

CROWNED PIGEONS AND PEOPLE

By Josef Lindholm III,
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My first really coherent memory of birds in zoos was probably around 1964. I could still be carried around then. My father was holding me when he asked a keeper what two birds were. I still see them clearly in my mind's eye, a few feet from each other in the Rainforest Aviary at the San Diego Zoo. I remember my dad repeating what the keeper said: A Cock of the Rock and a Victoria Crowned Pigeon. I remember the Cock of the Rock had a dark edge to its crest, so I know I saw a Guiana (*Rupicola rupicola*). On the other hand, I clearly remember the words "Victoria Crowned Pigeon" as well as I remember that piercing red eye under that unique crest.

Crowned Pigeons have captured the imagination for a long time. The first encyclopedia published in the United States appeared in 1798 and was titled *Encyclopedia, or a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature*. It was essentially an unauthorized version, with added text and pictures, of the Third Edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (which had just been completed in 1797). The publisher was Thomas Dobson (1751-1823) who, in 1783, emigrated from Scotland to Philadelphia, where he established a very successful printing press. Under the heading of "Columba, the Pigeons" is a lengthy account of "The Coronata or Great Crowned Pigeon": "This species inhabits the Molucca Isles and New Guinea, and has been brought to England alive. Buffon mentions five having been at once alive in France... In France they were never observed to lay eggs, nor in Holland, though they were kept for some time; but Scopoli assures us that the male approaches the female with the head bent into the breast, making a noise more like lowing than cooing, and that they not only made a nest on trees, in the menagerie where they were kept, but laid eggs. The nest was composed of hay and stalks. The female never sat, but stood upon the eggs; and he supposed it was from this cause alone that there was no produce" (Dobson, 1798).

Giovanni Antonio Scopoli (1723-1788) was a physician who also became a pioneering systematic zoologist and botanist. His *Anni Historica Naturales*, published from 1769 to 1772 is an important early work of ornithology. While one might presume the above mentioned "menagerie" where the pigeons nested was



in Italy, it could just have well been in Austria, or some other Hapsburg dominion, since Scopoli traveled and worked all over the Holy Roman Empire.

I am not aware of an English translation of Scopoli's *Anni Historica Naturales*. I have managed to puzzle out some of the French in Volume II of *Histoire Naturelle des Oiseaux*, by Georges-Louis Le Clerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788), another pioneering zoologist, who published the first of the 36 volumes of his *Histoire Naturelle* in 1749. The nine volumes on birds appeared from 1770-1783. The second of these volumes, which includes the pigeons, was published in 1771. In it we learn that the above-mentioned five birds that Buffon saw alive together in Paris were imported by "Monsieur le Prince de Soubise," otherwise known as Charles de Rohan (1715-1787), who, Wikipedia informs us, was a "military man, a minister to Kings Louis XV and Louis XVI, and a notorious libertine." Buffon notes they all looked like each other, and "d'ailleurs ils ne pendent pas," which my friend Pierre, Comte de Chabannes, translates as "they don't even lay eggs" (Buffon, 1771).

Until 1884, when Germany and England established Protectorates over the eastern half of the island, the Dutch held a monopoly over the animals of New Guinea, which they obtained through trade networks established, long before the arrival of

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Europeans, by the Bandanese civilization of the Moluccas. The Bandanese obtained Bird of Paradise skins from New Guinea in exchange for cloth from Java and India, which in turn had been exchanged for nutmeg. Nutmeg was a very valuable spice in the days before modern food preservation, and it grew only in the Moluccas, so when the Dutch subjugated the Banda Islands in 1609, they immediately established themselves as a world power. Regarding Crowned Pigeons, Thomas Dobson's *Encyclopedia* reports: "The Dutch at the Moluccas call them crownvogel. Monsieur Sonnerat, as well as Dampier, found these in plenty at New Guinea; and it is probable that they were originally transported from the place into Banda, from whence the Dutch chiefly now procure them" (Dobson, 1798).

Le Comte de Buffon was closely associated with the Royal Menagerie at Versailles, and responsible for research there. The Versailles Menagerie, established in 1665, featured great numbers of exotic birds, such as West African Crowned and Demoiselle Cranes, Old World White Pelicans, and Old World Purple Gallinules (Loiselle, 1912a, Robbins, 2002). From Buffon's remarks concerning le Prince de Soubise's birds, it appears that as of 1771 Crowned Pigeons had yet been kept there. However, in 1792, there was one at Versailles, which, along with "seven or eight peafowl, and two dozen chickens," was all that remained of the once great bird collection, three years into the French Revolution (Loisel, 1912a, 161).

On Sept. 19, 1792, two days before the Monarchy was abolished and the French Republic declared, the General Overseer for Versailles (who history only records as "Couturier") wrote a letter to Jacques-Henri Bernadin de Saint-Pierre (1737–1814), Director of the newly established Natural History Museum at le Jardin des Plantes (no longer le Jardin du Roi!), announcing that the Menagerie would be closed and the animals destroyed. Couturier invited the Museum Director to take his pick of the soon to be deceased specimens, drawing his attention especially

to "un superbe rhinoceros" (Loisel, 1912a, Robbins, 2002). Rather than responding with enthusiasm, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, a widely admired author of progressive romance novels, was horrified. After a hurriedly arranged trip from Paris to Versailles, in the company of two of his botanists, he published, at his own expense, a pamphlet titled, *A note on the necessity of adding a menagerie to the National Botanical Gardens in Paris*, and sent it to the Minister of the Interior in December 1792. (Louis XVI went to the guillotine that January). Due to the popularity of his novels, anything written by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was bound to attract attention and be discussed. He made an eloquent and ultimately successful case for a National Zoo for the New Republic (Robbins, 2002). Among his arguments was that the opportunity was presented for the establishment of new and interesting domesticated animals. In particular he mentioned the "pigeon couronne des Indes" as an excellent candidate—provided a mate could be obtained for it (Robbins, 2002, 217).

