exist in Bolivia, initially by interviewing locals and hunters in various regions.

Student expeditions

Bolivia '98: Ornithological surveys in Carrasco National park, western central Bolivia, the only protected area in Bolivia supporting the endangered southern helmeted Curassow.

Columbia '98: Biological surveys of the San Lucas Mountains in northern Colombia, focussing particularly on the blue-billed Curassow.

Sozoranga '98: Ornithological surveys in Tumbesian Ecuador, with reference to the rufous-headed chachalaca.

South Asia Regional Office

WPA undoubtedly carries out the largest number of its research projects through the support of our South Asia Regional Office, under the guidance of Dr Rahul Kaul. The administration of the office is funded by WPA and the Peter Scott Trust, but much of the funding for the 10-12 projects that are initiated per year, is found by Dr Kaul within India.

Surveys in the north-east of India, one of the least known areas in the whole region because it has been closed to outsiders for so long, continued. After surveys to various parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram, the fifth area to be covered was Maenam Wildlife Sanctuary in Sikkim. This work was supported by a grant from the Oriental Bird Club and was conducted in collaboration with the Sikkim Forest Department.

Our long-term technical and financial assistance to the ecological study of the Satyr Tragopan in Singhalila National Park near Darjeeling saw this project through to its completion. After three long and arduous field seasons, the work has

been written up and provides a great deal of original information on this vulnerable species.

In the Western Himalayas we have initiated a study on the threatened western tragopan that seeks to assess the distribution of this species and investigate its ecology.

Specialist publications

During 1998, the proceedings of the International Galliformes Symposium held in Malaysia in 1997, were published as a special issue of *Bird Conservation International*. This journal contains a guest editor's preface by John Carroll, Peter Garson and Philip McGowan, followed by nine of the papers presented at the symposium.

The Biology and Conservation of the Piping Guans (Aves: Cracidae), edited by Daniel M. Brooks, Fabio Olmos and Alfredo J. Begazzo, was published by the Cracid Specialist Group. This is a very valuable addition to the comparatively small amount of literature available on the cracids.

Ffteen papers have been accepted and edited by Joe Benshemesh, Darryl Jones and Rene Dekker for the Third International Megapode Proceedings. They are all with the printers and publication is expected shortly.

Major donations and sponsors

Again this year, WPA has received an enormous amount of support from various sources, some of which wish of course, to remain anonymous. However, we would like to recognise the generous donations made by John and Fiona Earle, Newsgroup International, Simon Gudgeon, Heinz Pollmeier, Leathersellers' Company Charitable Fund, Dennis Herman, The Howman Trust, D C Watson and Sons, WPA Germany, James Goodhart, Worldwide Journeys, Northern Ireland Ornamental Pheasant Society, the Jagged Globe, Palawan Press, The Glendoune Charitable Trust and Green Umbrella Ltd. In addition, we must thank many of our members who have supported both the WesTrag and the DNA Research projects.

Many of our members who pay their subscriptions annually greatly assist us by either paying by Banker's order, or by adding a small donation to the standard rate, and for this we are extremely grateful.

There are two organisations however, to whom we are again particularly indebeted: The Famous Grouse, who have supported an increasing number of events, such as the Game Fairs and Charity Shoots over the past year. Without their generous sponsorship it is doubtful that we would be able to attend and rundraise throughout the UK. Our raffle for a gallon of The Famous Grouse raises in excess of £3,000 at the Game Fair each year!

British Airways Assisting Conservation is of course our other major sponsor, without whose support we certainly could not carry out several of the projects with which we are involved. This year we received 10 tickets - a list of their uses is printed under 'travel'. Our particular special thanks should again go to Rod Hall MBE, for all his personal assistance and support. Rod decided to retire from running BAAC at the end of March, and along with our enormous thanks, we also wish him the very best for the future.

24th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE WORLD PHEASANT ASSOCIATION

to be held on Saturday, 25th September 1999 at Zoological Parc de Clères, France commencing at 9.15 am

AGENDA

1) Receive and consider the Report from Council on the past year.

2) Receive and consider the Accounts for the year 1998/1999.

3) Election of Members to serve on Council.

Note: Vacancies occur due to retirement by rotation and resignation. Under the rules (1994), nominations must be submitted in writing, accompanied by the written agreement of the nominee, by 31st May of each year.

The following are eligible for re-election and have agreed to stand:

John Corder
Chris Walsh
Ian Wright

4) Re-election of Chairman

Richard Howard (nominated by John Corder, seconded by John Coote)

6) Election of New Vice-Presidents

Al Lee (Pakistan) (nominated by Jean Howman, seconded by Richard Howard)

7) Re-election of Vice Presidents

The following are eligible for re-election and have agreed to stand:
Bob Bradey (Australia)
Dr Donald Bruning (USA)

Dr Klaus-Peter Erichsen (Germany)
Mohd Khan Bin Momin Khan (Malaysia)
Dr G R Potts (UK)

8) Reappointment of Independent Examiner for 1999/2000

Robert Culver FCA.

9) Any other business.

Regulations governing voting at General Meetings

1) Voting at a General Meeting shall be by a show of hands unless the meeting is an Extraordinary General Meeting called on the requisition of 20 members in which event ballot papers shall be used.

2) Only members present in person and in good standing shall vote. The Chairman may, at his discretion, require any or all members present to provide evidence that their subscription is up to date.

3) Should ballot papers be used two scrutineers, who will themselves be unable to vote, shall be appointed by the Chairman, who shall use his best endeavours to appoint them in such a way as to have no effect on the outcome of the vote.

4) The scrutineers appointed shall count the vote, agree the count and hand the result to the Chairman for him to announce.

5) Except where otherwise provided in the Rules a simple majority shall carry a motion.

6) In the event of a tied ballot the Chairman shall have a casting vote.

Treasurer's report for the year ended 30 April 1999

Ian Hoggarth

During the year to 30 April 1999, the Association had a surplus on funds of £13,475 compared with £28,043 in the previous year. Most of the surplus arose on unrestricted funds, whilst income marginally exceeded expenditure on restricted funds.

Although we do need some reserves, it is not an objective of the Association to make a 'profit', and a better measure of our financial achievements during the year can be gained from our ability to raise funds which are then spent to achieve the charity's objectives.

One of our successes this year was the increase in membership subscriptions. This has the double benefit of improving our finances, and enhancing our standing as a charity when we approach prospective donors for funds for specific projects. Further increases in membership will be sought in the year ahead.

We again received very generous support from donors, albeit at a lower level than the previous two years. Donations are our most important source of income. The Association recognizes that there are a lot of very deserving charities competing for funds at the moment, and if galliformes are to benefit we need a professional approach to donors, especially for major projects. One of our objectives for the future is to improve the quality and professionalism of our fundraising for projects, so that we can have a greater impact, especially in the field.

In spite of falling interest rates, we increased our investment income mainly by better use of any cash awaiting expenditure. The value of our investments (invested in M&G Charifund and gilt edge) remained unchanged over the year.

The profits from fund raising events made an important contribution to our income, whilst at the same time providing a good opportunity to recruit new members and publicise our activities. We are grateful to everyone who assisted in making these events such a success. Books, particularly those published through our own Publications Fund, continued to sell well and provide a valuable source of income.

'Direct charitable expenditure' totalled £71,902, a small increase over last year in spite of the reduction in our total income. Details of our expenditure are mentioned earlier in this report.

During 1998/99 we did not hold a convention of the size and cost of that held in Malaysia in the previous year, so expenditure on 'fundraising and publicity' reduced. We generally plan to make a small surplus on seminars and conventions, so income was also down.

Management and administration costs (£40,819) were constrained to the same level as last year. The Association has only one paid full-time employee, our Administrator, assisted by a part-time Accountant. The cost of having an office at Child Beale and remunerating these two people account for most of our administration costs, the balance being

the costs of stationery and printing, telephones and postage, the auditor's fee, depreciation, bank charges and a few other minor costs.

When funds for specific projects are raised the money is held in a restricted fund which can only be used for the purposes for which it was donated. At the year end we held £34,002 of funds raised but not yet spent on projects which are mainly in progress. The balance of the restricted reserves (£51,693) relate to our publications fund which raises money to produce books about galliformes for resale, with any surplus split between general funds and publication fund.

At the year end we were holding £67,854 of cash at bank and in hand. Of this, £34,002 is cash donated for specific projects, but not yet spent. In addition, £24,832 is cash being held in the publications fund, so it can be seen that only a small amount remains available for general purposes.

As last year we are only publishing summarised accounts in this WPA Annual Review. Copies of the full accounts will be available at the Annual General Meeting. Alternatively please contact our Administrator, Nicola Chalmers-Watson, who will be happy to send you one.

AUDITOR'S STATEMENT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE WORLD PHEASANT ASSOCIATION

I have examined the summarised financial statements set out on pages 13-14.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors

You are responsible as trustees for the preparation of the summary financial statements. I have agreed to report to you my opinion on the summarised statements' consistency with the full financial statements, on which I reported to you on 23 July 1999.

Basis of opinion

I have carried out the procedures I consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

Opinion

In my opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements of the year ended 30 April 1999.

Robert Culver FCA
Registered Auditor
23 July 1999

Field House, Brackley Avenue
Hartley Wintney, Hook
Hampshire RG27 8QU

WORLD PHEASANT ASSOCIATION
Statement of Financial Affairs for year ended 30 April 1999

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	1999	1999	1999	1998
	£	£	£	£
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE				
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Donations and gifts	41,292	24,917	66,209	80,141
Membership subscriptions	22,352	-	22,352	17,867
Investment income	3,416	1,477	4,893	3,048
Income from trading activities				
Related to the objectives of the Association	35,311	7,616	42,927	41,004
Fundraising and sponsorship	8,885	7,000	15,885	26,295
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	111,256	41,010	152,266	168,355
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Direct charitable expenditure	41,839	30,063	71,902	67,320
Fundraising and publicity	18,916	7,000	25,916	41,552
Management and administration	40,799	20	40,819	40,333
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	101,554	37,083	138,637	149,205
NET INCOMING RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS	9,702	3,927	13,629	19,150
Transfers between Funds	2,947	(2,947)	-	-
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR	12,649	980	13,629	19,150
Other recognised gains and losses				
Unrealised gains/(losses) on revaluation of investment assets	(154)	-	(154)	8,893
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	12,495	980	13,475	28,043
Balances from the beginning of year as previously reported	55,983	84,715	140,698	112,655
Balances at end of year	£68,478	£85,695	£154,173	£140,698

WORLD PHEASANT ASSOCIATION
Balance Sheet as at 30 April 1999

	1999 £	1999 £	1998 £	1998 £
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible Assets	7,444		8,758	
Jean Delacour Fund - Investments	47,032		47,186	
		54,476		55,944
CURRENT ASSETS				
Stock	32,079		26,756	
Debtors and Prepayments	9,578		8,614	
Cash at Bank and in Hand	67,854		57,377	
	109,511		92,747	
CREDITORS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	(9,814)		(7,993)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		99,697		84,754
TOTAL NET ASSETS		£154,173		£140,698
FUNDS				
Unrestricted		68,478		55,983
Restricted		85,695		84,715
		£154,173		£140,698

Approved by the Members of Council and signed on behalf of the Trustees by:

Chairman R P Howard
Treasurer I F Hoggarth on **21 July 1999**

Conservation Breeding Advisory Committee

Han Assink

De Vogelhof, Boerenweg 66, 5944 EL Arcen, The Netherlands.

Last year the CBAC was involved in three main projects: the start of Westrag 2000, continuation of the Indochina programme and continued fundraising for the EEP Gallitag DNA Project.

WesTrag 2000

The two aims of this enormous project are: 1) to assist the continuation of survey work, in NWFP Pakistan, of western tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus* and 2) to establish a captive breeding station, in Pakistan, for research into methods of captive rearing of these threatened birds. This is a joint venture between WPA Pakistan, WPA CBAC,and the Wildlife Department, NWFP, Pakistan.

Funding has been raised from friends in the UK, in order for the project to continue initially for five years. We have appointed a graduate of Stirling University, Owen Joiner, to oversee the project in Pakistan (Shinkiari NWFP). He commenced his activities in October 1998 and has completed the breeding complex. Plans are now proceeding to 'catch up' the founder stock.

Owen Joiner starting to dig the foundations of the captive breeding station at Shinkiari.

Indochina programme

This programme has maintained continued links with Hanoi and Saigon Zoos, despite receiving less financial support than in the past.

Thanks to BAAC, I was able to visit SE Asia in November 1998, to strengthen our links. Hanoi Zoo which has benefitted from the longest co-operation is now in a position to set up an education programme. To help this, WPA assisted a young graduate from Hanoi Zoo, Ms Do Thanh Hoa, to attend a three month course on zoo education at the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Jersey Zoo, followed by a month in UK gaining practical experience.

DNA Project

This extensive project aims to study the DNA of a selection of galliform species. Whilst captive stock will be compared with wild stock and museum skins to assess their viability and purity, other tests will compare the DNA of different races and subspecies to determine their relationships.

This enormous project has struggled to find full funding, but after some extremely hard work by several committee members, enough has been raised to initiate the first year's research.

Blyth's tragopan

A boost to the captive breeding of this species was achieved, after very successful hatching as a result of artificial insemination at Clères in France. This was followed up by an excellent artificial insemination weekend workshop in March (**WPA News** 59).

Ms Do Thanh Hoa (centre) from Hanoi Zoo with Mark Cairns from Australia and Nicola Chalmers-Watson.

Germany. As usual, WPA Germany started the year with four regional meetings, each attended by some 30 members. These meetings, which gave members the opportunity for exchanging news and know-how and for visiting interesting public or private collections, took place at Vogelpark Reichshof – Eckenhagen, Vogelpark Marlow and in the private collections of the Serena family in Herisau, Switzerland and of the Oehlke family at Burgdorf near Hannover.

As they have done for many years, some members renewed the traditionally good contacts between German and Benelux breeders by attending the 'Fazantendag' at Antwerp Zoo in Belgium.

Photo: Karl-Heinz Grabowski

Male Harman's eared-pheasant.

October saw about 80 members on a three-day annual convention, kindly invited and hosted by Ursula Wilmering in Vechta. The party met at her unique collection of fine grouse, blood pheasants and other birds and mammals, and then set off for a bus trip to a black grouse biotope, and the nearby Vogelpark Metelen and Rheine Zoo.

The lecture programme was highlighted by a fascinating video from Alexander Pack-Blumenau and Karl-Heinz Grabowsky on their visit to Tibet and Beijing. Members were thrilled by unique pictures of totally tame Harman's eared-pheasants in the wild and of Sclater's and Chinese monal in the Beijing Breeding Centre.

At the AGM, WPA Germany decided to help to finance the release project for hazel grouse in the Harz region, the investigation of the ecology and conservation of the Hainan wood partridge *Arborophila ardens* in China and the WPA DNA project.

Unfortunately not a single Blyth's tragopan was reared this year by German participants in the Studbook, and also the establishing of a breeding nucleus of Rheinarts crested argus in Berlin Tierpark unfortunately failed for the moment due to the death of the hen.

