

REEVES'S PHEASANT



Photo: "Stavenn"

Reeves's Pheasant, *Syrnaticus reevesii*, is a large pheasant of approximately 210cm (83 inches) in length. The name commemorates the British naturalist John Reeves, who first introduced live specimens to Europe in 1831.

The male is a brightly plumaged bird with scaly golden-white and red body plumage, grey legs, brown iris and red skin around eye. The head is white with a narrow black eye stripe. The male has an extremely long silvery-

white tail barred with chestnut-brown that can reach up to 2.4m (8 feet) in length. The female is a predominantly brown bird with darkish crown, buff face and grey-brown barred tail feathers.



Nesting Hen

Reeves's Pheasant is endemic to the evergreen forests of central and eastern China. They prefer higher ground and are hardy birds, being able to withstand both heat and cold. There are no known subspecies, but there is some plumage variation throughout their range.

They have been introduced for sport and ornamental purposes to Hawaii, the USA, the Czech Republic, France and the United Kingdom. In the latter three countries they have built up small breeding populations, and are still released on a small scale for shooting, often in conjunction with the Common Pheasant, *Phasianus colchicus*. Where introduced they inhabit farmland close to woodlands.

They are fairly common in aviculture, but are noted for being aggressive

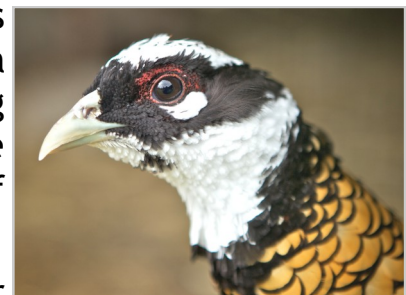


Reeves's Chick

towards humans, animals and other pheasants. The average clutch of 7-14 eggs is laid in the Spring, the incubation period is 24-25 days. Their call note is dissimilar to other game-birds being a musical warble, more passerine (song-bird) sounding than would be expected. Their diet consists of

vegetable matter as well as seeds and cereals.

Due to ongoing habitat loss, and overhunting for food and tail plumes, the Reeves's Pheasant is evaluated as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. It is thought there is only around 2000 birds remaining in the wild.



Male facial detail

R.V.C. with help from Wikipedia, and with thanks to Krissy Bush for permission to use her photos.