As it happened, the Crowned Pigeon never made it to the new National menagerie. The only animals that did finally arrive from Versailles in April, 1794, were single specimens of the Quagga and the North African Hartebeest (both now extinct), and a Senegalese lion (Robbins, 2002, 222). The Indian Rhinoceros had died some months before. No one appears to know what happened to the pigeon. But it had played its role in the establishment of the first truly public zoo in the world, in 1793.

This Menagerie de Jardin des Plantes, in Paris, was not long without Crowned Pigeons. Following the 1795 invasion of Holland to spread The Revolution, the French confiscated the inhabitants of Het Loo, the menagerie of William V, Prince of Orange. A collection of animals from there which arrived in Paris in August, 1796, included three "Pigeons courannes de Bengale," along with, among other creatures, a cassowary, a King Vulture, two curassows, fifty Silver Pheasants, two Golden Pheasants, six Axis Deer, and a lot of Chinese Goldfish (Loisel, 1912a, 39-40,



Robbins, 2002, 225). In 1804 some more Crowned Pigeons arrived in a collection resulting from Nicholas Baudin's expedition which Napoleon had commissioned to explore Australia. Their shipmates included one of the few Lyrebirds to leave Australia alive, fruit bats, 100 Giant Gouramis, many South African animals, and two of the now extinct Kangaroo Island Emus, that spent a brief sojourn at the Empress Josephine's estate at Malmaison before joining the others at le Jardin des Plantes (Loiselle, 1912b, 136, Belozerskaya, 2006).

The first fully successful captive breeding took place at le Jardin des Plantes, in 1850 (Hopkinson, 1926). However, in 1849, one hatched at London Zoo, but lived only four days. Furthermore, unlike the Paris breeding, achieved with Western Crowned Pigeons (*Goura cristata*), the London bird was a hybrid between a Western Crowned Pigeon, and a Victoria Crowned Pigeon (*Goura victoria*). While the Western or Blue Crowned Pigeon had been described to science in 1764, the Victoria Crowned Pigeon did not receive its scientific name until 27 Aug, 1844, at a meeting of the Zoological Society of London, which opened London Zoo in 1828 and has run it ever since. This scientific description was made from a bird living at London Zoo and was authored by Louis Fraser (1810–1866), the Curator of the Zoological Society's Museum. Of course it was named "in honour of her most Gracious Majesty, the Patroness of the Society" (Fraser, 1844). The nesting which produced the short-lived hybrid was documented in detail, by the Zoological Society's Secretary, David William Mitchell (1813–1859), who had authorized putting the zoo's two single crowned pigeons together (Mitchell, 1849).

Goura cristata hatched at London Zoo in April and August of 1874, September, 1875, July, 1885, September, 1886, and July, 1887 (Sclater, 1883 & 1896). Since the first record for a chick of this species reaching independence in the United Kingdom is credited to London Zoo in 1914 (Coles, 2003), it appears none

of these chicks survived. On the other hand, this species was reared in Egypt in 1874. The avicultural historian Emilius Hopkinson (1926) credits this achievement to "Ibrahim Pasha," but as that Viceroy of Egypt died in 1848, the honors obviously go to his grandson, Isma'il ("The Magnificent") Pasha, who was Viceroy from 1867-1879. Educated in Paris, he traveled extensively in Europe, and profoundly modernized his country. He was a key player in the construction of the Suez Canal, "The Gateway to India," which was completed in 1869.

Bringing birds from New Guinea to Europe became a fair simpler matter after the Canal was completed. Instead of being transported around the continent of Africa, they traveled from the Dutch East Indies to India then crossed the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. This is clearly demonstrated from the records of the Zoological Society of London. In the decade of the 1860's, London Zoo received four Western (or Blue) Crowned Pigeons and two Victoria Crowned Pigeons (Sclater, 1883). (Two of the former were gifts of the "Babu Rajendra Mullick, Corresponding Member of the Zoological Society." Rajah Rajendro Mullick Bahadur maintained his own magnificent "Marble Palace" Zoo in Calcutta (Walker, 2001, 261-262) and donated an amazing series of animals to London Zoo in the 1860's including eleven species of Asian and Pacific pigeons and doves, and eleven Kashmir Goats (Gray, 1864, Sclater, 1883)). During the 1870's London Zoo received 12 Western Crowned Pigeons and three Victoria's. In the 1880's thirteen Western (eight "on deposit") and five Victoria's came there (Sclater, 1883 & 1896).

A successful breeding of Victoria Crowned Pigeons in the UK does not appear to have occurred until 1972, at Bristol Zoo (Coles, 2003). The world's first breeding of a pure specimen took place in 1881, and as with the Western Crowned Pigeon, it was in France, at Chateau d'Andilly, where Pierre Rodocanachi (member of a very wealthy shipping and banking family) maintained a famous collection of gamebirds (Hopkinson, 1926).

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The third species of Crowned Pigeon (*Goura scheepmakeri*) was also first bred in France, though today, this can be somewhat difficult to figure out. Emilius Hopkinson (1926) credits “Delaurier in France in 1903 or 1904” with the first breeding of “D’Albertis’ Goura (*G. albertisi*), Salvad.” Count Adelardo Tomasso Salvadori Paleotti, M.D. (1835–1923) was an ornithologist at the Royal Natural History Museum at Turin from 1863 until his death, but took repeated leaves to compile catalogues of the rapidly expanding collection of the British Museum of Natural History. He published scientific descriptions of many of the specimens collected by increasingly busy explorers, one of whom was Luigi Maria D’Albertis, (1841–1901), whose extensive explorations of New Guinea from 1871 though 1877 included the ascent of Mt. Arfek Geb and a 45-day expedition that took him 580 miles up the Fly River.

