

# Mor

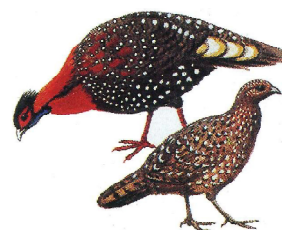
*Newsletter of World Pheasant Association - India*



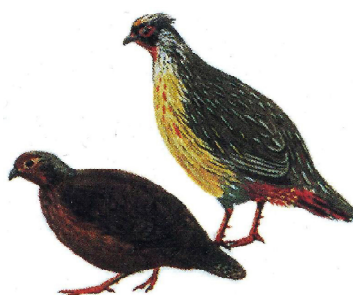
**Indian Peafowl**  
*Pavo cristatus*  
**National Bird**  
&  
Odisha State Bird



**Himalayan Monal**  
*Lophophorus impejanus*  
Uttarakhand State Bird



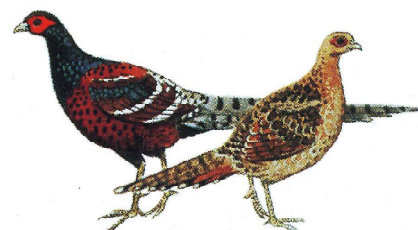
**Western Tragopan**  
*Tragopan melanocephalus*  
Himachal Pradesh State Bird



**Blood Pheasant**  
*Ithaginis cruentus*  
Sikkim State Bird



**Blyth's Tragopan**  
*Tragopan blythii*  
Nagaland State Bird



**Hume's Pheasant**  
*Syrmaticus humiae*  
Manipur and Mizoram  
State Bird

***Pheasants as  
National & State Birds***

*Mor is the newsletter of WPA-India for private circulation. Its publication is being supported by the Duleep Matthai Nature Conservation Trust.*

## *Editorial*

*Dear Readers,*

*A great news has been announced by the office of Prime Minister of India that now India is one of the biggest and most secure habitats of tiger. It is a fresh air in the era of climate change where whole world is talking about the consequences of it. After a long spell of drought in some states now we are facing floods in our country, especially in Assam which has put the life of wild animals mainly terrestrial in danger as about 80% of the Kaziranga National Park is underwater. Pheasants suffer a lot as they are ground nesters and couldn't escape so efficiently in disaster. Salute to the forest officials and other NGOs who are working tirelessly to save animals in Kaziranga.*

*Rooster- an adult male chicken, but why it is so famous in France and what it is so special about it? An interesting account given by author about rooster, its history of distribution in the world and how it is associated with Red Jungle fowl. I am very glad to see the consolidation and the diversity of articles in this issue, and in future issues we will cover other topics of interest for pheasant protection. This issue includes other articles on peacock where they described the Darwin's theory of best man win in peacock by Ranjit lal, in another article the researchers quantify damage caused by Peafowl to farmers in Kerala. Another North East state, Manipur has started an initiative to conserve Mrs. Hume's Pheasant in collaboration with villagers.*

*If you have something interesting to contribute, I would like to invite you and please don't hesitate to contact WPA-India for any suggestions also.*

*An appeal from the WPA-India- it's monsoon time, go for plantation of native trees, Save habitat, Save earth. Many thanks!*

*Dr. M. Shah Hussain, Hon. General Secretary*



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## **Manipur initiative to conserve state bird Mrs Hume's Pheasant**

The Manipur Forest Department in collaboration with the villagers has taken up a new initiative to conserve the state bird Mrs Hume's Pheasant, locally known as 'Nongin' in Manipur's Ukhrul district.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Kereilhouvi Angami on Tuesday formally laid the foundation stone of the 'Conservation Breeding Centre of the State Bird – Nongin' at Shirui village, about 100 km north east of Imphal the state capital. The Headman of Shirui village, local pastor, Chief Conservator of Forest of Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), H Brajamani Sharma, Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife), Anurag Bajpai, Chief Conservator of Forest (Administration and Planning), SoreiphyVashum, Divisional Forest Officer (Ukhrul), Shanngam, Assistant Conservator of Forest (Wildlife), W Romabai, members of Shirui Students' body also attended the event.

