



Guest editors' preface



Pheasant Specialist Group



The
Department of
Wildlife and
National Parks,
Peninsular
Malaysia.



Partridge, Quail and
Francolin Specialist Group

This special issue of *Bird Conservation International* represents a sample of contributions made during the International Symposium on Galliformes held in Peninsular Malaysia during 7–21 September 1997. The World Pheasant Association (WPA) and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Peninsular Malaysia, jointly organized this meeting in collaboration with two Specialist Groups: those responsible for the conservation and sustainable use of pheasants, and of partridges, quails and francolins (PQF). This was the second meeting involving the PQF Specialist Group (founded in 1991), and the seventh one for pheasant specialists, although the first since the founding of the Pheasant Specialist Group in 1993.

The symposium started with three days of presentations and poster sessions at the comfortable and well-equipped Melaka Paradise Resort. Virtually all those attending then moved to the Kuala Tehan Resort inside Taman Negara National Park for a further three days. Here, in more rustic but nevertheless comfortable conditions, several informal workshops were held, whilst everyone had an opportunity to explore the surrounding tropical jungle on foot, by boat or via the magnificent canopy walkway. If nothing else this convinced most people how difficult it is to study Galliformes species, or indeed any other animals, in such an oppressive climate with so much vegetation and so little light! Following this phase of the meeting, a limited number of young Asian field workers were taken by Philip McGowan and John Carroll to the Wildlife Department's field research base at Kuala Lompat in Krau Game Reserve, where their individual research goals and problems, and field and data analysis techniques, were discussed by the group at great length.

We selected a variety of papers for these limited proceedings, but they represent well the wide range of research and conservation work being undertaken at present on the Galliformes species represented by these two Specialist Groups. We hope that other biologists with thoughts of developing research and conservation programmes on Galliformes species will be stimulated to do

so after reading some of these papers. Other contributions to the symposium are being published elsewhere, about which further details can be obtained from the WPA Administrator, P.O. Box 5, Lower Basildon, Reading RG8 9PF, U.K. (Tel. +44 118 9845140; Fax. +44 118 9843369; Email wpa@gn.apc.org).

One of the principal aims of the symposium was to assess how useful the IUCN *Action Plans* published by these two Specialist Groups in 1995, have been in stimulating research, surveys and conservation action for threatened Galliformes species. Apart from the evidence represented by the papers in this issue, we address this question directly ourselves in the *Opinion* piece (see pp.317–323).

The PQF and Pheasant Specialist Groups are fortunate to act under the auspices of three supportive parent organizations: the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of IUCN (The World Conservation Union), BirdLife International, and WPA. The SSC provides the foundations upon which all Specialist Groups define the aims and scope of their activities, and publicizes their work internationally. The BirdLife International partnership gives the bird Specialist Groups an important link to work being undertaken on the conservation of birds and their habitats throughout the world. With the SSC, WPA was responsible for the formation of the PQF and Pheasant Specialist Groups (as well as three others for megapodes, cracids and grouse), whilst both BirdLife and WPA contribute to their core running costs. WPA and the Malaysian Wildlife Department conceived, administered and helped to fund this meeting, and many other supporters, including several individual members of WPA, helped with donations that went towards the cost of attendance for 17 young Asian researchers. The symposium would have been a much less useful event for everyone if they had not been able to come. The Kuala Lumpur workshop that several of them attended was part funded by the International Fund for Avian Research. We thank all these organizations and individuals for helping the Specialist Groups to fulfill their potential, and for making the symposium a reality.

Personally, we thank WPA for providing some assistance to each of us for attending the symposium. J.P.C. also thanks The Game Conservancy Trust for allowing him the time to work on the Steering Committee and for partially funding his participation. P.J.G. was part funded by the University of Newcastle and P.J.K.M. received a Royal Society Travel Grant.

As the three guest editors for this issue, we should like to thank the editor, Chris Mason, for offering to give over a whole issue in which to publish these proceedings, and for entrusting us with considerable editorial powers. We hope we have done them justice.

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