I have found the website www.worldbirdinfo.net enormously useful in figuring out scientific names that no one uses anymore. I discovered therein that the bird Count Salvadori described in 1876, from a specimen collected in Cloudy Bay, Southeastern New Guinea, as *Goura albertisi*, in the bulletin of the *Accademia della Scienze di Torino*, had already gotten a scientific name the year before.

On Nov. 8, 1875, the Zoological Society of London received

the description of *Goura scheepmakeri* submitted by Otto Finsch (1839–1917), remembered today as an authority of the birds of New Guinea. He was the first European to explore the Sepik River in 1885, and an instrumental figure in establishing the German Protectorate over Northeastern New Guinea in 1884. In 1875, however, all of this was ahead of him. Dr. Finsch would not begin his explorations of the South Pacific until 1879. He already held a distinguished reputation as an ornithologist, having served as Curator at the Royal Natural History Museum in Leiden from 1862–1865, and, from 1864, at the Natural History Museum of Bremen (now the Over-Seas Museum), to which he would be appointed Director in 1876. The specimen he based his description upon was preserved, “obtained by chance from a dealer in Holland” (Finsch, 1875), and had no locality data.

Dr. Finsch complicated matters by including another specimen in his 1875 paper—A living one in a zoo. After his thorough description of the dead bird from the dealer, he continues: “When at the Gardens of the Zoological Society of Amsterdam, Mr. Westerman called my attention to a living specimen of *Goura*, which he believed to be new, and which proved to be the same species as my specimen. From my description however, this specimen differs in some respects, having the throat and the smaller upper wing-coverts also vinaceous purple-brown, and

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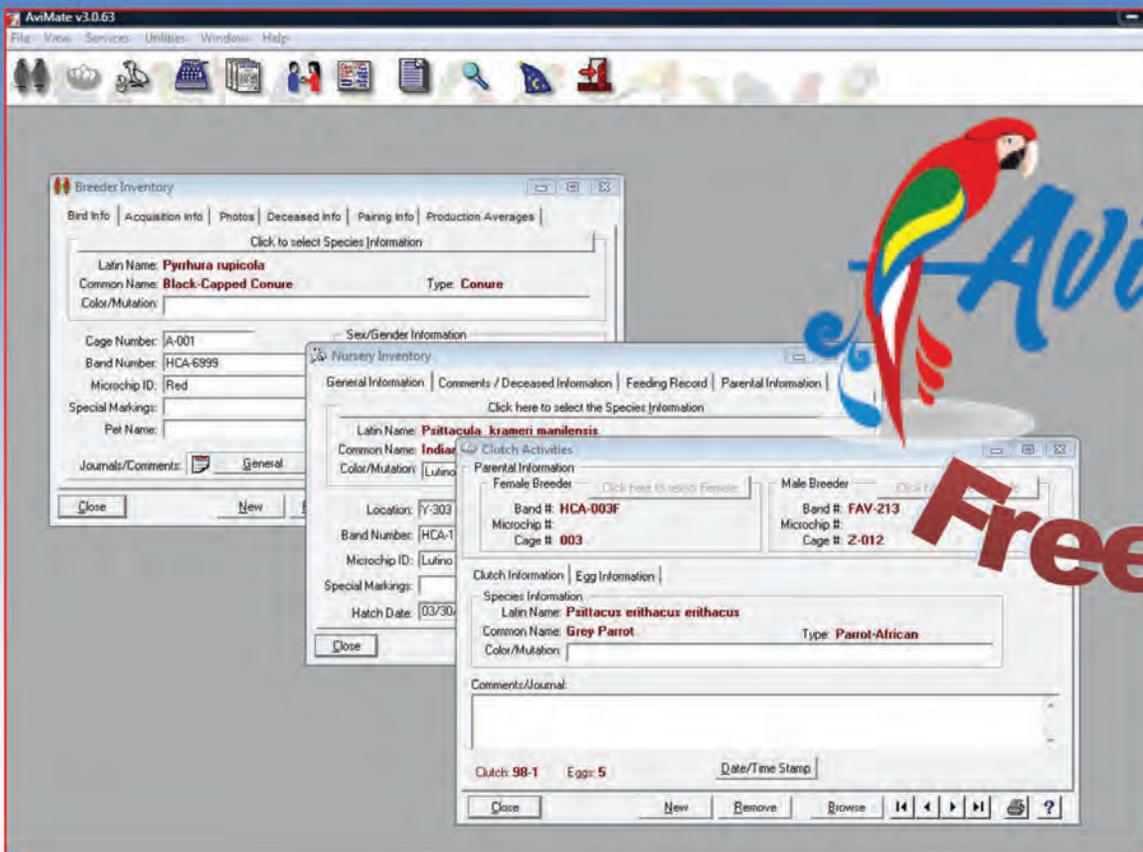
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the anterior coverts of the secondaries more decidedly whitish and tipped with purplish brown; otherwise the specimens agree in every respect. These differences probably depend on age or sex" (Finsch, 1875). (Gerardus Frederik Westerman (1807–1890) was one the three founders of Royal Zoological Society *Natura Artis Magistra* in 1838, and the first Director of "Artis," its zoo in Amsterdam, until his death.)

As it happened, while the zoo bird was indeed the same species as Finsch's dead specimen, the differences between the two were actually subspecific. And in 1876, the subspecies of Mr. Westerman's bird was given a scientific name—by Count Salvadori! Before discussing that subspecies, however, I present Dr. Finsch's account of how he came to name his: "Following the wishes of my esteemed friend Mr. Westerman, who wishes to express the feelings of thanks of himself and the Royal Zoological Society of Amsterdam, I have the pleasure of naming this new species after Mr. C. Scheepmaker, of Soerebaya [today's Surabaya, in Java, then the largest naval base in the Dutch East Indies] who has presented to the Society many rare animals, and to whom also belongs the credit of having sent home the first specimens of this interesting new *Goura*" (Finsch, 1875). Thus, ironically, Dr Finsch named his dead bird for the person who provided the live one at the Amsterdam Zoo. However, this is

not the only irony.