According to Divisional Forest Officer (Wildlife), Arun RS, the idea behind the move to establish a breeding centre in the forest area of Shirui with the support of the villagers is to conserve the state bird and its habitat considering the report of reduction in its global population. The officer also informed that the state bird is one of the difficult-to-breed species. Necessary steps are on for the development of around four enclosures in the proposed conservation breeding centre and the Department is hopeful that the villagers can take the benefit of eco-tourism in view of the annual Shirui Lily festival, to be held in Ukhrul district from April 24-28.

The breeding season of this state bird is between February to July and it is reported from many parts of Ukhrul district, which borders with Nagaland's Phek district and Myanmar's Saigang division.

The state coordinator of Indian Bird Conservation Network, Manipur, RK Birjit, said that Nongin is widely found in Ukhrul district. But surprisingly so far there is no official census of the state bird.

The bird spotted mostly in Jessami area and other villages including the deep forest areas of Shirui. Even though Nongin is a state bird, the visibility of the bird is very rare in the valley as it confines itself to its habited sites in hills.

Mention may be made that two gentlemen, GA Shimray and M Vaca of Shirui village, have donated six hectares of land for this noble cause.

Currently there is only a pair of Nongin in the state zoological garden at Iroishemba near Imphal.

*Source: Sobhapati Samom, NorthEast Now, IMPHAL , April 5, 2018.*

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## ***Is a rooster's morning call legal? France to decide***

*ROCHEFORT: A Franch court is set to rule this week on whether an early-rising cockerel should be considered a neighbourly nuisance in a case that has led to crowds of protest in the countryside. A woman from the picturesque island of Oleron off France's western coast has been summoned to court on Thursday after a legal complaint by her neighbours who are troubled by the early crowing of her rooster during their holidays. The case has attracted attention because the cockerel is an emblem of France, while the plaintiffs have been portrayed as pushy urbanites who keep their property in Saint-Pierre-d'Oleron as a second home.*

*"They come twice a year to the island," the owner of the cockerel, Corinne Fesseau, told the local France 3 channel. "I've been here for 35 years." Such tensions are nothing new in France, where thousands of wealthy families own second homes in the countryside, but the case has become a cause celebre that reflects fears that the traditional rural way of life is under threat.*

*"Today it's the cockerel, but what will it be tomorrow? Seagulls? The noise of the wind? Our accents?" asked Christophe Sueur, the mayor of Saint-Pierre-d'Oleron. The case led a mayor in the village of Gajac to pen an open letter last month which defended the rights of church bells to ring, cows to moo, and donkeys to bray throughout rural France. The reference to church bells was to a 2018 battle in a village where the owners of a holiday home complained that the daily tolling at 7 am was too early.*

*Source: The Times of India, 5 June 2019*

## ***The Rooster Must Be Defended': France's Culture Clash Reaches a coop***

*SAINT-PIERRE-D'OLÉRON, France — The rooster was annoyed and off his game. He shuffled, clucked and puffed out his russet plumage. But he didn't crow. Not in front of all these strangers. "You see, he's very stressed out," said his owner, Corinne Fesseau. "I'm stressed, so he's stressed out. He's not even singing any more." She picked up Maurice the rooster and hugged him. "He's just a baby," she said. Maurice has become the most famous chicken in France, but as always in a country where hidden significance is never far from the surface, he is much more than just a chicken. He has become a symbol of a perennial French conflict — between those for whom France's countryside is merely a backdrop for pleasant vacations, and the people who actually inhabit it. Maurice and his owner are being sued by a couple of neighbors. They are summer vacationers who, like thousands of others, come for a few weeks a year to Saint-Pierre-d'Oléron, the main town on an island off France's western coast full of marshes and "simple villages all whitewashed like Arab villages, dazzling and tidy," as the novelist Pierre Loti wrote in the 1880s.*

*These neighbors, a retired couple from near the central French city of Limoges, say the rooster makes too much noise and wakes them up. They want a judge to remove him. But for tens of thousands across France who have signed a petition in the rooster's favor, and for a host of small-town French mayors, Maurice has become a national cause. The crowing Gallic coq, an eternal symbol of France, must be protected, they say. The rooster has a right to crow, the countryside has a right to its sounds and outsiders have no business dictating their customs to its rural denizens. The controversy taps into France's still unbroken connection to its agricultural past, its self-image as a place that exalts farm life and the perceived values of a simpler existence. A parliamentary representative from the rural district of Lozère recently told French news media that he wants rural sounds to be officially classified and protected as "national heritage."*

*Source: The Indian Express, 25 June 2019*

## Gallic Rooster

The news items on prepage raise a pertinent question: what is so special about the rooster in France?

