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WPA News 61 (2000)

World Pheasant Association

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WPA NEWS



The International Newsletter of the World Pheasant Association

WPA News No 61 February 2000 Contents

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THE PIPAR PROJECT



Photo: Robin Marston

The newly rebuilt Danphe School, Keruwa, on a new site opposite the path up to Pipar.

This is WPA's longest running project and it is appropriate that it should be reviewed in the year it comes of age, just 21 years after 'Pipar' hit the WPA headlines at our first ever international symposium held in Kathmandu in 1979. At that symposium a tough young field worker, Tony Lelliot, gave a paper jointly with his Nepali counterpart, P B Yonzon, on the survey they had carried out in the area from April to October of that year. In their summary under conservation strategy they stated "one of the principal objectives of the project was to suggest an area that could in the future be considered as a site for a pheasant sanctuary, where game would be protected from poaching, and where further research could be carried out. Any such proposition would of course have to be approved and gazetted by His Majesty's Government. The principal study area of Pipar supports sizeable pheasant populations, which are coming under increasing pressure from humans (Yonzon

and Lelliot, this meeting). The area may be unique in that during the breeding season, from April to June, all four of the study species occur in a small area and limited altitudinal range. In addition to this, the Pipar area is accessible from Pokhara, involving only a three-day walk, and is suitable for both study and possible limited tourist development. The setting up of a sanctuary would need a specialised study by a qualified worker to determine its definition, boundaries, the extent to which Man's activities should be controlled, and other aspects."

After the symposium Christopher Savage, the then Chairman of WPA, and Keith Howman, who chaired the symposium, met with Prince Gyanendra to discuss how His Majesty's Government might be able to help. They met with a very sympathetic reception and the recommendation that if WPA could fund one or two guards for the area, they could

continued on page 9...

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Affiliated organisations

Taiwan Pheasant Association
Bird Conservation Nepal
Northern Ireland Ornamental Pheasant Society
Pheasant and Waterfowl Society of Australia

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Richard Howard



Our Chairman, Richard Howard pictured at his marriage to Sally Armstrong on 8 December 1999.

Photo: Susie Carr

I would like to wish all our members worldwide a very happy New Year. I am sure that we all look forward with great enthusiasm for the wellbeing of WPA and all that we are working for in the new millennium. I certainly anticipate great new things that will drive us towards the goals that we want for galliformes in general and also their habitat conservation – both go hand in hand and are as important as each other.

We do hope that in the near future we can be seen to be working with other organisations with confidence and co-operation. Together we will achieve so much more than individually – positive work for conservation becomes increasingly essential as habitats continue to be destroyed and fragmented – we have to act together now.

The re-print of the Megapode Action Plan has now gone to the Species Survival Commission for typesetting and publication within the next few months, and will be followed closely by re-prints of the Pheasant and PQF Action Plans. Also within 2000 we will see the publication of the first Action Plans for the Grouse and

the Cracids, therefore making up the full set for all the galliformes – what an achievement, great stuff!

We do have a change in the office – Jane is taking a rest from us in order to devote time to having a new baby and looking after her family at home. She will continue to typeset our **Newsletters** and **Annual Review** – this is such a help as Jane knows all the workings of WPA. We wish her all the very best in the future. I have a sneaking suspicion she will be around helping us for quite a while to come – thanks Jane!

A new face in the office will be Gill Court who will take over our book-keeping and secretarial work. Gill is not new to me as she worked in Child Beale's office for a good many years.

Phil McGowan has been asked to join us for four months from early January. His main job will be to prepare proposals for foundations and similar grant-giving bodies in order to raise funds, which will allow us to be more pro-active in the conservation field. It is our hope that we can become a larger player in the countries that have endangered galliformes.

A timeless effort by John Coote to identify the foundations to which we should apply has been ongoing for several months. Now he is at the point where he needs all our help – if you have any information on any trusts, companies or individuals that may be interested in supporting WPA, please do let us know. We are in a position to provide the information about the association and have projects to present to them.

We had some very successful meetings in 1999 – the WPA international convention in Clères, France in September (see page 17), joint meetings on cracids and PQF species in Mexico and Paraguay (see page 14), and an extremely successful international Grouse Symposium in Finland (WPA News 60). In 2000 we will be holding our weekend of meetings at Harewood again on 19-20 February, and all our members are welcome to join us there. It is always an interesting and well-organised weekend hosted by Jim Irwin-Davies – please do let him know if you plan to attend.

Of course we will also be holding our International Symposium in Nepal in September. As you already know, Nicola and I had a very interesting few days in Nepal preparing for the symposium, and are confident that it will be really great. By now you should have received further information and initial booking forms – if not please let us know. It will be a great chance for you to join us in one of the world's most fascinating countries.

WPA's Conservation Breeding Advisory Committee will also be organising a captive breeding workshop in Hanoi in early October, with emphasis on education within zoos, and husbandry of Asian pheasant species. Other meetings include a workshop on data collection for conservation of francolins in Uganda, and a meeting in India on aviculture in Indian zoos and forest departments.

As we set out our plans and strategies for the future with great optimism, we are counting on you, our network of members throughout the world, to help us achieve them. So if you would like to join us at one of our meetings, conventions or symposia, or make a small donation to help us to bring those less able to do so to our meetings, please do. It is always great to get groups of WPA members and enthusiasts together, and I hope to meet a few more of you in the coming year.

OBITUARY

M J C Brocklehurst 1919-1999

Many WPA members will be saddened to learn of the death of John Brocklehurst on 12 October 1999. John had been ill for a number of years but, despite the pain he undoubtedly suffered, he remained considerate and courteous to the last.

Educated at Harrow, he enlisted at the beginning of the Second World War on his 21st birthday and was posted to Singapore. When Singapore fell, John spent four weeks on the run from the Japanese before being betrayed and captured. He spent the next four-and-a-half years in captivity, first in Changi prison and subsequently on the notorious Burma railway. Despite the horrendous experiences in the prison camps he made many friendships which endured throughout his life and found an indomitable spirit to survive and make the best of things. His great motto in life was to get on with it and that is precisely what he did.

He worked as a well-known jeweller and silversmith, retiring in 1980. He commanded great loyalty and respect from those who worked for and with him, and was a perfectionist in everything he did. Many of his friends commissioned him to produce exquisite engagement and wedding rings and he also became a liveryman of the Goldsmiths' Company.

Central to John's life was his interest in people and wildlife. He travelled widely, particularly to Africa, Thailand, Malaysia, Pakistan and India, and he forged long and lasting friendships throughout the world. One of his fellow prisoners of war and great friend was the late Ian Grimwood, the Chief Game Warden in Kenya, with whom he travelled on many expeditions. He accompanied Ian on some of the expeditions which resulted in the Arabian oryx being saved from extinction before finally being re-introduced to Oman.

John loved to travel in an economical and spartan way, preferring to sleep under the stars than in a luxury hotel. Long after he had retired, he could walk most of us off our feet in the forest, and he would then cook up some concoction on the camp stove, amongst which a speciality of sardines and corned beef in gin seemed to occur quite frequently. He was an extremely accomplished fisherman, usually taking his rod and line on his travels.

John delighted in entertaining his friends and was a great catalyst in bringing together acquaintances of similar interests. His homes in Fulham and Westminster were renowned for the number of guests who passed through. A close friend was Mohd. Khan bin Momin Khan, formerly the Director General of Wildlife and National Parks in Peninsular Malaysia. WPA's close involvement in Malaysia is as a direct result of John's introductions and enthusiasm for the wildlife of that country. Many of those who visited Malaysia for our Symposium in 1997 will know the high regard in which John was held there.

He was a great talker and raconteur, but also a great listener. As a member of WPA Council for many years he offered well-considered advice based on a lifetime of experience and commitment to wildlife and conservation. Recently, Council voted unanimously to present John with a specially struck WPA Medallion in recognition of his lifelong service to conservation and wildlife. Despite all his personal discomforts in recent years, he always maintained a great interest in his visitors and in the world at large – "Never mind about me," he would say, "Tell me your news". To the end, he was excellent company.

It was a fitting tribute to John that so many people from all over the world gathered to remember him at a memorial service at St Luke's Church in Chelsea. Our sympathies go to his daughter, Caroline, and to his family.

Charles Crick and John Corder

CHAPTER PROFILE

WPA-Thailand

One of the interesting aspects of WPA chapters and affiliates is how very different each one is in their origins. China (see **WPA News 59**) was built around the just emerging, university-trained biologists of the late Professor Cheng Tso-hsin, our second President.

Thailand was one of our earliest chapters and was built around the enthusiasm of members of the Wildlife Department within The Royal Thai Forest Department. Thailand's first contact with WPA arose from correspondence in 1977 between Keith Howman and Pong Leng-Ee, the then chief Conservator of Forests. This led to the sending of Apichart Tirawat to the UK for three months training in captive breeding and management in 1978. Shortly after his return to Thailand the construction of a small number of captive breeding centres began (which still exist), and an initial stock of adult Siamese firebacks and eggs were shipped out to Thailand from the UK.

Following this Boonlerd Anjirisinda, the Chief of the Wildlife Research Section of the Wildlife Conservation Division of The Royal Thai Forest Department, attended WPA's first international pheasant symposium in Nepal in 1979. Then in 1983, both Dr Siwat Singhapant, who had



Somtob Norapuck (left) and Nopadon Kraiphanont signing the new Affiliation Agreement, November 1999.

attended a training course at Jersey earlier in the year, and Somtob Norapuck attended the second international pheasant symposium in Kashmir, India. Both were in the Wildlife Department. It was at the Kashmir Symposium that Thailand agreed

to host the next symposium due to be held in 1986 and form WPA Thailand. Somtob Norapuck agreed to be the first administrator, and he then acted as host with the blessing of the Forest Department to a reconnaissance visit by Keith and Jean Howman in 1984 to set up and agree the exact location for the 1986 symposium. By the time the Howards and the Howmans arrived, many members had been recruited into WPA Thailand and they were greeted by them at a memorable dinner in Bangkok. In 1986, WPA Thailand and The Royal Thai Forest Department were hosts to a highly successful symposium in Chiang Mai.

Membership of WPA Thailand peaked around 300 not long after this – membership was predominantly avicultural and much trouble was taken (as it is today) to get members to ring their birds. However legislation in Thailand, although it allowed ownership of one pair of a local species of pheasant, did not allow ownership of anything more, so there was no point in keeping prolific species like Jones' silver pheasant and Crawford's kalij, so enthusiasm waned until the law was finally changed in 1999.



Some of the current members of WPA Thailand, including (from left to right) Al Lee (3rd), Brigadier Mukhtar Ahmed (6th), Somtob Norapuck (4th) and Nopadon Kraiphanont (7th).

