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Winter 2022

WPA News 119 (2022)

World Pheasant Association

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WPA

news

The International Newsletter of the World Pheasant Association

Number 119 Winter 2022



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COVER:

Pheasant in the frost by Jonathan Pointer. This wonderful picture is one of the new WPA Christmas cards for 2022 and winner of our Christmas card competition.

MEMBERSHIP RATES

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

More details on membership and events can be found on the WPA website or contact the office office@pheasant.org

DIARY DATES

Conservation Breeding Advisory Group meeting - Sudeley Castle	4 February 2023
Grouse Conference - Balhousie Castle, Perthshire	5 May 2023
Beacon Hill Charity Clay Shoot - Amesbury	12 May 2023
Dunkeld Charity Clay Shoot - Scotland	27 May 2023
Red Rice Simulated Clay Day - Andover	14 June 2023
8th International Galliformes Symposium - Taman Safari, Prigen, Java	9 - 13 October 2023

Please check the WPA website news section for more details on events.

Copy Dates

The next issue of WPA News will be produced in April 2023. Articles, stories, letters and adverts for consideration for publication should be with the Office or sent to the editor (editor@pheasant.org.uk) by the end of February 2023.

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

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NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



My first year as chair has flown by and what an exciting time it has been. I have thoroughly enjoyed working and getting to know you all. Our 2022 WPA Annual Convention was held at the lovely Cotswold Wildlife Park. On a very informative day, our excellent speakers made the meeting special and fun at the same time. We heard a lot more about the successful black-necked pheasant project from Kyriakos Skordas. The project in Nestos Greece is moving forward nicely and we look forward to seeing the new proposal for 2023. There was a guided tour of the Cotswold bird collection and on Sunday complimentary access to Birdland was provided. Both of these parks are well worth a visit. I hope to see you all again for next year's conference.

While attending the European Conservation Breeding Group meeting, hosted by the Leipzig Zoo, I got to meet many of our European colleagues. They are a very enthusiastic group of aviculturists who made me feel most welcome. A change has been made to the chair position. Ludo Pinceel has taken the chair and will work closely with Naszáli Dezső, the new vice chair. Dezső will become the new chair at the end of next year. I am sure that this rolling system will give rise to new initiatives in the future. A huge thank you to Frédéric Verstappen who stepped down after three years of excellent leadership.

Two new projects are now up and running. I am very pleased that we are funding the Tompotika Maleo project directed by Marcy Summers. This is an effective project intertwined with local villages and schools. I am proud that we can be a part of the good work going on there. Since the start of this project in 2006, the number of maleo has been increasing. In view of the recent decline of the crestless fireback pheasant we have also agreed to fund four new purpose-built aviaries at Taman Safari in Prigen. Funding has come from the UK and WPA European chapters. The aviaries will be used to house crested fireback pheasants that are confiscated by Customs. In time birds could be transferred from Europe to the breeding centre. Now looking ahead, there is a possibility that we will hold the next convention during the summer months at Rutland to coincide with the Global Bird Fair. This would give us more time to prepare for the symposium in Prigen Indonesia which will be in October of the same year. As soon as we learn more, we will get that information out to you all.

Avian flu has been a big threat to us this year and will surely be back. We all need to maintain strong Biosecurity with a written protocol. Please sharpen up on your record keeping and ring your birds. Avian flu doesn't only happen to other people.

As always, thanks to Barbara and everyone for your dedicated enthusiasm and support.

Jo Gregson

November 2022

UPDATE: VIETNAM PHEASANT

Jan Dams

After the construction of the perimeter fence and the installation of water and electricity at the future breeding centre site, the first buildings will be erected in the end of 2022. In the beginning of 2023, a visitor centre and staff accommodation should be ready. A very important step, because once staff accommodation is finished and the project manager is appointed, this person can stay onsite and oversee the construction of the first sets of breeding aviaries for Vietnam pheasants. Great attention to detail is needed when building aviaries, so a good aviculturist overseeing their construction will be very important.

2022 has been an outstanding breeding season for Vietnam pheasants within the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria, with over 70 chicks, that were all parent reared, the population in zoos has taken a strong boost. Many of these chicks came from pairs that were placed in zoos through the World Pheasant Association. Due to this breeding success, there is room to send birds to Vietnam and fill aviaries in Saigon Zoo and Vinpearl Safari, where they can help expand the population within Vietnam and supply birds for the breeding centre. Transportation of live birds to Asia is always challenging, but luckily two European zoos (Prague Zoo and Tierpark Berlin) are willing to take on this mission and have made first contact.



*Vietnam pheasant
Photo: John Corder*

KHARUNGLA - PHEASANT MOUNTAIN OF BHUTAN

Part 3

Sonam Dorji

In our final part of the Pheasant Mountain of Bhutan, Sonam Dorji continues his search for the elusive Blyth's tragopan and discovers other rare wildlife.

The pheasants of Bhutan face the additional threat from illegal hunting more than any other species of bird. During my erstwhile job in a local NGO, I was associated with the research team field trips for the study of the critically endangered white-bellied heron (*Ardea insignis*). Over the years, this species has become a flagship of ornithological conservation in Bhutan, its main threat is habitat destruction. Important development activities that may impact the habitat of the WBH cannot be stopped as they are integral to Bhutan's nation building so a commendable balanced approach to address such issues and conservation requirements has been adopted by the government. The pheasants of Bhutan also suffer from habitat loss and natural predation. But the stark difference between the white-bellied heron and the pheasants are that the latter have the additional threat of illegal hunting for food in Bhutan. I genuinely believe that the pheasants need to be given more attention locally and not wait until they become critically endangered. While illegal hunting is not as rampant as in other countries due to Bhutan's strict conservation policies it nonetheless still poses a great threat.

My conversations with the nomad families helped them understand about the lives of the tragopans and wildlife in general. More still needs to be done and armed with the permission to film the tragopans from the Nature Conservation Division (Department of Forests and Park Services) my next six months objective has been planned, to create a documentary on the tragopans, especially on Blyth's, and to create awareness among the nomads and let them also understand the birds behaviour and habitat requirements.

As I write this article, I am back at Lobzang Norbu's shed. I have stayed for a few days with another local guide and am searching for tragopans. Lobzang and his family are no longer here but have moved with their animals down to milder altitudes and will return here in March. I have been to the same location where I first sighted the Blyth's but have not seen it, perhaps the tragopans too have migrated to lower altitudes. I will be following them for the next six months and hoping that I can make some difference in creating awareness on tragopans and on the "Pheasant Mountains of Bhutan". My great wish is also to capture the full lappet and horns display of the Blyth's tragopan in the wild!

The mountains and forests here are spectacular. Fog, rain and sunshine conjure an ever changing and stirring landscape and sometimes, when sitting alone on the high ridges, I look down on the distant low-lying mountains blanketed with clouds and wonder what wildlife lives there and what biodiversity mystery will the dissolving clouds unravel? Will it be as interesting as these mountains I am sitting on? Are there other species of tragopans that have not been recorded in Bhutan? I recently met an old hunter and showed him my bird book, he tells me there are western tragopan (*Tragopan melanocephalus*) on these mountains. His bows and arrows have long since gone and in his hand, rosary beads have replaced them. He swore to me that it lives there but texts and experts suggests otherwise. I believe him as he would have seen it physically. Let us see what the mountains reveal, miracles do happen in these mountains. My long time search for the



Blyth's tragopan
Photo: Sonam Dorji

illusive butterfly Kaiser-I-Hind (*Teinopalpus imperialis*) ended here during my search with a specimen on the road just below one of these mountains. This butterfly had only been seen by Japanese experts a long time back but never by a Bhutanese. These discoveries were interesting in that for the first time in Bhutan, two species of butterfly from the genus *Bhutanitis* viz. *Bhutanitis lidderdallie* and *Bhutanitis ludlowi* flew together at the around the same time. Such behaviour of two rare butterflies flying together has been reported from other countries like India but from Bhutan, this was a first.

My search for the rarest of pheasants and other wildlife continues, I have begun to believe in miracles of these pheasants mountains of Bhutan. I know these mountains will give me more gifts.



Sunset over the mountains
Photo: Sonam Dorji

COURTSHIP DISPLAY OF THE PALAWAN PEACOCK PHEASANT DOCUMENTED IN THE WILD

Peter Widmann, Indira Widmann and Lemuel A. Pabico

Palawan peacock pheasant (*Polyplectron napoleonis*) courtship display is well documented, but almost exclusively from aviaries. To get a glimpse of this bird in its natural habitat on the island Palawan in the Philippines is already a peculiarity, but to be able to observe its behaviour in the field, is almost impossible.

The local KATALA Foundation succeeded, probably for the first time ever, to document the courtship of this shy species in the field with the help of wildlife cameras. This study is part of a larger program that aims to monitor population trends of endangered wildlife species on Palawan and to maintain these populations.

Since the study methodology dictates that the cameras are installed at predetermined intervals, it was pure coincidence that a camera was placed right in front of a temporary courtship area. The spot was not even recognisable as such since, for example, the rooster did not remove fallen leaves.

Even though the cameras were in place for several weeks in the forest between November 2020 and February 2021, the courtship display was documented only once, at the beginning of January 2021.

The Palawan peacock pheasant is found in lowland forests on the island, which disappear faster and faster. According to Global Forest Watch, between 2001 and 2000 about 14% of the tree-dominated ecosystems were lost on Palawan, mostly on the lower locations where the main distribution area of the pheasant lies. Poaching is another important risk factor for the species. The construction of a snare takes only a few minutes, and all that is needed is some fishing line and branches. During patrols the employees of the Katala Foundation have discovered and eliminated dozens of traps, often with decaying remains of pheasants and other ground birds.

Currently, the peacock pheasant is classified as "Vulnerable" in the IUCN Red list. However a reassessment is now due, and it is probable that the species will qualify for a higher category.

The wildlife camera study is part of a conservation program that aims for the protection of one of the most valuable rainforest area on the island, the Iwahig penal colony in the central part of Palawan.



