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WPA News 68 (2002)

World Pheasant Association

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WPA NEWS



The International Newsletter of the World Pheasant Association

WPA News No 68 January 2002 Contents

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Editorial

Happy New Year!

Undoubtedly members will notice a very different look to this edition of WPA News. Everyone involved with WPA must, by now, be very aware that our income is considerably less than our outgoings. As a fairly small charitable organisation, we have expanded the work we do to such an extent that the financial demands on us far outweigh the income produced by our membership. Our International Council has felt that a major increase in subscriptions is unlikely to be popular with our members, and there has been no change in subscription rates for many years. The costs of producing a glossy magazine and Annual Review, in colour, four times a year currently absorb the majority of our membership income.

We hope that the occasional production of WPA News in a cheaper format (black and white, re-produced in-house) will still provide members with the same information that we have been used to. We hope that this is a better solution than cutting down the number of productions each year. The loss of colour photos to accompany articles is less than it might have been, since many members have already purchased the Photo CD which John Corder compiled for us early in 2001. Of course, if you still have not purchased a copy (and 200 of you have done so), orders can be taken via the WPA Office at a cost of £15, including postage and packing.

Finally on cost savings of the newsletter, members will note the inclusion of a leaflet from The Hebridean Woolhouse. It has sponsored the mailing cost of £250 of this newsletter for which we are very grateful. Any member with a small business that could with imagination, justify being promoted to our members and who would like to help us by sponsoring our newsletter should contact Jill Court at the WPA office.

Council is immensely grateful to everyone who has responded to the Chairman's appeal for help with our financial situation. Worldwide, there is no

doubt that WPA and the Galliformes Specialist Groups are regarded by major conservation organisations as some of the most successful achievers, whether it be for field work or for conservation breeding. Over the past 25 years or so, we have expanded our interests and expertise immensely, and WPA is a much broader based organisation than it was in its infancy. Perhaps we should boast a little more of achievements such as the establishment of conservation areas and reserves in a number of areas of the world, or the continued existence of a number of galliform species that have been threatened with extinction. Few organisations can have had such a wide-ranging effect and incorporate such a great store of knowledge whilst they are as small as WPA.

For us to continue with these achievements, we need to attract more funding on a regular basis. The alternative does not bear thinking about.

2002 WPA Annual Convention to be held in Belfast, Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Ornamental Pheasant Society (NIOPS) has kindly offered to host the 2002 Convention in Belfast on the 28th – 29th September 2002, followed by a post convention tour. The main conference will be held at the City of Belfast Zoological Gardens, by kind permission of John Strong. We are grateful to our NIOPS colleagues for volunteering to 'entertain' us and feel sure that, if stories about past events are to be believed, we are all in for a memorable weekend. Please put the date in your diary now.

More details and the programme are to be published in the May Newsletter; other information is available from Jimmy Reekie Tel. 01324 562239.

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Bird Conservation Nepal
Northern Ireland Ornamental
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Re-forming of WPA Area Groups

One of the major improvement of services for members in the UK which has been proposed by the new Conservation Breeding & Avicultural Group, is to re-constitute area groups. When WPA first formed, more than 25 years ago, these groups were often at the core of breeding achievements, and also provided a ready source of support for members throughout the UK. Gradually, over the course of time, these groups, with the notable exception of Scotland, seemed to fall by the wayside, often because of difficulties in finding new "leaders / co-ordinators".

We are particularly grateful to the people listed below, who have kindly agreed to resurrect groups in their particular geographical areas, and hope that they are well-supported by you, the members. Please get in contact with whoever is closest to you and see if we can all work to re-establish the comradeship and support at local level for which WPA used to be so renowned.

Eventually, we hope to be able to publish a programme for each group so that members can plan their social "pheasanting" in advance. We feel sure that area co-ordinators will be happy for members to join as many groups as they wish.

We still have vacancies for co-ordinators in the following areas where we hope to re-establish groups: Lancashire, Yorkshire, West Midlands, East Midlands & the Heart of England. Please contact Mike Cook (01620 823748) if you think you might be able to help, or for any further information.

First Meeting of W. Somerset / Dorset, E. Devon Group

Pat & John Corder would like to invite any interested members (and their families) in this area to visit at their new home and aviaries, just outside Chard at 2.30 p.m. on the afternoon of Sunday, March 10th. Please

let them know beforehand if you would like to attend.

Scottish Spring Meeting

To be held in East Lothian at the collections of Keith Chalmers-Watson & Mike Cook in March 2002. For full details contact Alastair Mackie.

Errata

We are grateful to Mr. Oh Siong Lai, a WPA member in Malaysia, who noticed the misprint in the article about re-introducing green peafowl to Malaysia, which was published on Page 7 of the last edition.

The article should have stated that "the extinct Peninsular Malaysia population belonged to the extant Javan species *P. m. muticus*, and not *P. m. imperator*."

Mr. Oh has quite a large collection of pheasants, which he breeds at his home in Terengganu State. Many of his birds have been imported from Europe and he is always keen to meet any WPA members who might be in the area. He can be contacted at oh8@tm.net.my

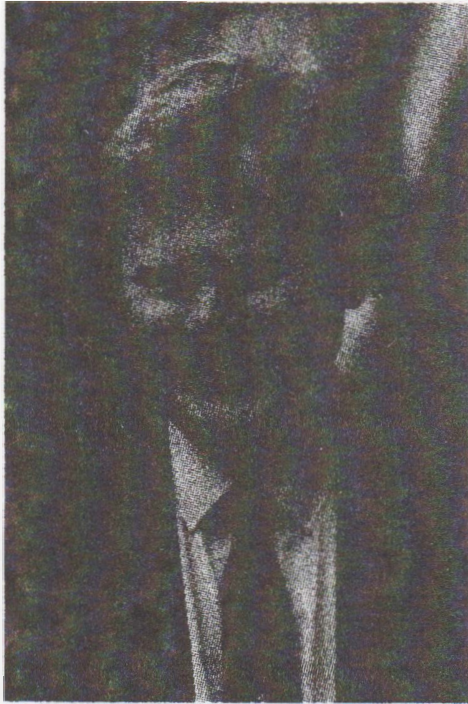


Green peafowl David Mead

Apologies that the last edition of WPA News was numbered 65 and should have been 66.

