

of chance and that such skins may not always show eclipse even if collected during the 'eclipse period'. Thus it is quite probable that the birds whose skins Peterson and Brisbin observed, might have been killed before they had moulted even though they were killed in the 'moulting period'. Similarly, skins of birds moulted earlier and killed towards the end of the 'moulting period' may have had regained full plumage when killed.

The skins examined by Peterson and Brisbin from India may have been collected from around villages and not from remote RJF prime locations. However, since the domestic varieties have descended from the wild RJF, breeding between the domestic forms and the wild ones is possible, especially around settlements keeping domestic poultry and living close to RJF habitats and the threat of hybridization is genuine.

None of the females observed by us ($n = 21$) showed any comb. The combs of males varied in shape and size, but were mostly damaged either in fight with other males or by hitting their heads against the roof during flight. However, in larger aviaries like Himalayan Bird Park, Renuka and Vishakapatnam Zoo, the male combs were intact.

All the birds observed by us (both sexes) had dark legs, which were thin and in some cases scaly and giving the legs a paler appearance than they actually were. The central tail feathers had been shed by 69% males observed by us. Usually, males in eclipse moult shed both the central

elongated tail retrices as well as the hackles. Therefore, most birds observed in eclipse were without the central tail feathers. However, in all cases, the tail was held horizontally, both by males as well as females.

Therefore, all the birds observed by us showed physical characters typical of true RJF and according to reliable descriptions^{6,8,9}, may thus be regarded as pure. A further inference derived from observation of traits of pure-type birds in captive collections is that the source population of these captive birds, i.e. Chail Wildlife Sanctuary, Renuka Wildlife Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh and Chintapalli Reserve Forest, Andhra Pradesh is also pure or at least was pure when these birds were taken into captivity.

A logical step for the future may now be to genetically 'type' the stock of 'pure' birds observed by us so that genetic markers may be used to compare samples derived from birds from other wild populations, and thus the status of the purity of the RJF in the wild may be known. In captivity, all the birds observed by us showing wild-type traits have been marked with leg rings, so that these birds can be identified, if required.

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NEWS

Indo-US S&T forum

The Indo-US Science and Technology Forum is located in New Delhi, sharing a campus with the United States Education Foundation in India (USEFI). While USEFI attends to education and academic pursuits in social sciences, the Forum facilitates and promotes interaction between the US and India in science and technology on government, academia, and industry levels. The Forum focuses on the issues of common concern and activities of mutual benefit, while exploring trends in science and technology.

One of the major activities of the Forum is the support of joint workshops in both countries regarding the conception phase of new areas of science and technology. Since its inception in April 2004, 35 such symposia have been held. Some of the areas include Indian Ocean ARGO floats, Nanotechnology, Brain Research, Weather and Climate Modelling, Cancer Networking, Arsenic Contamination and Genotoxicity, Eco-Informatics, Digital Library, Traditional Medicine, Green Chemistry, S&T to counter Terrorism, Biotechnology,

Renewable Energy Sources, and so on. Other major activities include exchange visits of scientists, in order to promote joint research and development projects, capacity building, and database creation on various aspects of S&T. The Forum is now in the process of enhancing industry participation, paving the way for an active academia-public-private partnership aimed at generating innovation.

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