

# Identification Guide to Decorative Feathers of Pheasants, Chickens, Turkeys and Related Birds



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# Introduction

Feathers are used to decorate many commercial items such as earrings and other jewelry, hair ornaments, carnival masks, and fishing flies. The colorful body feathers and tail plumes of chickens, turkeys, pheasants, guineafowl, and related birds are the most common of these commercial “decorative feathers,” and are the subject of this ID Guide.

Familiarity with the feathers of pheasants and related birds will allow law enforcement officers to recognize the legal use of non-protected bird feathers and avoid unnecessary seizures.

None of the pheasant species important in the feather trade is native to North America, and only one, Grey Junglefowl, is listed under CITES. The native North American Wild Turkey is categorized as a non-migratory gamebird and is thus not listed under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Note that feather use in cultural objects such as Native American headdresses or Amazon Indian feather crowns is not covered here, although some commercial feather products are modeled on traditional designs.

The birds most frequently used for such decorative items include the following:

- Chicken (*Gallus gallus* var. *domesticus*) – ancestral form is the Red Junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*)
- Grey Junglefowl (*Gallus sonneratii*) – CITES II
- Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)
- Indian Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*)
- Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)
- Golden Pheasant (*Chrysolophus pictus*)
- Lady Amherst Pheasant (*Chrysolophus amherstiae*)
- Reeve’s Pheasant (*Syrmaticus reevesii*)
- Silver Pheasant (*Lophura nycthemera*)
- Helmeted Guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*)
- Vulturine Guineafowl (*Acryllium vulturinum*)

In addition, there are protected pheasant species whose feathers are infrequent in trade, but which are of interest because of their protected status and/or possible confusion with more common species. These include the following. For a complete list of protected pheasants and related birds, see p. 83.

- Ocellated Turkey (*Meleagris ocellata*) – CITES III (Guatemala)
- The tragopans (*Tragopan*) – some CITES I and ESA
- The monals (*Lophophorus*) – CITES I and some ESA
- The eared-pheasants (*Crossoptilon*) – some CITES II and ESA
- Elliot’s (*Syrmaticus ellioti*), Mrs. Hume’s (*S. humiae*), and Mikado (*S. mikado*) Pheasants – CITES I and ESA
- The peacock-pheasants (*Polyplectron*) – CITES I and II; one species ESA
- Great Argus (*Argusianus argus*) – CITES II
- Green Peafowl (*Pavo muticus*) – CITES II

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**Note:** Many male pheasants exhibit different feather patterns and colors on different parts of the body, and an attempt has been made to illustrate the range of types for each species. Most female pheasants have drab brown plumage, and their feathers are not commonly used in decorative objects. Thus, the feathers illustrated in this ID Guide are from male birds, unless otherwise noted.

## Domestic Chicken (*Gallus gallus var. domesticus*)

Domestic chickens are descended from the wild Red Junglefowl of India, and some breeds still exhibit “wild-type” plumage. In addition, selection for traits desired by humans has produced an amazing variety of plumage types among domestic chickens.

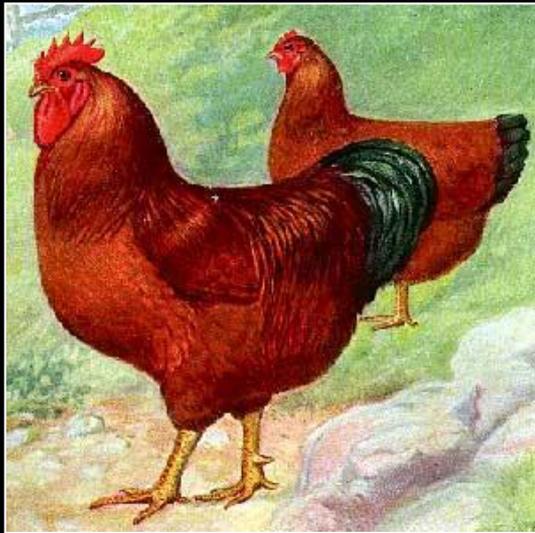


“wild-type” domestic chicken

The following pages illustrate a few of these varieties, along with scans of tail plumes and body feathers. While the diversity of chicken plumage can make their feathers difficult to recognize, these feather shape and texture characters may be helpful:

- Floppy or “lax” shafts on the tail feathers, which are often strongly curved
- Dark glossy green color of many tail feathers
- Body feathers with a tapered shape, often with a loose fringe around the tip; this is particularly characteristic of the elongated hackle feathers on the neck
- Black and white barring is a common pattern (as in Barred Rock)
- Reddish brown or rusty red is a common color (as in Rhode Island Red)

Rhode Island Red

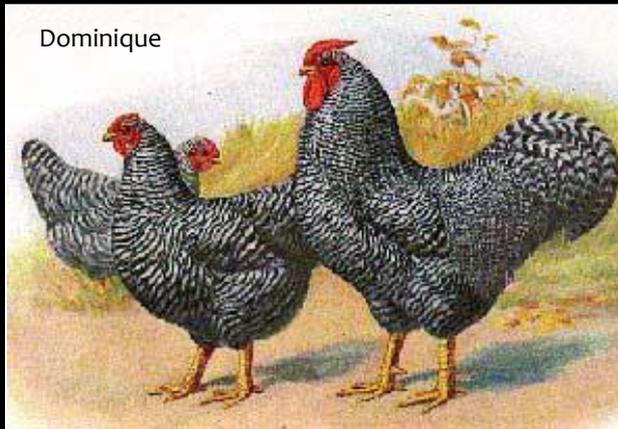


Buff Leghorn

Silver-Penciled Hamburg



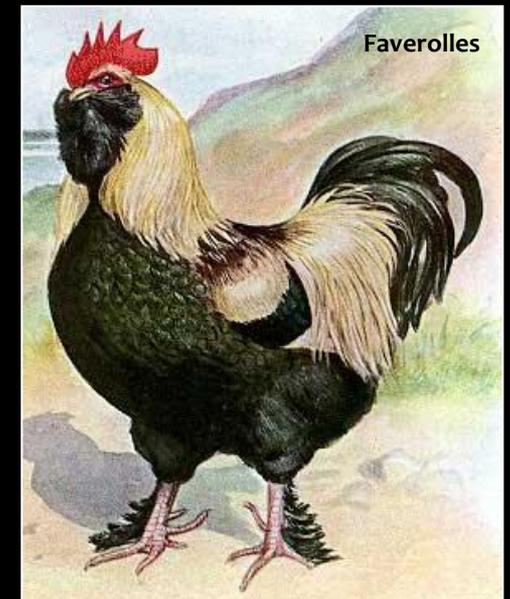
Dominique



White-faced Black Spanish



Faverolles



Bearded Silver Polish



Red Junglefowl



Tail of domestic rooster;  
similar to Red Junglefowl type

## Tail feathers



## Hackles



## Domestic Rooster

Note the floppy shape of the tail feathers and the characteristic pointed shape and loose fringes of the hackles



“Capes” (neck and upper back feathers) of three chicken varieties, of the red, buff, and barred types. This is a typical form in which chicken feathers are sold for fly-tying and other decorative uses.



Chicken

An assortment of domestic chicken body feathers



## Decorative uses of chicken feathers



# Grey Junglefowl (*Gallus sonneratii*)

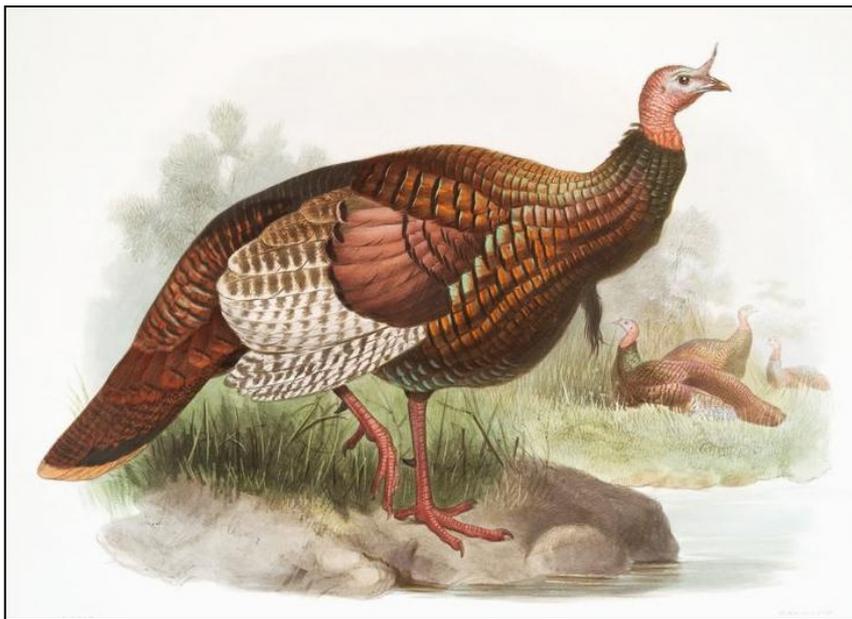


The “cape” skin of a male Grey Junglefowl. This is the form in which the feathers are commonly offered for sale.



The strikingly patterned neck feathers of this species are much used in fishing flies and other objects. Grey Junglefowl are CITES II-listed, but are commonly raised on gamefarms.





# Turkey

## (*Meleagris gallopavo*)

The Wild Turkey is native to North America (though, as an upland gamebird, it is not listed under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act). Many varieties of domestic turkey have been developed, and the feathers of both “wild-type” and domestic turkeys are widely used in decorative items.

Turkey body feathers can often be recognized by their fan-shaped or squared tips. In addition, many turkey feathers have a band of blackish or bronzy iridescence near the tip.

White domestic turkey feathers (including wing and tail feathers) are often dyed and used in a variety of decorative items. Large white or unpatterned dyed (naturally white) feathers in commercial items are likely to be domestic turkey. See pp. 80-81 for tips on distinguishing these large flight feathers from the similar-sized feathers of eagles.



# Domestic Turkey Breeds



Bourbon Red



Royal Palm



Narragansett



White

# Male Wild Turkey wing feathers



# Male Wild Turkey tail feathers



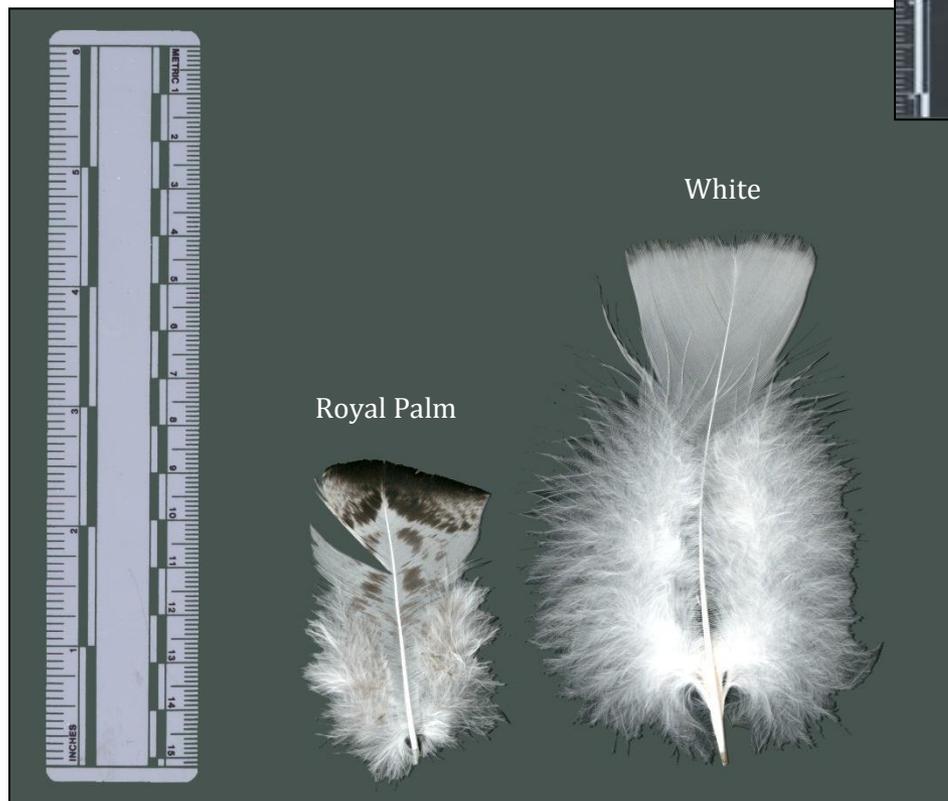
## Wild Turkey body feathers



The colors and patterns of turkey body feathers vary depending on position (e.g., breast vs. back). Despite this, turkey feathers are usually easily recognized by their squared-off or fan-shaped tips, and their black or iridescent (coppery to bronzy-green) subterminal bands.