Scotland	Alastair Mackie	01466 730209
North England	Ian Henderson	01661 842896
N. Wales, Cheshire	Mark Boilstone	01691718255
Lincs. Notts.	Roger Gott	01507 358552
S.Wales, N.Somerset,		
Gloucs.	Andrew Sheppy	01934 832180
East Anglia, South East	Mrs Jo Birch	01277 365935
W. Somerset, Dorset,		
E.Devon	John Corder	01460 61211
S W England:	Terry Hancock	01503 220364
South England:	Simon Mayes	01983 615236

Award Winning Ornithologist to head World Pheasant Association



Professor Dick Potts

Award winning ornithologist Dick Potts is to head the World Pheasant Association from next April.

Dick retires as Director General of the Game Conservancy Trust in December and will take over from Richard Howard as Chairman of the WPA.

The son of a Yorkshire farmer, Dick has always had a passion for all-things ornithological. He says: "I am thrilled to be heading the WPA. My career in conservation has been fascinating and has given me the chance to see exotic pheasants and their relatives all over the world. We understand the difficulties they face in endangered forest habitats, but it will be a real challenge to better understand the problems they face in a farmland environment."

Known especially for his work with grey partridges and generally for game bird conservation in the UK, Dick is no stranger to the WPA. One of his first major papers given overseas was at the Association's first International Pheasant Symposium in Kathmandu in 1979.

Dick and the Trust have always had close links with the WPA. This relationship was borne out of a realisation that the Trusts' intensive work to understand and conserve the game species of the UK could have much wider applications wherever

pheasant species are threatened. The Trust has been involved in WPA's training of overseas students for many years, and is continually presenting the latest conservation approaches and scientific techniques to WPA meetings, especially in Asia.

Dick joins WPA at what is probably the most challenging time in its existence, as the birds it cares for are more threatened than ever before. The threats to forest pheasants and their allies are now well known and the time has come to turn science into action. At the same time, the pressures on partridges and pheasants that live closer to humans in fields and cropland throughout the world are becoming more evident. Dick's long-running and intensive work in the UK will now prove a great asset worldwide as WPA continues its battle to ensure the survival of these birds and their habitats. Dick said: "Anyone who cares for these beautiful birds has a role to play in conserving them, and I look forward to working with these dedicated people from many different countries."

Capercaillie given greater protection in Scotland

The Scottish Executive's ban on hunting of capercaillie came into force on 4th November 2001 and carries with it a £5000 penalty for shooting one of these birds. The Scottish Executive decision was made without any consultation with WPA despite the fact that we are responsible internationally for the conservation of this species.

The decision has all the appearance of political window dressing - appearing to be doing something major when in fact it is doubtful if as many as a dozen capercaillie have been shot in the last decade. Landowners have operated a voluntary ban. Capercaillie numbers have declined from around 20,000 in the 1970s to around 1000 at the present time.

During the last decade WPA members have been refused permission to do trial reintroductions in parts of Scotland where capercaillie have not existed for fifty years (since the great storms of 1952) but where



replanted woodland is now mature enough to make a reintroduction a possible success from a habitat point of view and landowners were prepared to support such a project.

There are of course many factors to be considered with an attempted reintroduction not least predator control which is probably the greatest single factor in capercaillie survival. Just how this new legislation is intended to motivate and encourage game keepers to control predators in existing capercaillie areas is hard to fathom.

The capercaillie is the biggest member of the grouse family, with adult males weighing as much as 15 lb. In winter its principle food is pine needles - perhaps such a resinous diet explains why its flesh is seldom eaten - it is said to taste strongly of turpentine.

The capercaillie died out in Scotland mainly as a result of the destruction of much of the ancient Caledonian Forest, but was reintroduced, largely as a result of the efforts of one man, Sir Thomas Buxton. Thirty two birds were brought from Sweden in 1837 & 1838 and released on Drummond Hill in Perthshire. For a number of years, as new pine plantations expanded in Scotland, their numbers grew steadily, although they always seemed to do best when afforded protection from predators. Further importations have supplemented the breeding programme.

In 1979, capercaillie were the subject of an Anglia Survival film, entitled *Old Man of the Woods*. The film was produced by WPA member, Colin Willock, whose book, "A Walk on the Wild Side" is available from the Game Conservancy Trust.

It would be interesting to have a Scottish perspective on the conservation, breeding and possible future this species.

