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WPA News 63 (2000)

World Pheasant Association

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WPA NEWS



The International Newsletter of the World Pheasant Association

WPA News No 63 November 2000 Contents

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WORLD PHEASANT ASSOCIATION

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT Richard Howard



Delegates attending the Seventh International Galliformes Symposium in Nepal from 24-27 September 2000.

Photo: John Brown

It has been a busy and exciting time for WPA and for me over the past couple of months. I spent a wonderful three-and-a-half weeks in Nepal, culminating in a marvellous symposium where I made and re-made many friends. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to making the symposium such a success, and particularly our friends in Nepal who made all of us so welcome in their beautiful country. I would also like to thank Prince Gyanendra, not only for inaugurating the symposium and giving an enlightening speech, but also for hosting an evening reception for all the delegates. To quote His Royal Highness "A gathering such as this, bringing together conservationists and scientists, must surely lead to a better understanding of the threats facing galliformes." I am certain that we all left Nepal after the symposium having

achieved this greater understanding and also with a great feeling of optimism and enthusiasm to continue to work towards the conservation of galliformes and their habitats.

The other WPA event has been the 25th Anniversary AGM and party which we held at Beale Park on 20 October. About 40 members attended, including several who were present at the inaugural meeting in 1975. We had three fascinating talks; from Alain Hennache on the current status of the Lophura from Vietnam, from Adam Smith on his work on the alternative grazing options to improve grouse habitat, and an update from Ettore Randi on the results of the DNA-research project so far. Now that these results are coming through and we can start to see their potential, it only reiterates the importance of this exciting and pioneering project. We still need funding in

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The World Pheasant Association gratefully
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order to continue to support what has to be WPA's most important project, so please do what you can to help. We must continue with this vital work which is a demonstration of how far WPA has come in 25 years.

The bad news is that, as most of you will know, Nicola is leaving us at the end of November to move on to pastures new. As she has been the point of contact in the office for a while, there will obviously be a big change. I am pleased to welcome

Monique Gudgeon as our new 'Director of External Affairs'. She will be working mainly from home and will be concentrating on promoting the organisation in order to increase its funds. The office will be managed on a part-time basis by Jill Court and Robb Prinn, who will try to help with any queries that you have. We are hoping to build on our network of members to help with specific enquiries.

OBITUARY**W L Chaplin 1935 - 2000**

Photo: Nicola Chalmers-Watson

Billy Chaplin (centre) with Keith Chalmers-Watson, Richard and Sally Howard, at the WPA Convention in Clères, September 1999.

We learn with great sadness of the death of one of our Vice Presidents, Billy Chaplin, on 18 October, after a short illness following a holiday in France. He was one of the country's largest and most innovative game pheasant and partridge farmers - a business he ran for many years under the name of Lincolnshire Pheasantries.

Despite the substantial commercial nature of his business he still found time and space to keep some of his favourite ornamental pheasants; silvers, goldens and Reeves. His interest in the latter before the days of the Wildlife and Countryside act was as a sporting bird and for many years he had one drive on his family shoot that was a Reeve's pheasant drive. At the end of each season he would catch up survivors, rear from them and release them back to the area they had come from just like ringneck pheasants.

Billy was a great supporter of WPA and when the Cheer Pheasant Reintroduction Project started in Pakistan back in the late 1970s, he offered pens and space for some 20 pairs of cheer pheasants whose eggs were shipped out to Islamabad, Pakistan each week for usually eight consecutive weeks through British Airways Assisting Nature Conservation.

Billy and his wife Mary attended many of WPA's conventions and international symposia and few who saw him on our stand at the last Game Fair in Scotland will forget him cajoling cash from visitors into the collecting boxes at the end of the grouse tunnel.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Mary and their children, William and Melissa.

Red grouse in Scotland

Two events involving red grouse took place in Scotland during September. One was The Red Grouse Charity Shoot sponsored by The Famous Grouse and organised by WPA. Forty guns took part in a great fun clay shoot at the Hilton Dunkeld Shooting School followed by dinner and an auction in the Hilton Dunkeld Hotel. Around £2000 was raised and more importantly everyone enjoyed the event and wanted it repeated.

On 1 September a conference was held at Battleby near Perth, hosted by The Highland Cattle Society on 'Traditional Cattle for Upland Management and Beef', and what, we hear you say, has that to do with red grouse and WPA?

Research by Adam Smith of The Game Conservancy Trust, funded in part by WPA, is showing some interesting results from the use of highland cattle on heather moorland in place of black faced sheep, both in terms of habitat improvement and red grouse numbers.

After the conference, around 80 of the delegates went on a farm visit to Borland Farm in Glenshee, Perthshire, where our President Keith Howman and Adam Smith took them onto the grouse moor to see where much of Adam Smith's work had taken place and meet the highland cattle. Incidentally, the moor which has now had highland cattle on it for five years, had the largest number of grouse for many years.

After the farm tour, delegates were treated to a whisky tasting by Iain Stothard of The Famous Grouse and a highland beef dinner.



A group of delegates and Highland cattle up on the moor.

Photo: Jean Howman

Welcome to 9th International Grouse Symposium, China

In accordance with the decision made in Finland, the 9th International Grouse Symposium will be held in China in early August 2002 for five days, before the International Ornithological Congress. Some grouse people will also be at the IOC, so our grouse meeting will end on the day before the registration day of IOC.

At the moment, two excursions are being considered:

- 1) Lianhuashan Natural Reserve, Gansu Province; a good habitat for the endemic Chinese grouse *Bonasa sewerzowi* and many other interesting birds; it is a spruce-fir forest mixed with deciduous trees, mainly birch and willow, at an altitude of 2700-3100 m. The tour will last four to six days. Travel: fly from Beijing to Lanzhou (two hours), then 170 km by car (four hours).
- 2) Changbai Mountain, Jilin Province, a habitat for hazel grouse and black grouse in which four types of forest are vertically distributed along 30 km slope. Good scenery, such as the water-fall, and the sky-lake on the border with North Korea. The tour will last three to four days. Travel: fly to Yanji (one hour), then four hours by car.

The symposium is to be held in Beijing, and the mid-symposium excursion will be to Weichang, Hebei Province, an isolated black grouse habitat. However, if most people are willing to travel to the Lianhuashan Natural Reserve, it might also be in Lanzhou, as it is very hot during that period in Beijing. If in Lanzhou, the excursion to Lianhuashan could be in the middle of the symposium.

As per our plan, a special web site for this grouse symposium will be presented in August 2000. If you have any good ideas for this meeting, please do not hesitate to send to: Sun Yue-Hua at e-mail: sunyh@midwest.com.cn

Conservation of Galliformes within the IOC

In addition to the Grouse Symposium, WPA will be represented during a session (symposium) of the International Ornithological Congress. The organisers have accepted a proposal to have a symposium entitled Galliformes Conservation and Forest Management which will include the following talks: Sun Yue-hua on the habitat requirements of Chinese grouse, Dan Brooks on forest management of cracids and John Carroll on sustainable use of Galliformes.

PHEASANTS AND GROUSE

Available from
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More news on the new taxon of monal discovered from Arunachal Pradesh

Suresh Kumar and Pratap Singh

Reproduced with kind permission from the Mor Newsletter, August 2000, Vol 3 No 3.

A new pheasant taxon belonging to the genus *Lophophorus* was discovered in late 1998 during survey work on pheasant distribution in western Arunachal Pradesh. In order to collect more information on this new monal another six-month survey was undertaken from October 1999 to January 2000. The following is an account of the latest findings on this new monal.

Based on evidence obtained during the earlier surveys it was found that the new monal had a limited distribution range occurring only along the Great Himalayan Range from the eastern part of Tawang district to some where along the western part of Upper Subansiri district. Therefore, our major task during the current survey was to identify the exact distribution limits of the new monal, and also see whether it overlapped in distribution with Sclater's monal *Lophophorus sclateri* to which it resembles the closest, and with the other congeneric species, the Himalayan monal *Lophophorus impejanus*.

Two new districts along the central part of Arunachal Pradesh were visited during the survey that included Upper Subansiri and West Siang. These two districts, along with the Lower Subansiri district visited earlier, were the main focus of this survey. There we visited a few sites located in the interior close to the Indo-Chinese border. Apart from interviews with local people regarding the monals, we also trekked to a few areas in search of them. We suspected the Subansiri River flowing through the Upper Subansiri district to be a likely geographical barrier separating the new monal from Sclater's monal.

Thus, west of the river we expected to find the new monal and on the east Sclater's monal. We also suspected the new monal was likely to be a geographical variant of Sclater's monal since it resembles the latter in overall plumage coloration except for the white coloration of the tail. If the above is true then we expected to find other tail colour patterns along the zone of contact or overlap, which was most likely in the Upper Subansiri or West Siang district.