Otto Finsch concluded his description thusly: "Although the exact localities of my specimen and of that in the Amsterdam Gardens are unknown, I am fortunate in being able to give the south end of New Guinea, opposite Yule Island, as the true habitat of *Goura scheepmakeri*, having been kindly informed by Mr. Sclater that several specimens of it are contained in the last collection sent to the Civic Museum of Genoa by the indefatigable Italian traveler Signor d'Albertis from that locality" (Finsch, 1875). Those Genoa specimens were the ones on which Count Salvadori based his 1876 description of "*Goura albertisii*," preempted by Finsch's 1875 *G. scheepmakeri*. Salvadori specified the locality as Cloudy Bay, which is quite near the pointy southern tip of the island.

Philip Lutley Sclater (1829–1913), who drew Finsch's attention to D'Albertis' specimens at Genoa, served as Secretary of the Zoological Society of London from 1860 to 1902. Among other things, he was responsible for the nine editions of the List of the Vertebrated Animals Now or Lately Living in the Gardens of the Zoological Society of London, published from 1862 to 1896. He was also one of the leading ornithologists of the Victorian Age and often considered the "Father of Zoogeography" for having defined the zoogeographical realms we still recognize



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Crowned Pigeons Hatched in U.S. Zoos, 1959–1996

Source: The International Zoo Yearbook breeding records (Zoological Society of London, 1960–1998). (Figures in parentheses indicate pre-fledgling mortalities)

Western Crowned Pigeon (<i>Goura cristata</i>)		
Cleveland	1960, 62, 65, 76–77, 1987	4+
Tampa (Busch Gardens)	1963–77, 1981	34+(4)
Honolulu	1966–69, 1976–77	12(3)
San Francisco	1967, 1978, 1980–84	11
Pittsburgh Aviary	1969–1972, 1986–90	17(7)
Seattle	1969–73	11(4)
Dallas Zoo	1971	3(3)
Memphis	1971, 1973–74	3(1)
Chicago (Lincoln Park)	1974	1(1)
Phoenix	1975–77, 1980, 1982–84	7(3)
Birmingham	1977	2
Denver	1977, 1980–83	7(2)
New Orleans	1978–88, 1990–91 & 1996	35(14)
Washington DC (NZP)	1978–87, 1989	36(6)
San Diego Zoo	1981–83	7(4)
Topeka	1981–84, 1987–89, 1992, 1995–96	17(8)
Jackson	1983–84	4(2)
Tulsa	1983	1
Asheboro	1985	3(1)
Tucson (Reid Park)	1985, 1987, 1991–96	12(6)
San Antonio Zoo	1986–90, 1992–96	32(16)
Thurmont (Catocin Mountain)	1987	2
Fort Worth	1992–93, 1995–96	5(2)
Boston (Franklin Park)	1994	2
Yulee (White Oak Plantation)	1994	4(3)
Southern Crowned Pigeon (<i>Goura scheepmakeri</i>)		
Tampa Busch Gardens	1963–66, 1969, 1971–73	10+(1)
San Diego Zoo	1969–1970	3(1)
Memphis	1976–1981, 1984–85 & 1989	18(6)
Los Angeles	1979–82, 1987, 1990, 1992	11(4)
Albuquerque	1988	1
Little Rock	1993–94	3(3)
Sclater's Crowned Pigeon (<i>Goura scheepmakeri sclateri</i>)		
San Diego Zoo	1964–67	4

Victoria Crowned Pigeon (<i>Goura victoria</i>)		
San Diego Zoo	1959	1
Los Angeles	1974–78, 1981	14(10)
Detroit	1976–77	2(2)
Van Nuys (Busch Gardens)	1976	2
Kansas City	1977–78, 1981–86, 1988–93, 1995–96	25(10)
Minnesota ZG	1978–1985, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995	22(15)
Tampa (Busch Gardens)	1978–80, 1984	9(2)
Tulsa	1978, 1980–82, 1987–88	9(7)
Albuquerque	1980–1984, 1986–88, 1990, 1993, 1995	26(11)
Denver	1980–84	10(2)
Dallas Zoo	1982, 1986–88, 1990–93	24(17)
St. Louis	1982	4(4)
Columbia (Riverbanks)	1983–86, 1988, 1990–92, 1995	23(12)
Bronx Zoo (St. Catherine's Island)	1983	1
Philadelphia	1984–85, 1991–94	11(7)
Topeka	1985	2
Asheboro	1986–88, 1992	8(2)
Houston	1987–91, 1996	14(4)
St. Louis	1988, 1990, 1992	7(5)
Miami Metrozoo	1990–91	3(1)
Pittsburgh Aviary	1991, 1993–96	7
Milwaukee	1992	1(1)
Baton Rouge	1993–96	8(5)
Stoneham	1993	1
Honolulu	1994–96	6(1)
Memphis	1996	1
Bronx Zoo	1996	1
Seattle	1996	1
<i>Goura cristata</i> X <i>Goura victoria</i>		
Dallas	1970	1
San Francisco	1974, 1979	2
Houston (Busch Gardens)	1975–76	4
<i>Goura cristata</i> X <i>Goura scheepmakeri</i>		
Philadelphia	1965	1
Tampa (Busch Gardens)	1975–1977, 1979–89	7

today. It would thus follow that he should have a new crowned pigeon named after him. Although the pigeon that Count Salvadori named to honor Luigi D'Albertis was invalidated by Finsch publishing first, the one he named in honor of Sclater is recognized today as *Goura scheepmakeri sclateri*, and perfectly matches the description of the living bird Finsch was shown in Amsterdam, which he failed to recognize as taxonomically distinct! The specimens with which Salvadori worked came from Fly River, quite a distance to the West from Cloudy River, and the eastern tip of the island.