New regulations for the importation of birds within the European Union

Since November 1st, new European Commission regulations regarding the importation of birds have made the movement of stock within the EU simpler, by doing away with the need to apply for import licences. In addition, there are new requirements for importations from countries outside the EU. DEFRA has issued six General Licences to cover all these events. The main requirements are:

EU Member States and Norway – General licence No. EGG/2176/01/GEN5

1. Issued under Article 4 of the importation of Birds, Poultry and Hatching Eggs Order 1979, covered by Council Directive 90/539/EEC Birds for Zoos and Conservation Programmes. (extracts for Pheasants, Partridge & Quail)
2. Birds must come from a holding or business which is registered by a competent authority in the Member State of Origin.
3. The birds must be accompanied by a declaration, signed by the owner, containing at least the following three statements:
 - a. Birds must not have obvious signs of disease at the time of export.
 - b. Premises of origin must not be subject to health restrictions at the time of export.
 - c. Birds from third countries must have completed 30 days quarantine prior to export, and are free from quarantine restrictions.
4. The birds must not come from a holding in which avian influenza has been diagnosed in the 30 days prior to export.
5. The birds must not come from a holding or area subject to restrictions under measures that have been applied to combat Newcastle disease.
6. The importer must give at least 24 hours notice in writing to the Divisional Veterinary Manager responsible for the place of destination, of their intention to import the birds, specifying the nature of the consignment, its anticipated date of arrival and place of destination.
7. Article 10 requirements for birds under CITES still apply; permits should be

applied for at least 30 days prior to the importation.

Importation of birds from outside the European Union and Norway

General Licence No: Egg 2176/01/GEN2

1. This licence is issued under Article 4 of the importation of Birds, Poultry and Hatching Eggs Order 1979, covered by the Council Directive 90/539/ECC Birds for Zoos and Conservation programmes. (Extracts for Pheasants, Partridge and Quails)
2. Birds can only be imported from those countries listed as members of the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) other than EU Members & Norway.

Details obtainable from DEFRA Website – International Trade http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/int-trde/animlim/cins/ai_cins.htm

3. Birds must originate from holdings which are registered by the competent authority of the exporting country.
4. Birds destined for England and Wales must be accompanied by an animal health certificate, signed by an official veterinarian in the country of origin, in the same form used for other captive birds an example of which is shown in Annex A to commission directive 2000/666/EC.
5. Birds must be transported in cages or crates which must be numbered individually. The birds in each crate must be identified on the health certificate with the crate number.
6. The importer must provide written proof by a Local Veterinary Inspector, to the Border Inspection Post that a quarantine facility or centre is available, approved in accordance with Commission Directive 2000/66/EC, and that it will accept the birds. This only applies to birds entering England and Wales. Border Inspection Posts are Heathrow, Gatwick & Manchester Airports only.
7. All birds must be quarantined for at least 30 days in an approved quarantine facility or centre. During the quarantine period, inspections of the birds by an official Veterinarian and sampling and testing for avian influenza and Newcastle disease must be carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in Commission Directive 2000/66/EC.

(WPA is asking DEFRA for the importation of ornamental pheasants to be exempt from testing during quarantine and for them to be re-classified as Captive Birds,

being that they will never become a part of the food chain, unlike Game Pheasants)

8. Birds being imported must be identified by means of a tamperproof leg ring or a microchip with a unique serial number.
9. Birds will only be released from quarantine by written authorisation of the Divisional Veterinary Manager responsible for the facility.
10. All post-import quarantine costs shall be borne by the importer.
11. The importer must give at least one day's notice in writing of their intention of the importation, specifying the number, nature and ETA, to the official veterinarian of the border inspection post through which the birds are to be imported.
12. For those species which are covered by CITES, a CITES licence must be obtained for their importation 30 days prior to the intended importation date. Birds travelling by air must be in crates in accordance with IATA regulations. Failure to comply with the above requirements may result in the seizure of specimens by HM Customs & Excise

For more information or advice regarding the above given in Customer Information notes on Trade in Live Animals No. 2001/55: contact DEFRA – New imports, Tel 0207 904 6357 Fax 0207 904 6395.

We are grateful to Gary Robbins for his help in trying to make some sort of sense from these new regulations. There are still a number of areas which require further clarification, not least within DEFRA itself, but we are all trying to resolve these as quickly as possible in order that some of our vital conservation and breeding work is aided and not hindered by this legislation.

PHEASANTS AND GROUSE

Available from August 2002

KEITH CHALMERS-WATSON

Fenton Barns, North Berwick
East Lothian EH39 5BW

Tel: 01620 850201

Fax: 01620 850602

Avicultural News

Compiled by Gary Robbins

Closed ringing as conservation tool

The Wildlife wing of the Himachal Pradesh Forest Dept, India is to broaden its captive-breeding programme for the endemic species of pheasants for the coming year.

The species include Western and Satyr Tragopan, Himalayan Monal, Koklass, Cheer & Kalij pheasants. To ensure that accurate records are kept of all birds bred in captivity, they will be fitted with closed rings supplied by WPA. We are to send a further supply of rings for the 2002 season for use under the guidance of the Central Zoo Authority and the WPA SAFO office in India. All those involved in this project have now recognised the importance of maintaining captive stock from within the existing captive population, rather than continually taking birds from the wild.

We are very grateful to the Indian Central Zoo Authority for the support and funding which it has made available so that this conservation breeding project can proceed. As can be seen elsewhere in this Newsletter, a very successful course has been run in India recently for staff in zoos where pheasants are kept. The focus has been to try and improve breeding techniques and conditions, and thus reduce pressures to replace birds from wild stocks.

In Europe, it is difficult to imagine the difficulties experienced by some of our members in tropical countries. High temperatures, unavailability of specialist diets and a vast range of predators all seem to create immense problems for those who wish to breed galliformes.

It is good to see many different agencies all working together in India for the conservation of galliformes in the field and in captivity. We hope that they have many more successes to report by the time that our next International Symposium takes place in India in less than two year's time.

Last year, WPA also donated closed rings to the Wildlife Department in Malaysia for use with the existing breeding stock of green peafowl which they hold. With the re-introduction of this species now approaching, it is vital that all green peafowl in Malaysia can be easily identified so that no contamination of the re-introduced stock can occur.

