

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Bangkok (Thailand), 3-14 March 2013

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II

A. Proposal

To transfer *Tetraogallus tibetanus* (Tibetan snowcock) from Appendix I to Appendix II, in accordance with provisions of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev CoP15) Annex 4 precautionary measures A1 and A2a/b.

Tetraogallus tibetanus was listed in CITES Appendix II on 1 July 1975 as part of a group of Galliformes species. It is found in extreme eastern Tajikistan, extreme northern India, Nepal, southwestern China, Bhutan and extreme northern Myanmar.

The species does not meet the biological criteria for listing in Appendix I, laid out in Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev CoP15) Annex 1. The population size of this central Asian gamebird has not been estimated, but its wide range suggests that there are several hundred thousand individuals (Madge & McGowan 2002), hence does not meet criterion A. The species has a very large range (1,070,000 km²) (BirdLife International 2012) and thus the species does not meet criterion B. The population trend of the species is not known, but is suspected to be stable in the absence of any known declines or substantial threats (BirdLife International 2012), and so does not meet criterion C. *Tetraogallus tibetanus* is listed by the IUCN as being of 'Least Concern' globally (Birdlife International 2012).

In accordance with the precautionary measures contained in Annex 4 of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev CoP15) for the transfer of species from Appendix I to Appendix II, *Tetraogallus tibetanus* is not in known demand for international trade, nor is its transfer to Appendix II likely to stimulate trade in, or cause enforcement problems for, any other species included in Appendix I. As expected, no legal trade of the species has been recorded since its listing in Appendix I in 1975, but illegal trade is not known to be a significant problem. Its transfer to Appendix II, with monitoring of any impact of trade on the species for at least two intervals between meetings of the Conference of the Parties, will allow an assessment of any international trade that may be stimulated by its downlisting.

B. Proponent

Switzerland*, as Depositary Government, at the request of the Animals Committee (prepared by New Zealand)

C. Supporting statement1. Taxonomy

- 1.1 Class: Aves
1.2 Order: Galliformes

* The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

- 1.3 Family: Phasianidae
- 1.4 Species: *Tetraogallus tibetanus*
- 1.5 Scientific synonyms: none
- 1.6 Common names: English: Tibetan snowcock
 French: Tétragalle du Tibet
 Perdix des neiges du Tibet
 Tétras des neiges du Tibet
 Spanish: Perdigallo Tibetano
 Gallo lira del Tíbet
 Gallo salvaje del Tibet
 Perdiz real del Tibet
- 1.7 Code numbers: A-214.003.054.006

2. Overview

Tetraogallus tibetanus is found in the mountains of extreme eastern Tajikistan, extreme northern India, Nepal, southwestern China, Bhutan and extreme northern Myanmar. It was listed in CITES Appendix II on 1 July 1975 as part of a group of Galliformes species. The species is classified as of 'Least Concern' on the IUCN Red List (BirdLife International 2012).

The Periodic Review of the Appendices, as currently agreed by the Parties, is designed to review species already included in the Appendices to determine whether their listings continue to be appropriate, based on current biological and trade information and utilizing the provisions in Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP12) on Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II [see: AC20 Document 10 (Rev. 1)]. At the 22nd meeting of the Animals Committee (Lima, 2006) *Tetraogallus tibetanus* was one of 18 species of Galliformes chosen to be reviewed between CoP13 and CoP15.

At AC25 (Geneva, 2011), to help facilitate the review of the remaining 16 species of Galliformes under the Periodic review process, an Intersessional Periodic Review Working Group was created to address these Galliformes species. The United States approached the World Pheasant Association for their assistance in undertaking these reviews. Species accounts were compiled using information readily available from the BirdLife International species assessments for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Red Data Lists and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) trade database. These accounts were then circulated to members of the IUCN-Species Survival Commission / World Pheasant Association Galliformes Specialist Group who had particular knowledge about the species.

The final species accounts were presented in an Annex to AC26 Doc 13.3.1. At AC26 (Geneva, 2012) the Animals Committee studied the information provided and recommended that *Tetraogallus caspius* should be transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II (see AC26 WG1 Doc 2).

3. Species characteristics

3.1 Distribution

Tibetan snowcock is widely distributed in the high mountains of central Asia, from the extreme east of Tajikistan, through Jammu and Kashmir in extreme northern India, Nepal, southwestern China, Bhutan, and the extreme north of Myanmar.

3.2 Habitat

High alpine pastures and grassy or rocky mountain slopes up to the snowline (5000-6000 m, but retreating to lower (2500 – 4000 m) grassland and rocky areas in winter. Avoids forests and forest edge habitats, even in winter (Madge & McGowan 2002).

3.3 Biological characteristics

It nests in a sparsely-lined scrape on the ground, concealed by a shrub or boulder. They lay 4-7 brownish eggs, which are incubated only by the female. Its diet consists of berries, seeds, shoots,

roots and small invertebrates. It forms coveys of up to 50 individuals when not breeding (Madge & McGowan 2002).

3.4 Morphological characteristics

A large (45-55 cm) stocky partridge-shaped gamebird. Males have a grey crown and neck with a whitish ear patch, throat and breast, with two grey bands crossing the upper chest. The flanks and lower under parts are white with black longitudinal stripes. The tail is blackish brown. The upper parts are sandy grey with buff streaks. The rump and upper tail coverts are greyish-rufous. Females are similar but duller than the male with less patterning but dusky-pale spotting. In flight, has dark wings with white only on the tips of the secondaries (Madge & McGowan 2002).