Information obtained during the current survey, however, indicated that the above suspicions were not true, as local people in most parts of the Upper Subansiri and West Siang districts recognised only Sclater's monal, known to them as 'Pede'. In the Upper Subansiri district, locals also knew about the occurrence of this new monal west of the river Subansiri. To support this, evidence in the form of male tail feathers of the monal were also seen with a local. Only in and around Taksing locality, a border post along the Indo-Chinese border in this district, did the local people also know about the occurrence of the new monal, which is known to them as 'Daedong'. This rules out the possibility of the river Subansiri acting as a geographical barrier.

The other interesting findings of the survey were the discovery of two different tail color patterns of the new monal. At Redding village, close to Taksing in the Upper Subansiri district a set of male rectrices collected were completely white with dark bases, like that of the new monal.

However, of the fifteen tail feathers seen, eight of them have a small chestnut patch at the centre of each. The locals did not have any specific name for this monal. At first glance this 'Taksing monal' appeared to belong to a hybrid between the new monal and Sclater's monal, since according to the locals the latter two occur together there. It is also not known whether these tail feathers belonged to an immature bird or from a geographical variant of Sclater's monal. On another occasion, the rectrices of a male new monal collected from the Polosung locality near Sarli in Lower Subansiri district were examined.

Four of the 16 tail feathers of this 'Polosung monal'

inspected had, on their outer edges and just above the dark base, a slight chestnut splash. This was the first such pattern observed of the nine complete sets of the new monal rectrices seen so far. The locality from where the 'Polosung monal' was collected is also well away from the known distribution of Sclater's monal.

There is no clear explanation for the two new tail colour patterns observed during the survey as represented by the 'Taksing monal' and 'Polosung monal'. These could be individual variations within the new monal, as they do not show any consistent geographical trend or indications of intergradation towards Sclater's monal.

On plotting the presence/absence data of the monals on a map of Arunachal Pradesh it was found that a mountain range which is a part of the Great Himalayan Range forming the district boundary between the Lower Subansiri and Upper Subansiri districts probably acts as a barrier. Although we call this range the



Sclater's monal painting reproduced from Elliot's Monograph of the Pheasants of the World.

'Subansiri Divide', it may not be an effective barrier since there are not many high peaks. However Sclater's monal appears to be present only east of this range. On the other hand the new monal does not seem to occur east of the river Subansiri. Farther east in the West Siang district local people did not recognise the new monal at all. Along the western end of the distribution range of the new monal, the 'Sela Range', which forms the district boundary between Tawang and West Kameng districts, appears to be the distributional limit. It was also found that the new monal overlaps in distribution with the Himalayan monal there.

During the survey we also collected three skins of the new monal (a male, a female and a subadult) kept with the locals in the Sarli locality of Lower Subansiri district. On examination of these skins with the Sclater's monal skins at the Bombay Natural History Museum, and from published descriptions, paintings and from information obtained during the survey, it leads to the conclusion that the new monal represents an unknown western population of Sclater's monal.

Currently, morphometric and plumage colour comparisons of the new monal with the Sclater's monal skins kept in various museums are being carried out.

Acknowledgements

This study was made possible with generous financial support from Mr James Goodhart, member WPA, UK. Special thanks to Dr Peter Garson for organising funds in a short period of time and for his constant encouragement. We thank Shri S K Mukherjee, Director, Wildlife Institute of India, for the infra-structural support; the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department for granting us permission to carry out this study. We would also like to thank Mr Tapir, our field assistant who went on the four day trek to Taksing alone when Suresh Kumar could not continue on the survey due to a severe knee inflammation, and it was he who was responsible for the discovery of the Taksing monal. Also thanks to Mr Dorji Raptan and the other assistants for their assistance and help during fieldwork and Dr A R Rahmani, Mr Naresh Chaturvedi and Ms Meghana of the Bombay Natural History Museum, Mumbai for their help.

Authors: Suresh Kumar and Pratap Singh, Wildlife Institute of India, Post Box # 18, Chandrabani, Dehradun - 248 001, India.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR VIRINDER SHARMA ON HIS NEW APPOINTMENT

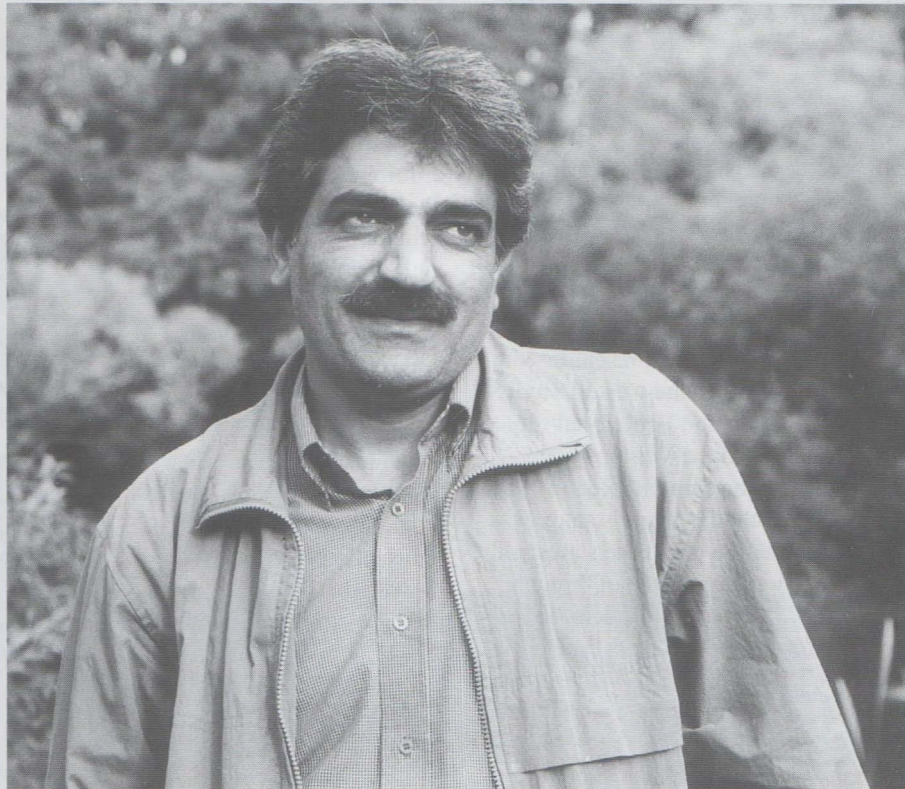


Photo: Jean Howman

Dr Virinder Sharma at Ashmere this summer.

Congratulations to Dr Virinder Sharma on his appointment as Environmental Advisor for the UK's Department for International Development. He will be based in Delhi and will be advising on the environmental content of development projects to the Department in India.

Virinder was one of three PhD students who were supervised and helped to obtain their PhDs by Dr Peter Garson of Newcastle University beginning in 1987 and concluding successfully in 1990.

His first contact with WPA resulted from a newspaper cutting in his local *Tribune* newspaper in Simla referring to the visit of what was to become The Great Himalayan National Park in 1981 of Dr Peter Garson and Dr Tony Gaston. He wrote to Peter and asked for his help and advice on a PhD subject. Typically Pete told him to go and look for cheer pheasants in the Simla hills and give him a report on the results and only then would he offer further advice. The report convinced Pete that he had the application and interest to really work on the cheer pheasant and the rest as they say is history. He duly obtained his PhD from Chandigarh University.

By coincidence Dr Rahul Kaul, who had first met up with WPA in 1982 at the Second International Pheasant Symposium in Srinagar, also came under Pete's wing at the same time and also got an impressive PhD degree. As members will know, he has for many years now run our South Asian Field Office. Both were funded for their PhD studies by WPA, thanks to sponsorship given to WPA by The Indian Plywood Corporation and their managing director Mr Vissanji.

Virinder's appointment came in the face of very strong competition for the job and he says that he considers his success to be largely due to the help and international exposure made possible for him by WPA.