Avian DNA Testing in the UK

A number of WPA members have previously used the company University

Diagnostics Ltd for early sexing of their galliformes. UDL recently announced that, from the 1st November 2001, they would be joining forces with Peter Scott and his team at Biotope. From that date, a new company called An-Gen will handle avian sexing, avian disease diagnosis and avian profiling.

UDL will continue as the testing laboratory, supplying the same high quality test results that you have come to expect from the UK's leading testing laboratory and Peter Scott's team will bring its expertise in client relations and marketing.

After 1st November all requests for kits, results and billing enquires should be directed to An-Gen at PO Box 60, Winchester, SO23 9XN Tel 01962-882986 Fax 01962-881790

New technology to candle thick shelled or coloured eggs

As people have become more interested in the development of their incubated eggs, whether they are under broodies, their parents or in an incubator, there has always been a problem in seeing the development of an embryo though thick shelled or heavily coloured eggs.

A new product has just come on the market called a "Buddy Egg Candler" which allows the heartbeat of a growing embryo to be monitored and to confirm that it is alive.

By placing the egg on a rubber cup, the machine will pass an infra-red ray through the egg and will instantly give the heart rate on the small screen. The readout is in the form of a three-digit pulse rate. Also, as the embryo moves, a graph records its movement. In the event of the embryo not being alive, a flat pulse line will be observed. (Most eggs will give a result after 5 days of incubation)

The Buddy Egg Candler can be run from the mains via a transformer or from its own batteries, which makes it possible to use in the field or in an incubation room.

Manufactured by Avitronics, it can be obtained from A.B.Incubators, Unit 1, Church Farm, Chelmondiston, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 1HS. Tel / Fax 01473 780050. Price £207.98 incl. VAT plus P&P

UK Gallitag Species Survey

To anyone in the UK who has not completed their survey form, we would be grateful if you can do so immediately, since all the data we can collect is vitally important in maintaining viable breeding stocks of galliformes in the UK.

Last year, the survey enabled us to

register a major decline in the Cheer Pheasant population and in the number of successful breeders with this species. The returns show that only seven collections held Cheer, and that virtually no young were successfully reared in 2000. Similarly the Madagascar Partridge appears to be going the same way: large numbers of these birds were bred 10 years ago yet now one has difficulty in finding good stock.

We are aware that not every breeder or collection completes a return for our annual survey, but would urge everyone to do so, since we all benefit from the information that it provides.

If you have lost your return, or have not received one, please contact Gary Robbins as soon as possible, since we need to have all returns in prior to the Harewood Avicultural Weekend 9th/10th February 2002, when details will be made available. We hope to publish some of the more significant findings in the next issue of the WPA News.

Avicultural Weekend at Harewood Bird Gardens, Saturday 9th / Sunday 10th February 2002

There is a varied programme planned for the weekend which should cover the interests of most people who are involved with captive breeding. We start on Saturday morning at 11.00 with the first full meeting of the new UK Conservation Breeding and Avicultural Group, where the objects of the group will be explained and its future programme will be outlined. At 2pm, the UK Gallitag will meet to discuss progress in the UK and Europe during the last year. Come along, hear the discussions and contribute if you wish.

On the Saturday evening we will hold our traditional Dinner at the Traveller's Rest, at nearby Collingham. People wishing to come need to book beforehand, so contact Gary Robbins gesr@garyrobbins.org or fax 01449 766065 and request a menu.

During the dinner, the WPA National Raffle will take place for some excellent prizes, so please get selling those tickets.

On the Sunday morning at 9.30, we start a Captive Breeding Workshop given by John Corder and Gary Robbins using Powerpoint presentations. The programme will include discussions on Aviary Construction, Food and Nutrition, Embryology, Incubation and the Rearing of Galliformes, Record Keeping and, finally, the Latest Legal Requirements in the UK. A visit to the Harewood Bird Gardens has been arranged for the afternoon.

Pheasant species in South Australia

Douglas Johnston

Douglas Johnston's article recently appeared in the Autumn 2001 magazine of the Australian Pheasant & Waterfowl Society

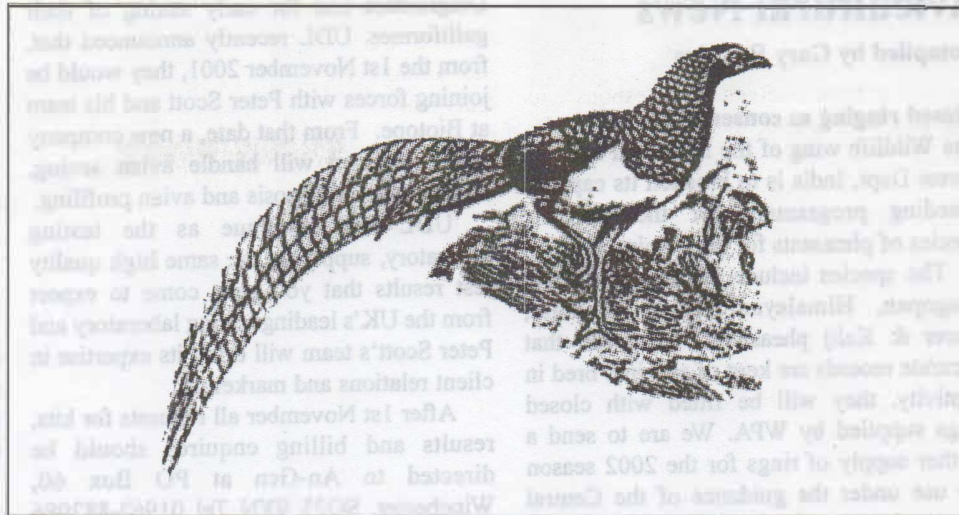
What prompted me to write this brief article on the number of pheasant and peafowl species that have been represented over time in South Australia was a telephone call I received recently. The particular caller had obtained my name and number from interstate. Prior to this she had been in contact with the World Pheasant Association which had provided her with information on pheasants. Her first question to me was where could she purchase a pair of tragopans as well as several other species.