REPORT FROM THE SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE

RAHUL KAUL

These two SARO projects demonstrate their own value in the conservation of the species or habitat.

Field studies in North East India

The north-eastern region of India is rich in biological resources and is regarded as one of the biodiversity hotspots on the earth. Until recently no contemporary information existed about the status and distribution of wildlife in this area. Bearing this in mind, WPA-SARO pioneered studies in this remote and difficult region of India with status surveys of wildlife in general and galliformes in particular.

We began with a series of survey in 1991 to cover some key areas of the states of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. An analysis of data revealed that our information on certain species was insufficient to address issues of species and habitat conservation. Subsequently, we initiated ecological studies on various species (which are still ongoing) in an effort to identify important areas and ecological requirements for species conservation. Therefore, a logical

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Photo: Jean Howman

Satyr tragopan.

progression of conservation action is shown in this approach, from generating field-based information to devising conservation plans based on sound scientific information.

Our studies have lead to providing vital information on the distribution and key areas for threatened species like the Slater's monal, the blyth's tragopan, Hume's pheasant and several important mammals like the red panda, the takin, and the hoolock gibbon to name a few. The ecology of the genus Tragopan in the north-east is likely to provide information about the ecological requirements vital for the survival of these birds, so that conservation steps can be suggested to the relevant Forest Departments.

Ecology of satyr tragopan in Singhalila National Park, Darjeeling

The threatened satyr tragopan is limited in its distribution to a few states of India –

eastern parts of the hills of Uttar Pradesh, parts of Darjeeling and a few marginal areas in western Arunachal Pradesh. The bulk of the range of this species is within Nepal. Therefore in India, and probably throughout its global distribution range, the satyr tragopan is more seriously at risk of extinction than believed.

WPA-SARO consequently assisted studies on the ecology of the satyr tragopan in Singhalila National Park (SNP), Darjeeling, which led to enhanced knowledge about the ecology of this and other species found in the temperate forests of this region. Gaps in our knowledge about the area were identified which, if addressed, could be used to produce useful management recommendations for SNP. Such a study is now being undertaken and after completion a management plan for Singhalila National Park will be produced. Due to studies on the satyr tragopan, the future of species like the red panda, the rufous-breasted hill-partridge, the Himalayan black bear and several others will be secure in SNP.

Vo Quy's pheasant

Two male Vietnamese or Vo Quy's pheasants *Lophura hatinensis* bred at Antwerp Zoo, Belgium, are now on display at the Cotswold Wildlife Park in Oxfordshire, UK. It is hoped that both will be paired-up in time for next season as part of a European breeding programme. At the Cotswold Wildlife Park, where the collection includes white eared-pheasants *Crossoptilon crossoptilon*, Himalayan monals *Lophophorus impeyanus*, Siamese firebacks *L. diardi*, satyr and temminck's tragopans *Tragopan satyra* and *T. temminckii*, as well as Palawan and grey peacock-pheasants *Polyplectron emphanum* and *P. bicalcaratum*, they successfully breed Edwards's pheasants *L. edwardsi* and hope to use similar methods to breed this new species.

Extract from *Avicultural Magazine* Vol 105 No 2 1999.

WPA in Australia

We note from *The Pheasant* winter 1999 issue - the magazine for the Pheasant and Waterfowl Society of Australia - that its current editor Bob Bradey is resigning as editor after six years in office. Those non-Australians who are members will, we are sure, want to send Bob our thanks for the wonderful job he has done as editor. The magazine has got larger but, more important, has got better with every issue. We all know how important communications are in any organisation and Bob has certainly done his share. Good news for WPA is that Bob intends to remain as chairman of the WPA group within PWS of A and will be reporting on WPA activities.

Hoogerwerf's pheasant

Resit Sozer (Netherlands) has reported finding six Hoogerwerf's pheasants *Lophura hoogerwerfi* (3.3.0) alive in a market in N Sumatra earlier this year. They were said to originate in Gunung-Leuser National Park (the only known site for this species). Four of these birds died and their skins were preserved at the Zoological Museum in Bogor (Java). Using them, the first formal description of the male is now being drafted by Resit. The remaining live pair is in an aviary at Sukabumi in west Java.

Save your losses and help science

John P O'Neill, PhD

I began raising golden pheasants when only about eight years old and have had a love affair with the *Phasianidae* all my life. My own research has, however, taken me to Peru, where for the last 40 years I have studied the ecology and systematics of South American birds. I finished a doctoral degree at Louisiana State University and have been associated with that institution every since. I also paint birds and after being the Museum's Director for nearly five years, I decided I would rather do research and paint than to have all of my energy taken up as an administrator.

The museum houses the fourth largest bird research collections at any university and is among the ten largest such collections in the world. Specimens come from a variety of sources including expeditions, salvage, and gifts and donations from aviculturists, zoos, and bird collections all over the US. Aside from the standard study skins, skeletal specimens, and fluid preserved specimens for muscle dissection, the museum houses the largest collection of frozen tissue for genetics studies anywhere.

Essentially every specimen that is received or collected has samples of muscle, heart, and liver saved for possible genetic studies. This material is kept in ultracold freezers or in liquid nitrogen. Researchers from all over the world use the museum's collections, including the frozen tissue. It is extremely important that these tissues are linked to a voucher specimen in the main collection.

Since the museum will probably not become involved in in-depth studies of Asian birds, I am working constantly to build up a synoptic series of the pheasants of the world (at least a male and female for study skins, one for a complete skeleton, one for preservation in formalin and, hopefully, examples of the downy young). We have done quite well at getting donations from breeders in the US, but now have most of the species commonly kept here. I am now hoping to be able to receive birds lost by breeders in Great Britain. The museum has the necessary CITES, US bird, and US Agriculture permits to allow it to receive birds legally exported from another country. All the breeder has to do is freeze the bird

in good plastic bags and put in a note with date of death, name of the aviary, and if wild caught, as much about the locality as is known. If birds are necropsied, please ask the veterinarian to do it 'cosmetically' because it will be used as a museum specimen. I will do all of the paperwork and will probably go to England to finish the process and pick up the birds, and I can communicate with you in more detail.

Because of the paperwork and expenses necessary to transport and receive the specimens, I am limiting my 'wish list' to the following (but, in reality, the museum is interested in any uncommon species of bird, and I am interested in knowing of other rarities in your collection) and unless noted, we are interested in any and all subspecies:

blood pheasant
western tragopan
Blyth's tragopan
Sclater's monal
silver pheasant
(any but true silvers)
imperial pheasant
Vo Quy subspecies of Edwards's pheasant
Salvadori's pheasant
crestless fireback
drouynii subspecies of white eared-pheasant
bronze-tailed peacock-pheasant
Bornean peacock-pheasant
crested argus.

There are still a number of the commoner species that we still need, so any US breeders reading this, please consider donations. Please be aware that no skeletons, fluid-preserved specimens or frozen tissues exist for many of the world's birds. Your loss can still provide extremely valuable information for science. Most of the world's galliform birds are not to be collected from the wild again, so making your captive birds available after death is extremely valuable and important.

John P O'Neill, Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, USA. Tel: (home) +1 225 642 0409 Fax: +1 225 642 0407 Email: pardusco@aol.com

Annapurna Conservation Area Project and its galliformes

Rahul Kaul

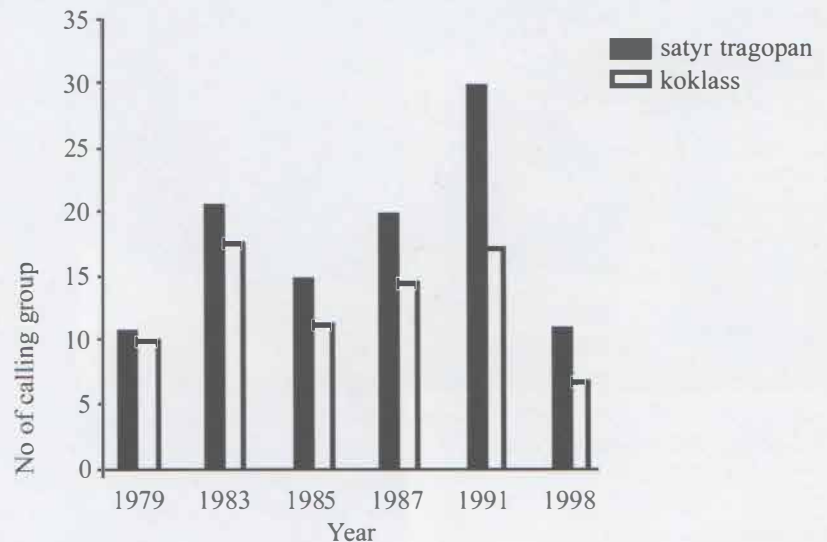
Annapurna is one of the hottest trekking destinations in Nepal. It is estimated that every year 30,000 tourists trek up these mountains. With two to three porters accompanying each trekker, the actual number of people visiting this area is a lot more. This regular ingress of trekkers has caused much damage to habitats, especially by way of loss of trees to cater for fuel wood, littering etc. However, tourism is also the main revenue earner for the country and cannot be ignored. A need was felt to evolve a scheme whereby tourism could be regulated, made eco-friendly and earnings from tourism could benefit the locals directly.

In 1986, the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) was initiated to direct development on an ecological basis and in line with the local needs. From an initial area of 200 sq km this project now covers over 7,600 km². The thrust of this programme is to help the locals to make decisions about development priorities, which are then implemented by ACAP with the help from local communities.

Much before the formation of ACAP, WPA was a major force in identifying and getting Pipar declared as a sanctuary (see page 1). Teams mostly funded by WPA have been monitoring the Pipar sanctuary regularly. In 1998 a team from Bird Conservation Nepal, the local affiliate of WPA, conducted a survey of the Pipar area. The team also included a member from ACAP. During the exercise, in which I participated, we conducted call counts to assess abundance indices of koklass *Pucrasia macrolopha* and satyr tragopan *Tragopan satyra*.

As the figure above shows, the Pipar Sanctuary is a veritable home to satyr and koklass where they occur in fair numbers although fewer birds were heard during this survey. The area also holds other important species like Himalayan monal *Lophophorus impejanus* and blood pheasant *Ithaginis creuentus* besides others. Mammals include species like Himalayan thar *Hemitragus jemlahicus*, serow *Capricornis sumatrensis*, leopard *Panthera pardus* and ghoral *Nemorrhaedus goral*.

Satyr and koklass calling groups in Pipar, Nepal.



The size of the Pipar sanctuary is small (46 km²) and has only two villages on its western boundary. It is now obvious that locals of these villages respect the sanctity of this wildlife refuge and do not pose a threat to this area and its animals. This was apparent from the condition of habitats witnessed during the recent survey trip made to this site and also from the abundance estimates of animals.

