

Mor

Newsletter of World Pheasant Association - India



Editorial

Greetings to all for a very happy and productive year !!

2009 has commenced with a very positive note for the *Galliformes* and WPA -India.

The major highlights of 2008 are: **Memorandum of Understanding** renewed between Wildlife Institute of India and WPA-India; Technical Committee set up for WPA-India; the most awaited ENVIS publication *Galliformes of India*, a collaborative effort between Wildlife Institute of India and WPA-India, was released by the Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests. Peafowl Reserves were declared in the states of Kerala, Orissa, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Karnataka. WPA-India further established new partnerships with WWF-India and INTACH. The rapid assessment of peafowl in Rajasthan through people's participation has been an innovative initiative. The Annual Birding Fair in Jaipur was well attended and was inaugurated by the Mr. Peter G. Kaestner, Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs and Consul General at the US Embassy.

This year the New Delhi Municipal Council has taken a positive interest in the unusual nesting of peafowl in the IIC Annexe adjoining the Lodhi Garden which is being observed since last 6 years. Peafowl studies in the parks of New Delhi and the President's Estate have commenced, which has been supported by Delhi Government. The Annual Report of WPA-India included in this issue provides further details.

Looking forward to more conservation actions from all our members and readers.

Dr. Nita Shah
Hon. Gen. Secretary



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**Release of *Galliformes of India*
by Shri Vijai Sharma, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India,
at a function organised jointly by WPA-India, Wildlife Institute of India and INTACH
at INTACH Head Office - 71, Lodi Estate, New Delhi - on 26 September 2008**



Speaking on the occasion, the Secretary, MoEF, appreciated the collaborative efforts of WPA-India and the WII and expressed happiness about the ENVIS publication, the first such on Indian birds. He also assured the support of the MoEF for the conservation of Galliformes in the country.

FOREWORD

by Keith Howman, President, World Pheasant Association, UK

When I looked at the contents of this volume I felt very humble indeed. Humble because so many of the authors I know have had considerable education leading to degrees, MScs and PhDs and I did not attend university. And humble because when I started WPA with a small group of friends more than 30 years ago, I could only have dreamt that it would lead to the research and interest in India's Galliformes that is so evident on every page. Working together in a common cause, we have shown how much can be done with dedication and some careful planning.

It is clear that the publication could not have been written when WPA started. We simply did not have the knowledge in those days and the people who were trained and prepared to suffer hardships so that they could gather information on a Cheer pheasant or a Blyth's Tragopan were in very short supply, if not non-existent. Since then, many highly dedicated young researchers have spent months toiling away in Himalayan forests, terai grasslands and in other often remote habitats finding out about these spectacular birds. Furthermore, at the start of the 1980s, the Government of India's ENVIS programme did not exist and nor did the Wildlife Institute of India! It is a great joy to me that all three of us have come together in this landmark publication that can be seen as really taking stock of how far we have come and what the future needs are.

Working in collaboration has been the key to so much of the progress that is described in these pages and the critical ingredient that gives me hope that we can address some of the big issues facing India's Galliformes. There is certainly much to do, but with the talent to meet these challenges increasingly available in India and the willingness of organisations such as WPA and WII to work together, I have great hope that this volume will galvanise another big step towards long lasting conservation.

"Galliformes of India" - ENVIS Publication by Wildlife Institute of India

(Vol. 10 No. 1 2007)

- Introduction by Editors - Dr. S. Sathyakumar & Dr. K. Sivakumar

Galliformes, commonly referred to as 'gallinaceous birds' or 'game birds', is a large and diverse group of birds in the world that comprises of 70 genera and 284 species (Keane *et al.* 2005). Howard and Moore's Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World (2003) Lists Megapodiidae (scrub fowl, brush-turkeys, mallee fowl), Cracidae (guans, chachalacas, curassows), Numididae (Guineafowl), Odontophoridae (New World quails) and Phasianidae (grouse, turkeys, pheasants and partridges) under the Order Galliformes. These birds are well recognised for their ecological, socio-cultural, aesthetic and economic values, and have become an integral part of the people and their culture.

In India, 45 species of Galliformes have been reported which includes, one megapode, 27 partridges, quail, francolins and snowcocks, and 17 pheasants. Of These, seven species are endemic to India, and the global status of 12 species is categorised as 'threatened'. This is largely due to habitat loss, habitat degradation and poaching.

