

# Mor

*Newsletter of World Pheasant Association - India*



## **Editorial**

First of all, very best wishes for the New Year to all the readers of ***Mor*** and the WPA-India network.

The most important event of the past six months was the 4<sup>th</sup> International Galliformes Symposium held at Chengdu and Wolong in the Sichuan Province of China from 14-21 October 2007. The President, WPA-India, participated and his report on the event is included in this issue.

The Annual General Body Meeting of WPA-India was held on 29 September 2007 at the WWF-India head office in New Delhi. In the meeting, the Annual Report and the audited Annual Accounts for FY 2006-07 were approved and adopted. A Roster of Scientists was also approved. The Governing Board met before the AGM. Based on the approved Annual Report an Annual Review is given in this issue.

Another significant decision taken in the meeting was to develop closer collaboration between the WPA-India and WWF-India. Following the meeting, WWF-India has become an institutional member of WPA-India.

*Dr. A.J. Urfi*  
*Editor*



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## **WPA-India Governing Board**

Samar Singh - President  
A.J. Urfi - Hon. Gen. Secretary  
D.K. Chetsingh - Hon. Treasurer  
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Raghuvansh Saxena  
Shekhar Singh                S. Sathyakumar  
M. Shah Hussain  
Nita Shah                      Sanjeeva Pandey  
Himanshu Malhotra

## Annual Review 2006-07

The year started with some dramatic developments, mainly concerning the rediscovery of the endangered Western Tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus* in parts of Uttarakhand State under the ongoing Key Areas Project and the reported sighting of the rare and elusive Manipur Bush Quail *Perdica manipurensis* in the Manas National Park of Assam State. Further field work during the open season has reconfirmed the report about the Western Tragopan. As for the Manipur Bush Quail, there has been no such luck so far, but the investigation is continuing.

### **General Body & Governing Board**

The Annual General Body Meeting of WPA-India was held on 14 October 2006. The Governing Board met three times during the year – 29 April 2006, 14 October 2006 and 25 January 2007. The meeting held on 25 January 2007 was also attended by Dr. John Corder, WPA Vice President, and Shri Vinay Tandon, Addl. PCCF and Chief Wildlife Warden, Himachal Pradesh, mainly to discuss the developments in HP and to review the progress concerning the pending HP Pheasant Conservation Project. In the same meeting, the Board accepted the resignation of Ms. Joanna Van Gruisen and, in the vacancy thus created, approved the appointment of the Shri Sanjeeva Pandey, former Director, Great Himalayan National Park, HP, as a member of WPA-India Governing Board till the expiry of the tenure of the present Board.

### **Membership & Newsletter**

There has been a slight increase in the number of members and efforts to enrol more members, including Student Members, are continuing. With a view to improve internal communication, regularity has been maintained in bringing out the six-monthly newsletter entitled **Mor**. The main theme of July 2006 issue was the four Tragopan species found in India and the focus of January 2007 issue was the Manipur Bush Quail. This kind of theme-based focus in the newsletter has been generally appreciated.

### **National Board for Wildlife**

The National Board for Wildlife, the apex national body for wildlife conservation chaired by the Prime Minister, met on 19 June 2006. In the meeting, the following proposals put forward by the President, WPA-India, were approved:-

(1) **Action for protecting the Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*** - As a part of WPA-India's campaign **Save the National Bird**, the following was proposed:-

- a) Rapid survey to assess current status of the species, followed by periodic monitoring.
- b) Special attention to cases of mortality at all stages – detection, investigation and prosecution – and enlisting the support of all concerned for this purpose.
- c) An awareness campaign to spread the message widely and to mobilise public support.
- d) Removal of the legal loophole in respect of dealing in peacock tail feathers.

The Board approved a rapid survey to assess the current status of the species and periodic monitoring and appropriate protection measures.

(2) **Conservation of the Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus*** - The following was proposed on behalf of WPA-India:-

- a) An awareness campaign to generate proper appreciation and understanding of the special importance of the species.

- b) Rapid scientific surveys to determine the current status of the species in the country and also to identify prime areas likely to have pure wild birds.
- c) Molecular genetic studies to assess purity of the gene stock in the identified habitats - on a selective basis.
- d) Field action to ensure utmost protection to the remaining population of the species and its natural habitats, along with regular monitoring of the prime areas.
- e) Further research and studies to address the gap areas, specially distribution and ecology of the species.