In line with its policy of benefits to locals from nature conservation, the ACAP is thinking about opening the area for wildlife tourism. This idea does appear to be appealing, at least from the point of view of providing the locals with some tangible benefits, yet it raises a few questions. The most significant is how will the locals benefit if the tourism operations are run from Kathmandu or from Pokhara? Some mechanism will have to be provided whereby it is made sure that the original ideas are not defeated. Other questions relate to the effect of such an exercise on the ecology of the area, especially if it is small.

Some steps, like bringing more areas under protection, are obvious. There are areas contiguous with the existing sanctuary to which protection can be

afforded if monitoring indicates damage to the areas opened for tourism. Such exercises need not be expensive and can be done cheaply. However, protocols will need to be defined beforehand for such monitoring programmes. Having more areas fit for wildlife tourism will mean that pressures are divided and that such areas can be opened on a rotation basis. Some surveys to yield baseline information will need to be conducted first to see if the adjoining areas do contain wildlife and if they are fit for tourism. The most important thing however is that a monitoring programme will have to be put into place and certain benchmarks will have to be set.

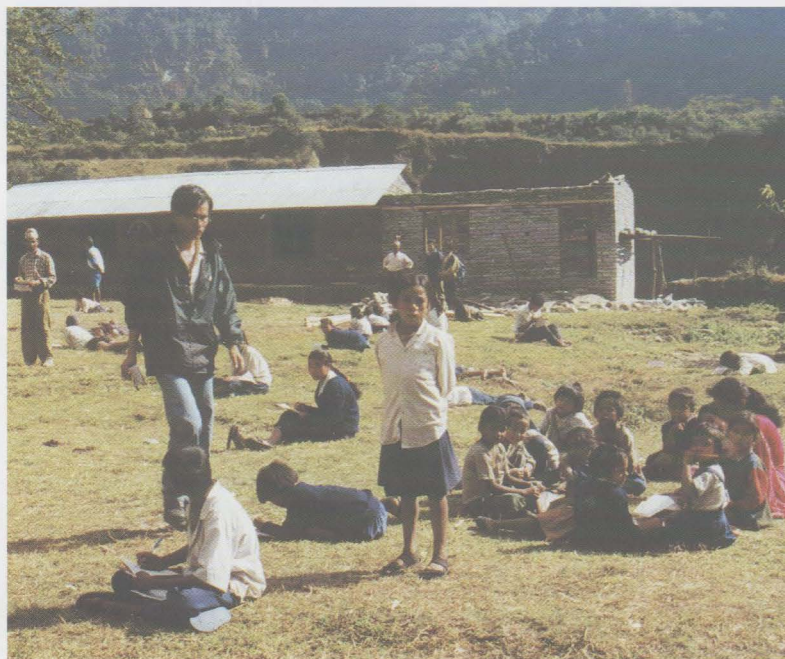
ACAP is a unique case in environmental protection and development and the wildlife tourism aspect can be run as a model for the rest of the world to follow. I am in no doubt that this can be achieved provided it is done systematically.

This survey was possible due to WPA, Bird Conservation Nepal and Getaway Travels, Nepal.

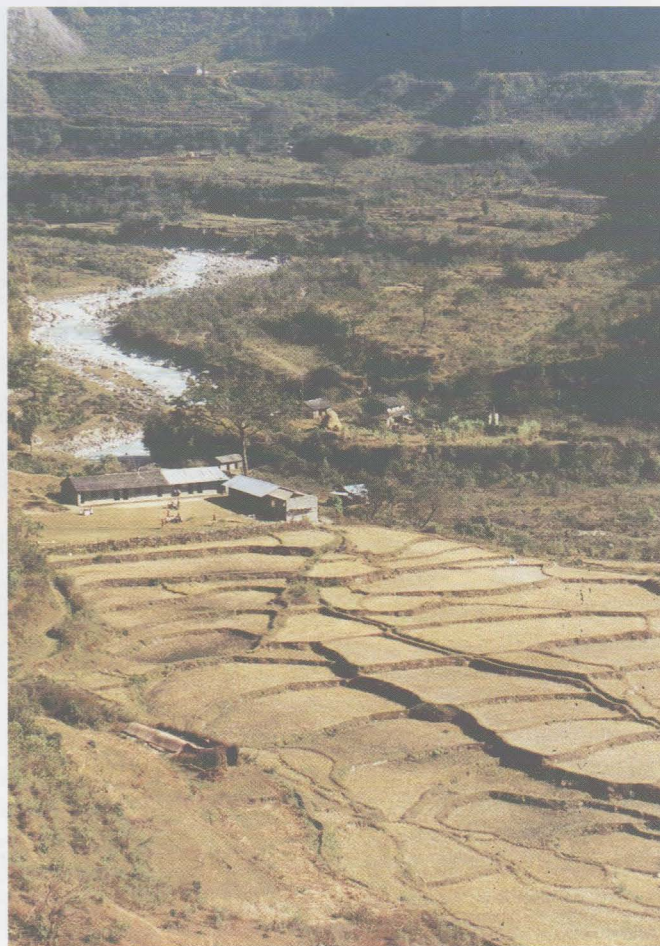
Rahul Kaul, WPA SARO, c/o WWF-India Secretariat, 172-B Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110 003, India. Email: r_kaul@hotmail.com

The Pipar Project

All photos: Robin Marston



Annapurna School - Rs 10,000 has been donated to assist in the building of the new classroom shown here on the right.



Looking down on Annapurna School.



Simple school benches in Megraz High School.

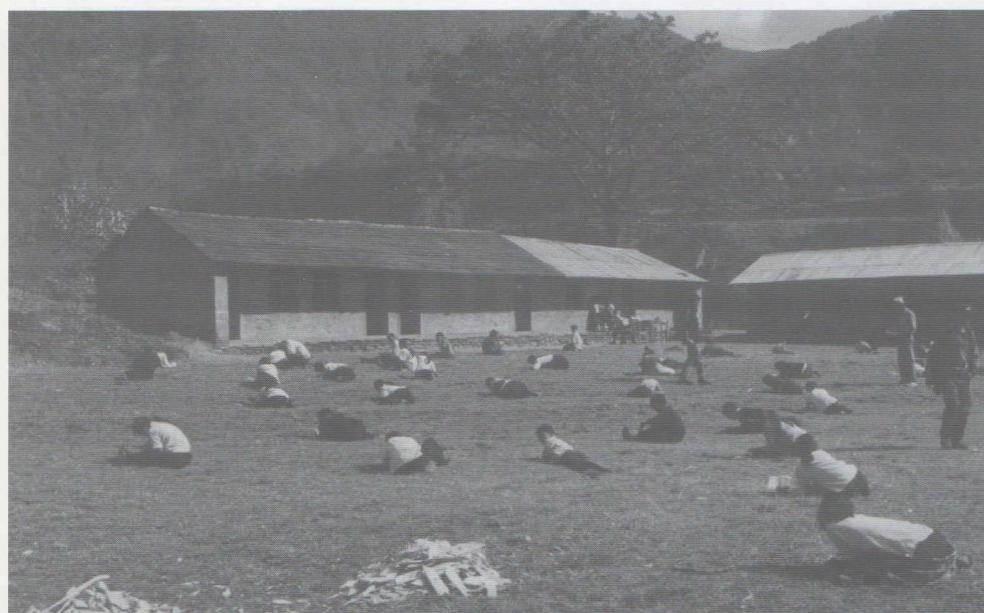


Megraz High School where the new wall is to be built.

Photo: Susan Walker-Mumro



Teachers from the Annapurna School and third from right, Nawang Rinzing, who worked for Colonel Roberts and looks after the Roberts Aviaries at the Fulbari Hotel, Pokhara.



Annapurna children doing their exams.

.....Continued from page 1

be given fixed support. Following completion of the survey and the writing of a management plan for the area by John Foster and Tony Lelliot, the hiring of the guards began. This was followed, as members who have read the leaflet on the Jimmy Roberts Memorial Fund will know, to the supporting of schools local to the area in order to help educate the children into protecting their local forest and habitat. The project is now administered by Robin Marston, the manager of The

Summit Hotel in Kathmandu, and an ex-major in the Gurkhas, who worked with Colonel Roberts for many years.

Robin recently visited the schools which we have helped over the years and sent us photographs and notes on them which have been reproduced above and on the previous page.

We hope that some of the delegates to the Nepal 2000 Symposium in Kathmandu in September will visit the schools for themselves.

The Jimmy Roberts Memorial Fund

As can be read in the previous pages, this new fund within WPA is already handing out funds to schools in the valley below 'Pipar', in line with its objectives, at a higher level than WPA has ever been able to do in the past.

Quite obviously we must keep our commitments within that of the funds raised and equally obviously we must be able to keep commitments, like the employment of a teacher, going for a minimum of one year – in other words, we would give one year's notice of any intention to discontinue.

Funds raised to date have fallen into two categories, which have either been one-off donations or commitments for a minimum of three to four years. The latter we are using for teacher salaries and the former for one-off capital projects. Our donors list is far too short, but by ensuring through Robin Marston that we really are paying at local prices, a great deal is being achieved both for the benefit of the local children and the conservation of the area.

Our very grateful thanks to the donors listed below. It is our hope that as more and more people see and hear about what is being achieved, more and more will support the fund.

Mrs C I Howman	Fiona Earle
The Howman Trust	John Brown
Himalayan Kingdoms	Green Umbrella
John Freeland	Brian Carter
Colin Willock	Peter Blest
Klaus-Peter Erichsen	
International Trust for Nature Conservation	
Worldwide Journeys and Expeditions	

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Cracid Specialist Group

The report which follows covers the first meeting at which our Cracid Specialist Group has combined with the section of our PQF Specialist Group that is concerned with neotropical species to hold a joint meeting. Congratulations to Dan Brooks and John Carroll on joining forces. Ed.

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.

On 4 October 1999, CSG held a regional workshop focusing on South America's Southern Cone (southern Bolivia and Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina) co-ordinated by Dan Brooks and Rob Clay (Guyra Paraguay), and held in Asuncion, Paraguay in conjunction with the IV International Congress on Wildlife Management and Conservation in the Amazon (see opposite page).

Immediately following this meeting, a joint CSG - Partridge, Quail & Francolin Specialist Group (PQFSG) Symposium on Conservation and Management of



Dan Brooks (left) preparing for the CSG Symposium in Paraguay.