The megapodes are a unique group of birds as they utilise external sources of heat to incubate their eggs (Jones *et al.* 1995). The family Megapodiidae consists of 22 species in seven genera, most of which are island forms are mainly found in the Indo-Australian region east of Wallace's line (Jones *et al.* 1995). In India, the Nicobar megapode *Megapodius nicobariensis*, occurs in the Nicobar group of islands (Abdulali, 1967; Ali and Ripley, 1983; Grimmet *et al.* 1998; Dekker 1992, Sivakumar 2000). More than 70% of the Nicobar megapode population declined due to tsunami that hit Asia in 2004 (Sivakumar, 2007).

India has a rich diversity of Partridges, Quails, Francolins, and Snowcocks that have centers of distribution in either eastern Asia, or western Asia and Africa, which is a consequence of the unique location of India at the crossroads of Asia (John Carroll, *in this issue*). Of that 27 species found here the Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* is migratory. Two genera contain the largest number of species in India, *Arborophila*, or the hill-partridges, and *Francolinus*, the francolins. The Himalayan Quail *Ophrysia superciliosa*, is presently assessed as 'Critically Endangered' (IUCN), which has been officially reported since the 1890s, but unconfirmed reports of its sightings, have kept it from being declared 'officially extinct'.

The most charismatic and popular of galliformes are the pheasants, the Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*, the National Bird of India, and many Himalayan Pheasants that are 'State Birds' illustrates this fact. Of the 17 pheasants in India, 16 species occur in the Himalaya, except for the endemic Grey Junglefowl *Gallus gallus sonneratii* that is confined to the Peninsular India. The Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* being the wild ancestor of all the domestic chicken in the world, has received much attention being one of the most important birds to mankind. Of the 12 species that are listed as 'threatened' in India, five are pheasants.

The highest diversity of Galliformes is seen in the Himalayan Biogeographic Zones, while the Andaman & Nicobar islands have only two resident species (Blue-breasted Quail in Nicobars and the Nicobar megapode). Biogeographically, a larger number of Galliformes genera that are found in India have Oriental in affinities, with some showing Indo-Chinese links and others Indo-Malayan origins (Jayapal *et al.* *this issue*). However, species exclusive to the Trans-Himalaya are distinctly Palearctic in nature. One genus (*Francolinus*) is of African origin. There are seven endemic and eight restricted-range species within Indian limits.

Though the Protected Area (PA) network of India affords protection to many galliformes species and their habitats, substantial populations still occur outside the PA network. Habitats and populations both inside and outside PAs are facing serious threats in the form of habitat degradation and poaching. In this issue, we have attempted to compile available information on the status, distribution and conservation of galliformes of India.

The publication is divided into eight sections in order to cover various facets of galliformes conservation in India. Section I gives species accounts of the 45 species that are present in our country. The three chapters in this section gives brief account of the species in a 'field guide' format which we believe, should be useful for all user groups. Section II deals with species of global and national significance and this includes Indian Peafowl, Red Junglefowl, Tragopans and the Himalayan Quail. The galliformes distribution in the selected biogeographic zones and PA network of India is presented in Section III. The status reports and the management of galliformes in the Himalayan range states, northeast states and Andaman and Nicobar Islands are presented in Section IV. The paper and articles dealing with conservation issues and management has been presented in Section V. This includes management issues and actions dealing with habitat loss, habitat degradation, poaching and the role of local communities in conservation. Under Section VI, we have presented the techniques that deals with monitoring of galliformes, identification of galliformes species from feather and live-trapping of galliformes. The view of international community on the conservation of galliformes in India has been placed under Section VII.



Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been renewed between WPA-India and the Wildlife Institute of India for a further period of three years to:

- * facilitate greater interactions and consultations between the two organizations and their personnel for mutual benefit; and
- * undertake joint initiatives, wherever possible, for research, studies and training aimed at promoting the conservation of Galliformes and associated objectives.

Technical Group established in WPA-India Annual General Body Meeting held on 26 September 2008 consisting of Dr. Nita Shah, Dr. Rahul Kaul, Dr. S. Sathyakumar, Dr. Parikshit Gautam and Col. Gautam Das, with Dr. Nita Shah acting as the Convener.

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Annual Report 2007-08

The most important event of the year was 4th International Galliformes Symposium held at Chengdu and Wolong in the Sichuan Province of China from 14 to 21 October 2007. WPA-India was represented on the occasion by the President, Shri Samar Singh. Nine other Indians also participated actively and the Indian participation at the symposium was generally appreciated. A fuller report on the event is attached.

