

THE LAST CHANCE . . .



THE LAST CHANCE FOR THE GREEN-NECKED PEAFOWL (*Pavo muticus*)?

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The Green-necked Peafowl from South-East Asia once inhabited the entire South-east Asian Region, from North-east India to Western China, through Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and all of Malaysia, even reaching the isolation of the island Java. Today the population of this spectacular Fowl is dramatically shrunken and in many of its original habitats is extinct, i.e. in Bangladesh and Malaysia and in many other is standing on the brink of extinction. The official numbers for this Species is between 5000 and 10000 still surviving in the Wild.

Above and left: Specifer male
Photos: Wolfgang Mennig

The main reason for this decline in the wild is the destruction and continued shrinking of natural habitat by the ever increasing human populations in those regions and also continued hunting.

The Green-necked Peafowl inhabits semi-open woodland, jungle and shrub land, especially the broad river valleys, the same areas that are also in demand with humans. The Species is shy of men and investigations have learned that they will desert areas populated by humans and never return there. It is only a matter of time before the complete extinction of this Species in the Wild actually occurs.

In the past, scientists distinct 3 sub-species of the *Pavo muticus*; the *Pavo muticus muticus* (Malaysia and Java), the *Pavo muticus imperator* (South-east Asia including Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam) and *Pavo muticus spicifer* (Bangladesh and Burma). This number of 3 sub-species is no longer accurate as today it is now known that there are at least 10 different sub-species of *Pavo mucticus*, some now extinct.

Alone, *Pavo mucticus muticus* that is of the Malayan 'type' and also the Javanese, that seem genetically identical and were placed under the scientific name *Pavo muticus muticus*, no longer holds good, indeed, there are two genetically different 'forms' in Java alone, in South-west Java, the Udjon-Kulon form and the East Javanese, Baluran-Form.



Above: Baluran – Muticus www-photo: Andrew Duff

Left: Indonesia – Muticus, www-photo: E. J. Peiker

Below: Baluran - Muticus, www-photo: Montereybay



The Sub-species *Pavo muticus imperator* is also split into 4 more 'Types' and with the West Chinese "Yunnanensis" that is split further into 5 more distinct 'sub-species', these are found in the nominate form, *Pavo muticus imperator* from Central Thailand too East Burma, then the "Annamensis" Form, or the "Vietnamensis" along the Vietnamese Coastline from North to South, further the "Angkorensis" in Cambodia and the "Laotius" in Central Laos.



