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Spring 2017

WPA News 102 (2017)

World Pheasant Association

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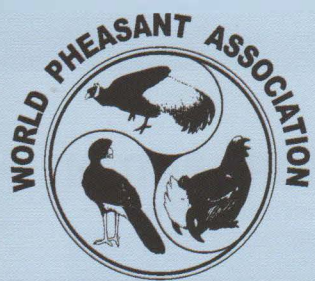


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WPA

news

The International Newsletter of the World Pheasant Association

Number 102 Spring 2017



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Registered Charity No 271203

FRONT COVER:

The front cover photo was taken by Hari Basnet. The picture shows a cheer pheasant in the Bajura district in northwest Nepal. Hari undertook a project studying the cheer pheasant's habitat, status and distribution in this area. More information on the project and the results can be found on page 13.

REAR COVER:

The rear cover photos show a variety of birds mentioned in articles throughout the newsletter. These include green peafowl in Thailand by Friedrich Esser (pages 16-18), cheer pheasant (page 13), Swinhoe's pheasant in Taiwan by Frank Lin (pages 10-11) and blue peafowl in Sri Lanka by Jean Howman (page 12).

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**MEMBERSHIP
RATES**

	UK	Non-UK
Individual	£ 30	£ 35
Junior	£ 15	£ 17.50
Family	£ 60	£ 70
Corporate	£ 120	£ 120
Supported	£ 30	£ 30
Life Membership, single payment	£ 600	£ 700

DIARY DATES

Compton Manor Charity Clay Shoot	12 May 2017
Dunkeld Charity Clay Shoot	20 May 2017
WPA Concert	9 June 2017
Simulated Charity Clay Shoot Day	5 July 2017
Scottish Game Fair	30 June - 2 July 2017
WPA AGM & Convention, Arnheim	8-10 September 2017

More details for events can be found on the WPA website www.pheasant.org/news.asp or contact the office on office@pheasant.org

Copy Dates

The next issue of WPA News will be produced in July 2017. Articles, stories, letters and adverts for consideration for publication should be with the Office by the end of May 2017.

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

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NOTES FROM THE CHAIRMAN



As we go to press in the Spring of 2017 I must firstly record a most successful CBAG meeting at the Cotswold Wildlife Park in February. This was attended by the largest gathering since we started at this venue, and with more new faces than ever before.

I made an appeal for a voluntary accreditation scheme and explained that this is essential if we are to continue to improve our relationship with the zoo community. I believe this was largely accepted in principle by those present. Further drafts will follow and it is hoped that our European Chapters will agree to support the scheme.

2017 promises to be a busy year within WPA. Perhaps the most important gathering will be at Arnhem in Holland on the weekend of 8-10 September. For the first time we have a combined meeting of WPA Germany, WPA Benelux and the UK Group, which will also hold our AGM during this occasion. Among other visits we will have the opportunity to explore the relatively new collection of Michael Van Duijnhoven who has rented a former school and converted classrooms to indoor aviaries, opening outside onto woodland/grass runs. Michael

has offered his excellent facilities for our meetings, and members will be astounded by this amazing collection.

The fundraising committee met in January and has once again been developing many new ideas, blogs and all! We must not underestimate the work they are doing on our behalf and we are spending some of the funds raised with prudence and great care.

At this time we are becoming increasingly alarmed by the spread of avian influenza. Many breeders, whilst taking all recommended actions to prevent access from wild birds, are unable to physically cover their aviaries completely. We have to hope that with the advent of warmer spring weather the restrictions may be lifted and the threat removed before the breeding season.

Many members will have noted that 28th January marked the beginning of the Chinese New Year - the year of the chicken. New Year is celebrated with a weeklong public holiday. Similar celebrations are held in Vietnam, where the New Year is known as the year of the rooster. WPA is becoming very involved with VietNature and the Vietnamese Edwards's Pheasant Committee, and their aim is to begin the first aviaries for the conservation breeding programme this year. Since the chicken or rooster is a member of the pheasant family, it could be said that this year could be named "The Year of the Pheasant". Certainly, VietNature considers this to be a very auspicious year for pheasants and they hope the first birds will be transferred from Hanoi Zoo to the first new breeding centre in Quang Binh Province during this year. The long-term aim is to have Edwards's Pheasant existing successfully in the wild in its homeland by the next "Pheasant Year" 2029. Many thanks to our Jon Pointer who donated the motif for the t-shirts which will be sold to aid funding for the new aviaries. Barbara will let you know when we have supplies of these for sale.

In the meantime, I do hope to see as many of you as possible at Arnhem in September.

Keith Chalmers-Watson

7th February 2017



Edwards's pheasant homecoming t-shirt from VietNature

YEAR OF THE ROOSTER

Emma Zeale

2017 marks the Chinese Year of the Rooster.

Hsinchu Zoo in Taiwan has embraced this by launching a 'chicken-themed' program to introduce different ground feeding birds to the public. The director of the zoo, Yang Chia-min, calls these birds 'wonder chickens'.

Included on the 'wonder chicken' tour are the galliformes. The zoo is home to a number of galliforme species, including Swinhoe's pheasant and golden pheasant. The tour will give visitors a chance to observe these species close-up. The zoo is also to undergo a renovation program to upgrade the bird's facilities and improve the education programme.

The zoo has also adopted the golden pheasant as its icon for the Lunar New Year as the colour red is auspicious.

Let us hope the Year of the Rooster is an auspicious one for galliformes around the world and their conservation.

CONSERVATION BREEDING ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

Paul North



*The manor house at Cotswold Wildlife Park
Photo: Paul North*

The annual meeting of the Conservation Breeding Advisory Group (CBAG) was held over the weekend of the 3rd to the 5th of February. The Cotswold Wildlife Park was, as in previous years, our host, providing meeting rooms and facilities for a record number of members and guests.

The weekend began with a council meeting on Friday afternoon followed by an informal get together for a meal and drinks in the evening. The weather was forecast with rain driven by a gale force wind and so the evening was spent in the refurbished Burford Gateway Hotel rather than walking into the town.

The CBAG meeting began on Saturday morning with registration and coffee in the manor house. The presentations began with a welcome by Reggie Hayward, Managing Director of the Cotswold Wildlife Park, and continued with an introduction to the days events by CBAG Chairman, Andrew Sheppy.

The first presentation entitled 'The essential tools of conservation breeding: Identity and pedigree' was given by Andrew Sheppy. Using examples from Andrew's own establishment, The Cobthorn Trust, which houses the National Poultry Collection, he explained the importance of being able to identify any particular animal and the four methods available to do that. These methods are closed rings, wing tags, tattoos and microchips, the first two being the most commonly used. He continued by explaining the benefits and possible pitfalls of using each method. Closed rings need to be of the correct size, and the timing of their fitting is crucial, but they do provide proof that the bird was captive bred. Wing tags can be fitted at any age and only two sizes are needed to cover all the poultry, pheasants, geese and ducks. Tattoos and microchips both require a semi-surgical procedure and specialist equipment, which make these methods unsuitable for the individual breeder.

Andrew then went on to explain the importance of record keeping. Stressing that records can be kept as a hard copy in a book or in a computer programme and that they must be permanent, comprehensive, kept up to date and need to be comprehensible by a third party. The information to record against each individual identity number may seem obvious: species/breed, hatch date, sex, parents; but it may be useful to

record other parameters such as egg number and date laid, whether parent or incubator hatched, and where housed.

Andrew then posed the question 'why all this ID & record keeping?' explaining that it is needed to maintain effective breeding programmes and to guarantee the provenance of any bird. It is essential to know the relationship of birds in order to make the best possible mating and help maintain the genetic biodiversity of the population.

The presentation was aptly summed up in the final slide, see message from it below.

Are YOU serious about Conservation Breeding?

- If so, do it properly
- Maintain identity and pedigree records
- Be part of collaborative breeding
- Provide proper pedigree and provenance of birds you supply
- Be an example of these standards of best practice
- Contribute to the long term future of our wonderful birds

The message from the final slide of Andrew Sheppy's presentation.

There followed a presentation given by John Corder entitled 'Edwards's Pheasant' which began by detailing the recent DNA research and explaining the conservation breeding priorities for this species in Vietnam. Five hectares of land has been donated by the Quang Binh Forest Department in Le Thuy District in Vietnam for a conservation breeding centre to contain aviaries and an education and training centre. Drawing on experience from other reintroduction and re-location projects for pheasants involving WPA, John outlined how this project may proceed.

The last presentation of the morning was all about turkeys. Stuart Wilson began by describing the various subspecies and graphically displaying their original American homeland and comparing it with their present range. See page 6 for Stuart's report.

A break for an excellent buffet lunch followed during which raffle tickets were sold, raising about £180 for CBAG funds.

The afternoon session began with the CBAG AGM. The chairman presented his report for the year, and treasurer Nigel Hester presented the accounts. The election of officers and committee members followed. The Chairman's message is on page 7.

The next presentation of the afternoon entitled 'Census and its implications' was given by Nigel Hester. Using very clear graphics he picked out the top ten species of adult and juveniles and outlined the variance over the last two years. The final slide

showed the largest adult losses in 2016 to be true silver pheasants. You can see the consolidated census results from all the European Chapters by clicking on the link on the census page, under the aviculture tab on the WPA website at www.pheasant.org.uk.

The final presentation before the afternoon refreshment break was again given by Nigel Hester and followed on from the theme of the first presentation but concentrated on genetics. Nigel gave us an introduction to the basic terms used by what is an expanding discipline. Beginning with the bacterial cell and progressing through the chromosome to cell reproduction and on to 'What is a Gene?'. There was a lot to take in and the half hour tea and coffee break that followed was a welcome respite, being able to catch up with friends old and new.