General Body & Governing Board: The Annual General Body Meeting of WPA-India was held on 29 September 2007. Apart from considering and adopting the Annual Report and the Annual Accounts for 2006-07, a Roster of Scientists was approved in the meeting. The Governing Board met three times during the year – 28 April 2007, 29 September 2007 and 14 March 2008. In the meeting held on 14 March 2008, the Governing Board appointed Dr. Nita Shah as Hon. Addl. General Secretary of WPA-India in view of the difficulty expressed by Dr. A.J. Urfi, Hon. General Secretary, to carry out his duties.

Membership & Newsletter: There has been a slight increase in the enrolment of new members and, at the end of the year, the position is as follows: Life Members (41), Institutional Members (6) and Annual Members (45). The new member in the institutional category is WWF-India, which is now also represented on the Governing Board.

The six monthly newsletter called **Mor** has been brought out regularly. The main theme of July 2007 issue was the National Bird and the focus of January 2008 issue was the Annual Review for 2006-07 and 4th International Galliformes Symposium held in China.

Partnerships & Networking: Collaboration with other partner institutions, such as the Bombay History Natural Society, Centre for Environment Education, Central Zoo Authority, National Zoological Park and others was continued and further strengthened during the year. During the year, new partnerships were established with WWF-India and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH).

In addition, efforts were continued to collaborate 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. The collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, has been continued and has borne fruit in the publication of the ENVIS issue on the Galliformes of India, which is now ready for release. The publication has separate sections dealing with species accounts, galliformes of national and global significance, distribution in the biogeographic zones and protected area network, reports from States, management aspects, research and monitoring techniques, etc. A selected bibliography is also included.

Save the National Bird Campaign: The campaign titled **Save the National Bird** was continued during the year with some gains. First of all, awareness has been aroused to a certain extent in different parts of the country. The cases of peafowl mortality are being reported and getting covered by the media. In this connection, WPA-India has carried out a field study on the effect of pesticide use on Peafowl in some parts of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Another significant development relates to the declaration of peafowl reserves at certain places in States like Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Orissa, Karnataka and Kerala. In Rajasthan, an innovative initiative was taken to make a rapid assessment of the peafowl population through people's participation. In Delhi, the NCT Government approved a field study on the status of the National Bird in selected big parks and another field study for the President's Estate is expected to be approved. Support for the campaign has been received from INTACH and other interested organizations and individuals.

Annual Birding Fair at Jaipur: The 11th Annual Birding Fair was held at Mansagar in Jaipur (Rajasthan) in February 2008. As before, the event was organized by the Tourism and Wildlife Society of India in collaboration

with local authorities and other partners, including the WPA-India. This time INTACH also joined and lent support. WPA-India was represented by the President Shri Samar Singh, Hon. Treasurer Shri Dilawar K. Chetsingh and GB Member Dr. Nita Shah.

This time the event was dedicated to the National Bird, the Indian Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*). This led to a pioneering initiative to undertake a rapid assessment of the peafowl population in Rajasthan with people's participation. Rajasthan Patrika, a leading Hindi daily newspaper, came forward to support the initiative and put out attractive advertisements, along with a simple questionnaire inviting people in general to respond. The response was overwhelming, with over 8000 responses from all the districts in the State. The information received is being collated and analyzed before announcing the results. This is the first such initiative in the country for a species count with people's participation and the same can be replicated at least for the peafowl in other States.

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

Effect of pesticide use on the Blue Peafowl and Grey Francolin in Central India (Funded by Ministry of Environment and Forests) – This was the final year of the project. All field work has been completed and the data and information collected is being analysed for the final technical report. A workshop of stakeholders was organized in Shivpuri district, Madhya Pradesh, in December 2007. Awareness activity has been continued.

Community based conservation of Galliformes in the Gori Basin, Uttarakhand (Funded by Ministry of Environment and Forests) – This was the second year of project implementation in which the focus has been on building human capital through training, exposure trips, outreach in the local and larger conservation community and broad basing the conservation agenda through the building of a network. Thus, during the year the work initiated earlier was taken forward and efforts focussed on building capacity and infrastructure for livelihoods.

Key Areas Project (Funded by WPA International) – Field work has been completed in Uttarakhand leading to considerable information on the distribution of most Galliformes found in the State. Significant observations include good population of Himalayan Monal and Satyr Tragopan as well as reconfirmation about the existence of the Western Tragopan. The information and data collected is being analysed and GIS based analysis would also be undertaken to identify crucial areas for long term conservation measures, including the possibility of establishing community reserves.

