

Vietnam Pheasant *Lophura edwardsi*

Family: Phasianidae, Genus: *Lophura*
Recognized Subspecies: 0, Monotypic
Conservation status: Critically Endangered
Wild Pop. Trend: Decreasing
CITES Appendix I
USFWS: Listed

Range: Vietnam endemic

Conservation Concern: The Vietnam Pheasant is listed as critically endangered by the IUCN. The plight of the wild population is unknown, and this species is likely extinct in the wild. The conservation goal for this species is to ensure that captive populations are managed to the best of our abilities to conserve the genetic variability and to act as a representative of the project, and that conservation support can be sent to Vietnam when requested.

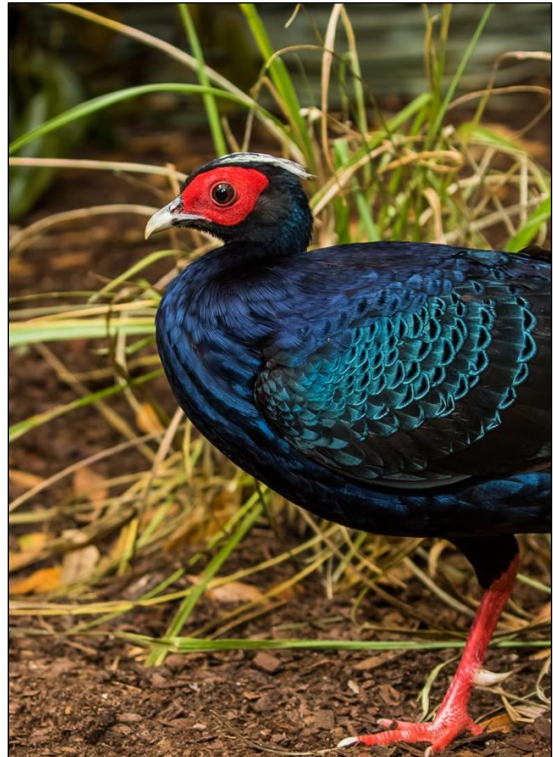


Photo credit: St. Augustine Alligator Farm

Species account: The Vietnam Pheasant is the most endangered of all the pheasant species. This species has been elusive since it was initially described to science in 1896. It has only been seen sporadically in the wild, with most reports known from the collecting trips of Dr. Jean Delacour between the years of 1929 to 1939. After the 1940's, this species was without confirmed sightings in the wild until 1990 (Madge and McGowan, 2002). The World Pheasant Association recently completed a survey of the native range but could not confirm the existence of the species. The WPA is continuing the surveys, but current information will increase the conservation ranking, possibly even listing the species as extinct in the wild (Platt, 2011).

The Vietnam Pheasant population originates from twenty-eight to thirty birds that were collected by Delacour during his expeditions to Vietnam in 1923 through 1939 (Ciarpaglini and Hennache, 1993). It is amazing that this captive population has persisted for such a long time as populations of other species started during this time-period were never well established. Yet this species has persisted as a "closed" population with no documented new bloodlines besides the initial birds. The continuation of this species in the U.S. and North America is due to the efforts of private aviculturists.

Originally it was thought that all captive populations came directly from the Delacour's aviaries at Clères, but it has since been determined that the captive population was dispersed from three collections in three different countries; France (Delacour/Clères), England (Webb/G.B. Lewis), and Japan (Taka- Tsukasa) (Ciarpaglini and Hennache, 1993). All the birds from these three collections were wild caught birds that Delacour had collected and then gifted to the aviaries of his personal friends. These three collections represent unique founding lines.

The North American population has been somewhat of a mystery, as no documentation has survived that tells the exact origin of the founding stock. Of special interest is that Edwards's pheasants were housed in North America before the first known export from Delacour's aviaries at Clères. It is now known that the original North American birds originated from the collection of Taka-Tsukasa of Japan and were supplemented at a later date by imports of birds from Clères. A more in-depth genetic study of the North American birds is warranted to confirm the origin of the population and ensure that all available genetic lines of this species are included in the AZA managed program.

The Vietnam is managed by an International Studbook and presents many collaboration opportunities both within the captive population and for in-situ conservation projects within the species historical range. After DNA testing some individuals within the EAZA population were found to be hybridized with the Swinhoe's Pheasant *Lophura swinhoii*. Hybrids were known to have been produced at Clères in 1925 (Delacour, 1938). In the future, the AZA population will need to be tested to confirm true species status.



Edwards's chick
Photo credit: Tracy Aviary

Although once considered a separate species, the Vietnamese Pheasant formerly *Lophura hatinhensis* is now considered a color morph from a bottlenecked population of the Vietnam (formerly Edwards's) Pheasant. Genetic testing has confirmed this, and the Vietnamese Pheasant is no longer considered a species or a sub-species (as it was in 2012). The validity of this species has been questioned over the years since the defining white tail feathers of the male varied in number from individual to individual. Birds of this coloration type were never imported to AZA but in the U.S. private sector population occasional males are hatched that have white tail feathers.

AZA Role: The captive population is managed to increase the overall AZA population while also maintaining genetic diversity. A better understanding of the genetic make-up of the overall population is desired, and AZA has been contacted to participate in the World Pheasant Association's hybrid/relatedness project.

TAG Program Goals: In December 2016, Vietnam Pheasants were featured by National Geographic's Photo Ark as one of 13 species no longer found in the wild that we can save together. Their amenable nature makes them extremely successful in mixed-species exhibits; making it easy to add visual interest at exhibit ground level. This species carries a strong and unique message about the combined efforts and contributions of the U.S. private sector and zoos that have allowed this species to persist in the U.S.

Education Emphasis

- Sexual dimorphism
- Endangered endemic species
- Extinction

AZA Connections: The following table is not a guide of what the Vietnam Pheasant can be housed with (although many of these are a possibility), but it shows the range connections between other AZA recommended program species.

Edwards's Pheasant <i>Lophura edwardsi</i> recommended species by other TAGs within species range				
Common name	Scientific name	TAG	Program	Conservation status
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-crested Laughing Thrush	<i>Garrulax leucolophus</i>	PACCT TAG	Yellow SSP	Least Concern
Red-billed Blue Magpie	<i>Urocissa erythroryncha</i>	PACCT TAG	Red SSP	Least Concern
Golden-crested Mynah	<i>Ampeliceps coronatus</i>	PACCT TAG	Red SSP	Least Concern
Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	Columbiformes TAG	Yellow SSP	Least Concern
Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	Ciconiiformes TAG	Red SSP	Near Threatened
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
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Anseriformes TAG	Raft	Least Concern
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Anseriformes TAG	Raft	Least Concern
Indian Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	Anseriformes TAG	Raft	Least Concern
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</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:

- Siamese crocodile *Crocodylus siamensis*
- Saola *Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*
- Hatinh Langur *Trachypithecus hatinhensis*

The Vietnam Pheasant is largely considered extinct in the wild. Please consider supporting projects for other Vietnamese species that conserve habitat where the Vietnam Pheasant was once found because future reintroduction projects will depend on habitat.



Vietnam Pheasant nest
 Photo credit: St. Augustine Alligator Farm