Palawan peacock pheasant
Photo: Katala foundation



Palawan porcupine
Photo: Katala foundation

Along with the peacock pheasants, other endemic bird species were already proven to occur in the lowlands of the archipelago, as well as a number of other globally endangered vertebrate species, such as the Philippine cockatoo and Palawan porcupine.

The KATALA Foundation would like to thank the ICTSI Foundation, Inc. for supporting the Green Heart of Palawan Program, within which the framework of this study is published in a friendly co-operation with the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development and the Bureau of Corrections (Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm).

This article has been reprinted from the WPA Germany magazine with permission from the authors and translated by Heidi Kruger.

NATURAL PARENT REARING

Ian Clark

In the latest Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) online newsletter, there was a fascinating article about parent rearing chicks, and the difference in survival and health between the various methods of rearing chicks.

From research done some years ago by GWCT, allowing the natural parents to rear the chicks produced by far the best result. The research was done on grey partridges, and compared young from brooder houses, bantam reared and REAL parent reared, and very different behaviour patterns emerged.

To quote from their excellent article, *'In simple terms, real parents reinforced good behaviour, improving survival chances, but bantam mothers were a poor substitute for the greys, which are an open country species. Being of jungle fowl origin, they did not reinforce the right behaviour patterns in the*

young greys, even though they are superb at rearing pheasants.'

I repeat - *'superb at rearing pheasants'*

What can WE learn from this excellent science? Certainly, for those of us who keep pheasant species, it's reassuring to know that a bantam mother will be teaching her young most of what they need to know if we can't arrange fully natural parent rearing due to our circumstances.

Incubators and rearing under lamps with no parental guidance was well down the scale when it came to birds fit for purpose – and that is to live in the wild, find their own food and avoid predators.

There are plenty of red and grey junglefowl around – might it be sensible to keep a couple of pairs of them as 'close to wild' foster mothers?

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Paul North

By Barbara Ingman

Paul North was presented with Honorary Life Membership at the AGM on 10 September. This was in recognition of his services to WPA over many years. Paul is a long standing WPA Trustee who for over three years was editor of WPA News until Emma took over in 2016. Paul produced fantastic editions of WPA News and continues to write articles and content since stepping down as editor. He worked with Nigel Hester to publish Monograph of the Pheasants after the work was translated, preparing the manuscript and photographs for printing. An absolutely mammoth task!

Paul has ensured that the history of WPA is safe for future generations. His unofficial role as an archivist, collecting, sorting, and cataloguing historical documents, photos and records in a digital format will help us all. Many documents and photographs would otherwise have been lost due to the very many office moves and changes in personnel over the last 47 years.



Keith Howman presenting Paul North with his Honorary Life Membership
Photo: Ceri Crystal



John Corder with his Honouraru Life Membership
Photo: Ceri Crystal

John Corder

By Keith Chalmers-Watson

John Corder has played a leading role in almost all of WPA's activities for almost 40 years. When he lived in London he was able to breed cheer pheasants, one of the noisier species, along with Malay peacock-pheasants which he parent-reared in the city. When he retired, he and Pat moved to Somerset where he has successfully bred many species including Bornean and Malay peacock-pheasants and Cabot's tragopans. He is particularly interested and involved in reintroduction procedures for several species and has also developed a number of teaching programmes which have frequently been shared at our meetings and on the WPA website.

John has been Chair of the European Conservation Breeding Group on two occasions and is also an active member of our Scientific Advisory Committee, but he will be remembered by his many friends as our "Man in Asia". He was instrumental in setting up the Western tragopan and cheer pheasant Projects in Himachal Pradesh and is still actively involved in China with brown eared pheasants, Chinese monal and many other species. He has just returned from Java

where he has prepared the ground for the WPA Symposium in Prigen in October 2023. I can think of no one more deserving to become an honorary life member than John Corder.

COLONEL J O M ROBERTS

Keith Howman

1st November 2022 was the 25th Anniversary of the death of our first Chairman of WPA Nepal, Colonel Jimmy Roberts and the subsequent setting up of the J O Roberts Memorial Fund which has continued the important idea he started of helping the village schools closest to Pipar. His thinking was that if we helped the villagers with their schools, it would help get them on our side to protect the habitat around the Pipar Pheasant Reserve and whilst probably not stopping all trapping of pheasants at least keep it at a low level.

We have reported in WPA News on the regular surveys carried out at Pipar and now also Santal on the opposite side of the valley.

On the 25th Anniversary of his death it is worth reflecting on the life of Colonel Jimmy Roberts, MVO, MBE, MC.

He was born in Gujarat in India in 1916 where his father was headmaster of a school. He was educated at Kings School, Canterbury and then the Royal Military College, Sandhurst.

In 1936 he was commissioned into the Indian Army which he chose because he wanted opportunities for his already developed passion for mountaineering. In 1937 he was posted to 1st (King George V's Own) Gurkha Rifles. Whenever he could he went mountaineering usually accompanied only by a few Gurkhas from his regiment. In 1939 he recorded his first of many first ascent of Guan Nelda (6303 metres).



Pipar pond

Photo: Laxman Prasad Poudyal

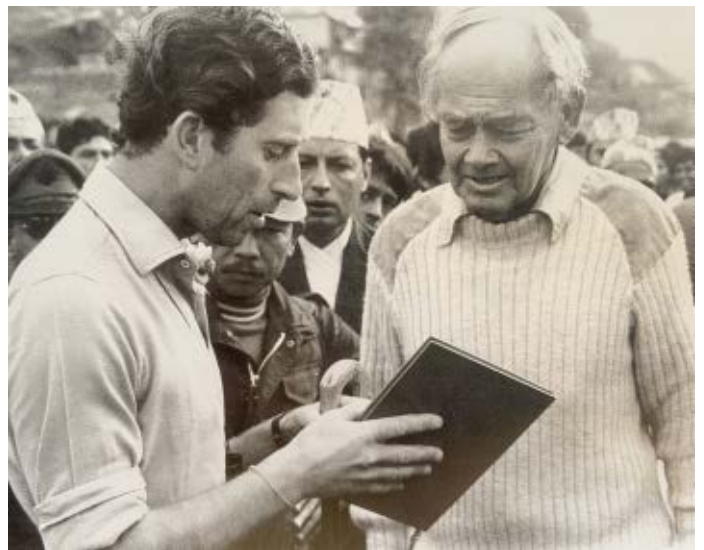
After serving in North Africa, he returned to India and joined 153 (Gurkha) Indian Para Battalion and was dropped into North Burma on 3rd July 1942 with a small force which surveyed the area and then marched through 150 miles of jungle to Fort Hertz where they made the previously unusable airfield usable. He was awarded an MC. As a Major commanding "A" Company he then took part in defending Sangshak in a major battle that held up the Japanese advance on Kohima. Not content with that he led the first paratrooper jump in Southeast Asia on 1st May 1945 with a Battalion-size force south of Rangoon as part of the operation to capture the city for which he was "mentioned in despatches".

After the war he transferred to the Brigade of Gurkhas and was posted to Malaya where he remained until 1954. He was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 1955 and made a member of the Royal Victorian Order in 1961. He went to Kathmandu in 1958 as Military Attache and retired from the army in 1962.

Colonel Jimmy as he was usually known was a very modest person who I first met in 1974 when we discussed pheasants. I was with him two hours before he died on 1st November 1997 – so 23 years and in all that time all I learned about his earlier life briefly recorded above was that he had been in the Gurkhas! WPA was formed in September 1975 and having discovered his interest in pheasants the previous year he was an obvious target living as he did in Nepal with eight pheasant species as well as partridge and quail.

For more information on the Pipar Project and Jimmy Roberts please visit the WPA website project pages or contact the office.

WPA printed a booklet "The Pipar Project: A conservation success" in 2008 detailing the project. Articles on Jimmy Roberts have also featured in the Nepali Times: <https://www.nepalitimes.com/opinion/hiking-with-jimmy/> and <https://www.nepalitimes.com/here-now/the-himalayan-odyssey/>



*HRH the Prince of Wales (no HM King Charles III) with Jimmy Roberts
Photo: Keith Howman*

UPDATE: RESEARCH

Jo Gregson

We are looking for Vietnam pheasant keepers who would be interested in helping us gather information to support the reintroduction project. We plan to use GPS trackers attached to tail feathers to locate released birds. You can help by recording the age that your juveniles lose their tail feathers. Those of you with larger aviaries might be able to help us pinpoint the age at which young birds move away from the adults.

JIMMY THE CAPERCAILLIE

Gayle Ritchie

Jimmy the capercaillie has, thus far, been very unlucky love. It's not that he's unappealing to look at, or that he's not sensational at strutting his stuff - quite the opposite.

The sad truth is there are very few lady capercaillies out there for Jimmy to mate with. The handsome two-year-old is owned by Mitchell Simpson and kept in a secret 12-acre woodland in Scotland along with hundreds of rare and exotic bird species. Keeping poultry is not everyone's idea of fun, but golf is not my idea of a good time!" says Mitchell, 67. "I've got around 350 birds here including jungle fowl, demoiselle cranes, Temmink's tragopan, blue, brown and silver pheasants from the Himalayas and Hawaiian geese. It costs me around £400 to £500 a month to feed them. It's not cheap!".

I won't beat about the bush - while I'm keen to see Mitchell's bird collection, I've come here with one true ambition - to meet Jimmy.

Having read a feature I'd written about capercaillies in crisis - it's estimated there are only around 700 in Scotland - Mitchell, a keen conservationist, got in touch, keen to tell his story. He fell for capercaillies when he had a rare encounter with a wild one in Angus as a 12-year-old lad. "My friends and I chased this huge bird, but it stopped dead, and then headed towards us!" he recalls. "We all ended up in a ditch, stinking!" He never went for us; he was just showing who was boss, but I thought he was magnificent. They're impressive birds. They have an effect on you."

