

## Malayan Great

### *Argus Argusianus a. argus*

Family: Phasianidae, Genus: *Argusianus*

Recognized Subspecies: Suspecies of Great Argus

Conservation status: Near Threatened

Wild Pop. Trend: Decreasing

CITES Appendix II

USFWS: Not Listed

ESB



Photo credit: Joel Satore

**Range:** Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Sumatra, and Borneo

**Conservation Concern:** The Malayan Great Argus is listed as near threatened by the IUCN. The wild population is estimated to be around 100,000 but this needs to be updated and investigated. This species is threatened by deforestation and hunting and has been undergoing a noted decline in recent years. The conservation status of this species was upgraded in 2004 due to habitat destruction and hunting throughout its range. Habitat conversion for palm oil agriculture has been the leading cause of loss of habitat for this species.

**Species account:** The Malayan Great Argus is a large species of pheasant that has one of the most impressive nuptial displays and a loud distinctive call. This species was named for the Titan of Greek mythology “Argus” who was covered in eyes reminiscent of the wings of the male of this species.

In the 2012 RCP, the Double-banded Argus, the former *Argusianus bipunctatus*, was mentioned as an extinct species/sub-species of Argus Pheasant as an educational topic. That species was only described from one feather and in 2012 it was officially declared that this feather did not represent a full species but just a feather mutation. The nuptial display of this species is performed by the augmented wing feathers and the tail feathers play a small role unlike other species in this order.

**AZA Role:** This is a large pheasant and increasing holding space has been a challenge which has in effect limited the growth of the population. To ensure a stable population of this species, more holders need to be identified. The AZA population is thought to be unrelated to the EAZA population and exchanges may be needed in the future to diversify the founder base of both populations as imports from range countries will likely never be possible.

**TAG Program Goals:** This species has 12 assumed founders. The current priority for the population is to acquire more institutions willing to hold and/or breed this species. As of right now, the population is in a slight decline due to the limited number of holding institutions.

## Education Emphasis

- Habitat fragmentation
- Palm oil
- Sexual dimorphism

**AZA Connections:** The following table is not a guide of what the Argus Pheasant should be housed with (although many of these are a possibility), but instead it is meant to show the connections between other AZA recommended program species.



Female argus at  
Sylvan Heights Bird Park  
Photo Credit: Gen Anderson

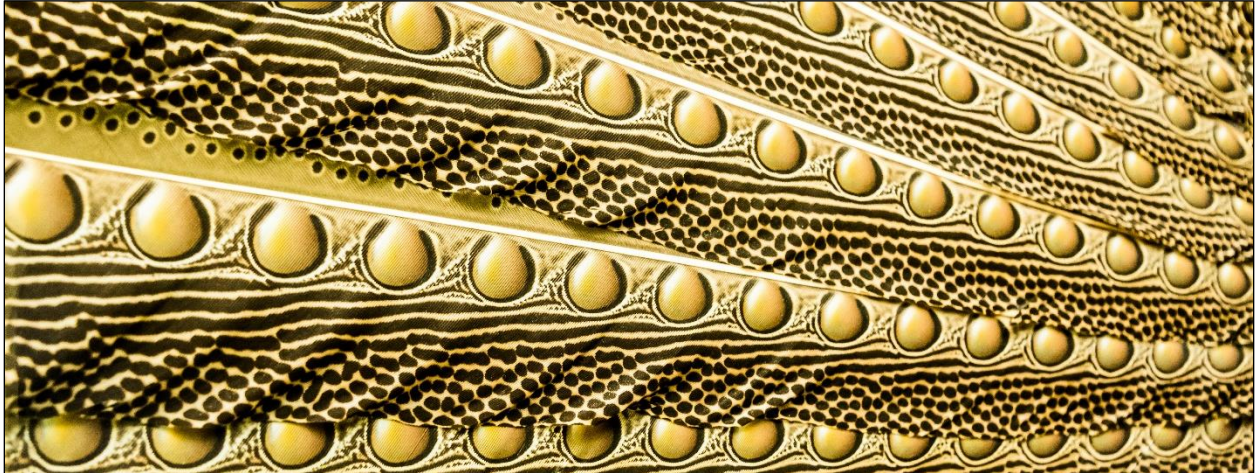
Great Argus <i>Argusianus argus</i> recommended species by other TAGs within species range				
Common name	Scientific name	TAG	Program	Conservation status
Hooded Pitta	<i>Pitta sordida</i>	PACCT TAG	Red SSP	Least Concern
Fairy Bluebird	<i>Irena puella</i>	PACCT TAG	Yellow SSP	Least Concern
Common Shama Thrush	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	PACCT TAG	Yellow SSP	Least Concern
White-breasted Wood Swallow	<i>Artamus leucoryn</i>	PACCT TAG	Candidate	Least Concern
Golden-crested Mynah	<i>Ampeliceps coronatus</i>	PACCT TAG	Red SSP	Least Concern
Javan Sparrow	<i>Lonchura oryzivora</i>	PACCT TAG	TAG Monitored	Vulnerable
Black-naped Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus melanospilus</i>	PACCT TAG	Yellow SSP	Least Concern
Jambu Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus jambu</i>	Columbiformes TAG	Yellow SSP	Near Threatened
Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	Columbiformes TAG	Yellow SSP	Least Concern
Pink-headed Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus porphyreus</i>	Columbiformes TAG	Candidate	Least Concern
Chestnut-breasted Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus curvirostris</i>	Turaco and Cuckoo TAG	TAG Monitored	Least Concern
Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus galgulus</i>	Parrot TAG	TAG Monitored	Least Concern
Milky Stork	<i>Mycteria cinerea</i>	Ciconiiformes TAG	Red SSP	Endangered
Storm's Stork	<i>Ciconia stormi</i>	Ciconiiformes TAG	Red SSP	Endangered
White-winged Wood Duck	<i>Asarcornis scutulata</i>	Anseriformes TAG	Yellow SSP	Endangered
Indian Pygmy-goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	Anseriformes TAG	Red SSP	Least Concern
Lesser Indian Whistling-duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	Anseriformes TAG	Raft	Least Concern

\*\*Disclaimer: this information was collected in 2017. If you have interest in any of these species, contact the perspective TAGs. All range overlap information was determined using the IUCN Red List range maps.

## Conservation priority species that share the same range

- Sunda Pangolin *Manis javanica*
- Sumatran Orangutan *Pongo abelii*
- Malayan Gharial *Tomistoma schlegelii*

If your institution is supporting a field project with one of these species, see if your conservation partner observing the Malayan Great Argus Pheasant in their study/field site. If your Zoo displays one of the following species, the addition of an aviary for the Malayan Great Argus can illustrate the diversity of this biome at your institution and highlight a threatened bird.



Argus feathers  
*Photo credit Shutterstock*