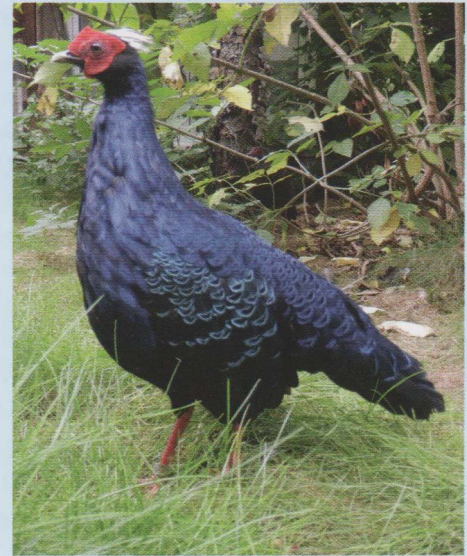
James Burrell and other students from Sparsholt College gave the final presentation of the day entitled 'Working with Brown Eared and other Pheasants'. It featured a video of a brown-eared pheasant at the college being trained to recognise one particular playing card from a complete deck. The bird was trained using mealworms as a reward when, in the beginning it pecked at one specific card. More cards were added and again the bird was rewarded for pecking the same specific card. Finally the complete deck of cards was laid out in front of the bird and, even when the position of the specific card was altered within the layout, the bird correctly recognised the specific card.

This very amusing example has many practical uses, for example to train a bird to enter a crate or stand on scales and forms part of the Avian Training Workshop offered by the College.

All the presenters were thanked for their contributions, as were our hosts, the staff and management of the Cotswold Wildlife Park. The day was completed with dinner at the Windmill Carvery in Asthall and was as enjoyable as in previous years.

Edwards's Pheasant (*Lophura edwardsi*)

There has been no confirmed sighting of Edwards's pheasant in the wild since 2000 despite extensive camera trapping. In 2000, one male was confiscated from a hunter and held in captivity in the Hai Lang District Forest Protection Department, Quang Tri. Edwards's pheasant is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List.



Male Edwards's pheasant
Photo: John Corder



Photo: Uzair Saeed 'Silver Pheasant' February 16, 2014 via Flickr, CC BY 2.0

SEARCHING FOR WILD TURKEY

Stuart Wilson

The Europeans first encountered wild turkeys when the Spanish arrived in Mexico in the 1500's. The south Mexican sub-species (*Meleagris gallopavo gallopavo*) had already been domesticated for around two thousand years and tame barnyard birds were subsequently taken back to Spain.

So when The Mayflower sailed to New England in 1620 the new settlers were somewhat surprised to discover another sub-species, the eastern wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*) in the forests of the eastern seaboard. In fact there were six sub-species of wild turkey in North America at that time. The Florida turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo osceola*) from the swamps of the everglades, Merriam's turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo merriami*) from the alpine meadows of the Rocky Mountains, Gould's turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo mexicana*) from the scrub deserts of northwest Mexico, and The Rio Grande turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo intermedia*) from the banks of the famous river that winds its way through Texas and New Mexico.

However, the arrival of the Europeans devastated wild turkey stocks. Much like the passenger pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) and the North American Bison (*Bison bison*), wild turkeys were hunted on an industrial scale to help feed the growing population. By 1900 turkeys had been exterminated in all but eight US states. Clearly something had to be done, and so the US government embarked on an ambitious re-introduction scheme.



Male turkey strutting
Photo: Stuart Wilson



Wildcat canyon turkey habitat
Photo: Stuart Wilson

Wild turkey eggs were taken from the wild, hatched in huge numbers and released as poults across the USA. Early attempts failed and turkey numbers didn't begin to increase until the government changed their strategy and proceeded to translocate wild caught adult birds. This proved to be a more successful method, which was further enhanced by the introduction of the rocket propelled catching net.

At their lowest ebb wild turkeys numbered around 30,000 birds. Today there are over 7 million; it is possibly the most successful conservation project of the twentieth century.

In September 2016, I travelled to California to visit family and with the intention of capturing footage of wild turkey in the forests around San Francisco. Although the naturally occurring California wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo californica*) had been extinct for over 10,000 years, there are good numbers of introduced birds from projects dating back to the 1880's. These are the Rio Grande sub-species and large numbers can be found in the Berkeley Hills just north of the city. I concentrated my efforts on a series of steep well-wooded valleys in the Wildcat Canyon National Park.

It didn't take too long before I heard the familiar gobbling calls of an adult tom (male) and when you find one turkey you usually find another and then another, and I was soon able to film a group of around twenty birds.

The youngsters, known locally as jacks and jennys were already the size of the adult females, with grey necks and a small wattle or snoot over the bill. The adult toms were much larger with pinkish blue necks and a strutting gait. The Rio Grande sub-species is one of the smaller races, larger than the diminutive Florida turkey but only two-thirds the size of the Eastern and Gould's sub-species. Wild turkeys can be notoriously skittish, especially in hunting areas but these birds were reasonably approachable and content to preen and partially display to the females.

And then suddenly they were gone, slipping away quietly into the depths of the forest.



Three male wild turkeys
Photo: Stuart Wilson

CAPTIVE BREEDING ADVISORY GROUP AGM

The CBAG AGM was held at the Cotswold Wildlife Park, Burford, Oxon on Saturday 4th February 2017

Apologies for absence were received from Carla How, Kay & Stephen Jacques, Belinda Moyle and Gary Robbins. The circulated minutes from the previous AGM were accepted as being a true record of that meeting and there were no matters arising from them. The acting Chairman's report is included below.

CBAG Chairman's Report 2016-2017

Mr Reggie Hayward and Louise Peat at the Cotswold Wildlife Park along with all the staff were thanked by the Chairman for allowing us to hold our annual CBAG meeting here, and for their hospitality and making everyone feel so welcome. The Chairman reported that we were extremely lucky to have use of this venue which is a real benefit to WPA and CBAG. Andrew Sheppy was delighted to see so many people at the meeting and there were a number of new faces. Good reports were received from last year's meeting which have been put into practice in some places. The focus of the programme this year was on the essential tools of conservation and the importance of the engagement and encouragement of young people. Work has started moving directly to encourage more people to take part. The Group functions very well and it is important to keep on top of issues we talk about.

Thanks were also given to Jimmy Reekie and Ian Elvin for raising further funds (the Raffle raised £170). Nigel Hester was also thanked for all his hours of hard work collecting census returns and collating the results.

CBAG Treasurers Report 2016-2017

The balance brought forward from 1st May 2015 was £8186.26

It has been a very quiet year regarding the CBAG accounts. Income raised so far this year for general conservation breeding is £671.83. Only £96.83 was donated by the general public via the Sewerby Hall collection box. The rest was from private donations. Also Keith Chalmers-Watson made a £600 private donation specifically for the 'Mountain and Malay Peacock Pheasant DNA project'. This is slightly up on last year, with all but one bird garden or zoo failing to make any return.

Interest payments from our deposit account raised £11.76. Expenditure: £4602 was paid on completion of the Mountain and Malay Peacock Pheasant DNA project to RZSS. Even with Keith's £600 donation there was still a small shortfall of £316.70 from the DNA research fund which was covered by the general conservation breeding account. This was authorised by a unanimous vote at the 2015 CBG AGM which allow up to £1000.

There are no outstanding debtors or creditors, The current balance is £5300.85

This is slightly inflated due to the CBAG convention payments made prior to today's meeting. Since the convention is done at cost, adjusting for the pre-payments gives us a working fund of £4867.85

Specific Project Reserves

There are no specific project reserves.

The Future

There is no other detailed planned expenditure at present. However, I am sure there will be further expenditure as part of ECBG DNA testing of the Edwards pheasant. Also, I believe there will be some costs to DNA test new mountain and Malay peacock pheasant purchased by Keith Chalmers-Watson. This will be about £800.

Nigel Hester, WPA-UK CBAG Treasurer

Election of Officers

The Committee is as follows:

Chairman Andrew Sheppy	Vice Chairman Stuart Wilson	Secretary Tim Lovel	Treasurer Nigel Hester
John Corder	Keith Chalmers-Watson	Ian Elvin	Belinda Moyle
Will Harrison	Jimmy Reekie	Robert Wilding	Billy Wilson

John Newsome is no longer a WPA member and Robert Wilding was voted onto the committee in his place. The election of all officers was moved unanimously.

Election of UK representatives for the European Conservation Breeding Group

Keith Chalmers-Watson, John Corder and Nigel Hester agreed to continue in office.

Venue and Date for the next AGM

It was agreed to return to the Cotswold Wildlife Park on 3 February 2018.

Any Other Business

It was agreed to add Keith Chalmers-Watson, John Corder and Paul North to the bank mandate as two signatures are required on cheques. This should ensure there are always two members available to sign cheques at the CBAG meetings.

John Corder – there are mountain and Malaysian peacock pheasants outside the studbook. DNA testing of some birds has proved the birds are pure. Keith Chalmers-Watson has paid for the DNA testing. It was agreed the DNA fees should be covered by CBAG and this funding for DNA testing should extend to anyone who has Mountains or Malays which they have obtained from Europe and want to bring into the studbook. Anyone interested should contact KCW so birds can be tested in October with a view for including them in next year's breeding programme. If CBAG support testing birds they must be available for use in the international studbook. Costs to date are around £800. Ian Crutchley asked if it was worth trying to look into the possibility of a communal arrangement to get testing done more cheaply. Council are currently looking into this.

Keith Chalmers-Watson asked for consultation with the CBAG committee for next year's programme and suggested a question and answer session with a small panel to answer questions.

Meeting closed at 14:30

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF CBAG

Andrew Sheppy, February 2017

It is a pleasure to report on the recent meeting of CBAG at the Cotswold Wildlife Park, which is now a real fixture in the diary. This year's meeting was very well attended, possibly the largest number I can remember over a good few years. The two main topics of the essential tools of conservation breeding and the involvement of young people both had a good share of the meeting. We looked at identity and pedigree recording in the morning and Nigel Hester took on the daunting task of explaining the basics of genetics in the afternoon followed by presentations by past and present students of Sparsholt College.

John Corder and Stuart Wilson both gave excellent presentations on specific species, the latter on American wild turkeys, which was fascinating. James Burrell, a former Sparsholt student, captivated the audience with his video of working with brown eared pheasants.