The Board approved the constitution of a specialist group to prepare an action plan for the conservation of the Red Junglefowl.

Further action in the above-mentioned matters is being taken by the Ministry of Environment & Forests and the Wildlife Institute of India. WPA-India is also involved in the follow-up and is continuing its campaign **Save the National Bird**. An important development in this connection is the recent establishment of Peafowl Conservation Reserves at Dungarpur in Dungarpur District of Rajasthan, Bankapura in Haveri District of Karnataka and Aska in Ganjam District of Orissa.

### **Field Projects**

The progress in regard to the ongoing field projects is briefly given below:

**Wildlife and Floristic Studies in Allain-Duhangan catchments, Himachal Pradesh (Funded by ERM India)** - The project was completed and the final report to the sponsor was sent in June 2006.

**Effect of pesticide use on the Blue Peafowl and Grey Francolin in Central India (Funded by Ministry of Environment and Forests)** – The project started in 2004-05 and has thus completed two years of field work involving estimation of species populations, assessment of pesticides use, analysis of soil samples, etc. During the year, a workshop to involve the local farmers and other people and to generate awareness was organized in Morena District of Madhya Pradesh. Other awareness activities were continued.

**Community based conservation of Galliformes in the Gori Basin, Uttarakhand (Funded by Ministry of Environment and Forests)** – The project work commenced in April 2006. The year was devoted to data collation and analysis, biological and social economic surveys, creation of educational material and starting a nature interpretation centre, collaboration with the forest department and local officials, mobilizing the local communities for patrolling and protection as well as to enforce community ban on hunting.

**Key Areas Project (Funded by WPA International)** – During the year, a series of activities were undertaken, including data collection and synthesis, obtaining permission for field work and analysis at the landscape level on the distribution pattern of the Western Tragopan, exploring the possibility of establishing a 'Pheasant Reserve' in the Garhwal Himalaya and participation in the Annual Research Seminar at the Wildlife Institute of India. Field visits were also made and data on pheasants was collated, in which some students of local universities were involved.

**Survey of Manipur Bush-Quail in Assam** – Following the unconfirmed sighting of the bird in June 2006, WPA-India Regional Representative for the North-east, Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhary, continued field surveys to confirm the presence of the species in the area. WPA Hqts has shown interest and an amount of UKP 500 was provided at the end of year for this activity.

The following project proposals, prepared and submitted to the HP Government, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the British High Commission, the Central Zoo Authority and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership

Fund (CEPF), are pending for approval:-

- \* Himachal Pradesh Pheasant Conservation Project.
- \* Study on the status, distribution & conservation issues of the Pheasants of Western Arunachal Districts.
- \* Study on the status, distribution and related conservation aspects of the Pheasants of Sikkim with special reference to Blood Pheasant *Ithaginis cruentus*.
- \* Development of Strategy and Conservation Action Plan for Pheasants in Key Areas.
- \* Technical guidelines on captive rearing of Pheasants in the Indian Zoos.

### **Partnerships & Networking**

In pursuance of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the WPA-India and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), the progress made is briefly mentioned below:

**Training** - The WII has continued its efforts to sensitize and train the frontline staff in the conservation and monitoring of pheasants. Training in field techniques relevant to abundance estimation and monitoring was imparted to the field staff in Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Uttarakhand. Training of field staff in monitoring pheasants, such as the Indian Peafowl and the Red Junglefowl, is also included under the All India Tiger, Co-predators, Prey and their Habitats Monitoring Programme that is currently underway at the national level. Training material on the subject, including data sheets and guidelines in Hindi, was used during the field training.

**Bibliography** - Over 300 references with abstracts on *Galliformes* have been compiled at the WII Library and Documentation Centre into software and indexing is in the final stages. This bibliography will be published as a chapter in the forthcoming ENVIS issue on *Galliformes*.

**Library** - In the WII Library all the books and reports related to *Galliformes* have been placed together separately under the Ornithology and Birds Section.