As we have done for many years, WPA Germany had a successful stand on the Ornamental Bird Show in Recklinghausen in January, which attracted more visitors than ever before.

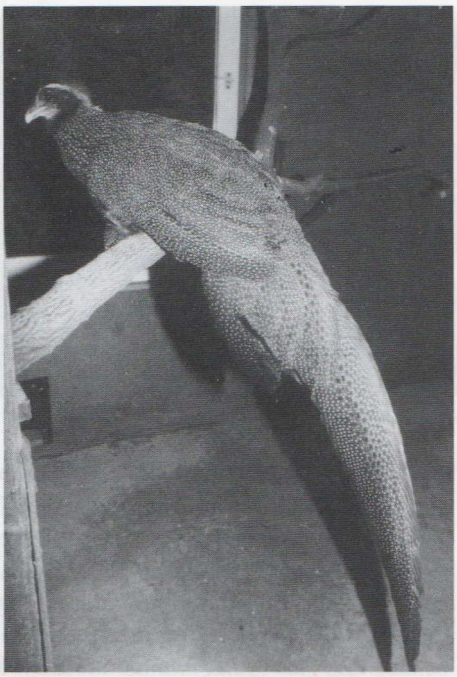

Photo: K Radloff

Male crested argus at Tierpark Berlin.

Besides distributing **WPA News**, WPA Germany sent three newsletters in German to its 300 or so, mostly avicultural, members in Austria, Switzerland and Germany.

China. A number of interesting events happened in the past year. First of all, our Chairman, Prof Zheng Guangmei, and nine other Chinese ornithologists (most of them are WPA members) attended the 22nd International Ornithological Congress in Durban. At the Congress, the Chinese delegation was successful in winning the chance to host the 23rd International Ornithological Congress in Beijing in 2002. The National and Local Committees for the Congress have been established. Our members, Prof Zheng Guangmei, Prof Xu Weishu, Zhang Zhengwang, Ding Changqing and Sun Yuehua are working for the Local Committee. WPA-China is planning to collaborate with WPA-International and its Specialist Groups to organise the Pheasant Conservation Programme during the Beijing Congress.

Secondly, a major research project of rare and endangered Chinese pheasants was initiated in 1999. The project, entitled 'Studies on the mechanism of ecological adaptations and conservation strategy of the rare and endangered pheasants in China', has been funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China with total budget of RMB 850,000 yuan (about US$100,000). The project will be based at Beijing Normal University. A group of Chinese pheasant researchers will work together on this project. The leader is Prof Zheng Guangmei. The aims of the project are 1) finding the effects of habitat fragmentations on the distribution and survival of the rare species of pheasants; 2) studies on the adaptation mechanism of the pheasants to the variable habitats and to disturbance; 3) find out suitable ways to save the endangered species. Eight species of pheasants will be well studied, *eg* Cabot's tragopan, Elliot's pheasant, brown eared-pheasant, Temminck's tragopan, golden pheasant, blood pheasant, Reeves's pheasant and grey peacock-pheasant. The big project will last from 1999 to 2002. In the meantime, there are three other pheasant projects funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China, including the Social Structure of Harmani's eared-pheasant (Dr Lu Xin), Population genetics of the genus *Alectoris* in China (Prof Liu

The late Professor Cheng Tso-hsin, photographed in 1991 with his wife Lydia.

Naifa), and the landscape ecology of the Chinese grouse in the fragemented habitats (Prof Sun Yue hua).

Thirdly, we have started the China Important Bird Areas Project from December 1998. The project is funded by Wild Bird Society of Japan and supported by BirdLife International. 15 experts from all over the country attended the first China IBA Workshop in Beijing. So far, we have identified more than 450 IBAs in China, which include over 100 IBAs for the threatened species of galliformes. The project will be finished by the end of 1999 and the results will be published next year.

Fourthly, owing to the great efforts of Ron Sumner, The American Friend's Pheasant Research Fund—Chinese Student Supporting Programme was finally established in the autumn of 1998. Two students (Zhang Yanyun, PhD student; Zhang Guogang, Master's degree student) have been funded for the first year, with each receiving a grant of US$500. It is a significant achievement for WPA-China, as we think that training students from the developing countries is very important and not only benefits pheasant research, but also helps the conservation of the rare species of pheasants and their habitats. We hope the AFPF can continue in the year of 1999, and we really hope the programme can get some support in Europe.

In the past year, we continued to publish our Newsletter *WPA-China News* in English. We have several researchers finished their theses and were awarded degrees on pheasant research in June of 1999, which include Ni Xijun (PhD) on the thesis of 'Study on the Habitat selection of ring-necked pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*', Zhang Guogang (MSc) on the thesis of 'Conservation of brown eared-pheasant in the South of Shanxi Province, China', and Shi Xingdi (MSc) 'Studies on the karyotypes and G-banding patterns of three species of eared-pheasants'. We were very happy to know that our members, Dr Ding Changqing (Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences) and Ms Tian Xiuhua (Harbin Zoo, Heilongjiang Province) had won the Prof Cheng Tso-hsin's Awards for young Chinese Ornithologists in October 1998.

To all the members of WPA-International, we would like to say WPA-

China is your close friend. We welcome your visits to China at any time. We especially welcome your suggestions and comments on our work.

If you want to known more about WPA-China or if you want to help us in one way or another, please contact us by e-mail or by post at the following address: WPA-China, c/o Prof Zhang Zhengwang, College of Life Sciences, Beijing Normal University, Beijing 100875, China.
Fax +86 10 62200567.
E-mail: zzw@bnu.edu. cn.

France. The WPA France AGM was held on 28 November 1998 in Paris zoo with the kind attendance of Han Assink, Chair of WPA-CBAC, who talked about the current projects of CBAC and especially the Vietnam project. Eric Plouzeau, administrator of the France chapter, supplied a simultaneous translation. This very interesting talk inclined the participants to sustain the Vietnam project for one year more. It was decided to invest all the profit from publication of the book *L'Incubation Pratique* (FF11100) in the DNA project and in the Vietnam project.

Two other important decisions were taken during this AGM. The first was to organise the WPA Annual Convention in Clères for the last weekend of September 1999: a small organisation committee was elected in order to prepare these international days and a post-tour in Sologne (central France). The second decision was to help the zoological park of Clères to organise an Artificial Insemination Workshop at the beginning of 1999.

This last meeting was held on 6-7 March with the participation of the Museum of Paris and INRA. 25 private breeders from six European countries (and three WPA Chapters) attended. After a theory day on the Saturday, everybody was invited on the Sunday to collect semen and evaluate it. For this training, domestic poultry had been donated by INRA.

Regarding the French legislation, no advance has been noted in 1998 or at the beginning of 1999, except the decentralisation of the *capacity certificates* from the ministery to the departments for all the people keeping wild animals without any public presentation. A new law is always under study. It might be tested in two French departments during all the year 1999 before being promulgated or changed.

WPA France and Aviornis France created a new French federation of which the main aims are: to encourage the conservation of the threatened species of galliformes, anseriformes, gruiformes and columbiformes; to promote any research linked to this conservation; to popularise the best breeding methods; and to represent the French breeders to the authorities. This federation is open to other French associations.

Four newsletters were sent to WPA France members.

Pakistan. A spectacular achievement in 1998 was the video filming by Mr Raza Abbas of the rare and elusive western tragopan in the pristine forest of Palas valley, Indus Kohistan.

The first ever recording of this beautiful pheasant was made possible by the efforts and generous funding by Brig Mukhtar Ahmed, President of Houbara Foundation and Chairman of WPA-

Pakistan. Credit also goes to Rob Whale for organising the field trips, without his guidance and knowledge of the region, it would have been impossible to achieve this.

Rob has now finished his survey project and is presently working for WWF Pakistan on projects such as the Himalayan Jungle Project and also in areas such as Ayubia National Park. Credit and thanks must go to Brigadier Mukhtar and Dr Mumtaz Malik for supporting him over the last four years. The final report is presently being written by Rob and Dr Peter Garson and should be finalised by September this year. It will be published by UNDP and will be in two forms, technical and non-technical.

The general outcome of the project has been to compare pheasant populations in Pakistan's northern areas and also summarise the methodologys researched during the project time.

Owen Joiner has nearly finished building the hut and cages at Shinkari for Westrag 2000. The weather conditions for trapping have not been at all ideal this year and a plan to catch birds in the summer has been instigated. However, the mild weather has allowed Owen to carry out marvellous progress at the breeding site and everything is ready for the birds. Owen will now work with the NWFP Wildlife Department on their cheer breeding programme until tragopans are caught.

Pheasant and Waterfowl Society of Australia. After the 1997 Pheasant & Waterfowl Society of Australia Biennial Federal Meeting (held at the Megapodes Convention at Nhill), the Affiliation agreement with WPA was signed with much enthusiasm. In the 1998 year, 21 P&WSofA members took advantage of the agreement and joined WPA as affiliates and received their copies of the **WPA News** for that year. At this number the costs associated with the affiliation fees came out about even, which was a very positive result for the first year.

In 1999, so far the number of P&WSofA members who have joined as affiliates is 17, just a few short of the same number as last year. Quite a number of these members are new members, which means that a large proportion from 1998 have decided not to rejoin in 1999. Some investigation will be undertaken to determine the reason for non renewal, in an attempt to try to boost the numbers again.

It appears that a large drop off in actual members of the P&WSofA has contributed somewhat to the low numbers of those taking up WPA affiliation. Also the lack of progress with importation seems to always reflect badly on interest in overseas activities, conservation and WPA.

Unfortunately there has been insufficient time available to investigate significant and worthwhile fundraising activities in Australia for WPA over the past 18 months, but it is hoped to address this situation over the next two years.

Again I would like to encourage each state branch of the P&WSofA to subscribe as an affiliate of WPA and put the copies of **WPA News** into the branch library to be available to members who might be interested. This would be a positive promotional opportunity. As the Society is committed to the WPA Affiliation Agreement the state branch

executives should feel duty-bound to promote the agreement and hence membership.

As no further funds have been raised in recent years on behalf of WPA there have been no donations towards any WPA projects, and hence there are no progress reports to be presented to the Association.

Being a Vice President of WPA, I intend to stand again as the Chairman of the WPA Australia Committee within the P&WSofA. I also plan to more actively promote and report on WPA activities through *The Pheasant* and other direct marketing methods over the next two years. I do request the support of the Federal Committee and all state branches in this effort.

Northern Ireland Ornamental Pheasant Society. The NIOPS is glad to be able to say that at the end of the last financial year we achieved a membership of over 100 members and renewals for this year to date stand at 96. Only once before have we managed to reach 100 members.

The society has been running a raffle at the Northern Ireland Game Fair for the past three years enabling us to make contributions to some of the various WPA projects. So far we have been able to support the Indochina Programme, the Western Tragopan Project and most recently the DNA Project.

Since the society was formed we have been able to communicate with our members in the form of a newsletter, as well as holding open meetings five times a year. In the early summer we hold a barbecue so that members and friends can enjoy a social evening out. Now this would seem to be a reasonable thing for a club to do for its members, but if you think about it, a lot of other clubs do similar things.

We thought long and hard about what else we could do for our members where they might possibly benefit from being in our society. We eventually came up with a very obvious idea. There is something we can do for our members that other pheasant clubs have either not done, or not advertised and that is to import new blood for the benefit of its members.

At the end of the 1998-breeding season the society imported two unrelated pairs of golden pheasants to help improve the genetic bloodlines already here in Northern Ireland. The progeny of these imports will be made available to the members in the form of unrelated pairs. If this project proves successful then in several years to come we can look at a different species to import.

Thailand. Following lobbying by WPA Thailand members, the laws on keeping, breeding from and selling captive bred birds have at last been changed. Individuals have to register birds in their collection following which they can apply for a licence to breed from their birds and sell surplus birds. Previously there was a limit on the number of birds of one species (usually two birds) that could be kept so that if birds were bred the law was automatically being broken which was very discouraging to our members.

Resulting from the changes, members of WPA will be able to breed and exchange pheasant species and this we expect will encourage new members to join and will allow existing members to improve their collections.

Pheasant Specialist Group

Peter Garson

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This Specialist Group, like many others with responsibility for a particular group of plants or animals, operates as what I call a 'voluntary self-help network'. Much of my work as Chairman involves putting people in touch with each other across the world. Mutual support then develops: for technical advice, obscure literature, potential funding sources for projects.

We currently have about 80 members registered with the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), all of whom are actively involved in conservation work on pheasants *in situ* and *ex situ*. Central to PSG function is the Core Committee of ten who shoulder much of the responsibility for giving technical advice on project plans, and in authorising me to sign letters of endorsement to principal investigators, on behalf of WPA, BirdLife International and SSC (our three 'parents'). We thank BirdLife and WPA once again for underwriting the costs of running this committee, allowing it to meet twice in the year in July and January as usual. Subscribers to our six-monthly newsletter *Tragopan*, many of whom are WPA members, allow us to send out around 300 copies, many of which are sent free of charge, to people who cannot possibly pay for it, from all over Asia. I must personally thank Carol Inskipp for doing such a fine editing job on *Tragopan* despite her many other avian and educational preoccupations!

Of the 25 projects detailed in the *Action Plan* (1995-99), only three now remain untouched. Philip McGowan and I earlier undertook an informal audit of the impact of our *Action Plan* in stimulating new work on priority species, areas and topics, which was published jointly with John Carroll (Chairman, PQF SG) in the Malaysia Symposium issue of *Bird Conservation International* (8: 317-323 [1998]). We decided that, particularly as regards field biologists and conservation breeders (in other words the people who actually do projects), our efforts in 1993-95 had been a considerable stimulus, and we therefore committed ourselves (in print!) to produce another edition. With the employment of Richard Fuller by WPA as this year ends, we are starting the task of writing the 2000-2004 *Action Plan*, working closely with the team at BirdLife International that are simultaneously working on the *Asian Red Data Book for Birds* and *Birds to Watch 3*. We are expecting our texts on threatened species, and the criteria used to place them in particular *IUCN Red List* threat categories to emerge as identical after a co-operative, world wide review process during the coming summer. Wish us luck, and hope to see the new publication available in early 2000!

Moving from northwest to southeast across Asia, here is a brief overview of the projects that involved the PSG to some degree in 1998/99:

- **Western tragopan**: Rab Nawaz (aka Rob Whale!), Pakistan Gallifomes Project, completed his surveys at six sites in North West Frontier Province, including a June visit to upper Palas valley, where he heard good numbers of males calling, as had Guy Duke in the early 1990s. The report arising from this project will be published jointly by UNDP and WPA-Pakistan later in 1998. Under the Westrag 2000, Owen Joiner went out from UK to Pakistan in October as overseer to construct aviaries and arrange for wild birds to be trapped in collaboration with NWFP Wildlife Department sometime in the summer or autumn of 1999. Shahid Basheer (Aligarh Muslim University, India) located some promising new sites for this species in the upper Ravi valley in Himachal Pradesh, whilst K Ramesh (Wildlife Institute of India) has collected data over three years suggesting that mushroom collectors may be severely disturbing the breeding of tragopan and koklass in the Great Himalayan National Park a little further east.