Western tragopan studies in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh

Shahid Bashir

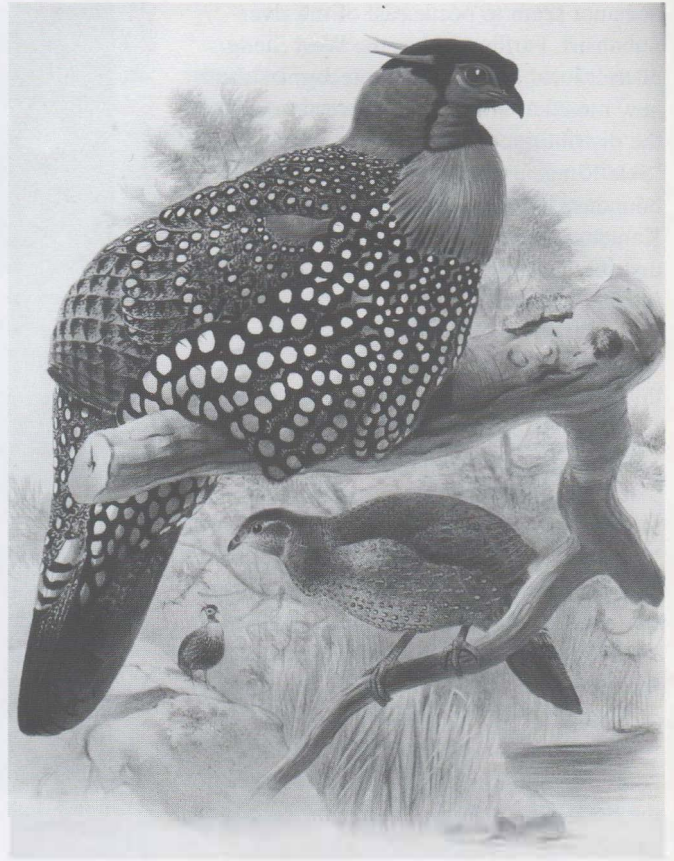
Reproduced with kind permission from the Mor Newsletter, August 2000, Vol 3 No 3.

Himachal Pradesh is one of the northern states of India, better known as the land of the mighty Himalayas. This mountainous state still has some good forest patches left and pheasants are well represented here. Western tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus* is one of the species that is present in the moist temperate forest of this region in addition to being present in Jammu and Kashmir to the west. A study, 'Status, Distribution and Ecology of the Western Tragopan in the Western Himalayas' was therefore initiated in 1998. The main aim of the first year's study was to collect information about the status and distribution of western tragopan through extensive surveys. The study also sought to collect data on the main threats faced by this species. Little did I know that the job I was about to begin was not only physically tough but also mentally demanding. Being new to this field I had no idea about the problems that I would encounter. After obtaining the necessary permits from the state Wildlife Department and buying the required field equipment, I was ready to commence fieldwork in the month of November.

Chamba, the beautiful land of temples, Gujjars and the Gaddis, was to be my initial study area. All the preparations had been made very meticulously and everything seemed to be going fine. The first few days at Chamba were spent on making last minute purchases, renting accommodation that would serve as our base camp, and working out our plans and meeting the concerned authorities. We shortlisted three sites for our initial visit. The sites were Khajjar, Kalatope and Kugti Wildlife sanctuaries.

I realised the importance of correct information, proper planning and clarity of objectives after I went to these three sites, all no-tragopan sites. By this time I had

made friends with some of the local people in Chamba. Incidentally a few of them were old hunters and provided me with good information about the areas that should be surveyed. Obtaining a list of sites was only the first step. The real test of endurance and will power would be to go to these remote areas, as a one man team. The enormity of this task became clear to me when I went to Kugti WLS. Kugti is the name of two unusually big villages; the lower Kugti which consists of about 150 households and the upper Kugti having about 50 households. This village is located 12 km from the small town of Hadsar, approachable from Brahmour by road. We reached Hadsar in the evening after having booked the rest house from the DFO's office at Brahmour. The Chowkidar (caretaker) of the rest house was nowhere to be found and our stay became almost impossible, as no one in the village was willing to accommodate my assistant and myself. Finally we were told that a block officer of the wildlife department lived here. We headed straight for his house in pitch darkness and found a place to spend the night. Undaunted by the hardships of the previous day, we proceeded towards Kugti with hope. Throughout the 12 km trek there was no trace of any human habitation and the only people we met were the labourers employed in road construction. It took us almost a whole cold December day to reach Kugti. To our utter disappointment the caretaker of the rest house at Kugti offered only night shelter, which was only slightly better than a cowshed, and that too at a very high price. But at least we had a place arranged for a local who would guide us around. We found chukar, koklass and a few monal during our field trips but none of the local people or the hunter found any



Western tragopan painting reproduced from Elliot's Monograph of the Pheasants of the World.

tragopans. We lost hope of finding any tragopans in this area but did not want to give up. The weather turned bad and for fear of getting stranded in Kugti, we returned to Hadsar. To sight the species on which we were working was still a dream.

My next site was the Specka Reserve Forest. By this time my assistant had abandoned me and I had to go there alone. I had come to know of a person by the name of Issa who lived in the village Krueel. This village is very near to the Speck forest and is a 12 km trek from a small town, Saho. I reached Krueel by myself with all my gear and was very warmly welcomed by Issa and his family. We finalised plans of surveys in this area and it was decided that Issa's cousin Moosa and his son Gani would accompany me for the surveys. By this time I had become a bit despondent and depression had started to set in. I had begun to think that I was wasting my time in search of a very rare and a very elusive bird species, but the encouragement and support provided by my hosts was enough to keep the spirits alive.

• STOP PRESS •

WPA's new web address

<http://www.pheasant.org.uk>

We spent the first two days without any success, still no tragopans! On this day, which was 19 December, along with Moosa and Gani, I went to the Riyali forest. Moosa was very optimistic of a sighting here and we started our trek early. At a height of 2700 m, at around 9.15 am, we heard the call "wa-wa-wa" of a tragopan. It was a *Quercus semecarpifolia* dominated forest with good understorey. The bird could still not be seen and the call was coming from behind some shrubs. After some time another tragopan appeared. I had come to learn about this call from the literature I had gone through and I was hearing what I had read. Now the urge to see these birds was even greater. Moosa pointed towards some moving object about 25m in front of me. I could not believe my eyes as a female tragopan walked away from me. I would have mistaken it for a female of some other species. As I stood there, motionless, watching my species for the first time and I was disturbed by some movement, and a magnificent bird moved into view. This time, I needed no introduction to the bird in front of me. It was a male western tragopan. It left me completely mesmerized and it was love at first sight!

This project is supported by the International Trust for Nature Conservation & World Pheasant Association.

Author: Shahid Bashir, Department of Wildlife Sciences, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh 202 002, India.

KING BIRD TOURS

An extract from King Bird Tours newsletter 39, July 2000 on a trip to Bhutan.

'Later in the tour, we were driving along when I spotted a male Himalayan monal on the slope above us. We stopped the bus immediately and soaked up this iridescent beauty. He allowed us to get out of the bus and set up the scopes for a visual feast. He remained in the open some quite close (12 meters) for soul-satisfying looks. Also seen, but not by everyone were a fine male satyr tragopan, several kalij pheasant and chestnut-breasted, hill and rufous-throated partridges.'

VISIT TO CHINA

Al Lee, Administrator for WPA Pakistan, recently visited China along with his good friend Mr Pera Chiewhatpong, Secretary of WPA Thailand. By good fortune their visit coincided with The Second Chinese Pheasant Workshop and Congress where they were able to meet up with Professor Zheng Guangmei, Chairman of WPA China, Professor Zhang Zhengwang and other members of WPA China. That was the good news.

The not so good news is the extent of exploitation of species such as the Lady Amherst's pheasant, particularly by the Yee Tribe in Yunan Province. After the conference Al and Pera visited Yunan and drove out of Kunming to a village the literal translation of its name being 'horse crosses river'. Here they found many restaurants selling wildlife, including live



Mr Pera holding a tribal head gear with Lady Amherst's feathers.

Amherst's and ring necked pheasants. However as Al says before we condemn we need to know from our friends in WPA China about the state of the habitat of the area. It may well be that the numbers are sustainable though even if it is the animal welfare aspect needs close attention.



Group photograph with Professor Zheng Guangmei.



Yee Minority hat with Hume's feathers.

The Galliformes Specialist Groups or why three parents are better than one

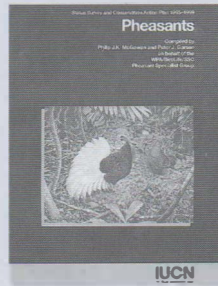
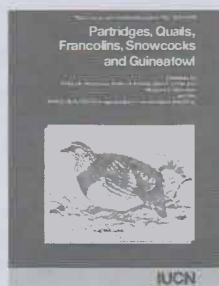
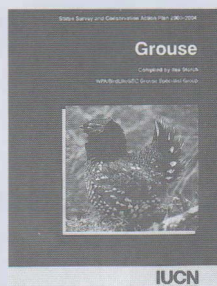
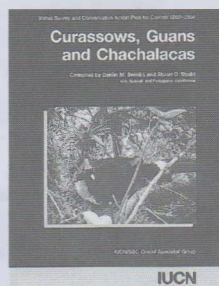
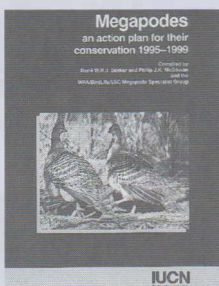
Taken from an article written by Philip McGowan for inclusion in the 50th Anniversary Edition of *Species*, the newsletter of the Species Survival Commission

The five Galliformes Specialist Groups (the Cracids; the Grouse; the Megapodes; the Partridge, Quail and Francolin; and the Pheasant) are all parented by the World Pheasant Association, BirdLife International and the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of IUCN-The World Conservation Union. Currently, the relationships between these three have never been better and both BirdLife and SSC have recently confirmed the role that WPA plays in stimulating, managing and guiding all five SGs. In many ways, it is not surprising that WPA has the major role as it created some of the groups and has sought to support their work since all five groups became firmly established in the early 1990s.