Photo: Jan Van Liere

The Paraguay Symposium contained several talks on Cracids. These included:

Winter diet of the dusky-legged guan <i>Penelope obscura</i> in the lower Rio Parana delta of Argentina.	J.A. Merler. et al.
Evaluation of population density of 'charatas' <i>Ortalis canicollis</i> in Izozog, Provincia Cordillera, Dept. Santa Cruz, Bolivia.	A.M. Mamani
A revision of the status and ecology of the black-fronted piping guan <i>Pipile jacutinga</i> in Paraguay.	R.P. Clay et al.
Status of galliformes in eastern Paraguay.	R.P. Clay

Most of the Mexico Symposium contained several talks on neotropical galliformes. These included:

Overview of PQFSG's involvement with neotropical quails - research and conservation.	J.P. Carroll
Current status, dietary preferences, and perspectives for the sustainable management of crested bobwhite <i>Colinus cristatus</i> in Venezuela.	E.M. Perez
Status, natural history and conservation of the bearded wood-partridge <i>Dendrortyx barbartus</i> (Gould 1846) in Veracruz and Oaxaca, Mexico.	S. Aguilar-R & H. Corzo-A.
Status of bearded wood-partridge <i>Dendrortyx barbartus</i> .	J. Clinton-E et al.
Abundance of the long-tailed tree-quail <i>Dendrortyx macroura</i> in managed and unmanaged pine-oak forests.	G. Chavez-L
Recovery of the masked bobwhite in Sonora and Arizona.	W.P. Kuvlesky Jr et al.
Status and conservation of cracids in Mexico and Central America.	F. Gonzalez-G et al.
Status of the horned guan <i>Oreophaps derbianus</i> in the field and captivity.	F. Gonzalez-G
Populations, status and conservation of the Cozumel Island Curassow <i>Crax rubra griseomii</i> .	M.A. Martinez-M
Individual, seasonal and daily variation in the diet of a familial group of black curassows <i>Crax alector</i> .	M. Jimenez et al.
Conservation genetics of <i>Crax blumenbachii</i> .	S.L. Pereira & A. Wajntal
Surveys and conservation of <i>Cracidae</i> and <i>Odontophoridae</i> along two altitudinal transects of the Colombian Andes.	P.G.W. Salaman et al.

Additionally, two excellent posters were presented:

Habitat of <i>Odontophorus colombianus</i> in Venezuela.	E.B. Bonaccorso
Distributional patterns of the Family <i>Odontophoridae</i> in Mexico.	M. Gordillo

Neotropical Galliformes took place on 9 October 1999, with the Cracid section co-ordinated by Brooks and Fernando Gonzalez-Garcia (Inst. Ecol.). This meeting was co-hosted by PQF's John Carroll and held in Monterrey, Mexico in conjunction with the 6th Neotropical Ornithological Congress.

Both symposia concluded with round-table discussions, convening as working groups engaged in open, dynamic discussion. We began by introducing ourselves and our interest in Neotropical Galliformes. The majority of the workshop participants in Paraguay were from central-south America and the Southern Cone (Paraguay, northern Argentina and Bolivia). Many of the topics discussed revolved around a captive breeding theme (eg ranching to reintroduction), because most of the participants had captive-breeding backgrounds. However, future projects were identified as well.

At the Neotropical Galliformes Workshop in Monterrey, 26 people were present from: Mexico (11), Colombia (7), Venezuela (3), Brazil (2), USA (2) and Peru (1).

Topics discussed included: communication, funding, coordination, and reintroduction, among other agendas.

A book comprising these two symposia will be published covering all Neotropical Galliformes, rather than only Cracids. The title will be *Biology and Conservation of Neotropical Galliformes in the New Millennium*, and it will comprise mostly manuscripts from the symposium in Mexico, but also some from the workshops in Bolivia, Paraguay, and some invited ms. Further details will be published later.

Cracid conservation in the new millennium: a Southern Cone perspective

Robert P Clay* and Daniel M Brooks+

Summary

This report comprises discussions from a meeting that took place as the second part of a cracid symposium held at the IV International Congress on the Management and Conservation of Amazonian and Latin American Wildlife in Asunción, Paraguay, on 4 October 1999.

After the scheduled presentations, a working group was convened which engaged in an open, dynamic discussion of issues related to cracid conservation. Fifteen people were present, with the majority from central South America and the Southern Cone (Paraguay, northern Argentina and Bolivia). As most of the participants had captive-breeding backgrounds, many of the topics discussed revolved around this theme (eg, ranching to reintroduction). However, future projects were also identified.

Here, we summarise the discussions that took place and draw conclusions and recommendations. A clear need was identified for further studies of the basic biology of all cracid species throughout the region, in addition to large-scale captive-breeding experiments.

Introduction

On 4 October 1999, a cracid symposium was held in the city of Asunción, Paraguay, as part of the IV International Congress on the Management and Conservation of Amazonian and Latin American Wildlife. The first part of the symposium consisted of talks ranging from the ecology of dusky-legged guan *Penelope obscura* in the Argentine Río Paraná Delta, to the natural history and harvest patterns of chaco chachalaca *Ortalis canicollis* in the Bolivian Chaco, and to the status of cracids in eastern Paraguay. A working group was then convened, which engaged in an open, dynamic discussion relating to various issues of cracid conservation, with a particular emphasis on cracids of the Southern Cone of South America (in southern Bolivia, Paraguay and northern Argentina). The working group was co-moderated by Dan Brooks and Rob Clay, with the latter taking the minutes.



Open discussion workshop at the CSG Symposium in Paraguay. Facing participants: Dan Brooks (far left) and Robert Clay (second from left), Guyra Paraguay's Scientific Co-ordinator. Guyra is BirdLife's Paraguayan counterpart.

Workshop participants included: J Barnett, MP Bertolini, D Brooks, R Clay, A Colman J, M Cubas, C Dlouhy, AM Mamani F, T Ocampos, JC Orozlo, P Marcoveardia, E Narvaez, VR das Sontos and R Wallace.

The discussions focused on three closely related topics: captive-breeding of cracids, reintroduction projects, and the feasibility of cracid farming. These topics were discussed at both general and specific levels, with two common themes throughout the discussions: captive breeding of bare-faced curassow *Crax fasciolata* by the Entidad Binacional Yacyretá; and the Río Pilcomayo restoration project. The opinions and points of view expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the authors, editors, participants, WPA, IUCN, BirdLife International, nor the CSG.

Captive breeding

An important initial point was made that there has been very little investigation and experimentation with captive-breeding of cracid species on a large scale. This was considered of relevance for both reintroduction projects and the possibility of farming cracids.

Specific problems identified with captive-breeding of cracids included:

- The low reproductive rate of many cracid species, particularly of *Crax*, *Ortalis* and *Penelope* species were considered to be more suitable given a

tendency for higher rate of reproduction and larger clutch size.

- Young cracids sometimes have to be hand-fed initially.
- The provision of a balanced diet. Various alternatives were discussed, including boiled eggs, boiled eggs mixed with ants, mealworms, dog food (eg science diet) and commercially available balanced diets.

Local experience

Both the Entidad Binacional Itaipú and the Entidad Binacional Yacyretá have had some success with captive-breeding of *Crax fasciolata*. The experiences of the Entidad Binacional Yacyretá were elaborated on in greater detail.

Captive *C. fasciolata* at the Entidad's refuge in Ayolas, Misiones Department, Paraguay, lay just two eggs a year, between September and November. After five years without success, the Entidad finally succeeded in rearing the species by removing the eggs from *C. fasciolata* nests and placing them under incubating chickens. The *C. fasciolata* eggs were placed in the middle of clutches of chicken eggs bought from the local supermarket. The Entidad does not have an incubator, but one student experimented with a few *C. fasciolata* eggs in an incubator, without success.

Reintroduction

Captive breeding was generally considered a viable option for re-populating areas with

cracid species. Two specific examples were considered: the reintroduction of cracid species to the Río Pilcomayo area; and the reintroduction of *Crax fasciolata* to the Isla Yacyretá.

Before these specific examples were considered, several general points were discussed. In particular, six primary concerns were raised:

1. There are few examples of successful reintroduction projects. In contrast, there are many zoos holding animals supposedly for conservation/reintroduction projects.
2. Careful consideration has to be given to the methodology used: contact with humans has to be minimised, and the birds must be raised in surroundings that are as natural as possible, including diet.
3. Genealogies are needed for the captive founder population to ensure that sufficient genetic variation is present to avoid problems associated with inbreeding.
4. Sufficient habitat has to be available in the reintroduction zone to support a viable population.
5. The factors that caused the original local extirpation of the species have to be remedied before reintroduction begins.
6. The species' ecology must be well known before beginning the reintroduction programme.

In addition, the point was made that there are only two documented successful cracid reintroduction projects. The first, that of red-billed cruassow *Crax blumenbachii* in Brazil, uses a very large cage with natural vegetation into which are introduced paired, near-fully grown individuals (of age c. 12 - 18 months). After three months, the cage door is left open during the day (but closed at night), and the birds are then gradually acclimatised to the wild.

The second reintroduction involved the translocation of plain chachalaca *Ortalis vetula* in Texas, using radio-tagged birds. It was stressed that an annual survival rate of 10% was good for a reintroduction project, and that many only obtain 6% annual survival rates of reintroduced birds.

Potential projects in the Southern Cone:

1. Reintroduction of *Crax fasciolata* to the Isla Yacyretá, Itaipúa Department, Paraguay.

With the successful breeding of *C. fasciolata* in their refuge near Ayolas, Misiones Department, the Entidad Binacional Yacyretá is keen to reintroduce the species to the Isla Yacyretá. The completion of the Yacyretá Dam flooded most of Isla Yacyretá. However, the non-flooded area, some 12,000 ha, has been set aside as a protected area, and the proposal is to reintroduce *C. fasciolata* in this area.

Strengths of this project include:

- *Crax fasciolata* is historically known from the area. During preparatory work on the island in 1989-1993, the species was found to be common, especially in stands of giant bamboo *Guadua* sp. A remnant population may still survive on the island.
- The captive founder population was rescued from the now flooded part of the island, and includes six pairs constituting separate genetic lineages.
- Captive-bred individuals will be reintroduced into a protected area, with a relatively large area of suitable habitat, and where hunting is prohibited.

The principal problem identified was that the current captive population is essentially domesticated. There is a clear need to raise birds for release in one or more large cages with essentially natural habitat and minimal interaction with humans.

2. Río Pilcomayo restoration project

The Río Pilcomayo rises in the foothills of the Andes in Bolivia, and forms the border between Paraguay and Argentina west of the Río Paraguay. About 300 km of this riverine border is now dry. Various cracid species used to occur in the area, including *Crax fasciolata* and *Ortalis canicollis*. These species have disappeared from the area apparently through ecological changes related to water scarcity and contamination, rather than hunting. Only indigenous people occur in this area of Argentina/Paraguay, and they prefer to fish rather than hunt. It was considered potentially feasible to repopulate cracid populations in this area if the ecosystems could be restored.

In addition, mention was made of a project to reintroduce *Crax fasciolata* and other cracid species into a reserve in Misiones Province, Argentina.

Cracid farming

The possibility that cracids could be farmed by native communities was considered,

especially whether it could constitute a technical and economic alternative to subsistence hunting.

