



The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW)

(Founding in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)

PO Box 248, Panania NSW 2213, Australia

"Reintroduction of Endangered Species"

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With the ever worsening status of some extended species, it is gratifying to see what progress is being made by some aviculturists today. The pheasants of the world are in a very unenviable situation at the moment, but some American and European breeders in particular, have active programmes for the captive propagation of endangered species as a means of ensuring their survival. Foremost among these would be the Pheasant Trust in Norwich, Norfolk, UK. Some time ago they sent our Society two films, one on the birds in their fine collection and the other "[Pheasants to Formosa](#)", on the reintroduction of the [Swinhoe's Pheasant *Lophura swinhoei*](#) to a reserve in their native Formosa, or Taiwan.

Reintroduction projects are not easy and are prone to special problems. The birds are not just released into the wild some fine day, as they would surely die. Fortunately, pheasants as a group lend themselves particularly well to projects of this kind provided certain conditions can be assured.

Firstly, it is important that there should be suitable natural habitat available for the birds where they will be able to find all the necessary requirements in the way of food, shelter and nesting cover. Furthermore it is essential that the habitat, particularly where the initial releases are made can be protected from human disturbance and predation. For this reason successful reintroduction schemes are confined to properly staffed wildlife reserves.

Secondly, it is necessary that the release procedure itself is properly carried out. Birds have to become accustomed to searching for their own food in a large enclosure of about two acres, and upon arrival at the site of release, they should be penned in a temporary predator proof enclosure for several weeks until they have settled down. Thereafter three or four birds are released at intervals of two or three days, food and water being provided for them daily just outside the holding pen. As a rule birds released in this manner do not wander far and quickly learn to return to the pen when hungry. Feeding must be continued for several weeks after all the birds have been released and until such time as the food is no longer required. The best results seem to be obtained when released in subsequent years can be made in the same area.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the major contribution to conservation which aviculture can make, lies in the successful breeding in captivity of birds threatened with extinction, and from these captive nuclei the subsequent release of progeny in native habitats - if these are available. A reintroduction project can only be successful if there is suitable habitat for the bird in question. It is an unfortunate fact that if the habitat is totally destroyed or altered so radically as to be useless to a species, then aviculture is its only and last hope.

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