A joiner to trade, Mitchell started collecting birds, including grouse, guinea fowl and various members of the parrot family, 60 years ago, with the aim of boosting population numbers and conserving species. He's not had a great deal of success breeding capercaillies but he refuses to give up. In 2015, his hopes were high when five chicks hatched after being reared by a bantam hen. They survived until they were six months old when, tragically, rats and mink (so Mitchell thinks) killed two, and a neighbour's dogs caused the others to die of stress. While there are a few estates in Scotland involved in capercaillie conservation, Mitchell is pretty much a one-man band although a determined and optimistic one at that. He's winging it if you'll excuse the pun. His hope is that one day Jimmy will father some chicks, but he's missed the boat this season because two hen capers lined up for him failed to make it to Scotland from Italy thanks to red tape.

I'm lucky to meet Jimmy during the final stages of the breeding season, during which he puts on a flamboyant display known as a lek. His wings point down, his tail flares, his chest puffs out and he emits a series of pops, gurgles and wheezing sounds. It really is something.

Mitchell has developed a strong bond with the bird, and I watch as he gently strokes Jimmy's silky plumage. "They've all got unique personalities," he says. "They're not all aggressive. Jimmy, as you can see, is very friendly, although he's a bit



*Jimmy the capercaillie
Photo: Gayle Ritchie*

frustrated because he's not got a lady!". My perception of the species had indeed been that it was a scary, intimidating beast ready to attack. So, when Mitchell suggests I enter the enclosure and meet Jimmy, I do so with some trepidation. I needn't have worried - Jimmy is a true gentleman, allowing me to pet him and coming up for a wee bosie. When he starts to get amorous, I back off. "You're as close as he's going to get to a lady this year," laments Mitchell. "It's not aggression - it's passion! It's a shame but the mating season is pretty much over, so he'll have to wait for his next chance." It's such an honour to meet this beautiful, strange, and impressive bird - the stuff of dreams - even if he is in captivity. I've always wanted to see one in the wild, but that time has yet to come if it ever does.



*Jimmy the capercaillie with Mitchell and Gayle
Photo: Gayle Ritchie*

CONSERVATION BREEDING ADVISORY GROUP AVICULTURAL WEEKEND

Billy Wilson and Nigel Hester

This year's CBAG meeting will be held at Sudeley Castle Winchcombe, Gloucestershire GL54 5JD.

Unfortunately by that time the aviaries will be closed so there will be no pheasants on view. We hope to make up for this disappointment with a good range of interesting presentations and a number of speakers including Stuart Wilson, Stewart Henderson and Ed Godwin who have confirmed that they will be making presentations.

John Corder will also be giving us some information on the upcoming convention following his visit to Prigen Indonesia.

Please can anyone wishing to attend let Nigel know by email Nigel.hester@adive.co.uk as soon as possible. There will be the nominal £15 to £20 charge to cover the refreshments and lunch.

There are several hotels in the area and traditionally most members attending the meeting stay at either the Tewkesbury Travel Lodge or the nearby Tewkesbury Premier Inn. For those wishing to attend there will be a group dinner on Saturday evening at the Gardener's Arms, Beckford Road, Alderton, Tewkesbury GL2 8NL

For further information see <https://www.gardenersarms.biz/our-menus/evening/>

Please let Nigel (Nigel.hester@adive.co.uk) know your meal choices for main and starter, a sweet can be ordered on the night. There will be individual tabs and each person or couple responsible for settling their own. The pub has said if anyone drops out less than 48 hours before the event then they will need to pay a £10 charge.

We look forward to seeing you there.

KEEP SAFE AND CARRY ON

Louise Peat

Before I get onto the dry and boring subject about the importance of records and identifiers, I want you to take a few minutes and ask yourself why you keep birds? Why have you decided to invest so much time, money, sweat, toil and tears into this very unpredictable hobby? Is it for the adrenalin filled roller-coaster ride; the challenge to get every minuscule detail correct in order to attain that ultimate high when success comes? Or is it as simple as connecting with the sheer magnificence and beauty of Mother Nature's art? I am sure the answer will be different and indeed very personal for everyone, but regardless of your answer, it is an honour, a privilege and a great responsibility having such treasures in our lives.

We are all painfully aware that there are an increasing number of obstacles that threaten the future of private aviculture, our backs are up against the wall and if we are to secure our future it is time for every individual to batten down the hatches and put defence strategies in place! So, what are the threats and what can you as an individual do to safeguard your passion?

Avian Influenza: A Very Brief History

First described in 1878 in Northern Italy, avian flu has been making the rounds worldwide ever since; just like every lifeform it has evolved and adapted to ensure survival. In 1997, the first registered human fatalities of avian flu occurred in Hong Kong. In 2003, the virus caused outbreaks in the Netherlands, which affected 28% of the national chicken population and resulted in one human fatality. By 2005, the European Wild Bird Trade ban was implemented in an attempt to prevent further spread of avian influenza and other diseases to humans. In 2007, an outbreak of a highly

pathogenic H5N1 was confirmed on a turkey farm in Suffolk. Since then, outbreaks in the UK have continued annually and unfortunately in the last 12 months the number of cases have increased quite dramatically. At the time of writing (September 2022), the DEFRA website states there are 120 confirmed cases of highly pathogenetic avian flu in England. This year has also seen an unprecedented number of wild birds affected by the virus, causing devastation in some seabird populations. Clearly this situation is an increasing threat to our collections, a threat that will be with us for the long-term, as such we need to adapt our practices to mitigate the threat as much as possible.

Take Action, Think ACRONYM – (see footnote)

So, what do we need to be doing? Over the last couple of years, the human race has been subject to some pretty strict biosecurity measures; face masks, social distancing, travel restrictions and isolation. Our birds are at just as much risk to AI as we are to Covid, so surely, it's a no-brainer to put the same measures in place for them? Admittedly this will come with a price, both time consuming and costly, but failure to act and the consequences of ignoring this threat could be devastating.

Track & Plan

Once AI is confirmed in the UK, tracking the spread and location of outbreaks should become part of your daily routine. There is an interactive map on the DEFRA website (see link below) that displays all current confirmed outbreaks and includes surveillance, protection and control zones. Have a contingency plan in mind based on the distance between you and the threat, date and record

measures you put in place to safeguard your birds. This will ensure you have the appropriate documentation at hand when needed, helping to reduce some of the stress.

Protection From Incidental Contamination

All food and water receptacles need to be undercover or inside shelters. The main threat is from above, ensure you can cover all aviaries with plastic or corrugated sheeting to exclude contact or transmission from wild birds. These need to be leak proof and any rainfall diverted outside of the aviary. Ensure that aviary mesh is too small to allow wild birds or mammals access. Ideally aviaries should also be underwired or have solid floors.

Pest Control

As well as wild birds, mammals can catch and carry AI, therefore try to deter wildlife as much as possible from your premises. If you are lucky enough to have pest proof aviaries in place, be aware pests are cunning little blighters and will always find a way in especially if they know there is a free meal waiting. It is wise to have a two-pronged attack strategy in place to counter any insurgents (internal and external aviary). If DIY methods are not working for you, seek professional help.

Hygiene

Virus or no virus, good hygiene is always best practice. There is always room for improvement, simple things such as ensuring any disinfectants you use are DEFRA approved against AI viruses. Putting foot baths at the entrance of each aviary, remember to refresh them as instructions state and where possible keep them covered. Keep a unique set of cleaning tools for each aviary, and again when not in use keep them clean and under cover. If you are adding any new furnishings to an aviary disinfect them before they go in. Uneaten food should be removed at the end of each day to discourage pests. All waste should be stored in pest proof containers until collection. Have set clothing when servicing aviaries including boots. Put measures in place for your own health, remember AI is zoonotic, wear disposable gloves, face masks and if you have them disposable overalls. Between 2003 – 2021 there have been 456 confirmed human fatalities worldwide due to the H5N1 strain of Avian Influenza (WHO – World Health Organisation).

Isolation

A vital addition to any collection is an isolation area. This facility can be multifunctional, but it needs to be designed to a high standard to enable thorough cleaning & disinfection. It must also be 100% pest proof, have closed access to the outside, have a double door system that can be secured to prevent unauthorised access, be separate

from your main aviaries and be large enough to hold birds for several weeks without compromising their welfare. The main purpose for this area is for separation of any ill birds from your main aviaries, thus reducing the risk of any contagion from spreading. It can also be utilised (when not in use) to quarantine any new arrivals. Any underlying health issues can be ignited after a period of stress and transport is one of the most stressful periods in a bird's life. Giving them time to recuperate and ensure good health before you add them to your main collection will help safeguard your birds. As the threat looms, minimise transfers as much as possible, and restrict your own movements to locations you know are free of AI, equally minimise visitors to your collection.

Paperwork

Keeping a dated record of all bio-security methods you implement is highly recommended. This could be as simple as documenting in a daily diary, enabling instant access to a timeline of events for any visiting authorities. Include all aspects; the date you put out footbaths, name of disinfection used, pest control methods, new birds coming in, include origin details and where they were isolated, ill birds, medication use, deaths, necropsy results and disposal, anything you feel is relevant. Use this in conjunction with a map of your premises (it doesn't have to be perfect), a simple map showing where each aviary is in connection to each other, species being held, distance between aviaries, where your isolation facility is located. Include double door systems, any roof covering, feed and water areas, location of foot dips and any pest control. Service areas and tool storage (including any personal protective equipment). Finally, keep a list of species held, include; common and scientific names, IUCN listing and number held, along with individual identifiers.

Doing paperwork is never going to be very high on anyone's agenda, but once you have a system in place it only needs a couple of minutes at the end of each day to keep updated. Make it part of your routine, get yourself a nice cup of tea, a couple of biscuits and boom, before your tea is the ideal dunking temperature the job is done.

The majority of the suggestions above are common sense, take a look at your collection, think about what the risks are and how you can adapt your facilities to reduce as many of those risks as possible, there is a great deal of information on the internet regarding AI, for the best guidance take the time to read through the information on the DEFRA website (for links see below), and if you haven't already, consider registering your birds, you are legally required to register if you have 50 or more birds.