Salvadori named three taxa of Crowned Pigeons in 1876, all based on specimens at the Civic Museum of Natural History in Genoa. Along with the ones he named for he named for D'Albertis and Sclater, is the one he named to honor Odoardo Beccarri (1843–1920). Beccarri was primarily a botanical collector, specializing in Palms. His most well-known discovery is the infamous Giant Corpse Lilly (*Amorphophallus titanum*),

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which he found in Sumatra in 1878. On his second expedition to New Guinea, in 1872, he traveled with D'Albertis, and it was during this voyage that the type specimens of "Goura beccarii" were collected at Humboldt Bay (renamed Yos Sudarso Bay by the Government of Indonesia). It is now recognized as the Mainland New Guinea form of the Victoria Crowned Pigeon, a much larger bird than the ones from the coastal islands, and much rarer in captivity. My friend, Paul Breese, Director Emeritus of the Honolulu Zoo received two from the Private collection of Sir Edward Hallstrom, in Nondougl, in Papua New Guinea in 1960. They were from a flock of eighteen that the famed collector Fred Shaw-Mayer brought back from the Sepik River. Paul tells me that they definitely had larger crests than the Victoria Crowned Pigeons one is used to seeing. They never bred. Paul thinks they may both have been males.

Today, three full species of crowned pigeon are recognized. *Goura cristata* was scientifically described in 1764, by the German naturalist Peter Pallas, in the text of an auction catalog for a collection of preserved specimens. Eighteenth Century communication being what it was, in 1766 the great Linneaus, who commenced the assigning of scientific names to animals in 1758, named it "Goura coronata," and that name remained in use until well into the 20th Century. However, as we have seen with



Salvadori's "Goura albertsi," priority rules, and the 1764 name is the one in use today. In aviculture, this species is most widely known as the Blue Crowned Pigeon, since it lacks any of the purple seen in the other two species. Ornithologists tend to call it the Western Crowned Pigeon. It is confined to the weirdly shaped western end of New Guinea (traditionally known as the "Birds Head"—The whole island does bear an uncanny resemblance to

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a Crowned Pigeon) and several offshore islands. The island birds have been designated as *G. cristata minor* on the basis of having shorter wings, but mainland birds have quite variable wing-lengths, so the trend has been to recognize no subspecies (Gibbs et al, 2001). None of the breedings listed in the International Zoo Yearbook are thus listed. Politically, the entire range falls within Indonesia.

West past the “neck” of the “Bird’s Head” is where one finds *Goura victoria*, along the northern coast of New Guinea, almost to the eastern end of the island. The big, large-crested subspecies Salvadori named in honor of Beccari is found on the mainland. The nominant subspecies, described by Fraser in 1844 is confined to the islands of Biak, Yapen (formerly Jobi) and Supiori. Both are immediately recognizable as Victoria Crowned Pigeons because they alone have spangled crests, each feather ending in a “tab.” Since both subspecies are found in Indonesia, both have been commercially exported in recent decades, but little, if any effort was made to distinguish them, and there don’t appear to be any recognized *G. victoria beccarii* in the U.S. or Europe. This subspecies was never listed by the International Zoo Yearbook.

While ornithologists appear to be content with the common name Victoria Crowned Pigeon for *Goura victoria*, the consensus among them appears to favor the common name Southern

Crowned Pigeon for *G. scheepmakeri*. As a whole, this species is distinguished from the other two by possessing purple underparts, but lacking the “tabbed” crest of *G. victoria*. Unlike the other two species, this one has no island populations, so that it was not discovered until well into the classic age of Victorian exploration. The eastern subspecies, which Finsch described from his preserved specimen, is restricted to the present-day Republic of Papua New Guinea, which has never allowed commercial export of birds, and, in recent decades, has essentially prohibited zoo consortium exports as well. The more colorful western subspecies, Slavadori’s *G. scheepmakeri sclateri*, has a far more extensive range, which includes Irian Jaya, the Indonesian half of the island, from where commercial exports have been made. Although many of the International Zoo Yearbook records are listed simply as “*Goura scheepmakeri*” it is likely they all concern *G. scheepmakeri sclateri*. My friend Pierre de Chabannes, who has traveled extensively through Asia and Europe, has never seen *G. scheepmakeri scheepmakeri*.

As late as the 1920’s there remained confusion regarding Crowned Pigeon Classification. “*Goura sclateri*” was thought to be a full species, while the eastern population was listed as “*Goura cristata scheepmakeri*” (Low 1929, Newman, 1932), or continued to be identified as “*Goura albertisi*” (Hopkinson, 1926).



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CROWNED PIGEONS AND PEOPLE

Crowned Pigeons hatched in Zoos in Continental Europe and the United Kingdom, 1959–1996

Source: The International Zoo Yearbook breeding records (Zoological Society of London, 1960–1998). (Figures in parentheses indicate pre-fledgling mortalities)

