

## Deletion of Imperial Pheasant *Lophura imperialis* from Appendix I

### Proponent: Switzerland, as Depositary Government, at the request of the Animals Committee (prepared by France)

**Summary:** The Imperial Pheasant *Lophura imperialis* is a rare dark-blue pheasant known in the wild from just four records from Viet Nam. First described in 1924 from a single live pair, it is now accepted as being an occasional naturally-occurring hybrid between Silver Pheasant *L. nycthemera* and Edward's Pheasant *L. edwardsi*. A bird captured in 1990 was likely a hybrid between *L. nycthemera* and Vietnamese Pheasant *L. hatinhensis* which itself has been found to be an inbred form of *L. edwardsi*. There have been no other confirmed reports of Imperial Pheasant in the wild. A captive stock was established in Europe and the USA from a pair caught in 1923, which were subsequently cross-bred with *Lophura nycthemera* to create new stock. Birds with Imperial Pheasant phenotype have also been created in captivity by hybridizing Silver Pheasant and Edward's Pheasant.

*Lophura imperialis* and *L. edwardsi* were both listed in CITES Appendix I in 1975. Since 1975 international trade in 31 *L. imperialis* individuals has been reported in the CITES trade database, all but four declared as captive-bred. These four comprise animals exported before 1999 from non-range States with no source code included in the record. There is no reason to suppose that these were not also captive-bred.

*Lophura imperialis* is proposed for removal from Appendix I on the basis that it is no longer recognised as a species. The proposal notes that under *Resolution Conf. 10.17 (Rev. CoP15)* on animal hybrids the Imperial Pheasant would still be considered as included in Appendix I because one of its parents (*L. edwardsi*) is in that Appendix. There is therefore no need to transfer the taxon to Appendix II before then removing them from the Appendices, as would normally be the case under the precautionary measures in para A 1 to Annex 4, of *Resolution Conf 9.24 (Rev. CoP15)*.

The proponent has also asked for an Amendment in the Annex to *Resolution Conf 12.11 (Rev CoP15)* regarding the reference standard for birds adopted by the Conference of the Parties: "Dickinson, E. C. (ed.) (2003): *The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World*. Revised and enlarged 3rd Edition. 1039 pp. London (Christopher Helm). [for all bird species – except for the taxa mentioned below]" by replacing "for all bird species – except for the taxa mentioned below" with "for all species birds, except *Lophura imperialis* and taxa mentioned below". *Lophura imperialis* will not appear in the upcoming 4th edition of the publication "*The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World*" (scheduled for publication in 2012/2013), as it has been permanently removed from the taxonomy of birds.

At its 26th meeting (Geneva, March 2012) and in the context of the Periodic Review of the Appendices, the Animals Committee recommended preparing a proposal to delete *Lophura imperialis* from Appendix I because of its status as a hybrid of (see document AC26 Doc. 13.2.1 and its Annex). France volunteered to prepare such proposal.

**Analysis:** Based on the low number of individuals found, despite search efforts, it seems unlikely that *L. imperialis* forms the 'distinct and stable populations in the wild' required allowing hybrids to be specifically included within the Appendices and as such would appear not to be eligible for inclusion in its own right. Under *Resolution Conf. 10.17 (Rev. CoP15)*, if *L. imperialis* were deleted from the Appendices, specimens would still be treated as if included in Appendix I because one of its parents (*L. edwardsi*) is in that Appendix.