Records – The sexy stuff

For well over a decade, I maintained the records for a collection of over 2000 animals, whenever people asked what I did for a living the answer was always received in the same manner, an expression of sheer boredom swept across their faces as they politely but swiftly looked for

UPDATE: ECBG

Barbara Ingman

We are in full negotiations with WPA Spain to host the ECBG meeting in Spain this spring. Full details will be circulated in due course.

opportunities to change the subject! Whilst the act of data accumulation is immensely tedious, the rewards have the potential to dramatically impact our knowledge of species; improving husbandry and even being utilised to help conservationists in the field. This all sounds very grandiose, and you may be thinking 'I only have a couple of aviaries in the garden, no one will be interested in my birds', well let me stop you right there. Every single piece of information is vital and when gathered it can reveal a pattern, the more information the more obvious and factual that pattern will be, so your one piece of information is as important as the whole, whether you keep a couple of birds or have a more extensive collection you can make a difference and play a valuable part in research and knowledge gathering. This is where record keeping gets really juicy, imagine the sense of satisfaction and achievement from knowing you and your birds have in some small way helped towards the future of a species, is that not justification enough!

The Galliforme Research Group, helps to seek out and gather specific information to help towards in-situ projects, most recently looking at moulting patterns of the Vietnam pheasant *Lophura edwardsi* to establish the best time frame to fix trackers to tail feathers, so birds can be monitored on release. The group is also looking at roosting behaviour and chick dispersal, all things that could be monitored in your own collection, if your juices are flowing why not contact the group to ask what type of information may be of value.

Records – The basics

Most people probably already have a system in place for keeping their records, whether it be a daily diary, index cards, computer spreadsheets or a combination of. The important thing to remember is to make sure the system works for your needs and is relatively easy to keep updated. As a minimum you should always document the information listed above in the AI section, after that it is more about recording the type of information that would benefit or interest you. The most obvious being breeding behaviour, reviewing the results at the end of the season can help to plan ahead and implement changes for the following season to help improve success rate. Finally, whenever you move birds on always ensure you give a copy of the records to the new holder.

If any WPA members would like help or advice about a record system that works for you, or just wants to chat about records, I would be only too happy to help. Feel free to get in touch louise.peat28@gmail.com.

Identifiers

It is more important than ever to ensure all birds have some form of identifier, preferably a permanent identifier such as a closed leg ring or microchip, and or a temporary identifier such as a split ring. Why is it so important? It is all about traceability. This is your bird's version of a passport and bearing in mind it is rare that a bird will live its entire life in one place, if not rung the origins of the individual could become lost. Why does this matter? The two key reasons are

being able to offer evidence to the authorities for the origins of the individuals in the event of an outbreak, and to be able to trace the pedigree of the individual and any resulting offspring (vital if you hold any studbook species).

All identifiers of an individual must be documented on the records you keep, and physically checked whenever you have the bird in hand. To summarise, there are many potential challenges ahead, but then, aviculture has always been about the challenge, keeping a positive outlook and working together to share knowledge and experiences to help adapt practices and decrease any threats.

Useful links AI

Stop the spread webinar – very informative presentation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/avian-influenza-bird-flu-stop-the-spread-webinars/stop-the-spread-webinars>

Official up-to-date information on avian influenza

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu>

Avian influenza, cases and disease control zones in England

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu-cases-and-disease-control-zones-in-england>

Highlights of the history of avian influenza

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/timeline/avian-timeline-1880-1959.htm>

Footnote

Think ACRONYM – Okay guys I lost four hours of my life whilst writing this article trying to come up with some clever pheasant related acronym to title the AI section.

I'm sorry to disappoint but clearly, I'm not that clever, even my usual inspirational evening whiskey has failed to ignite my aged brain cells. I have no doubt that there is some brainiac out there who loves word games, I challenge that person to make it work! The winner will get a mention in the next newsletter and a drink of your choice at the February meeting.

UPDATE: NEW TRUSTEES

Jo Gregson

I am very pleased to welcome our three new CO-OPTED trustees. All three bring something new to our group.

Louise Peat has worked with birds for most of her life. She has gained a lot of experience with record-keeping and is keen to help members set up their own systems. As it turns out she is also very good at selling raffle tickets.

Jan Dams, Chair of EAZA Galliformes TAG, is working closely with the Vietnam Pheasant project and is now part of the new crestless fireback pheasant group.

Stewart Henderson has a wealth of practical experience with Galliformes. He is always ready to share his knowledge. Stewart compiles the UK Galliformes census each year.



YOUNG CONSERVATIONISTS

WPA's page to celebrate the young conservationists in our membership and inspire other young people to get involved in conservation and aviculture. Please send any content to editor@pheasant.org.uk, we would love to hear your stories and see your makes!

Activity - Pine cone feeders

Items needed:

- ★ Pine cones
- ★ String
- ★ Lard or suet
- ★ Bird seed and nuts
- ★ A mixing bowl

Step 1:

Cut up the lard/suet into small pieces and place them in the bowl. Allow the lard/suet to warm up to room temperature.

Step 2:

Add the bird seed and nuts to the bowl and mix together with your fingers until the fat holds everything together.

Step 3:

Tie the string around the top of the cone to make a hanging loop.

Step 4:

Using your hands, pack the fat mix into the pine cones. Then place in the fridge for an hour to set.

Step 5:

Hang in the garden and watch the birds enjoying them, and send us a picture!



Our first quail hatching - Emma Zeale

This summer we decided it would be a fun learning experience to hatch our own quail and keep a small flock of them in the garden.

The pictures below show Bea aged 4.5 years with our quail chicks. She is very good at looking after them and is very proud to show them off to the other children on our road.

She would check the incubator every day and we had a countdown to hatch day. It was wonderful to see her excitement as the eggs started to wobble and cheep, and when they started to 'pop' out of the eggs.

Her one-year-old brother Rory was also very interested in them! I once found two quails loose in the house as he had opened the lid when the door had been left open and then crawled away! By this stage I was starting to look forward to them moving outside!

Our quail are now bigger and live outside in a two-tier hutch. We have kept seven females which have names including 'Quailer', 'Chicco', 'Flipflop' and 'Radish'. Bea likes to visit them and give them treats, and we are looking forward to having our first eggs when they start laying.



FUN FACTS:

- ★ In most species, the young are precocious, able to feed semi-independently within a few hours of hatching.
- ★ Galliformes are found in a wide variety of habitats, in semideserts, steppes, savannas, forests, mountains, and farmland.
- ★ Pheasants can fly up to 60 mph!
- ★ There are more than 250 species of Galliformes found worldwide.
- ★ To aid digestion, birds regularly swallow small stones.

BREEDING HABITAT OF WESTERN TRAGOPAN

Muhammad Naeem Awan

Predictive modeling identified new breeding habitat of western tragopan in Pakistan: Opening new windows for research and conservation

Background

The remote valleys of the western Himalayas are indicative of the inaccessibility of the Himalaya global biodiversity hotspot (Mittermeier et al., 2011). However, apart from its inaccessibility the region is under increasing anthropogenic pressures in recent decades due to an increasing human population (Government of Pakistan, 2012; Awan et al., 2016). Consequences are habitat degradation due to unsustainable forestry and fragmentation through unsustainable development (Awan et al. 2021); over exploitation of natural resources with increased harvesting of non-timber products such as mushrooms, intensive grazing by increased numbers of livestock, and hunting (Awan and Buner, 2014; Cochard and Dar, 2014).

In Pakistan, the western tragopan is an altitudinal migrant living in shrubby steep slopes of montane forests at an altitudinal range between 2400 to 3600 m.a.s.l. during breeding (Roberts, 1991; Awan et al., 2016). The western tragopan seems to prefer pockets of broadleaved forests dominated by *Quercus semecarpifolia*, *Betula utilis*, *Acer caecium* and *Juglans regia* in association with their typically dense broad-leaved understory, in amongst the more dominating conifer forests typical at these altitudes, dominated by *Pinus wallichiana*, *Picea smithiana*, *Cedrus deodara* and *Abies pindrow* (Mirza, 1978; Awan, 2008; Miller, 2010). The breeding season is spent on steep, forested slopes during April – June (Ali and Ripley, 1987; Mirza et al., 1978; Roberts, 1991; Awan et al., 2016) with dense understory and little or no disturbance (Ramesh, 2003). In Pakistan, the exposition of the breeding habitat, based on extensive call-count surveys in spring ranges predominantly from north to north-east or north to north-west (Awan et al., 2016).

Threats to the species in Pakistan has been listed as forest degradation, increasing number of livestock, increased tree cutting for animal fodder and fuel wood, as well as increased collection of medicinal plants, wild vegetables and mushrooms and collection of pheasant's eggs (Awan and Buner, 2014; BirdLife International, 2019).

Scientific knowledge of a species distribution is one of the most important preconditions for the successful conservation and management action and related investment (Cushman and Huetmann, 2010; Rabinowitz and Zeller, 2010; Viña et al., 2010; Drew et al., 2011). For rare or little-known species or species found in highly remote and difficult to access areas, such data are often not readily available or hard to collect. In this context, predictive habitat and species distribution modeling (Guisan and Zimmermann, 2000, Elith et al., 2006, Qiao et al., 2015), has become an important conservation tool helping to prioritize conservation and management action (Guisan and Zimmermann, 2000). Such studies can also be helpful in projecting minimal occurrence data of little-known species thus saving considerable time and resources for intensive monitoring schemes which would be required otherwise (Gwena et al., 2010; Ohse et al., 2009; Kandel et al., 2015; Regmi et al., 2018). Furthermore, reliable species distribution models (further called SDMs) can guide future surveys to areas where a species is predicted to occur.