In addition, note the apparent gap, or “window” that may be present along the shaft in the lower fluffy part of turkey body feathers. This is characteristic of large gamebird body feathers (e.g., turkey, peafowl, large chicken), but is not seen in other groups of birds, such as raptors.

## Domestic Turkey body feathers



The body feathers of white domestic turkeys – often dyed bright colors – are commonly used in decorative items.

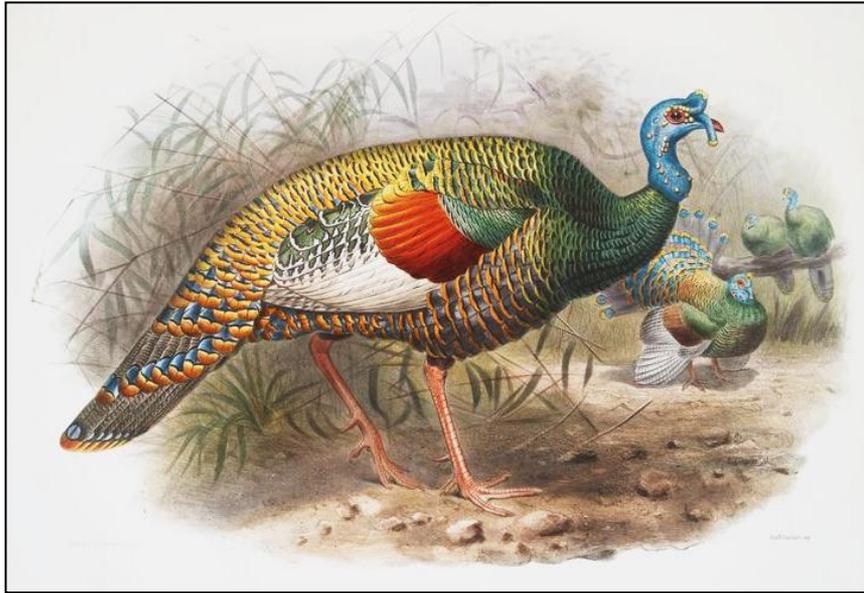
One use of turkey under-feathers is for “marabou,” which is defined in the trade as fluffy feather material employed in trimmings and items such as feather boas. This “marabou” material is not to be confused with the feathers of the Marabou Stork (*Leptoptilos crumeniferus*), a CITES-listed species from Africa.

For more information on “marabou,” see: <http://www.lab.fws.gov/idnotes/MarabouIDGuide.pdf>

# Decorative uses of turkey feathers



Note: red-dyed spotted feathers are guineafowl



# Ocellated Turkey

(*Meleagris ocellata*)

The Ocellated Turkey is the only other turkey species. It is found in Guatemala (where it is CITES III-listed), Belize, and the Yucatan region of Mexico. The body feathers have even more green and copper iridescence than Wild Turkey, and the naked blue head with colorful warts is distinctive. There is also more white in the wing feathers.

Ocellated Turkeys are rare in captivity, and the feathers are rarely, if ever, seen in commercial trade.



# Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

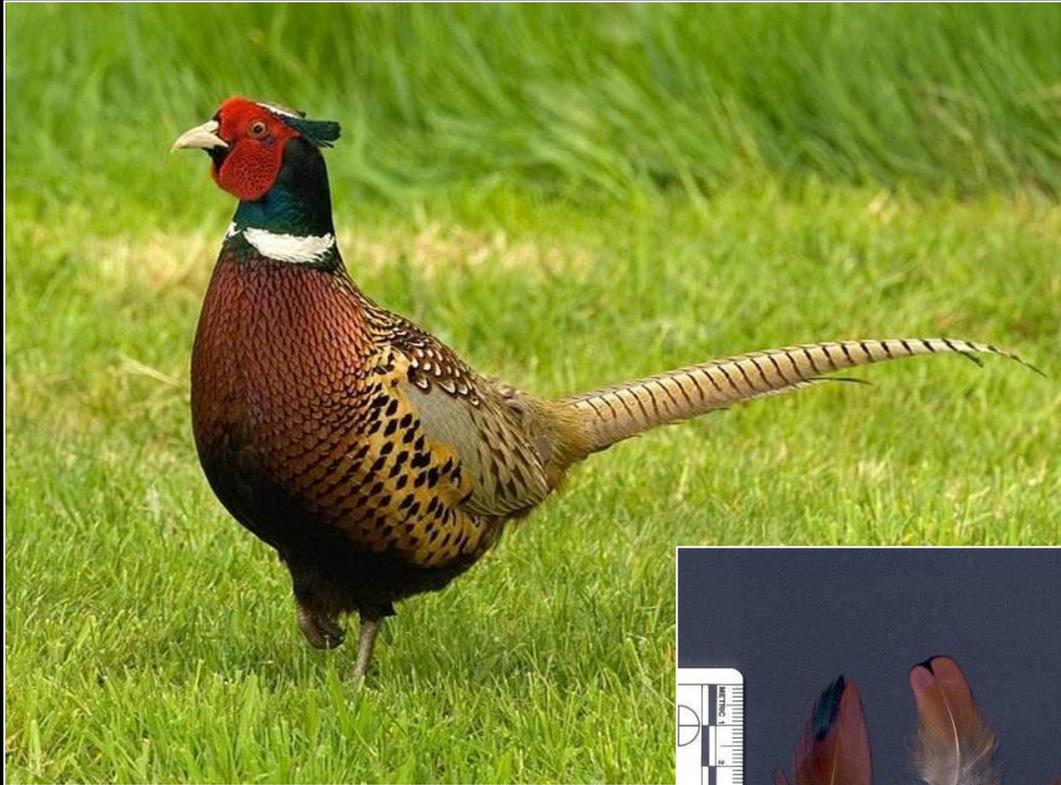


The feathers of Ring-necked Pheasants rival those of domestic chickens and turkeys in popularity for decorative uses. The species, also known as Common Pheasant, has been widely introduced in North America and elsewhere, and is very commonly raised on game farms.

The natural range of Ring-necked Pheasants stretches from the Black Sea to Taiwan and Japan, and there are many recognized subspecies across this vast area. These differ in plumage details (many races, for example, lack the white neck ring), but all share prominent red facial skin, erectile ear-tufts, and long slender barred tails. The Green (or Japanese) Pheasant, established on Hawaii, is sometimes considered a separate species, *P. versicolor*.

The plumage of the male Ring-necked Pheasant is complex, with each body region exhibiting a different pattern. Learn these diverse feather types and you will be able to confirm many decorative items as legal.



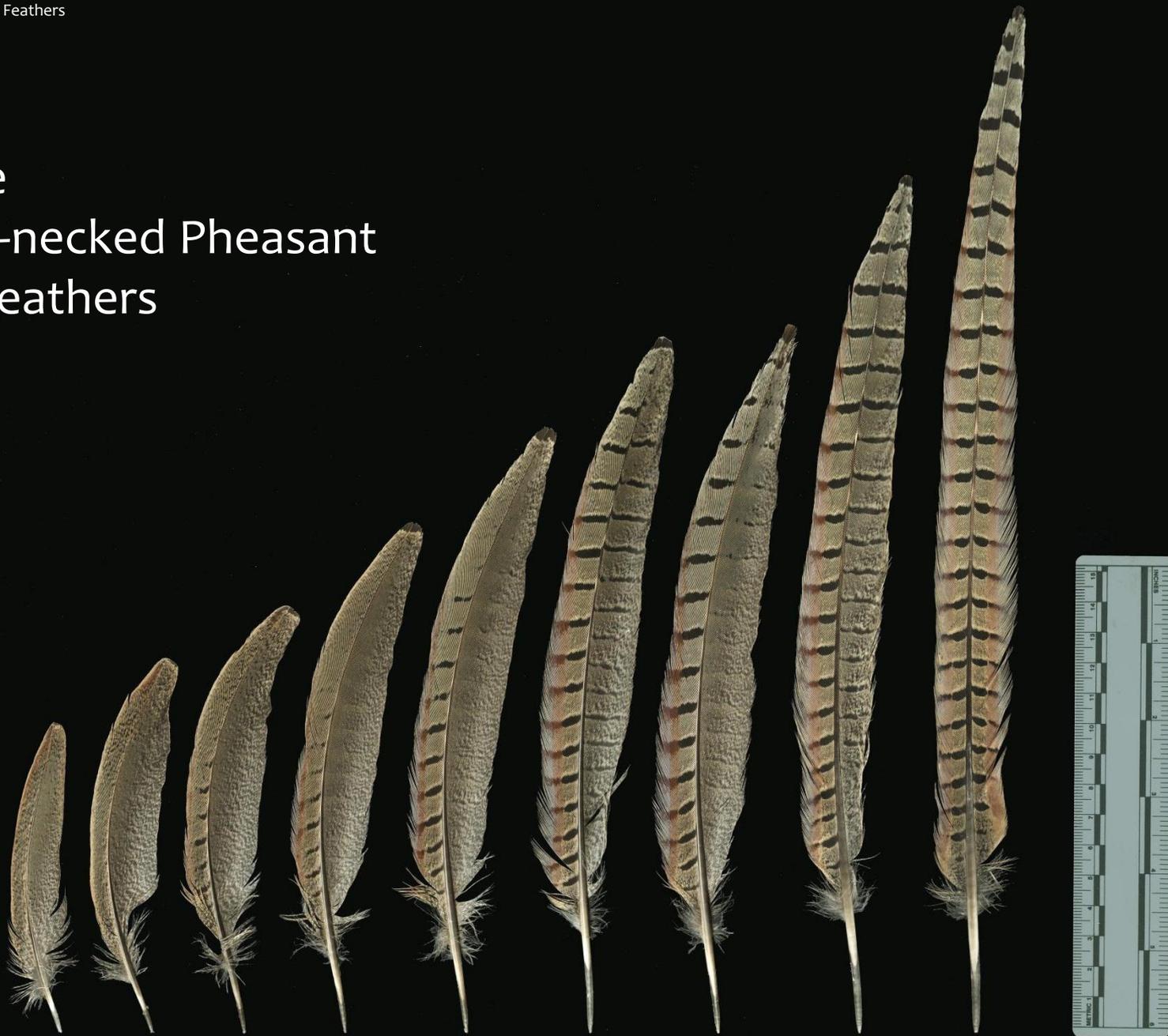


An assortment of male body feathers

# Male Ring-necked Pheasant



# Male Ring-necked Pheasant tail feathers





Ring-necked Pheasants are the only pheasant species for which the feathers of females are commonly used in decorative objects. This is due to their ready availability, combined with their attractive, if drab, patterning.