There was much food for thought in the report on the census of birds that Nigel Hester had produced once again. During the AGM we welcomed Robert Wilding to the committee to fill a vacant place. I would like to thank all who contributed in any way to the meeting for a really good effort.

As usual, many of the company spent a pleasant evening over dinner and the whole event has received much favourable comment, even promises to put some of the recording techniques into practice.

We are already planning next year's meeting, which will include more of Stuart Wilson's filming, this time of silver pheasants, and we intend to have a panel for a members' question and answer session. If members have any specific topics that they would like to see included in the meeting, please feel free to let the office know.

As I write these notes there has just been yet another case of Avian Influenza confirmed, which continues to be a great concern for all of us. I do hope that all members continue to be very careful of biosecurity and that we all remain free of this dreadful disease in our birds. We have such a responsibility in the care and nurture of these wonderful birds, which must be kept in focus in all our activities.

We have an assortment of eggs in the incubator and spring comes on, so I wish all a successful and trouble free breeding season. I look forward to hearing good news of successes and remind all to keep good records and provide a report for this year's census in due course.



*Two male wild turkeys
Photo: Stuart Wilson*

RARE BREEDING BIRDS PANEL

Emma Zeale

The Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP) collects data on uncommon breeding birds in the UK and publishes an annual report summarising the status of 100 species of rare breeding birds. This report also includes non-native breeding birds with fewer than 300 breeding pairs in the UK. Two birds included in this report are the golden pheasant and Lady Amherst's pheasant.

The most recent report, published in the February issue of *British Birds*, covers non-native breeding birds in the UK between 2012-2014. It has long been recognised that Lady Amherst's pheasant is present in small numbers in Bedfordshire, however the report details that it is no longer a self-sustaining population. There were also no confirmed breeding records of golden pheasant submitted to RBBP, however numbers of golden pheasant seem to be stable, perhaps indicating persistent releases into the wild. It is illegal to release non-native species into the wild under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981).

For more information visit the RBBP website www.rbbp.org.uk

NEPAL EARTHQUAKE ROUNDUP

Robin Marston

Robin Marston visited the 'Pipar' schools in November 2016 and February 2017 to assess the ongoing repairs being undertaken following damage sustained in the earthquake. He writes:

'Apart from a rather expensive three hour electrical breakdown on route, the car cruised as usual to Pokhara. The car nearly knows its own way now! However, Kathmandu roads are almost one continuous traffic jam these days and many roads around the country are in a poor state of repair. One has to say that poor old Nepal is not improving.

Pema and I went to Sukla, Blakalyan, Meg Raj and Janajagaram, and on another day to Bura buri and Keruwa. Sadly Sarhe Pake, our first high up school on the left as you progress up the valley, closed for lack of pupils. However, the good news is that Rumja is thriving with 24-25 children. I did not get up there myself but Pema went on Monday. The damaged classroom has been rebuilt and Pema got new carpet for the two junior classes. She has since purchased 25 sweaters for the winter and sent these up to the school.

Balkalyan Primary has received lots of support from a charity with offices nearby and is looking good. The government has built a new toilet block that was much needed. However, there are no doors to the entrance to the girls' and boys' rooms and no doors to the toilets inside. So we are going to make the four doors needed, paint the building and complete the water support system, estimated to cost \$300.

Meg Raj, the oldest of the schools and the one that had the split when the Dalit element moved and set up Janajagaram, is its usual sleepy self and falling behind.



The rebuild of Sherpa school in Dolakha, two rooms have been completed and one more is currently being rebuilt.

Photo: Robin Marston

in Abu Dhabi to make more money. We interviewed him and took the liberty of offering him another Rs7000 per month for the next 14 months. This will hopefully get him through a difficult period and mean we won't lose him. He is most grateful but still needs to look around to see how he can help himself financially. Meanwhile, WPA assistance will help a good deal.

Sukla Gandaki and the Plus 2 element are going well and have good student support for classes 11 and 12. However, they are finding that many students that have even passed grade 12 (normally at age 18) still cannot find a reasonable job in Ghachok or Pokhara. Thus, most boys end up going to Abu Dhabi as labourers and the girls stay at home. It was their suggestions (which I heartily welcomed) that they start some skill trade training in parallel with the 11 and 12 curriculum. There is a drastic shortage of trained/skilled electricians, plumbers, carpenters, plasterers in Nepal and plenty of opportunities. Also, if they still go to Abu Dhabi they can go as skilled labour instead of unskilled and thus earn a much better salary. So they are seeking our support.

Rumja school has been leased some land free of charge to plant forty kiwi fruit trees. These will hopefully produce fruit in two years and will help support the school and the village.



Sherpa school in Dolakha was destroyed in the earthquake and the rebuild is being undertaken using funds raised by the Australian Rotary and WPA (UK).

Photo: Robin Marston

Janajagaram, the community school, is thriving with good student attendance and high standards. However, they only have two government teachers and the rest are 'volunteers' who receive Rs7000 (\$60) a month from the school/community. There is one particular case that I have decided we will help for the next 14 months. He was one of the first young teachers there and has an excellent reputation. He eloped with a Newar (high caste) girl whose parents have a private school in the village. They married and now have a two-month-old son. His now wife was also teaching at the school. However, her parents have not accepted him and have cut him off. This is very hurtful to the daughter and also financially now a problem as she cannot work at the moment. Trying to manage their little family on \$60 a month is not possible and therefore he has applied to go to work



Planting of kiwi fruit trees near Rumja school

Photo: Robin Marston

FORMOSAN SAPPHIRES - PART 1

SEARCHING FOR THE SWINHOE'S PHEASANT IN TAIWAN

Frank Lin

Situated in the mountains of central Taiwan, Dasyueshan National Forest Recreation Area has become renowned for its breathtaking scenery and biodiversity. It is often considered the best place to see Taiwan's two endemic pheasant species, the Swinhoe's pheasant (*Lophura swinhoii*) and the Mikado pheasant (*Syrmaticus mikado*). The colours of the males of both species, blue, white, and red, invoke the countrys national flag. Alongside the Taiwan blue magpie (*Urocissa caerulea*), which also bears these colours, they are often considered national symbols. A wildlife photographer hailing from Canada, I always wanted to see these fascinating creatures. In this first of a two-part series, I will be describing my experiences seeing the Swinhoe's Pheasant at Dasyueshan in central Taiwan.

Separated from mainland China by the Taiwan Strait since the most recent glaciation period in the late Pleistocene (~ 80,000 years), the island of Taiwan is distinctive in its biodiversity. Owing to Taiwan's height (the worlds fourth tallest island), regularity of powerful geoclimatic events, and the complexity of its montane habitats, there are many plant and animal species unique to Taiwan.

The stunning endemic *Lophura* pheasant has many local names. In Mandarin Chinese, it is called Lan-fu-xian, meaning blue-breasted Kalij, while in the Taiwanese dialect it is sometimes called Wa-Koe (flowered fowl) or Ang-Ka-Ah (red-legged). Japanese naturalists of the colonial period called it the fiery-wing. The male is sapphire blue overall with red wattles, white on the crest, mantle and tail, as well as reddish-purple on the scapulars. The juvenile male is dark purple and maroon, lacking the white feathers. The female is arguably more visually arresting, bedecked with an intricate pattern of yellow chevrons and strikingly marbled wings, as well as maroon outer tail feathers. Observed up close, it is easy to appreciate her astounding set of patterns, which merge so perfectly with forest debris.

There is often confusion between the two Taiwanese pheasants - the Taiwan thousand-dollar bill depicts a pair of Mikado pheasants.

The easiest distinction is that the Swinhoe's has red legs, compared to the grey legs of the Mikado. The Mikado is smaller and appears more grouse-like, with legs further back on its body. Despite the confusion, their prominent depiction has increased awareness of Taiwan's avifauna.

About Dasyueshan

Dasyueshan, meaning 'big snow mountain', is located in Taichung in the Snow Mountain range. Formerly a prominent logging area, Dasyueshan largely consists of secondary forests and the focus has shifted towards conservation. Despite its remote location, it is accessible by car through a well-paved road. With an average annual temperature of 12 °C and annual rainfall of up to 4000 mm, it is much colder and humid than the cities below. Late spring and summer are wet and cool, while the winters are drier and colder. The topography is undulating consisting of several peaks, such as Anmashan (location of the visitor center and ecolodges), and Siasyueshan (Little Snow Mountain), the highest point in the park at 2997 m. Dasyueshan itself extends higher at 3503 m. Animals are occasionally seen in hiking trails but many animals, from birds to muntjacs and monkeys, can be observed by the road, though this requires patience and luck. The Swinhoe's pheasant is most often seen at the 23-kilometer stop up the mountain road, in a mixed broadleaf forest habitat at an altitude of 1000 m. There is a parking lot and birdwatching platform to see songbirds, which feed on berries in the trees during winter and spring. Above 2000 m are conifer forests, the haunts of the Mikado, though Swinhoe's are occasionally seen there as well.

The Search Begins

I first visited Dasyueshan in August 2014. Unfortunately at this time there were more campers than birders. Accompanied by my father, we saw a few small Swinhoe's pheasants (probably juveniles following their mother) on the road upon entering 23K, but they were quickly scared off by passing motorcyclists on the other side of the road. Although I saw a female Mikado Pheasant at 47K later



Female and male Swinhoe's pheasant
Photo: Frank Lin



Male Swinhoe's pheasant eating garbage
Photo: Frank Lin

that day, the Swinhoe's pheasant would await for next time.

I went back in December, when chances were better to see them. At 07:00, I arrived at 23K where a dozen bird photographers were in position in a ditch, across the road where they expected the pheasants to appear. Within minutes, a female appeared, followed moments later by the male. Eventually, three more females and a juvenile male appeared. As they foraged for food by the road, they constantly made bubbly chirruping sounds. At one point the male walked uphill making shrill chirps that could be heard from afar, after which the birds returned to the other side of the road. With wattles expanded, the male repeatedly performed a laterally-oriented display where he hops some distance and then runs around a female, wagging his tail side-to-side while uttering a low whooshing hiss. It is sometimes performed in absence of females when the male is under threat, and may have anti-predatory functions, drawing attention of intruders away from females and young. The female also performs a distraction display, which I saw at a zoo years ago. She rapidly opens her wings and jumps around, while her mate remains stationary at the side. Wing whirring is another commonly observed display, but I have yet to witness it in this species. In my sightings, the females appeared at the scene first, so the male might not be compelled to whirr. After about thirty minutes, the birds walked downhill and we went to (unsuccessfully) find the Mikado. Going up the mountain, I saw two additional male Swinhoes, one of which flew across the road.