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A male western tragopan caught on camera traps
Photo: Muhammad Naeem Awan



An example of breeding habitat of western tragopan from Machiara National Park
Photo: Muhammad Naeem Awan

For a species like the western tragopan, which is elusive and difficult to detect, other than from breeding calling counts, SDMs seem the ideal framework on which to base future conservation actions, including confirming species occurrence. Of particular importance for the long-term survival of a threatened species is the identification of (potential) breeding habitat areas, which are contributing directly to a species reproductive output (Drew et al., 2011; Han et al., 2017). While SDMs may suffer large variance and bias especially when the data are scarce, ensemble models offer a solution to reduce such aberrations through combining several modeling

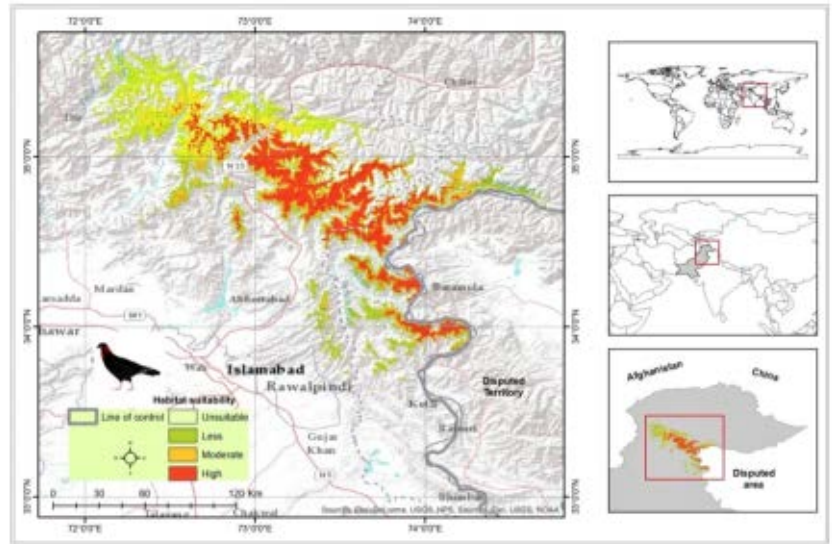
techniques into a single predictive model (Siders et al., 2020).

First countrywide attempt has been done by Awan et al. (2021) to estimate the potential breeding habitat of the species in Pakistan. A total of 226 confirmed presence locations were used to model potential breeding habitat of Tragopan based on a suite of bioclimatic, topographic and remote sensing predictor variables. All data were resampled to a 1-km resolution for habitat predictions. Awan used an ensemble (average) of the three models i.e. Maxent, Support Vector Machine (SVM) and Random Forest (RF) for distribution modeling of breeding habitat of western tragopan in Pakistan. Awan et al. (2021), further analyzed level of

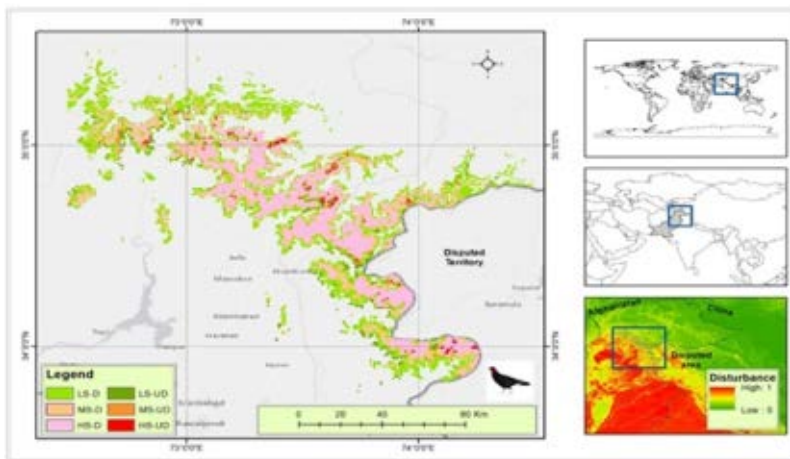
anthropogenic disturbance within the breeding

habitat of the species in Pakistani landscape of Western Himalaya. Awan used the coordinates of each positive location to extract the corresponding human modification values from the Global Human Modification dataset (HMc) in the Earth Engine Data Catalog (Gorelick et al., 2017). These values were calculated based on five major anthropogenic stressors mapped using 13 individual datasets, including: human settlement (population density/built-up areas); agriculture (cropland, livestock); transportation (major, minor, and two-track roads; railroads); mining and energy production; and electrical infrastructure (power lines, nighttime lights; Kennedy et al., 2019).

Ensemble modeling predicted potential breeding habitat across an area of 10,409.85 km². Of this, 2,979 km² (28.6%) was categorised as highly suitable or core breeding areas, 2,544 km² (24.4%) as moderately suitable, and 4,887 km² (46.9%) as low suitability.



Predicted breeding habitat of western tragopan in Pakistan
Photo: Muhammad Naem Awan



Human modification imprint within the predicted breeding habitat of western tragopan in the Himalayan landscape of Pakistan.

LS= low suitability, MS= moderate suitability, HS= High suitability

Photo: Muhammad Naem Awan

Human imprints

The predicted breeding habitats of western tragopan had HMc values ranging from 0.12 to 0.44 (mean = 0.33 ± 0.06). This implies that habitat suitability for the tragopan now appears associated with areas of moderate land modification ($0.10 < HMc \leq 0.40$; Kennedy et al., 2019). For wider context, the mean HMc for the western Himalayan subalpine conifer forests ecoregion is 0.45, with nearly 44% categorized as highly or very highly modified. The HMc analysis demonstrates that of the 2,978.8 km² of highly suitable breeding habitat, only 78.9 km² (2.64%) is free from human disturbance. Similarly, of the 2,543.9 km² of moderately suitable habitat, 129.3 km² (5.08%) is free from human disturbance, while only 36.9 km² (0.75%) of low suitability areas appear free from human disturbance.

Newly identified areas with suitable habitat for western tragopan in Pakistan

Apart from the three known main regions where western tragopan is known to occur in Pakistan (Azad Kashmir, Kaghan Valley and Palas Valley), ensemble model predicted ten new areas where neither historic records nor recent surveys confirm presence-absence (Fig. 4). Together, these areas comprise an estimated 375.1 km² of highly suitable habitat for the species. In addition to these ten newly identified areas, there are a number of additional new areas which fall into the moderate to low suitability habitat categories and have good chances of tragopan presence. Most of these areas are associated with the newly identified areas of highly suitable habitat. This new information for a species of global conservation concern is of great importance and open a new window for the research on western tragopan in Pakistan.

The extinction crises of globally threatened species demand effective conservation action more than ever and this study

provides new idea for conservation and management planning for the globally Vulnerable western tragopan. This study indicates that the knowledge of the species distribution in Pakistan, based on numerous targeted surveys over the past decades together with citizen science information taken from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, are likely to draw an incomplete picture of the species true distribution. This Ensemble model predicted at least ten new areas of suitable breeding habitat, previously unknown to the science and conservation manager community in Pakistan. This opens new opportunities for western tragopan research in Pakistan by pinpointing to previously unexplored areas with high likelihood of confirming the species in the wild.

In a country where only around 2% of the landcover consists of forest (Government of Pakistan, 2000; FAO, 2010), significant demands are being made on this natural resource, deteriorated by illegal logging (Awan, 2008; Ali and Nyborg, 2010; Awan and Buner, 2014; Awan et al., 2016). Hence, the results from this study are expected to be of importance to relevant authorities like the Forest and Wildlife departments, to improve the protection of the remaining pockets of pristine mountain forests in Pakistan.

Western tragopan, a species of global conservation concern needs a clear picture of its abundance and distribution which is very important for its conservation purpose. Clearly identified sites with its potential distribution provides guidelines for further research and conservation management. An effort done to model breeding habitat of the species provides a new horizon for future research and conservation in Pakistan. This model can also be replicated in other parts of the species distribution range to get a clear picture on species global breeding habitat availability which will further help to estimate breeding habitat of the species on global level.

Acknowledgement

The author is most thankful to World Pheasant Association, UK for financial support provided to conduct this important study and publish its results. Efforts of WPA UK are highly acknowledged for supporting, helping and promoting Galliformes research and conservation in Pakistan. I am also thankful to Brigadier (R) Mukhtar Ahmed (WPA, Pakistan) for all his support and help in pheasant research and conservation work in Pakistan. This study was designed, conducted and published after help from Dr, Arshed Pervez, Dr Zafeer, Dr Francis Buner and Dr David Lee for which I highly appreciate their role and support. We are also grateful to the Wildlife Departments of Azad, Jammu and Kashmir, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for their support during the field work and data collection.

UPDATE: ANGKOR CENTRE OF CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

Christel Griffioen and Jason Miller

With funding generously provided by WPA UK and WPA Germany a new breeding facility for green peafowl (*Pavo muticus* emperor) has been built at the ACCB. The facility has been constructed by our experienced facility team and all required materials and supplies have been sourced locally and, where possible, purchased from local vendors at the villages surrounding ACCB in order to support the livelihoods within our community. Additional vegetation will be planted in the aviary and hides to provide visual barriers will be put up, before the pair of peafowl will be transferred to the facility in time for the 2023 breeding season.

The 2022 breeding season for the green peafowl at ACCB was not as fruitful as we hoped for. The first clutch of eggs of both our breeding females, was unfortunately unsuccessful. Predation, by presumably small Asian mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*), caused the loss of all four eggs laid by one female and flooding of the nest during heavy rainfall overnight resulted in the other female abandoning her eggs. Fortunately, both females re-clutched laying each five eggs, which have been naturally incubated. Only three of the five eggs laid by the first peahen hatched successfully. The chicks are doing well, and we are planning to release them in a secure protected area later this year. The second clutch of the second peahen was less successful with two rotten eggs, embryonic death of two eggs at different stages of development, and one chick dying during hatching. The female re-clutched a second time, of the four eggs in this clutch only one egg hatched after 29 days of natural incubation, the other three eggs were rotten. When the offspring of this peahen was just over two months old the sire committed infanticide on the chick.



A COTSWOLD WEEKEND

Paul North

The Convention and Annual General Meeting were held on the Saturday of the second weekend in September with a welcome return to the Cotswold Wildlife Park. As with any WPA get together, a Council meeting was held on the Friday.