The explanation is that the cock or rooster has played a role in the symbolism and folklore of France for a long time and remains an unofficial national emblem of that country. To the French people, the rooster symbolizes faith, integrity, bravery and a bold defender of the flock.

It is believed that the French connection with the rooster stems from the similarity of the Latin words for 'cock' or 'rooster' (*gallus*) and 'inhabitant of Gaul' (*gallicus*), old France. This play on words was known in Roman times, when the Gauls used roosters to symbolize their loyalty to Gaul.

In the Middle Ages the rooster was widely used as a religious symbol and was freely depicted in French churches. This is also recorded in 14th century German references to France. During the



Renaissance, the association between the rooster and France was promoted by the French monarchy. This was mainly in appreciation of the bird as a strong Christian symbol, based on the legend that Jesus, prior to being arrested, had predicted that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed on the following morning. At the rooster's crowing, Peter remembered the prediction of Jesus. The bird's crowing at dawn each morning made it a symbol of the daily victory of light over darkness and the triumph of good over evil. It also represented the Christian attitude of watchfulness and readiness for the return of Christ. Thus, during the Renaissance, the rooster became a symbol of France as a Catholic state and found a popular place atop weather-vanes, also known as weather-cocks. From the 16th century onwards under both the Valois and Bourbon kings, representations of a cockerel often accompanied the King of France on coins and engravings as a symbol of the king's piety.

The Revolution in 1789 established the rooster as the representation of the French nation's identity. It was featured on coins and on the seal of the Premier Consul. The allegorical figure 'Fraternity' often carried a staff surmounted by a rooster.

However, when Napoleon came to power, he replaced the rooster with the eagle. But, the French Revolution of 1830 rehabilitated the image of the rooster, and the Duke of Orleans signed an order providing that the rooster should appear on the flags and uniform buttons of the National Guard. The seal of the Second Republic shows Liberty holding a tiller adorned with a rooster, but this figure still appeared alongside the symbol of the eagle, which was preferred by Napoleon II, as sign of an enduring empire.

Under the Third Republic, the wrought-iron gates of the Elysée Palace in Paris acquired a rooster and it is still known as the 'Rooster Gate'. The twenty-franc gold piece struck in 1899 also bore a rooster.

During the First World War, surging patriotic sentiment made the Gallic Rooster the symbol of France's resistance and bravery in the face of the German eagle and the rooster became the symbol of a France sprung from peasant origins - proud, opinionated, courageous and prolific.

Today, while the rooster is not an official symbol of the French Republic, it still stands for a certain idea of France. In the collective imagination, the Gallic Rooster symbolizes somehow France and the French people. This is especially noticeable during international sporting events, when the bird proudly acts as the mascot for French teams and has even marched out in opening ceremonies of the Olympics. For over a century, France's national football and rugby teams have proudly worn a shirt or jersey displaying the rooster prominently and French sportsmen and



women have been drawing inspiration from this emblem. Interestingly, when the National Olympic Committee of France withdrew the bird from use in its logo in 1997 it led to a public outrage, with celebrated figures arguing that it was a change that attacked the values of the nation. Following that, for the FIFA World Cup 1998 the mascot for the competition was Footix, a giant cockerel bedecked in the national colours of red, white and blue.