- **Cheer pheasant**: Rajiv Kalsi (MLN Collegem Yamuna Nagar, India) has conducted habitat surveys at sites containing populations, and others without them in central Himachal Pradesh. His analyses should tell us which combinations of habitats and grassland management systems favour this species.

- **Grey junglefowl**: KJ Peeyuskutty (St Joseph's College, Calicut, Kerala) is continuing his field study of this species in Periyar Tiger Reserve in the Western Ghats. Meanwhile MC Sathyanarayana (AVC College, Mayiladuturai, Tamil Nadu) is overseeing a three year study in Theni Forest Division, farther south.

Pete Garson with Rab Nawaz in Kuala Tehan, September 1997.

K Ramesh, Peter Garson, Dr Sathyakumar, TR Vinod in Great Himalayan National Park, India (May 1998).

- **Satyr tragopan**: Sarala Khaling (Government College, Darjeeling, India) has been awarded a PhD for her study of this species in Singhalila NP. Meanwhile Rahul Kaul (WPA/SARO, Delhi) and Suresh Shakya (Bird Conservation Nepal) are developing a big scale pheasant population monitoring project to include WPA's Pipar Project area and several others in the Annapurna Conservation Area (Nepal).

- **Sclater's monal**: In late 1998, Suresh Kumar (Wildlife Institute of India) returned to the extreme NW of Arunachal Pradesh and obtained more sightings and specimens of a possible new race of this species, its distinguishing feature being a pure white tail. A full account of his findings is now in preparation.

- **Temminck's tragopan**: In July 1998, Pratap Singh (Wildlife Institute of India) saw a male of this species in the extreme west of Arunachal Pradesh, indicating a range extension of over 100km, and possibly implying that it overlaps geographically with satyr tragopan in this area. Dipankar Ghose (WPA/SARO, Delhi) is scheduled to undertake surveys of this species farther east in Arunachal Pradesh, to complement studies of Satyr tragopan in Sikkim (1998) and Blyth's tragopan in Mizoram (1997) for his PhD.

- **Dolan's eared-pheasant**: This subspecies of *Crossoptilon crossoptilon* was found in late 1998 by Alexander Pack-Blumenau (WPA-Germany) in a small area near where it was originally found in the 1930s, in southern Qinghai province (PR China).

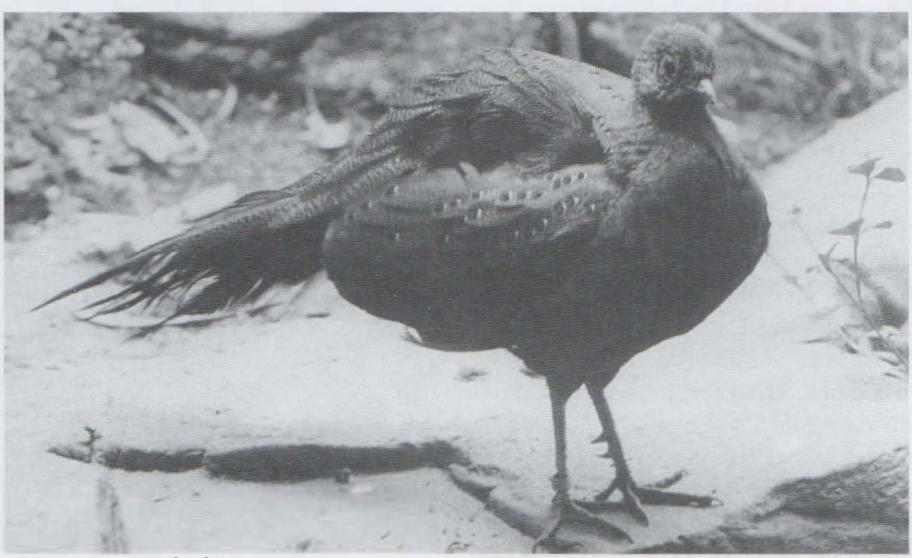
- **Green peafowl**: Nick Brickle (BirdLife International Vietnam Programme) carried our surveys of this species and concluded that an extension should be made to the existing Yok Don NP. This recommendation has been accepted by the government.

- **Indochina Project**: Cuc Phuong (Hanoi Zoo, Vietnam) has overseen the construction of a large new aviary complex at Cau Dien, to which some Edwards's, Vietnamese and other pheasants have been transferred for off-exhibit study and breeding

- **Mountain peacock-pheasant**: New arrangements have been agreed for managing the world's *ex situ* population of this species, with the Malaysian Wildlife Department inviting WPA to be represented on their management committee, with both WPA and PSG (Roger Wilkinson) represented on the international studbook committee under Don Bruning (Wildlife Conservation Society, New York).

And finally!

- **DNA sequencing**: Sybile Moulin (Museum of Paris, France) has started a PhD project aiming to explore the evolutionary and geographical relationships of numerous subspecies of silver and kalij pheasants in SE Asia. Meanwhile Ettore Randi (National Institute of Wildlife Research, Bologna, Italy) has continued his research into the relationships between Edwards's, Vietnamese, imperial and other *Lophura* pheasants, and hopes to raise sufficient funds with WPA's help to employ a full time researcher on this and other pheasant DNA projects in the near future.



Mountain peacock-pheasant.

Photo: Keith Howman

Partridge, Quail, and Francolin Specialist Group

John P Carroll

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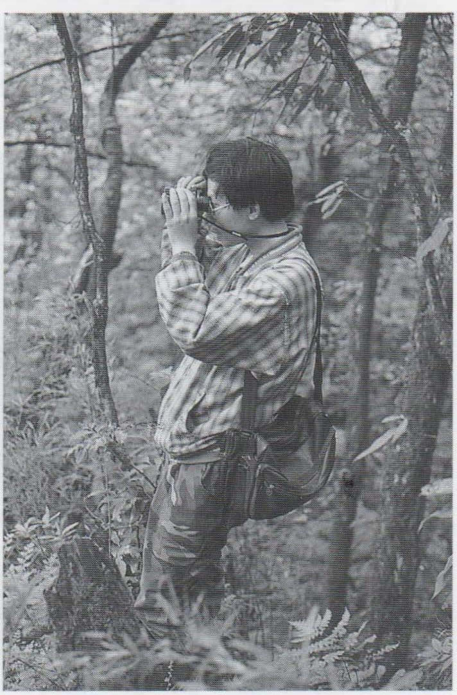
Members of the SG continue to make progress on a number of fronts. We are seeing increases in activity on key species in both Africa and Latin America.

The proceedings of the Malaysia Galliformes Conference held in September 1997 came out as a special edition of Bird Conservation International. Important papers on the Sichuan hill partridge *Arborphila rufipectus* and Hainan hill partridge *A. ardens* were included. The proceedings also included an opinion piece by Phil McGowan, Pete Garson, and John Carroll on their views of the values and limitations of Action Plans for conservation.

Our five-year Action Plan completed in 1995 is rapidly coming to a close. We are presently working on the second plan to cover the years 2000-2004. We plan to have this completed late this year. Richard Fuller has been contracted to assist with this effort under the auspices of the World Pheasant Association. Plans are also underway for the next International Galliformes Conference to be held in Kathmandu, Nepal during 23 September to 1 October 2000. This will be held in conjunction with the Pheasant Specialist Group and World Pheasant Association. In addition, Jack Eitniear and John Carroll are co-organizing a workshop with Dan Brooks, Chair of the Cracid Specialist Group on the quails and cracids of Mexico and Central America. This workshop is to be held in conjunction with the Neotropical Ornithological Congress to be held in Monterrey Mexico on 9 October 1999.

Work is continuing on the orange-necked hill partridge *A. davidi* thanks to the Species Survival Commission and Chicago Zoological Society. A grant awarded through the SG is allowing Nguyen Tran Vy to continue status surveys in the vicinity of Cat Tien



Dai Bo surveying Sichuan hill-partridge.

National Park in Vietnam. He was also accepted to take a short course in biodiversity monitoring at the Smithsonian Institution.

In Africa, Eric Sande has made enormous strides in our understanding of the biology of Nahan's francolin *Francolinus nahani*. His studies at the Budongo Forest Reserve in Uganda include critically needed population and life history data on this obscure species. He completes his field work in August 1999 and returns to Makerere University to begin work on his thesis. In Mexico, Jack Eitniear and his team from the Centre for the Study of Tropical Birds, Inc discovered a new population of the bearded tree-partridge *Dendrortyx barbatus* in Queretaro, Mexico. This population is completely outside of the historic range and appears to be more secure than most of the other small and isolated populations previously surveyed. The SG endorsed a proposal by Gao Yu-Ren of the South China Institute of Endangered Animals for continuation of his work on the Hainan hill partridge.

The SG is making slow and steady progress despite the fact that most of our members are severely impeded by lack of money. Several of our members participated in a workshop on field techniques for galliformes in India during March 1999. Christine Dranzoa and John Carroll are planning a similar workshop for Uganda. They hope to have funding to run it after the 2000 Pan-African Ornithological Congress to be held in Kampala. Our group activities are kept up to date on our web site (http://www.game-conservancy.org.uk/pqf/index.htm) thanks to support of James Long and The Game Conservancy Trust.

Eric Sande radiotracking Nahan's francolin.

Grouse Specialist Group

Ilse Storch

c/o Munich Wildlife Society, Linderhof 2, D-82488 Ettal, Germany. Tel: 49-8822-92120, Fax: 49-8822-921212, Email: WGM.ev@t-online.de

The major activity of the GSG during the past 12 months has been data collection and preparation of the first Grouse Action Plan, that will be printed in late 1999.

Grouse Action Plan

The Action Plan will be a tool for promoting grouse conservation. Besides providing a reference and guide to the distribution, status, and threats to all grouse species, the Action Plan's major objective is to identify conservation priorities from a global perspective. We hope that this Action Plan will strengthen the chances of implementing the most immediate conservation needs to improve the viability of the most threatened species and subspecies. They are the Grouse Specialist Group's primary concern. The Action Plan, however, shall also underline the importance of grouse conservation in a broader sense: as typical representatives of a whole spectrum of natural tundra, grassland, and forest habitats of the northern hemisphere, grouse are indicators to ecosystem health. Their indicator function and their attractiveness to people make the grouse suitable flagship species to promote the conservation of biodiversity.

Ilse Storch.

From a global perspective, and compared to other galliform taxa, the situation of the grouse at the turn of the century is not critical. So far, their extended distribution ranges and inaccessible habitats have effectively protected most grouse species. None of the 17 species is considered to be critically endangered (IUCN 1996). However, they are far from being safe either. Three species with limited geographic disribution, the Caucasian black grouse, the Chinese grouse, and the Siberian grouse, are red-listed as near threatened (IUCN 1996) and may be vulnerable. Some subspecies are considered to be threatened, but the intraspecific taxonomy of the widely distributed species is still uncertain. On local and regional scales, many populations of grouse are declining and threatened with extinction. This is particularly true in landscapes densely populated and intensively used by

humans. But even in remote northern areas grouse numbers have been declining related to increasing development and exploitation of their habitats.

Chinese Grouse Project

The GSG supports an ongoing research and conservation programme on the Chinese grouse *Bonasa sewerzowi*, by the GSG committee member Sun Yue-Hua of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and his co-worker Fang Yun. The Chinese grouse is a close relative of the hazel grouse and occurs in a limited range in central China. The species is susceptible to habitat loss and fragmentation, and little is known about its ecology and behaviour. The GSG has helped to find funding for the project, and has written letters of recommendation. During 1995 to 1998, the bird has been studied at Lianhuashan Natural Reserve in Gansu Province. More than 50 birds were radiotracked (Sun pers. comm.), revealing insight into habitat-relationships, spacing patterns and behaviour. In 1999, research into the effects of habitat fragmentation on population dynamics and persistence of the Chinese grouse has been started as a cooperation between the National Natural Sciences Foundation of China (NSFC) and the Deutsche Forschungs-gemeinschaft (DFG) to support the project. Additional small grants have been provided by The Stiftung Avifauna Protecta (SAP) and the BP Conservation Programme. Finances for the continuation and completion of the project is still lacking.

8th International Grouse Symposium

The 8th International Symposium on Grouse will be held at the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi, northern Finland, on September 13-17, 1999. Our local host is GSG committee member Harto Lindén. We invite all colleagues to join us in Finland to create a stimulating scientific forum to discuss grouse biology, ecology, management, and conservation.

Chinese grouse and habitat.

Photos: Sun Yue-hua

Megapode Specialist Group

René W R J Dekker* and Darryl N Jones**

**National Museum of Natural History, P.O. Box 9517, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands.*

*** School of Australian Environmental Studies, Griffith University, Nathan, Qld 4111, Australia.*

Members of the Board

Gillian Baker has been nominated as UK representative of the Megapode Specialist Group. She will attend meetings in the UK, especially those in relation to WPA and the publication of the Megapode Action Plan 2000 - 2004.

Special publications

In the period May 1998 – April 1999, two major publications on megapodes were in preparation by the Megapode Specialist Group:

- The Proceedings of the Third International Megapode Symposium, Nhill, Australia, December 1997. This

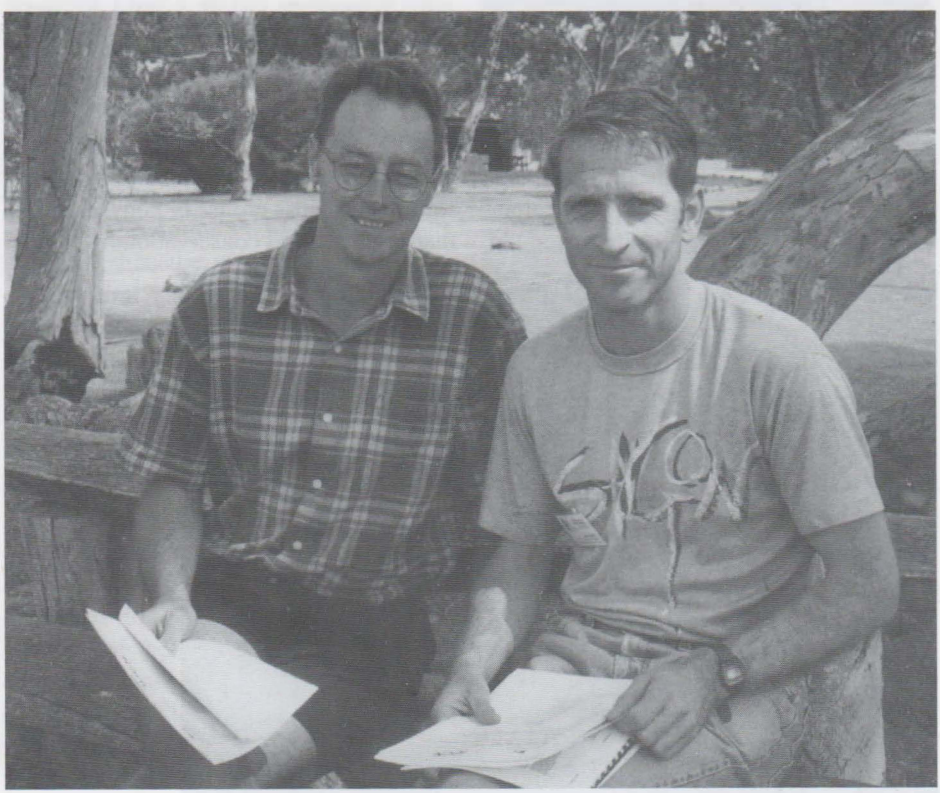


Photo: Jean Howman

Darryl Jones (left) and Rene Dekker (right), taken at the Third International Megapode Symposium, Nhill, Australia in December 1997.

publication of 15 papers presented at Nhill will be published 30 July 1999 as a special publication in *Zoologische Verhandelingen 327*, the journal of the National Museum of Natural History, Leiden.