3.5 Role of the species in its ecosystem

This species has a useful role in seed dispersal.

4. Status and trends

4.1 Habitat trends

Information is not readily available.

4.2 Population size

The population size is estimated to be 100,000 to 499,999 mature individuals.

4.3 Population structure

It breeds in pairs from April to June, but forms coveys or flocks of up to 50 birds outside of the breeding season. Older references report occasionally massive congregations of thousands of birds in autumn (Madge & McGowan 2002).

4.4 Population trends

The population is currently thought to be stable (Birdlife International 2012).

4.5 Geographic trends

Information is not readily available.

5. Threats

No specific threats are known, apart from some subsistence hunting and use as pets. Climate change could be a potential threat to this species. As global warming continues, the glacial moraines that it inhabits at high altitude are expected to be more affected than other type of habitats (Baral in litt., 2012).

6. Utilization and trade

6.1 National utilization

Some birds are caught for human subsistence, or raised as pets on a national level.

6.2 Legal trade

No legal trade in this species has been recorded since it was listed in Appendix 1 in 1975 (Tables 1a and 1b). Note that commercial trade is not permitted for Appendix I species, and so the lack of existing international trade does not necessarily indicate a lack of future demand for international trade.

Table 1a: <i>Tetraogallus tibetanus</i>		
CITES reported trade (sources = all) during 1975-1999 and 2000-2010 (all terms and units combined).		
Term	Total 1975-1999	Total 2000-2010
Live Total	1	0
Source: UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Database. Accessed on January 5, 2011. Gross Exports/Imports. In most cases, the unit value is the number of specimens.		

Table 1b: <i>Tetraogallus tibetanus</i>		
CITES reported trade (source = wild [W]) during 1975-1999 and 2000-2010 (all terms and units combined).		
Term	Total 1975-1999	Total 2000-2010
(no trade)	0	0
Source: UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Database. Accessed on January 5, 2011. Gross Exports/Imports. In most cases, the unit value is the number of specimens.		

6.3 Parts and derivatives in trade

No parts or derivatives have been recorded in trade.

6.4 Illegal trade

Information is not readily available, but not believed to be significant.

6.5 Impacts to look-alikes

Males and females are similar to *Tetraogallus himalayensis* and *T. altaicus*, but are smaller, have prominent white flanks with longitudinal black stripes, and lack white on the primaries. These look-alike species are classified as of 'Least Concern' by IUCN (BirdLife 2012) and are not listed on the CITES Appendices.

The Caspian snowcock *Tetraogallus caspius*, the only other snowcock listed in Appendix I of CITES, is clearly identified by its plumage features, especially its dark breast and flanks, and large patches of white on its primaries.

6.6 Actual or potential trade impacts

Information is not readily available.

7. Legal instruments

7.1 National

In India, the species is protected under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972.

7.2 International

This species is listed on CITES Appendix I and EU Annex A.

8. Species management

8.1 Management measures

Information is not readily available.

8.2 Population monitoring

Information is not readily available.

8.3 Control measures

Information is not readily available.

8.4 Captive breeding and artificial propagation

There are no records of this species in captivity in Europe in the WPA database (31 July 2012), and ISIS (31 July 2012) records no captive individuals in ISIS institutions; however, both databases rely on voluntary submission of records.

8.5 Habitat conservation

The species is present in two conservation areas and four national parks in Nepal and present in two Important Bird Areas in Tajikistan.

9. Information on similar species

Other species of *Tetraogallus* are similar but readily separable in the hand (see Section 6.5, and Madge and McGowan (2002) for further details).

10. Consultations

This proposal was based on a rapid review of 16 species of Galliformes by the World Pheasant Association. Their account was circulated to members of the IUCN-Species Survival Commission / World Pheasant Association Galliformes Specialist Group who had particular knowledge about the species, before being considered by the Animals Committee at AC 26 (Geneva, 2012). The proposal was sent to the Management and Scientific Authorities of Tajikistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and China on 17 August 2012. By 24 September 2012, responses had been received from Myanmar and China. Myanmar had no comment on the merits of proposal and was not able to provide any information on the species in Myanmar due to the lack of scientific and systematic study. China supported the proposal that *Tetraogallus tibetanus* be transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II because it is distributed widely in China, has a large and stable population, and consumption demand is quite weak and has little impact on the population.

11. Additional remarks

12. References

BirdLife International (2012) Species factsheet: *Tetraogallus tibetanus*. Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org> on 31 July 2012.

CITES trade statistics derived from the CITES Trade Database (see: www.unep-wcmc.org/citestrade), UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, UK.

ISIS (2012) International Species Information System species holdings. Downloaded from <https://www.isis.org/Pages/findanimals.aspx> on 31 July 2012.

Madge, S.; McGowan P. 2002. *Pheasants, partridges and grouse: A guide to the pheasants, partridges, quails, grouse, guineafowl, buttonquails and sandgrouse of the world*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

The World Pheasant Association European census database. 2012. Available online at <http://www.wpa-europe.ch.vu/> accessed 31 July 2012.