

First International Pheasant Symposium

The first International Pheasant Symposium promises to be a unique occasion for members of the World Pheasant Association. The Symposium itself will be held in Kathmandu from 21st - 24th November and participants have been invited from almost all the Asian countries including Pakistan, India, Malaysia and Thailand all of whom will be sending representatives and speakers.

W.P.A. has taken the opportunity of organising a really exciting holiday and pheasant trek around the Symposium for its members, some forty of whom will be flying out to Kathmandu on 18th. November. After a day to recover they will fly to Megeuly air strip near the famous Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge. Elephants instead of taxis will take the party to the lodge. During the journey through the forest a wealth of birds and animals are usually seen and can include Indian Rhino and Leopard as well as Wild Indian Peafowl and Red Junglefowl. Two days will be spent at Tiger Tops before the return flight to Kathmandu and the Symposium.

The Symposium will have two prime objectives. The first to which much of the first day will be devoted will be a country by country round-up so far as is possible of the present day pheasant distributions and forest habitat status. The first day will also be concerned with a collation of all known conservation work under way or planned for the future, that will affect the species in each country.

The second objective is the dissemination of information on such vital subjects as census techniques, captive breeding problems in Asia, release techniques, the value of National Parks, tourism and conservation etc.

Present at the Symposium will, we hope, be all W.P.A.'s field workers who have been or currently are working on

pheasants in Asia. All of them will be presenting papers at the Symposium but probably equally important will be for-gathering after it.

W.P.A. has taken the chance of organising a special scientific trek into Tony Leliot's study area North of Pokhara. All our field workers will be on this trek and will be able out on the ground to compare notes on census techniques, estimating areas, study methods, etc. W.P.A. hopes from this to be able to reach standard guidelines that can be used by all future field workers.

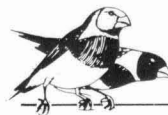
Many of the members of the I.C.B.P. Pheasant Working Group will be attending the Symposium and W.P.A. is delighted that I.C.B.P. has decided to take the opportunity to call the first ever meeting of their pheasant working group in Kathmandu.

For the holidaying W.P.A. members their real adventure starts after the Symposium when all who are fit will be flying up to Lukla at 9500 feet to commence a trek into the Everest National Park. This will take them up the Dudkosi River through the famous Sherpa village of Namche Bazaar and on towards the monastery of Thyanboche. The main camp site will be some three hours short of Thyanboche in a lovely valley of predominantly birch forest which abound (my words!) with Himalayan Monal and Blood Pheasants. Unless things go badly wrong or they are like me, rather deaf, the party should be wakened in the mornings by the whistling call of Monal all round them — a lovely and unforgettable sound.

The whole trek will take just six days before flying back to Kathmandu, a day's sightseeing and the return home. The trip is now fully booked but it is W.P.A.'s policy to organise further treks in the future and two are already arranged in association with Mountain Travel Nepal and

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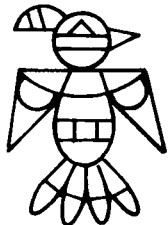
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Mountain Travel India. A return trip to Nepal will be the first and will be in the spring of 1980 from 7th March to 22nd March, to partly coincide with the Rhododendron season. It will be led by W.P.A.'s field worker in Nepal, Tony Lelliott.

This trip will be run in conjunction with the well known travel company Thomas Cook and will repeat the Lukla Thyanboche trek in the Everest National Park and a two day visit to Tiger Tops in the Chitwan National Park in Southern Nepal. In addition, to replace November's Symposium, there will be a two day visit across to Pokhara in Central Nepal from which some of the finest views of the Himalayas can be obtained. A visit is also being arranged around Asia's largest and most comprehensive pheasant farm belonging to the Chairman of W.P.A. Nepal, Colonel Jimmy Roberts. The cost will be around £950.

The second trip will be in the autumn of 1980 to Kashmir in Northern India. This will be in the first fortnight in September and will begin by flying to Delhi. After a day to recover from the flight, the party will take a coach to Agra the home of the world famous Taj Mahal. Then on to Baratpur, which is famous for its birdlife, where the night will be spent. The following day there will be more viewing of the birds before a return to Delhi. Then the next day the party flies to Srinagar in Kashmir where accommodation will be in house boats on the Dal Lake. An experience of a lifetime.

The remainder of the trip will be one of choice between a trek into the Kashmir mountains or a week's fishing on the famous trout rivers of Kashmir. The trek will be led by our field worker in India Dr. Tony Gaston, who has led other ornithological parties and is an expert in both the birds and the plants. Actually seeing pheasants cannot be guaranteed though even in September the Koklass pheasant should be heard without difficulty, but this bird is shy and it requires time and patience to see them. The now very rare Kashmir stag may also be seen. This trip is not yet fully costed but is unlikely to exceed the Nepal trip cost.

Anyone interested in either of these trips or in getting their name on the mailing list for future tours should write to me at Ashmere, Felix Lane, Shepperton, Middlesex, U.K.

K.C.R. Howman

KATHMANDU:

Temperature very comfortable; warm during the day — light cardigan in the evening is the norm.

Accommodation in four star, well run and comfortable hotel:

TIGER TOPS:

Early morning mist — cool; later it becomes warm to shirt-sleeve temperatures during the day. Cool again in the evening — light jerseys. Dress informal at both Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge (solar heated showers, comfortable, simple accommodation) and the Tented Camp. Only walking shoes necessary — the elephants do the rest!

LUKLA — KHUMBU PHEASANT TREK:

Fly into Lukla at 9,500 feet; this is high and you will be walking higher, up to a maximum of around 12,000 feet; at this altitude 'mountain sickness' is a possibility if —

- i) you overdo it
- ii) you are very unfit;
- iii) you have a bad heart;

We strongly recommend a word with your Doctor before committing yourself to this trek. All walking is at your own pace, and you will not be under pressure — do not try to be clever and race off on your own before you are acclimatised as it can be your undoing.

Mornings are normally sunny, but cloud comes up most days and around mid-day; temperatures can change from shirt-sleeve walking conditions to parka weather. The nights will be cold and insulated waistcoats and parka-type jackets are advisable, as well as a couple of good jerseys. First-rate double sleeping bags are provided, as well as foam mattresses, so you will be warm and comfortable at night.

Good walking boots are recommended, but they can be lightweight and there is no necessity for expensive heavy duty mountaineering boots. A separate list of recommended items to take will be sent to those participating — this is based on the experience of several Asian trips and is merely a personal list intended to be helpful. Trekking means tented accommodation and everything, bar personal necessities, are carried for you. The Monal and Blood pheasants are fantastic and well worth the effort:

POKHARA:

The Himalayan views at Pokhara are some of the finest but with little chance of seeing pheasants.

If anyone does not want to trek and prefers to be based at an hotel in Pokhara (altitude about 2,800 feet) and walk from there, please let me know at the time of booking so that we can arrange accommodation. Colonel Roberts' pheasant farm is at Pokhara. Temperature very comfortable. The Tour will be going there anyway after Lukla. ●