



HIMALAYAN MONAL

Galliformes
Family: Phasianidae
Genus: *Lophophorus*
Species: *impejanus*



Range: Himalayas from eastern Afghanistan to Bhutan, northeast India and southern Tibet; also in Burma.

Habitat: Open coniferous or mixed forests with bamboo; elevated forests, cliffs and meadows between 7900 - 14800 feet.

Niche: omnivorous, terrestrial, diurnal

Wild diet: Seeds, tubers, shoots, berries and Insects

Zoo diet:

Life Span: (Wild)
(Captivity) 10-12 years

Sexual dimorphism: sexually dichromatic

Location in SF Zoo: Short bird string

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

The Himalayan Monal is a relatively large-sized, pheasant. The adult male possesses a wiry, metallic green head-crest with spoon-shaped feathers. The eyes are ringed with blue, and the neck is reddish-brown. At the nape of the neck is a yellow patch that forms the top edge of the bluish-black wings and the purplish-black back. The breast is dark brown and the tail feathers are chestnut brown with a white rump that is visible in flight and when displaying to the females. The female has dark brown feathers except for a white throat and rump patch and the bright blue circle around the eyes. The female also has a crest, but it is shorter and brown with ordinary feathers.

Weight: 3 - 5 lbs
Length: 2 - 2 1/2 feet
Wingspan:

This species has strong legs and a long, curved beak that together enable it to dig into the hard soil of the mountains to uncover food. This method of foraging leaves conspicuous areas of turned over soil up to 10 inches deep on hillsides.

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Classified as Least Concern (LC) on the IUCN Red List and listed on Appendix I of CITES.

The main threat to the species is poaching, as the crest is valuable here, as well. It is thought to bring status to its wearer, and is a symbol of authority. The male monal was under hunting pressure in Northern India, where the crest feather was used to decorate men's hats, until 1982, when hunting was banned in the state.

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COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

This species is highly communicative and uses several different calls to express meaning to its mate, other birds in its foraging group, or intruding birds. Males also use body displays to attract females such as bobbing the head-crest and fanning their tail feathers. The breeding season begins in April when the monals are at higher altitudes. The male switches from calling only in the early morning to calling throughout the day.

They are often found in pairs during the breeding season but can spend the rest of the year in communal flocks. They may descend to 6600 feet in the winter. It tolerates snow and will dig through it to obtain plant roots and invertebrate prey.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Breeding season is April–August and pairs are formed at this time. Most breeding takes place in the higher altitudes where they tend to be in this season. The female scrapes a nest in the ground and incubates the eggs alone, while the male stands guard throughout incubation and fledging to protect the eggs and chicks from predators. The young are precocial and are able to care for themselves. Once the chicks reach three months of age, they have most of their feathers and begin to forage for food on their own. After six months the young are completely independent and must search for food and mates alone.

Incubation: 28 days # of Eggs: 3 – 5	Sexual Maturity: 2 years Fledging:
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MISCELLANEOUS

The Himalayan Monal is the national bird of Nepal.

Sources:

created 9/2013

Handbook of the Birds of the World, Vol II © 1996 Josep del Hoya, Lynx Edicions.

<http://www.arkive.org/himalayan-monal/lophophorus-impejanus/>

<http://www.lpzoo.org/animals/factsheet/himalayan-monal>

<http://www.saczoo.org/document.doc?id=639>