Members began to arrive in Burford on Friday and a good gathering enjoyed an evening meal together at the Carpenters Arms in the middle of Burford. Saturday morning saw forty or more members and guests gather at the Cotswold Wildlife Park for coffee and registration followed by a welcome introduction to the park by the manager of the park Jamie Craig.

First item on the programme was a roundup of events over the last year given by Jo Gregson, WPA Chair. Next up was Gary Ward, bird curator at London Zoo with an illustrated talk on Aviary aesthetics, showing examples of both good and bad aviary planting designs and discussing some of the things to consider.

For the next presentation we were pleased to welcome a visitor from Greece, Kyriakos Skordas who is the General Director of the Hunting Federation of Macedonia & Thrace (KOMATH) and is responsible for the WPA funded conservation project for the black-necked pheasant in the Nestos Delta, Greece. Kyriakos began by explaining that the main objective of KOMATH is the protection and sustainable management of the natural resources and spends more than 50% of its money on habitat improvement and wild fauna protection. This includes employment of game wardens, habitat improvement projects and game species management and public awareness and collaboration with other involved bodies.

He went on to describe the small population of black-necked pheasants found in the Nestos Delta and talked about the six year (2017-2022) WPA funded project, that with the help of Richard Carden (WPA) and advice from Roger Draycott (GWCT), KOMATH have improved the habitat, organised annual call counts, identified predators and have influenced a change of direction by their government regarding the control of predators in their area.

Following a short break for coffee we were introduced to the Vietnam Pheasant Recovery Project by Jan Dams, Chair of EAZA Galliformes TAG and Animal care coordinator at Antwerp Zoo. His very thorough presentation kept his audience entertained with the help of some excellent graphics. He began with the original threats to the birds and continued to discuss their introduction into Europe and how that stock has evolved to identify pure birds. He detailed the return of some birds to Vietnam zoos and the preparations now in progress for the eventual return of Vietnam pheasants to the wild.

An excellent buffet lunch was followed by a tour of the bird collection at the park. The Annual General Meeting followed. The afternoon continued with two presentations about GPS trackers for birds. The first involved the pilot study on the effects of tail mounted radio trackers on the behaviour of captive Vietnam pheasants. This involved detailed observations and behaviour recordings to produce a detailed ethogram which showed no adverse or negative effects from the transmitter.

The second presentation was given by Laura Gardner, Director of Conservation, The Wildwood Trust and detailed the release and tracking experiences for red-billed chough on the island of Jersey and more recently in Kent. After the refreshment



*Jo presenting Will Harrison with Jon Pointer's pheasant raffle painting
Photo: Cheri Crystal*



*Convention 2022
Photo: Paul North*

break that followed, the winning raffle ticket was drawn for the original painting of a pair of black-necked pheasants by wildlife artist Jonathan Pointer and it was presented to the winner by Jo Gregson.

Due to unforeseen circumstances the next scheduled presentation entitled Tragopan Studbook and DNA was replaced by a second talk by Jan Dams about the bare-faced curassow in the wild and in captivity. After details of the bird's life in South America, Jan went on to describe how he and his brother Rik kept and bred these fascinating cracids over many years.

The final offering entitled Studbooks and ringing was given by Gavin Harrison, Assistant Curator, Waddesdon Manor Aviary. He explained that a studbook, as a record of individuals within a managed captive breeding population, was an important tool in scientifically managing ex-situ populations with a focus on conservation species. The studbook coordinators responsibilities were highlighted as were the several types of software and the information that they provided. The importance of identifying the individual bird with a closed ring or microchip and the information about each bird was discussed.

The day was concluded with the convention dinner held at the Highway Inn in Burford, which provided good food and beverage in a congenial atmosphere.

AVIAN INFLUENZA AND HOW TO PREVENT IT

Stewart Henderson

Now before I start, I must make it perfectly clear that if you do follow my recommendation's then it may not stop you getting bird flu and it may not stop the Scottish government/ DEFRA requiring a full humane cull of your birds. However, it will help provide evidence that you have done all you can to prevent getting avian influenza and may help you possibly save some of your collection.

From the 1st of October 2022, up until I type this paper (25/10/2022), the UK has seen 72 cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1: 68 in England, two in Wales and two in Scotland. Considering there have been so many cases in such a short time, it really does not bode well for the coming months. However, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

On the 20/10/2022 we had the pleasure of hosting an extraordinary meeting at Fenton Barns with four of the leading experts in Scotland to discuss measures to reduce the chances of getting avian influenza:

- Sheila Voas – CVO Scotland
- Alastair Douglas – Head of Animal Disease Control Branch
- Annabel Henderson – Senior Policy Manager, Disease Control Branch
- Mick Park – APHA Vet Lead, Scotland.

Firstly, the whole of the UK was put under an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ), which means by law that bird keepers must have a good level of biosecurity to try and prevent the spread of the virus.

At Fenton Barns, we always aim to uphold a good level of biosecurity, but having these four individuals visit opened my eyes on what we should be doing in addition. The following is a list of preventative measures we can all do (although it may seem overkill, it is necessary):

1. Basic biosecurity includes foot dips placed in doorways/ entry points of buildings. I was advised to have two foot dips next to each other, one for scrubbing the footwear and removing any dirt that could be stuck in the cleats of footwear, and the second foot dip is for dipping your

footwear in Government-approved disinfectant (at the correct dilution rate) after scrubbing.

2. Keeping records of when the foot dips were emptied and renewed with fresh disinfectant (preferably a Government-approved one).

3. Keep records of when food etc. has been brought on to the premises (traceability).

4. Keep a visitors record book and a record of where birds have been sent and received from. I am keeping records for every bird that is sold, so as I know who has which bloodline from certain species, so in the event of someone, or us, losing a bird, I can trace the possibility of finding a bird from a different bloodline and not a sibling of the remaining bird.

5. Cover all feeders and drinkers where possible, especially if there is a risk of waterfowl, geese and ducks etc. flying over the aviaries and having faeces fall into the water. In any case, all feeders should be under cover if possible (to avoid any direct or indirect contact with wild birds).

6. Disinfect all feed bags and bedding wraps before taking them into a building or before you feed. I was told the probable cause in some of the current cases is keepers taking in infected feed bags or bedding (such as shavings) wrapped in plastic that have bird droppings on them that is being transferred into the shed. (It's the little things that we don't think of that can be our undoing).



Foot dips
Photos: Stewart Henderson



Covers on feeders and drinkers
Photos: Stewart Henderson

7. Avian influenza has been proven to last 100 days on any surface or in faeces, feed etc., so making sure everything is disinfected and kept clean is of paramount importance.

8. It is a legal requirement for anyone keeping 50 or more birds to register their premises/birds under the GB Poultry Register. We encourage anyone with any number of birds to also register voluntarily.

I know this sounds and reads as total overkill, but we must do whatever we can to prevent this horrendous virus from entering our flocks, as it is not going away. I was also informed that this is a different strain to the previous strains of H5N1 from years ago and is a lot less likely to transmit to humans, but it is devastating in birds with the highest mortality they have seen before.

On a brighter note, I was very encouraged to hear that the Scottish Government/APHA were more than willing to listen to us and work with us if there was a case of bird flu on our

premises. All the points that I have listed above would be of a valuable contribution and aid in the unfortunate event of a collection getting avian influenza.

The census that the WPA conducts is now proving to be more important than ever, and due to the current outbreaks it is vital that we get as much information as possible from aviculturists on the status of species that are kept in collections. We handed last year's census over to all persons at the meeting to which all commented on how important it is that we have this information at hand; if anything was to happen within any of our collections, we can make a case to spare certain birds due to their rarity. So please anyone that hasn't sent me their census please do so at the email below or if you need a blank copy, you can either find one on the WPA website or you can contact me, and I'll send you one.

Rings are also going to become very important (more than people are realising), due to the traceability of the birds, knowing where birds have come from and parentage of these birds. If anyone is wanting any advice or help in finding out which rings to buy or which days to put the rings for different species then please contact me at stewart_fbpheasants@yahoo.com and I will help in any way I can.

Our Chairman has kindly written a letter on behalf of all members, which is available on the WPA website and has a list of the species that includes over one quarter of all living Galliformes and is based upon the internationally recognised criteria used by Birdlife International, IUCN etc.

UPDATE: OFFICE

Barbara Ingman

I think I can safely mention Christmas, although when we started planning the gift guide it was unseasonably early. However, the outcome is particularly good with some lovely new cards and gorgeous mugs which are selling very well so far! Please support this fundraising venture. I've even mastered the art of dispatching the mugs so that they arrive in one piece, after a disastrous first attempt. This time of year gives me a chance to plan events for 2023 and the diary is filling up very quickly already with events in some lovely venues – Sudeley Castle, Spain, Perth, Rutland, not forgetting Indonesia. I loved our return visit to the Cotswold Wildlife Park, seeing everyone and the tremendous commitment to WPA from members and Trustees alike. I hope to see you at the Conservation Breeding and Advisory Group meeting on Sudeley Castle on Saturday 4 February 2023. Oh, and don't forget to order cards, mugs and books in time for Christmas. Season's Greetings!

GROUSE CONFERENCE

Barbara Ingman

Conference - Practical Conservation for Scottish Grouse Species

Friday 5th May 2023 at Balhousie Castle, Perth

WPA has joined forces with the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust to hold a Conference entitled "Practical Conservation for Scottish Grouse Species" at Balhousie Castle on Friday 5th May 2023. This will discuss the threat of extinction of the capercaillie and the threats facing ptarmigan, black and red Grouse.

To register interest, please contact office@pheasant.org.uk

More information will also be posted on the website in due course



CHANGING LEGISLATION

Louise Peat

Even well-meaning progress can throw a 'sparrow' in the works, causing chaos and uncertainty, with unforeseen consequences. This is probably the best way to describe an impending new legislation. From what I can ascertain it is primarily about keeping 'exotic' species out of the wrong hands and reducing risks to human health from injury or disease. An admirable philosophy, saving needless suffering and poor welfare conditions for thousands of animals. This legislation proposes to ban individuals from keeping any species that do not feature on a 'Positive List'. The listed species are all deemed to be safe animals that can be kept in the home and will almost certainly mainly feature domesticated species. If implemented, any species not on the list will be allowed to live out their lives but may not be bred from or replaced unless you hold a special permit and can demonstrate that you have specialist facilities or expertise.