An important initial point was made that there has been very little experimentation with cracid farming as an alternative to hunting. The general consensus, however, was that cracid farming is not a realistic option. Some of the points raised included:

- The low reproductive rate of many cracid species means that turn-over would not be high enough.
- In indigenous communities, the consumption of bush-meat is a strongly accepted source of protein, while breeding domestic animals for direct consumption is not socially acceptable in many cultures.

Specific examples of this latter point were given. In Bolivia, for instance, indigenous people harvest *Ortalis* eggs from the wild, and then leave the eggs to hatch in sand. However, they do not care for the young *Ortalis*, and as a result the survival rate is low. One possible solution to this problem would be placing the eggs under chickens (as happens in a project in Peru).

However, at least in the Río Pilcomayo area this was not considered an option as the indigenous people do not have chickens.

Further studies

All participants in the workshop agreed that there was a clear need for further studies of all cracid species in the region. The basic biology of the majority of species is poorly known, especially the ecological factors determining their distributions, clutch size, tolerance of hunting, egg-harvesting, and habitat disturbance. The following points were highlighted:

- The status and distribution of all cracid species in the region needs to be investigated. The case of *Pipile jacutinga* in the area of the Itaipú Dam was given as a pertinent example. In 1980-82, the species still occurred throughout the Itaipú area. Today, the species may still survive in just one reserve: the Limoy Biological Reserve. Fears were expressed that rusty-margined guan *Penelope superciliosus* may be on the brink of a similar population collapse in the area.
- Clarification is needed of the taxonomy of several species, especially *Ortalis*

canicollis. A study currently underway of the taxonomy and zoogeography of the forms of this species in the Chaco has been hampered by discrepancies between the published descriptions of forms, and the reality in the field.

- The ecological needs of each species should be intensively studied prior to the initiation of reintroduction projects.

Conclusions

The primary focus of the workshop was undoubtedly captive-breeding, and the role that it could play in the conservation of cracid species, either through reintroduction projects, or the possibility of farming as an alternative to subsistence hunting.

Some clear conclusions can be drawn from the discussions:

Captive-breeding

- Captive-breeding of many cracid species is hampered by low reproductive rates, with small clutch sizes, and a need for some initial feeding of young.
- Both the Entidad Binacional Itaipú and the Entidad Binacional Yacyretá have valuable trial-and-error experience of breeding Bare-faced Curassow *Crax fasciolata* in captivity.

Reintroduction

- Captive-breeding was generally considered a viable option for repopulating areas with cracid species.
- However, there are few examples of successful reintroduction projects, and careful consideration has to be given to various factors before such a project should be initiated. Such factors include:
 - i. The removal of the factors that caused local extirpation in the first place;
 - ii. The availability of sufficient habitat in the release zone to support a viable population;
 - iii. The methodology used to raise birds for release (contact with humans should be minimised, and exposure to the natural environment maximised);
 - iv. The genealogies of the breeding birds.
- A preliminary analysis of the proposal to reintroduce *Crax fasciolata* to Isla Yacyretá, Itapúa department, Paraguay, suggests that such a project could be

feasible. The species was historically known to be on the island; habitat still exists, and is included within a protected area; and the captive breeding birds were originally from the island, and represent different lineages.

- The reintroduction of various cracid species to the Río Pilcomayo area was also considered potentially feasible, once the ecosystems of that area have been restored.

Cracid farming

- Given the low reproductive rate of many cracid species, and the social stigma against domesticated animals in many indigenous cultures, cracid farming was not considered a particularly viable alternative to sustainable hunting.

Recommendations

Although time was not available to discuss recommendations during the working group, some key issues can be highlighted:

1. The feasibility of large-scale captive-breeding of cracids needs to be investigated. The results of such an investigation could have profound implications for both *in-situ* and *ex-situ* cracid conservation projects.
2. Studies are urgently needed of the status, distribution, breeding biology and ecology of all cracid species within the Southern Cone.
3. Possibilities for developing cracid farming or ranching schemes with local communities need to be fully explored.
4. The taxonomy of several taxa, especially the various forms of *Ortalis canicollis* and the *Pipile* species group, require further investigation.
5. Careful planning and project design need to be undertaken before proposed reintroduction projects of *Crax fasciolata* on the Isla Yacyretá, and cracid species in the Río Pilcomayo zone are initiated.

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Red Grouse Charity Shoot

The fourth of our series of Red Grouse Charity Shoots sponsored by The Famous Grouse, took place at the shooting grounds of the Dunkeld Stakis Hotel on Friday 8 October 1999.

Nine teams participated in a particularly well run shoot with ample time being given by the instructors on each stand to help guns with problems as well as maintaining the competitive spirit.

The winning team was The Holgarth Heroes whose leader, Adrian Holgarth (see back page), was on a strong winning streak as he also won the pool shoot followed by the raffle for a gallon of Famous Grouse whisky. This he promptly and very generously proceeded to auction for WPA for £120 which went to our President's brother Alastair Howman. To the surprise of all, herself included, Jean Howman won the first shooting prize of her life as top lady gun and went off clutching a bottle of Gloag's very excellent London Gin.

The prizes were distributed by Iain Stothard of The Famous Grouse who finally had to give himself a prize as his Famous Grouse team won their first prize of the season by achieving the best team score in the 30 clay flush.

The shoot and prize giving were followed by a whisky tasting of Famous Grouse whisky and a number of malts in their marketing range and then dinner. The whole event was a great success, was thoroughly enjoyed by one and all and raised nearly £1500 for WPA funds.

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WPA LOOKS TO THE FUTURE...

When WPA was established in the UK in 1975 its primary aim was to support the conservation of pheasants. Since its inception it has expanded considerably and now has an established track record of action on behalf of all Galliformes throughout the world, whilst remaining unique in its ability to combine the interest of a wide range of members.

After much discussion within Council and amongst members present at the 'Members Weekend' held at Harewood House, Leeds in February 1999, WPA has identified the top priorities for its future activities in the world of international conservation. Council is no longer seen as the ideal group for the discussion of conservation matters, and with the increasing pressures faced from ever stricter UK Charity law, there is a requirement that this be a group of trustees who are knowledgeable about running a charity.

WPA's greatest resource is undoubtedly the world-wide network of members and experts in a great variety of fields, and it is vital to provide the opportunity for all those interested people to contribute. For example, WPA has a long tradition in captive breeding, and is increasingly trying to apply these skills to conservation

problems, through studbooks and management of captive populations.

Conservation Committee

A forum is required which will not only react to all project proposals received, but will also actively guide the conservation priorities of the Association. With the demise of the Conservation Policy and Programmes Committee, there has been an increasingly urgent requirement for a committee which will oversee and guide the conservation activities of the Association — hence the formation of the Conservation Committee at the Council meeting in June 1999.

'The Conservation Committee exists to define and oversee the conservation activities of the Association...'

To do this, the committee will determine the conservation objectives of the Association, and will implement activities to achieve these objectives. Specifically the committee will:

- develop a WPA-wide conservation strategy

- ensure standards through review and monitoring, and
- evaluate progress with respect to the objectives.

The WPA conservation strategy will be developed by expanding on the areas in which WPA has shown itself to be proficient - these have been identified as leadership, capacity building and the conservation programme.

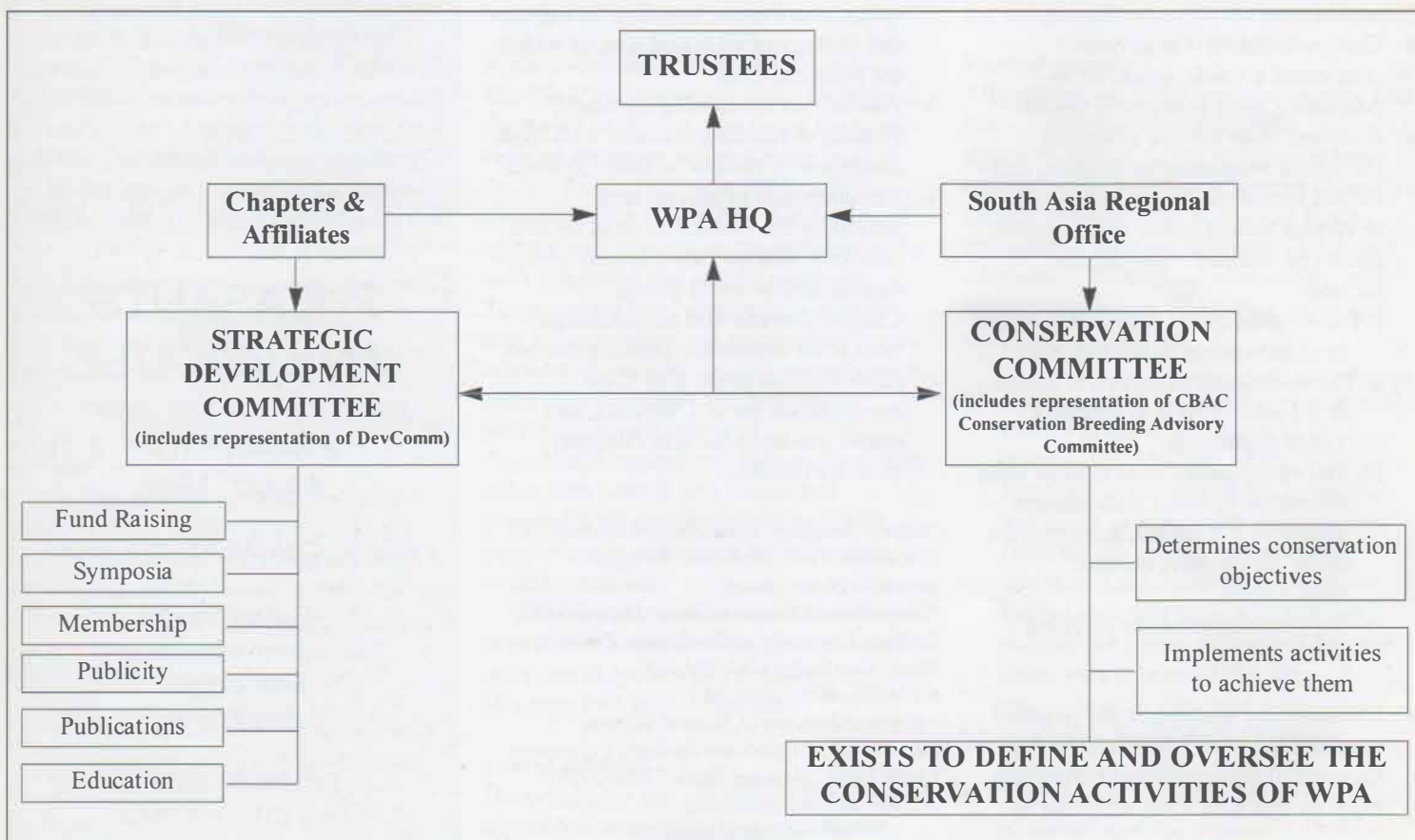
The first meeting of the Conservation Committee was held the day before the international convention at Clères in September. Representatives of each of the following groups have been invited to sit on the committee:

Conservation Breeding Advisory Committee (CBAC)

Each of the Specialist Groups

Each of the Taxon Advisory groups (TAG) with which WPA has a partnership

There are also several co-opted WPA members who bring additional perspective and expertise to the committee.



