

The Vietnam Pheasant Project Newsletter



VIETNAM PHEASANT SPECIES RECOVERY TEAM

Steady Progress at the Conservation Breeding Centre

In January 2022 we announced the site for the establishment of a new conservation breeding centre for the Vietnam Pheasant, situated in the Le Thuy district of Quang Binh province, close to one of the intended reintroduction sites at Khe Nuoc Trong nature reserve. The Viet Nature team have now constructed and completed the perimeter fence at the site and installed the infrastructure required to provide electricity and running water on site.

After a lengthy application process, we are delighted to report that the construction permit for the new breeding centre was granted on 7th October, allowing the building to begin, beginning with the staff accommodation on site which we aim to complete by the end of the year. This will be followed by construction of the first breeding aviaries in early 2023.

Another exciting development is the commitment of funds from the Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund (KNCF) in Japan to support the construction of an education centre at the site which will enable the engagement of schools, local communities and tourists to the region in the conservation work. Now that the construction permit has been granted, work on the education centre can begin.

To allow the effective construction and administration of the breeding centre, Viet Nature has established a new social enterprise which is called Viet Nature Conservation One-member Company Limited (ViNaConserv). As a social enterprise, this company is eligible for receiving grants and donations from domestic and foreign organizations, similar to Viet Nature. ViNaConserv is the leaseholder of the 4.5 ha of land where the VP conservation breeding and nature education centre is being built. Therefore, grants and donations directly to ViNaConserv for the Vietnam Pheasant species recovery programme are very welcome.



Project Manager

A New Addition to the Team

Thanks to our generous donors we are now in a position to recruit a Project Manager to coordinate the project. We are looking for a highly motivated, energetic individual with bird husbandry and project management skills and experience to join the Viet Nature team in Vietnam and lead the delivery of the species recovery plan that will bring this species back from the brink of extinction. A major part of this, of course, is the establishment and development of the conservation breeding centre in Le Thuy district and this is where the Project Manager will be stationed so that they can oversee the construction of aviaries and other facilities on site and establish the founder population.

The Project Manager will also recruit, lead, train and support a team of bird keepers and maintenance staff who will be responsible for the captive husbandry of the Vietnam Pheasant.

The Project Manager will liaise with field teams who are responsible for delivering project objectives in potential reintroduction sites and they will participate in project strategy and planning through working closely with Viet Nature management and the Vietnam Pheasant Species Recovery Team.

We advertised this position back in the summer and we are currently in the process of interviewing suitable candidates so that we can recruit someone to start early in 2023.

Ex Situ Updates

More studies on the horizon

The genetic study of the ex-situ population continues, with blood samples of more than 90 individual birds having been received at EAZA biobanks, and more are expected. Optimal post-release tracking devices are being researched with a study on the effect of collar trackers on the behaviour of Vietnam pheasants having been conducted in Germany, showing there was no real effect. Besides this, a single bird was fitted with a tail mounted tracker, to which this bird was also indifferent. To determine if tail mounted trackers will remain attached to the birds long enough, holders are asked to note tail feather moulting patterns in young birds. A Disease Risk Assessment will also be conducted to make sure introduced birds don't bring any harm to the local fauna.

Meanwhile, new footage from the World Pheasant Association, which you can view [HERE](#), shows excellent parenting skills of a pair of birds in a beautifully designed aviary that was set up to allow the birds to rear their own family. The recommendation to only parent rear stems from the hope that this will aid in the retention of natural behaviour in the population in human care, which will eventually give the released birds a better chance of survival. Also the Vietnam pheasants at the breeding centre in Vietnam will be parent-reared.

With a record breaking 80 chicks produced in zoos this year, and more in WPA collections, plans to send birds to Vietnam to stock local zoos and the first set of aviaries built by VietNature are being made.



News from the Field

Helpful Insights

Thanks to generous support from Mandai Nature, Viet Nature has continued its camera trapping work in Ke Go nature reserve which is within the recorded range of the Vietnam Pheasant.

Ke Go is a key site for understanding the recovery of forest ecosystems in the Annamite region and for assessing the continued threats faced by wildlife. Using 68 camera traps, a total of 4,676 camera trap days were recorded over an area of 2000 ha. A total of 8,682 photos of animals of 38 different species (20 mammals and 18 birds) were taken by the traps.

As well as camera trapping, Viet Nature conducted detailed habitat surveys, recording forest type and structure. These revealed that natural forest in Ke Go Nature Reserve appears to be recovering thanks to the management efforts at the nature reserve. Habitat quality is improving and would seem to favour Galliformes. Red Jungle Fowl, Scaly-breasted Partridge and Bar-backed Partridge were all recorded.

Now that we have data from camera trapping surveys in 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2022, evidence is pointing towards signs of recovery for populations of several species, notably the endemic Annamite Striped Rabbit and the critically endangered Sunda Pangolin.

Sadly there were no records of Vietnam Pheasant from any of the camera traps. It is unlikely that they are still present at Ke Go. However this site could be a potential reintroduction site in the future and will be further assessed as such.

Human pressure on the forest was also assessed. Activities such as logging, encroachment on forest land for cultivation and collection of non-timber products were not recorded at all during the surveys which is good news as it is allowing the vegetation to recover. Unfortunately snaring and illegal hunting is still a major problem and these are being tackled head on by the nature reserve team. Another threat is cattle grazing which is having a significant impact on vegetation cover in certain areas and a management plan is being developed to resolve this issue.

Over the coming year much time (and finances) will be put into the selection and preparation of the first sites for reintroduction.



Scaly-breasted partridge pictured in Ke Go



Sunda pangolin pictured in early 2022



Snares remain a major threat to Vietnamese wildlife

THANK YOU to all of our donors and supporters who are making this project possible through their generosity and dedication.

Keep an eye on our **[Project Website](#)** for impressions from the field, and stay up to date with all of our future developments.