

Mor

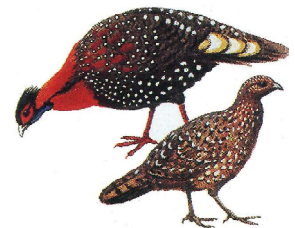
Newsletter of World Pheasant Association - India



Indian Peafowl
Pavo cristatus
National Bird
&
Odisha State Bird



Himalayan Monal
Lophophorus impejanus
Uttarakhand State Bird



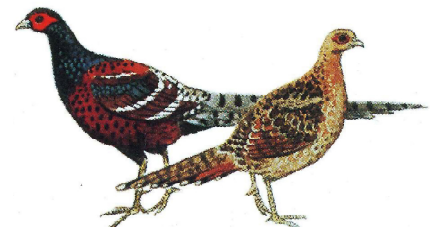
Western Tragopan
Tragopan melanocephalus
Himachal Pradesh State Bird



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,

Just as we were preparing to go into print with this issue of Mor, we received the sad news of the passing of Mr. Duleep Matthai, on the 5th of March 2017. To us at WPA-India it is a double loss, as the Duleep Matthai Nature Conservation Trust (DMNCT) is not just a project sponsor for the publication of MOR, but Duleep himself was a long-time friend and supporter of WPA-India. Unknown to most people, he held pheasants and their conservation as issues close to his heart. In the 1970s and 80s, on many occasions he provided personal assistance, guidance, and even office support to strengthen the work of the then Indian chapter of WPA. On nature conservation issues in general, he made his views, concerns, and restlessness with the bureaucratic system known in no uncertain terms. This issue of Mor carries a more detailed tribute to Duleep Matthai and WPA-India shares his loss with all his near and dear ones.

Another project under DMNCT sponsorship that is making good progress is the “Long Term Conservation of Pheasants in Western Arunachal Pradesh”, and we cover the latest activities here. The field surveys have led to a better understanding of ground issues, and WPA-India recently collaborated in the holding of a training event for homestay hospitality and conservation tourism in the region.

Other articles covered in this issue include one on the importance of parabiology training to aid the protection of biodiversity, a piece on the pheasant descriptions in treatises of Babur and Jahangir, and some notes and news about the Himalayan Monal.

Hon. General Secretary, WPA-India

Long Term Conservation of Pheasants in Western Arunachal Pradesh

(WPA-India project supported by the Duleep Matthai Nature Conservation Trust)

Brief Progress - December 2016 to February 2017.

The 4th survey trip has been conducted around Dirang and Mandla-Phudung area of West Kameng district (December 2 to 11, 2016). The area had been earlier reported to be rich in pheasant population. The WPA-India team spent nearly a week in the area but failed to sight any of the pheasants. Secondary information from local sources confirmed the presence of at least two different species of Tragopan, Blood Pheasant and Himalayan Monal in the area. But all admitted that probably due to on-going road construction project through the area has forced the pheasants to move away to a safer zone. Reportedly, there had been rampant killing of pheasants by the construction labourers living in road-side camps for consumption. Other birds, though in relatively small numbers, have been sighted. One major sighting was that of a pair of rare Black-necked Crane in Sangti valley, 8 km away from Dirang.



Satyr Tragopan



Kaleej Pheasant



Monal Pheasant



Blood Pheasant



In February 2017, the first workshop on **TRAINING IN HOMESTAY HOSPITALITY AND CONSERVATION TOURISM LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP**, could be arranged in Rupa of West Kameng district. The workshop was arranged jointly with the Arunachal Pradesh Tourism Department, Association for Conservation and Tourism (a well known NGO working mainly in North-Eastern States on ecotourism) and a local NGO based at Rupa. In all, 73 villagers from different villages around Rupa attended as participants and potential homestay owners. The two days workshop was successful and received positive response from all the participants.