Thai-Imperator, Females,
www-Photo: Thai.to

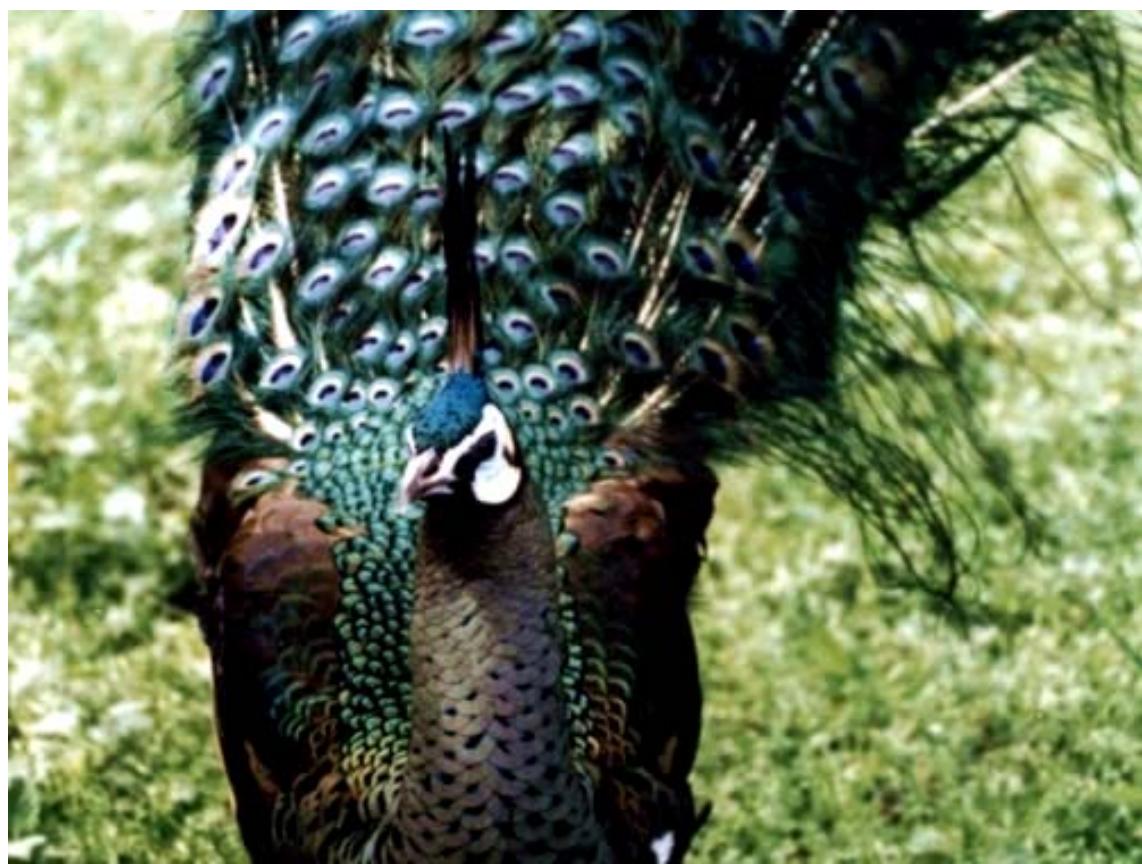


Thai-Imperator,
www-Foto: Dave Farrow



Cambodia – Imperator,
www-Photo : Allan Michaud

Yunnan - male,
www-Photo:
unbekannt



In Burma, there are two distinct forms, the "Arrakan" in North Burma in the Arrakan Mountains and further South, to Malaysia, the nominate form, '*Spicifer*' is identified.



Burma – Spicifer,
www-Photo: John Corder



Burma – Spicifer Female,
www-Photo: John Corder

All these sub-species vary to a greater or lesser degree in their colouring and markings and to a greater degree in the specific habitat where each is encountered.

The most of these sub-species were and are, always geographically separated from one another, i.e. developed in isolation, only in very small area's would crossing have been at all possible.

When the many of sub-species of this bird are listed here, with such a wide, biological diversity, it would seem that the existence of this species should not be in danger. Unfortunately the reverse is the case, very many more of the sub-species are already extinct and the remainder are now almost all on the brink of extinction.

"The Return of the Green Peafowl"- Pictures from the Malayan newspaper "The Star" on 11. Jan. 2005

Siti Hawa Yatim
Director of Wildlife &
National Parcs, Malaysia



Right: The first young *Pavo muticus muticus* that arrived in Malaysia in 2005.

Acting now, before it becomes too late, in 2004 the WPA International has started a breeding and release programme in Malaya. In co-operation with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks in Malaysia a breeding station has been built and breeding birds from England and Germany taken to Malaysia.



All these birds were DNA tested to ensure only pure *Pavo muticus muticus* are used in the breeding programme. These birds will be bred and the young released into the wild.

Exact observation and accurate recording of the birds in the Project and later in the wild has been organised by the Wildlife and Parks to ensure the greatest possible success of this Project.

Left: Emperor female.

Below: Muticus Female.

Photos: Wolfgang Mennig

This Project alone cannot ensure the survival of this Species. With further support from the WPA several "International Focus Groups" were formed in 2005. These are Groups that each interest themselves in a specific species of Wild Fowl. One of these Groups is now allocated to the *Pavo muticus*, the Green-Necked Peafowl.



Functions of the Groups:

- To find and organise interested breeders of the Species and Sub-species, and give them the opportunity to co-operate in an active way.
- To check the existing Aviary bred populations on purity by specialists or through DNA testing, in order to select suitable breeding stock.
- The identification of all 'Pure' animals in a Stud Book, catalogued to inhibit close breeding and to enable 'swapping' of suitable breeding stock and the further dissemination of the offspring.

We are hoping that through this programme, more and more breeders will learn to recognise the pure form of the Green-necked Peafowl and that by their help the captive bred birds will increase substantially in number. Moreover we hope

that the crossing with *Pavo cristatus*, the Blue Peafowl at long last will be totally stopped.

If anyone wishes to support this Project, we would be thankful for any help offered and all are welcome in the support of preserving this unusual and beautiful bird.

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**Above: Emperor male
Left: Muticus male
Below: Specifer female
Photos: Wolfgang Mennig**

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