Strategic Development Committee

To fully complement the increased activity created by the new committee, a second committee has been established to oversee the aspects of WPA not covered by the Conservation Committee. This committee is called the Strategic Development Committee and is basically a network of working groups for different areas:

- Fund raising
- Membership
- Publicity
- Chapters
- Symposia
- Publications
- Education

Certainly WPA does not have sufficient personnel presently to commit time to making each of these equally effective in all areas of responsibility, and it is the role of the Strategic Development Committee to define the priorities for activity.

As the bulk of WPA's work is conservation, and there have been insufficient funds recently to actively guide the direction of these activities, a working group for raising major funds has been set up and identified as the immediate highest priority. The Association's reliance on philanthropic individuals is not enough to advance in the conservation field.

The Major Fund-raising Working Group has been identifying potential targets for funding within four areas:

- grantmaking foundations and trusts
- governments and departments
- companies
- individuals

It is vital that both the two new WPA committees work very closely together, both for communications purposes, and particularly for fund-raising efforts. Representatives on the Conservation Committee have been asked to provide a list of their highest priority projects, which the Major Funds Working Group will adopt, popularise, and use to apply for funds.

It will no doubt take a little time before each of these committees is running properly, but hopefully we will be in a position in the near future to react more positively to project proposals and funding applications, and to increasingly guide the path of galliformes conservation.

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Action Plan Update

Richard Fuller

Most of us are only too aware that we have very limited resources to use for the conservation of Galliformes. It is therefore essential that these resources are targeted effectively to where they can be of most use in conserving these species, and alleviating the variety of threats they face. One approach to this has been the production of Action Plans by IUCN, the World Conservation Union. In 1995, three such documents were produced, covering the pheasants, megapodes, and partridges, quails and francolins. These were the first ever Action Plans on birds and are still rated very highly by IUCN. In 1995 we set ourselves a five-year implementation period, after which we would review the situation. On schedule, the new Action Plans are now in their final stages, and will be ready for submission to IUCN within a few weeks.

So who has actually written the new Action Plans? The short answer to this is no-one! No single person or group writes Action Plans, they are compiled by collecting together information and opinion from a wide range of sources. This compiling role is typically undertaken by specialist organisations affiliated to the Species Survival Commission of the IUCN, and in our case has worked out as a partnership between WPA, BirdLife International, and the Chairs of the five Galliformes Specialist Groups. Phil McGowan has been overseeing the whole project, and myself, Phil, René Dekker, Gillian Baker, John Carroll and Peter Garson have been involved in compiling the Action Plans.

So, as the new Action Plans take effect, let's have a brief look at the how effective the previous documents were. Compared with many other groups of birds, there has been a great deal of conservation research into Galliformes, in particular pheasants, over the past five years. I conducted a questionnaire survey to investigate this. Thirty-one completed forms were returned including such wonderfully diverse topics as surveys of maleos in Sulawesi, compiling a sites database for Asian Galliformes, bringing a new pheasant species into captivity, an in-depth study on the previously unknown Nahan's francolin in Uganda, genetic studies on Edwards's and other pheasants *etc.*

What is it that the new Action Plans aim to achieve? Some words by René Dekker of the Megapode Specialist Group sum up the situation well for many species:

"We know much more about megapodes now than we did five years ago, but this has not yet improved the conservation status of most (threatened) megapodes. Although a fair number of projects as described in the first Action Plan have been executed, these were mainly short-term studies and surveys. These are, however, necessary steps to reach our conservation goals. The new Megapode Action Plan has built on this foundation by describing longer-term conservation projects *in situ*, and focuses on active involvement of the local community and local authorities."

We can see from this that there has been a subtle change of emphasis since 1995 in the conservation of galliform birds. Five years ago, the overwhelming priority was for survey work and basic ecological research to enable us to understand the conservation status and requirements of Galliformes. While this still remains necessary for some species, particularly some of the forest partridges and francolins, much new information has come to light on many species, thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of many Galliformes researchers. WPA has helped focus this work and raise the profile of the group as a whole. The conservation committee will hopefully provide a formal basis for this work to continue and flourish.

This is particularly important in the light of this change of emphasis. The Specialist Groups, who have prepared the new Action Plans, now see a need for 'strategic' projects. In plain English, this means work that focuses on important conservation subject areas as they relate to Galliformes, and looking for example at larger geographical areas rather than single species or sites. Of course, there is still a number of species where this kind of specific information is still lacking, but we are getting to the stage where we can make informed judgements at a wider level. For example, recent work by Phil McGowan, Ding Chang-qing and Rahul Kaul looked at how well the system of protected areas is helping conserve Asian galliform species. It found that 84% of threatened

species have been recorded in less than ten protected areas, and that six are not known to occur in any protected area. This kind of strategic work enables us to concentrate on the species most in need of protection. This process of targeting our resources is essential if we are to make the best use of what we have.

Other examples of strategic projects are further research into systems of sustainable use, something that could be used in many different areas and species across the world. Similarly global research into methods of captive breeding and restocking, as well as using pheasants as indicators of biodiversity. It is one of the jobs of Action Plans to distil out the most important subjects for action over the next five years. Every effort is made to ensure that these proposals are not an unachievable wish-list, but a set of feasible and useful priorities for the conservation of Galliformes.

I would like to thank everyone at WPA for their interest, help and support during the preparation of the new Action Plans. A project of this sort is not possible without contribution from a wide range of individuals and organisations. It has been a privilege to be involved in this project, and I am sure that if knowledge and interest continue to grow as they have done in the past five years, the Galliformes could well become flagships for the effective conservation of other birds and wildlife in an increasingly congested world.

If you would like further information on the Action Plan programme, or to discuss some of the issues surrounding it, please do not hesitate to contact me at: Department of Biological Sciences, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE. Tel: 0191 373 5962 Email: r.a.fuller@durham.ac.uk

Delacour's crested fireback pheasant

Gary Robbins has provided us with previously unknown and unrecorded data on the eggs of Delacour's crested fireback pheasant *Lophura ignita macartenyi* from Sumatra. It lays between six and eight eggs which are pinkish/buff in colour, 53-56 x 41-42 mm in size, 49.6-50.7 gm in weight and has an incubation period of 24 days.

Report on the Clères Meeting

All photos: Nicola Chalmers-Watson

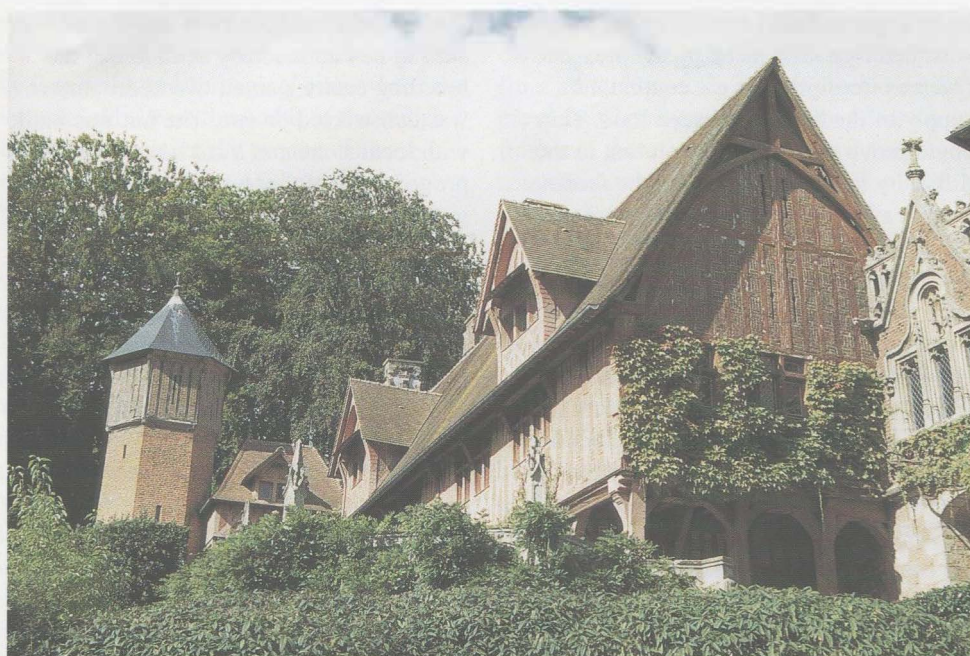


Richard Fuller, co-ordinating revision of the Action Plans, explaining to delegates what action plans are!



Mike Cook giving an update on the WesTrag 2000 project.

Photo: Richard Howard



Chateau Clères where the meetings were held.



Dr Dan Brooks, Cracid SG chair, who gave an update on cracid projects with Kurt Landig, Treasurer of WPA USA.



Ettore Randi, INFS Bologna, giving some background to the DNA project.

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WesTrag 2000 Update

Owen Joiner

WesTrag 2000 was initiated in October 1998 with the principle objective being that of the captive propagation of the western (horned) tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus*. The western tragopan is a vulnerable species indigenous to the Western Himalayas with a distributional range from Pakistan across Kashmir to NW India. There have been continuous attempts throughout history to establish a captive population of this species, the earliest trial being recorded in 1837. Most attempts failed due to the simple and annoying problem of failure to breed. The most recent attempt to maintain western tragopans in captivity is found at the Sarahan Pheasantry in India. Sarahan has maintained a string of western tragopans with little breeding success until the early 1990s. In 1992 a male bird was successfully hatched and reared but shortly after, both parent birds were lost. This young male remains alive and well and the pheasantry has been augmented with another pair of adult western tragopans. Hopefully progress with breeding will continue.

The breeding programme implemented by WesTrag 2000 follows the ecology of the tragopan as closely as possible. The breeding centre has been established in pine forest at 7,500ft asl in an attempt to account for the tragopan's natural habitat in the aviaries. From previous field work and reports from various researchers it was suggested that the tragopans have a high requirement for fresh green food, with the leaves of *Quercus* species (oaks) being of



The breeding centre in Masser Reserve Forest, Mansehra.

great importance. The siting of the aviaries was therefore influenced by the presence of *Quercus* trees providing a continuous supply of the necessary green food. This could prove to be a single solution to the difficulty in captive breeding, the feeding.