- The Megapode Action Plan 2000 – 2004. The Action Plan is being compiled by Richard Fuller with the help of Gillian Baker and the World Pheasant Association. Publication is expected by the end of 1999.

Megapode Newsletter

Megapode Newsletter 12 (2) was published in December 1999.

Selection of publications by members of the Megapode Specialist Group

Baker, G. 1998. *Maleo survey and education project.* Phase 1: June–August 1998. Unpubl. Rep. 17 pp.

Birks, S. M. 1999. Unusual timing of copulations in the Australian Brush-turkey. *The Auk* 116 (1): 169-177.

Butchart, S.H. et al. 1998. *The status of Maleo in western Central Sulawesi.* Prelim. Rep. Maleo Survey Project: Phase 2. 35 pp.

Foster, T. 1999. Update on the Vanuatu Megapode *Megapodius layardi* on Ambrym. Vanuatu. *Bird Conservation International* 9: 63-71.

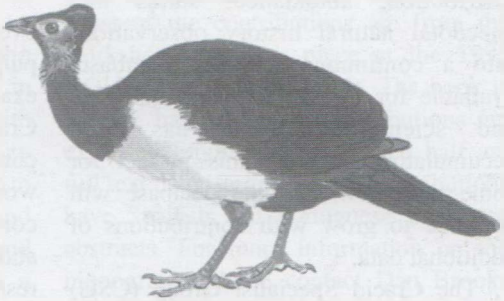
Harold, G. & Dennings, S. *The First Five Years 1992–1997. A report by the Malleefowl Preservation Group.* Malleefowl Preservation Group, Ongerup, Western Australia. ISBN 0 646 321005. 97 pp.

Wong, S. 1998. Estimating the hatch dates of Australian brush-turkey embryos by candling. *Wildlife Research* 25: 669-676.

Field projects

The following species were under study by members of the Megapode Specialist Group during (parts of) 1998/1999:

- Australian brush-turkey *Alectura lathami* – Australia, A. Göth (see *Megapode Newsletter* 12 (2): 9-11).
- Australian brush-turkey *Alectura lathami* - Australia and U.K., 1998 joint NERC grant between D.N. Jones (Griffith University) and T. Burke (Sheffield University): Sperm competition in Australian Brush-turkeys.
- Malleefowl *Leipoa ocellata* – Australia, various researchers/groups.
- Maleo *Macrocephalon maleo* – Sulawesi, G. Baker & S. Butchart (see *Megapode Newsletter* 12 (2): 14-15).
- Nicobar megapode *Megapodius nicobariensis* - Nicobar Islands, R. Sankaran & K. Sivakumar.
- Melanesian megapode *Megapodius eremita* – Solomon Islands, R. Sinclair.



Maleo illustration by Esdaile Hudson.

Cracid Specialist Group

Daniel M Brooks and Stuart D Strahl - Co-chairs

Ecotropix, 1537 Marshall Suite No 1, Houston, Texas 77006, USA.
Email: Ecotropix@aol.com.

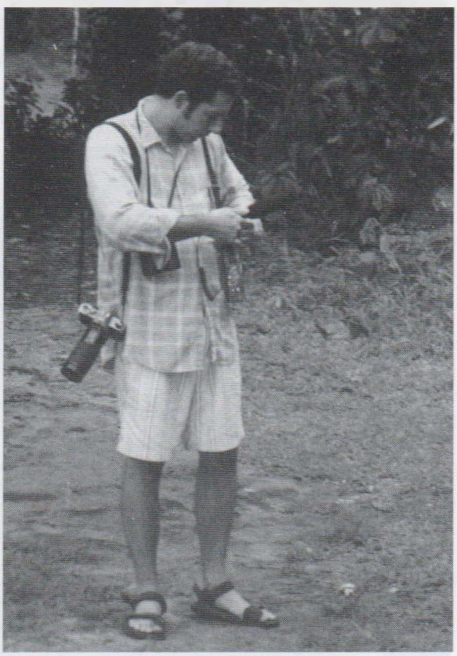
In an effort to help foment Cracid conservation and research efforts throughout the Neotropics, a number of Regional Coordinators (RCs) have been appointed to help spread the mission of the CSG.

They are:

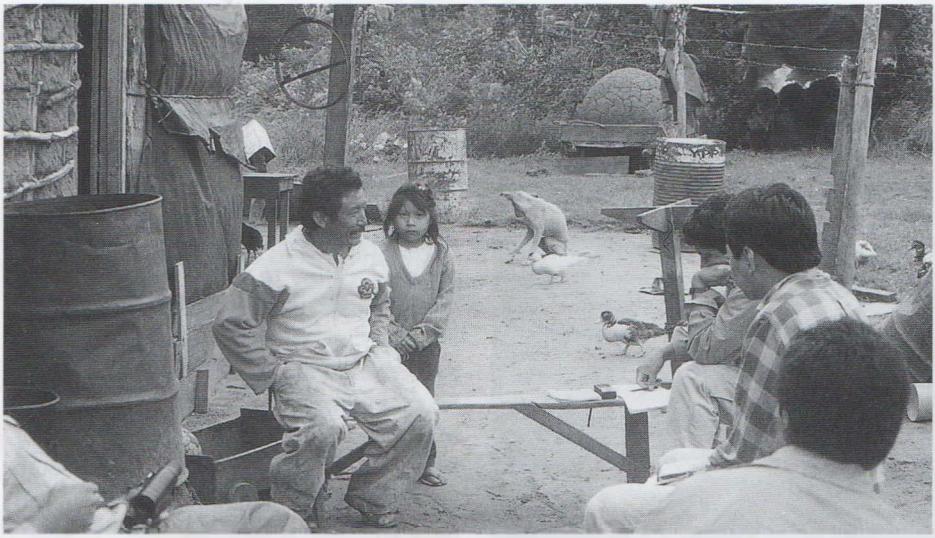
Argentina RC - Sandra Caziani
Bolivia RC - Edilberto Guzman-A.
Brazil RC - Fabio Olmos and Mauro Galetti
Central America RC - Fernando Gonzalez-Garcia
Colombia RC - Ivan Jimenez
Paraguay RC - Rob Clay
Peru/Ecuador RC - Alfredo Begazo
Venezuela/Guina Shield/Caribbean RC - Olivier Tostain

Additionally, Gina Sedaghatkish and Alfredo Begazo have officially taken on the role of CSG Webmaster and Database Coordinator, respectively. The ultimate goal of the CSG Website is to publish user-friendly information on Cracids, CSG activities and publications for Cracidologists, scientists and the general public. The objective of the database project is to accumulate all data on Cracid distribution, abundance, status and anecdotal natural history observations into a continuous working database, available for use by any Cracidologists and scientists. Alfredo has been accumulating data for this project for some time now, and the database will continue to grow with contributions of additional data.

The Cracid Specialist Group (CSG) has held a number of different Symposia over the last two decades. The primary purpose of these important meetings is to examine detailed reports and updates on Cracid status, distribution and conservation. Just as important, workshops provide a forum to communicate openly and effectively about several topics relating to Cracid research and conservation. In October 1999, CSG will hold a Regional



Dan Brooks recording a marbled wood quail at the main study site in Peruvian Amazon.



Dan Brooks' team interviewing a local hunter to find out what they can about species presence and frequency of take from the locals.

Workshop focusing on Paraguay/South Atlantic Forest, co-coordinated by Dan Brooks and Rob Clay, and held in Asuncion, Paraguay in conjunction with the IV International Congress on Wildlife Management and Conservation in the Amazon. Immediately following this meeting, a joint CSG - Partridge/Quail/Francolin Specialist Group (PQFSG) Symposium on Conservation of Tropical Galliformes in Mexico and Northern Central America will take place, with the Cracid section co-coordinated by Brooks and Fernando Gonzalez-Garcia. This meeting will be co-hosted with PQFSG's Chair John Carroll, and Jack Clinton-E and held in Monterrey, Mexico in conjunction with the 6th Neotropical Ornithology Congress. Several speakers are lined up to talk about status. phylogenetics, and harvest patterns, among other topics, and the Symposium will conclude with a Round-Table Working Session.

The results of both symposia and workshops are invaluable as references that often result in publication. For example, CSG's first monograph, *Biology and Conservation of the Piping Guans (Aves: Cracidae)*, edited by D.M. Brooks, F. Olmos and A.J. Begazo, is the first definitive work on the genus *Pipile*. This book is very important, as two of the four forms of *Pipile* are endemics that are considered Endangered or Critically Endangered, with the other two species At-Risk where sustainable harvest programs have not been implemented. Most of the contributions are from the workshop that took place at the 1998 AOU Meetings in St Louis. The book is 64 pp.; half of the 12 contributions are extended English abstracts, and half are full text manuscripts, but all contributions have Spanish and Portuguese translated abstracts. For more information on the monograph, please contact Dan Brooks directly.

Canopy walkway at the main study site in the Peruvian Amazon.

CSG continues its strong commitment to publication of Cracid research through the trilingual *Bol. CSG* (Bulletin of the Cracid Specialist Group). This Bulletin has been published and circulated biannually, approximately every March and September, with generous help from WPA. The Bulletin reaches more than 300 individuals around the globe, predominantly in Latin America. Other recent publications include the *Piping Guan Monograph* mentioned above, and the *Action Plan*, which CSG is putting the finishing touches on. The Action Plan should be trilingual also, and will hopefully be out some time this year, perhaps prior to the aforementioned Workshops/Symposia in October.

Many excellent Cracid research and conservation projects have been or are being initiated above and beyond those mentioned in the last report. Many of these are taking place in western South America (*ie*, Colombia - Bolivia), and include:

- Andres Cuervo: Distribution and status of the Blue-billed Curassow in Colombia.
- Sara Defler: Wattled Curassow field research in the Colombian Amazon.
- Thomas Donegan: Cracid surveys in the Serrania de los Churumbelos, Colombia.
- Jeremy Flanagan: Training courses for conservation of the White-winged Guan in Peru.
- Bennett Hennessey: Status of the Wattled Curassow in Bolivia.
- Iván Jiménez: Interspecific foraging patterns of Curassows in the Colombian Amazon.
- Ross MacLeod: Breeding survey of the Southern Helmeted Curassow in Bolivia.
- Juan Parra: Socioecology of Salvin's Curassow in Tinigua National Park, Colombia.

For further information on the Cracid Specialist Group, please contact Dan Brooks by E-mail at Ecotropix@aol.com.

WPA-South Asia Regional Office

Dr Rahul Kaul

c/o WWF-India Secretariat, 172-B Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110 009, India

We had the satisfaction of bringing to completion the studies on the satyr tragopan, which were initiated by the Forest Department of West Bengal.

The results have been compiled in the form of a PhD thesis that Sarala Khaling has submitted to the University of North Bengal. A part of this study has already been published in the Galliform Symposium special edition of Bird Conservation International and I expect a few more international quality publications in the near future from this study.

The study on tragopans in Northeast India are continuing but have had a minor setback when our researcher, Dipankar, was bitten, probably by a pit viper, while in the field. He had to be evacuated immediately and is now recovering from the rather dangerous and painful bite. He should resume field work soon thanks to money made available by Mr James Goodhart at very short notice.

In the year gone by, we finally got the western tragopan project started but no sooner had the project been initiated than it ran into financial problems. Unfortunately the payments for this project have been delayed.

However, with the resources at our disposal, thanks to some support from

Researcher Sarala Khaling (left) with her colleagues during studies on satyr tragopan in Singhalila National Park, Darjeeling.

Palawan Press, Dr Salim and the researcher Shahid, have done a wonderful job to have stuck to the task for all these months. Hopefully funding will be restored soon and things should work out well. Being one of the more threatened species of the sub-continent, I do hope that we can continue.

The Galliform Project under the Kumaon Biodiversity Project has now ended and results are being compiled by the researcher Shah Hussain. WPA-SARO was involved with this project for the first two years. Results from this project should go a long way in suggesting conservation measures to help galliform conservation in Kumaon.

Dr Rajiv Kalsi has started his cheer study with Junaid Nazir as the researcher. The study has funds for the first year from Club 3000 but WPA is likely to play a role in funding for the subsequent years. The study is being undertaken in Majathal Sanctuary in Himachal Pradesh.

During the last year, in collaboration with WWF-India, WPA-India and the Centre of Wildlife and Ornithology, we initiated work on the Himalayan quail. A booklet has been produced giving most details known about this bird. Based on this work, surveys will be launched in an effort to re-discover this bird. With long term projects having ended or about to end, there is a constant supply of reliable and scientifically robust information, which can be used to good effect. Publications in good scientific journals are a top priority as they accord scientific recognition to the study and the results produced. However, due to limited circulation of these journals, hardly any managers or policy makers get to read the new findings achieved through our studies. The information published in scientific journals has great potential to be written up as books or booklets with an easy style of writing to appeal to a broader readership. With Keith Howman's help, we are piloting a booklet on the satyr tragopan and hopefully there will be many more to follow from India, China and Southeast Asia to disseminate information over a broader audience.

We also co-organised a Galliform Technique Workshop at Sai Ropa Nature Interpretation Centre of the Great Himalayan National Park in Himachal Pradesh. Other organisers were the Wildlife Institute of India, the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department, and WPA-India. The event was partially funded by WPA and was attended by both local and international participants. During the course of the eight days, there was ample exchange of ideas and information about new techniques and ways to address specific problems. I am sure the participants went home quite happy and satisfied.

It is encouraging that two proposals have come out of Nepal for work on galliformes and hopefully WPA will be able to support these in some way. This is a good time to encourage work in this part of the world especially as Nepal will be hosting the International Galliform Symposium less than 15 months from now.

We have been lucky to have the Peter Scott Trust as one of our supporters and we have worked jointly to see the projects coming to fruition. We do hope that we are able to work together in future also to attain our common goals of nature conservation.

Pheasant surveys in Pakistan and filming the western tragopan

Rab Nawaz

Project Coordinator, Pakistan Galliformes Project (1996-98), 1 Kakul Road, Abbottabad, NWFP, Pakistan. Tel: 0092 351 7761121 or 0092 992 31960.