The five SGs all carry out similar activities, but vary in the emphases that they give to each. This reflects the considerable range of information available and the conservation requirements of species in these groups. The core activities, as with many other SGs, are dissemination of information through newsletters, arranging symposia and other meetings, and carrying out projects. Much of this is identified in a structured and critical manner in the five-year Action Plans.

The three parents have very varied strengths and therefore can play very different roles in pursuing the goals of the SGs, as given in the Action Plans. WPA's interests are more specifically Galliformes and their habitats than the other two parents, as BirdLife is concerned with all birds, and SSC with all species. In addition, SSC has more than 100 SGs to run and BirdLife works nationally and regionally, rather than taxonomically, through its national partners in many countries. However, taken together the three parents complement each other. WPA seeks to look after the day-to-day matters of the Galliformes SGs and is seeking to encourage cross-fertilisation of knowledge and ideas between the five groups.

It is hoped that all five Action Plans will be published during 2000: Cracids has appeared, Grouse is in press and second editions of the Megapodes, Pheasant and PQF plans have all been compiled and are with SSC for publication. When this happens, WPA with the SGs will become the major focus for co-ordinated implementation of the plans, which cover all 270 or so species of Galliformes, over the next five years. It is evident that the galliform SG will need all three parents playing their very different roles if the goals proposed in the Action Plan are to be pursued and achieved.



Searching for one of Peru's most threatened cracids: the horned curassow

Following important funding from the Chicago Zoological Society's Small Grants for Species Conservation, and the WPA, a Cracid Specialist Group endorsed project, Aves Amenazadas del Sira, will carry out the first survey of the threatened horned curassow *Pauxi unicornis koepckeae* in Peru since its discovery. *P. u. koepckeae* is known only from the Cerros del Sira, Dpto. Huanuco, Peru, an isolated mountain range some 60-100 km west of the main eastern Andean chain. *P. u. koepckeae* was described from two specimens taken in 1969 and was evidently rare at this time. Nothing is known of the sub-species, present status and its relocation. An assessment of its population density and actual or potential threats are considered to be immediate priorities for cracid conservation.

The species distribution remains an enigma. Despite intensive fieldwork in other remote areas in the eastern Andes of Peru, the species has never been recorded elsewhere. A record from the Cerros del Tavara in the Tambopata-Candamo Reserved Zone of south-east Peru in 1992 may have been a bird of the Bolivian or Peruvian sub-species. As a first step towards a better understanding of the species conservation status in Peru, it is vitally important to reconfirm the species presence in the Cerros del Sira and Tavara. Our primary goal will be to locate calling birds during the breeding season and make an initial assessment of its population densities. If successful, we plan to gather baseline data on the species breeding biology, its use as a food source by local indigenous communities and immediate and long-term threats to the integrity of the forest. This year, survey work will be carried out in October-December in collaboration with the Peruvian NGO, ProAves Peru. A successful project will allow follow-up work to be carried out in 2001. The project gratefully acknowledges funding by CZS and WPA as well as endorsement and encouragement by Dan Brooks.

Allan Mee, Dept of Animal and Plant Sciences, Sheffield University, Sheffield S10 2TN, U.K. Email: allan.mee@sheffield.ac.uk

The 7th International Symposium on Galliformes, 24-30 September 2000

Theo Pagel, Köln Zoo, Germany

The 7th International Symposium on Galliformes was held in Nepal. It was the second time that Nepal has hosted the symposium after the first one in 1979. The symposium was organised and hosted by the World Pheasant Association (WPA), the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) and Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN).

First of all I would like to thank the programme committee comprising Peter Garson, John Carroll and Philip McGowan for their well mixed programme. And vicarious for all other organisers I would like to thank Nicola Chalmers-Watson and Hem Sagar Baral for the excellent organisation and hospitality. The WPA, under the chairman Richard Howard, has done a great job and I am sure that his wish that at the end of the symposium all should be friends, has come true.

The Godavari Village Resort, about 20 km from the capital (Kathmandu) of Nepal, was our headquarters for the first four days. It is a new and lovely resort near to the Phulchowki hills, a place which is well known to birders. Therefore it was not astonishing that a lot of the delegates went out birding in the time where there was no programme. Some even had the chance to make a scenic flight along the peaks of the Himalaya – an impression which they will never forget.

The symposium was opened by his Royal Highness Prince Gyanandra Bir Bikram Shah, chairman of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation. His opening address was a very warm, interesting and informative report. He mentioned the problems which countries like Nepal are facing concerning nature conservation but he gave also examples where Nepal has made a lot of progress such as in the Annapurna Conservation Area Project.

Researchers, scientists, nature conservationists, ornithologists and aviculturists from 15 countries (Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Germany, India, Italy, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, Pakistan, UK, USA, Vietnam)

numbering 139, met to share experiences and to discuss various themes on Galliformes.

All of the dinners hosted by the KMTNC, DNPWC, WWF and WPA were absolutely marvellous, especially the cultural programme of the last dinner, which was a real highlight for everyone.

The programme was very complex with over 20 reports and many more posters. It could have been hard work to get through all this, but I think everybody was so fascinated by all the information that it was a real pleasure to see and listen to what the speakers had to say. It would not be fair to highlight a special report or a poster, but to give you an impression let me mention one or two. David Parkin's report on genetics, showed everybody the importance of this subject, or the report of Richard Fuller about the importance of such basic knowledge like distributions. And in this concern we had a lot of information in other reports and posters. All in all the sessions and poster groups were very interesting because of the variety of subjects, such as conservation of Galliformes in Nepal, conservation of natural resources in Nepal, genetics, species ecology, feeding and breeding biology, national status reports, surveys and distribution, captive breeding, taxonomy, behaviour, *etc.* I would suggest that everybody who is interested in more details tries to get the abstracts. But I am sure that a lot of the reports and posters will be published in the future in different magazines.

During the symposium Mr Hari Sharan Nepali 'Kazi' was presented with a very special award by Prince Gyanendra. He is basically recognised as the father of ornithology in Nepal.

On 28 September the delegates went to Tiger Tops in the Royal Chitwan National Park, which is famous for its flora and fauna. It is one of the highlights for ornithologists in Nepal. In the checklist there are 526 different bird species listed for this beautiful national park. Tiger Tops is really absolutely the top of the accommodation offered in the Chitwan National Park and we were very privileged

that Jim Edwards of Tiger Mountain had organised such a good stay for us. During an elephant ride or together with one of the well trained guides of Tiger Tops, most of us saw animals, and especially birds, which we had never seen before. The one-horned rhinos of course were the most spectacular animals which we saw down there. We had also interesting and successful workshops at Tiger Tops to produce conservation strategies for the swamp-francolin and for the area known as Pipar. I am sure that also in private discussions there was a very intensive exchange of knowledge.

On 1 October it was time to go back home for some of us. Others had more luck and I have heard they had very interesting post-symposium tours. There was an ornithologists tour guided by Richard Howard to Chitwan, Koshi Tappu and the Nagarjan Forest, a wildlife/cultural tour to Tansen, Lumbini and the Royal Bardia NP or the Pipar/Pokhara tour. Each of them was exquisite.

It was my first International Symposium on Galliformes but I am sure it was not my last one, and I look forward to meeting all my new friends again soon.

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Right: The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation hosted a wonderful evening reception, kindly sponsored by The Famous Grouse in Nepal. L to R: Jimmy Reekie (usually seen selling raffle tickets for a 'Gallon of Grouse' at the CLA Game Fair), Dr Kyaw Tint, Director General of the Wildlife Department, Myanmar; Nicola Chalmers-Watson; U Khin Maung Zaw; Tan Setha from Cambodia; Richard Howard and Hguyen Tran Vy from Vietnam.