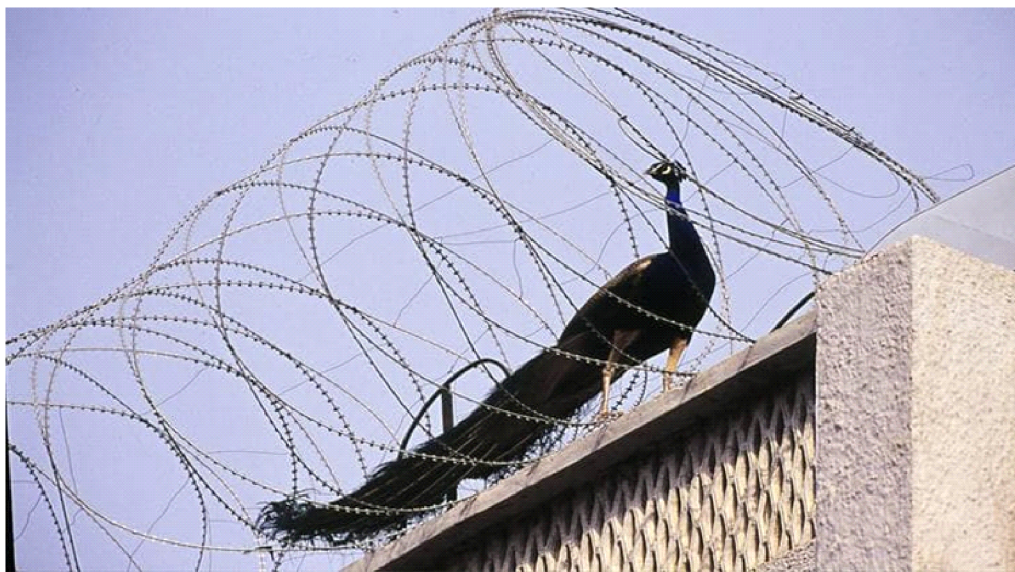


Rooster in national colours of France

This kind of recognition is indeed amazing, especially considering that the species of the rooster has its origins in lands far away from France. It is not so well known that the principal progenitor of all forms of domesticated chicken throughout the world is the Red Junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*), commonly called Jungli murgi, an endemic bird of India and south-east Asia. Most probably, the domestication of the wild junglefowl took place in India about five thousand years ago, around the time of the Indus Valley Civilization. The seals and clay figurines found at Harappa and Mohenjodaro bear testimony to this fact. The Chinese claim that their ancestors domesticated the species earlier. In any case, it is known that around 1500 BC *Gallus gallus* had reached central Europe and it was well established there in domesticated form during the Roman times. Earlier, in ancient Greece the Rooster was considered a solar emblem and taken as a sacred sign. In Egypt also, the bird caught the fancy of the people and received the patronage of the Pharaoh rulers. In due course, its early morning wake-up call came to be regarded as the herald of dawn and liberation from darkness. In some Christian religious art, the crowing cock became a symbol of the resurrection of Christ and the Zoroastrians considered the bird a guardian of good over evil and even forbade the eating of fowl.

by Samar Singh, former President, WPA-India

## Down in Jungleland: May the Best Man Win



Survival of the fittest applies to peacocks too. (Source: Ranjit Lal)

Mother Nature frequently bowls googlies. Natural selection, for instance, weeds out everything that is useless. Only those traits in a living organism are encouraged which help in its survival in a harsh and hostile world.

Why then — you might ask — do peacocks trip about dragging those enormous, basically useless, yet very beautiful, trains behind them? It can be a huge impediment, always a deadweight when you have to fly, and ever ready to snag in branches and thorns, if you had to get away from a tiger or leopard.

It made Charles Darwin frown. But he did hit upon the solution: *Cherchez la femme!* He formulated the theory of sexual selection. There were two aspects to this. One: it was the girls who decided who they liked and wanted to go with. And they had a hell of a lot of investment involved in this: they could give birth usually only once or so in a season, (unlike the guys who could go off philandering) to a limited number of babies, so, they had to ensure that their babies were of top class material. They had to be picky about the dudes they chose and what they liked about them. Some of their choices seemed sensible: for instance, choosing a stag with the biggest, strongest antlers. He was macho, and could take on the best and win. His babies would be strong and virile. But sometimes, the girls' choices seemed absurd and frivolous: like the way they went gaga over the ludicrous — but often so gorgeous — tassels, tails and wattles sported by birds-of-paradise. To say nothing for our own homegrown peacock and its train. These appendages served no purpose at all — from a survival point of view. Even huge antlers could be an impediment — getting caught in branches while its owner fled from predators in the jungle.



Yet, not only did these ornamental gewgaws survive, they got more absurd and outrageous in the passing of evolutionary time. You see, the girls loved them, wanted their babies to have them and only went with the guys which had them.