In the late afternoon, a group of pheasants can be observed feeding down the hill of the 23K parking lot, in dense but dry undergrowth. They were present during my visits in December 2014 and January 2016. This may be a different flock from the morning roadside group; the male seemed slightly smaller and more reclusive. The females were not as afraid of humans, so their beautiful patterns could be observed up close.

The pheasants are sometimes accompanied by Taiwan hill-partridges (*Arborophila crudigularis*) and squirrels, both of which I saw on my winter 2014 visit. The pheasants dwarf the diminutive partridges, which constantly scrape the undergrowth using their proportionately large feet while the pheasants mainly use their beaks. This behaviour may allow more food to be accessible to both species. Though the Swinhoe's pheasant is regularly observed at this favourite haunt, many questions remain about its life outside, such as its breeding biology and roosting patterns. Although the male is often seen with several females, they may

actually be monogamous. In captivity, males have been observed incubating the eggs and raising the young. Additional females seen in the field may be related to the male or visitors from other territories. The males serve as sentinels or guardians to their group; often a fight breaks out if more than one male is present. Even among father and son there is conflict as the son grows up - I observed an adult male repeatedly chasing the juvenile male. Females have been observed fighting as well, perhaps to compete for resources.

Current Issues

The preservation of Dasyueshan has allowed Taiwan's endemic pheasants to flourish, which have been threatened by hunting and habitat destruction. Though their populations have recovered in many areas of Taiwan, other issues have emerged in recent years. Feeding the birds is illegal and liable to a hefty fine, but is common practice among photographers. Some are concerned that Dasyueshan is becoming a "chicken farm" where the novelty of seeing wild birds is lost as they become habituated. On my last trip, I was appalled to see one man smoking in front of the pheasants, and the male pheasant eating a plastic bag. I climbed down to retrieve it after the pheasants left. I was able to retrieve most of it, but some scattered pieces were just out of my reach. I remain concerned as to how often these birds eat litter, and the effects on their health. Although Taiwan is no stranger to typhoons and earthquakes, the birds may struggle to breed in more adverse weather of recent years. Another alarming problem is the occurrence of stray dogs and cats in the park. Park officials have set up traps, but it is difficult to capture these animals that have a potentially catastrophic effect on native wildlife. Though the Swinhoe's pheasant remains largely sedentary, Mikado pheasants were not seen for over a month this past winter.

Seeing the Swinhoe's pheasant is an amazing experience that I hope readers can enjoy someday. Dasyueshan is truly an exhilarating place to see Taiwan's birds, and I will be back to make further observations. It is my wish that people will continue to respect and cherish this splendid species and its environment.

In the next installment, I will be describing my search for the Mikado pheasant.



Female Swinhoe's pheasant
Photo: Frank Lin

Special thanks to Yi-Yu Chen, Kermit Blackwood, Michal Skrucha, Kuen-Dar Chiang and Jonathan Pointer for their contributions to this article.

CHRISTMAS IN SRI LANKA

Keith Howman

It took 42 years since the formation of WPA for us to get to Sri Lanka. Its problem was lack of pheasants! There are just two present in Sri Lanka, the Ceylon junglefowl (*Gallus lafayettii*), which is unique to the Island and the blue peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*), which is far from unique.



Blue peafowl
Photo: Jean Howman

Christmas day (we had arrived in Colombo the previous day) was the best for years. No turkey, plenty of luscious prawns, and the best hotel I can remember with a delightful garden full of birds and bird songs. The next day we had the first of only three minor problems on this trip, our flight was cancelled. However, one of the unusual aspects of this trip was that a driver would meet us on arrival and be with us for the entire trip with a mobile phone provided to be able to keep in contact at all times. Therefore he would be driving to our next destination so we decided to drive with him. This entailed a nine-hour drive with a driver that not only drove well and safely, but had a remarkable ability to spot birds when cruising at 40mph. We thus arrived at the Gal Oya Lodge having seen and photographed many birds including our first Ceylon junglefowl and blue peafowl.



Ceylon junglefowl
Photo: Jean Howman

Sri Lanka is a lovely country with lovely people. It is a green country with much primary and secondary forest when it is not covered with paddy fields. Wetland areas abound so bird life, particularly waders, is exceptional. Our trip was planned as a photographic trip, particularly of birdlife for which Sri Lanka is best known, but with hopefully the possibility of seeing a leopard. The leopard in Sri Lanka is the top predator, unlike Africa where the lion dominates. As a result it is possible to see leopard hunting by day, but not over the Christmas holidays, as we were to find out. Our trip therefore took in a number of national parks (there are 22 in all). Gal Oya is very poor with only one track in and the same

one out which was clearly avoided by the birds and wildlife generally. It is a large national park gazetted 60 years ago and should be better.

Udawalawe National Park is brilliant for Asian elephant, bee-eaters and bird life generally.

The Gal Oya Lake has cormorants almost by the million and fish jumping all over. It has great water bird life such as black head and herons.

Then we came to Yalla which was where our second minor problem occurred! Definitely one to avoid over the Christmas holidays if you don't like queues of safari vehicles lining up to try and see a leopard half a mile away up a tree. Away from the maddening crowd it probably has good birdlife and is good at a quieter time of year.

Bundala National Park has fantastic wetland bird life as well as monkeys and a bad tempered elephant. It was a real joy of a park to visit with peafowl around every corner.



Purple swamp hen
Photo: Jean Howman

Our final minor problem was another cancelled flight but this time it was a definite bonus. The airport was changed to a Sri-Lankan Air Force airport with good security on our vehicle (mirrors underneath etc.) after which it totally relaxed and we flew in a six seater Cessna at 8000ft and we were able to see the green countryside and wetlands everywhere. It was a wonderful end to a visit to a lovely country.



Yellow-wattled lapwing
Photo: Jean Howman

CHEER PHEASANT IN NEPAL

Paul North

The vulnerable (IUCN Red List) cheer pheasant is distributed in a narrow belt in the Himalayas from northeast Pakistan, through northern India to the Kaligandaki River in western Nepal.

Local people reported the presence of cheer pheasant in Bajura district in northwest Nepal, an area that lies outside of the Protected Area system and where these birds were not found in a previous survey of this area. This prompted a project that is documented in a paper entitled 'Survey of Cheer Pheasant *Catreus wallichii* in Bajura District, Nepal' authored by Hari Basnet of the Small Mammals Conservation and Research Foundation in Nepal and funded by the Oriental Bird Club.



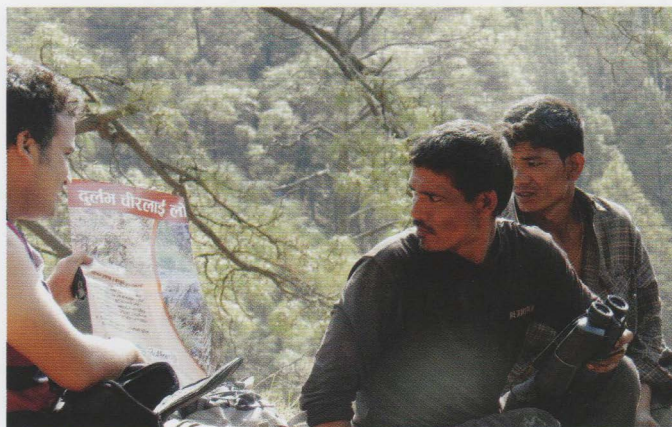
Cheer pheasant recorded during surveys in the Bajura district Nepal
Photo: Hari Basnet

The project objectives were to explore the cheer pheasant habitat in Bajura district and to establish their current status and distribution in this area and to determine the bird diversity in the study area.

A preliminary survey was carried out in nine locations based on information from local people gathered as a result of short news reports broadcast from two local radio stations. Local people who supplied information were interviewed about the past and present status of the birds and the threats that they face.

The threats to the cheer are considerable and include hunting, and this can be taking of eggs and snaring with the help of a captive bird. Wildfires are a serious threat and destroy cheer habitat and nesting sites. Many fires are started deliberately to promote the growth of grasses for grazing stock. Natural predation also occurs, Golden Jackal, yellow-throated martin and large-billed crow being the main perpetrators.

During the survey a maximum of 12 calling cheer pheasants were recorded and the breeding population was estimated to be nine pairs. There were six sightings of Cheer pheasants and two clutches of eight and nine chicks were seen, also one captive cheer



Conservation activities with local people was undertaken as part of the project in the Bajura district Nepal
Photo: Hari Basnet

and a Kalij were recorded and there were two reports of captive Cheer being reared by local people.

During the project 143 species of birds were recorded from within the Bajura district and are listed in the paper. Unfortunately the endangered Himalayan Quail (*Ophrysia superciliosa*) was not among them.

The results of the survey and a list of recommendations was shared with the district forest officers, local as well as national journalists, and the local radio stations. The survey results were covered by three newspapers and an online news service. Conservation awareness was conducted in the locations with the help of cheer t-shirts and posters produced by Bird Conservation Nepal, and a half hour talk about the research and its results was aired by local radio stations.



Cheer pheasant chicks recorded during the surveys in the Bajura district Nepal
Photo: Hari Basnet

The following link is to a video taken during the project and shows the birds and chicks in the wild, captive birds and a pair of cheer defending their chicks from an attack by large-billed crows and local villagers.