Workshop inauguration. WPA-India Coordinator Heerak Nandy addressing the workshop participants.

by WPA-India team

Parabiology Training – Demonopolization of Scientific Knowledge in Biodiversity Conservation

Parabiology training is a concept in participatory conservation in which the local community members are not just ‘helpers’ or ‘cheap labour’, but trained in ‘field research skills’ to carry out ‘conservation-based technical tasks and act as conservation ambassadors in their community’. The term is applied in similar sense as ‘Paramedics’ – technically qualified first-response professionals. So, the participation of local community members is now not just limited to answering survey questionnaires or assisting researchers in data collecting, but involves using field instruments such as GPS, camera-traps and radio-tracking to collect the data, data analysis, and other aspects of applied conservation, such as inventory, patrolling, planning, implementing and evaluating interventions, management decisions, monitoring, awareness, and policy-making.

Involving the local communities in species conservation projects has been necessitated by the fact that, especially in tropical ecosystems, there is a large dependence of the indigenous population on natural resources. The largely European and American researchers working in the tropics have found it a daunting task, one of the reasons being language and cultural barriers. With biologists from the tropics completing their education as expert conservation biologists, the task will now be simpler. Researchers have to identify the level of local participation according to the situation. So, local communities practicing conservation with parabiology training can now essentially practice traditional conservation while generating scientific data that can be used for conservation action.

In my book ‘Conserving Asia’s Wildlife Treasure: The Pheasants’, I have mentioned an example of participatory monitoring using local community members in which, despite the initial cost of training, and inaccuracy of monitoring data, their participation resulted in quicker decision-making better threat redressal, and policy change for conservation. The local community also benefits from enhanced awareness levels which improves decision-making in resource management. Indigenous knowledge of participating locals also helps to improve accuracy in surveys and monitoring. Therefore, capacity-building programs for local women and youth that are a part of Protected Areas management plans should include Parabiology Training, in addition to training in eco-tourism and handicraft sector.

Wildlife Conservation Research Unit of the University of Oxford offers a PG Diploma in ‘International Wildlife Conservation Practice’ – a course that teaches conservation biology techniques, such as survey techniques, statistics, spatial data collection and assessment, and conservation awareness. This is to help develop professionals who can help in conservation projects and also train parabiologists for such projects. In India, Gubbi Labs in Gubbi, Karnataka (a private research training organisation), offers training which can help citizen scientists and parabiologists; this type of training will also be useful for setting up of entrepreneurial ventures offering services, such as map-making, to researchers and authors.

We are seeing the demonopolization of scientific knowledge (especially survey and statistical techniques) that was earlier restricted to the academia, and now widely used by NGOs and parabiologists. We have to keep in mind that ‘conservation is not just a science but also a societal goal’.

by: Anita Chauhan, author of ‘Conserving Asia’s Wildlife Treasure: The Pheasants’, available from Flipkart and Amazon.

Galliformes in Baburnama and Jahangirnama

Babur, the founder of Mughal rule in India during the period 1526-1530, was a keen observer of nature and his memoirs, the Baburnama, has interesting and perceptive accounts of certain Indian animals and birds. The Peacock finds special mention (along with illustrations) as given below:

“The **Peacock** (Ar. Taus) is a beautifully coloured and splendid bird. Its form (andam) is not equal to its colouring and beauty. Its body may be as large as the crane’s (turna) but it is not so tall. On the head of both cock and hen are 20 or 30 feathers rising some 2 or 3 inches high. The hen has neither colour nor beauty. The head of the cock has an iridescent collar (tauq susani); its neck is of a beautiful blue; below the neck, its back is painted in yellow, parrot-green, blue and violet colours. The flowers on its back are much smaller; below the back as far as the tail-tips are larger flowers painted in the same colours. The tail of some peacock grows to the length of a man’s extended arms. It has a small red tail, under its flowered feathers, like the tail of other birds. Its flight is feebler than the pheasants; it cannot do more than one or two short flights. Hindustani call the bird **mor**.”



Jahangir, great grandson of Babur and the fourth Mughal emperor (1605-27), was a naturalist in a class of his own. His memoirs, the *Jahangirnama*, includes his observations of some galliformes as given below:

(1) “Baso, the Zamindar of Talwara, brought for my inspection a bird the people of the hills call **Jan Bahman**¹. Its tail is like that of a qirqavul, which is also called *tazarv* (pheasant). In colour, it is exactly like a female qirqavul, but its body is larger by a ratio of ten to fifteen. Around this bird’s eyes is red, while around a pheasant’s eyes is white. Baso reported that this bird lives in snowy mountains and eats grass and herbs”.