It also led to competition between the dudes: the guys with the most outrageous headdress, or train, got the chicks. Even if it meant that you would end up being starters for a tiger or leopard or dinner for eagles. And yes, if you could show you had the best, you could make out with an entire harem. And here, natural selection met sexual selection. Only the fittest survived.

As far as the completely useless ornamentation was concerned, well, the dudes knew it brought the chicks flocking to them — so even if they posed a risk to survival — the males went for it. You have to give a girl what she wants, if you want to get what you want. And if you can make out with as many as possible before you become a snack for a carnivore, well, your little babas and babies will pass on the good work (and genes). They do, and the particular ornament gets passed on and embellished rapidly (ending up looking ludicrous sometimes) as the generations pass. As for you — you've done your duty!

Now why would the ladies be so perverse as to find completely useless appendages so attractive? Admittedly, many of these feathers, crests and trains are really gorgeous — so maybe they like them just because they're so beautiful. Most biologists don't agree with this because it implies that birds — and beetles, for that matter — have a sense of aesthetics, which their brains are not capable of developing. Possibly, it's just whimsy.

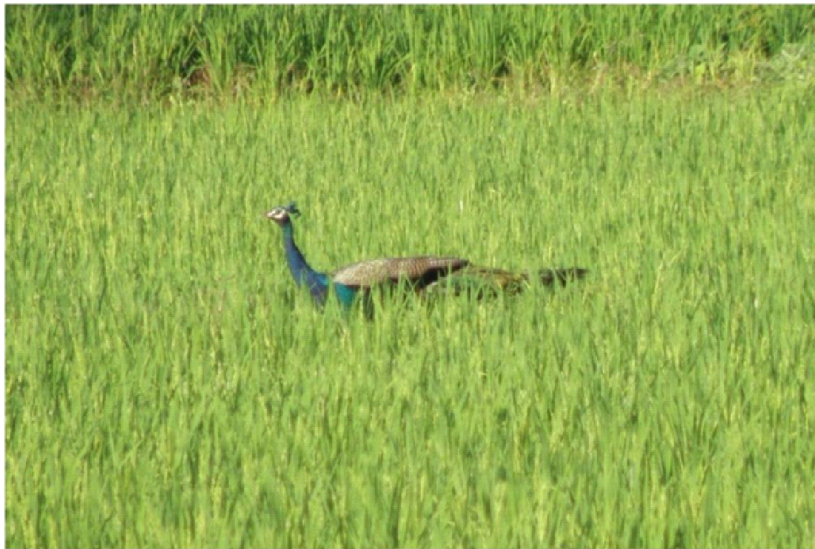
One theory suggests that the girls choose these guys because, in spite of, say, the 6 ft train dragging behind in the case of the peacock, they made it to adulthood and are running after chicks! They've seen it all and have come through despite the impediment. It makes them look fit and taut — like they've spent all their time in the gym (or at the hairdresser's) toning up. It means they have good genes — genes the girls like and want their babies to have. However, there's apparently been no hard evidence that this is the case, so this theory seems to have fallen by the wayside.

The same happens with us. Girls go gaga when confronted by rock stars, beefy wrestlers, boxers, racing drivers or footballers. Guys do their best to emulate those studs — so that they can get the girls, too. Being a boxer or wrestler may improve your survival chances in a fight, but it equally implies that you're more likely to get into a fight in the first place — and get injured or worse — and that has no survival value. But, as any dude will tell you, it's a risk worth taking. Ask the peacock.

*by: Ranjit Lal an author, environmentalist and bird watcher. (Source: The Indian Express, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019).*

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## Researchers quantify damage caused by Peafowl to farmers



India's national bird, the Peafowl, has been a part of mythical stories and is also considered sacred. Over centuries, they have been playing an important role in agricultural ecosystems by aiding seed dispersal, scavenging, and for control of insects and rodents.

However, of late, they are turning out to be a problem. The main issue is that their population is growing. While social customs bar people from causing any harm to them, there has been a decline in the population of their natural predators for various reasons. The bird is also protected under the Indian Wildlife Act.

Farmers are hit hardest as instead of being a help, peafowl are becoming a menace, damaging crops, over-feeding on fruits and grains and trampling on and dislodging seedlings. Consequently, there have even been reports of farmers resorting to poisoning, trapping, hunting and even electrocution in a surreptitious manner to protect their earnings.