In 2001, Belgium was the first EU country to implement this legislation, they have a Positive List of 42 mammals and more recently also introduced a Positive List for reptile species. Many other countries are now considering the legislation, Graham Thurlow, long term aviculturist and font of all knowledge, has provided us with an overview of the current situation regarding Positive Lists:

On Positive Lists, for Scotland they commissioned a study as to whether or not they might be a good idea. The results were due back in June but have still to see the light of day and we are being advised that it has been de-prioritised. Positive Lists for England/Wales are dead in the water for the time being, but this may well change depending on which party comes into power.

In Germany, despite the Reds and Greens being in the governing coalition and a Green Minister in charge of both Conservation and Animal Welfare (both parties supported Positive Lists in their Manifestos), Positive Lists did not get onto the list of priorities for the Coalitions four-year term (the Liberals as the other party in the Coalition were resolutely opposed).

Of huge significance was the recent events - two months ago - when the Council of Ministers for the 26 EU Member States voted to ask the European Commission to look at the possibility of introducing a Positive List across the EU (though Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary also caveated their support for such an investigation by stating that they believed their own Negative Lists worked better). Two days later, the European Commission publicly and very forcibly stated that they would not initiate such a review since an EU-wide Positive List would be highly problematic in terms of the WTO arrangements and that, in any case, these would come under EU Member State Competencies and not European Commission Competencies.

Plenty of countries are looking at Positive Lists (Spain, Finland, Austria, Malta, Cyprus all considering). The Dutch Government has introduced a Positive List for mammals (with the stated intent of then having one for birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish) but each time they have been challenged in the courts and the challenge has been upheld with the Government sent back to the drawing board.

This leaves us with two key questions to consider:

1. Is it inevitable that the UK will adopt this legislation and if so, how long do we have to prepare before it comes into force?
2. What standards will be required to attain a 'special permit'; will private aviculturists be able to apply?

Unfortunately, we do not have the answers at this time, but that does not mean we should be resting on our laurels, taking action now is imperative to securing the future, even if this legislation doesn't see the light of day you can guarantee something similar will replace it. Preparation is key and, on this front, respect is due to our current Chair who has had the foresight to set up MOU's with other organisations. There really is strength in numbers and working together will give us a louder voice that could influence how we are viewed and may even have a positive effect on any decision making. In the meantime, every individual should be playing their part, it is time to 'cowboy up', set out your mission, what your plans are for your collection and how you can achieve that to a high standard. Think about how you would justify what you do and how you would evidence that.

Changing legislation:

https://www.apa.org.uk/pdfs/APA_LondonVetShow_guide.pdf

<https://www.prijatelj-zivotinja.hr/index.en.php?id=1759>

UPDATE: BIO POLY WRAP

I'm afraid we had to stop using the bio/home compostable poly wrap for the WPA Newsletter. There are a few reasons for this.

The bio poly wrap caused some production issues, one of them being it doesn't seal very well during the mailing and wrapping process. Another is that the film itself is inconsistent in thickness which causes feeding issues on the mailing and poly wrapping machine.

Our printer discussed these issues with the supplier but so far they've been unable to resolve the issues.

Additionally, the price of the bio poly wrap has been constantly increasing and it is now very expensive, with global supply chain issues the supply of the material has also been erratic.

So with all this in mind we had to revert back to the regular poly wrap, although the regular poly wrap is not home compostable it is fully recyclable and can be disposed of safely in home recycling bins where it can be processed at our regional and national plastics recycling centres.

PICTURE PUZZLES

Paul North

I have been a collector, some may say a hoarder, all my life. Foreign coins, stamps and post cards were collected from a very early age. Simply to own was not enough, my brothers and I were encouraged by my father to look beyond the object, to question its age, what was its origin and how did it come into our possession.

In my late teens and early twenties collecting took a back seat, with a job and money in my pocket there were many other things of interest. Living in the City of Coventry and working in engineering made me a bit of a *petrol head* with a love of cars, particularly old cars and in some ways I was still collecting, owning a Wolseley 14/60 that was made before I was born and a string of MGs from the late forties - early fifties.

The next significant shift in my collecting came about because of a picture bought from a bookstall at a Game Fair that set me on the road that I still follow all these years later.

In the late sixties I was living in Lancashire with a wife and young family and had an interest in birds. I joined WPA and in the years that followed spent a happy week of my holidays helping to build and then staff the WPA game fair stands, and it was here in the many bookstalls that dotted the site, that I discovered bookplates, pictures cut from damaged or broken old books.

The picture that caught my attention was one that showed seven birds including partridge, quail and tinamou. Six of the birds I recognised but the seventh, labelled **GIBRALTOR 3 TOED QUAIL** was a complete mystery, although the answer was there in the name. So, a small (quail) ground dwelling (no hind toe) bird from a southern European climate - it is, of course, a hemipode of the family *Turnicidae*, possibly *Turnix sylvatica* also known as the common buttonquail. It all seems very simple and obvious now but, in fact, it took a few years before I had the answer.

This original antique print came from the 'Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and Literature', an important 19th-century encyclopaedic work that was published in serialized form from 1802 to 1820. The entire Cyclopaedia consisted of 39 volumes of text, five volumes of plates and an atlas.

The second puzzle picture came some years later. My collection had grown considerably but was not yet out of hand, after all every room has four walls. I bought it with a small group of bookplates being offered on the internet and this picture was immediately recognisable as that of a Western Tragopan but was labelled **HASTINGS TRAGOPAN** with a latin name *Cerionis Melanocephalus*. It was plate 30 from Cassell's Book of Birds Volume III published in 1875.



Tragopan hastingii

It was the word Hastings that I needed to understand and presuming it to be a person's name I turned to my trusted tome, The Eponym Dictionary of Birds only to be disappointed as there were no Hastings listed. The only other Hastings that came readily to mind was the small seaside town in Sussex, and although I did not realise it at the time, this was part of the answer.

Just before Christmas last year I was looking up information on the internet and I came upon a reference to 'Century of Birds from the Himalaya Mountains' by John Gould, published in London in 1831. Realising that this was a title that I had not viewed before, I opened it in the Biodiversity Heritage Library website and moved down to the List of Plates. Plates 60 to 70 were of Galliformes and plates 63 to 65 were named as *Tragopan hastingii*, a male, young male and female. Following the illustrations was a written page giving description and other details and there at the end of the first line was the answer I had been seeking for so long. It read "This new species, on which we have bestowed the name of *Hastingii* in honour of the Noble Marquis"

Further research proved that Francis Edward Rawdon-Hastings, 1st Marquess of Hastings, KG, PC, had had a successful military career and held the office of Governor-General of India from 1813 to 1823. He is still remembered today but on the other side of the

Channel as the common name in French is Tragopan de Hastings and in Italian Tragopano di Hastings.

These are just two pictures from a collection that now numbers in the hundreds and includes original chromolithographs, paintings and engravings covering a somewhat narrow band, being almost completely of Galliformes.



Seven birds

GALLIFORM SURVEY 2022: PIPAR AND SANTEL, NEPAL

Laxman Prasad Poudyal, Hathan Chaudhary, Manshanta Ghimire, Sanjib Acharya and Shes Kanta Sharma

Spring survey of galliformes in Pipar and Santel in 2022, Annapurna Conservation Area, central Nepal

Summary

The Galliformes of Pipar have been surveyed 13 times between 1979 and 2019. The nearby area of Santel was surveyed five times between 2001 and 2017 using comparable methods. In continuance of the long-term monitoring at Pipar and to provide a sixth count at Santel, dawn call counts were conducted in both areas, using the same survey points as previous surveys, between 17th and 28th May 2022.

The aim of the surveys was to obtain information on the pheasants and partridges that could be used to infer the status of these populations and especially whether they had changed since the last surveys. The secondary aims were to gather information on the presence of birds and mammals of both areas, and to gather information of the human disturbances on the forests.

Seventeen satyr tragopan, five koklass pheasant and seven common hill partridge were recorded by dawn call count at six listening stations at Pipar. Likewise, 17 satyr tragopan, three koklass pheasant and 17 hill partridge were recorded by the same method at seven listening stations at Santel. Both forests have richness in birds and mammalian species. A total of 162 bird species were recorded in the Pipar and Santel forests, with 115 species in the Pipar forests and 132 species in the Santel forests. The birds include Himalayan monal (Danphe) *Lophophorus impejanus*, satyr tragopan *Tragopan satyra*, blood pheasant *Ithaginis cruentus*, koklass pheasant *Pucrasia macrolopha*, hill partridge *Arborophila torqueola*, bearded vulture *Gypaetus barbatus* in the survey areas, and red-headed vulture *Sarcogyps calvus*, spiny babbler *Acanthoptila nipalensis* in the lower altitudes. Mammalian species include Himalayan goral *Naemorhedus goral*, barking deer *Muntiacus vaginalis*, Nepal gray langur *Semnopithecus schistaceus*, Assamese macaque *Macaca assamensis*, Asiatic black bear *Ursus thibetanus* and common leopard *Panthera pardus*.



Starting fieldwork
Photo: Laxman Prasad Poudyal



Team discussion
Photo: Laxman Prasad Poudyal

Buffalo and sheep grazing, Yarsha Gumba/caterpillar fungus *Ophiocordyceps sinensis*, medicinal plants and bamboo shoots collections, firewood and timber materials collections, and a very newly introduced tourist trekking route through the Pipar forests were the major human pressure in the areas. Hunting evidence were noticed; snares for pheasants and traps for mammalian species were found during the survey.

The key recommendations for future work include continuation of studies on pheasants and other species, studies on vegetation and people's influence on habitats, studies on the effects of hydropower on habitats, and the continuation of WPA's works in nearby schools.