(2) “One of the birds seen in the hill country is the horned pheasant, which the Kashmiris call **Sonlu**². It is an inch smaller than a peahen. The tail and both wings are blackish, rather like the wings of a bustard, and have white spots. The belly up to the breast is black with white spots, and in some places there are red spots too. The ends of the legs are a brilliant, beautiful fiery red. From the tip of its beak to the front of the neck is also shiny black, and its crop is a piece of round skin about the size of two palms. In the middle of that skin is a violet coloured patch the size of a hand with turquoise-coloured spots, and turquoise-coloured spots around it too consisting of eight plumes, and around those is a line two fingers wide that is peach-blossom red. Around that is another turquoise-coloured line. Its feet are also red. I ordered to weigh it alive, and it was 152 tolas”



(3) “Another is the zarrin bird, which the inhabitants of Lahore call ‘Shan’ and the Kashmiris call **Pooth**³. In colour, it is something like a peacock’s breast. It has a tuft on top of its head and its tail is yellow, the length of four or five fingers, like the long feathers of a peacock. Its body is equal in size to a goose, although a goose’s neck is long and ill-proportioned, while the zarrin’s is short and elegant. My brother Shah Abbas had requested (for) a zarrin. And, several were sent with an emissary”.

¹ *Himalayan Snow-Cock (Tetraogallus himalayensis)*.

² *Western Tragopan (Tragopan melanocephalus)* also called *Horned Pheasant* .

³ *Himalayan Monal (Lophophorus impejanus)*.

Magnificent Himalayan Monal

Himalayan Monal is the National Bird of Nepal and the state bird of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. It is a very beautiful pheasant found in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and China occupied Tibet. In India Monal is found in Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Alternate English name is Impeyan Monal (named after Lady Mary Impey wife of Sir Elijah Impey, Chief Justice of Bengal during the British Raj).

Scientific Classification: Kingdom - Animalia, Phylum - Chordata, Class - Aves, Order - Galliformes, Family - Phasianidae, Sub-Family - Phasianinae, Genus - Lophophorus, Species - *Lophophorus impejanus*, Binominal Name - *Lophophorus impejanus*. This name was given by Latham in 1790.

Size/Length: Male - 66 to 74 cm. Female - 61 to 66 cm. **Avg weight:** Male 2.3 kg. Female 2.10 kg. **Colour:** Male - Bright green, Copper and violet coloured body. Female - Dark Brown body, white neck, white semi crescent on tip of the tail. **Habitat:** Monal lives in Ban Oak to conifer forests, open grassy slopes, Bugyal's on high rocky cliffs and in alpine meadows. Home territory varies from 3300 to 4500 metres in summer and 2300 to 2500 meters in winter season. It loves to live in vast Bugyals of Uttarakhand. **Food Habit:** Usually eats, roots rotten leaves, grass seedlings, insects, fruits and seeds. **Breeding Season:** From May to June. Female lays 4-5 eggs in nest made of dry leaves or on a pit under the shelter of a rock. Female alone incubates her eggs.

In Uttarakhand Monal is found in following areas: 1) Govind National Park (near Harki Doon). 2) Tons Forest Division (vicinity of Balcha, Kulni, Taramandal and Changsil area). 3) Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary (near Chopta on way to Tungnath, near Madhmaheshwar). 4) Gangotri National Park's (upper reaches). 5) Uttarakhand Forest Division (near Dodital and Dayara Bugyal trekking route). 6) Roopkund Trek (near Vedni Bugyal, Pater Nachonia, Kalwa Vinayak, Baguabasa and Huniathch). 7). Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve (upper areas). 8) Pindari and Kafni glacier trekking route. 9). Upper reaches of Almora Forest Division. 10) Pithoragarh Forest Division (Askot wildlife sanctuary and in Munsyari and Panchchuli valley).