## Female Ring-necked Pheasant



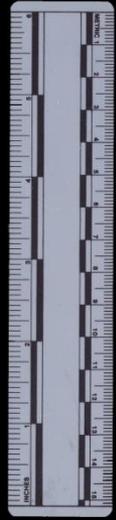
Female Ring-necked Pheasant

# Female Ring-necked Pheasant tail feathers



Note: the central tail feather (normally the longest) is broken in this set

# Ring-necked Pheasant wing feathers



Male



Female



## Decorative uses of Ring-necked Pheasant feathers



with turkey feathers at sides and center



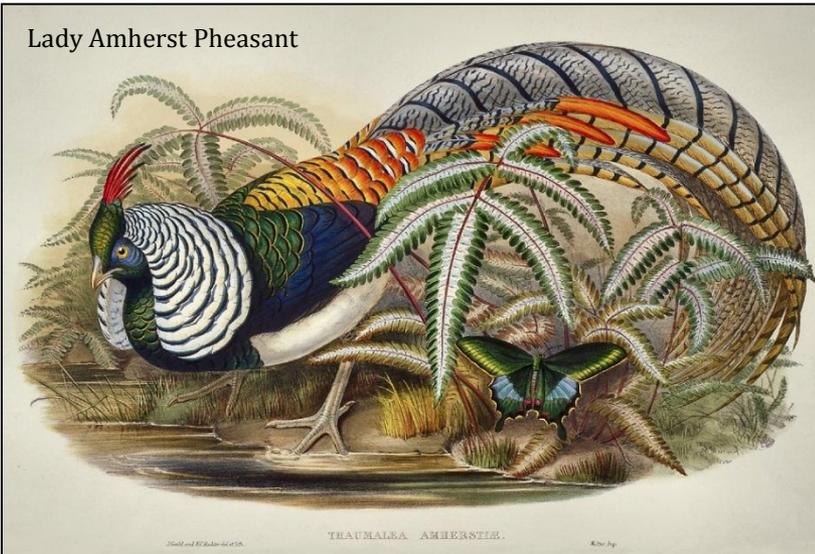
Golden Pheasant

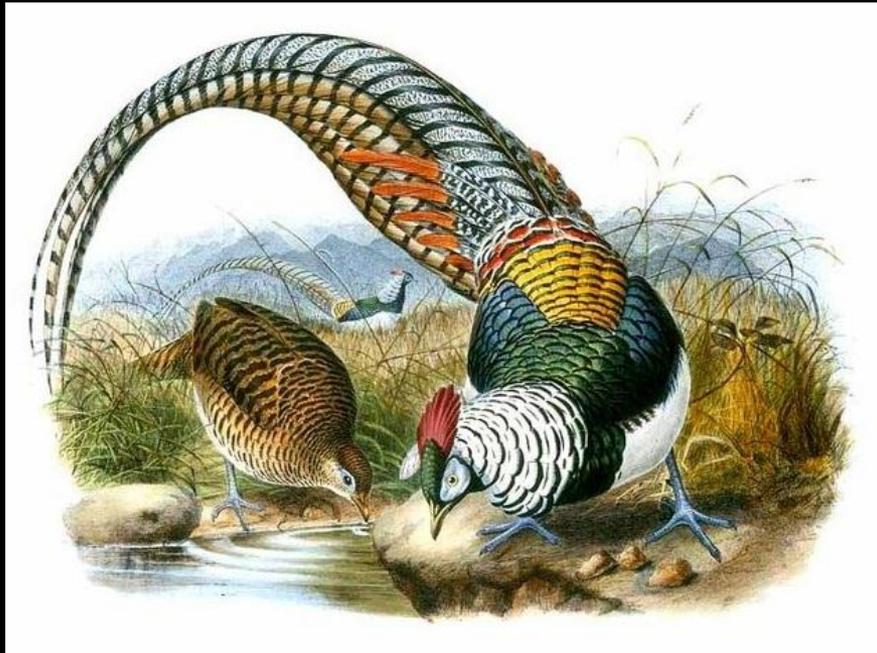


# Ruffed Pheasants (*Chrysolophus* species)

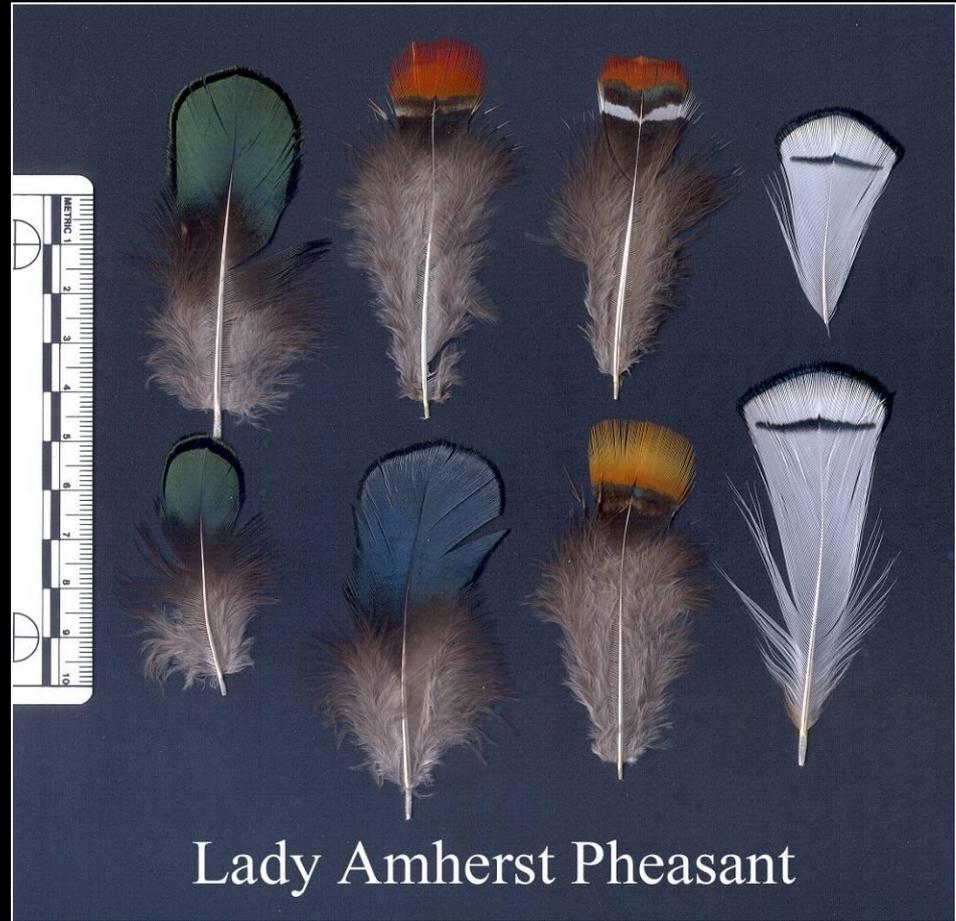
This group is comprised of the Lady Amherst Pheasant (*C. amherstiae*) and the Golden Pheasant (*C. pictus*). In both species, the males exhibit a distinctive ruff or cape of fan-shaped feathers along the sides of the neck, as well as very long, tapered tail feathers. Lady Amherst and Golden Pheasants are widely captive-raised, and their varied and colorful feathers are commonly seen in decorative items. Neither species is listed under CITES or the ESA.

Lady Amherst Pheasant

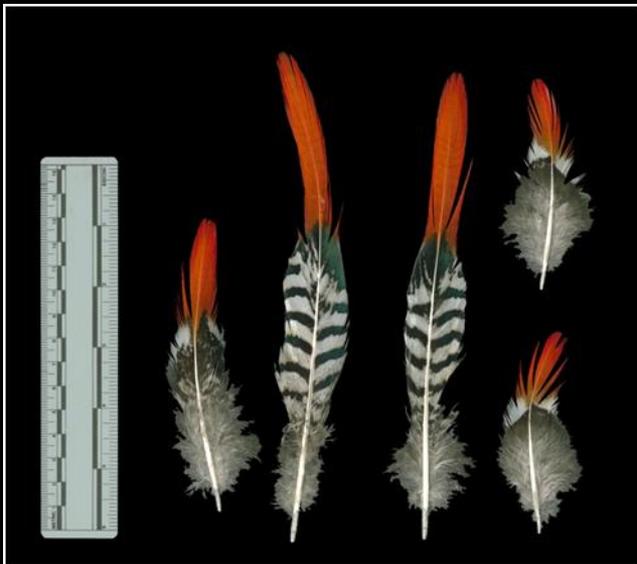




Assorted body feathers



Lady Amherst Pheasant



Elongated tail coverts

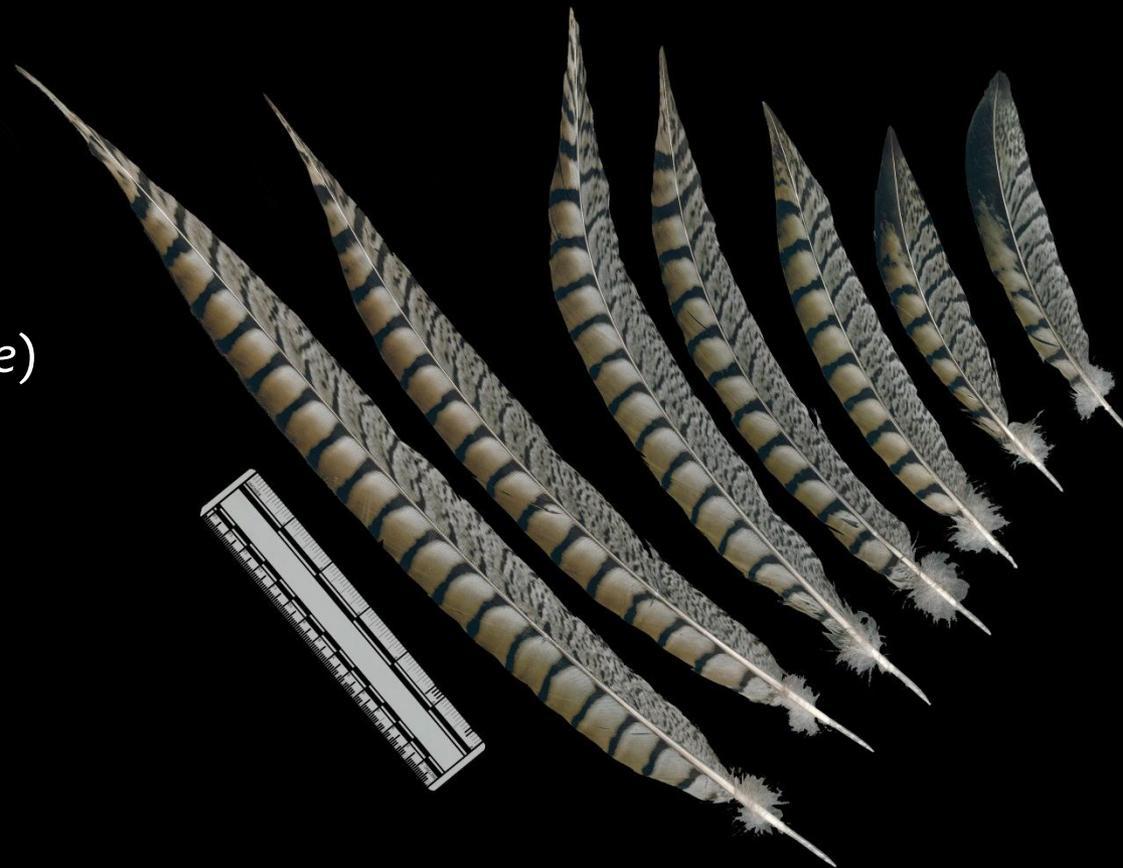
Lady Amherst  
Pheasant  
(*Chrysolophus amherstiae*)

# Lady Amherst Pheasant

(*Chrysolophus amherstiae*)



Central tail feather  
(greatly elongated;  
total length > 2.5 ft )



Outer tail feathers;  
note these are shown at a  
different scale than central  
tail feather



## Decorative uses of Lady Amherst Pheasant feathers





# Golden Pheasant

(*Chrysolophus pictus*)