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<b><u>Taxonomy</u></b>	
<p><i>Lophura imperialis</i> should be considered as a natural hybrid between <i>L. edwardsi</i> and <i>L. nycthemera</i>. It was reported that <i>L. hatinhensis</i> could possibly be one of the parental species, but <i>L. hatinhensis</i> has recently been proven to be an inbred form of <i>L. edwardsi</i>.</p>	<p>The upcoming fourth edition is due to be published in February 2013 (<a href="http://www.nhbs.com">www.nhbs.com</a>, 2012).</p>
<p>At its 15th meeting (Doha, 2010), as shown in the Annex to <i>Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP15)</i>, the Conference of the Parties adopted the following publication as the standard reference for pheasant taxonomy and nomenclature: "Dickinson, E.C. (ed. 2003): <i>The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World</i>. Revised and enlarged 3rd Edition. 1039 pp. London (Christopher Helm)". In this publication, <i>Lophura imperialis</i> is still considered as a species.</p>	
<p>The species <i>Lophura imperialis</i> will not appear in the upcoming fourth edition of the publication "Dickinson E.C., <i>The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World</i>" (in press, scheduled for publication in August 2012), as it has been permanently removed from the taxonomy of birds.</p>	
<b><u>Range</u></b>	
<p>Viet Nam</p>	<p>Hunters have reported a similar looking bird in Lao PDR, though its presence there remains unproven (Madge and McGowan, 2002).</p>
<b><u>IUCN Global Category</u></b>	
<p><i>Lophura imperialis</i> is no longer a valid taxon. It was therefore removed from the IUCN Red List.</p>	
<b>Biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I</b>	
<p><b><u>A) Small wild population</u></b>  <b>(i) Population or habitat decline; (ii) small sub-populations; (iii) concentrated geographically during one or more life-history phases; (iv) large population fluctuations; (v) high vulnerability</b></p>	
<p>A single wild pair were acquired in 1923 in the region of Dong Hoi Viet Nam. Then in 1990, an immature male was captured 12 km from Cat Bin, followed by another immature individual caught in 2000 in Da Krong District.</p>	<p><i>Expeditions to find wild Lophura imperialis in the 1930s failed (Hennache et al., 2003).</i></p>

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
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**Trade criteria for inclusion in Appendix I****The species is or may be affected by trade**

There will be no actual or potential trade, since *Lophura imperialis* will be treated as a hybrid of *L. edwardsi* and as such, will retain the same status of Appendix I, in accordance with *Resolution Conf 10.17 (Rev. CoP15)*.

Gross exports/imports of *Lophura imperialis*

Term	1975-1999	2000-2010
Live total (wild)	22 (4)	9 (0)
Grand total	22 (4)	9 (0)

*It appears that the four individuals identified as being wild in the SS were designated so because the source code had been left blank in the CITES database. These records consist of two individuals exported from the USA to Belgium, and two individuals exported from the Netherlands to Denmark and are very likely to have been captive-bred. All other trade reported in the CITES is in individuals reported as captive-bred.*

**Other information****Conservation, management and legislation**

*Lophura imperialis* was listed in Appendix I of CITES in 1975.

One of the parental species, *Lophura edwardsi*, is listed in CITES Appendix I.

*Lophura imperialis* is present on the Red List (2007) of Endangered Species in Viet Nam.

*Lophura imperialis and L. edwardsi are both listed in EC Regulations Annex A.*

**Similar species**

*Hennache et al. (2003) found that Lophura imperialis showed no unique shape features or plumage. For most measurements L. imperialis were intermediate in size between L. edwardsi and L. nycthemera. All specimens of L. imperialis had plumage characteristics that were to some degree intermediate between the two parent species.*

**Artificial Propagation/Captive breeding**

The pair captured in 1923 were exported to France and produced a line of captive animals which died out after World War II due to lack of additional founders.

In 2003 at the Zoological park of Clères, Alain Hennache hybridized the two parental species, resulting in five offspring.

The last record of *Lophura imperialis* in captivity in Europe was in 2009 in the United Kingdom, a farmer reported having three specimens.

*A captive stock was established in Europe and the USA from the 1923 pair, which had to be cross-bred with Lophura nycthemera to create new stock (Madge and McGowan, 2002).*

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
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Other comments

Viet Nam, the only range State of *Lophura imperialis*, expressed its support for the proposal.

**Reviewers:** R. Thomas.

**References:**

- Hennache, A., Rasmussen, P., Lucchini, V., Rimondi, S. and Randi, E. (2003). Hybrid origin of the imperial pheasant *Lophura imperialis* (Delacour and Jabouille, 1942) demonstrated by morphology, hybrid experiments and DNA analyses. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society* 80: 573–600.
- Madge, S. and McGowan, P. (2002). *Pheasants, partridges and grouse: A guide to the pheasants, partridges, quails, grouse, guineafowl, buttonquails and sandgrouse of the world*. Christopher Helm, London.
- www.nhbs.com (2012) *The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World, Volume 1: Non-passerines*  
[http://www.nhbs.com/the\\_howard\\_and\\_moore\\_complete\\_checklist\\_of\\_the\\_tefno\\_186080.html](http://www.nhbs.com/the_howard_and_moore_complete_checklist_of_the_tefno_186080.html) Viewed December 2012.