Survey of Manipur Bush-Quail in Assam (Funded by WPA International) – Surveys were done during the year in Manas National Park and the immediate buffer area. But, these did not lead to any fresh sighting of the Manipur Bush Quail. Since the modest funds received from WPA have been utilized, this part of the project has ended. A new proposal is, however, being prepared for submission to the Ministry of Environment and Forests so that further work could be done during the winter of 2008-09.

Field Study of Indian Peafowl in selected parks of Delhi (Funded by Delhi Government) – This new project has been sanctioned at the end of the reporting year by the Delhi Government and field work has just started. Another project of similar nature on the National Bird in the President's Estate in New Delhi is expected to be approved soon.

The following project proposals, prepared and submitted to the HP Government, the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) are pending for approval:-

- Himachal Pradesh Pheasant Conservation Project.
- Study on the Status, Distribution & related Conservation aspects of the Pheasants of Sikkim and Western Arunachal Districts (East Kameng, West Kameng & Tawang)
- Promote conservation of Kanchenjunga-Singalila Landscape by developing a monitoring mechanism through establishing status, distribution and related conservation aspects of the Pheasants

A new project on Climate Change impacts on the Pheasants in the Western Himalaya is being prepared in collaboration with the Institute of Global Warming and Ecological Studies, Amity University.

Galliformes of India and their Conservation Status

No.	COMMON NAME	Scientific Name	POPULATION	IUCN	WPA *
1	Nicobar Megapode	<i>Megapodius nicobariensis</i>	fairly common	vulnerable	I
2	Snow Partridge	<i>Lerwa lerwa</i>	fairly common	others	IV
3	Tibetan Snowcock	<i>Tetraogallus tibetanus</i>	uncommon	others	I
4	Himalayan Snowcock	<i>Tetraogallus himalayensis</i>	fairly common	others	IV
5	Buff-throated Partridge	<i>Tetraophasis szechenyii</i>	rare	others	IV
6	Chukar	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	fairly common	others	IV
7	Black Francolin	<i>Francolinus francolinus</i>	common	others	IV
8	Painted Francolin	<i>Francolinus pictus</i>	fairly common	others	IV
9	Chinese Francolin	<i>Francolinus pintadeanus</i>	rare	others	IV
10	Grey Francolin	<i>Francolinus pondicerianus</i>	common	others	IV
11	Swamp Francolin	<i>Francolinus gularis</i>	fairly common	vulnerable	IV
12	Tibetan Partridge	<i>Perdix hodgsoniae</i>	fairly common	others	IV
13	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	fairly common	others	IV
14	Japanese Quail	<i>Coturnix japonica</i>	fair	others	IV
15	Rain Quail	<i>Coturnix coromandelica</i>	fairly common	others	IV
16	Blue-breasted Quail	<i>Coturnix chinensis</i>	uncommon	others	IV
17	Jungle Bush quail	<i>Perdicula asiatica</i>	fairly common	others	IV
18	Rock Bush Quail	<i>Perdicula argoondah</i>	fairly common	others	IV
19	Painted Bush Quail	<i>Perdicula erythrorhyncha</i>	fairly common	others	IV
20	Manipur Bush quail	<i>Perdicula manipurensis</i>	rare	vulnerable	IV
21	Hill Partridge	<i>Arborophila torqueola</i>	fairly common	others	IV
22	Rufous-throated Partridge	<i>Arborophila rufogularis</i>	fairly common	others	IV
23	White-cheeked Hill Partridge	<i>Arborophila atrogularis</i>	fairly common	NT	IV
24	Chestnut-breasted Hill Partridge	<i>Arborophila mandellii</i>	uncommon	vulnerable	IV
25	Mountain Bamboo Partridge	<i>Bambusicola fytchii</i>	uncommon	others	I
26	Red Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>	fairly common	others	IV
27	Painted Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix lunulata</i>	fairly common	others	IV
28	Himalayan Quail	<i>Ophrysia superciliosa</i>	Extinct?	CR	I
29	Blood Pheasant	<i>Ithaginis cruentus</i>	fairly common	others	I
30	Western Tragopan	<i>Tragopan melanocephala</i>	rare	vulnerable	I
31	Satyr Tragopan	<i>Tragopan satyra</i>	rare	NT	I
32	Blyth's Tragopan	<i>Tragopan blythii</i>	rare	vulnerable	I
33	Temminck's Tragopan	<i>Tragopan temminckii</i>	rare	others	I
34	Koklass Pheasant	<i>Pucrasia macrolopha</i>	fairly common	others	IV
35	Himalayan Monal	<i>Lophophorus impejanus</i>	fairly common	others	I
36	Sclater's Monal	<i>Lophophorus sclateri</i>	rare	vulnerable	I
37	Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	common	others	IV
38	Grey Junglefowl	<i>Gallus sonneratii</i>	common	others	II
39	Kalij Pheasant	<i>Lophura leucomelanos</i>	common	others	I
40	Tibetan Eared Pheasant	<i>Crossoptilon harmani</i>	rare	NT	I
41	Cheer Pheasant	<i>Catreus wallichii</i>	uncommon	vulnerable	I
42	Mrs. Hume's Pheasant	<i>Syrnaticus humiae</i>	rare	vulnerable	I
43	Grey Peacock Pheasant	<i>Polyplectron bicalcaratum</i>	fairly common	others	I
44	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	common	others	I
45	Green Peafowl	<i>Pavo muticus</i>	rare	vulnerable	IV