Momentarily taken back by this request I reluctantly informed her that this species was unavailable in Australia. I pointed out that the range of species available in Australia is somewhat limited compared to some overseas countries. I suggested she may wish to consider some of the ornamental or game pheasants available in Australia as many of these are quite stunning. She has gone away to think about it.

This caused me to reflect on what species we have had over time in South Australia compared to what is now available.

The most logical and likely source of such information was the Adelaide Zoo. The Royal Zoological Society of South Australia published a book written by Mr C.E. Rix which detailed the various achievements of the Society covering the period from its formalised beginnings in 1878 up to 1978 and referred to the various animals and birds that have been exhibited during this period. An early list of purchases by the Society included a pair of golden pheasants, and in 1882-3, reference is made to the construction of a number of animal houses including a pheasantry. Also, in the late 1920s a number of exotic birds including 'fire-backed pheasants' were obtained following a trip to Singapore and the Dutch East Indies by the then Assistant Director of the Society.

In 1937 the total number of Galliforme species represented was 37. With the introduction of a complete ban on importing birds into Australia, except from New Zealand, since 1943, (with some very limited exceptions) this number has significantly



declined. Over the past 100 years up to 1978, the family PHASIANIDAE has had by far the biggest representation, and also provided the greatest number of breeding species of any of the order GALLIFORMES within the Adelaide Zoo. Indeed, the pheasant/peafowl group has numbered some 34 species and sub-species of which 24 have bred at some time.

What does become significant however is that at present there is only 8 species now represented in the collection. While it is recognised that during this 100 year period many of the species represented were at best only ever a pair, it nevertheless makes one reflect on the range of species we have had compared to now and that it is unlikely that we will ever see again in Australia. The list at the end of this article is quite amazing in the range of species that were once here in Australia.

What is the point of all this?

Essentially it is that, of those species we still have available to us in Australia, generally, a number of these are now coming under threat for various reasons. Poor fertility, hybridisation, declining interest in keeping pheasants, low prices, housing requirements and Local Government statutory restrictions are some of the problems we face as pheasant and waterfowl enthusiasts. What can we do? I am not sure other than to say that we as a Society should use our best endeavours to ensure the continuity of the species we have left in Australia. I would think we would all agree, that it would be sad to say in years to come to someone seeking to obtain a pair of Lady Amherst pheasants, "Sorry, this species is no longer available in Australia".

Reference

C.E. Rix. Royal Zoological Society of South Australia 1878 - 1978

The following is a list of the pheasants and peafowl that have been exhibited by the Royal Zoological Society of South Australia.

- Satyr Tragopan 1934 (B)
- Cabot's Horned Tragopan 1907 (B)
- Himalayan Monal 1887 (B)
- Brown-eared Pheasant 1892
- Blue-eared Pheasant 1954
- Nepal Kalij* 1934 (B)
- White-crested Kalij 1936
- Black-breasted Kalij 1892
- Silver Pheasant* 1884 (B)
- Edwards' Pheasant 1944 (B)
- Swinhoe's Pheasant* 1892 (B)
- Vieillot's Crested Fireback 1886 (B)
- Siamese Fireback 1937 (B)
- Crestless Fireback 1936
- Red Jungle Fowl 1932 (B)
- Japanese Long-tailed Fowl 1890
- Siamese Silk Fowl* 1886
- Green Jungle Fowl 1932
- Grey Jungle Fowl 1913
- Cheer Pheasant 1892 (B)
- Reeves' Pheasant* 1886 (B)
- Common Pheasant* 1884
- Mongolian Pheasant 1908 (B)
- Chinese Ringneck Pheasant 1950 (B)
- Melanistic Mutant Pheasant* 1937 (B)
- Green Japanese Pheasant 1937 (B)
- Golden Pheasant* 1884 (B)
- Lady Amherst's Pheasant* 1884 (B)
- Germain's Peacock Pheasant 1933 (B)
- Burmese Grey Peacock Pheasant 1908 (B)
- Malay Great Argus 1933 (B)
- Blue Peafowl* 1884 (B)
- White Peafowl 1886 (B)
- Green Peafowl* 1887 (B)

Date indicates when first exhibited by Zoo (B) indicates species has bred at least once in the Zoo

* in collection as on 30th June 1977

Email corner

It's great to have received some responses to John Corder's article on Palawan peacock-pheasants in the last edition of WPA News.

Dan Brooks, Chair of the Cracid Specialist Group wrote,

"Great article in last WPA News. I can't resist taking the time to answer a few of John's points! My male has gaps in the display fan only during post-moult feather growth, but they always grow out. My hen often lays 2 eggs. The last time she raised both to maturity, they were indeed a pair. My hen currently has 2 other chicks..... we'll see what they turn out to be! One appears a tad lighter in the face than the other, but it may have been the way the light was hitting it this morning. My female RARELY calls, and when she does, most often it's a 'quasi-alarm' call of sorts. Never anything even closely resembling duetting with the male."

Peter Paul van der Lugt wrote,

"I have read John Corder's article 'Peacock Pheasant Notes' with great interest. The points he raised will certainly interest all breeders.