Members of five and more years standing will know that Robert Whale has been reporting regularly from Pakistan, initially on the NWFP captive breeding centres and more recently on pheasant survey work on which he has been working with the NWFP Wildlife Department headed by Dr Mumtaz Malik and financially helped over various periods of time by funding from WPA, WPA Pakistan and WWF Pakistan. **WPA News** *58 gave an account by Raza Abbas of his first filming of the western tragopan. This could never have taken place without the preliminary reconnaisance work carried out by Rob Whale over two previous years. We would like to record our thanks to Rob for his years of dedication to pheasant conservation in Pakistan and all done for a pittance. Ed.*

Surveying tragopans and the other pheasants is not an easy job at all. Our project time has divided into two seasons, summer and winter. Each season has its advantages and disadvantages. In winter surveys involved teams of men and trained hunting dogs beating a block of forest as would be done on a shoot in UK or USA.

However, the Himalayas pose a nightmare for this technique as walking in a straight line is impossible and beating through undergrowth on the extraordinarly steep slopes of Indus Kohistan is dangerous. If the dogs are well trained then we could at least cover most of the ground along a selected route. The folding ground and slope also make calculating the area covered very hard (rendering estimates somewhat suspect). However we were most interested in the defecting population differences between years, and as long as we followed the same routes each year, we would produce comparable data.

One problem affecting these survey results is that snow conditions can be very different each year. Thus a route that was navigable one year can be under 2 metres of snow in another. This has great disadvantages for any monitoring programme which is aiming to repeat the same surveys year after year, because the pheasants move in response to snow conditions. Thus the results obtained from fixed sites suggest that populations are fluctuating greatly between years, whereas in fact this is due to differences in winter snow conditions.

Spring counts are far easier to carry out. The survey areas consist of four points approximately 200 metres apart and usually on a track, so that it is easy to find the points at 04.30 in the morning! Once on these points, four men wait for the dawn chorus to begin, noting the species and distance of each calling male clearly within hearing range. After the chorus has finished the recorders compare results to eliminate double counting (by

using exact calling times and compares directions for calling sites). The spring calling season is from April through to June and over these three months the survey team is always up before 04.00 unless it is raining or we are between surveys. These surveys also require that the team spends most of the time in tents in the jungle. Romantic as it sounds the novelty wears off within days!!

It is widely assumed that each male koklass or tragopan calls every day, so that the number of calling sites represents the number of breeding males (or pairs or females) in an area. However when we surveyed the same area for up to seven consecutive mornings, we found considerable variation in the numbers of callers and their positions from one day to the next. Repetition seems to be essential if precise results are to be obtained.

The use of dogs in winter has been an interesting experience and has definitely increased our ability to find pheasants in winter. However, a lot also depends on the ability and consistency of the dogs in question. The team did do some surveys with and without dogs in the same areas. Dogs did produce more birds, but this difference was not that marked.

The outcome of this three year project has been interesting and also disturbing. The main objective has been to monitor the pheasant populations in six different areas with different levels of human disturbance. Although there is no evidence to show that there is an immediate threat to these populations concerned, some local populations have become extinct in years gone by. Some forests are being cut at an alarming rate, but projects such as the Himalayan Jungle Project (soon to become Palas Conservation and Development Project) are helping to safe-guard habitats in that area. Other forests are left to the mercy of the timber mafia and contractors.

I would like to thank Keith Howman, Peter Garson, Al Lee, Dr Mumtaz and Brigadier Mukhtar plus all members of the survey team who have been dedicated to the project throughout the last three years! Local people have also played an important role in accommodating the team and assisting us in our work.

Photo: Raza Abbas

The team before departure from the base camp.

I am currently writing a technical report on this project with Peter Garson, for the UNDP Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme in Pakistan.

Filming the western tragopan

The western tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus*, for some reason has generated a lot of interest in both aviculture and research circles as the most mysterious of the tragopans, or perhaps pheasants in general. Its former distribution ran from the Swat valley in Pakistan to Garhwal in India at altitudes of 2200 - 3600 meters (Ripley 1982). Now the distribution of the species has been reduced and fragmented due to habitat loss and hunting. In Pakistan, the tragopan used to be found in Swat, Kohistan and Kaghan, and also in Galis (Roberts 1991). However, the main population now survives in Kohistan, with only a handful of birds in Kaghan.

As with all of the tragopans, they are stunning birds to see. The male has a red neck, an orange bib and the rest of the body is dark with white spots. They have quite an elongated appearance due to the long tail and at a distance they seem quite large birds as pheasants go. When they take flight they resemble a large partridge; short stubby wings which make an unmistakable noise on take off. The hen is dark brown, also having white markings that are quite elegant on closer inspection.

The filming of the western tragopan in Palas valley during June 1998, was apparently the first footage of the bird in

Photo: Raza Abbas

Western tragopan habitat.

the wild. It was in fact more down to luck than the competence of the expedition coordinator that got the bird on tape. The male tragopan in question was leading the team a merry chase around the jungle and it was a case of the bird sneaked up on the camera man rather than the other way around! However, over the five or six days that the filming took place, the team learnt a lot about the habits and habitats of this species.

The team unfortunately never observed the female, though they did hear her in the morning or at dusk. Usually her call summoned the male very quickly. On the first day, we spent more than an hour building a camera hide whilst the male emitted an alarm call every time a branch was broken. He then decided to run straight past the hide with two men standing outside, whilst the cameraman was inside the hide without his camera! The reason for this bold action by the male was the female calling just above the hide. So Dr Sutton, an ornithologist who accompanied the team hoping to get a chance to see this elusive bird had a male run straight towards him on the first day in the right habitat!

The daily routine of the male seemed to commence with a dawn chorus at approximately 04.30 - 05.30 after he left his roost in the lower portion of his home range. A neighbouring male tragopan did the same. Initially he would emit a few calls from the point we presumed to be the roost, then he would continue to call on the ground. On most mornings the team would be broadcasting a satyr recording and always obtained a response, although the male was wary of the hide. By 09.00 he was silent but could be made to call again by playing the satyr tape or simple by a clap of the hands. His home range was accurately calculated but a very conservative guess would put it at 150 x 150 metres. The habitat consisted of ravines filled with birch trees and ridges with spruce and fir. The ravines were usually quite moist and had a ground cover of fern species and birch saplings. The tragopan shared its habitat with koklass pheasants. The team often heard them calling very near to the male tragopan at dawn and saw a male near the hide.

A satyr tape recording always produced a response. Even as late as 22.00 hrs the two neighbouring tragopans would respond. Playing both the male and female calls was productive. Although the team only had the supposed alarm call of the satyr female, with the male calling back to it. The male satyr's call would usually bring the male western tragopan quite near, and within 20 meters at times. He once flew straight over the hide, but its presence always seemed to alarm him. The team did not have enough cable to place the speaker away from the hide, but he probably could have been lured right past it after some trial runs.

It was our last attempt that was successful, with the whole team becoming tired of living on a small ridge with no water, no cooking facilities (food was brought up the mountain by the porters sometimes on an hourly basis!). The mornings were very cold for sitting still for hours at a time, and we also had rain every afternoon. It seemed incredible that whilst the cameraman sat under a yew tree, facing down the mountain, the bird should climb up into trees behind him and give a soft alarm call. It sat there for six minutes only metres away from him.

A preliminary study of the effects of habitat isolation and fragmentation on the Chinese grouse at Lianhuashan mountains

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Abstract

The Chinese grouse is an endemic and rare bird in China. It inhabits the mountain conifer forests. In 1998 and 1999, using satellite images, we determined the habitat fragmentation patterns, and surveyed the forest patches at Lianhuashan mountains. The Chinese grouse in the Lianhuashan mountains are now an isolated population. The forest in our study area has been heavily cut in the past 30 years. Through vegetation analysis, we found that the Chinese grouse could survive in poor habitat for ten years, where forests were cut for more than 60 percent, but in low density. Conservation suggestions were proposed.

Introduction

The Chinese grouse is the only endemic *Tetraonidae* bird in China and is distributed in the high mountains of Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, north-western Yunnan, and eastern Tibet. In Gansu, the bird inhabits the conifer forests at an altitude of between 2500m to 3600m (Li 1996, Liu & Geng 1994). The bird is listed as 'endangered' in the China Red Data Book (Zheng and Wang 1998), and its population is believed to be in decline because of habitat isolation and fragmentation, partly naturally by aridity of the area with the rise of the Himalayan mountains and partly artificially by agriculture, logging and deforestation of the mountain forest. However, no practical work has been done concerning this problem.

In 1998 and 1999, using satellite images, we investigated how the habitat of Chinese grouse is being destroyed and the habitat isolation and fragmentation situation at Lianhuashan mountains in Gansu Province. In this paper we present our preliminary results.

Study area

Our study area is located at Lianhuashan mountains (34°45'-35°06'N, 103°27'-103°51'), which includes the Lianhuashan Natural Reserve, parts of Yangsha and Yeliguan forestry farms in Kangle, Lintan and Zhuoni County, Gansu Province, China. The altitude of forest around this area is between 2600m to 3600m, with the highest peak of 3616m. The yearly average temperature in the Lianhuashan Natural Reserve was 5.1-6.0°C, with a high of 34°C and a low of -27.1°C. The forest occurred on northern slopes and some north-east or north-west slopes, however, it was too dry for forest on the

Photo: Sun Yue-Hua

The optimum Chinese grouse habitat at Lianhuashan Natural Reserve, good conifer forest with deciduous trees and shrubs, mainly willow and birch.

southern slopes, and there is only shrub and grass. The forest is dominated by fir *Abies fargesii*, spruce *Picea aserata,* birch *Betula* spp, and many kinds of willow *Salix* spp.

Methods

Satellite image analysis

Satellite image prints were bought from Beijing Satellite Ground Station, Chinese Academy of Sciences, taken on 8 December 1996. As male Chinese grouse hold territories in the habitat of mountain spruce-fir forest mixed with deciduous trees (mainly willow and birch) (Sun and Fang 1997), and, all nests were found in the same habitat, we believe that the spruce-fir forest is the key habitat for the survival and reproduction of the bird. The spruce-fir forest was in red color on the satellite images, so combining with local topographic maps, we were able to determine the distribution of possible spruce-fir forest at Lianhuashan Mountains. The preliminary work covered the size of about 200 km^2.

Vegetation analysis

Five vegetation plots were arranged randomly in each forest patch, with a size of 10m x 10m. The slope direction and slope angle were measured, and the canopy cover was estimated to the nearest 10%. Live trees bigger than 3 dbh (diameter-at-breast-height) were counted and their dbh were measured. The

diameters of cut stems were also measured. Shrub cover was estimated from the average of four sub plots with the size of 2m x 2m, similarly the grass cover was estimated from four sub plots with the size of 1m x 1m. Main shrub species were recorded.

To calculate the rate of the forest cutting, we use the stem area as an index. The ratio of stem area of cut stems to that of all living and cut stems bigger than 3 dbh was defined as forest cut rate.

Investigation into the presence of Chinese grouse

During our investigation, we took a specimen of Chinese grouse with us and inquired from local people about the bird. From our radio-tracking studies, we noticed that in spring the birds fed on willows near conifer trees in the morning and late afternoon, and were easily observed. Also, the male Chinese grouse flutter-jumped to mark their territories in spring (Sun & Fang 1997), this also helped us to discover the bird. So we surveyed the birds by line transect method in the morning, each patch surveyed for about 1 km long if the patch was big enough. In winter and spring, the Chinese grouse mainly spent nights in the conifer trees (Klaus et al., 1996), where they would normally leave droppings of more than 30 pieces in one night. We determined if the birds were present mainly by searching for droppings under the possible night-roosting conifer trees.

Figure 1. The study area and the forest patch distribution at Lianhuashan mountains. Shadowed areas show the possible conifer forest we detected from the satellite image combined with the local topographical map.

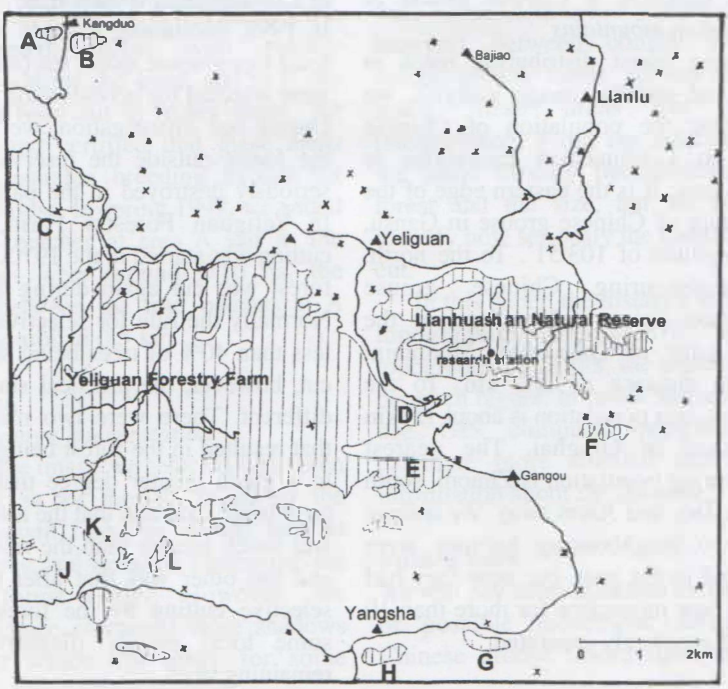

Photo: Jia Chenxi

Helped by local forestry officers, and a Chinese grouse specimen, the team asked local people if they had seen any of these birds.

Results

Habitat isolation of Chinese grouse at Lianhuashan mountains

Combining forest distribution maps in Gansu and satellite image analysis, we found that the population of Chinese grouse at Lianhuashan mountains is isolated now. It is the eastern edge of the distribution of Chinese grouse in Gansu, with longitude of 103°51'. To the north, the neighbouring Chinese grouse distribution point is Yongdeng at the eastern edge of Qilianshan Mountain, with the distance of 200 km. To the northwest, this population is about 150km to Xunhua in Qinghai. The nearest neighbouring population is Zhuoni, south to River Tao, and 30km away. We believe these two neighbouring habitats were connected in the past, but now they had gaps of bare mountains for more than 10 kms and are clearly separated.

Forest destruction and fragmentation at Lianhuashan mountains

In 1998, combining satellite images and local topographic maps, ten forest patches were selected for investigation (Figure 1). During our investigation, we found that the forest outside the reserve had been seriously destroyed in the past 30 years. In Yeliguan Forestry Farm, selective cutting was started in the 1970s, and some forest was cut again during 1995-1998. Normally the rule for selective cutting is less than 40% of trees being selected for cut, however, the practical situation was different. There were two main reasons that resulted in the forest being destroyed to a much greater degree that it should have been. One was that the actual cutting was much greater than the rules allowed and the other was that after the formal selective cutting by the forestry farms, some local people illegally cut the remaining trees.