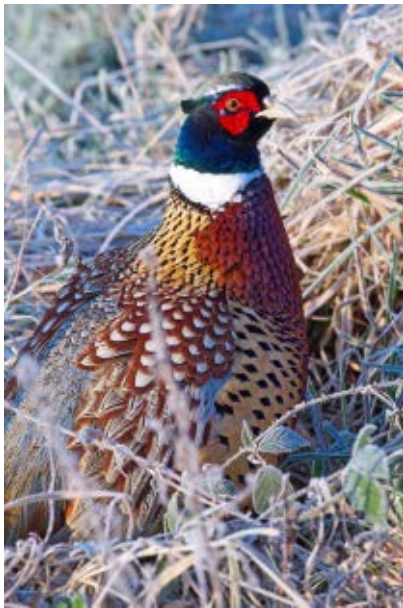
Please contact the WPA office if you would like to read the full report for 2022 and comparison to previous year's survey counts.

2022 GIFT GUIDE

1. **New** Christmas Cards and notelets
2. **New** Colourful Mugs featuring Junglefowl and Pheasants
3. Pheasants of the World Posters – all sizes available
4. Books – ‘Monograph of the Pheasants’ should be on everyone’s bookshelves!
5. Vietnam Pheasant Prints

1. **Christmas cards and notelets**, professionally printed on white card: 105 x 148mm.

This year’s cards are already folded size A6. Price is still only £6 for 10 cards and envelopes. The back page has the WPA Logo and a short note about the importance of WPA’s conservation work. Inside the card reads: 'Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year'. There are two New designs from the winners of our Christmas card competition:



New ‘Pheasant in frost’, photograph Jonathan Pointer

New ‘Capercallie in snow’, photograph David White

2. Other Merchandise:

These gorgeous ceramic mugs are dishwasher proof (285ml) and come at a bargain price of £12 each, plus postage and packing. They will make first-rate Christmas presents Hand printed by Kirsty Yeomans (crowartist.co.uk)



Pheasants



Junglefowl



Add two double sided colourful WPA bookmarks for only £1 -They make excellent stocking fillers!

If you would like to discuss an order please contact the office: office@pheasant.org.uk, or phone: 07935383992.

The full list of gifts is also on the website: pheasant.org.uk/christmasshop.aspx

Orders will be dispatched as soon as possible - Thank you for your support

All proceeds go towards our vital conservation projects.

OBITUARY

James Goodhart 1933 – March 2022

by John Corder

James was a very benevolent Patron of WPA for a number of years. He was a lifelong ornithologist who encouraged and contributed very significantly to many important galliformes projects. James was always a very private person, so we know little of his life before his involvement with WPA. However, we do know that he was born and lived in Yorkshire and had a background in farming. His maternal grandfather was a well-known Member of Parliament, Sir Arthur Haworth. He enjoyed entertaining on his own terms. Vintage champagne was often served before dinner, and he had his own idiosyncratic manner of cooking grouse by grilling it for a much shorter time than most would expect!

James was obviously involved in bird research at quite an early age as the 1953-54 Annual Report of The Wildfowl Trust carries a report, of which he was a co-author, on an expedition to the Arctic in West Spitsbergen. At the time he was a student at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. The aim of the expedition was to ring geese during their nesting season in the arctic so that they might be traced when they migrated south. Apparently, this expedition was extremely arduous and maybe it was the precursor to James' great enthusiasm for trekking through mountains to see rare birds.

His initial involvement with WPA came via the former Pheasant Specialist Group. James donated around £10,000 annually to support field researchers who were working on important projects. He would often visit these researchers at their sites, which provided the opportunity for ornithology in areas which were often very difficult to reach. In his sixties and seventies, he surprised many of his younger proteges with his ability to cope better than them with very arduous mountain conditions.

One of his proteges is Dr K. Ramesh, now one of India's leading conservationists at the Wildlife Institute of India. Ramesh studied the western tragopan in the mountains of Himachal Pradesh for his PhD, financially supported by James. During one of his treks with Ramesh, James visited Sarahan where there was a pheasantry dedicated to threatened mountain pheasant species, including the only western tragopan in captivity at that time. James was very disturbed with the conditions and the lack of expertise, and he strongly encouraged WPA's collaboration. As readers may know, WPA became very involved in this project for western tragopans at Sarahan and also one for cheer pheasants at Chail. Both projects are now very successful, and pheasants have been released from them to reinforce dwindling wild populations. Without James, it is highly unlikely that this would ever have been accomplished.

In 2007, James suggested that WPA should organise a Conservation Breeding Workshop to share our expertise with those working to breed threatened pheasant species in captivity. He was a major sponsor for the first workshop, held for a week before the Chengdu Symposium. From this workshop, new programmes emerged for many pheasant species, including blood pheasant, Chinese monal, brown eared-pheasant, Cabot's tragopan, green peafowl and Bornean peacock-pheasant.

More recently, James supported Dr Wang Nan's & Dr Geoffrey Davison's field research into Blyth's tragopan throughout almost its whole range. Probably no other pheasant species has been studied so intensively and the research has resulted in the identification of at least one new sub-species.

His final donation to WPA was allocated to help key researchers who would otherwise be unable to contribute their expertise, to attend our forthcoming symposium in Java.

In recent years, James suffered increasingly from memory loss and retired from his home in Bishop Wilton to a Care Home within his home county of Yorkshire. He was supported extremely well by his old friend, Ian Kibble. During his lifetime, he gifted some land to the Woodland Trust in Bishop Wilton, and he is now remembered there with a memorial bench.

James will long be remembered within in WPA for his rigorous and enthusiastic approach to the conservation of galliformes which was applied with immense generosity.



FUNDRAISING DATES

Charlotte Chilcott

Looking ahead to 2023, planning for our three key fundraising events is already underway so please make a note in your diaries and contact us if you would like more information on the days.

We always need more teams and volunteers on the day are always very, very welcome.

Black-necked Pheasant Charity Clay Shoot

Acorn Shooting School, Beacon Hill Farm, Amesbury

Friday 12th May 2023

Contact Rosey Northcote-Smith – rosey@hapana.co.uk

Black Grouse Charity Shoot

County Clays, Dunkeld

Saturday 27th May 2023

Contact Ian Robertson – ian@countrysidelearningscotland.org.uk

Red Rice Simulated Clay Day

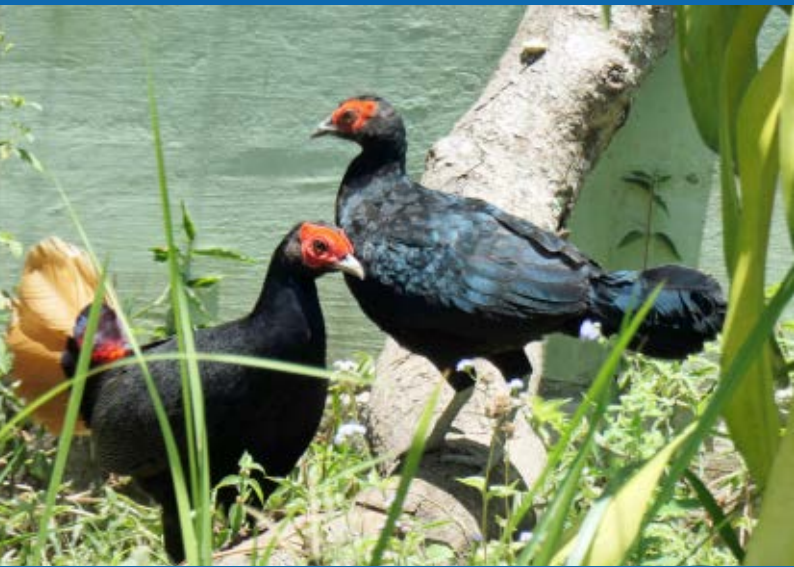
Red Rice Farm, Andover

Wednesday 14th June 2023

Contact Rosey Northcote-Smith – rosey@hapana.co.uk



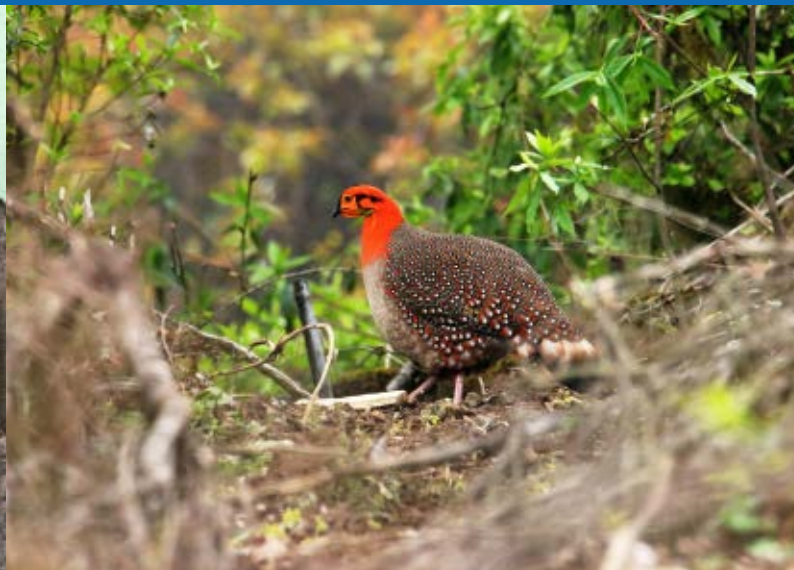
Green and red junglefowl of the Bankiva sub-species in the wild in Java
Photo: John Corder



A pair of the recently up-listed critically endangered Malay crestless firebacks which are now in the WPA aviaries at Prigen. Photo: John Corder



A pair of white-faced partridges which originate from East Java and were the first birds to breed in the WPA aviaries at Prigen. Photo: John Corder



Blyth's tragopan
Photo: Sonam Dorji



Grey partridge. Photo: Ekaterina Chernetsova (Papchinskaya) via Flickr on 13 March 2019 (CC BY 2.0)



Gunnison sage grouse
Photo: Larry Lamsa via Flickr on 24 March 2019 (CC BY 2.0)