Thus we see that Himalayan Monal is found right through eastern to western boundaries of Uttarakhand. Among other pheasants like Satyr, Western Tragopan, Cheer, the Monal is the most handsome of all birds. It is a very clever and alert bird. Its cry resembles like Vik-Vik. For its magnificently coloured plumage, this bird is the most sought after by the poachers. Government must take strong steps to preserve this bird from poachers. In order to do this, separate Monal breeding centres are to be established in Tons Forest Division, Uttarakhand Forest Division, Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary, Askot and Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary.

Source: Alok Negi and Naresh C. Madhwal, *Cheetal*, Vol. 53, No-3 (2016), September-December 2016.

Manali to have monal breeding centre

The Tribune News Service, Kullu, November 27, 2016

"To conserve the endangered but majestic pheasant bird Monal, the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) authority will set up an advanced breeding centre at Manali.

Director of the GHNP, SS Kataik, said today that all preparations were underway and till December-end this year, the authority would make the breeding centre at Manali operational to conserve the endangered Monal. According to Kataik, there are a number of Himalayan Monal in the GHNP but there is need to make more efforts to conserve them and, with the start of this centre it would be great help in this direction.

"To keep a constant watch on birds, cameras will be installed in cages and a stud book would be maintained. Each bird will get a name and complete case study data since birth will be prepared. Cages will be designed according to the weather conditions so that even heavy snowfall will not have any effect on them," he said.

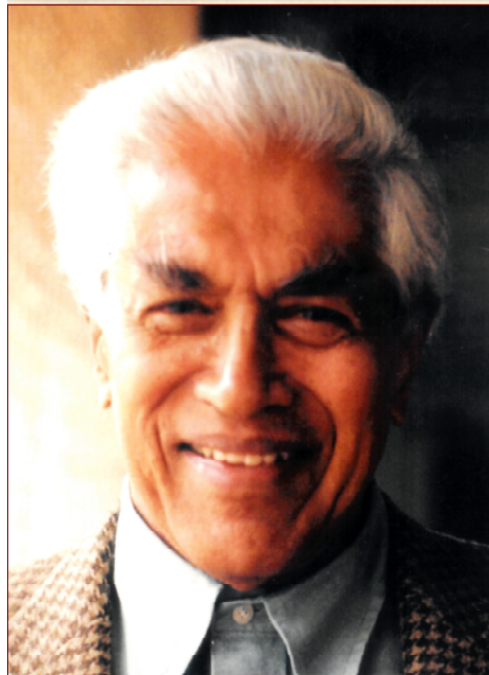
According to official sources, poaching for its crest, human interference with nature and increasing pressure on jungles are of the major causes for the dwindling of monal numbers. A plan to construct a Monal breeding centre in Manali was floated a few years back, but it failed to materialise due to lack of funds.

The Director stated that the centre would be the second such in western Himalayas after Sarahan in Rampur. Monal is a relatively large-sized pheasant. The bird is about 70 centimetres long. The male weighs up to 2,380 gms and the female 2,150 gms.

The bird's natural range extends from eastern Afghanistan through the Himalayas in Pakistan and India (J&K, HP, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh), Nepal, southern Tibet, and Bhutan. There is also a report of its occurrence in parts of Burma. It occupies upper temperate oak-conifer forests interspersed with open grassy slopes, cliffs and alpine meadows."



Duleep Matthai: born in Chennai on 18th October 1924 and died in Vallabh Vidyanagar, Anand District, Gujarat, on 5th March 2017, aged 92.



Duleep Matthai was a highly influential figure in India's nascent environmental movement in the 1970s that first flagged the long term environmental risks arising from loss of forest cover that comes with unfettered development activities. The warnings of Matthai and other environmentalists continue to fall on deaf ears because of widespread ignorance and indifference to the importance of ecological security.

Through his love of nature and wildlife developed from his early childhood growing up in the forested family estate in Kerala, Matthai understood long before it became widely accepted knowledge the ecological role of forests. He understood that the loss of large expanses of forests through human activity, especially in the tropical regions and uplands of India, poses a serious threat to human welfare and even survival.

Today there is undisputed scientific evidence that forests help to maintain air, water and soil quality, influence climatic conditions, regulate run off and ground water and reduce downstream sedimentation and flooding. They sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to reduce the greenhouse effect and importantly protect the watersheds and river systems. Chronically drought affected areas are invariably those that have undergone severe deforestation.