Unspecified Crowned Pigeons (<i>Goura sp.</i>)		
Hayle (Paradise Park)	1990	2(1)
Western Crowned Pigeon (<i>Goura cristata</i>)		
Zoologischer Garten Berlin	1959, 1961–66, 1972–73, 1975–76, 1978, 1994–95	18+(3)
Rotterdam	1959, 1971	1+
Paris (Jardin des Plantes)	1965, 1967–68	5
Amsterdam	1967–70	6
Tierpark Berlin	1969	1
Walsrode	1971, 1977–79, 1982, 1987, 1990, 1992–96	23(2)
Wassenaar	1972–74	5(2)
Copenhagen	1973–81	21(14)
Blackpool	1974–76, 1978	5(3)
Darmstadt	1974–75, 1977, 1979, 1984	7
Wuppertal	1974, 1977, 1984, 1992	5(2)
Marwell	1975–76	2
Fuengirola	1976	2(2)
Kiev	1978	3(3)
Muenster	1978–79	2
Widdington (Mole Hall)	1978, 81–82	3
Saint Petersburg	1979, 1981	4(3)
Alphen (Avifauna)	1981–83, 1987–93	19(11)
Augsburg	1982	2(2)
Montpellier	1983–84, 1991	3
Bochum	1984–87, 1989–94	14(2)
Servion	1984, 1989	2(1)
Munich	1986	1(1)
Villars les Dombes	1987–90	9
Arnhem (Burgers Zoo)	1989	4
Barcelona	1992, 1995	4(1)
Krasnodar	1994	2
Budapest	1995–96	3
Chester	1996	2(2)

Southern Crowned Pigeon (<i>Goura scheepmakeri</i>)		
Wassenaar	1964–67, 1969, 1974	7(1)
Frankfurt	1967–1972	8
Asson	1973–75, 1979	8
Rotterdam	1971–73, 1981–82, 1984, 1987–96	31(15)
Walsrode	1977–79, 1982, 1990–93	15(1)
Copenhagen	1995–96	4(2)
Southern Crowned Pigeon (<i>Goura scheepmakeri sclateri</i>)		
Rotterdam	1965–66	5(4)
Bern	1979–86	17(9)
Zurich	1982–85	7(5)
Walsrode	1994–96	12
Victoria Crowned Pigeon (<i>Goura victoria</i>)		
Wassenaar	1967, 1969–70, 1977–80, 1982	14(5)
Amsterdam	1971, 1973–74, 1976–93	27(6)
Walsrode	1971, 1979, 1982, 1987, 1991–96	15
Arnhem (Burgers Zoo)	1972, 1986, 1991–96	14(3)
Alphen (Avifauna)	1994–96	5(2)
Barcelona	1994–95	3
Bojnice	1995	1(1)
Hayle (Paradise Park)	1995	1(1)
Rotterdam	1995–96	7(3)
<i>Goura cristata</i> X <i>Goura victoria</i>		
Tierpark Berlin	1972	1
Hayle (Paradise Park)	1989	1

Be that as it may, in 1922, Jean Delacour was able to buy “three pairs of crowned pigeons: Common, Victoria, and Sclater’s” in the famed Calcutta Bird Market (Delacour, 1923). [On that same visit to India he was also given a further, unspecified pair of crowned pigeons, along with a pair of Argus Pheasants, by Kumar Gitendro Mullick, a descendent of the afore-mentioned Rajah who gave London Zoo crowned pigeons in 1864 (Sclater, 1883)].

During the 1920’s and ’30’s, Calcutta was a major source of birds for zoos and aviculturists, and quite a few made their way to the United States. The San Diego Zoo obtained Victoria Crowned Pigeons, along with Siberian Cranes, Lion-tailed

Macaques, and its first elephants, from Frank Buck in 1923. As far as I can tell San Diego has kept at least one member of the genus ever since. The first U.S. breeding was achieved in 1930, in California, at the Palos Verdes Estates Aviary of Frank A. Vanderlip (Wigley, 1930) (who in 1913, while President of the National Bank of New York, had bought the entire Palos Verdes Peninsula). A Western Crowned Pigeon hatched there. Victoria Crowned Pigeons were not far behind. When Jean Delacour visited the Northern California collection of S.H. Levin, in 1936, he found a dozen there, “most of them bred on the spot.” On that same California visit he found both Western and Victoria Crowned Pigeons were being bred at Leland Smith’s famous aviaries at Fair Oaks, near Sacramento (Delacour, 1937).

The first U.S. zoo breeding of crowned pigeons was of Victorias, at San Diego Zoo in 1943. A pair purchased in Calcutta nested five times, losing the chicks at eight days or less, before success was achieved (Koch, 1943). Since this occurred in the middle of World War II, San Diego’s staff all saved rations

Crowned Pigeons hatched in Zoos in Asia, the Pacific, Africa and the Americas, 1959–1996

Source: The International Zoo Yearbook breeding records (Zoological Society of London, 1960-1998). (Figures in parentheses indicate pre-fledgling mortalities)

Unspecified Crowned Pigeons (<i>Goura sp.</i>)		
Durban (Bird Park) (South Africa)	1986, 1988–89	7(1)
Western Crowned Pigeon (<i>Goura cristata</i>)		
Colombo (Sri Lanka)	1963 1971, 1973–74, 1977, 1979	10+(2)
Surabaya (Indonesia)	1970–73	4+
Jakarta (Indonesia)	1971–72, 1974–75, 1978–80, 1982	14
Sao Paulo (Brazil)	1972–73	3(1)
Jurong (Singapore)	1973–82, 1984–90, 1992–94	77(6)
Winnipeg (Canada)	1973–78	8(3)
Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)	1979, 1982–83	4
Bangkok (Thailand)	1983, 1989, 1991	4
Ahmedabad (India)	1985, 1987	2(2)
Chiba (Japan)	1986, 1991–93	5(1)
Granby (Canada)	1986, 1990–91	3(3)
Havana (Cuba)	1989, 1996	5(1)
Durban (Bird Park) (South Africa)	1990	2
Hong Kong Botanical Gardens (China)	1990–91	2
Johannesburg (South Africa)	1990–93	5(4)
Pretoria (South Africa)	1992–96	16(11)
Bandung (Indonesia)	1993–94	2
Calgary (Canada)	1995	2
Chiangmai (Thailand)	1996	1
Darica (Turkey)	1996	2
Hong Kong Ocean Park (China)	1996	3
Kagoshima (Japan)	1996	2