Table 1. Vegetation analysis and presence of Chinese grouse (CG) at the forest patches in Lianhuashan mountains surveyed in May 1999

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C	D	L	RS
ALD(m)	3120	2800	2950	2860	2810	2830	3150	2850
d*(km)	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	edge	1.0	0.6	in
canopy cover	0.18	0.39	0.46	0.51	0.60	0.58		0.55
No. of conifers	1.4	1.6	1.8	2.6	1.75	4.67	8.2	6.87
stem area	334.1	552.0	1360.9	2081.2	1091.2	1097.9	1902.5	3014.1
No. of cut stems	3.4	2.4	4.8	2.6	2.0	9.0	0.3	0
cut stem area	3487.3	1284.3	2712.3	754.9	746.5	2156.6	61.2	0
No. of deciduous trees	0.6	2.4	3.2	0.4	7.5	0.83	4.2	11.9
cut rate	87.7%	61.9%	63.4%	26.0%	29.0%	61.2%	2.4%	0
shrub cover	0.48	0.48	0.41	0.27	0.32	0.46		0.29
grass cover	0.65	0.34	0.46	0.36	0.25	0.58		
CG seen					+		+	
CG trace		+		+	+	+		

d*: the distance to the big conifer forest

As a result of practical investigation, we found that E, H, I, J, K had become the second-growth forest with mainly deciduous shrubs and trees, and in F, the forest had been cut in recent years. We surveyed and certified that these areas were not suitable breeding habitat for Chinese grouse. In spring 1999, we added two more patches at area A and B, the patch sizes were around 5-10 ha, the distance between the four patches at A and B was around 0.5 km.

Discussion

Satellite image interpretation

The satellite image we selected was taken in winter, as we thought in winter the second-growth forest or shrubs had no green leaves, and we could distinguish the conifer forest easier. However, the satellite image contained more shadows in winter which did make for some difficulties as some steep northern slopes were in very dark colour and we could not interpret between conifer forest or second-growth forest, so we needed to reach these areas for absolute interpretation. From the satellite image, we could identify the possible conifer forest and the size, but we could not identify how seriously the forest had been cut.

In this paper, the distance measured is topographic distance, if we add topographical factors, the distance would be much bigger. In future studies, we will use GIS computer programmes to calculate more detailed and accurate information about the distance.

Future work

We will pay more attention to the creation of possible movement corridors for Chinese grouse. More surveys will be

made at the connection areas between the reserve and the Yeliguan Forestry Farm, to study the distance between the two main populations, and if the birds could move between them. In this paper, we did not discuss the effects of forest patches and distance on the presence of Chinese grouse. As Kangduo is 2.5km from the big conifer forest area and it is on the edge of the habitat area it would be the good place for studying this problem. We hope in the future, we could find thresholds of forest cutting and isolation beyond which suitable habitat will not be occupied by Chinese grouse and ensure that this is kept to. Also, more studies will be conducted into the dispersal of young birds, to get information about the minimum conditions needed for linking habitats by corridor bridges

Conservation suggestions

The local planting plan should pay more attention to the connection areas between Lianhuashan Natural Reserve and Yeliguan Forestry Farm (D in Figure 1). We suggest a bigger reserve should be set up to protect the whole Chinese grouse habitats in Lianhuashan mountains; that is to say, to include the Yeliguan Forest Farm. This is not only to protect the Chinese grouse but is also important to protect other wildlife. At Kangduo, it was said, many wildlife species were in good density in the past, such as musk deer *Moschus* sp, blue sheep *Pseudois nayaur*, common otter *Lutra lutra*, even the leopard *Panthera pardus*, but due to deforestation and hunting, these animals are now very rare, even extinct. During our investigation, we found hunting the Chinese grouse was not common. However, bigger pheasant species such as the blue eared-pheasant *Crossoptilon auritum* suffered more from hunting. All illegal hunting should be stopped.

The forest at Kangduo was seriously cut in the early 1990s, but the Chinese

Figure 2. The comparison of vegetation characters, the conifer stem area and number of deciduous trees, between the habitat of Chinese grouse at our research station (RS) in Lianhuashan and the forest patches.

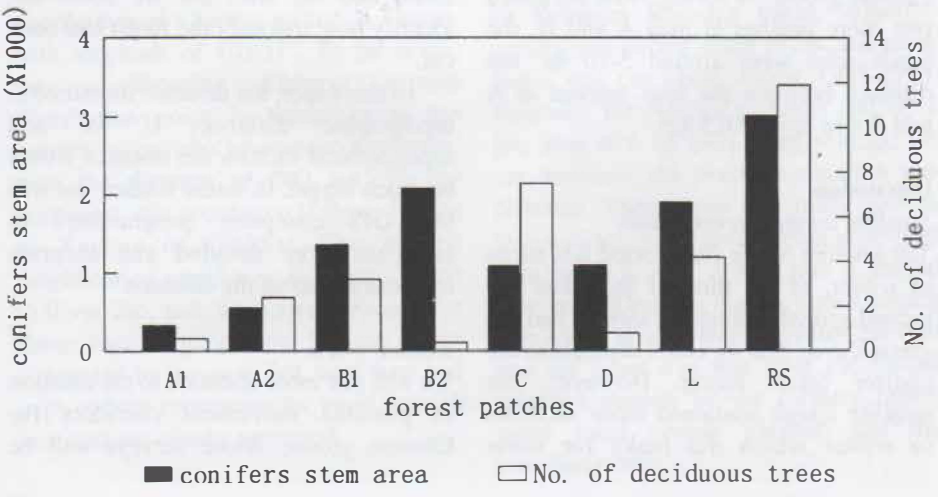

Photo: Sun Yue-hua

The forest at Kangduo, where we selected four forest patches. The forest on the left of the photo was clear cut around ten years ago, however, the Chinese grouse was still found in the remaining forest patches in vey low density. If the remaining trees cannot be protected, the birds will soon become extinct in this area.

grouse has survived in such a bad habitat for about ten years, and might be able to survive longer until the habitat recovers. It is very important not to cut the forest any more, as the birds would not be able to stand the situation. From October 1998, the Chinese government stopped cutting all natural forest in Gansu, and some other provinces. However, the management is not very effective as we found at Kangduo where illegal cutting still occurred. We suggest the local government pays more attention to stopping the illegal logging of conifer trees.

Acknowledgments

This study was supported by grants from the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), Chinese Academy of Sciences and Deutsche Forsechungs Gemeinschaft (DFG), BP Conservation Programme, Grouse Specialist Group of WPA and Martin Wills Trust. We thank Lianhuashan Natural Reserve for their great help to our work.

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The orange-necked partridge and five other galliformes in two protected areas in southern Vietnam

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The following is a very much abbreviated summary of a well produced and lengthy report from Atkins and Tentij. It contains only the preface, conclusion and acknowledgements and is yet another example of the excellent and valuable work that can and is being done by many of today's young and enthusiastic field workers. We would like to thank Dr Réne Dekker for bringing Robert Atkins and Manon Tentij to our attention and pestering us for help with their travel costs, and British Airways Assisting Conservation for once more coming to our aid in this respect. The full text of the report is lodged with the WPA HQ office and an informal account of their trip can be found in **WPA News** *55.* *Ed.*

Preface

This report presents the results of a survey of the orange-necked partridge *Arborophila davidi*. This survey was a part of our Master of Science degree (doctorandus) in biology at the University of Amsterdam. The fieldwork was carried out in Vietnam from February 1997 until April 1997.

Early in 1996 we received a copy of the Partridges, Quails, Francolins, Snowcocks and Guineafowl: Status survey and conservation action plan 1995-1999 (McGowan et al., 1995). In this Action Plan the necessity of a survey of the recently discovered orange-necked partridge in Vietnam was indicated. More information was urgently needed in order to assess the potential threats to its survival. We became very enthusiastic about the project, particularly because we were interested in the conservation aspect. Dr Rene Dekker of the National Museum of Natural History, Leiden, would be our supervisor together with Dr Jan Wattel of the Zoological Museum, Amsterdam. Through the BirdLife Vietnam Programme in Hanoi we were able to apply for a three-month research visa.

We stayed in Cat Tien National Park for three months and were assisted by Pham Huu Khanh, a staff member of the Technology Department of Cat Tien National Park, and Nguyen Tran Vy, a post-graduate student from the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources in Ho Chi Minh City. Our supervisors in Vietnam were Jonathan C Eames and Dr Nguyen Cu of the BirdLife Vietnam Programme.

We arrived in Vietnam on 1st February, near the beginning of Tet, the Vietnamese New Year. We brought two bicycles so that we could travel through the park without having to rely on the services of the very expensive Jeep.

The original aim of the survey was to concentrate exclusively on the orange-necked partridge. Unfortunately, during the first two months of our fieldwork, we did not hear or see any sign of the species. Within a few weeks though, we were able to identify more than 100 species of birds

and we could recognise the vocalisations of most terrestrial birds, including all the galliformes. We decided to combine our survey of the orange-necked partridge with a census of five other species of galliformes. In this way we were able to search large areas of Cat Tien in a systematic manner and we hoped that, whilst censusing the other species, we would have a better chance to find the orange-necked partridge.

By the beginning of April, we had almost given up hope that the orange-necked partridge was still present in Cat Tien National Park. Together with a team from the BirdLife Vietnam Programme and of the National Museum of Natural History, Leiden, we went to the neighbouring Cat Loc Nature Reserve. Three years before our visit to Cat Loc, a team from the BirdLife Vietnam Programme visited this reserve and found no evidence of the orange-necked partridge (Eames, J.C., pers. comm.). During our visit, the orange-necked partridge did turn out to be present in Cat Loc Nature Reserve.

Only during the last month of our fieldwork were we able to focus completely on the orange-necked partridge, because by that time we knew how and where to look. Back in Cat Tien we continued our survey on this beautiful species. So in this report, we are glad to announce that the orange-necked partridge still exists and we are happy to show the results of our survey.

Conclusions

Orange-necked partridge

The continued existence of the orange-necked partridge has been proved in Cat Tien National Park, Dong Nai province and in neighbouring Cat Loc Nature Reserve, Lam Dong province. Two new locations have been found for the species. The orange-necked partridge appears to be present in larger numbers in Cat Loc than in Cat Tien.

The habitat requirements of the orange-necked partridge are now clearer: hills of at least 150m altitude with steep slopes, covered with tall, non-thorny bamboo or a mixed bamboo-evergreen vegetation. The presence of water nearby may also be a requirement in the dry season.

Foraging is done in pairs. Pairs of the orange-necked partridge react strongly to the playback of recorded calls. We found that orange-necked partridges started calling in early April. This might indicate the beginning of the breeding season.

A reassessment of the Mace-Lande status may be needed, particularly in the light of habitat loss, though further, more intensive research is needed.

The conservation status of the orange-necked partridge, according to the Mace-Lande criteria, is 'Endangered', as given in the Partridges, Quails, Francolins, Snowcocks and Guineafowl: Status survey and conservation action plan 1995-1999 (McGowan et al, 1995). This status was determined when there were little data available on the species. This report presents new data on the orange-necked partridge and therefore we feel that a re-evaluation of the conservation status of the species is needed, using the criteria of the new IUCN Red List Categories (IUCN, 1994).

We have calculated an extent of occurrence of ca 2,000 km^2 by measuring the area between the type locality (Bu Kroai), Cat Loc Nature Reserve and Cat Tien National Park. However, as

described in the introduction, Bu Kroai has been cleared of forest so the extent of occurrence may be smaller.

As mentioned in the results, there are presently three locations known for the species: two in Cat Tien and one in Cat Loc. Presumably Cat Loc as a whole may be counted as one location, though further surveying is necessary.

We observed intensive use and destruction of these localities in Cat Tien and Cat Loc, as described in the discussion. Based on these findings, the orange-necked partridge should, in our opinion, be designated as Endangered: B1+2c.

IUCN. 1994. IUCN Red List Categories Prepared by the IUCN Species Survival Commission As Approved by the 40th Meeting of the IUCN Council. IUCN, Gland.

Green peafowl

The central wetlands, Bao Sau, appear to contain the largest concentration of green peafowl in Cat Tien National Park.

It is difficult to estimate the total population size in Cat Tien, because green peafowl seem to be present in more areas, particularly alongside the Dong Nai River, during the rainy season. Our survey was during the dry season, when the birds are absent from these areas.

The constant human presence at Bao Sau may have a negative effect on the species.

Siamese fireback

The density of Siamese fireback in semi-deciduous forest was found to be 0.19 wing-whirring males per hectare on average, with the maximum densities up to 0.89 wing-whirring males per hectare.

Birds were not seen or heard in February, but in March groups of males with several females became more conspicuous and the males could be heard wing-whirring. This might indicate that the breeding season begins in March.

Germain's peacock-pheasant

The density of Germain's peacock-pheasant in Cat Tien National Park in semi-deciduous forest was found to be 0.30 calling birds per hectare on average, with maximum densities up to 0.83 calling birds per hectare.

Scaly-breasted partridge

Scaly-breasted partridges are quite common in Cat Tien National Park, with average densities in semi-deciduous forest of 0.53 calling pairs per hectare and with maximum densities of 0.98 calling pairs per hectare.

Pairs of scaly-breasted partridges call significantly more in the morning than in the afternoon ($p<0.05$, $N=121$).

Suggestions for research and conservation

Following our fieldwork in Cat Tien National Park and Cat Loc Nature Reserve we would like to make some suggestions for further research in these two areas:

- The availability of preferred habitat should be examined in Cat Loc and Cat Tien, using satellite images, to find reasons for the difference between the size of the *A. davidi* populations in both parks and to obtain more information about its overall distribution and habitat requirements.

- Suitable areas, if present, outside Cat Tien and Cat Loc need to be examined for

the presence of orange-necked partridge.

- The development of the commercial fishpond in Cat Tien National Park should be ended as soon as possible.

- Attempts should be made to make Cat Loc readily accessible to (foreign) researchers and to find a way to provide the Cat Loc forestry service with adequate financial means.

- Continued presence of researchers in Cat Tien and Cat Loc will make the staff and inhabitants more aware of the importance of conservation in general and the species in the area in particular.

- The personnel and inhabitants of Cat Tien National Park should be made aware of the needs for conservation in 'their' National Park. Senior staff to the park should be given some basic form of natural history education and species-recognition.

- Cat Tien National park needs one or more flagship species, perhaps incorporated in a park logo. This would attract more foreign tourists and, together with the sale of park merchandise and the rental of bicycles, would generate some extra cashflow.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following foundations and companies for their generous financial support: Lucie Burgers Foundation for Comparative Behaviour Research; BirdLife International Vietnam Programme; British Airways Assisting Conservation Programme; Stiftung Avifauna Protecta & Zoologische Gesellschaft fur Arten- und Populationsschutz; Martina de Beukelaar Stichting; Stichting J.C. van der Hucht Fonds; Institute for Systematics and Population Biology/University of Amsterdam; World Pheasant Association; Partridge, Quail and Francolin Specialist Group; Constructiebureau Tentij B.V.; Bever Zwerfsport and RAF Personal Audio Amsterdam.