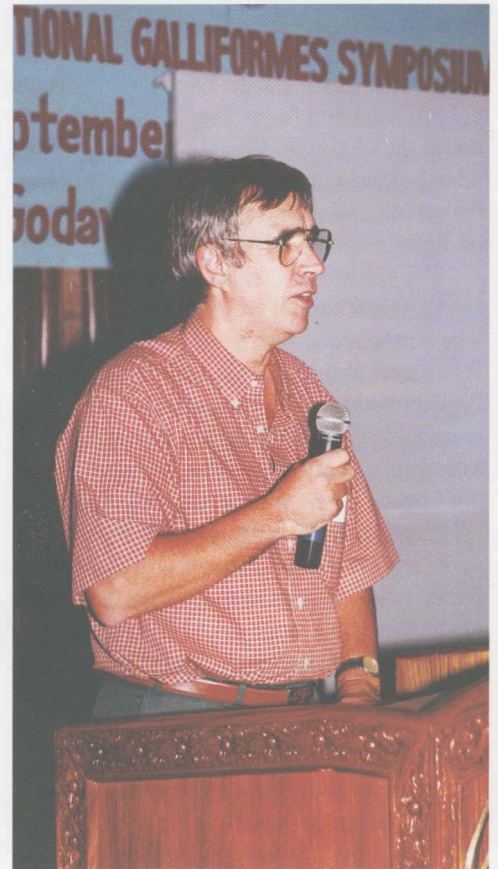
All photos: John Brown



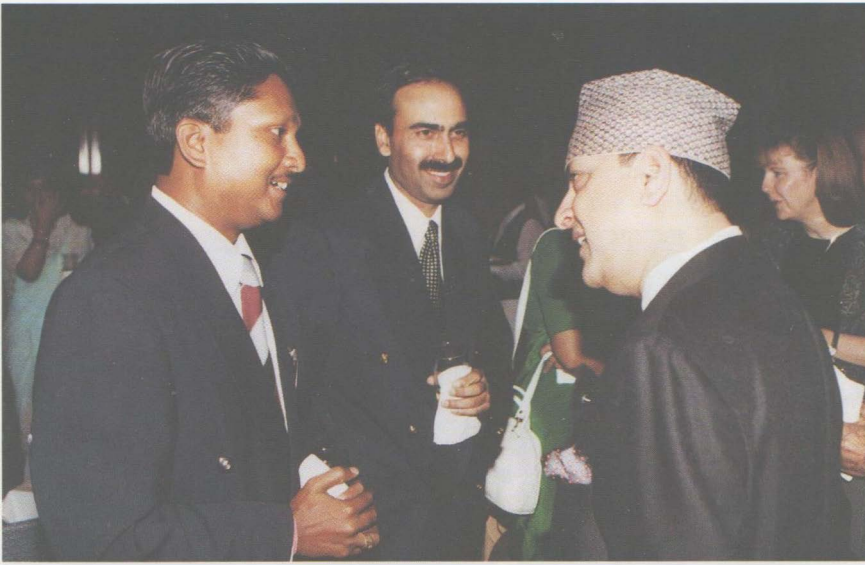
Photo: Peter Garson

Participants in the 'Pipar Workshop' which was held at Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge.

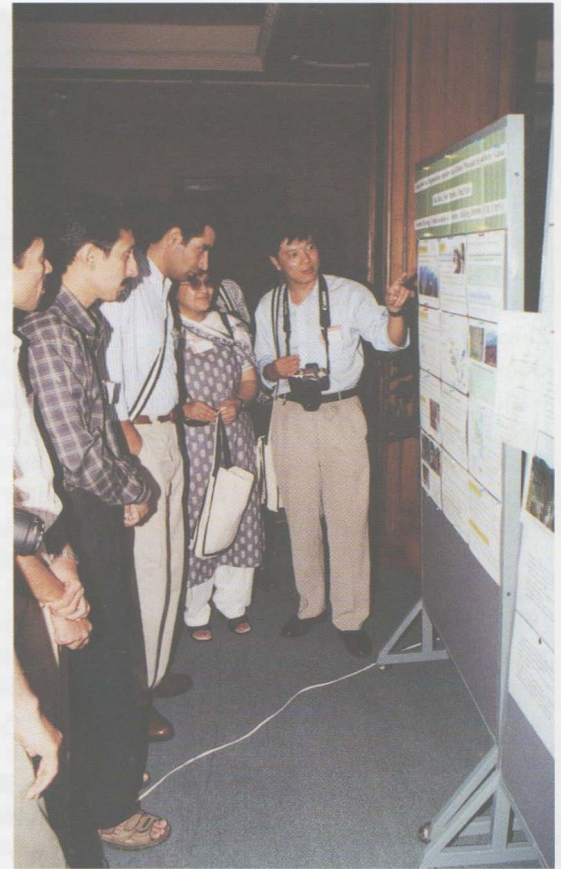
Right: Dr David Parkin from the Department of Genetics, Nottingham University, gave a fascinating talk on Molecular genetics and the conservation of threatened birds. He also summed up the programme introducing the resolutions that were put forward.



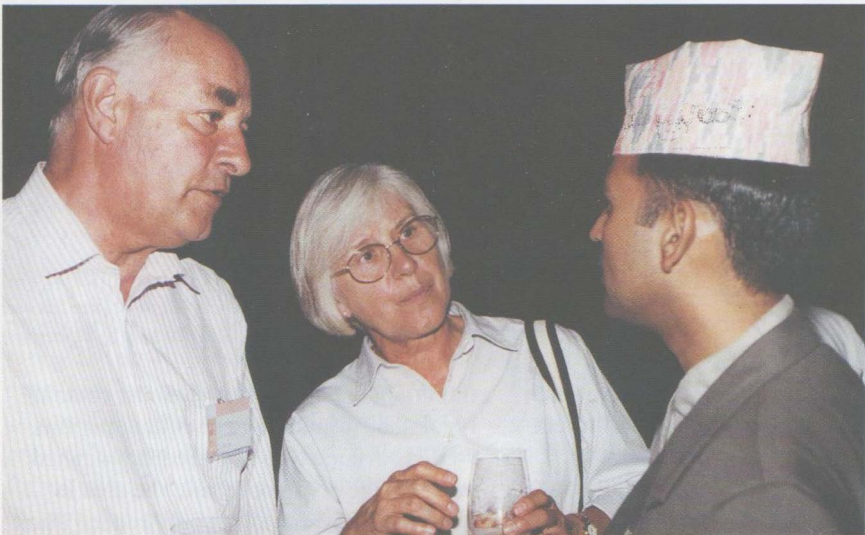
Left: L to R: Rabi Bahadur Bisla (secretary, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation), Richard Howard, Prince Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah and Brigadier Mukhtar (Chair WPA Pakistan).



Prince Gyanendra, as well as inaugurating the symposium programme, graciously hosted an evening reception, where he took the opportunity to meet many of the delegates. Here he is talking to Dr Sathyakumar and Rahul Kaul.



Many of the presentations were in the form of posters, where the individual had a chance to explain their work to a smaller audience. This allowed individuals to ask more questions. Jia Chenxi presenting his poster on Habitat fragmentation and survival of the blood pheasant in Gansu, China.



Left: The author and artist Martin Woodcock with his wife Barbara, talking to Hem Sagar Baral.

Below: Hem Sagar Baral, President of Bird Conservation Nepal and convenor of the Nepal Working Committee, who worked so hard organising the symposium.

Dr Kyaw Tint, Director General of the Wildlife Department and U Khin Muang Zaw (Director, Wildlife Division) were sponsored to attend the symposium, where many discussions were held about future collaborations in Myanmar.



Photo: Peter Garson

**Excerpts from the address given by His Royal Highness Prince Gyanendra
Bir Bikram Shah, Chairman, the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation to the
International Galliformes Symposium, Nepal 2000**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure to inaugurate this International Symposium on Galliformes. I commend the organisers, the World Pheasant Association, the Bird Conservation Nepal, The Department of National Parks and Wildlife conservation, His Majesty's Government of Nepal and the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation for this effort. The occasion, with so many familiar faces in the audience, brings back memories of the first meeting of the World Pheasant Association (WPA) held in Nepal some 21 years ago. A gathering such as this, bringing together conservationists and scientists, must surely lead to a better understanding of the threats facing galliformes. For such previous gifts of nature, conservation strategies that are both systematic and sound, will I am sure, receive the highest priority in your deliberations.

I am particularly pleased to observe that a key feature of your symposium is to encourage young scientists with the opportunity to present their work. Above all, this will give them an added responsibility to present biological data so vital for administrators to understand and state of wilderness areas and the species that abide and survive there. This, I believe, will surely be an added incentive for posterity.

The Annapurna Conservation Area is not only Nepal's favourite trekking destination, but also where all six species of Himalayan pheasants continue to occur.

Managed by the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, the Annapurna Conservation Area Project covers an area of over 7,000 square kilometres. Within that area, over 100,000 indigenous residents have chosen a flexible, grass-root participatory comprehensive approach. This has enabled them to build a consensus to satisfy their needs, while at the same time inspired them in consensus building to preserve bio-diversity. Again, within this conservation area, some baseline data exists for the environs of Pipar. These procedures need repetition and expansion in other protected areas. The King Mahendra Trust intends to execute a project developing Pipar as a pheasant sanctuary. Your support for this endeavour would be highly welcome.