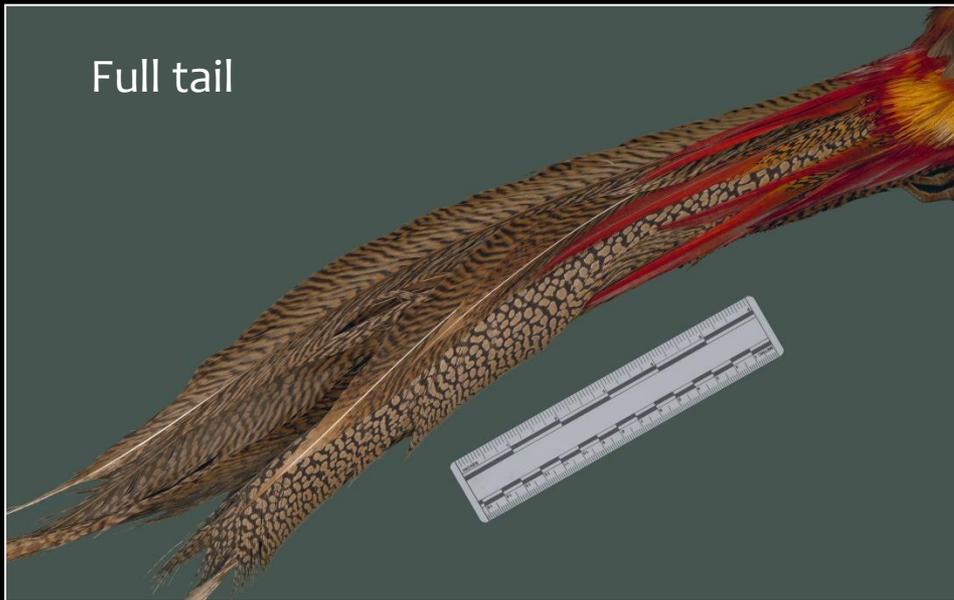


Golden Pheasant

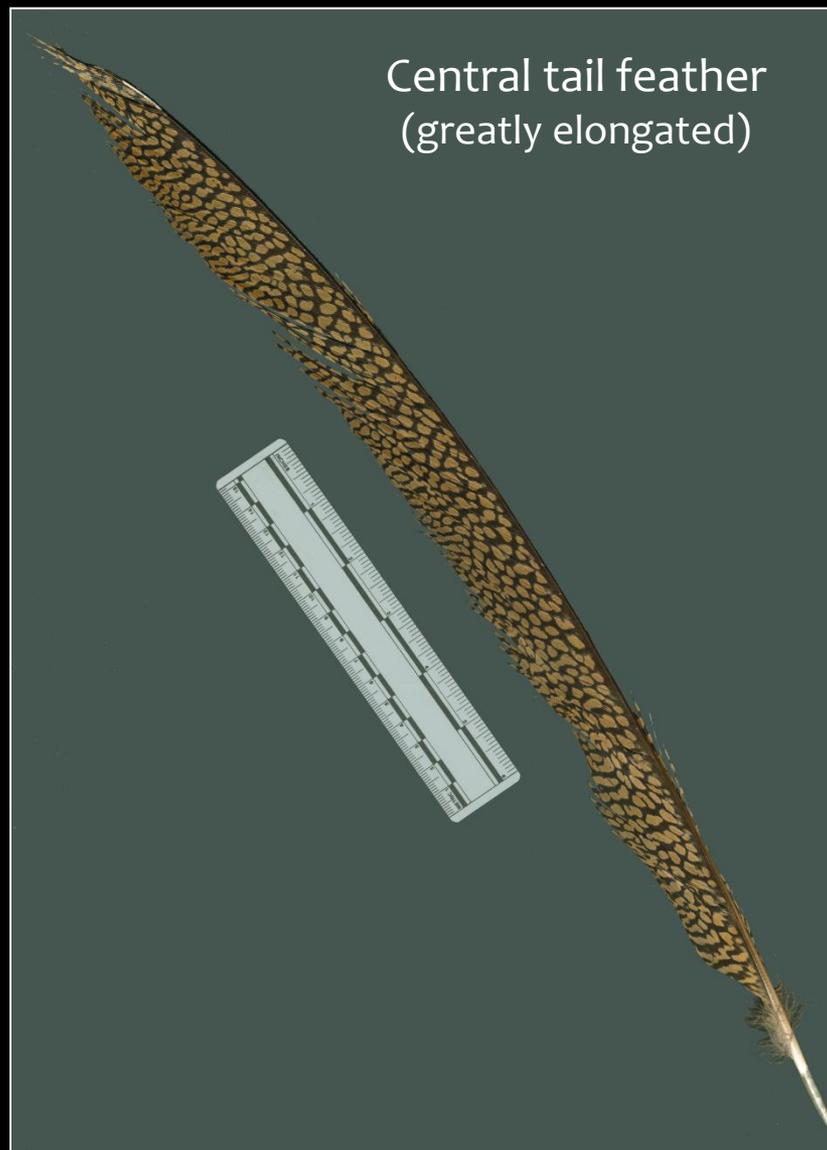


Elongated tail coverts

Full tail



Central tail feather  
(greatly elongated)



Outer tail feathers

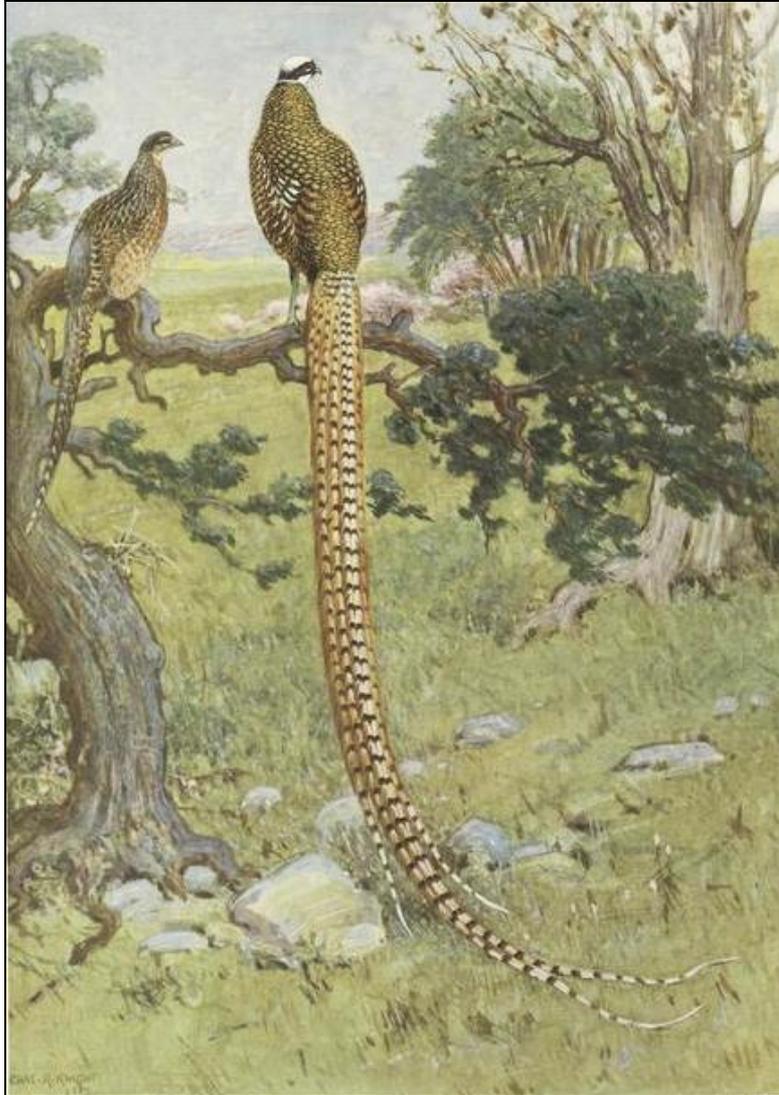


# Golden Pheasant



## Decorative uses of Golden Pheasant feathers





Reeve's Pheasant

# Long-tailed Pheasants

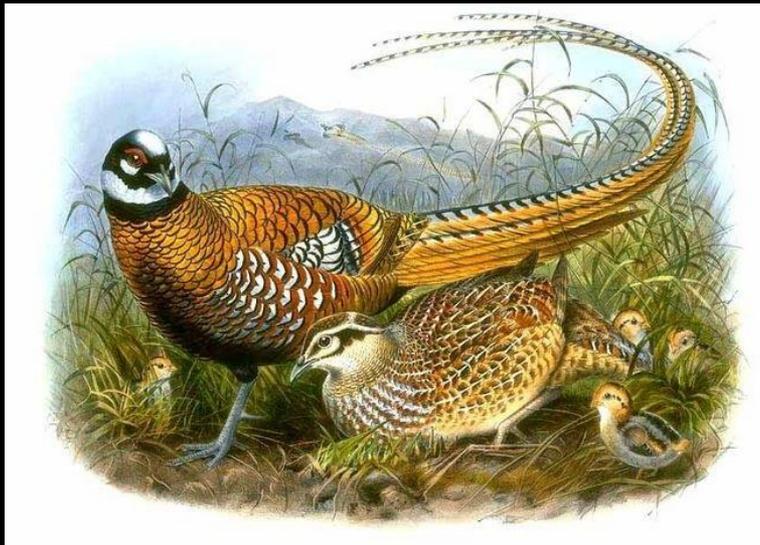
## (*Syrmaticus* species)

Males of the five species of “long-tailed pheasants” are all characterized by long, tapering tails, and many exhibit elaborate body plumage. Only Reeve's Pheasant (*S. reevesii*) feathers are commonly seen in the trade. This species' spectacular tail feathers can reach 5 feet long. The body feathers of Reeve's Pheasant are also frequently used in jewelry and other decorative objects.

Reeve's Pheasant is not protected, but three other *Syrmaticus* pheasants are CITES I and ESA-listed: Elliot's (*S. ellioti*), Mrs. Hume's [or Bar-winged] (*S. humiae*), and Mikado (*S. mikado*).