Southern Crowned Pigeon (<i>Goura scheepmakeri</i>)		
Jakarta (Indonesia)	1974–76	3
Jurong	1988 & 1995–96	7(2)
Hong Kong Botanical Gardens (China)	1992–96	10(2)
Kumamoto (Japan)	1993, 1995	2
Durban Bird Park (South Africa)	1996	1
Victoria Crowned Pigeon (<i>Goura victoria</i>)		
Sydney (Australia)	1971–72, 1974, 1976–79, 1981, 1985, 1987–88, 1990	21(14)
Hong Kong Botanical Gardens (China)	1972, 1979, 1984–87, 1990–92, 1994	17(5)
Jakarta (Indonesia)	1973, 1976, 1979–80 & 1986	8(1)
Mt. Hagen (Papua)	1973, 1977, 1980	4(1)
Adelaide (Australia)	1974	1(1)
Jurong (Singapore)	1975, 1989, 1992, 1994	7
Surabaya (Indonesia)	1978, 1986	3
Yokohama (Japan)	1979	2(1)
Tokyo (Ueno) Japan	1982–85, 1987–89	8(5)
Toronto (Canada)	1986–89, 1990–94, 1996	16(6)
Kumamoto (Japan)	1989	1(1)
Colombo (Sri Lanka)	1990	1(1)
Bulolo IFTA ZC (Papua)	1994	1
Taipei (Taiwan)	1994	1
Bandung (Indonesia)	1995	2

tickets to make sure there was enough canned fruit for the parents (Benchley, 1945, 123–125). By 1964, when San Diego Zoo commenced breeding Sclater's Crowned Pigeons, all three species had bred there (Dolan, 1964).

As can be seen from the three tables compiled from the breeding records of the International Zoo Yearbook, public zoo breedings of Crowned Pigeons became increased steadily in the 1960's and became a regular occurrence in the 1970s. Some interesting patterns can be observed. The propagation of Western Crowned Pigeons has been fairly consistent. Considering that the Victoria Crowned Pigeon had been bred repeatedly in the U.S. from the 1930's, it is surprising to note that this most distinctive of the three species was hardly propagated in zoos before the 1970s. In the U.S. no zoo breedings of Victorias occurred between 1959, when San Diego hatched it, and 1974, when Los Angeles commenced. Likewise in Europe, the only place to breed it before the 1970s was the Wassenaar, a Dutch zoo, now closed, which had a huge bird collection in the '60's. In the mid-1970s, after

Newcastle's quarantine restrictions had made it much harder to import birds to the U.S., zoo breedings of Victorias became a consistent activity. On the other hand, in the 1960's and '70s, quite a few Southern Crowned Pigeons (very likely all Sclater's) were hatched in several U.S. collections.

One would hope that propagation documented by the International Zoo Yearbook through 1996 (when records were no longer collected) would have clear result today. And indeed it does. But, again, interesting patterns are apparent. In the U.S., as of April 13, 2012, ISIS (the International Species Inventory System) listed 37 *Goura cristata* distributed among 13 U.S. Zoos. Four (all males) were listed as *G. cristata cristata*, 12 (three males, eight females, and one unsexed) were listed as *G. c. minor*, as were seven hybrids between the two. (As previously noted, these subspecies are no longer recognized by many ornithologists (Gibbs, et al, 2001)). Seventy-five *Goura victoria*, none identified by subspecies, were listed among 38 U.S. collections. The total number of *G. scheepmakeri* in U.S. zoos were a male and female in Little Rock, and one female at Los Angeles, none listed by subspecies. ISIS indicated that over the previous twelve months, a single *G. cristata* was hatched, at Fort Worth. Three *G. victoria* hatched

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in that time period, one each at Birmingham, Minnesota Zoological Gardens, and San Antonio. No hatchings of *G. scheepmakeri* were listed.

In marked contrast, 57 *G. scheepmakeri* were listed among nineteen collections in Continental Europe and the UK on April 13, 2012. Twenty seven of these were listed as *G. scheepmakeri sclateri*, but, as previously mentioned, most likely all of them are. Seven were hatched among six of these collections in the last twelve months. On the other hand, the Continental European and UK population of *G. cristata* consisted of 39 specimens distributed among fourteen collections, with four hatched among four of these—a figure very similar to the U.S.. None were listed as *G. c. minor*, four were identified as *G. c. cristata*. This region's holdings of *G. victoria* consisted of 106 birds held among 39 collections—a similar institutional figure to the U.S., but significantly more specimens. Eighteen were listed as *G. victoria victoria*. Six hatched among six zoos in the last six months.

All three species of Goura are listed as Vulnerable to Extinction by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which considers all in a state of decrease. Since 1975, all have been listed in Appendix II of the International Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which means all international trade must be conducted with government

documents. Jeff Sailer, Director of City Zoos for the Wildlife Conservation Society/Bronx Zoo is of the opinion that the IUCN listing for these birds is “probably an underestimation of status,” and that it may be necessary to alter it to Endangered or Critically Endangered. Speaking at the AZA Midyear Meeting, in 2012, he pointed out that its size and edibility have caused it to be absent in a three to four mile radius around any village in New Guinea, and that there are no in situ programs for any of the species.

The need for captive management of Crowned Pigeons was recognized long ago. U.S. Regional Studbooks for the three species were established in the 1980s, and were maintained for years by David Wetzell, initially at the Kansas City Zoo, then at Roger Williams Zoo, then Jackson. It was decided at that time that the U.S. population of *Goura scheepmakeri* was not genetically sustainable, and that that species should be managed in Europe. U.S. collections were urged to concentrate on the other two species.