As the success of community-based forests continues to grow in Asia, it has given growth to illicit trapping and hunting of wild species. This leads one to consider that while protection is certainly called for, developing a harvest management plan of common game species is now of strategic

importance. Such a strategy must contain regulated, sustained-yield culling permits so that revenue thus acquired is ploughed back for the community and the area in question. This would not only reduce illicit activity, but would also ensure a permanent source of income to develop and sustain a proficient human resource. Resource managers and local communities must continue a dialogue and join hands to effectively protect and utilise wildlife resources.

I am aware that much of this symposium is designed to increase discussion between all participants, with the objective of forging new friendships and long-term working relationships. Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. Mindful of this, I hope, your discussions in the informal atmosphere of Godavari, Chitwan and the Annapurna Conservation Area will contribute to making this symposium a memorable one.



His Royal Highness Prince Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah addresses the International Galliformes Symposium.

Photo: John Brown

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Scientists' Workshop of the 7th International Galliformes Symposium - I B Parnell

The Scientists' Workshop of the 7th International Galliformes Symposium was held 1-6 October 2000 at the King Mahendra Trust Nepal Training and Research Center (NTRC) in Sauraha, Nepal. There were 18 scientists in attendance representing Nepal, India, China, Cambodia, Vietnam, the USA and the UK. The purpose of the Scientists' Workshop was to instruct scientists on population sampling techniques that could then be used to better monitor galliformes populations in their respective countries. Scientists were able to learn population monitoring techniques that can be compared across national borders and provide rigorous results from their studies that may be presented to national governments in order to better manage species of concern.

The informal atmosphere of the workshop provided a superb environment for sharing research results and developing new directions for future research. Dr John Carroll (USA) was the workshop programme coordinator, along with Dr Philip McGowan (UK) and Dr Peter Garson (UK). There were daily lectures given by the instructors on various sampling techniques and methods of data analysis. Some workshop participants volunteered to give presentations that were then critiqued by the rest of the group. Workshop participants also prepared research proposals for topics chosen from the current action plans. The proposals were then presented to the group for critique. The purpose of the critiques was to give the participants an opportunity to learn how to construct experiments with clear objectives, how to evaluate other scientists' research and give constructive

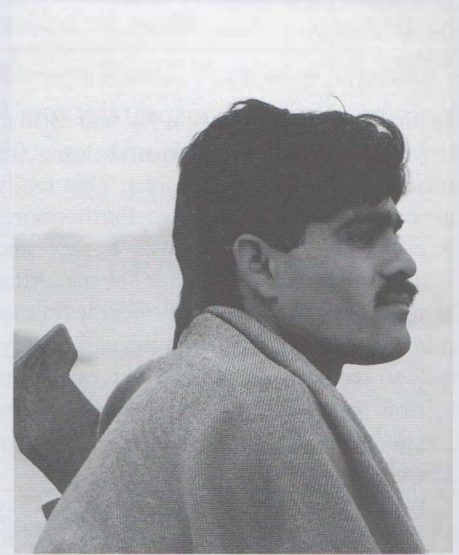
criticism, and how to deal with criticism of your own research.

In the field, workshop participants learned how to set up trail cameras to monitor areas remotely. Several of these cameras were set up around the NTRC in hopes of photographing a rhinoceros or wild elephant at night. Only one roll of film (out of four) has been developed and it revealed a large bull elephant standing in the driveway of the NTRC. The participants are looking forward to seeing what was captured on the other rolls of film.

The Scientists' Workshop was not all work though. The participants had the opportunity to participate in daily nature walks in the nearby community forests of the Royal Chitwan National Park's buffer zone. They visited one area that was formerly overgrazed and deforested, but through the efforts of the King Mahendra Trust and local people the area supports a diversity of wildlife and provided needed fuel and other forest products for the local people. There was also a football match between Nepal and the 'Rest of the World' that resulted in a 2-2 draw. The match was witnessed by about 30 local children and residents and followed by a great dinner at one of the local resort hotels.

Mr Hem Sagar Baral from Bird Conservation Nepal did a great job organising the logistics of the workshop and each evening negotiated dinner for all the participants at one of the local hotels or tour outfitters. The participants and instructors had a great time getting to know each other and learning about each other's research.

Visit of Tanveer Malik to Scotland, UK March-July 2000



I was invited by the committee of WesTrag 2000 to come to the UK for training and experience in pheasant management, during the period March to July 2000. The purpose of the training was to enable me to help run the WesTrag 2000 project in Pakistan. Westrag is presently trying to introduce the rare western tragopan into captivity in Mansehra, Pakistan. In Scotland I gained experience with different WPA breeders. It was interesting to see how many ideas there are for captive breeding. It was also interesting to see how these breeders decorate their pheasantries with logs, stones and branches. There was a great difference between the feeding programmes - some breeders used fruit regularly, some used it once in a week, and others didn't use it at all. Some used pellets and grains and specialised feeds for special pheasants. Everybody has their own ideas about rearing chicks: some use broodies whilst others use artificial incubators. At Fenton Barns I helped to rear the pheasant chicks. My favourites were Mikado and Swinhoes because they were friendly and lovely to work with.

I would like to thank the people who I visited, they made my stay very comfortable and British Airways Assisting Conservation who supplied the flight.

It's my hope that now I may be able to assist not only WesTrag 2000 but also NWFP Wildlife Department with their captive breeding projects in the future.



The teams from the Nepal vs The Rest of the World football match plus some spectators.

Colombian EBA Project Interim Report

Taken from a letter written by Thomas Donegan, Paul Salaman, Jose Manuel Ochoa and Andres M Cuervo to WPA.

My thanks indeed go to WPA and British Airways Assisting Conservation for donating a flight to the project. This really cut our costs dramatically. Furthermore, travelling in Club Class was a new and highly pleasurable experience for me. After flying to Bogotá, the EBA Project team met up in Medellín, Colombia at the end of July, ready to conduct biodiversity surveys of the isolated and biologically unknown Alto Tamar, in Dpto. Antioquia, northern Colombia.

We had all the equipment and food ready to go, and just before fieldwork was due to start, we chartered a light aircraft to circle the massif looking for an appropriate place to land in a helicopter. We found the massif to be completely covered in virgin primary forest, with no human settlements or clearings for tens of kilometres. However, at 2000 m elevation on a high plateau, we



Photo: Paul Salaman/EBA '00

Crax salvini

encountered a small marshland with very low vegetation, perfect for air-dropping the team and equipment by helicopter. We took several rolls of photographs of the forest and mountains. The site is perfect for our surveys and future conservation work.

Sadly, just a few days before flying in, a guerrilla/paramilitary confrontation occurred in an area between Medellín (Colombia's second city from where the helicopter would leave) and Alto Tamar. Although the confrontation was 80 km south of our study area, all flights in the surrounding regions were prohibited by the military. Despite willing pilots, we were unable to enter the zone.

Having seen the extent and quality of the forest in Alto Tamar, we considered it better to wait and re-attempt the project later in the year, rather than to relocate to study an alternative region. Our helicopter pilot is prepared to do the drop-off and pick-up, and a good price is already set. Additionally,

we have already completed the lengthy process of obtaining government permits to do the research in Alto Tamar.

We have all the equipment and food stored in a team member's house in Medellín. It is all packed and ready to go. The expedition funds were already changed to Colombian Pesos before the situation changed, and therefore have been deposited in a special high interest high street bank account in Colombia. We will therefore be delaying the project fieldwork in this area until late December/early January when Colombian and UK team members are on vacation from university again.

The zone has already re-stabilised now. There is now no prohibition on air flights over the zone and there has been no adverse news from the area for over a month. However, we considered it more prudent to wait longer.

But our time in Colombia was not at all wasted. After it became apparent that the flight was not possible, we spent a week investigating the birds of Tambito Nature reserve, in the south west of the country, following up work from 1997. We worked in higher elevations (2200-2900 m) in which we were unable to study in previous years, and made many interesting new findings on the birds of the area. In Cracids, we made further records and observations of sickle-winged guan *Chamaepetes goudottii*, an endemic of the Northern Andean mountain chain.



Ivory-billed aracari

We then spent a further week following up conservation work in Serranía de los Churumbelos, our study area in 1998-99. We spent much time talking to local people about the forest and its animals, as well as conducting additional bird surveys. Deforestation in the Churumbelos has now stopped, as local people are farming other crops, rather than selling forest wood to make a living. The declaration of Churumbelos national park, a direct result of this and previous EBA expedition fieldwork, is now very much in progress, and we were able to support the environment agencies in this process.