**ENVIS** - The next issue of ENVIS to be brought out by the WII is devoted exclusively to the Indian *Galliformes* and is expected to be ready by September 2007. The issue will cover all aspects of *Galliformes* conservation in India, including reports from the concerned States.

**Collaboration** with other partner institutions, such as the Bombay History Natural Society, Centre for Environment Education, Central Zoo Authority, National Zoological Park, Army Eco Cell and others was continued and further strengthened during the year.

Likewise, WPA-India continued its collaboration with the Union Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) and the Wildlife Wings in the Forest Departments of the concerned States, more specially Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

**Himachal Pradesh Government designates Western Tragopan as State Bird.**

**Now 6 out of 17 pheasant species in the country are National & State Birds.**

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## **4<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL GALLIFORMES SYMPOSIUM**

### **14 -21 OCTOBER 2007**

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The 4<sup>th</sup> International Galliformes Symposium was held at Chengdu and Wolong in the Sichuan Province of China from 14 to 21 October 2007. It was organized by the WPA in collaboration with WPA-China and the China Ornithological Society. A total number of around 200 delegates from about 25 countries participated. President, WPA-India, Samar Singh participated on behalf of WPA-India (at own cost). The other Indians at the Symposium were: Qamar Qureshi, M. Fernandes, Mukesh (all from the Wildlife Institute of India), K. Ramesh, T. Bhattacharya, Malika Viridi, Lalit Mohan, Satpal Dhiman and Alam Singh Chauhan (last three from the Himachal Pradesh Forest Deptt). WPA had arranged sponsorships for all these other Indian participants. The Himachal Pradesh contingent also participated in the pre-symposium workshop on conservation breeding conducted by Dr. John Corder, WPA Vice Chairman.

The venue in Chengdu was the Wang Jiang Hotel, a five-star hotel. At Wolong, about four hours drive out of Chengdu, the venue for the two workshops and the field trip to the Giant Panda area, was the Wolong Hotel, which provides all the basic facilities.

The Symposium started on the morning of 15 October with a short and simple inaugural session. It was addressed by Mr. Keith Howman, now WPA President Emeritus, Dr. GR Potts, WPA Chairman, Prof. Zheng Guang-Mei, newly elected WPA President, Ms. Yang Baijin, Secretary General, China Wildlife Conservation Association (China's biggest NGO in this field) and Mr. Dai Baiyang, Deputy Director, Forestry Deptt of Sichuan Province. Interestingly, the last-named was the only Chinese government official who participated in the Opening Session of the Symposium.

The first technical session started by an introduction by the Chairman of the Scientific Programme Committee, Dr. Stephen Browne. Thereafter, the WPA Director, Dr. Philip McGowan, gave a presentation on 'Conserving Asia's Galliformes: Progress and Challenges' and Dr. Zhang Zhengwang spoke on research and conservation of China's Galliformes. The rest of the day was devoted to presentations by the Chinese researchers on various ongoing studies in the country.

The forenoon of the second day started with an important presentation by Dr. John Carroll on WPA's approach to conserving Galliformes. Thereafter, some long term WPA studies were presented, including one by Malika Viridi on the ongoing WPA-India project in Pithoragarh District of Uttarakhand. Then followed parallel sessions on 'Conservation Breeding' and 'Species Ecology'. In the first part, the three participants from Himachal Pradesh gave separate presentations on the work being done in their State and the recent success with the breeding of the Western Tragopan was specially highlighted. This evoked considerable interest and it was recognised as an outstanding achievement.

The afternoon session on 'Country & Regional Reviews' was chaired by the President, WPA-India. The next session was on 'Galliformes Reintroduction', in which the new guidelines on the subject were briefly explained. This was followed by poster presentations, which included one on 'Unusual Nesting Behaviour of the Indian Peafowl' by the President, WPA-India. This also evoked considerable interest and was generally appreciated.

The third and last day of the Symposium at Chengdu had sessions on 'Conservation Research and Strategy', 'Abundance, Distribution and Habitat Use' and 'Genetic & Phylogenetic Studies'. Presentations were made by K. Ramesh on 'Landscape Analysis of Habitat and Occurrence Probability of the Western Tragopan in Uttarakhand' and by M. Fernandes and Mukesh on 'Conservation of the Red Junglefowl in India'. These were also well received. The afternoon was devoted to several poster presentations, which included one by

T. Bhattacharya on 'Responses of Galliformes to Anthropogenic Pressures in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, Uttarakhand'.