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsOoWj_alPI)

SCARCE PHEASANT ARTWORK FOR SALE

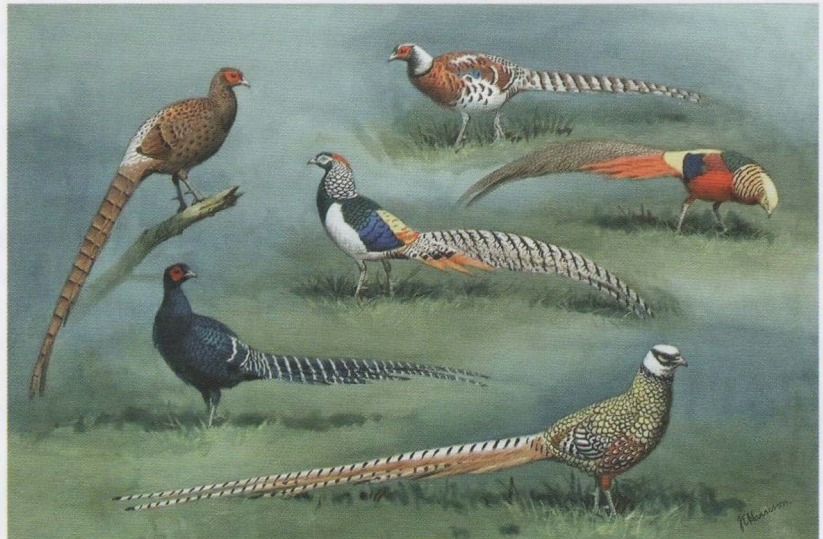
J.C HARRISON

Two original signed
watercolours (14 x 22 in)
mf £5,200 for the pair

Also, from Elliot's original
'*Monograph of the
Phasianidae*' hand coloured
lithographs of:

- Viellot's Crested Firebacks
mf £500
- Swinhoe's Pheasants
mf £500
- Malay Peacock Pheasants
mf £400
- Soemmering's Copper
Pheasants
£450
- Japanese Green Pheasants
£450

mf = mounted and framed.
Images available on request.



Major Iain Grahame, Daws Hall, Lamarsh, Bures, Suffolk, CO8 5EX
Tel: 01787 269213 Email: info@majorbooks.co.uk

RESPONSE TO 'DEATH TO THE MEALWORM?' IN WPA NEWS 101

Dear Editor,

I was somewhat disturbed to read the headline 'Death to the Mealworm' that appeared on page 14 of the last issue of your excellent magazine. I feed mealworms to my birds all year round but at this time of year each bird receives considerably more than in the breeding season as I consider them to be a more immediate source of protein in the cold weather than the seed and crumb diet that is fed with them. My fears were allayed on reading the article as it became clear that the mealworms were being fed to very young birds which is something that I have never done as there are better rearing foods available for chicks. Mealworms that are commercially produced today are readily available, inexpensive and as they are vegetarian do not carry the deadly diseases as did their predecessor, the maggot. As they can be fattening, I feed very few in the approach to and during the breeding season; one wants birds that are fit not fat, and increase the amount in the approach to and during the winter months. I have not encountered the problems described in all the years of feeding mealworms to my adult birds. So I would say, "Long live the Mealworm".

Robert White

PROJEK TAMBUN

A community project for the conservation of the Megapode *Megapodius cumingii* on Mantanani Island, Sabah, Malaysia

Earl of Cranbrook

This Project, towards which WPA gave a matching grant in 2015, is coordinated by the Sabah Society, a non-government / non-profit organisation with the following objectives: to stimulate a wider interest in, and knowledge of, the history, natural history and geography of Sabah and the cultures and customs of its people, and to encourage and assist the recording of knowledge of the history, natural history and geography of Sabah and the preservation of examples of the cultures and customs of its people.

Led by the inspirational Hon Secretary (now Chairman) of the Sabah Society, Chiwon Chin, and in co-operation with Camps Borneo, a natural history club has been formed involving staff and pupils of the national primary school (the only school on this small island). In 2015, on periodic visits Sabah Society volunteers used hand-held GPS to locate nest mounds and deployed photo-trap cameras to record activity by the birds (and other, less welcome visitors!). Building on this database, in July-September 2016, a recent graduate in zoology at the University of Malaya, Mohd. Fauzi Jaini, made a definitive map of all egg mounds, and recorded their present condition. The school natural history club was revived and close liaison established with 'homestay' operators.



Chiwon Chin sets a camera trap with members of the school nature society



A pair of megapodes on their nest mound

In September, Alfons Patandung, leader of the WCS program for conservation of the Sulawesi endemic megapode, Maleo *Macrocephalon maleo*, visited the team and made valuable suggestions based on his 11 years of field experience. Two public presentations have been made in the main village, Kampung Padang, to parents of the school children and other island residents. Travel expenses were paid to the village headman and organiser of the 'homestay' movement to attend a symposium organised by Sabah Society in Kota Kinabalu, to discuss progress among a wider audience.

From October 2016 two young men, Mohd Ikwan and Mohd Bakri, residents of the island, have been engaged to patrol the areas of the island frequented by megapodes and to monitor the state of nest mounds. Notices have been posted at critical sites to emphasise that the megapode is totally protected and that egg stealing is an offence.

In December 2016, Fauzi returned to the island for a short session, but will be back later in the year. One hide for observation has been built at an active nest mound, and others are planned. Cooperation with an island resort manager will result in the publication of a hand list of the birds of Mantanani, and Iwan and Bakri have been retained for further training as part-time guardians and informal bird guides. A report on rare migratory passerines on the island has been submitted for publication in BirdingASIA, an outlet likely to attract regional birders to the island.

By these means, the project is making progress towards its aims of convincing Mantanani islanders that their megapode is of value alive and safeguarded, as a positive attraction for the thriving regional community of birders, who will contribute useful income as ecotourists.

Basic funding has been provided by Cranbrook, from the Merdeka Award 2014, In addition to WPA, the Paul and Louisa Cooke Charitable Trust has made a generous donation. The Wildlife Conservation Society paid Alfons' international airfare. For the 2017 programme a key addition is a part-time administrative assistant, at a monthly cost of RM 800 (including local allowance), approximately £1900 for 12 months.



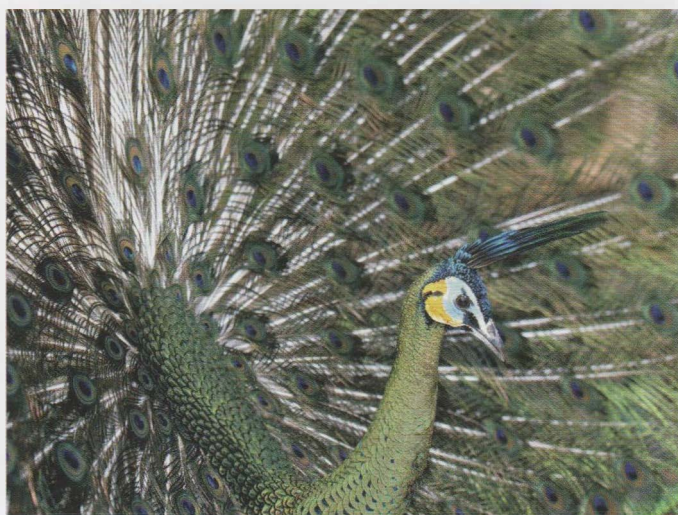
Notices prepared by the school nature club and posted by Ikwan and Bakri, October-November 2016

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A GREEN PEAFOWL IN THE WILDERNESS

Part 1 - March to October

Freidrich Esser

How does one set about watching a year's life of the green peafowl (*Pavo muticus imperator*)? These birds are said to be shy, keen-eyed jungle dwellers and nothing in their environment can escape their attention – a fact I can only endorse. I had to use camouflaged hiding places for well over 90% of my observations. I had to accustom the birds to different feeding places I built close to where they live, since the green peafowl is likely to stay in one place and to stick rather rigidly to its habits.



Green peafowl (*Pavo muticus imperator*) male in the wild in North Thailand
Photo: Freidrich Esser

It is the middle of March, the weather is sweltering, it is the dry season with temperatures of around 35°C. The nights are not much better, the temperature is somewhere between 20°C and 30°C.

Phew! What a year this has been. I have provided the birds with everything necessary, for now they have to look after themselves. I found it very hard to leave them; they have become quite accustomed to me. Had it not been for the peacocks, the peahens would still be clinging to my tail feathers. What may be the thoughts of a hen, sitting in her nest, breeding her five eggs? Two weeks earlier she had scratched out a scrape with her talons below a boulder sticking out of the ground on the slope of a hill, padded it with dry grass and laid her eggs there. There were five eggs all in all; one was laid each day in the late afternoon. When the Green Peafowl does not live in captivity its clutch hardly ever numbers more than five eggs.

I hope that people do not burn off the thin layer of dry leaves in and around the jungle, as they usually do at least once a year. A lot of 'my' peahens lost their clutches in the fire last year, some of them only days before the fledglings would hatch. Others lost their clutches to egg collectors. These eggs, irrespective of their stage of breeding, are regarded as a delicacy in large parts of south-east Asia. Monitor lizards, snakes, wild boars and other animals see the clutches as a welcome addition to their normal diet. A peahen then may lay some more eggs, much to the delight of the peacocks. For them this means mating time again.

People in most parts of south-east Asia, especially in Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, and Cambodia, burn the thin layer of dry leaves in the Jungles for hunting reasons. Dry leaves make a lot of noise when you try to sneak up on animals, giving them a fair warning that danger is at hand.

The chicks hatch after about 28 days of incubation. During that time the peahen only leaves the clutch for a very short time to drink water and eat. The first chicks hatch around the end of March or beginning of April. The peahen lays her first clutch at the age of two.

Shortly after the chicks have hatched – usually within the first twenty-four hours – the peahen leaves her nest together with her chicks and shows them how and where to find water and food. The young ones are in extreme danger during the first days, since they do not know yet which animals are predators and when to hide or run away. Between the third and fifth day they start flying or hopping on trees, starting with scrubs and bushes. From the fifth day on they are able to fly six feet high.