Whilst in the Churumbelos, we also spent much time talking to local hunters, farmers and children about the animals of the zone, with a special emphasis on Cracids. From these talks, we discovered the existence of black curassow *Crax alector* in the zone. Additionally, working with a local farmer in the field, we were pointed out the call of common piping-guan *Pipile pipile* in the forests during bird surveys. We had not previously recorded either of these species. Salvin's curassow *Mitu salvini* was previously known only from talks with hunters in the zone. On talking to local people, we found a juvenile *M. salvini* in captivity in a house near our study area which we photographed, confirming the record. Much new information of all avian groups was collected which will be key in fuelling the continuing conservation effort there.

Despite not being able to achieve our primary objective this summer, we managed to lay in place all the preparations for fieldwork this December, and conducted some brief and exceptionally rewarding work at two other sites at little cost to the project. We look forward to returning to Alto Tamar in December/January to complete the project's objectives.

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WPA

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For further information on membership of WPA, or supporting the Association in any other way, please contact the Administrator
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ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS PRESENTED AT A RECENT MEGAPODE SYMPOSIUM HELD WITHIN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS IN BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

Female-female aggression in Australian brush-turkeys

Sharon M. Birks, Burke Museum, Box 353010, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195, USA. E-mail: sbirks@u.washington.edu

Male Australian brush-turkeys *Alectura lathami* construct large incubation mounds that they maintain and defend for several months during the breeding season. Because male-male competition limits the number of males with mounds, and because females prefer some mounds over others, many incubation mounds are used by several females. During a four-year field study in southeast Queensland, I found that females frequently encountered each other during visits to incubation mounds but seldom tolerated each other's presence. Females competed for access to mounds by chasing, fighting, and occasionally inflating their wattles and vocalizing; individuals differed markedly in their aggressiveness and competitive ability. Females who lost aggressive interactions were usually forced to wait to lay and spent only a fraction of the normal time digging their laying hole. The depth at which eggs are laid affects their incubation temperature, and other studies have shown that deeply buried eggs have the highest hatching success. Thus, aggression during laying may ultimately affect egg mortality by limiting digging time for non-aggressive females. Females who frequently lost fights switched to new incubation mounds more rapidly than those who did not, which suggests that losing aggressive interactions may be costly.

Living without parents - how hatchlings of the Australian brush-turkey survive

Ann Göth, Australian School of Environmental Science, Griffith University, Nathan 4111 QLD, Australia
E-mail: A.Goeth@mailbox.gu.edu.au

Chicks of the Australian brush-turkey *Alectura lathami* as with all species of megapode, must cope with a problem unique among birds: there are no adults to look after them. Megapodes deposit their eggs within burrows of volcanically heated soil, or in mounds constructed of organic material, in which the heat required for incubation is derived from decomposition and/or solar. After hatching, the chicks dig themselves out of the incubation site and are immediately independent. Here I report on the first study on free-ranging megapode chicks. Radio-tracking and experiments on the predator recognition ability of hatchlings were utilized in an attempt to understand how these hatchlings survive in the absence of parents. Aspects studied included the vegetation structure preferred by the chicks, the type of predators preying on them, other factors affecting their survival and the behaviour of chicks when confronted with introduced and native predators. To date, conservation plans for endangered or threatened megapode species have not considered chicks, as nothing is known about their behaviour and survival in the wild. For this reason, this talk will not only deal with the results gained during two breeding seasons, but it will also assess the factors most important for inclusion in management plans for endangered megapodes. Although the Australian brush-turkey is one of the most common megapodes, many general results, such as those relating to predator recognition and preferred habitat structure, are likely to be



Male Australian brush-turkey on nest mound.

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Metapopulation structure of Australian brush-turkeys as indicated by their arthropod symbiotes: do mites and lice behave like mitochondrial DNA?

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The Australian brush-turkey *Alectura lathami* is a relatively widespread species of megapode with populations extending throughout coastal and inland Queensland to central eastern New South Wales. Although capable of flight, they are relatively sedentary and are restricted to forested habitat; hence, it seems likely that geographically distant groups of Australian brush-turkeys have little demographic exchange. Australian brush-turkeys are host to numerous species of symbiotic arthropods (feather lice and feather mites) that are transmitted entirely through physical contact between hosts. The absence of parental care in these birds means that there is only horizontal transmission of symbiotes between socially interacting individuals. This means that, barring immigration of adult birds, the arthropod symbiotes present in a given population of Australian brush-turkeys should be the descendants of those arthropods present on the hosts that founded the population. We hypothesised that the assemblage structure of arthropod symbiotes of the Australian brush-turkeys should reflect geographical separation of host populations, such that individual hosts within one region should have more similar arthropod assemblages than those inhabiting more distant regions. We tested this by collecting feathers from Australian brush-turkeys from throughout their entire Queensland range. Feathers were preserved in ethanol and the arthropods removed from the surface of the feathers and from inside the quill. Specimens were mounted and identified to species, or morphospecies if they proved to be undescribed. These data were examined using multivariate analysis (dendrograms, ordinations) to determine whether the similarity of arthropod assemblages reflected the geographic distance of their hosts.

Relationship between time since fire and summer food resources for malleefowl

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As the habitat of the malleefowl *Leipoa ocellata* becomes increasingly scarce, fragmented and degraded, the maintenance of habitat quality emerges as a critical objective in the conservation of this endangered species. The occurrence, extent and frequency of fire are key determinants of habitat quality for malleefowl. A positive correlation is thought to exist between malleefowl density and the duration the habitat has remained free from fire. This presentation examines whether this relationship can be explained by the occurrence of substantially greater quantities of food resources in long-unburnt mallee habitat. Food resources available to malleefowl were compared across a range of habitats with differing fire histories (8, 16, 23, and 36 years post fire). A range of potential food items was sampled, including herbs, epigeic invertebrates, flowers, fruits shrub-borne seeds, and seeds on the ground. The abundance of most of these foods was independent of fire history. Shed seed larger than 3mm was the only food item to increase in abundance as a function of time since fire. The stock of large seed within the seed-bank, may explain, at least in part, why old-growth mallee appears to be optimal habitat for malleefowl.



Malleefowl.

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An overview of the joint DNA Project with pheasants

Gary Robbins

World Pheasant Association, Co-chairman EAZA Galliformes TAG

Some two years ago, an ambitious project was proposed and to be organised jointly by the EAZA Gallitag, the World Pheasant Association and the Institute of Wildlife Conservation (INFS) of Bologna, Italy. This project has been submitted to the IUCN/SSC Pheasant Specialist Group and received its full endorsement.

The aim of this project is the use of genetic analysis to evaluate captive galliformes stock for possible release in the future. Forty-two gallinaceous species have been identified as threatened in the Action Plan of the Pheasant Specialist Group.

The main objectives of the project are:

- to define the significant taxonomic units and use them as a reference basis, using biological samples from wild birds.
- to check purity of the captive population by comparing their Genome to the reference base. This will identify hybrids and allow them to be eliminated from managed captive populations.
- to define the genetic variability of the captive stock in order to ascertain the main bloodlines in each captive population and manage them to avoid loss of genetic variability during the coming years.

The project actually started in March of this year, with the appointment of a graduate to carry out work under the control of Dr Ettore Randi of INFS, in Italy. Prior to the start of this project, work was already being carried out on the relationship of the three endemic Vietnamese pheasants, (Edwards's Vietnamese and Imperial) funded by the Museum of Natural History, Paris. These species were considered closely related in the wild, and some captive stocks of Edwards' include hybrids with Swinhoe's pheasants. To date eleven such birds have been identified and culled from future breeding programmes.

Genetic diversity in the Edwards's pheasants still exist in spite of 75 years of captive breeding without any imports from the wild. Five or six bloodlines have been identified, of which one is very closely related to the wild birds that have been

discovered recently. As a result of these findings, the existing captive population is to be managed on a scientific basis using specially developed software.

Recent studies of the three closely related species, the Edwards's, Vietnamese and Imperial pheasants, suggested that the Imperial pheasant may well be a hybrid occurring naturally in the wild, between the Edwards's and a silver pheasant sub-species. Experiments carried out last year at Cleres, in France, where Edwards's and Berlioz silver pheasant show phenotype hybrids similar to the suggested imperial pheasant caught in February this year. DNA tests of that bird have suggested it is a hybrid with profiles similar to the Edwards's and silver pheasant sub-species.

To support this investigation in the wild, posters have been printed, sponsored by WWF/Birdlife/WPA/MNH, and these depict the three pheasants. Posters were distributed to villages in or around national parks and reserves of Vietnam. Basically the poster asks "Have you seen or caught any of these birds?" The results have been very good; some six Edwards's pheasants have been brought in during the last three years, from three locations. Rather remarkable for a species which was believed extinct! In addition, the imperial hybrid was recovered in February 2000.