Elliot's Pheasant

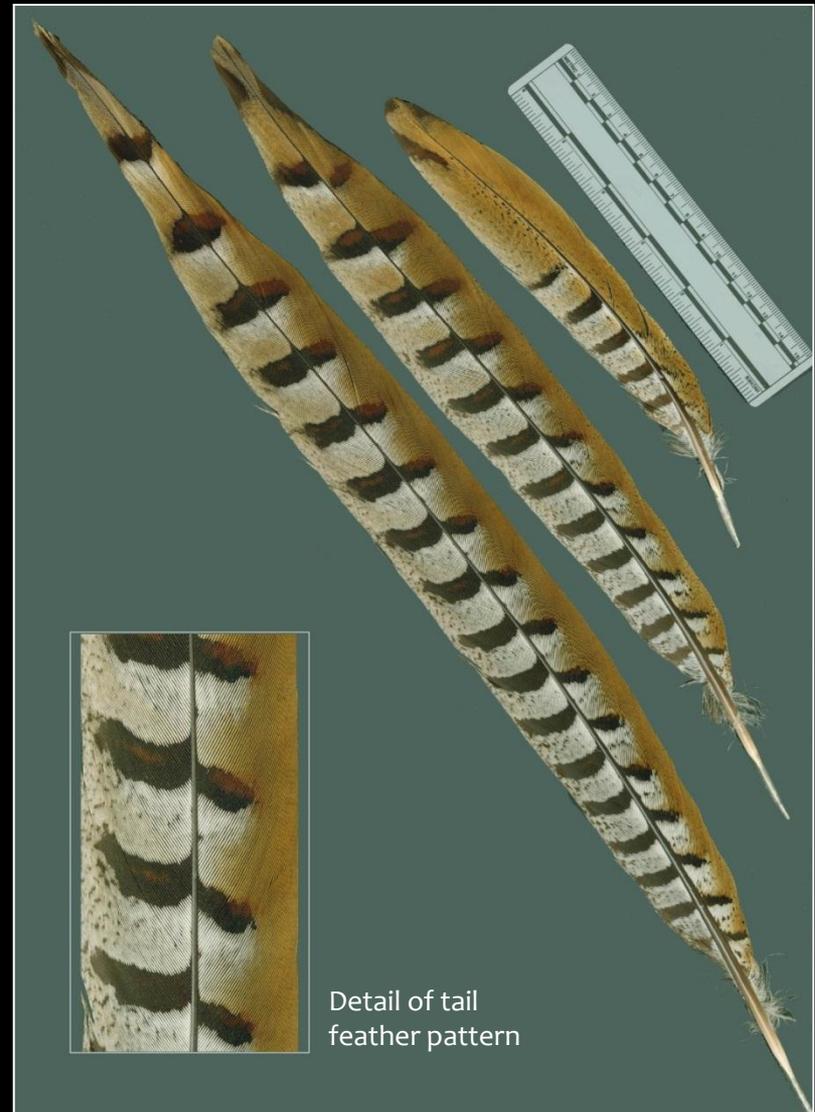


# Reeve's Pheasant

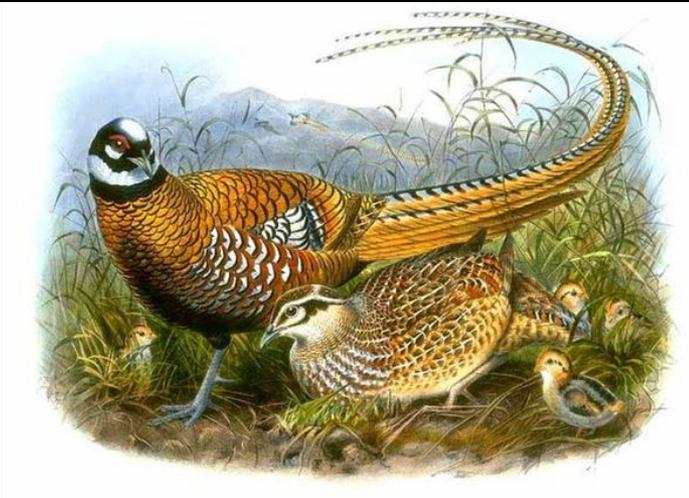
(*Syrmaticus reevesii*)



Reeve's Pheasant



Detail of tail feather pattern



Reeve's Pheasant  
feather use in  
decorative  
products





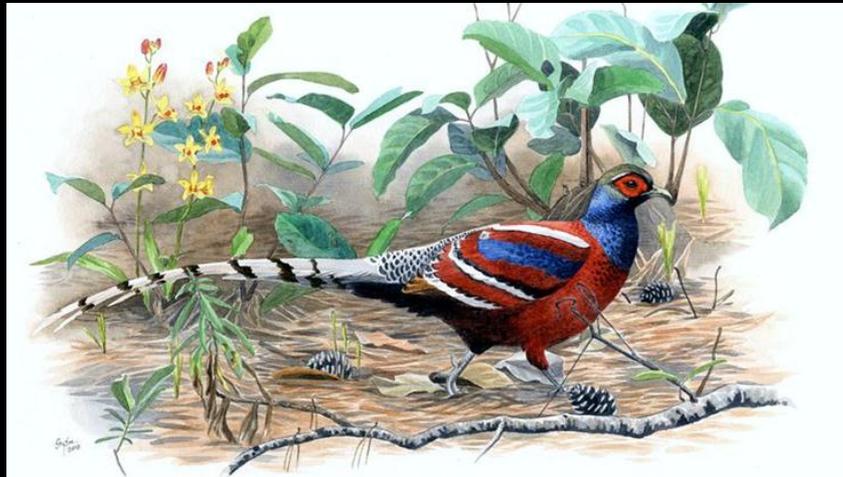
Detail of tail  
feather pattern

# Elliot's Pheasant

(*Syrnaticus ellioti*)

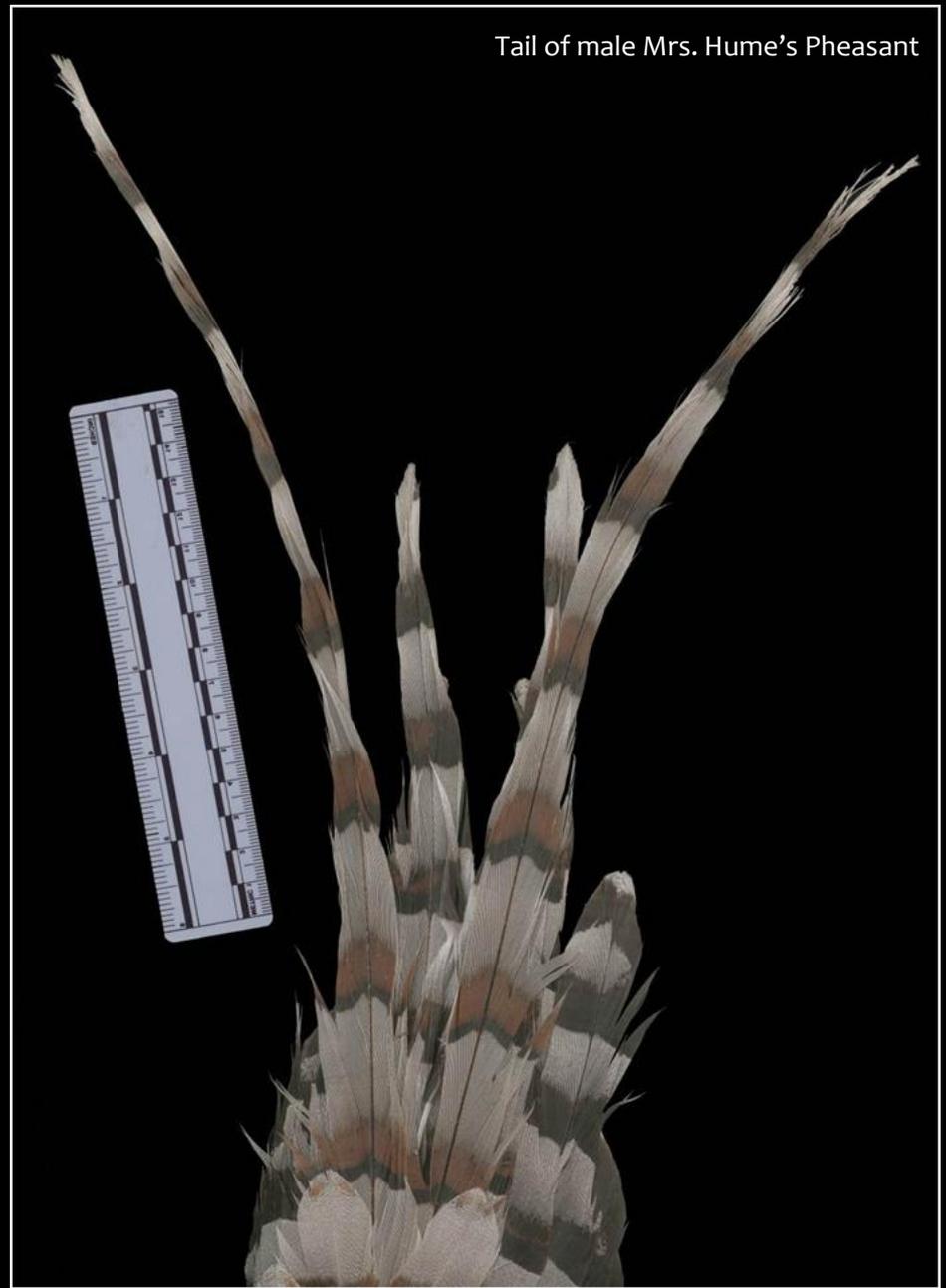
# Mrs. Hume's Pheasant

(*Syrmaticus humiae*)



Painting by Ayuwat Jearwattanakanok

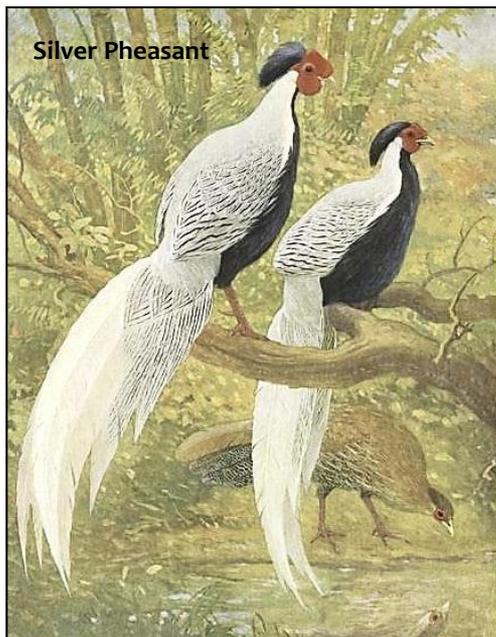
Tail of male Mrs. Hume's Pheasant





Mikado  
Pheasant  
(*Syrmaticus mikado*)





# Silver Pheasant and Allies (*Lophura* species)

The Silver Pheasant is a member of the diverse genus *Lophura*, which also includes the firebacks and the Kalij Pheasant (*L. leucomelanos*), which is naturalized in Hawaii.

Three *Lophura* species are CITES I-listed: Swinhoe's Pheasant (*L. swinhoii*), Imperial Pheasant (*L. imperialis*), and Edward's Pheasant (*L. edwardsi*). These are extremely rare both in the wild and in captivity, and their feathers are not known to be used in decorative items.

The Silver Pheasant is widely raised in captivity, and its body feathers are commonly used in decorative items including jewelry and fishing flies. These feathers – white with attractive fine black lines – are unlikely to be confused with any other species except certain domestic chicken breeds. No other *Lophura* species is regularly seen in the feather trade.



Swinhoe's Pheasant

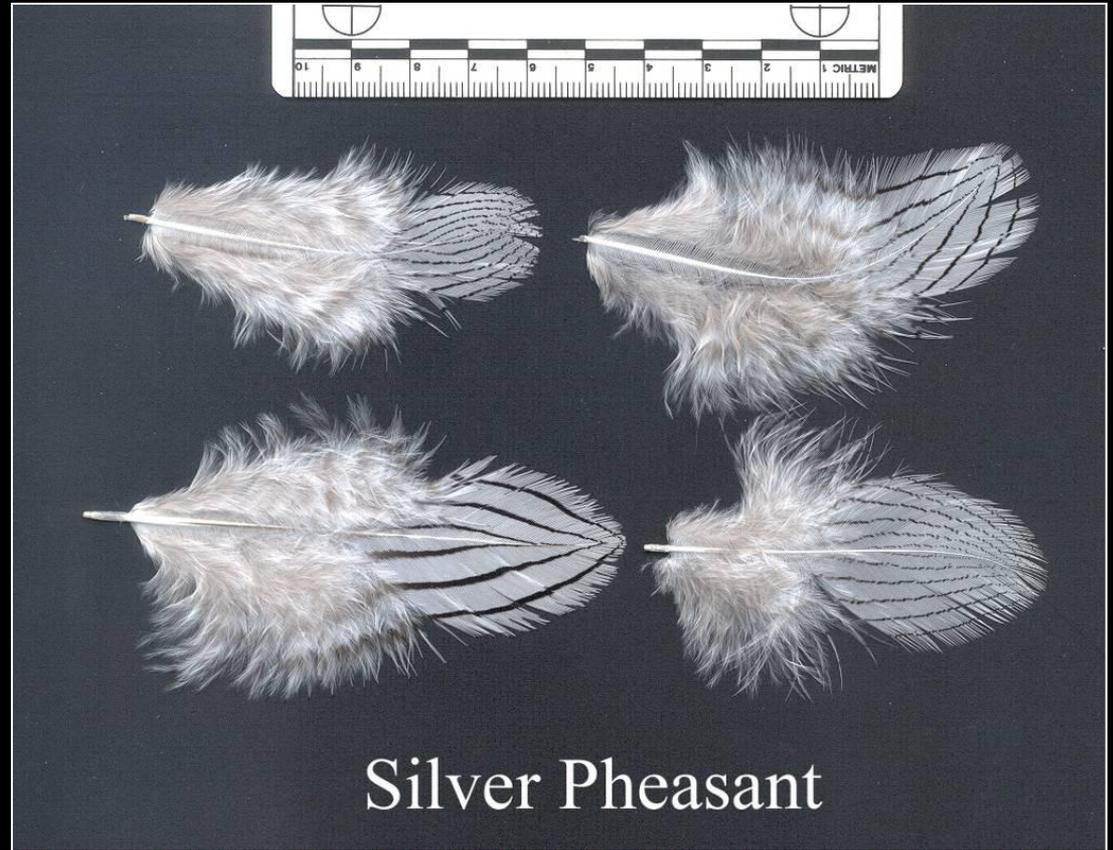


Kalij Pheasant





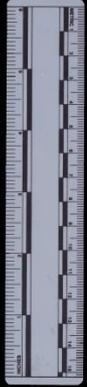
**Silver Pheasant**  
(*Lophura ncythemera*)