The young feed on a variety of insects and different seeds that their mother stuffs down their beaks. When it is feeding time the mother calls the fledglings and they learn thus to distinguish between things that are fit to eat and which are not. The peahen leads her offspring over paths well known to her through the jungle vegetation, to rivers and lakes. A peahen usually joins with another peahen and her young. Older peahens have about the same breeding time, so that the fledglings of my five peahens hatched within a period of three weeks. When they eat, they keep a reasonable distance to each other.

The hierarchy among the peahens is very quickly handed down to the chicks. That is the chicks of a high-ranking peahen precede the other chicks of the same age. The peacocks take only a small part in the breeding business.

Without a sound they glide from their perches to the ground in the early hours of the morning, they drink a little, pick the odd grain here or there before they proceed to their courtship-grounds.



Green peafowl (*Pavo muticus imperator*) male in the wild in North Thailand
Photo: Freidrich Esser

There they pronounce their presence with a loud “Koo hoo Koo hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo” or “waaoo waaoo”, thus marking the place as their territory, telling other peacocks to stay clear. At the same time the cries serve as an invitation to those peahens that have not found a mating partner yet.

The peahens and chicks are busy looking for food from the early morning to dusk, never staying too long in one place. It is only in the hot hours around noon that they visit bamboo groves to indulge in prolonged sand bathing.

When they roam for food they pass through the territories of peacocks. These peacocks welcome them and often show them around, helping their guests to find things to eat. Then the older peacocks display their extravagant eye-spotted wheels. The young seem to like that part because they – boys and girls – all join in displaying their tail feathers in turn. It is only the mothers that do not join the party. Sometimes the old peacocks stand aside.

I have never been able to observe a peacock helping the peahen in bringing up the young. Neither do the peahens seem to find help from their own juveniles of the previous year, as has been claimed in various internet forums.

I have not seen juveniles together with such a muster of peahens and their chicks. The juveniles usually go off, alone or in gangs, to roam unknown territory. In this phase of bringing up the chicks the peahens begin to moult. Most of the peacocks begin their moult at the height of the courtship display by changing their light-brown primaries. This may happen as early as February. The birds regularly use the paths, which they themselves have made through their territory, as long as there is ample food and water and they are left undisturbed. Thus they also use the same sleeping-places for years. This is especially true for peacocks. If they are disturbed there in their sleep, they are likely to leave the place for an indefinite period of time to look for some other shelter a bit farther off. They usually return some time later, when they feel safe again. The peahens usually have several sleeping-places because they do not, unlike the peacocks, permanently stay in one place. It

often takes them two days to roam the length and width of their territory. It is very interesting to see such a peafowl family walk from one peacock's territory to that of another peacock. The new one usually awaits the new family at his territory's border (we never know where exactly this is) and shows them around just like any peacock would do, treating the chicks as if they were his own.

I have been lucky enough to observe such families as they crossed five different territories and they were always very welcome. It would be worthwhile to do a DNA test to find out if the peahens mate with more than one peacock before they deposit their eggs, it is possible that they do.

During the course of the first few months, quite a few chicks lose their lives to snakes, wild cats and birds of prey. I once saw an eagle attack a muster of peafowl. The peahens gave a loud “tok tok tok krrrook krrrooh hoo hoo hoo” and the birds vanished into the thick undergrowth. In the wilderness only two or three out of five freshly hatched chicks survive. In a more man-made environment, where most of the predators have become extinct a peahen may sometimes rear all five of her offspring until they are fully grown. But the normal case here is two to four chicks per peahen, most of which reach maturity.

As the chicks grow older and bigger they need more and more protein. Now frogs, snails, lizards, and small snakes are part of the diet. These are often swallowed in one. They also regularly search the excrement of the banteng for beetles. These beetles are regarded as a delicacy by the local people. Since peafowl are not pure carnivores, they feed on fruit as well. Their favourites are bananas, mangoes, the fruits of the Jack tree, the fruits of climbing plants and lots more. They also eat grass, clover, and the leaves of various plants. They strip off ripe as well as unripe seeds from the panicles of a variety of grasses. On the fields of the local farms they sometimes band up as teams to harvest maize, rice, beans, and peanuts. All in all, the peafowl are omnivorous. They will eat almost anything, provided they find it.

From July onwards, depending on when they hatched, the chicks



Female green peafowl (*Pavo muticus imperator*) in the wild in north Thailand
Photo: Freidrich Esser



Female green peafowl (*Pavo muticus imperator*) with chicks in the wild in north Thailand

Photo: Freidrich Esser

have passed the most dangerous period of their lives. They have learned a lot about food, predators and they have learned how to behave in a group.

The peacocks accompany the different family musters around their territory, as has been described before, but their day is a bit different from that of a peahen. They spend a lot of time, especially in the morning hours, keeping their plumage in order. It takes quite an effort to dry their long back and tail feathers and keep them straight. When they do this, one can see them in the

WPA QUIZ

Rosey Northcote-Smith

Over the past year I have been running fun general knowledge quiz nights at my local tennis club. They are incredibly popular with all ages. The evening includes a simple two-course supper of a main and a dessert. The tennis club takes the ticket price to cover catering, bar staff, photocopying and prizes, and I charge for the quiz. I also run either a small raffle or a 'Heads and Tails' for £1.00 per person. For the 'Heads and Tails' all stand and place hands on heads or tails, I flip a coin and if it's heads and you have your hands on your tails you sit, until there is a winner who gets a bottle of fizz.

All of the money raised is donated to WPA. So far I have raised over £350.

This is a great way to raise funds for WPA and if anyone would like to have a quiz night I would be delighted to supply a quiz pack.

This includes a time waster, eight rounds of questions, instructions and ideas on how to run the evening - so all you have to do is the food, drinks and prizes!!

The pack is free if the evening is a WPA fundraiser, or £50.00 if it is for your village or another charity. All money received from selling packs will go to WPA. A huge amount of work goes into a successful quiz so it is worth every penny. Please note the quizzes are different subjects and general knowledge rounds, and are not specialist avian questions.

Enjoy your quizzing!

sunlight, whereas they normally stay out of the sun. At certain times they wander through their territories and stay in certain spots (they may be courtship places?) for an hour or two. Then they go off to the next spot. When they come to such a spot they tread very carefully, making almost no sound and they keep an open eye on everything that may be going on there. When they feel safe enough they enter the place crying "koo-hoo koo-hoo koo-hoo". At the height of the courtship season a peacock will sometimes only shout "waa-o waa-o waa-o", displaying his wheel, although I could see no peahen anywhere. From the middle of May onwards, sometimes a little later, the peacocks lose their trains within a matter of two weeks. That is when the rainy season begins too. Peacocks are often seen together with banteng or wild pigs. These animals feel safe with peafowl around because a peafowl's eyes are very keen, but such paradisiacal scenes have become very scarce because there is hardly any place left for big animals to live freely. During July and August one hardly ever sees any peacocks. It seems as if they were hiding on purpose. Maybe it is because they look too terrible due to the moult; their plumage turns pale and without their magnificent elaborated tails and metallic ocelli they look bereaved of all their splendour. However, the moult is of great advantage to the birds, because now they can move through the undergrowth without the long, heavily soaked feathers. All I ever heard from them during that period was a warning-cry now and then. Apart from that they were silent.

Part 2 - October to February will be featured in the next Newsletter.

WORKSHOPS ON ORNAMENTAL PHEASANTS

Barbara Ingman

Kirkley Hall Zoological Gardens, Northumberland, is near Newcastle airport and has excellent air and rail transport links. It opened in May 2011 as an educational training facility for Northumberland College's Animal Care students. As well as becoming a tourist attraction the zoo now boasts over 130 species of animals. It has a full zoo licence, is a member of BIAZA and links with various partners to actively promote the conservation of animals.

Steven Sykes is the Manager and a keen supporter of WPA. Kirkley Hall is one of the few corporate members of WPA and some Trustees visited the zoo last July after our Council meeting at Blagdon Hall. They were impressed by Steven's enthusiasm and the way young people were involved in all aspects of the running of the Zoo.

John Corder discussed his teaching programmes with Steven. After other meetings Council have approved one day programmes that are supported and taught through WPA, aimed at Bird Keepers in Zoos and WPA members. The programme has not yet been finalised but will cover aspects of breeding and management of pheasants. The only charge would be for accommodation and meals. Transport to and from the Zoo would be provided. It is also planned to hold the course at other institutions in the UK and the first course is scheduled at Kirkley this summer. Please register your interest by sending an email to Barbara at office@pheasant.org.uk.

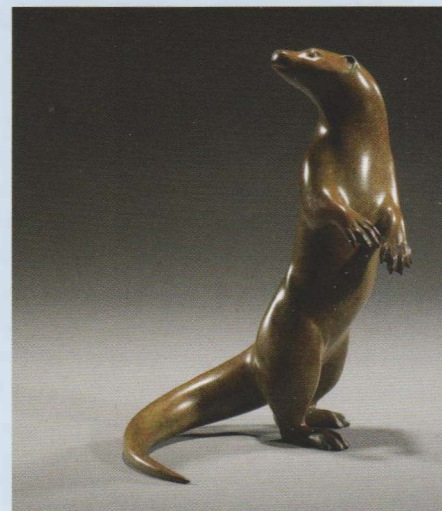
WPA LIMITED EDITION RAFFLE

We are delighted to be able to offer members a unique opportunity to win this beautiful bronze sculpture of an Otter valued at £3600 which has been very kindly donated by one of Britain's leading contemporary sculptors Simon Gudgeon. This stunning otter stands at 11 inches high. Details of Simon's work can be seen at: <https://simongudgeon.com/>

There are 300 tickets available priced at £30 each.

All proceeds from the sale of the tickets will go to the ongoing WPA Pipar Project in Nepal. The sculpture will be on display at Compton Manor 12th May, Dunkeld 20th May and our concert on 9th June. Tickets are being sold on a first come first served basis, and being limited to only 300 the odds are good and can be bettered if you buy more than one ticket. The draw will take place at a WPA Charity Shoot on Wednesday 5th July 2017 at Red Rice. Raffle tickets will be posted to you as soon as possible after receipt of payment. Participants will be informed of the name of the winner by email shortly after the draw.