Some Edwards's pheasants in the United States have started to produce white tail feathers very similar to the Vietnamese pheasants, which might suggest that they too could be hybrids; the investigation continues.

Returning to the main project, some 80 samples have been analysed from various tragopans, they all tested pure, except two from birds, which reside outside the EAZA region. On the other hand, all the sonnerat junglefowl tested to date show they are hybrids, only three birds held in the USA are pure.

A PhD study into the relationship of the various silver pheasant subspecies/ kalij pheasants using DNA analysis, is also being carried out for the Museum of Natural

History, Paris. This research is running in parallel to our project; their next step will be to start examining museum skins.

Another practical area where the UK-Gallitag and WPA have been involved, is the proposed re-introduction of the green peafowl into Peninsular Malaysia. Ten years ago, four pairs of captive bred green peafowl were sent to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks in Kuala Lumpur, to help provide them with experience in breeding a species which became extinct some 40 years ago on the peninsular.

Three years ago, a group of these green peafowl was released into the heavily forested grounds of Malacca Zoo. These birds bred in 1998 and again in 1999 and now survive unassisted in the wild. The Department of Wildlife and National Parks is closely monitoring their progress to evaluate what lessons might be learned for any possible future re-introduction programmes.

To comply with IUCN/SSC Re-introduction Guidelines, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks wishes to confirm which sub-species of green peafowl originally inhabited Peninsular Malaysia.

With the help from the Trustees of the Raffles Skin Collection, housed in the National University of Singapore, we were given special permission to collect feather and tissue samples from four specimens which were caught in Peninsular Malaysia during 1914. The British Natural History Museum in Tring also allowed samples to be taken from eight skins of peafowl collected in the peninsular during the 1930s. The DNA analysis will confirm the sub-species living in the area at that time. Samples were also taken from two skins originating from north and south Thailand. We know the Indo-Chinese sub-species *P.m. imperator* exists in Northern Thailand and the nominate race *P.m. muticus* was thought to have existed in Southern Thailand and Java.

Once these samples are analysed, the next stage of their release programme can be considered.

Resulting from the close liaison between WPA and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks of Malaysia, the Director General recently gave permission for feather samples to be collected from all their wild caught birds held at their Sungaki Breeding Centre, and for CITES licences to be issued so that they can be analysed as a part of the DNA project. DNA reference markers were taken from all the seven endemic species found in Peninsular Malaysia, (excepting red junglefowl) plus samples from the Bulwer's pheasant held at the Breeding Centre.

These samples will be processed and used as reference markers to check birds entering any future European Studbook. A further development of the DNA project is that aliquots from the Malaysian pheasants are also to be made available to the AZA Gallotag in the USA.

Should anyone be interested in participating in this joint venture, or would like to help with funding, please contact Alain Hennache at Cleres, France, or myself at WPA in the UK.

(This transcript is taken from a talk given at the EAZA Annual Conference, held in Aalborg, Denmark, 19-24 September 2000).

HESITANT BRONX ZOO PHEASANTS GET AUDIO PRESENCE

Taken from ZooNews Digest 28 August - 3 September 2000 (Zoo News 118)

NEW YORK - It's summertime at the Bronx Zoo and love is in the air. Or rather, love is being broadcast over a segment of the park-wide audio system to target three unsuspecting birds who are having trouble feeling the vibes. The Zoo's Bird Department is focusing its efforts on boosting the size of a collection of Bulwer's wattled pheasants consisting of two males and one female, which are housed in the pheasant aviary. Breeding success of Bulwer's pheasants in captivity has been universally poor, so the team is making concerted efforts to simulate the birds' natural habitat at the zoo in order to promote mating. John Rowden, assistant curator of the Bird Department, has collected information through both research at the Bronx Zoo and fieldwork in Borneo on the mating habits of Bulwer's wattled pheasants. His research has led to the finding that these birds use an exploded lek breeding system, meaning that the males will gather in the same general area and set up display arenas, while remaining visually isolated from one another. The key way males keep track of each other in this system is by vocalizing. Among the Bulwer's pheasants specifically, the vocalization consists of a loud, two-note call, performed during display. So how do you motivate those shy males to start strutting their stuff for the female?

Competition, of course! Every day at one-minute intervals from 6.30 to 7.30 am, and 5.30 to 6.30 pm, the zoo broadcasts recorded male display vocalizations on the branch of park-wide audio system speakers located within the pheasant aviary. According to Rowden, these hours were chosen because Bulwer's pheasants tend to be more active early and late in the day. Instrumental to this audio project were members of the WCS Media Services Department, who created the WAV file of the male Bulwer's pheasant's vocalizations that were then programmed into the park audio system and played on cue. In addition to mimicking the bird calls, this also providing the pheasants with daily rain showers (they breed during the rainy season in Borneo), and dust baths (dust bathing is an important activity for them). In attempting to recreate the pheasants' natural habitat in these ways, the bird department hopes to augment its collection of Bulwer's wattled pheasants, as well as to expand general knowledge of how to successfully maintain a population of these birds in captivity. According to initial observations of the undergoing projects, both the males and the female increase their activity when the vocalizations are playing. So who said there's no recipe for love?

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

2000

2-3 December National Cage & Aviary Birds Exhibition, NEC Birmingham, UK

2001

7-10 January SEAZA Conference, The Philippines

12 January Pheasant Specialist Group Core Committee Meeting, London, UK

10-11 February Members weekend, Lotherton Bird Garden - all welcome

17 May WPA Red Grouse Charity Clay Pigeon Shoot, West Wycombe, UK

7-8 July Game Conservancy Scottish Fair, Scone Palace, Perthshire, Scotland

13 July PSG Core Committee Meeting, Game Conservancy, Fordingbridge, UK

27-29 July CLA Game Fair, Woburn Abbey, UK

7 September WPA Red Grouse Charity Clay Pigeon Shoot, Dunkeld, Scotland

18-23 September EAZA Conference, Prague

29-30 September WPA International Annual Convention, Jersey, Channel Islands

2002

early August 9th International Grouse Symposium, Beijing, China

August 23rd International Ornithological Congress, Beijing, China

Please let us have any dates of interest for inclusion.

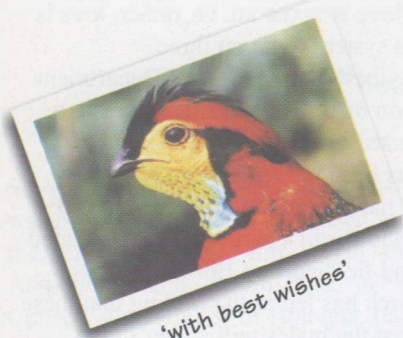
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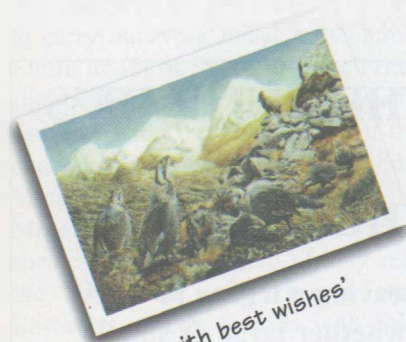
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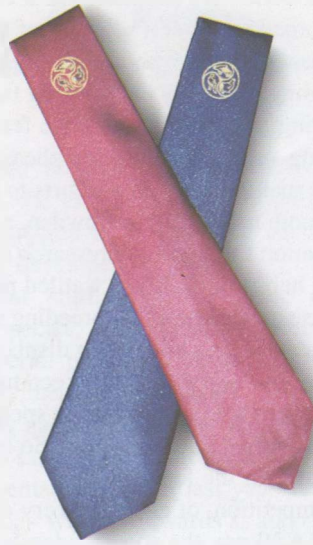


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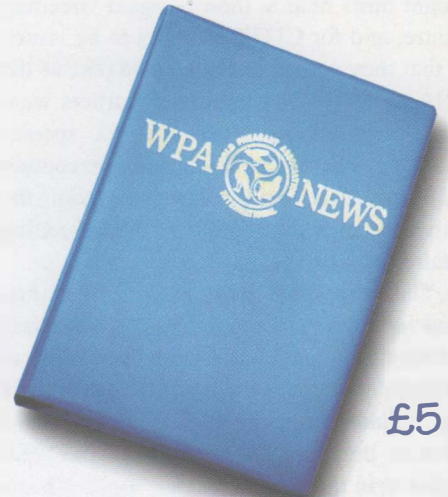
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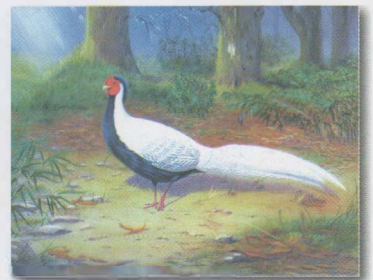
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