We would also like to thank and greet a number of people: Dr Rene Dekker of the National Museum of Natural History, Leiden, for all his effort and supervision; Jonathan Eames and Dr Nguyen Cu of BirdLife Vietnam Programme, for their guidance and good company in Vietnam; Dr Jan Wattel of the Zoological Museum, University of Amsterdam, for his share in the supervision; Tran Van Mui, Director of Cat Tien National Park; Pham Huu Khanh, from Cat Tien National Park, for helping us with our fieldwork, his excellent company and showing us the Vietnamese social niceties; Nguyen Tran Vy, from the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources, for helping us with our fieldwork with great enthusiasm; Do Thi Xua for her extremely generous hospitality in Cat Tien; Keith Howman and Jane Clacey of the World Pheasant Association; John Carroll, Chairman of the Partridge, Quail and Francolin Specialist Group; Rod Hall from BAAC; Charlotte Vermeulen for sacrificing her holiday; Boudewijn Heuts for his statistical acumen; Tineke Prins for handling our mail; Jan-Herman van der Sloot of the Expert Center for Taxonomic Identification, Amsterdam for his sonographic artistry; Nick Brickle from BirdLife International and Jon Brommer for their 'harsh' comments and corrections; Han Assink, Ben King and all the people who sent us mail in Vietnam.

Maleo survey and conservation project

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The maleo *Macrocephalon maleo*, is used as the symbol of the Megapode Specialist Group and the Indonesian Ornithological Society. The word maleo is used for all megapodes in Indonesia and the maleo itself is a popularly known symbol of Sulawesi's natural heritage. It is endemic to Sulawesi and is listed in the IUCN Action Plan (Dekker & McGowan, 1995) as endangered. Earlier this decade Dekker (1990) and Argeloo (1994) assessed the conservation status of the maleo and produced maps of the known nesting grounds in Sulawesi. The majority of their survey work was in Northern Sulawesi, and most nesting ground records elsewhere on the island were based on Ad Libitum observations.

Last year Stuart Butchart and I conducted a survey of maleo nesting grounds in Central and South Sulawesi. I surveyed the eastern side of the island from June - August 1998 and Stuart concentrated on the western side of the island that he surveyed in October-December 1998. Both Stuart and I set out to find all known maleo nesting grounds to check on their conservation status and to survey for any previously unrecorded sites. I teamed up with an Indonesian NGO, called Sahabat Morowali to survey eastern Central Sulawesi, and to set up maleo conservation projects in the area. The partnership was really successful. Together we were able to survey a large area and set up three conservation projects and public awareness schemes.

The public awareness and conservation projects were helped considerably by the presence of 40 English girls, who came out to help Sahabat Morowali on a 'World Challenge Expedition'. The girls helped to improve nesting grounds by cutting back invasive vegetation and put up poster boards and other public awareness material. Tourism in the area is generally restricted to a few back-packers, so the presence of so many 17-year-old English girls caused quite a stir and a lot of publicity for the maleo. We also got a lot of support from the Department of Forestry and NRM2 (Natural Resources Management), who want to improve the conservation status of the maleo in the Morowali Nature Reserve and surrounding villages.

I met up with Duncan Neville of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Palu to ask if he would like to be involved with Stuart's survey. He was very supportive and kindly found funding for eight members of local NGOs to assist Stuart. One of these NGOs was called 'maleo' and is run by a man who studied the maleo for his thesis whilst at University in Palu.

I also bumped into Jack West. Jack was the first person to artificially incubate and hatch a Moluccan megapode *Eulipoa wallacei* egg (West et al., 1981). He was very interested in our maleo project and has since given a paper at the Australian

Society of Zoo Keepers bird conference urging Australian Zoos to fund a captive breeding programme for the Moluccan megapode and the maleo.

I had imagined that the economic crisis in Indonesia would have thwarted all attempts at conservation, but was pleasantly surprised by the strong local support that Stuart and I received. There are a lot of people in Sulawesi who want to preserve the maleo as a symbol of their national heritage, but the picture is looking bleak.

My team surveyed 22 nesting sites in eastern Central Sulawesi, 12 of which were previously unreported. 27% of these sites had already become abandoned. 25% of the remaining sites were severely threatened and a further 57% were threatened (following criteria described in Argeloo, 1994). The most depressing survey was Bakiriang. Bakiriang used to be one of the largest and most impressive maleo nesting grounds in Sulawesi. The site is protected and controlled by the forestry department, but its protected status is not being enforced.

The forest behind the nesting ground has suffered extensive illegal deforestation and the beach is disturbed by fishermen using explosive devices. The egg harvest is controlled by the forestry department who have built a semi-artificial incubation cage. 200 eggs per year are donated to the King of Banggai as part of an ancient custom. The remaining eggs are excavated and half are incubated inside the cage to prevent egg predation and illegal harvesting. I am somewhat cynical about the cage design and incubation conditions used, which seemed far from optimal. The emergence rate of chicks was very low. Nobody was able to give reliable estimates of the numbers of birds using the site, but the populations have fallen dramatically in recent years.

The expansion of palm oil plantations around the eastern coast of Sulawesi is one of the largest threats to coastal maleo populations. Transmigration (movement of people from over-crowded islands to less crowded islands) has also had a serious impact on the maleo. Five out of the six nesting grounds that had been abandoned were next to transmigration sites. At one site, Tambayoli, which was developed as a transmigration site in 1991, the maleo population has plummeted. This is due to forest disturbance, egg collecting and hunting of the adult birds. There were however three sites left that supported large maleo populations. Two of these sites are in the Morowali Nature Reserve. Their isolation from large villages and the protected status of the surrounding forest helps to maintain these sites as important maleo conservation areas. However, Morowali Nature Reserve has been proposed for National Park status, and careful management will be needed to ensure that these sites remain protected.

Stuart has only just finished his survey, and has kindly sent the following summary which shows that the maleo is in serious trouble in western Sulawesi too. "We surveyed maleo nesting grounds in western Central Sulawesi and northern South Sulawesi. We confirmed the existence of ten previously reported nesting grounds, and located 36 new sites. Of 41 sites for which we have information on their current status, populations of maleos at 14 sites (34%) have already gone extinct, and populations at 82% of the active sites are

declining. Of the sites that are still active, 96% are considered to be under some degree of threat, and 59% are severely threatened. The main threats to maleos are uncontrolled egg-collecting and habitat degradation, with hunting and trapping of adults at nesting grounds being a secondary threat. Coastal nesting grounds are particularly vulnerable to habitat degradation for plantations, cultivation, habitation, and artificial fish-ponds.

Inland nesting grounds located in forest are particularly vulnerable to opportunistic collection of maleo eggs by rattan collectors. Traditional systems of controlled egg-collection have almost universally broken down, and harvesting of eggs is intense and uncontrolled at nearly all sites. Taman Nasional Lore Lindu is an extremely important conservation area for protecting maleos, but the status of its nine nesting grounds gives cause for concern, with several already close to extinction. Conservation efforts within the park should be prioritised at the Saluki and Hulurawa nesting grounds.

Only four coastal nesting grounds retain the potential for effective conservation of maleos, with moderate to large populations and adjacent protected forest: Tanjung Dako, Tanjung Bambalatong, Tanjung Matop, and Tanjung Labuanunuk. At all these sites, conservation measures need to include strict controls over egg-collecting, restricted access to the nesting ground, and effective protection of surrounding habitat. The effectiveness of hatchery programs needs to be carefully evaluated, and if these systems are implemented, they require tight controls, close monitoring and intensive supervision.

The maleo is in serious trouble, but there are individuals, communities and organisations in Indonesia who want to do something about it. We shall continue working these people into the future and hopefully preserve the maleo as a symbol of Sulawesi's natural heritage, Indonesia's avifauna and as the Megapode Specialist Group logo.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of the people and organisations in Indonesia who made this survey possible. Thank you to Stiftung Avifauna Protecta, the Van Tienhoven Stichting/Netherlands Foundation for International Nature Protection, The World Pheasant Association and British Airways Assisting Conservation for supporting this project. I would also like to thank Dr Stuart Butchart for his contribution to this article.

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Conservation status and natural history of the wattled curassow in the lower Beni river area of Bolivia

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Introduction

The wattled curassow *Crax globulosa*, 'Mamaco' in Bolivia), is a large terrestrial member of the cracid family, with the male having a bulbous red-orange knob and wattle on its bill. Cracids are the most threatened birds in South America and are highly susceptible to over hunting.

The wattled curassow is considered vulnerable and a high research and conservation priority (Collar et al. 1994; Stotz et al. 1996). Rare, with little natural history information and few recent population studies, this species could possibly be in a serious decline throughout South America. Historical accounts have shown that the species had a patchy distribution, with records found in western Amazonia in Brazil (based on records from 11 sites), Columbia (1 site), Ecuador (1 site), Peru (9 sites), and Bolivia (2 sites) (Collar et al. 1992).

In Bolivia one site is found along the northern border of the Mamore river between Brazil and Bolivia, with the species last recorded in 1829 (Paynter & Traylor 1991). The other known area, and the subject of this study, the Beni site, is found in middle-western Bolivia, down river from the town of Rurrenabaque and passing the town of San Marcos, where the wattled curassow has been collected on three separate occasions (Vaurie 1967; Gyldenstolpe 1945; Figure 1). The last known record for the wattled curassow in Bolivia was a collected specimen from the Beni site in 1937. With little natural history knowledge, no recent population data and the threat of overhunting, it was seen as imperative to document if this species still existed in Bolivia, and if so, to collect as much information as possible in order to aid future research on the confirmation of viable populations, population threats and the best means of protecting this species for the future.

Methods

Through a grant from the World Pheasant Association, a series of interviews with local hunters, ecotourism operators and loggers were held in the town of Rurrenabaque during the month of November 1998. During the interviews the plates and photographs of cracids were used from the Handbook of the Birds of the World (1996).

Local interviews are often the fastest and most cost effective means of gaining information on large mammals and birds in a short period of time. Hunted animals are often suprisingly well studied by local people. As long as interviews are held in an objective, 'blind' manner, one is able to obtain accurate information on past populations, distributions, habitats, behaviour, reproduction and population threats. One must keep in mind the

Photo: J del Hoyo - Lynx Ediciones

Wattled curassow.

possible errors inherent with information collected in a non-scientific manner, always searching for similar and supportive responses to the information obtained.

Results

I interviewed approximately 40 people in the town of Rurrenabaque, finding 14 people who were familiar with the wattled curassow, some having seen the species in the last year (Appendix 1). I am convinced that they are correctly identifying the wattled curassow. Several hunters described the bird in exact details, including details that would distinguish it from the similar razor-billed curassow Mitu tuberosa, including plumage coloration, curled feathers on the back of head, the knob and wattle and vocalisations.

It would seem that this species is now isolated to a small area down-river from Rurrenabaque, around the town of San Marcos, and that only people familiar with this area are familiar with the bird. I am hoping to investigate this further with field research in 1999. Through the interviews I was able to gather the following information:

Distribution

The past population of the wattled curassow would seem to have ranged from the town of Rurrenabaque down the Beni river and past the mouth of Negro river (see figure 1). The older hunters all say that the species was very common all along the Beni river, often encountering three to four groups in the forest in a day. Thirty years ago one could find them within an hours walk from Rurrenabaque

near Gringo lake. The wattled curassow never occurred upstream from Rurrenabaque, which is the beginning of the Andes Mountains and a dramatic change in forest type. There is a famous report of a lucky hunter finding one in a tree along the river edge early in the morning in the town of San Buena Venture in 1948-53. The Caiman hunters watched the wattled curassow disappear from many different areas, but never acutally becoming extirpated, only more isolated with reduced numbers.

Presently the species only seems to exist around the San Marcos area, Marcelo Chuqui, Fernando Dieguz, and Nelson and Migual Lucia observing and hunting the bird this year. The hunters from San Marcos claim that the wattled curassow is now only found on the eastern side of the Beni river, approximately 10km down from San Marcos, up to 40km down the Beni river and approximately 8km east of the town of San Marcos. Populations increase towards the east. A healthy population exists around the lake Estrella, and the oxbow lake Contrabanda. In the last ten years populations have regained their past numbers in the forest east of the Beni river, and the wattled curassow is starting to repopulate vacant areas again.

One ecotourism operator says that they also exist in the lower Yacuma river area, which is approximately 100 km east of the San Marcos area, but this needs to be confirmed.

Habitat

The wattled curassow's habitat appears to be inundundated areas in high terra firme tropical forst, not necessarily found near rivers. They prefer flat areas, and were less common in Amazonia forest closer to the Andes. Historically they have never been found past the first Serranias of the Andes nor in pampas or open areas. During the dry season (June/July), many of the inundated areas become dry and the birds are forced into concentrations in the few wet areas left. These often tend to be nearer rivers. During the dry season the wattled curassow is easier to find in their known sites.

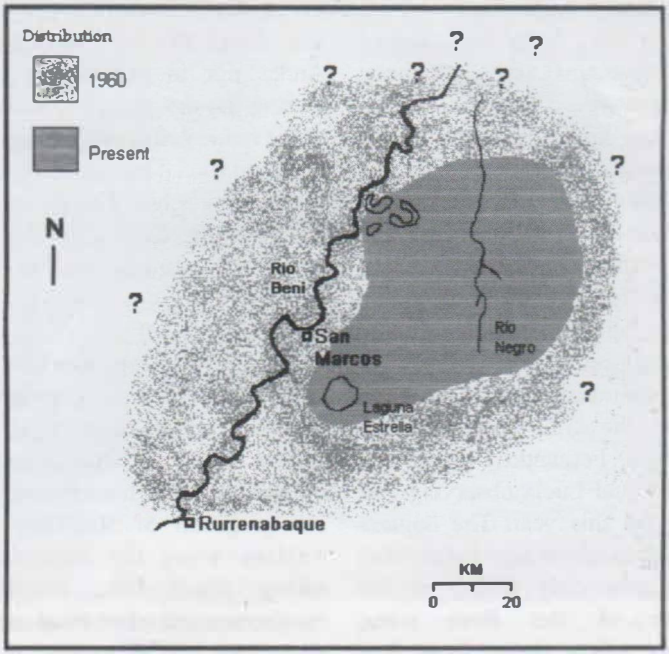
Behaviour and reproduction

Wattled curassows commonly travel around in groups of two to six and rarely can be found in large groups of 15-20 individuals, one hunter saying he once saw a group of 50. They forage by walking along the inundated ground, eating small fish, insects, aquatic crustaceans and other small animals. They sleep high (20-30 metres) in the forest canopy at night.

The hunters speak about how the wattled curassow has a distinctive whistle, and that the whistle call is often heard at night. The sound has two parts, beginning with around three bangs of the wings against the body, and then the whistle call. They mention the banging is now always heard, and heard more often at the first light of day. When encountered they fly up into the forest canopy, usually about 20-25 metres above the ground, where they sing the same whistle hunters have heard at night.

The wattled curassow has flightless chicks between September and October. The chicks are able to fly in November. From this information it can be inferred that they must nest between July and August.