The Closing Session was addressed by the Rt Hon Elliot Morley, MP (UK), who was earlier the UK Environment Minister for about ten years and currently the Prime Minister's Special Representative to the GB Gleneagles Dialogue. He is also the President of GLOBE (Global Legislators Organization) and an avid birdwatcher. He spoke on the theme 'The Politics of Biodiversity'. In the summing up of the Symposium by Simon Dowell, special mention was made of the presentations made from India by Malika Virdi and K. Ramesh and the poster presentation given by T. Bhattacharya.

On 18 October, most of the delegates were taken by coaches to Wolong, about four hours drive out of Chengdu. Wolong is called the Hometown of the Giant Panda and is perhaps the most prestigious National Nature Reserve in China as well as a World Heritage Site. After reaching there, the delegates were taken in batches to the Panda Museum and the Panda Garden, which has the Panda Conservation & Research Centre and holds about 50 captive Giant Pandas. It is the most important such centre in China and also in the world.

On the following two days, i.e. 19 & 20 October, workshops were held on 'Landscape Ecology' and 'Occupancy Modelling' for selected participants. The first workshop was conducted by Qamar Qureshi and K. Ramesh from India. The other delegates were taken to the Panda Valley and other places for birdwatching. Wild Pandas were not sighted, mainly because tracing them involves considerable effort and climbing in that difficult and heavily forested terrain. The other main attractions of the reserve are the Red Panda, the Golden Monkey and the Golden Pheasants. A few Golden Pheasants were seen by a couple of delegates.

On 21 October the Symposium ended and all the delegates were brought back to Chengdu either for returning home or for proceeding to the post-symposium tours arranged by the organisers.

Overall, the Symposium was well organised and very successful. The noteworthy features are briefly given below:

- (1) Considering the number of participants (around 200) and the countries (about 25) they represented, it was the largest such gathering organised by the WPA so far.
- (2) The smooth and orderly conduct of all the events was very creditable and indicated the meticulous planning done by the organisers, especially by the Chinese.
- (3) The Chinese participation was indeed impressive. Apart from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the China Ornithological Society, about 15 Universities and other academic institutions from different parts of China were represented and a number of young Chinese researchers gave papers and presentations. It was clearly evident that work on *Galliformes* is receiving considerable attention in the country and that the WPA-China is getting widespread support.
- (4) In all this, the role of Prof. Zheng Guang-Mei, President, China Ornithological Society, and Chairman, WPA China, is significant; he is widely respected and has been himself working on *Galliformes* for several years. His recent appointment as the WPA President is an added achievement for China and will surely provide further impetus in this field within the country.
- (5) The Indian participation at the Symposium was perhaps the best ever in such an event overseas. Apart from conducting a workshop, each Indian delegate made a contribution and this was generally appreciated. Copies of the WPA-India Annual Report for 2006-07 the latest issue of the newsletter titled *Mor* were circulated to all the delegates at the Symposium.
- (6) The other South Asian countries that participated in the Symposium were Nepal and Pakistan. This

provided an opportunity to interact with their delegates and also to discuss about further action regarding the South Asia Strategy on Galliformes Conservation, which was formulated unanimously by six South Asian countries during the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Galliformes Symposium held in India in April 2004. It was agreed to explore the possibility of organising a workshop sometime in 2008 to take forward the initiative, for which the support of the WPA Hqts and the SAARC Secretariat would be sought.

- (7) During the Symposium, the President, WPA-India, held separate discussions with the WPA President, WPA Chairman and WPA Director regarding the working of WPA-India and requested for some core support from the WPA Hqts for a couple of years. It was agreed that a proposal for this purpose would be sent by WPA-India for the consideration of the WPA Council.
- (8) The President, WPA-India, also discussed with the WPA Chairman, Dr. GR Potts, and the Chairman, PQF Specialist Group, Dr. John P. Carroll, about the ongoing investigation regarding the Manipur Bush Quail, for which a modest sum (UKP 500) had been received from the WPA Hqts earlier this year. It was agreed to send a further proposal for more support to the Chairman, PQF Specialist Group, for necessary action.