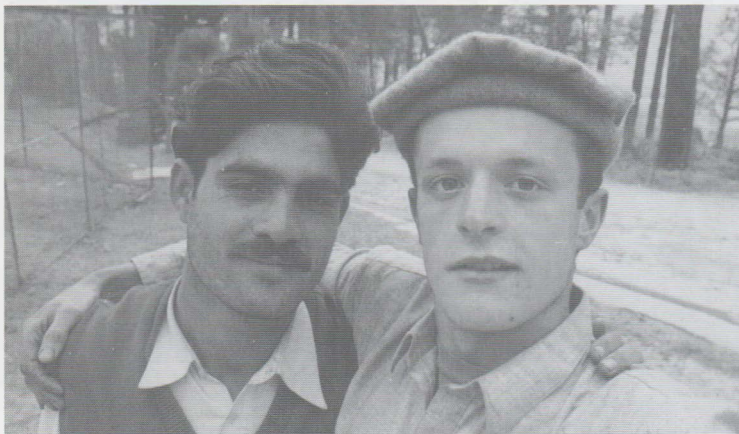
Six aviaries in total were constructed at the breeding centre, each measuring 40 by 20ft, thus creating an 800ft sq floor area in each aviary (a total of nearly 5000ft sq). The aviaries, which are arranged in a single complex with three either side of a central line, are set into the immediate forest to include a wide range of plants and natural cover. Along the central line a sheltered strip of corrugated tin has been erected and which will provide a total cover of 120ft sq for each cage. This sheltered area has been separated from the cage by a wall of bamboo screening and can be used to

enclose and secure the birds in times of heavy snowfall. Should breeding occur, the cages shall be split longitudinally to create a total of 12 cages each of 400ft sq total floor area. This will provide the opportunity to maintain 12 pairs of western tragopans in the breeding centre at some point.

To enable management and security staff to be continuously available at the breeding centre a small two bedroom hut was constructed on site. The hut was built with local stone and local labour which proved to be highly beneficial with regard to the involvement of local people. The opportunity to employ local villagers has gained the project a great deal of respect from the immediate population, and should facilitate the survival and future of the project in this remote location.

The project has been helped immensely by the provision of an ex-army Jeep and a motorcycle. The Jeep, which was previously used by Rob Whale who earlier this year successfully completed his three year census of the western tragopan, has proved invaluable. The motorcycle, purchased by the project, has also proved most useful in times of mechanical failure and emergency errands. There is however, a great disadvantage in using a motorcycle on forest tracks; that of the local rabid dog. There are many shepherds in the forests and the majority of their accompanying dogs seem to have personal vendettas against the project bike! It makes for an exciting journey.

In July 1999 a pioneer trapping expedition took place. A total of nine days was spent in the forested areas of Upper Haj-Dir in the Keyal Valley in the district of Indus Kohistan. Incredibly, on the first day of searching for western tragopans a male was flushed from a steep rocky



Tanveer Malik (left) and Owen Joiner at the Pakistan forestry Institute in February 1999.

outcrop by the accompanying shikari and his trained dog. It seems ironic that pheasant researchers and observers require a 'hunter' to show them the desired bird but it is unfortunately necessary. Shortly after flushing the male, evidence of the female's presence was discovered. A recently used dust-bowl was found complete with mottled brown-grey feathers. Oddly, the pair were using a SE facing slope, something which has been recognised as a winter habitat; in fact the pair seemed to actively select the more open and exposed areas for preening and resting, presumably favouring the warmth. This was evidenced by the abundance of moulted feathers and droppings in sheltered but sun-exposed patches.

For several days the tragopan's movements were monitored by the mapping of their dawn calls. This established a rough territory-utilisation map which was then used to consider trap placement. Two trapping techniques were used; a twin-door recoil pitfall trap and a large ground nylon net. The pitfall traps were set on recognised feeding paths and 'preening' sites whilst the net was laid across the width of the nullah (or glen) just above the ground. This involved the clearance of shrubs and disguising the net edges.

The movements of the tragopan pair were highly erratic and random. There was a great difficulty in selecting sites for traps or nets because the feeding paths were not used consistently but frequently visited. On two occasions the female tragopan, accompanied by a female Himalayan monal, actually ventured beneath the net. After feeding for a short period they both departed, leaving a trail of moulted feathers as evidence behind them. The male tragopan was rarely observed but his call could be heard most mornings at approximately 05.30 hours. After checking the traps and nets in the morning, explorations into neighbouring forest blocks were mounted in the continuous search for other western tragopan pairs. No further tragopans were found in this area of the valley.

In January 2000 a second trip will be mounted in the Keyal Valley to try and capture ideally three pairs of western tragopans. Lessons learned from the pioneer trip in July indicate that a seven to ten day flush survey to establish the 'hotspot' for the valley's tragopan population would be invaluable. It is thought that during winter the birds

descend to feed and shelter below the snowline and are thus concentrated in lower altitude forests. Once these hotspots are located, the traps and nets will be strategically placed according to the snow-cover and around potential feeding areas. A variety of other methods of capture will be experimented with, for example, baiting an area to evaluate the tragopan response and then installing a baited walk-in trap. Other methods such as 'whoosh nets' could also be used to trap numerous birds at once provided they could be baited and concentrated into a relatively confined area.

Once caught the birds will be transported from the valley to the breeding centre immediately. The journey time by jeep will be between ten and twelve hours. Other species accidentally caught by any trapping procedure will be subjected to feather sampling and then released. The feather samples could then be sent to Italy to compliment Dr Ettore Randi's DNA research. It would be expected to collect feather samples from monal, koklass and of course western tragopan. Although feathers from all three species were collected on the previous trapping expedition they were not fresh and therefore kept as record and souvenirs only.

WesTrag intends to capture and introduce western tragopans to captivity during the Spring of 2000. It is unlikely that the first breeding will occur during the first year but if successful introduction to captivity can be achieved then a milestone will have been reached.

At this point the project wishes to acknowledge the help of sponsors and those that have been of great assistance to the project both on the ground and officially. On the ground we have been assisted at every step by a young Pakistani named Tanveer Malik without whose help the mere installation and maintenance of the breeding centre would not have been so successful. There have been two prominent figures in Pakistan, Brigadier Mukhtar Ahmed and Dr Malik Mumtaz. Both of these gentlemen have provided great support on an official basis and have taken care of the legalities required for such a project. The Wildlife Department staff and the Brigadier's personal staff have been ever-ready and willing to assist wherever possible and ensure the smooth running of the project. We are most grateful to the people who have sponsored this project and are indebted for their continued support, we extend our grateful thanks.

Palawan peacock-pheasant

Mark Whiffin and David Lee (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK) are scheduled to leave for four months of surveys with Philippine counterparts in October. They will survey known sites (eg St Paul's Rock National Park) and a number of other areas in Palawan in an effort to find additional populations and obtain more information on the supposed existence of two forms of this species (differing in the extent of the white stripe over the eye in males).

The project is being funded by Zooparc Beauval and three other European zoos and has had support from British Airways Assisting Conservation.

Tibetan eared pheasant

Lu Xin (Wuhan University, Hebei, China) has completed the first of three spring-summer field seasons at Xiong-se Monastery near Lhasa in Tibet. This year he succeeded in trapping and marking 30 individuals, later finding 14 nests.

One of his main tasks this year was to define the social hierarchy amongst five males in one group of adults. Next year he hopes to take blood samples from adults and chicks in an effort to describe the mating system through the resulting DNA fingerprints.

This project is funded by the China National Natural Science Foundation.

Bulwer's pheasant

John Rowden (Wildlife Conservation Society, New York, USA) made a two month trip to Kayan Mentarang National Park in NE Kalimantan in March-May. He sighted two pairs, both close to the Kwan river, one each in primary and secondary dipterocarp forest.

Local people thought that breeding took place in December-February in recent years, so a return visit at the end of 1999 was planned. This project is funded by the Wildlife Conservation Society (New York, USA).

The above are extracts from *Tragopan* Issue 11, September 1999, the newsletter of the WPA/Species Survival Commission/BirdLife Pheasant Specialist Group.

Polygamous breeding of the grey peacock-pheasant

Mark G Cairns



Photo: Keith Howman

Grey peacock-pheasant.

Mating systems for captive peacock - pheasants

Emphasis on the need to study and research tropical pheasant species is becoming increasingly important in heed of the rate in loss of habitat through deforestation and degradation. Wild populations of tropical forest pheasants are notoriously difficult to study (Balen and Holmes 1993, Davidson 1986) with little information on reproductive biology in the wild state (Searle 1989). With several species, studies can no longer occur since in many regions preferred habitats have either completely disappeared or become so fragmented to the point where they no longer sustain viable populations.

This difficulty of study is emphasized by the changing view of mating systems for the peacock-pheasants. Previously thought to be monogamous (Rutgers and Norris 1970) (*ie* only one partner) we have seen a shift towards serial polygamy (number of females in temporal sequence) which even now is not entirely irrefutable (Johnsgard 1999). To date there has not been any male of any of the six peacock-pheasant species observed mating with another female before she has started to incubate her eggs. Generally it is viewed that for all the members of the peacock-pheasant genus *Polyplectrum*, pairwise breeding is the most

appropriate avicultural practice, with trios being described as being 'impossible' (Searle 1989). Breeding results to date have led to the belief that this is the most successful social arrangement (Searle 1989, Rutgers and Norris 1970), although the degree of experimentation from this is unknown. From a conservation point of view successful attempts to reintroduce species may relate to the level where natural social organisation is mimicked in captivity (Ridley 1983). If the social arrangement of a species is uncertain and there are a number of possible alternatives then opportunity (or management) should be made in the captive environment to allow the birds to adopt any of the possibilities.

Preliminary evidence for true polygamy in the grey peacock-pheasant *Polyplectrum bicalcaratum*

During the 1999 breeding season at Keith Howmans' Ashmere pheasant aviaries, a male with four female grey peacock-pheasants (subspecies uncertain but most probably *P.b.bakeri*) were set up for experimental polygamous breeding. Initially all were housed in three pens (each approx 2m x 6m x 2m) interconnected by trapdoors in sheltered areas which allowed the birds to move freely through all three

pens. Initial observations showed that the male had no preference to which pen he remained in, whereas females tended to occupy one pen, rarely moving between others (two pens had one female and one with two females). No aggression was observed by either male or females prior to or during the egg laying period.

The breeding season began with the first egg being laid in late February, and extended through to the latter half of May. In total 27 eggs were laid between the four females. All females produced eggs with one hen laying two clutches and the other three each laying four (all clutches except one, which comprised one egg, consisted of two eggs). During this breeding period the male exhibited truly polygamous mating. Mating was not restricted to another female until after the previous had begun to incubate the eggs. On three occasions the male had mated with a second female only a day after the first. On one occasion he had mated with three females in two consecutive days. On five occasions the male had mated with a second female after a maximum of four days had passed. With this greater than 'normal' number of copulations by the male fertility was not compromised since the overall fertility for all eggs laid was 88%. Nest sites were consistently a small scrape in the corner of the pen and most often without cover.