More information is included in the flier and is also available on the news section of the website.



WPA CONCERT

WPA are delighted to host an evening of baroque and classical music for flute and strings. The evening will include music from the Waverley Ensemble directed by Ishani Bhoola with the world renowned flautist Susan Milan.

The Waverley Ensemble is a group of professional string and keyboard players based in Haslemere, Surrey. The group was established in 2010 by former London Philharmonic Orchestra member Ishani Bhoola. Playing on modern instruments, the Waverley Ensemble specialises in playing baroque music, in particular Bach, Vivaldi and Telemann. The evening will also feature music from the flautist Susan Milan. Susan is an English professor of flute at the Royal College of Music and has a multi-dimensional career as an orchestral guest principle, chamber musician, soloist, recording artiste, composer, author, teacher and lecturer.

The evening will begin with champagne and canapes and there will be a chance to browse the Silent Auction and Tree of Prizes. The concert will be in two halves with champagne and canapes at the interval. There will be drinks and nibbles available after the concert for those wanting to stay longer. The evening will conclude with the collection of the Silent Auction and the Tree of Prizes.

Please come and join us for a wonderful evening.

More information is included in the flier and is available on the news section of the website.

BRIGHT SEEDS SPONSORSHIP

Emma Zeale

WPA have recently received the first cheque from Bright Seeds from the sales of Bright Seeds Pheasant and Finch - Gamecover and Conservation Mix. This is the company's biggest selling mixture and they sell around 1000 hectares per year. Bright Seeds donated £1 for each 25kg bag sold in 2016 and plan to do the same in 2017. The bags for the mix are brightly coloured and feature the WPA logo on them. Chris Bright from Bright Seeds handed over a check for £852 from 2016 at the recent Fundraising Committee meeting in January. Bright Seeds support for WPA through the sale of the mixes started in the summer last year. WPA would like to thank Bright Seeds for their support.

For more information on the products please visit the Bright Seeds website www.brightseeds.co.uk.



Chris Bright from Brights Seeds handing over the check to Keith Howman
Photo: James Marchington



Pheasant and Finch Seed Mix with WPA Logo

AVIAN FLU

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N8 in the UK and Europe

22 February 2017

Disease report

Since our last update on the 7th February, the zones around the premises in North Yorkshire were lifted on the 9th February. No local spread has been found during the surveillance in the zones or from tracings. In East Lindsey, Lincolnshire, the fourth outbreak, zones were merged on the 11th February and were lifted on the 21st February. For the third case in East Lindsey, the zones will be merged at 00:01 on the 22nd February. For the two gamebird premises in Wyre District, Lancashire, the Protection and Surveillance zones will be merged on Monday 27th February. The zones around IP8, in the same district and linked to these other two premises through movements of live birds before disease was detected, will be merged on the 7th March provided there is no further suspicion of disease identified from the tracings. The map has been updated to indicate that four of the infected premises are now considered resolved, and zones have been lifted, with no further spread identified following intensive epidemiological investigations.

On the 14th February, H5N8 HPAI was confirmed in a grandparent broiler breeder flock at a premises in Mid Suffolk. Twenty three thousand birds were present in three sheds, two of which contained birds with clinical signs and slowly increasing mortality over a few days. Samples taken tested positive for H5N8 HPAI by PCR and the birds were humanely culled. There had been no trade of live poultry, hatching eggs or day old chicks to other Member States from either this or other parts of the integrated business during the high risk window. Epidemiological investigations are continuing.

Warden patrols at a site in Norfolk, where wild bird surveillance takes place, have recently submitted two (dead) whooper swans (*Cygnus cygnus*) which have tested positive for H5N8 HPAI. This brings the total number of regions in which H5N8 positive wild birds have been found in the UK to 20, including more recently, positive whooper swans at Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland.

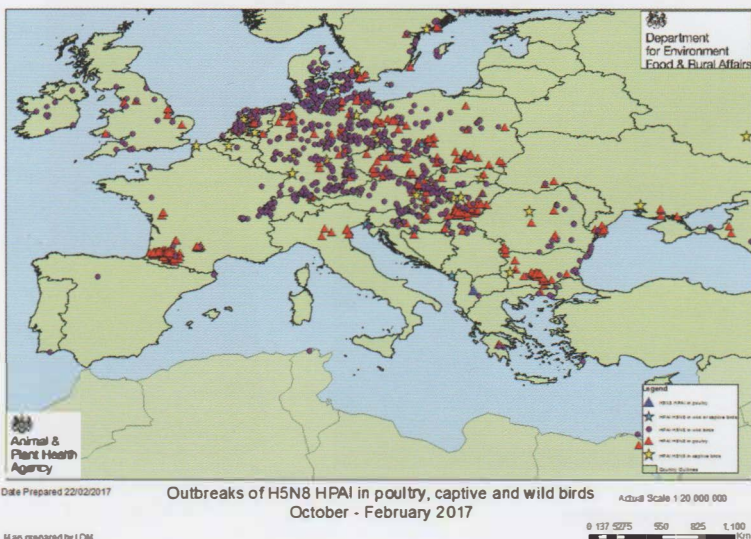
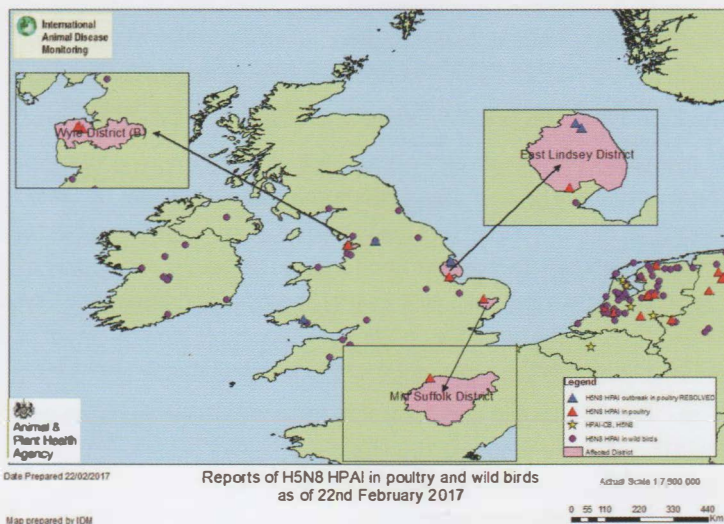
Situation assessment

The situation in Europe has continued with wild bird findings still being reported. However the list of species which are now testing positive involves more swans, including whooper and mute swans (*Cygnus cygnus* and *Cygnus olor* respectively). The reasons for this may be simply that as large, white birds, they are easier to spot but more importantly, these are relatively sedentary birds once they have arrived at a wintering site, so they will have greater contact with contaminated environment and therefore be more likely to become infected than a transitory visitor. Elsewhere, the number of outbreaks across Europe, the Middle East, West Africa and Asia has also continued to increase; new countries reporting H5N8 include Kuwait and Cameroon. There have been around 820 outbreaks in poultry and 38 in captive birds reported now to the EU ADNS system (which may include non-EU countries) and a small number of H5N5 reports

and each day more reports are made, particularly for wild bird findings.

As a result of the continuing reporting in the EU, the risk level for the UK is maintained at "HIGH" for an incursion of an infected wild bird, and as "LOW TO MEDIUM" for introduction of infection to poultry on individual premises dependent on the level of on-farm biosecurity. Commercial poultry premises with good or high biosecurity measures are unlikely to get disease. The widespread locations of the positive wild bird findings suggest that we should consider the whole of the UK as a risk area for wild bird infection but that areas with populations of waterfowl species may carry a greater risk proportionally in terms of risk level for poultry premises.

As a result of the increase in positive findings in wild birds in Europe, we ask that the public use the Defra helpline (Tel: 03459 33 55 77) to report findings of dead wild birds.



In particular, any wild ducks, wild geese, swans, gulls or birds of prey and where more than five birds of any species are found dead in the same location.

Conclusion

We continue to consider the risk level is high for further introductions via wild birds, but the risk of entry into poultry farms remains as low to medium depending on the level of biosecurity. Several EU countries have now kept birds indoors for up to 12 weeks and therefore a decision may be made for birds to be turned out to retain free range status. If they are released onto ranges with environmental contamination then further outbreaks could occur, and in the current climate and season, virus can remain in the environment for several weeks at this time of year.

Authors

International Disease Monitoring team

Avian influenza (bird) flu Prevention Zones

Planned controls in England from 28 February 2017

We are taking these actions because of the continuing heightened risk of avian influenza (bird flu) throughout the UK. Since the autumn of 2016, outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza of subtype H5N8 have been found in poultry and wild birds in the UK and in most countries across Europe.

From 28 February 2017 we expect to put in place an amended Prevention Zone in England:

Higher Risk Areas in England

Our analysis of the H5N8 outbreaks across the UK and Europe confirms that the risk remains highly significant across the entire country, but that areas of the country close to substantial inland or coastal bodies of water where significant numbers of wild birds (particularly wild waterfowl or gulls) collect are at an even higher risk. The closer that a premises with poultry or other captive birds is to such bodies of water, the greater the risk that disease will be carried into it by foraging wild birds, particularly ducks.

We have defined these areas in England as Higher Risk Areas. You should now use our interactive map at <http://www.gisdiseasemap.defra.gov.uk/intmaps/avian/map.jsp> to check if you live within the 'Higher Risk' areas.

You will only be considered to be in a Higher Risk Area (HRA) if the whole of your poultry premises falls within this area. If any part of the premises is outside the HRA, then it will not be considered to be in a HRA.

Summary of options from 28 February 2017

From 28 February all keepers of poultry and other captive birds must continue to maintain good biosecurity and keep a close watch on the health of their birds. Where practical you should do all you can to keep chickens and turkeys in separate enclosures to ducks and geese.

All keepers of poultry and captive birds will also need to adopt one of the following three methods of separating their birds from wild birds, and in particular from wild waterfowl:

- a) Housing – option open to all areas of England.
- b) Total netting/aviaries/covered runs – option open to all areas of England.
- c) Supervised access to enclosed outdoor areas – This option is not currently permitted and will only be available outside 'Higher Risk Areas' after 28 February.