### **Presentations from India at the Symposium**

Tragopans, Dilemmas and other Horned Creatures: Why should Communities Care? - Malika Viridi

Conservation Breeding of Cheer Pheasant at Chail Pheasantry in HP - Sat Pal Dhiman

Conservation Breeding of Western Tragopan at Sarahan Pheasantry in HP - Alam Singh Chauhan

Conservation Breeding Strategy for Western Himalayan Pheasants in Himachal Pradesh - Lalit Mohan

Unusual Nesting Behaviour of the Indian Peafowl - Samar Singh

Landscape analysis of habitat and occurrence probability of Western Tragopan - K. Ramesh

Conservation of Red Junglefowl in India - M. Fernandes

Responses of Galliformes to anthropogenic pressures in Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, Uttarakhand - Bhattacharya T.

Shri Samar Singh chaired a Technical Session on Country & Regional Overviews. Dr. Qamar Qureshi and Dr. K. Ramesh conducted the Landscape Ecology Workshop at Wolong.

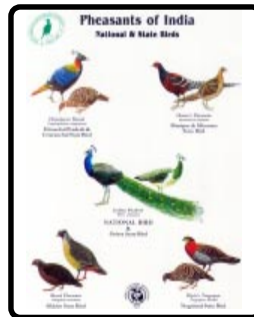
### **Roster of Scientists**

Dr. Rahul Kaul	Dr. Asad Rahmani	Dr. A.J. Urfi	Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhury
Dr. B.C. Choudhury	Dr. S. Sathyakumar	Dr. K. Ramesh	Dr. Qamar Qureshi
Dr. Rajiv Kalsi	Dr. Nita Shah	Dr. M. Shah Hussain	Dr. Jamal A. Khan
Dr. H.S.A Yahya	Dr. M.S. Bisht	Dr. M.C. Sathyanarayana	Dr. Parikshit Gautam
Dr. A.K. Malhotra	Dr. Lalit Mohan	Shri Sanjeeva Pandey	Dr. K. Sivakumar
	Shri Pratap Singh	Shri Heerak Nandy	

## Resource Material - available on request

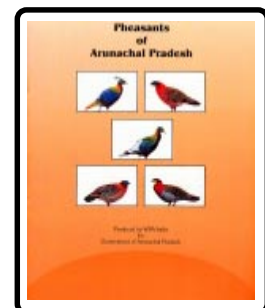
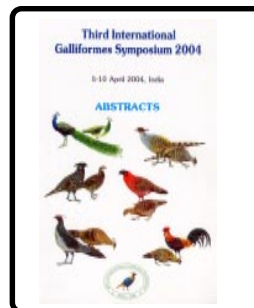
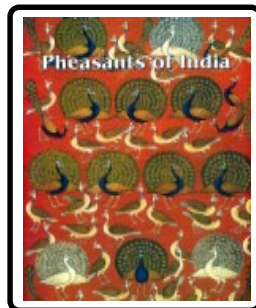
### Posters

- Pheasants of India
- Pheasants of Arunachal Pradesh
- Pheasants of Himachal Pradesh
- Pheasants of Uttaranchal
- Pheasants of Assam
- Pheasants of J&K
- Pheasants of Sikkim
- Pheasants of Nagaland
- Pheasants of West Bengal
- National and State Birds
- Save the National Bird
- Himalayan Monal



### Booklets

- Pheasants of India
- Pheasants of Arunachal Pradesh
- Third International Galliformes Symposium 2004
- Symposium Abstracts
- Pheasants of Himachal Pradesh



*Mor is the biannual newsletter of WPA-India for private circulation.  
Contributions to MOR may be sent to WPA-India.*

**11<sup>th</sup> Annual Birding Fair at Mansagar lake, Jaipur (Rajasthan) being organised by the Tourism Wildlife Society of India (TWSI) on 8-9 February 2008.**

**Collaboration with WPA-India, INTACH and others.**

**Event is dedicated to the Indian Peafowl, the National Bird.**

**TRAFFIC-India undertaking a short term assessment of the trade in peafowl feathers invites inputs from all concerned.**

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