A team of researchers from Kerala Forest Research Institute and Christ College in Thrissur in Central Kerala have sought to find out whether it was possible to pay compensation to the farmers affected by the problem like it is done for damages caused by wild animals like elephants.

They conducted the study at Chulannur Peafowl Sanctuary in the state. They did an enclosure experiment in a paddy field to estimate the loss. They selected two sets of plots. One was provided with an enclosure to avoid depredation by peafowl and the other was treated as a control plot. After four years of repeated estimates, the researchers have concluded there can be a difference in the yield of up to 40 per cent on average between the two plots.

The researchers feel that the quantification of actual economic loss could form the basis for the provision of compensation for the farmers. They feel that it can be a win-win situation for all and bringing in the communities into wildlife conservation.

Ex-gratia payment for damage caused by elephants and other wild animals has been a good solution to address the man-animal conflict issues relating to wildlife. It had not been possible for damage caused by peafowl as there was no data to go by so far. Now, the data is available and can be used.

The study was conducted by Suresh K. Govind of Kerala Forest Research Institute and E A Jayson of Christ College. The study has been published in journal 'Indian Birds'. (India ScienceWire)

*Source: Down to Earth, 10 December 2018*

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### **Habitat characteristics dependent population and distribution of Indian Peafowl, *Pavo cristatus* (Galliformes: Phasianidae) in Punjab**

by: Sandaldeep Kaur, Tejdeep Kaur Kler and Mohammad Javed

**ABSTRACT:** The present study was carried out to estimate the habitat characteristics dependent population and distribution of Indian Peafowl of Punjab Agricultural University campus, Ludhiana considered as location 1, Village Baranhara (district Ludhiana) as location 2, village Gharuan (district Ropar) as location 3 and village Rauni (district Patiala) as location 4 from January 2016 to December 2016. A total 1655, 426, 370 and 107 individuals of Indian Peafowl were recorded at location 1, location 2, location 3 and location 4 respectively. The observation showed that female count was higher at location 1 and 3 and lesser at location 2 and 4. Overall population density of Indian Peafowl was 16.29, 9.40, 8.39 and 7.46 (Indian Peafowl/Km) at location 1, location 2, location 3 and location 4 respectively. The observations showed variation in the population of Indian Peafowl at all selected transects which seemed to be dependent on the availability of food items, roosting sites, ground cover for breeding and protection purposes.

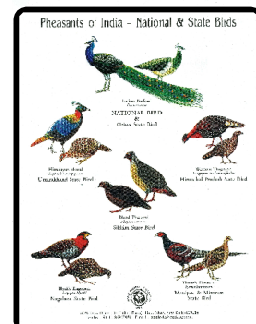
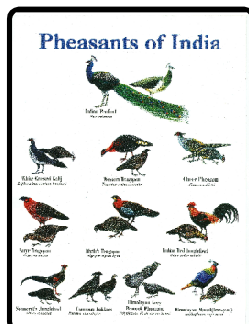
Full article on: <http://www.entomoljournal.com/archives/2018/vol6issue4/PartAF/6-4-317-838.pdf>

*Source: Journal of Entomology and Zoology Studies, 2018, Vol. 6, Issue 4.*

## Resource Material - available on request

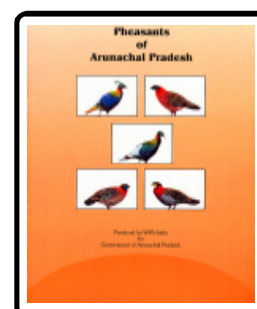
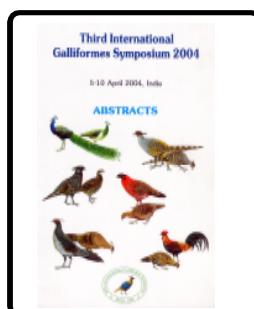
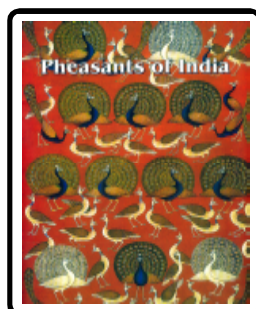
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