Only when hens were allowed to incubate their own eggs was there a change in behaviour observed. Natural incubation was allowed with three hens with each having laid in separate pens. Behaviour changed as soon as the chicks hatched with parent females aggressively pursuing any other female in the same or neighbouring pen. No aggression was ever directed towards the male who was still allowed to wander freely through all pens. Since aggression had become a problem, sitting hens or hens with chicks were then closed off from other pens and restricted to one pen alone. An additional fourth pen was made available for the remaining hen. One of the females, after losing two chicks five days after hatching, proceeded to produce another clutch of two eggs 13 days after the loss of the chicks.

Applications for the conservation of *Polypsectrum* species

Although this is only a small amount of evidence and, at this stage is restricted only to the grey peacock-pheasant, it has still revealed a number of attributes that may be useful for breeding for conservation purposes. This limited application could be used for the following:

- In situations where a limited number of males exist compared to females, a greater number of young could be produced in a shorter period of time with more females, which would effectively reduce the chance of losing rare alleles in a population.
- Allows for greater incorporation of the genetics of a particularly valuable male if one exists according to studbook recommendations.
- Allows for better coordination for setting larger numbers of eggs in incubators which would lead to bigger hatching groups and possibly greater survival rates (relevant to peacock-pheasant chicks), and greater number of animals of the same age.

In light of the threat of extinction due to habitat loss for the Hainan grey peacock-pheasant *P. b.katsumatae* (Yuren 1991), it can be envisaged that in the future such captive breeding techniques may become useful. More importantly, such knowledge has been acquired before it is needed, therefore no threat of experimentation with potentially valuable birds would have to occur in developing optimal mating arrangements for captive breeding scenarios in the future.

Conclusion

Even though this breeding scenario has not been truly staged as a comprehensive research project to fully determine the plasticity of mating systems for this species in the captive environment, it certainly presents some evidence that polygamous mating exists and is a manageable method of captive breeding for the grey peacock-pheasant. This information is presented in the hope that it will encourage more detailed investigation and experimentation with the grey and other species of peacock-pheasant, and that it can spur on others to carry out such endeavours.

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WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY

**Leaving a legacy to WPA,
whether large or small,
will ensure continuing
galliform conservation well
into the future.**

*For further information or advice
on leaving a legacy to WPA,
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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

2000

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5-6 February | WPA USA mid-year officers meeting, Gainesville, Florida, USA.
Contact: Ted Norris +1 734 279 5198 or Sam Harris +1 904 462 3305. |
| 19-20 February | WPA Committee's weekend, Harewood, Leeds
Contact Jim Irwin-Davis Tel: 0113 218 033 |
| 11 May | WPA Red Grouse Charity Clay Pigeon Shoot, Brandon Shooting Lodge, Lincolnshire, UK |
| 16 May | WPA Red Grouse Charity Clay Pigeon Shoot, Berkshire, UK |
| 19-21 May | Countryside Live, Syon Park, UK |
| 1-2 July | Game Conservancy Scottish Fair, Scone Palace, Perthshire, Scotland |
| 28-30 July | CLA Game Fair, Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire, UK |
| August | 2nd Chinese Pheasant Workshop, Kunming, China |
| 23 September -
1 October | International Symposium on Galliformes, Kathmandu, Nepal |
| 7 September | Red Grouse Charity Clay Pigeon Shoot, Dunkeld, Scotland |
| Oct | Workshops on education and South East Asia pheasant species, Hanoi, Vietnam |

2001

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| September | WPA International Annual Convention, Jersey, Channel Islands |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------|

Please let us have any dates of interest for inclusion.

EEP Galliformes TAG Annual Report 1999

Alain Hennache and Gary Robbins

The following extracts are taken from a full report of the year's activities that has been prepared to send to EAZA (the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria). A meeting was held in Basle during the EAZA AGM in September 1999, at which Dieter Rinke from Walsrode was elected onto the committee.

Developments in 1998/1999

Alain Hennache attended the South East Asian Zoos and Aquaria (SEAZA) meeting in Saigon on 1-3 November 1999 with the aim of developing a SEAZA Galliform TAG. It was decided, together with Dang Gia Tung, deputy director of Hanoi Zoo, and Phan Viet Lam, head curator of Saigon Zoo, to present five regional studbooks for Galliformes at the next SEAZA conference to be held in the Philippines – for the Vietnamese pheasant *Lophura hatinhensis*, crested argus *Rheinartia ocellata ocellata*, Annamese pheasant *Lophura nycthemera annamensis*, Malaysian peacock-pheasant *Polyplectron malacense* and the mountain peacock-pheasant *Polyplectron inopinatum*.

The European Junglefowl Group which was formed in 1998, has decided to focus on determining the genetic viability of the European captive stock. It has been suggested that even *Gallus gallus* in the wild could be hybridising with the domestic chicken, although the red junglefowl received from the Bavi National Park, Vietnam were considered pure. The results from 300 samples suggest impurities in the captive population. The EEP Galliform TAG agreed to help with this project and to see if sponsorship could be obtained from the poultry industry.

The DNA-research project is designed to ensure that all specimens which are to enter studbooks are genetically pure. The project will commence at the beginning of 2000, starting with research to ascertain the relationship of the three Vietnamese lowland *Lophura* pheasants - Edwards', Vietnamese and Imperial. The next phase will be to study the relationship between the various sub-species of the silver pheasants and the kalij, followed by a study into the genetic viability of the various tragopan breeding stocks. The research is

scheduled for three years, and a technician will be employed at INFS, Bologna in Italy for the duration.

The group has agreed that:

- All specimens entering a studbook will be purity tested first.
- Zoos and private breeders will be able to submit feather samples for checking the purity of their stock, for a modest charge, once the project is up and running. Details will be published later.
- The DNA Project is a high profile project and needs maximum funding. To date the response from zoos has been poor, but hopefully once the first results are seen, more interest and funding will be forthcoming. The basic cost per year, is 14,000 EUs, plus the cost of individual samples. At present the project has a short fall of 10,000 EUs over the three years, despite this, the DNA Committee has decided to go ahead.

The TAG supported the WPA proposal for an international studbook for the Vietnamese pheasant *Lophura hatinhensis*. The international studbook-keepers are Dang Gia Tung, deputy director of Hanoi Zoo and Han Assink, Chair of WPA/CBAC. More than 60 captive birds are recorded throughout the world, of which 70% are in Europe.

Recommendations

It was agreed that the international studbook-keepers for blyth's and cabot's tragopan, Vietnamese pheasant, Congo peafowl, mountain and Malay peacock-pheasant, should be approached to see if they wish to have a regional register and co-ordinator, or to handle breeders direct. It was agreed that the level of management for the species without current programmes would be left until the results from the studbook survey is known. It was also noted that a number of registers and species co-ordinator have been operating since 1993 when the UK-Gallitag was first formed. It was requested that megapodes and grouse should be added to the next

TAG Space Survey and recommendations in future.

Goals for 1999/2000

- To propose a regional collection plan for Galliformes.
- To carry out a survey for megapodes and grouse.

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WPA AIMS TO
DEVELOP
AND PROMOTE THE
CONSERVATION OF
ALL SPECIES IN THE
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Membership of WPA 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 people to participate in fulfilling its objectives.

For further information on membership of WPA, or supporting the Association in any other way, please contact the Administrator at: PO Box 5, Lower Basildon, Reading, Berkshire RG8 9PF.

Articles printed in WPA News do not necessarily represent the views of the World Pheasant Association.

AVIAN 2000



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The International Avicultural Event of the Millennium

Venue: Blackbrook Zoological Park, Winkhill, Nr. Leek, Staffordshire, UK
Weekend of 15th/16th April 2000

Internationally Acclaimed Speakers so far Booked -

- **Frank Todd** - Senior Research Fellow Hubbs/Sea World Institution in San Diego.
- **Martin Kaiser** - Curator of Birds, Tierpark Zoo Berlin - Birds of the Qinghai-Tibet-Plateau.
- **Raymond Sawyer** - arguably owns one of the finest private collections of Exotic Birds in the World.
- **Mike Lubbock** - Sylvan Heights Waterfowl, North Carolina - winner of numerous first breedings of Waterfowl in North America.
- **Christopher Marler** - will be passing on his life's experience with 'Domestics' - Breeding: Exhibiting and Judging, laced with other anecdotes of Wildlife.
- **Luuc Van Havere** - has extensive private collection in Belgium. 'Keeping and Breeding Ibis in Captivity'
- **Nick Worth** - WPA's Future Role in Aviculture.
- **Nigel Jarrett** - Threatened Species Officer, The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. 'White-waters and New Zealand Blue Ducks'.

Other speakers will be announced, as they are known.

Entrance charges will be as follows:-

Single day ticket - Saturday	15 th April 2000	£15.00 (Under 16 years of age £ 7.50)
Single day ticket - Sunday	16 th April 2000	£15.00 (Under 16 years of age £ 7.50)
Combined two day ticket	15 th /16 th April 2000	£25.00 (Under 16 years of age £12.50)
Banquet on Saturday Evening	15 th April 2000	£45.00 (<i>Black Tie not essential, but this would be in keeping with the occasion</i>).

Anyone attending the Banquet only may do so after 6.30pm without purchasing a Day Ticket.

As this weekend will undoubtedly be oversubscribed, tickets must be booked in advance. The names of the delegates will be individually printed on the ticket and are not transferable.

No tickets will be available for sale on the day at the gate.

Tickets will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Cheques to be made payable to AVIAN 2000

SWITCH: VISA or MASTERCARD ACCEPTED

Laurie Crampton, Cold Arbor Wildfowl, Tytherington Lane, Bollington, Cheshire, SK10 5AA
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Photo: Richard Howard

A reminder to you all that plans are well underway for the Nepal 2000 Symposium. If you have not yet received any information and are interested in attending, please contact WPA as soon as possible. The photograph (left) shows the Hotel Godavari, Kathmandu, where the symposium will be held from 24-28 September, 2000.



Photo: Keith Howman

Above: Ron Sumner was a visitor to WPA HQ during November. His visit to the UK was mainly to discuss with Peter Olney (Editor of International Zoo News), pheasant studbooks in the USA.

Left: Al Lee, Keith Howman and Brigadier Mukhtar Ahmed renewing the Affiliation Agreement between WPA and WPA Pakistan.

Right: The Holgarth Heroes, the winning team at the fourth Red Grouse Charity Shoot, held at the shooting grounds of the Dunkeld Stakis Hotel (see page 13), with Iain Stothard (second from left) of The Famous Grouse.

Photo: Keith Howman