Matthai was a founding trustee of the World Wildlife Fund in India and always played an active role in promoting the organization within the country. He was largely instrumental in getting land allotted for setting up the WWF head office in New Delhi. His concerns about environmental degradation found resonance with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who discussed environment issues with him from time to time and also invited him to be a member of important advisory bodies set up by the Government, such as the National Committee of Environment Planning and Coordination and the Indian Board of Wildlife chaired by the Prime Minister. Matthai was consulted also when the Department of Environment was established in 1980, especially in the matter of naming it properly.

In 1980s, Matthai was appointed to the governing bodies of the newly established Indian Institute of Forest Management at Bhopal and the Wildlife Institute of India at Dehradun. He was also a member of the Steering Committee of the prestigious Project Tiger, also chaired by the Prime Minister.

Later, as Vice Chairman of the National Wastelands Development Board set up by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Matthai toured the country extensively to understand the challenges of restoring degraded barren tracts and then suggested possible solutions, which included aerial seeding wherever feasible, given the political will to make available necessary resources and overcome vested interests.

Prof M. S. Swaminathan, father of India's 'Green Revolution' and former President of WWF India and the IUCN, regards Duleep Matthai as the father of the ecological security movement in India and his commitment to the conservation of nature and the development of WWF India as "truly monumental".

Born into an eminent Kerala family, Duleep was the second of the three children of Dr John Matthai, who served as Railways and Finance Ministers in Independent India's first Cabinet, and Mrs Achamma Matthai, who as Chairperson of the Central Social Welfare Board, played an important role in helping to resettle refugees from West Punjab after Independence and Partition.

Matthai started his career in 1944 with the tea industry in Assam. In 1960 he moved to Bombay initially as JRD Tata's Executive Assistant before taking on senior roles in other Tata companies. In his mid-50s Duleep Matthai resigned from all corporate activities to focus his energies on nature conservation and environment protection.

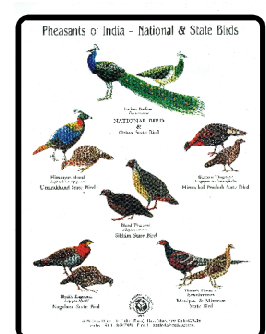
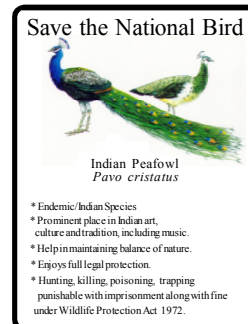
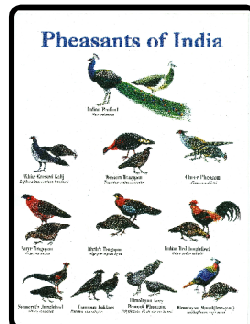
In 2001, Matthai helped set up and became a founding trustee of the Foundation for Ecological Security, an NGO that is actively involved in the massive and critical task of ecological restoration in the country, and in 2007 he set up on his own initiative and became a founding trustee of the Duleep Matthai Nature Conservation Trust to which he donated the major part of his personal assets.

He is survived by his only son Arjun.

Resource Material - available on request

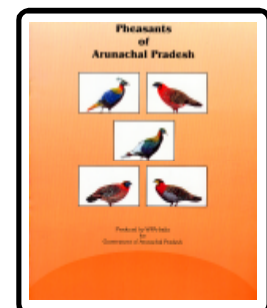
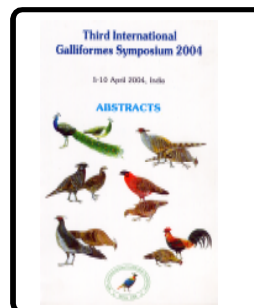
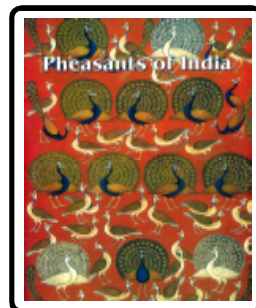
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