If you're not in an Higher Risk Area

You will be able to allow birds outdoors into fenced areas provided the areas meet certain conditions:

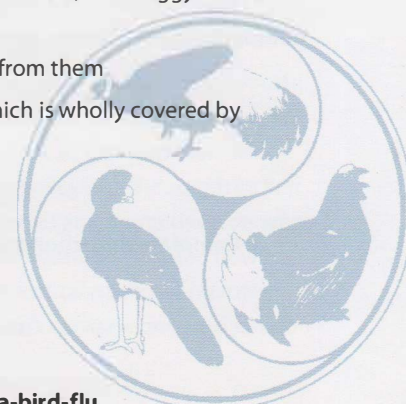
- (a) the areas have been made unattractive to wild birds, for example ponds have been netted, wild bird food sources removed.
- (b) action has been taken to reduce any existing contamination, such as cleansing and disinfecting concrete areas, wet/boggy areas are fenced off.
- (c) assessments have been made of the risk of birds coming into contact with wild birds or contamination from them.

You will still be able to keep your birds housed (in permanent or temporary sheds), or into a fenced run which is wholly covered by netting.

If you are in a Higher Risk Area

You must either:

- (a) keep your birds housed, in permanent or temporary sheds; or
- (b) allow birds outdoors but only into a fenced run which is fully covered by netting.



For the full guidelines and the planned controls visit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu>

SCIENCE DIGEST

An introduction to some of the recently published open access papers on various aspects of galliforme biology gleaned from a range of international journals.

Recovering the Genetic Identity of an Extinct-in-the-Wild Species: The Puzzling Case of the Alagoas Curassow.

Costa M.C., Oliveira P.R.R. Jr, Davanço P.V., Camargo Cd., Laganaro N.M., et al., 2017.
PLOS ONE 12(1): e0169636. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0169636

Sharp-Tailed Grouse Nest Survival and Nest Predator Habitat Use in North Dakota's Bakken Oil Field.

Burr P.C., Robinson A.C., Larsen R.T., Newman R.A., Ellis-Felege S.N., 2017.
PLOS ONE 12(1): e0170177. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0170177

A molecular genetic time scale demonstrates Cretaceous origins and multiple diversification rate shifts within the order Galliformes (Aves).

Stein, R.W., Brown, J.W. and Mooers, A.Ø., 2015.
Molecular phylogenetics and evolution, vol. 92, pp.155-164. DOI:10.1016/j.ympev.2015.06.005

Ancestral range reconstruction of Galliformes: the effects of topology and taxon sampling.

Wang, N., Kimball, R. T., Braun, E. L., Liang, B. and Zhang, Z., 2017.
J. Biogeogr., 44: 122–135. doi:10.1111/jbi.12782

New Evidences of Mitochondrial DNA Heteroplasmy by Putative Paternal Leakage between the Rock Partridge (*Alectoris graeca*) and the Chukar Partridge (*Alectoris chukar*).

Gandolfi A, Crestanello B, Fagotti A, Simoncelli F, Chiesa S, et al., 2017,
PLOS ONE 12(1): e0170507. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0170507

Current nature reserve management in China and effective conservation of threatened pheasant species.

Zhou, C., Zhao, Y., Connelly, J.W., Li, J. and Xu, J., 2017.
Wildlife Biology, pp.wlb-00258.

Mapping tree canopy cover in support of proactive prairie grouse conservation in western North America.

Falkowski, M.J., Evans, J.S., Naugle, D.E., Hagen, C.A., Carleton, S.A., Maestas, J.D., Khalyani, A.H., Poznanovic, A.J. and Lawrence, A.J., 2017.
Rangeland Ecology & Management, 70(1), pp.15-24.

Evaluation of leg banding and attachment of radio-transmitters on ring-necked pheasant chicks.

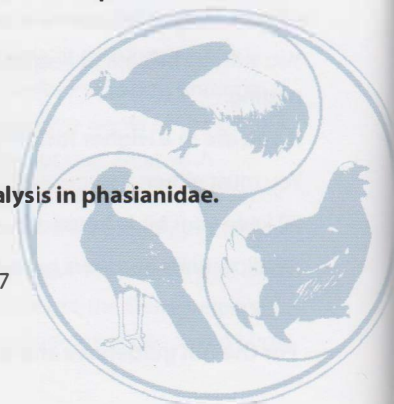
Carroll, J.M., Hamm, R.L., Hagen, J.M., Davis, C.A. and Guthery, F.S., 2017.
Wildlife Biology, pp.wlb-00263.

Comparing post-release survival and habitat use by captive-bred Cabot's Tragopan (*Tragopan caboti*) in an experimental test of soft-release reintroduction strategies.

Liu, B., Li, L., Lloyd, H., Xia, C., Zhang, Y. and Zheng, G., 2016.
Avian Research, 7(1), p.19.

Complete mitochondrial genome of the Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*), with phylogenetic analysis in phasianidae.

Zhou, T.C., Sha, T., Irwin, D.M. and Zhang, Y.P., 2015.
Mitochondrial DNA, vol. 26(6), pp.912-913. DOI:10.3109/19401736.2013.863287



OBITUARY

Kit Savage

We were very fortunate in having Kit as our first Chairman. To a group of enthusiastic but amateur aviculturists he brought a much wider, indeed international, experience. He was friends with everyone – Peter Scott, Jean Delacour, Gerald Durrell, and many others; he knew them all. He said of one country “Half my friends there are in the government, but the others are all in jail! But it will soon turn round.” And it did; within six months the rulers and the prisoners changed places.

He was fearless in speaking his mind when he thought it necessary, particularly criticising the cost of international Conservation bodies basing themselves in Switzerland and paying huge salaries comparable with the UNO. This did not make him popular.

He was an ideas man, not a practical one. He could have ten new projects in mind before breakfast, and it fell to colleagues to spot the real winner among them all. One of his greatest was to call an International Symposium on Woodland Grouse and to find a base for it at Culloden, near Inverness. Kit somehow persuaded the owner of the hotel to allow free drinks for four days – and nights – for 40 thirsty grousers. The bill was enormous, and it did our reputation no good at all. The word went out that here was a group of English milords so rich that they could afford anything. It took us years to disabuse them. His invitations brought eminent scientists from all over the northern hemisphere, particularly from China. Prof Cheng and his assistant were the first scientists allowed to visit the West after the Gang of Four fell. The freedom to travel anywhere in the UK, to speak on the radio or on TV, and to lecture in Oxford concerned them greatly – “All this freedom, it’s very worrying.”

Kit came with his reputation assured after he published with Lawton L Shurtleff. Their book on the Mandarin and the Carolina wood ducks was a beautifully written and illustrated volume, wearing its scientific knowledge lightly. Others will write of Kit’s achievements as a Civil Engineer. To us he will remain a most entertaining, witty and cultured friend.

David Hewetson-Brown

David Hewetson-Brown very sadly died the day after attending WPA’s Fund Raising Committee meeting, on 6th January. He was 77. David and his wife Susan were amongst the first of a rather different type of WPA member who started to join in the 1980’s. He had never kept rare pheasants and never did though they did have some rather nice friendly bantams. He was a shooting man and like most shooting people in the UK a keen conservationist of wildlife on his farm. He and Susan joined WPA because they liked what we were doing and the way that we were doing it, in particular in Nepal with the Pipar Project. Not long after joining WPA they put up a marquee in their garden entirely at their own expense and held a fundraising lunch for the project.

When we started our fundraising Charity Clay Shoots they immediately offered to help and donated days shooting worth hundreds of pounds as well as bringing teams to the events. David

has been on the committee organising these events from the start and has generously raised many thousands of pounds for us.

David was no ordinary farmer and started a business on his farm of growing turf on plastic matting. This has led to his son James doing wildflower turf which obtained a vast contract for the Olympic games with the business being a leader in its field.

Our best wishes and condolences to his wife Susan and their close-knit family.



David Hewetson-Brown
Photo: James Marchington

John Earle

It is with great sadness that we report the death in December 2016 of Dr John Earle at the age of 91. John and his wife Fiona were very generous supporters of The Pipar Project. Indeed it was the two of them when in their late seventies who climbed up some 2000 ft of the very steep track to the village of Rumja. There they found the beautifully located but very run down Rumja Primary School, alerted us to it and offered to help fund improvements to it. When the school was damaged in the earthquake disaster they immediately donated funds towards its repair.

Being a doctor, John took a keen interest in hygiene in relation to all the Pipar schools and it was he who persuaded us to use a percentage of clear perplex sheets when building/repairing the roofs of classrooms to improve lighting and prevent a nasty little parasite that likes dark rooms with mud floors.

Professor Vo Quy

Professor Vo Quy, one of Vietnam’s leading zoologists and ornithologists, died on 10th January 2017 at the age of 87. Professor Quy was from the north-central province of Ha Tinh and worked as a lecturer at a number of universities. He was known for his pioneering studies on Vietnam’s wildlife and his efforts to restore tropical habitats that had been destroyed by Agent Orange during the Vietnam War.

Professor Quy wrote the two-volume study, ‘The Birds of Vietnam’ in 1975, which remains a classic in the field. He was also involved in advocating policies relating to economic development and environmental protection. One such policy was the country’s first biodiversity action plan. He also acted as an intermediary between Vietnam and the United States as the countries debated how to jointly address leftover dioxin, the chemical agents in Agent Orange. His death is a loss for Vietnam’s conservation field and to the research community.



Male green peafowl (*Pavo muticus imperator*)
Photo: Freidrich Esser



Female green peafowl (*Pavo muticus imperator*)
Photo: Freidrich Esser



Cheer pheasant
Photo: Dhruvaraj S, 'Cheer Pheasant' via Flickr on 27 /10/08 CC BY 2.0



Male Swinhoe's pheasant
Photo: Frank Lin



Male blue peafowl in Sri Lanka
Photo: Jean Howman



Male blue peafowl in Sri Lanka
Photo: Jean Howman