**Silver Pheasant**

# Silver Pheasant

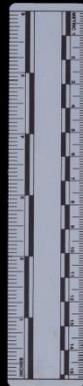




Wing Feathers

Tail Feathers

Silver Pheasant





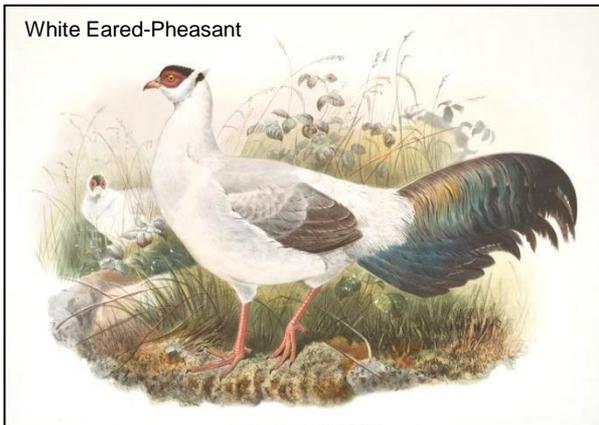
## Decorative uses of Silver Pheasant feathers



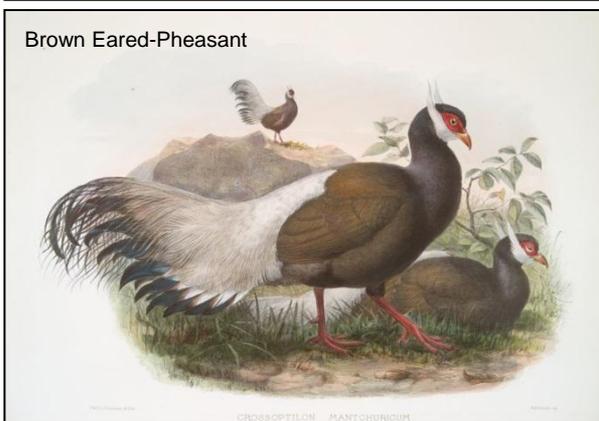
Blue Eared-Pheasant



White Eared-Pheasant



Brown Eared-Pheasant



# Eared-Pheasants (*Crossoptilon* species)

There are four species of eared-pheasants, all confined to high mountains of China and Tibet. The White Eared-Pheasant and Brown Eared-Pheasant are listed as CITES I and ESA-Endangered; the other two species are unlisted.

The eared-pheasants get their name from the ear- or horn-like tufts of feathers arising on each side of the face. The tail shape is distinctive, with ragged upper plumes drooping over elongated tail feathers. These tail feathers are either all dark, with green or blue iridescence, or white with dark iridescent tips. Male and female eared-pheasants are similar in appearance.

Eared-pheasant feathers are rarely seen in the trade, but are sometimes offered for fly-tying (especially to substitute for heron in traditional designs).



Brown Eared-Pheasant



"Spey" fly with Blue Eared-Pheasant hackle



**Blue Eared-Pheasant**  
(*Crossoptilon auritum*)

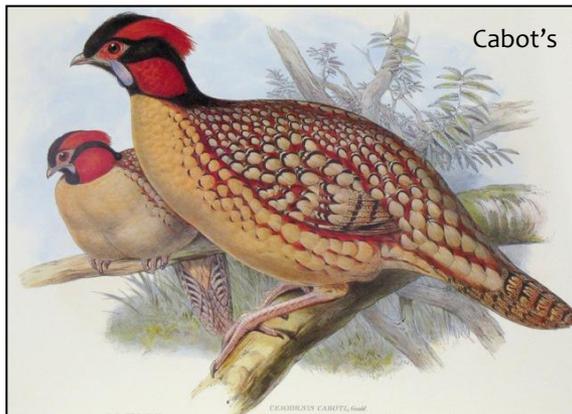




## Cheer Pheasant (*Catreus wallichii*)



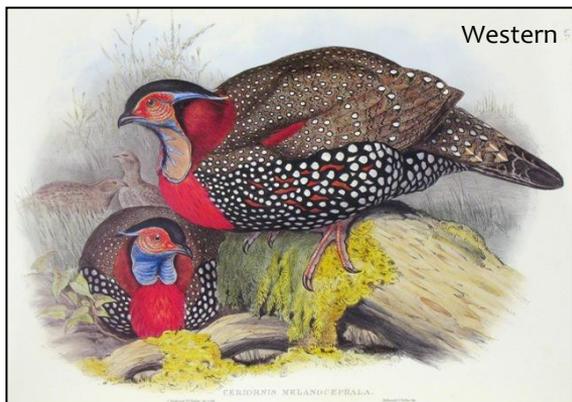
This rare long-tailed pheasant is restricted to the Himalayas. It shares some characteristics with both *Syrnaticus* and *Crossoptilon*. It is CITES I-listed, but its feathers do not appear to be in commercial trade.



Cabot's



Blyth's



Western

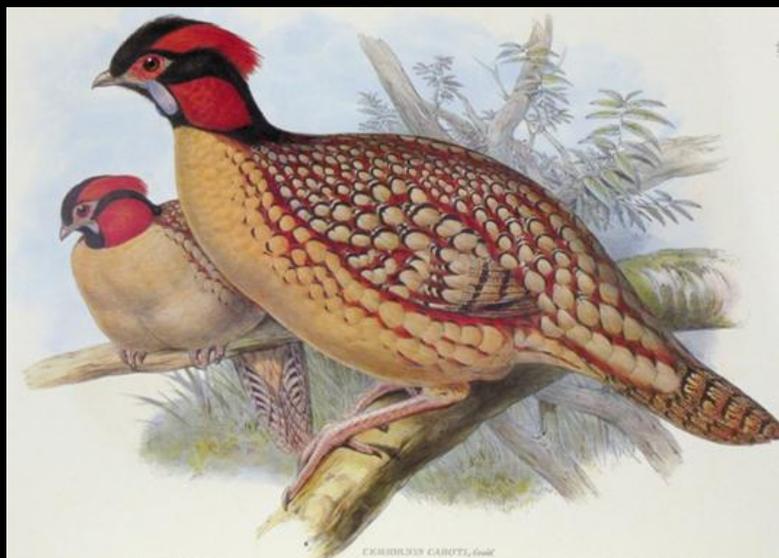
# Tragopans

(*Tragopan* species)

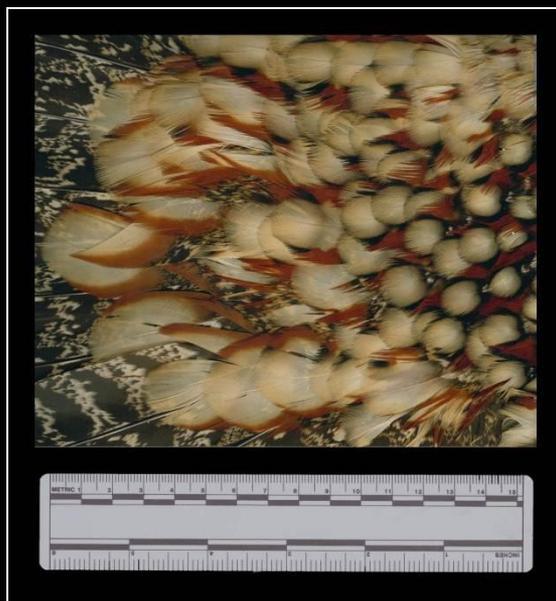
Tragopans are five species of “horned pheasants” found in the Himalayan Mountains and foothills. Three species (Cabot’s, Blyth’s, and Western) are listed as CITES I and ESA-Endangered. The Satyr Tragopan is CITES III (Nepal). Only *T. temminckii* is not CITES-listed.

The males of all tragopan species have beautiful body plumage with striking spotted patterns. These feathers are used in fishing flies (including some “classic” Atlantic salmon fly designs), earrings, and other decorative items. Tragopans lack elongated tail feathers or other plumes, so it is the body feathers that are used in decorative items.