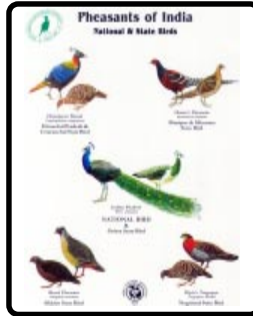
CR = Critically Endangered; NT = Near Threatened

* Schedule under Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972

Resource Material - available on request

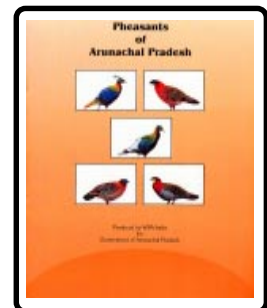
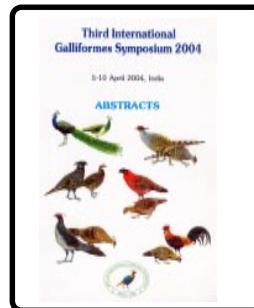
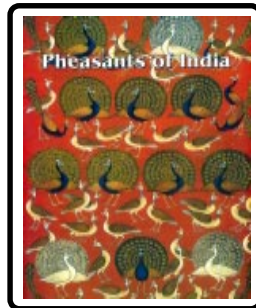
Posters

- 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
- Symposium Abstracts
- Pheasants of Himachal Pradesh



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Saving the national bird

NDMC constructs enclosures at Lodhi Garden to keep animals at bay

Nivedita Khandekar
New Delhi, December 27, 2008



JASJEET PLANA/NT

Unusual Nesting Behaviour

Peafowl are ground-dwelling birds and usually nest on the ground. However, for the past five years or so, some birds have been nesting in certain window ledges of the India International Centre Annexe building, adjacent to the Lodi Garden in New Delhi. In 2008, such nesting took place three times and one peahen named *Mayuri* managed to successfully incubate twice. The above picture is of *Mayuri* and one of her chicks.

THE CITY'S green lung, Lodhi Garden, now has a shade of blue — peacock blue to be precise.

The Horticulture Department of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has come forward to protect the national bird — the Indian Blue Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*) at Lodhi Garden. They have built a netted enclosure in the garden behind the restaurant near gate number 1, taking efforts to make it as close to a natural habitat as possible.

Although many peacocks are found in neighbouring areas, specially the India International Centre (IIC) and Mausam Bhawan, till last year there was no peafowl nesting in Lodhi Garden for lack of safety. "Peafowl chicks are vulnerable. Cats, dogs or even mongoose can generally destroy them. It is necessary to give them protection in the initial stage," said Samar Singh, president of World Pheasant Association - India Chapter.

It was Singh who suggested the

NDMC to build the enclosure for protection of the peafowl. A couple of chicks were reared in the enclosure for three months before being released on August 31. Again, a watch was kept on an identified peahen (with a ring inserted on leg), which kept the eggs for hatching on a bush on a balcony of IIC. "No sooner than the chicks were born, they were driven to the enclosure, with mother in tow. The peahen and the two chicks — almost two month old now — are in the enclosure since then," NDMC officials said.

The staff at the garden feeds them with bajra, wheat or corn

dalia and even boiled eggs. They also have taken care to put a Hessian cloth cover with an electric bulb to provide warmth to the birds. "But the mother takes the chicks up the tree where we have put dry grass," said a caretaker.

Of the two reared and released in August, one still roams the garden. Giving him company is another peacock, an injured one, which was left at the garden by someone. The staff is now eager to have the latest entrants to the Indian peafowl family roam without fear in the sylvan surroundings of the garden.

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