My data are very limited and I can only say that indeed most breeders that have two young birds in a nest, claim to have one male and one female, but many breeders have only one surviving bird in a clutch and a score of 50% is not enough for evidence as you know. It would be interesting to ask people to report instances where they got two birds of the same sex. An explanation of different body weights of eggs could be that the mother cannot spend as much 'resource' on the second egg as on the first and then one might hypothesize that the heavier egg will yield a male. I have only last year started to use the weight loss of eggs to verify incubation. My recordings show two eggs of the Mountain peacock to have exactly the same weight. (Both eggs developed well. After some two weeks one egg showed no further weight loss and the young appeared dead. The other developed for a further 5 days but died in the shell).

I cannot remember having seen a visual difference in the size of the eggs of peacock pheasants, contrary to Temminck's and blood pheasants. As part of my university study I have become interested in the sex ratio and sex sequence of young birds. If it were true that the first egg is heavier, it would be interesting to know whether that egg develops into the male or the female.

But I am afraid we shall never know as most breeders including myself do not correlate the young with the egg from which it emerged."

Further to these points, John Corder has written:

It has been really interesting to hear from other breeders of peacock pheasants about their observations. I am sure we will find that not all birds of the same species behave in the same way, but without making this sort of information available, we will never be able to establish truly representative patterns of behaviour. Peter Paul's point about the importance of keeping records is vital - too often we rely on memory only for it to fail at a later stage (at least in my case!).

We have found that many of our birds, once they are established as breeding pairs, develop their breeding behaviour and vocabulary. For example, most hens seem much more competent at raising chicks the second and third time around, and they have much more confidence with their families. Of course, there should be no surprises with this, but we can certainly verify that birds such as Cheer actually seem to increase their recognisable vocabulary year on year. However, one quite common observation is one that I made in the previous article, namely that many pairs of birds do not display a full range of behaviour or calls if they think they are being overlooked. In all the years we have bred Himalayan Monals, I have never seen the cock tread the hen, yet every egg is fertile. The same is the case with Malaysian and Mountain Peacock Pheasants. Perhaps it is not too surprising that we do not always see or hear all of our birds' behaviour. We were fortunate with our Palawans that we were able to observe and to video their calling behaviour without their knowing.

Our very limited experience with raising Palawans has shown a great disparity in the age at which we were able to put closed rings on the chicks. Birds which later turned out to be males were able to be rung between 35 and 39 days, whereas those that were hens could only keep a ring on after 41 to 48 days. With our pairs of chicks, there was often quite a significant difference in size, even from the first or second day, and the smaller chick usually turned out to be a female.

Please send in any information or observations you have made; the more of us who contribute, the more likely it is that we'll all benefit, and this can only be to the

benefit of the birds that we try to breed and conserve.



Did you know?...

**Bird titbits from Canadian Ornamental Pheasant & Game Bird Association - May 2000
Vol. 22**

Birds are sexually more active in the late afternoon than in the morning.

Processed feeds lose many of the proteins and vitamins when kept longer than 10 - 12 weeks in extended storage.

Tyres filled with sand make excellent dusting areas for game birds. Tyres filled with straw or hay make excellent nesting sites for ducks and geese.

One can cause a high mortality rate amongst chicks if given cold water during a very hot summer day.

Splay legs in chicks can be prevented by using an egg box in the bottom of a cardboard box for at least a couple of days. The chicks will then get their legs underneath themselves, the bones will harden and the youngsters will be ready to meet the rest of their family members.

Birds in outside temperatures of 70°F will consume twice as much feed as water. In 95°F heat, birds consume 8x as much water as feed.

Eggs being cleaned should be washed at a temperature of 110 - 115°F. Remove them from the water, clean, rinse and allow them to be fully air dried prior to placing in the incubator.

Workshop held on captive rearing techniques for pheasants at Chail, Himachal Pradesh

A two day workshop was held at Chail, Himachal Pradesh on Captive Rearing Techniques for Pheasants. This workshop was held on 26-27 November 2001 and was conducted jointly by the wildlife wing of the Himachal Pradesh Forest Dept. and the World Pheasant Association. Financial support for the workshop was provided by the Central Zoo Authority.

The main objective of the workshop was to provide a simplified account of the essentials of aviculture for the upkeep of aviaries and survival of pheasants within them. Since the workshop was mainly for the benefit of the keeper level staff of the H.P. Forest Dept., the medium of instruction was Hindi.

Twenty five staff members of the H.P. Forest Dept. participated in this workshop held at the Chail Forestry school in addition to the Chief Conservator of (Wildlife), Conservator (Wildlife) Shimla and DCF (Wildlife) Shimla.

The participants were addressed by a team of five resource persons consisting of Prof. A.H. Musavi, (Secretary WPA-India) Dr. S. Sathyakumar (Wildlife Institute of India), Col. Gautam Das (IUCN-SUI), Dr. Rahul Kaul (WPA) and Sanjeeva Pandey (H.P. Forest Dept.).

The workshop was divided into three parts.

- Presentations by participants on problems associated with each Captive Breeding facility.
- Lectures by resource persons addressing specifically problems raised by participants.
- Field trip to an aviary to demonstrate points raised during lectures.

Main problems encountered by participants in keeping pheasants in captivity were:-

- Rats and mice and other predators in the enclosures.
- Difficulty to keep the aviary grassed.
- Eggs laid everywhere and abandoned.
- Inappropriate diet
- Instances of egg cannibalism by females.
- Disease detection delays

- Identification and record keeping

The talks were presented on five main themes with ample time provided for questions and answers.

- Aviaries.
- Disease prevention.
- Nutrition and feed formula.
- Incubation and breeding.
- Record keeping.