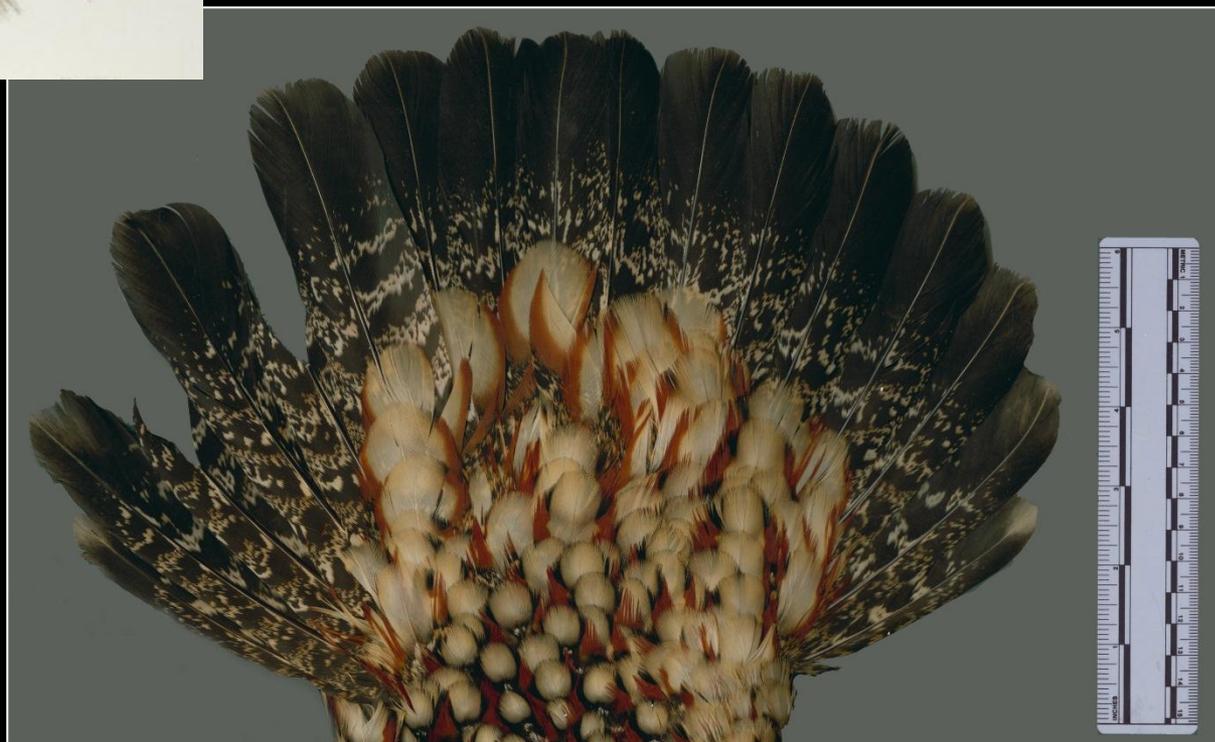




# Cabot's Tragopan (*Tragopan caboti*)



Rump feathers

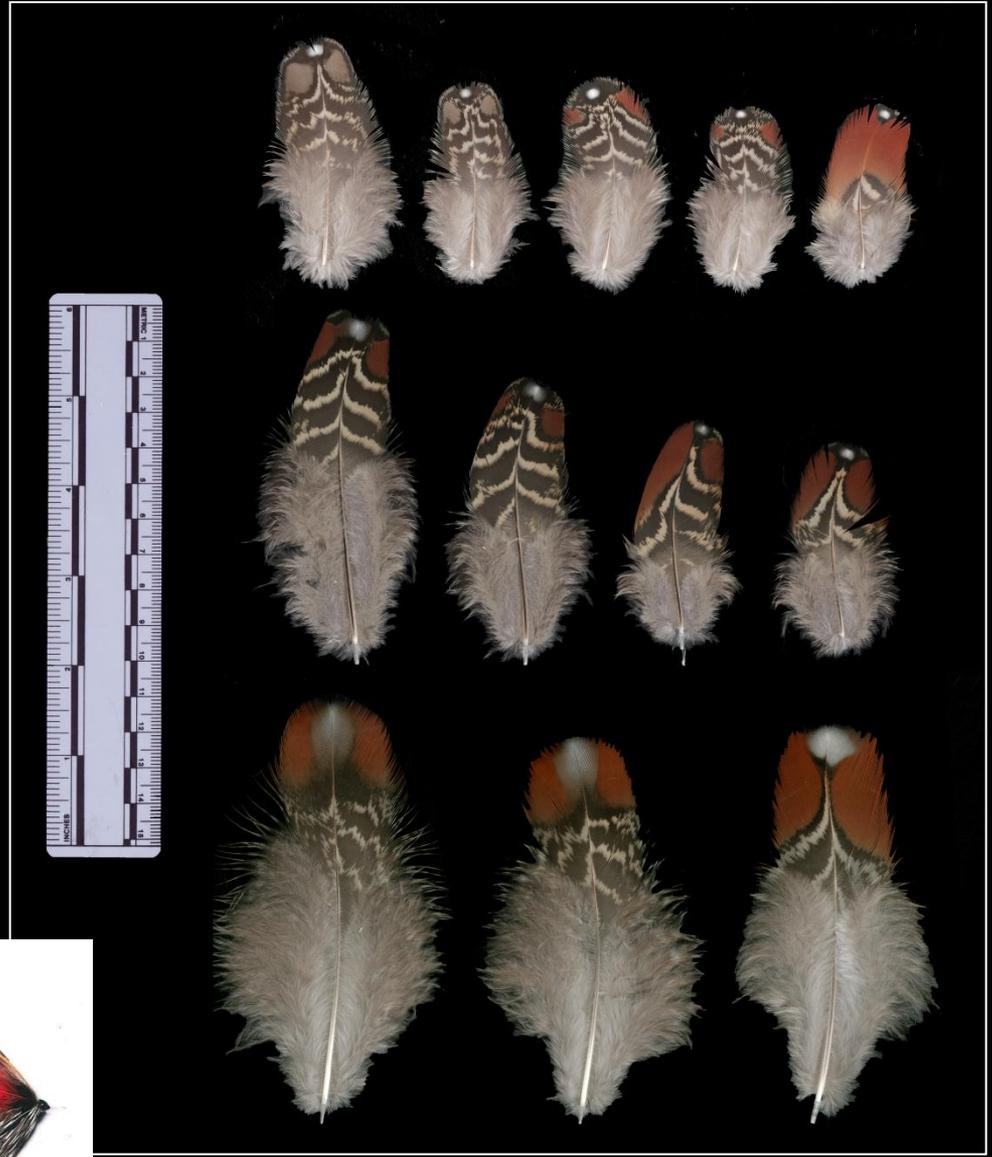


Rump and spread tail



# Satyr Tragopan

(*Tragopan satyra*)

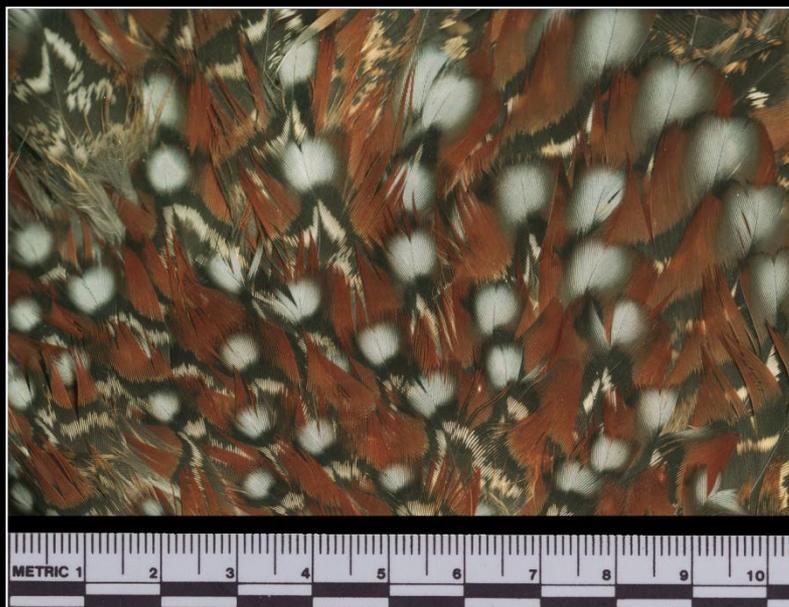


Back feathers and wing coverts

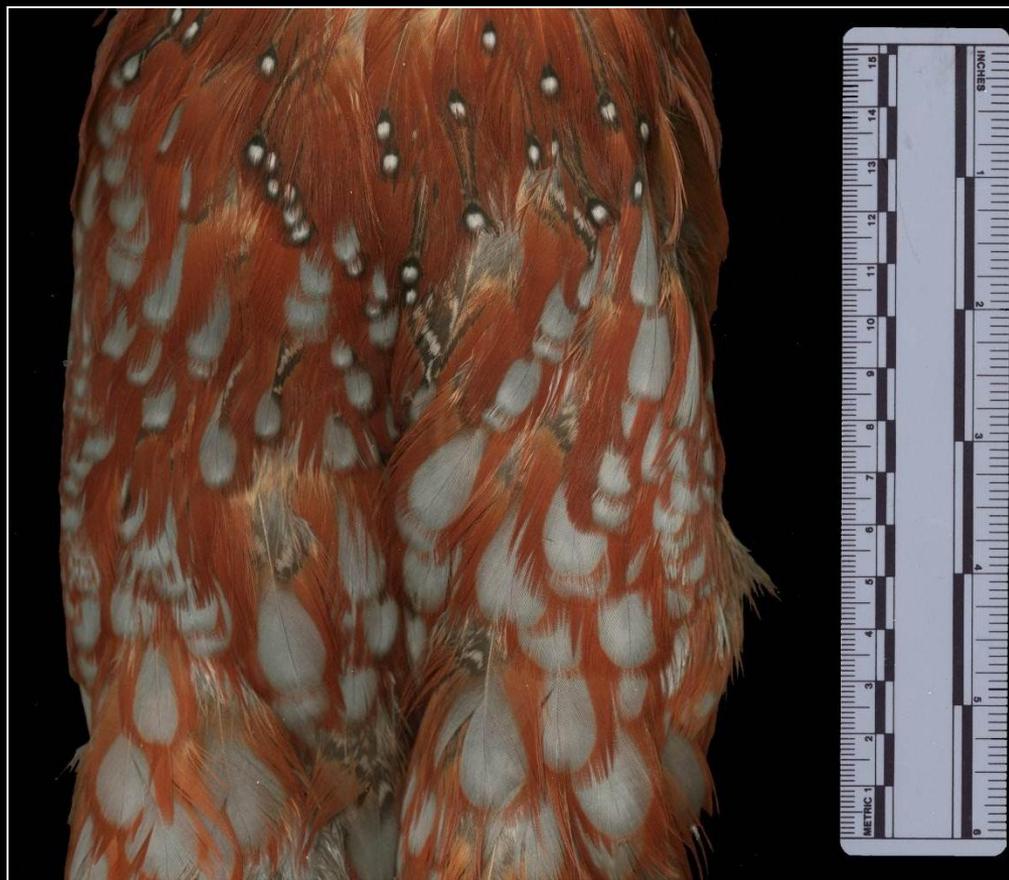


# Temminck's Tragopan

(*Tragopan temminckii*)



Closeup of upper wing coverts



Lower neck and upper back



**Blood Pheasant**  
(*Ithaginis cruentus*)



This small, partridge-like pheasant is found in the Himalayas and the mountains of central China. There are many subspecies, which differ markedly in the amount of red on the breast. It is CITES II-listed, but its feathers do not appear to occur in trade.

# Monals or Impeyan Pheasants (*Lophophorus* species)

The three species of monals are found at high elevations in the Himalayas and western China. All three are CITES I; two (*L. ihuysii* and *L. sclateri*) are also listed as ESA-Endangered.

The males of all monal species have dorsal body feathers with dazzling metallic iridescence. Despite their beauty, these feathers seem to be rarely used in decorative items. The hat on the right is from the 1940s; the necklace is contemporary. The orange-brown tail feathers of the male Himalayan Monal are occasionally seen in the trade.



Himalayan Monal  
*L. impejanus*





# Himalayan Monal

(*Lophophorus impejanus*)

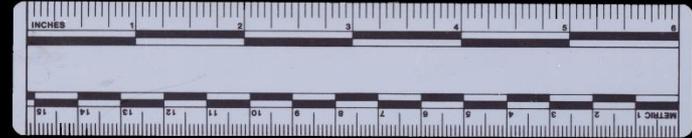
View of iridescent back feathers;  
head at the top of the image



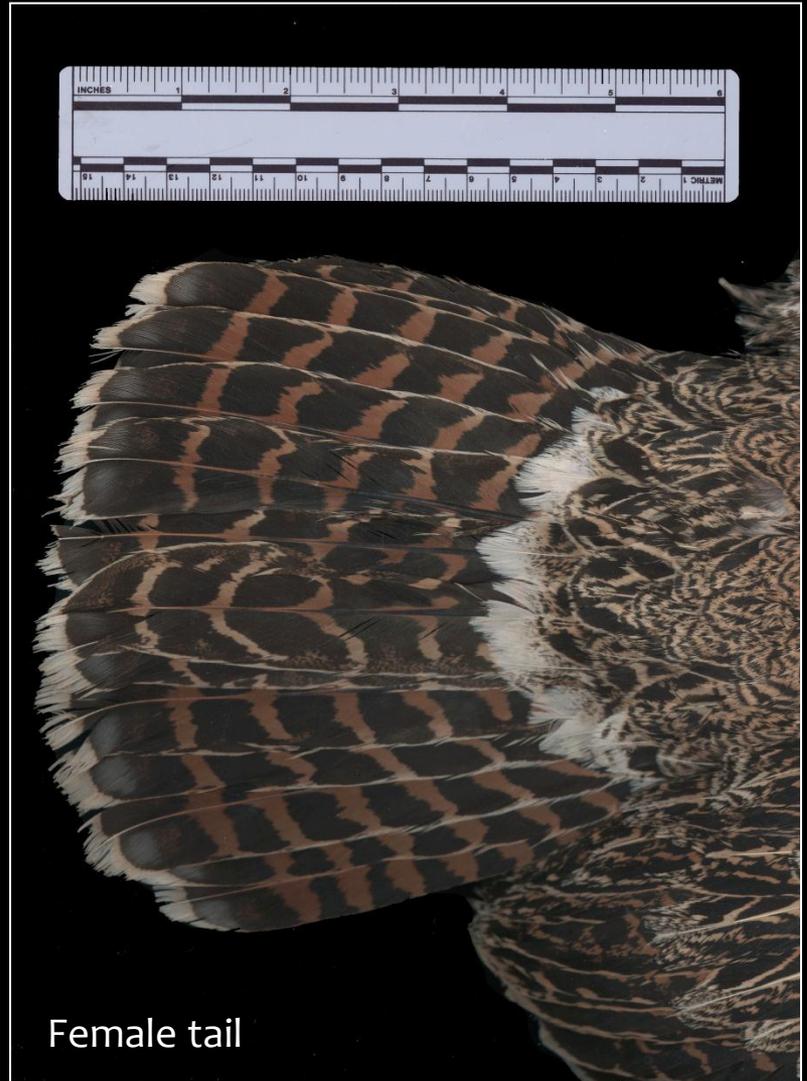


# Himalayan Monal

(*Lophophorus impejanus*)