For some years, until recently, the U.S. studbook for *Goura cristata* and *Goura victoria* was not being actively maintained. However, the studbook keeper and Species Survival Plan Coordinator is now Wendy Wadsworth, of the North Carolina Zoo, and she has just completed the draft of a Population Analysis and

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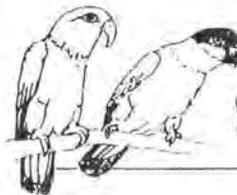


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Breeding and Transfer Plan for the Victoria Crowned Pigeon, with one for the Western Crowned Pigeon to soon follow. There is much to be done to insure healthy sustaining North American zoo populations of these species. At this point, as with many other zoo populations, some bloodlines are severely overrepresented. The production of only three or four chicks a year, coupled with a very long fledging period limits population growth. Another problem is the aggressiveness of many breeding pairs, especially problematic when they are kept in walkthrough aviaries.

A recent development has been an emphasis on encouraging zoos to move away from maintaining pairs, as has long been the tradition, but to keep them in flocks instead. Jeff Sailer would like to see them "kept in dozens." When kept in flocks, as they would occur in the wild, aggression towards keepers, the public, or other birds has diminished dramatically. While no U.S. zoo currently maintains as many as a dozen together, the Jurong Bird Park, in Singapore, has maintained large flocks in its enormous aviaries for years. As of 13 April, 2012, ISIS listed 78 *Goura cristata*, 31 *G. sheepmakeri* (which Pierre de Chabannes informs me are Scater's), and 53 *G. victoria*. These flocks are maintained separately to avoid hybridization.

The Philadelphia Zoo recently procured a pair of Victoria

Crowned Pigeons from Jurong. On the other hand, it has also been proposed that birds maintained in U.S. private aviculture "re-enter" the zoo population. Although never common-place, and always commanding a respectable price, Crowned Pigeons have maintained a place in U.S. private aviculture since propagation began there in the 1930s. In 1973, Jean Delacour found all three species bred in the Danville, Calif., aviaries of J.W. Steinbeck, from who he had first bought birds in the 1920's (Delacour, 1974). I found records for a breeding pair of Victoria Crowned Pigeons formerly at Tulsa Zoo, hatched by Steinbeck in 1971 (when U.S. zoos were not breeding any) and purchased from him in 1973. I do not know if any Scater's Crowned Pigeons remain in U.S. private aviculture, but various people continue to enthusiastically work with the other two species. The Victoria Crowned Pigeons of Hal Vokaty and Daniel Almageur come to mind.

Michele Raffin, of Los Altos, California established her Pandemonium Aviaries as a nonprofit in 2009, with a particular focus on pigeons and doves (<http://pandemoniumaviaries.org/>). Along with other island endemics such as Green-naped Pheasant Pigeons, Sulawesi Quail Doves, Luzon Bleeding-hearts, and Jamaican Mountain Witches, she is dedicated to propagating Western and Victoria Crowned Pigeons to assist in their

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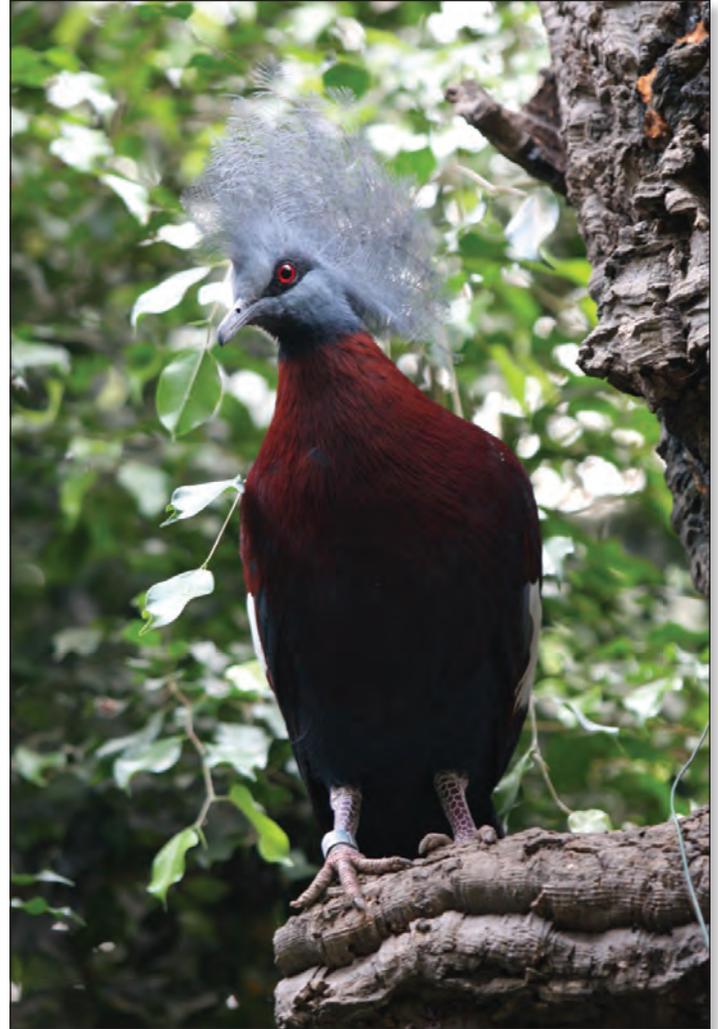
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worldwide conservation efforts. It is pleasing to see such an enterprise in the San Francisco Bay area, not far from where such great pigeon and dove aviculturists as Steinbeck and Gifford were so successful in the past.

Some people may remember Bruce Fearing's 1960 poem, "Some Brown Sparrows" from college or high school literature classes. Its opening lines read: "Some brown sparrows who live in the Bronx Zoo visit the Victorian Crested Pheasant..." While we may smile at the poet's misconception, we should appreciate his pleasure at seeing this bird and its English Sparrow visitors. Confronted by a Public whose definition of "Zoo Animal" all too often may not include birds, those of us privileged to work with Crowned Pigeons are grateful when zoo visitors stop in their tracks, in disbelief at seeing "The World's Largest Pigeon." We will do our best to make sure that experience continues.

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