On the afternoon of the second day, the participants were taken to Kharion (Chail Sanctuary) to see the aviaries there. The participants were made aware of the shortcomings of these aviaries and certain simple procedures were suggested to improve them.

The workshop ended with a hope and expectation that the results of captive breeding efforts would improve in the following breeding season.

Rahul Kaul
World Pheasant Association - South Asia
Field Office

Wild turkey revival in the USA

Following the American Festival of Thanksgiving, and the Christian Festival of Christmas, many of us will have enjoyed a surfeit of turkey in recent weeks. The following information about turkeys, and their amazing recovery, has been provided by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Bureau and the National Wild Turkey Federation.



There are only two species of turkey in the world; the North American wild turkey *Meleagris gallopavo* divided into five distinct sub-species, and the ocellated turkey *Meleagris ocellata*. The ocellated turkey exists only in a 50,000 sq. mile area in and around the Yucutan Peninsula, whereas the five subspecies of North American turkey can be found throughout all the United States, except Alaska, and into Ontario, Canada.

Wild turkeys were commonplace in most of the United States prior to the arrival of European settlers. Unfortunately, as human populations grew in the late 1800s, the land was cleared, destroying critical habitat, and the wild turkey was heavily exploited. By 1900, the wild turkey had been extirpated from most States.

Conservationists worked to bring the wild turkey back to its earlier prominence throughout the first half of the 20th century, with some success. Politicians in Congress played a very significant role in restoring turkeys by passing a law in 1937 where receipts from a tax on sporting arms and ammunition was put into a special wildlife restoration fund.

Then, during the late 1950s, a revolutionary turkey management tool called the 'rocket net' enabled entire wild flocks to be trapped alive, and then transferred to sites selected on the basis of suitable habitat. Using Michigan as an example of the increase in wild turkey numbers, the State went from no birds in 1900, to 2,000 free ranging birds in 1964. By 1983, these numbers had risen to nearly 15,000 and the present statewide turkey population is estimated at over 140,000 birds. One of the most important discoveries was that, in hot climates, turkeys need a

ready supply of water. Many States instigated projects to fulfil this need; they had the delightful name of "Guzzlers for Gobblers".

Insects are the young turkey's primary food source during the spring and early summer. Insects make up over 90% of the poults' diet during its first month of life. Adult birds need forests of mixed hardwoods and conifers, with a plentiful supply of water.

The turkey's long legs allow them to run at between 15 and 18 m.p.h. through the woods. In the air, they have a five feet wingspan, and yet, amazingly, they can

negotiate between trees at high speed without accident.

At first glance, wild turkeys resemble the familiar 'bronze' farmyard variety. A closer look, however, reveals that the wild turkey has a slimmer, sleeker more leggy appearance, with a long narrow head and large alert eyes – no comparison to its short-legged, overweight, dumpy-bodied domestic cousin with large wattles and a big head. Males weigh twice as much as females – an average of more than 19lbs compared with just over 9 lbs. The tip of the tail feathers are brown in wild birds, whereas they are white in domesticated stock.

The five sub-species of wild turkey are the eastern *Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*, the Florida *M. g. Osceola*, the Rio Grande *M. g. intermedia*, Merriam's *M. g. merriami* and Gould's *M. g. mexicana*.

As the United States of America was established, Benjamin Franklin proposed that the turkey should become the national bird. He felt it would be a much better symbol than the bald eagle, which he described as a fish-eating scavenger. So the national bird of the most powerful country in the world was very nearly a galliform!

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FUTURE EVENTS

2002

9-10 February

Avicultural Weekend, Harewood Bird Gardens, Leeds, UK. Including the UK Galliforme TAG meeting

16 May

Red Grouse Charity Shoot, West Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, UK

16-19 May

Annual Conference Federation of Zoo Gardens of Great Britain and Ireland

6-7 July

Game Conservancy Scottish Fair, Scone Palace, Perthshire, Scotland

26-28 July

CLA Game Fair, Broadlands Estate, Romsey, Hampshire, UK

August

23rd International Ornithological Congress, Beijing, China

18-31 August

9th International Grouse Symposium, Beijing, China

18-22 September

EAZA Annual Conference, Barcelona, Spain
Including the EAZA Galliforme TAG Meeting

28-29 September

WPA Annual Convention, hosted by NIOPS, Belfast, Northern Ireland

4-6 October

WPA Germany Convention, Vogelpark Walsrode, Germany

Please let us have any dates of interest for inclusion.

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

From the past ... by Tim Lovel

Journal of the Ornamental Pheasant Society Vol. 3 1937

This continues my review of the Ornamental Pheasant Society publications which started in the last WPA News. I was given these volumes by the widow of the Rev. Kingsford Venner, who was for many years vicar of Appleshaw near Andover, and a keen pheasant breeder all his life.

In this volume, which for the first time appeared in a French as well as an English edition, the Marquess Hachisuka (who lived in California) offered notes on "Japanese pheasants and colour varieties". Jean Delacour wrote about



peafowl, the Argus, including *Rheinartia*, which he emphasised are much harder than the great Argus, and also the peacock pheasants.

James Chapin described the new Congo peafowl species *Afro pavo congensis*, discovered by him in August 1936 from two mounted specimens in the Chateau de Terveuren, Belgium. Previously it had been known only by one feather found by him in 1913 in the hat of a native in the Ituri forest.

Capt. Scott Hopkins wrote about the delights of keeping Tragopans, particularly their tameness and friendliness as well as their great beauty. He had all but the Western Tragopan, but found Blyth's and Cabot's more difficult to keep and breed. He deplored the very high mortality of birds being imported from Asia, which he estimated at 90%. This was attributed to heat, disease and the long sea voyage without expert care.