Figure 1. Described distribution of the wattled curassow in the Beni site, Bolivia.



Discussion

The interview results suggest that a viable population of the wattled curassow still exists in the Beni site (San Marcos). A species that is almost unknown in the literature found to be well known by the local people. I suspect that this holds true for other populations of the wattled curassow and I recommend that the same research method be applied in other areas of South America.

Presently it would seem the Beni site population is growing, and is under a controlled sustainable hunting system in the town of San Marcos. As one person told me, the people of the town enjoy the meat of the wattled curassow, and want to reduce hunting to a sustainable level, to ensure the meat in the future.

The information from the interviews is very valuable, but it needs to be followed up with a more thorough study, especially in a quantifiable manner so that we can assess the population status of the wattled curassow. Through a field expedition, travelling down river by boat, and entering different possible sites, a survey should be made to ascertain whether the population size is sufficiently large to sustain the species in the future (minimum viable population). I would like to study as many areas as possible, with the interest of finding an area that has a healthy population, a relatively undisturbed forest, poor access to local hunting and logging, and that would politically be easier to protect. I am presently searching for a grant of approximately 3000 USD to carry out this field work in 1999.

I also would like to investigate the best possible method of

conservation/protection of this species. Given the present knowledge, and the existence of a high backpacker ecotourism market in the area, four protection options seem apparent:

- the creation of a protected area
- the reduction of hunting pressure through public education
- protection through ecotourism interests
- San Marcos community population monitoring the sustainable hunting.

In.this situation perhaps one or all of these options will be appropriate to protect this species. It will be necessary to research the global and Bolivian success of these methods as well.

The Beni site will be recommended as an Important Bird Area (IBA), and hopefully will be implemented in Armonia" (Bolivian BirdLife International partner) IBA programme, which is designed to recommend and begin conservation actions towards bird diversity in Bolivia.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank the grant from the World Pheasant Association, which allowed this research to be possible, and the infrastructural support of the association Armonia, the BirdLife international partner for Bolivia. I am greatly in debt tot he assistance of Fernando Dieguez, who helped me filter through the population of Rurrenabque to the very co-operative and friendly people who could benefit our research, who also deserve a large thank you – this study would not have been possible without their help. And a very appreciative thank you for the advice and assistance of Dan Brooks, Daniel Robinson and Bret Whitney.

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Appendix 1

Name	Age	Occupation	Residence
Marcelo Chuqui	33	logger	
Rurrenabaque			
Frederico Dieguez	77	Caiman hunter	San Marcos
Fernando Dieguez	42	Caiman hunter/logger	San Marcos
Carlos Gongora	55	Logger/skin collector	Rurrenabaque
Luis Gonzalez	66	Caiman hunter	San Marcos
Nicolas Cuata Lero	34	Subsistance hunter	Asencion
Freddy Limaco	31	Subsistance hunter	San Jose de Uchupiamonas
Nelson Luciu	40	Logger/subsistance hunter	San Marcos
Miguel Luciu	37	Logger/subsistance hunter	San Marcos
Gilberto Luciu	43	Logger/subsistance hunter	San Marcos
Ignacio Merena	63	Subsistance hunter	Muchanes
Raul Molina	43	Logger/hunter	Rurrenabaque
Santiago Yarari	35	Subsistance hunter	San Marcos
Juan Carlos Yturri	30-40	Logger/subsistance hunter	San Marcos

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WPA ANNUAL CONVENTION

The WPA Annual Convention for 1999 will be hosted by WPA France and will be held at Parc Zoologique de Clères in France on 25 and 26 September.

The programme on Saturday begins (after registration and coffee) with the WPA AGM followed by three sessions chaired by Gary Robbins, Alain Hennache and Han Assink. Invited speakers include John Carroll (PQF specialist group), Dan Brooks (Cracid specialist group), Philip McGowan, Mike Cook, Ettore Randi, Pamela Rasmussen, Ludo Pincel, Michel Saint Jalme and Dang Gia Tung. Summaries of talks will be given in French, Dutch and German.

The convention dinner on Saturday night will be held in the Castle at Clères and on Sunday there will be a guided tour in the Zoological park of Clères in the morning followed by a visit to an ornamental duck breeding centre at Maison de l'Oiseau.

After the convention there will be an opportunity to spend three days (27-29) in Sologne in the centre of France, where there will be opportunities to visit two zoos (Beauval and La Haute Touche) including one of the most important collections of deer in the world, an important fresh water fish aquarium, an ostrich farm, two Renaissance castles, a wine cellar and the national collection of pheasants for hunting!

The convention fees will be 600 FF (£60) per person. Further information is available from WPA HQ but time is of the essence!

Forthcoming events

1999

8-11 September	16th Annual Conference of EAZA, Basle Zoo, Switzerland
11-12 September	WPA Germany Annual Meeting
13-17 September	Eighth International Grouse Symposium, Rovaniemi, Finland
25-26 September	WPA Annual Convention, Clères, France
2-3 October	World Birdwatch '99 Contact: Communications, BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge, CB3 0NA Tel: 01223 277318
8 October	WPA Charity Clay Shoot, Dunkeld House Shooting Grounds, Perthshire, Scotland
13-17 October	BirdLife International World Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
October	Workshop on Biology & Conservation of Mexican galliformes in conjunction with 'VI Neotropical Ornithological Congress', Monterey, Mexico. Contact Dan Brooks
October	Workshop on the Biology and Conservation of Paraguayan and Atlantic Forest Cracids in conjunction with 'IV Amazonia Fauna Management Congress', Asuncion, Paraguary

2000

28-30 July	CLA Game Fair, Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire, UK
23 September-1 October	International Symposium on Galliformes, Kathmandu, Nepal

Famous Grouse charity shoots

Thanks to sponsorship by The Famous Grouse, we have been able to extend our programme of fundraising clay shoots. We got off to a great start with our first shoot at the Royal Berkshire Shooting Grounds. A very sporting layout was enjoyed by 16 teams of guns and was followed by a most enjoyable dinner, prize giving and auction conducted by Dillon Williams.

On Saturday 12 June, with the sponsorship and active participation of Highland Distillers, WPA's first fundraising clay pigeon shoot in the

Photo: Keith Howman

Iain Stothard of The Famous Grouse in action on the driven grouse stand at the Royal Berkshire Shooting Grounds.

Photo: Keith Howman

The Daily Telegraph team lead by Peter John Bonthrone (right).

Nick van Gruisen of Worldwide Journeys, entering into the fundraising spirit at The Royal Berkshire, watched by Colin Howman, leader of The Speech Recognition Team.

south-west took place. It was made possible by the generosity of Lord Clinton, who afforded us the facilities of his Heanton Satchville estate, north of Okehampton.

The setting was superb: a spectrum of pasture, woodland, huge mature trees, pools and high banks made it possible to simulate a variety of game. In the end the least scathed were the springing teal and a quail (or rocket-propelled sparrow), which emerged from behind the startled gun.

32 participants plus walking guests were there, and nobody really cared who won but for the record, Andrew Joynson's sponsored Potheridge Shoot took the team prize, and the gallon of Famous Grouse went to Rick Perry as individual winner.

Our thanks go to Andrew Joynson for giving so much help in organising the event and to Lord Clinton's keeper Kevin Brogman who helped create the fairly testing course for the guns.

Photo: Jean Howman

Happy prize-winners of the Red Grouse Charity Shoot at the Brandon Shooting Grounds.

The Brandon Shooting Grounds in Lincolnshire was the third venue where Jim Gale set a nicely balanced challenge to the teams of guns and a pretty strong lot of guns they were too, with two individual highest scores of 46 out of 50. The first of the two to join WPA won! Our thanks to Nick Worth and Jim Gale for all their work that went into organising the event.

These shoots have contributed around £5000 to WPA funds as well as making a number of new members and being a lot of fun. We would like to thank The Famous Grouse for their support and in particular Iain Stothard.

By the time this appears we will be getting ready for our final Red Grouse charity shoot of the season, which is being held at the Dunkeld House Shooting Grounds, Dunkeld, Perthshire on 8 October. Anyone interested who has not received details (Scottish members have been circulated), should contact Nicola Chalmers-Watson at WPA HQ.

David Lamyman of The Tragopan team in action in the lovely wooded surroundings of the Brandon Shooting Grounds.

Western tragopan radiotagged

On 12 May 1999, Ramesh Krishnamurthy managed to radio collar a western tragopan in the Great Himalayan National Park, Himachal Pradesh, Northern India. Further information on his progress will be published in **WPA News** 60. The Great Himalayan National Park was originally surveyed by Dr Tony Gaston and a team which included our Pheasant Specialist Group Chairman, Dr Peter Garson with funding provided by WPA.

Late news from WPA China

Distribution and numbers of the brown eared-pheasant in Beijing - according to the recent surveys made in 1998/99, the distribution range of the brown eared-pheasant has increased to 130km² with several new locations found including Duanmugou, East Longmenjian, West Longmenjian and Yanhecheng. The population density was 2.5 ind/km². (Song Jie & Zhang Zhengwang)

The rare species of pheasants in Hunan - there are seven species of rare pheasants in Hunan province, which include cabot's tragopan, Elliot's pheasant, silver pheasant, koklass pheasant, temminck's tragopan, Reeve's pheasant and golden pheasant. (Yang Daode)

Captive breeding of golden pheasant - studies on the captive breeding of golden pheasants in winter, induced by artificial lights, were successful in Hebei Province. Under the conditions of 14L:10D, the pheasant bred very well. After treatment, it took 37.67±1.41 days for the female to start laying her eggs which lasted 35±7 days with an average clutch size of 9.02±5.37 eggs. (Zhang Luqiang)

New PhD on pheasant research - Ni Xijun has finished his thesis on pheasant studies and was awarded his PhD degree by Beijing Normal University in July 1999. Dr Ni worked on the Chinese ring-necked pheasant for three years under the supervision of Prof Zheng Guangmei, Liu Nafa and Zhang Zhengwang.

Hong Kong Big Bird Race - In April 1999, four members of the China Ornithological Society were invited by WWF Hong Kong to attend the 1999 Hong Kong Big Bird Race. The team comprised of four members of COS, Prof Gao Yuren (the leader), Sun Yuehua, Zhang Zhengwang and Ms Jiang Huimin recorded 132 species of birds in 24 hours. During their stay in Hong Kong, they were warmly welcomed by WWF Hong Kong, Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, The Nature Conservation Association and Maipo Nature Reserve and they met up with Lew Young the former Conservation Office of WPA and now Director of Maipo Nature Reserve.

Reeve's pheasant.

Aims of the Association

The objects of the Association are:

(1) to advance the education of the public in knowledge of those species of pheasants which are rare or in danger of extinction and as ancillary thereto to promote the conservation of such pheasants for the benefit of the species and the public.

(2) to conduct study and research into rare species of pheasants or species in danger of extinction and to publish the results of all such study and research.

Membership

This is open to all those in sympathy with the objectives of the Association and willing to comply with its rules. WPA is an international organisation designed to enable all interested persons and institutions to participate in fulfilling the objectives of the Association.

Each chapter and affiliate administers its own membership - for information please write to the contact given earlier. All those who do not live in a country where there is a chapter or affiliate, are invited to join the UK Branch of WPA.

For further information please contact:
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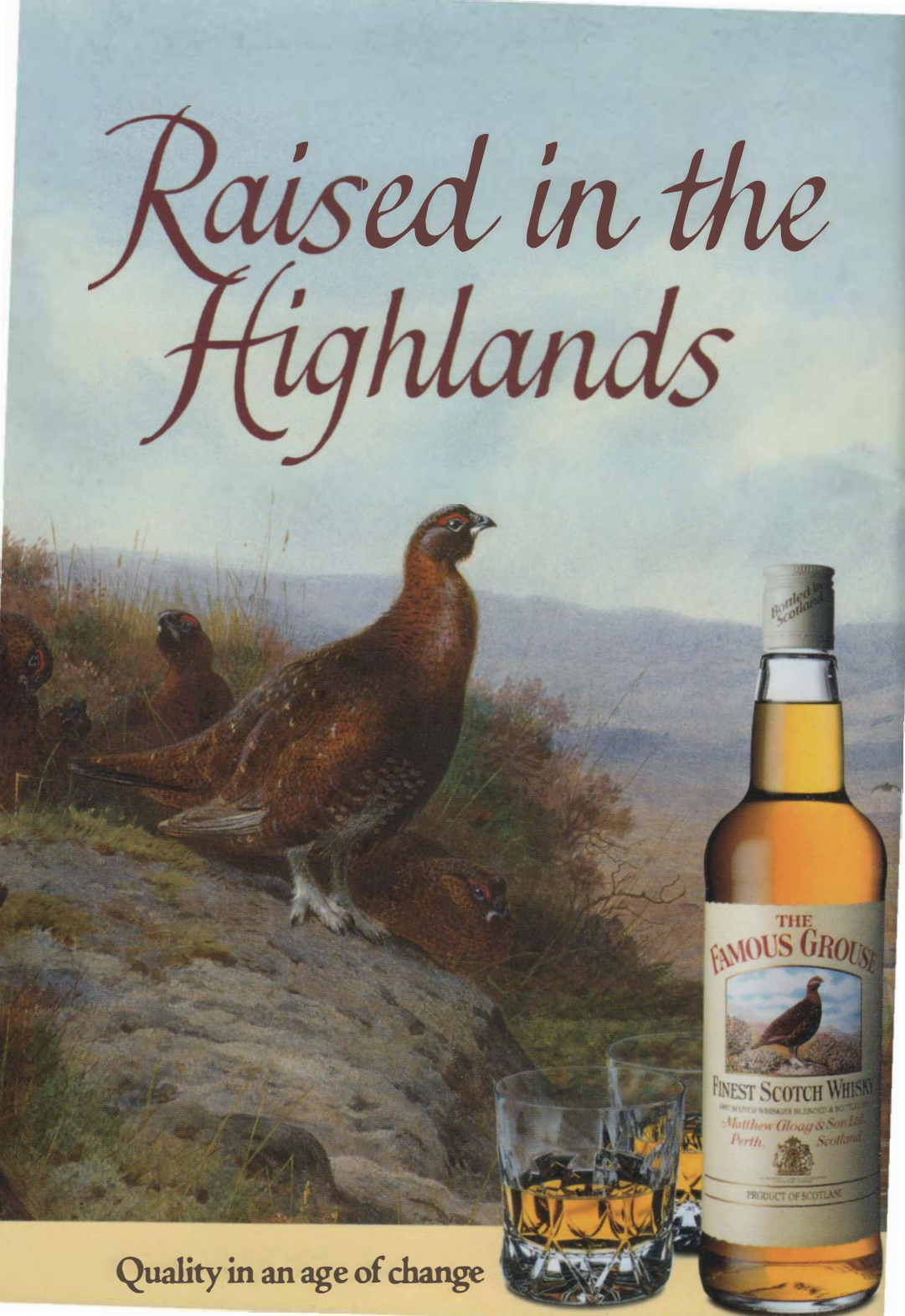
Raised in the Highlands



Quality in an age of change