Yvan Malisoux of Narnur reviewed the cause of chicks with crooked toes. He did not attribute this to in-breeding, for he described chicks of a pair of Golden Pheasants which were, "terribly in-bred. The hen was the daughter of her husband, her mother was the husband's sister and this incestuous pair was itself bred from brother and sister. Further back I do not know but this is quite enough! The eggs were all fertile but very weak and about 10% hatched. The

chicks are abominably delicate and some are epileptics, others have the intestines built the wrong way, etc. All are weaklings. Well, among these chicks I have not yet seen one crooked toe at birth."

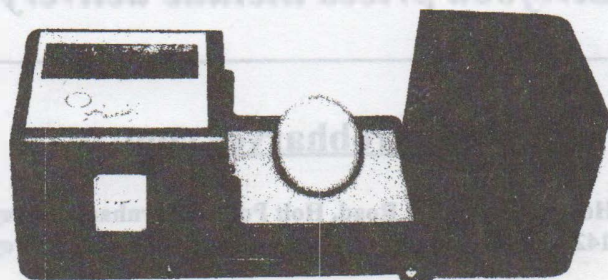
Also he said that any pair of birds can produce chicks with crooked toes one year but not the next. Yet the inbreeding has not changed. In his belief "crooked toes can be made at will" if not avoided at will. Insufficient moisture and too high a temperature in an incubator full of pheasant or partridge eggs can produce 30-40% of chicks with crooked toes. A sitting hen can also be too hot and dry and can produce the same effect.

Miss V Cooper described how she had started in 1922 with a pair of Golden Pheasants and how, when they



had 11 young chicks, she "went digging for ant eggs, made custard, shot rabbits for maggots, or a stray cat that was without an owner"!! The Show Secretary, F Armitage wrote on the preparation of pheasants to compete in the Foreign Bird section of bird shows. Members were sternly advised not to quote any prices when advertising their surplus stock, since this inevitably depressed values.

Five clergymen were asked to write on why pheasants appealed to them. Each produced an original and amusing essay, not least the Rev. J R Lowe who wrote in a mood familiar to all of us. "Why do ornamental pheasants appeal to me? At the moment they do not. I hate the sight of them! Why? Because my beautiful Elliott's cock has burst a blood vessel in his brain whilst displaying to a wife. Both his hens were in full lay and I was getting very fair fertility. I borrow another cock and he knocks both hens about to such an extent that he has had to be sentenced to solitary confinement. Add to this my Amherst cock that we had been waiting for two years to come into breeding condition has slain his only wife, an attractive lady that came from France! Do not talk to me about lack of cover for half the spruce trees in Gloucestershire had been denuded and the aviary looks like a jungle. This is why, for the moment, I loath ornamental pheasants..... If you want plenty of colour, grace of movement and no worries, keep a series of bachelor cock pheasants. If you want, intense and sickening set backs, moments of intense joy, then give these cocks some hens. It is not easy. Those who say the getting of fertile eggs and the rearing of rare ornamental pheasants is easy are qualifying for a mental home. But I will admit it is great fun."



The Buddy Egg Candler, as reviewed in *Avicultural News* on page 5

PRESIDENT
Keith Howman

CHAIRMAN
Richard Howard



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CONSERVING GALLIFORMES AND THEIR HABITATS

Dear Member

As Chairman I look forward with great anticipation to 2002 with the news that Dr Philip McGowan has agreed to stay as Conservation Director and that, from April 2002, WPA will have a new Chairman Professor Dick Potts. Dick has just retired as Director-General of The Game Conservancy Trust and has agreed to take on the Chairmanship as I am coming to the end of my second term as your Chairman. He has been a good friend of WPA for many years and a better person to take over from me would indeed be near impossible to find.

I would like to thank all the members who have given so generously to our fund-raising appeal over the past three months. Having said that, it is only some 15% of members that have felt able to help us in this way. It would be fantastic if every member who has not yet been able to contribute could now buy the enclosed book of raffle tickets, the proceeds of which are going towards the same goal, to keep WPA's position strong in 2002. I am optimistic that you will help us and therefore look forward to the New Year with enthusiasm.

A very generous member of WPA has provided us with a donation of £1000 specifically to enable us to offer the attractive prizes on the enclosed Appeal Draw tickets. We must not let this donor down. I do hope that members will support our donor by persuading as many friends and relatives as possible to buy our raffle tickets. We will gladly send you more!!

You will not be held in suspense for long as the draw will take place at the Harewood meeting on 9th February. Please send your cheques promptly, payable to WPA and ticket stubs using the enclosed reply paid envelope. To make things even easier for you, it is only necessary to fill in the top ticket if you are buying the whole book – our computer will do the rest!

We have just heard that Jeremy Mallinson, the Director of The Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, has offered to conduct the tour of Jersey Zoo personally should you be the lucky winner of the first prize, as long as he is on Jersey at the time. If not, a suitable alternative guide will be provided.

I would like to thank all members of the Strategic Development Committee, Conservation Committee and Council who give so much of their time voluntarily for the well-being of WPA. I am delighted that the new UK Conservation, Breeding and Advisory Group is now up and running with local representatives. The objective of this Group is to bring together those interested in keeping birds in captivity in the UK. If you would like more information please contact Gary Robbins or Keith Chalmers-Watson via the office. I hope this Group will be of real interest to members as I know many of you enjoy keeping these beautiful birds. It may provide a pattern for some of our chapters and affiliates to follow.

All that remains is for me to wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year.

With best wishes,

Richard Howard
Chairman