Male tail feathers



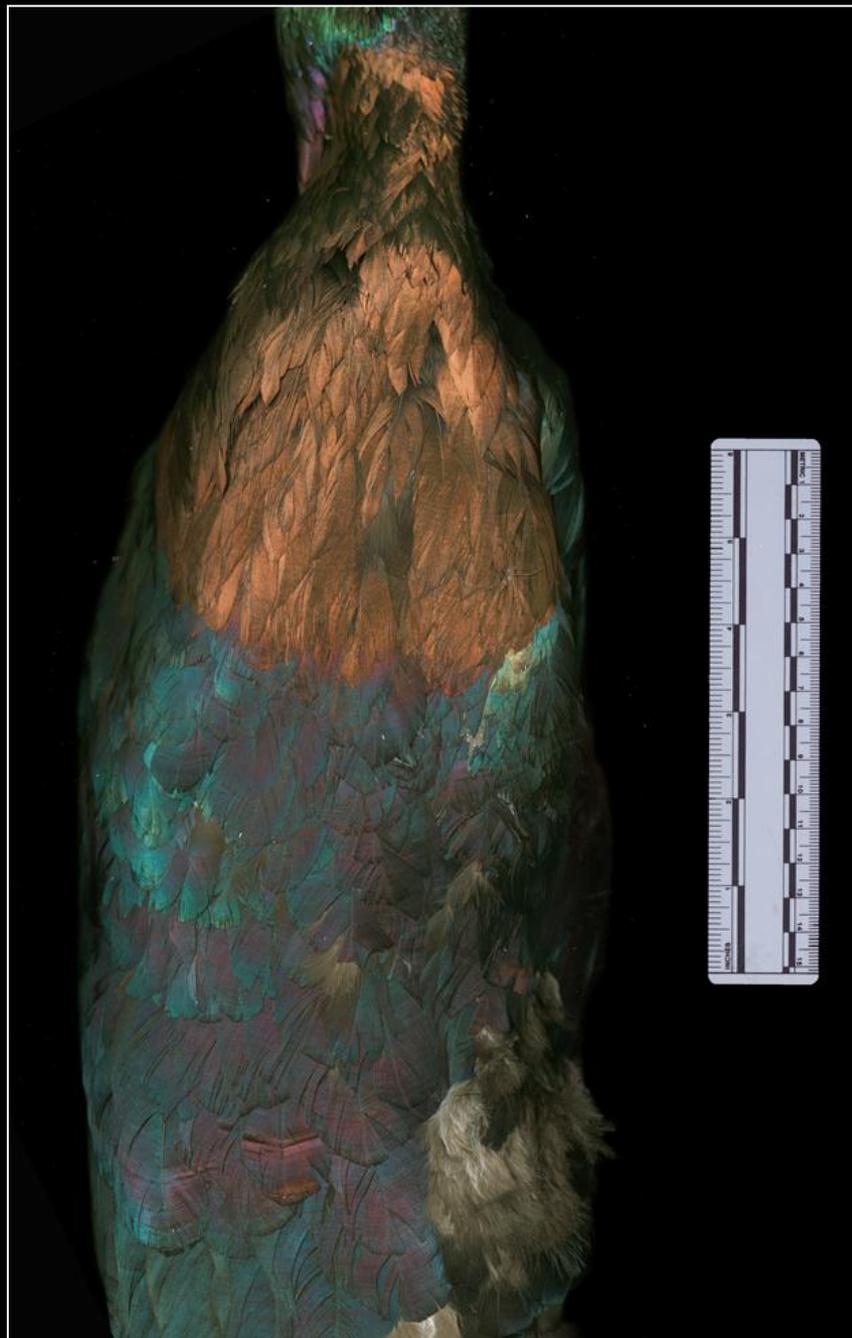
Female tail



# Chinese Monal

(*Lophophorus lhuysii*)

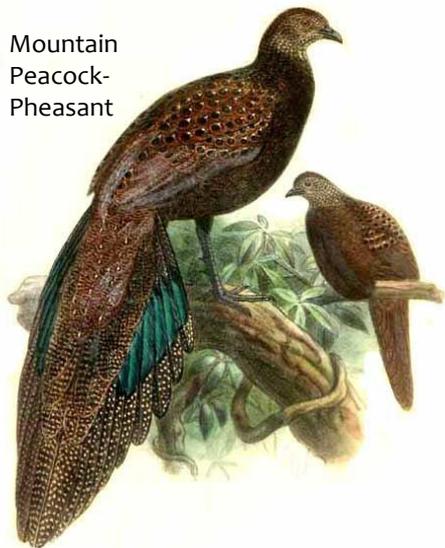
View of iridescent back feathers;  
head at the top of the image



Malayan  
Peacock-  
Pheasant



Mountain  
Peacock-  
Pheasant



# Peacock-Pheasants

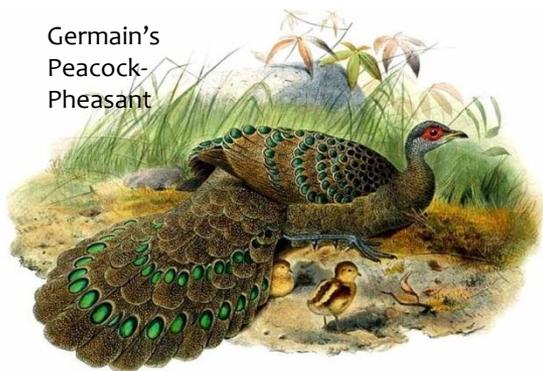
## (*Polyplectron* species)

Peacock-pheasants are eight species of Southeast Asia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. One species, the Palawan Peacock-Pheasant (*P. napoleonis* = *P. emphanum*) is CITES I and ESA-Endangered; four other species are CITES II, including the widespread Grey Peacock-Pheasant (*P. bicalcaratum*).

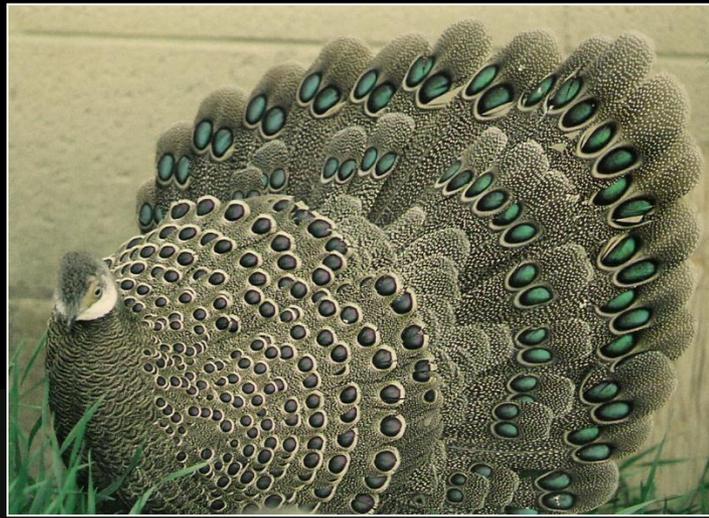
Males of most peacock-pheasant species have striking iridescent ocelli or eyespots on the back, wing coverts, secondaries, and tail feathers. The feathers are also finely mottled gray, tan, or brown. The exception is the male Palawan Peacock-Pheasant, in which the dorsal feathers are iridescent blue-green.

The eyespot feathers of peacock-pheasants are used in fishing flies, earrings, and other decorative items. These eyespot feathers usually cannot be identified to species, but all the *Polyplectron* species with large eyespots on the tail feathers are at least CITES II listed (Malayan, Bornean, Germain's, Palawan, and Grey Peacock-Pheasants).

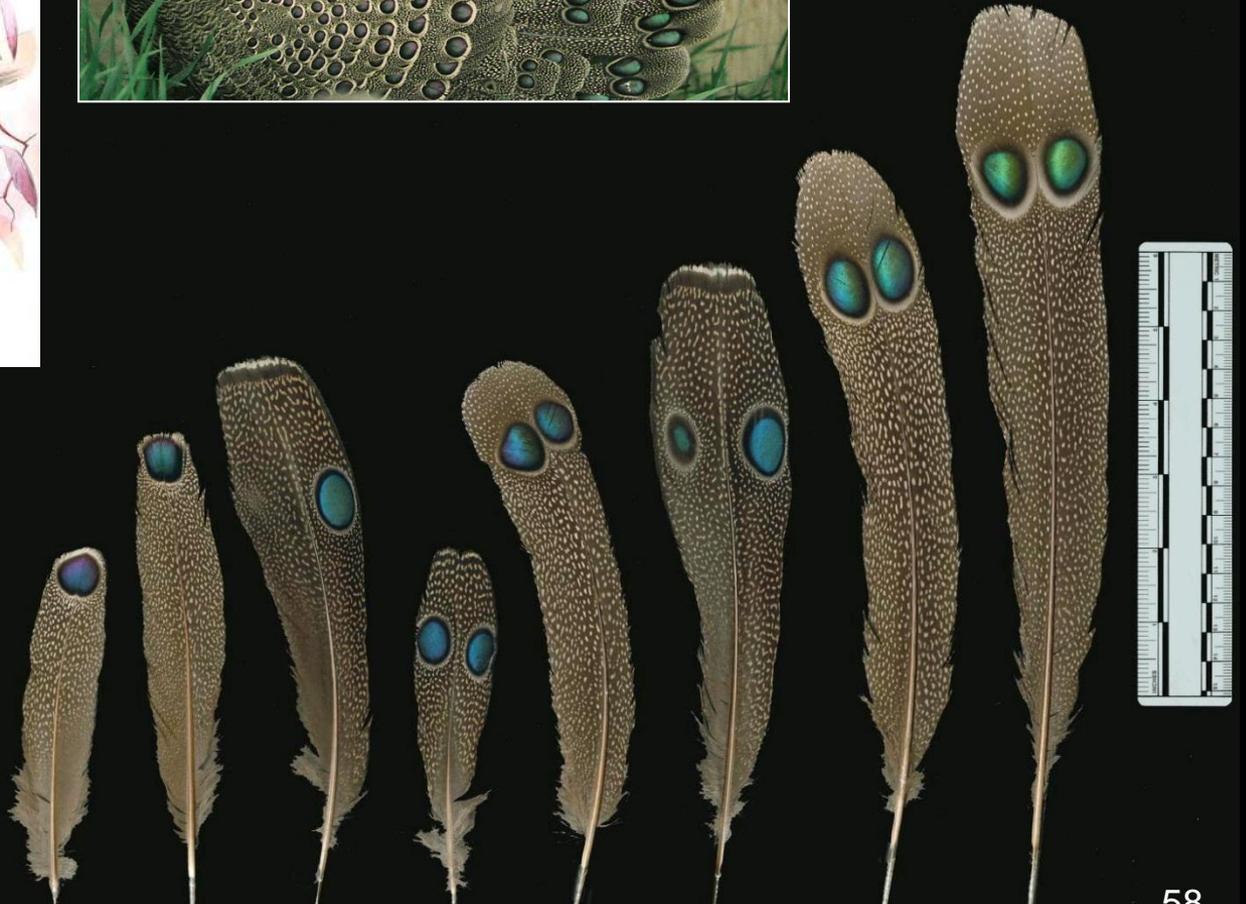
Germain's  
Peacock-  
Pheasant



with Silver Pheasant feathers



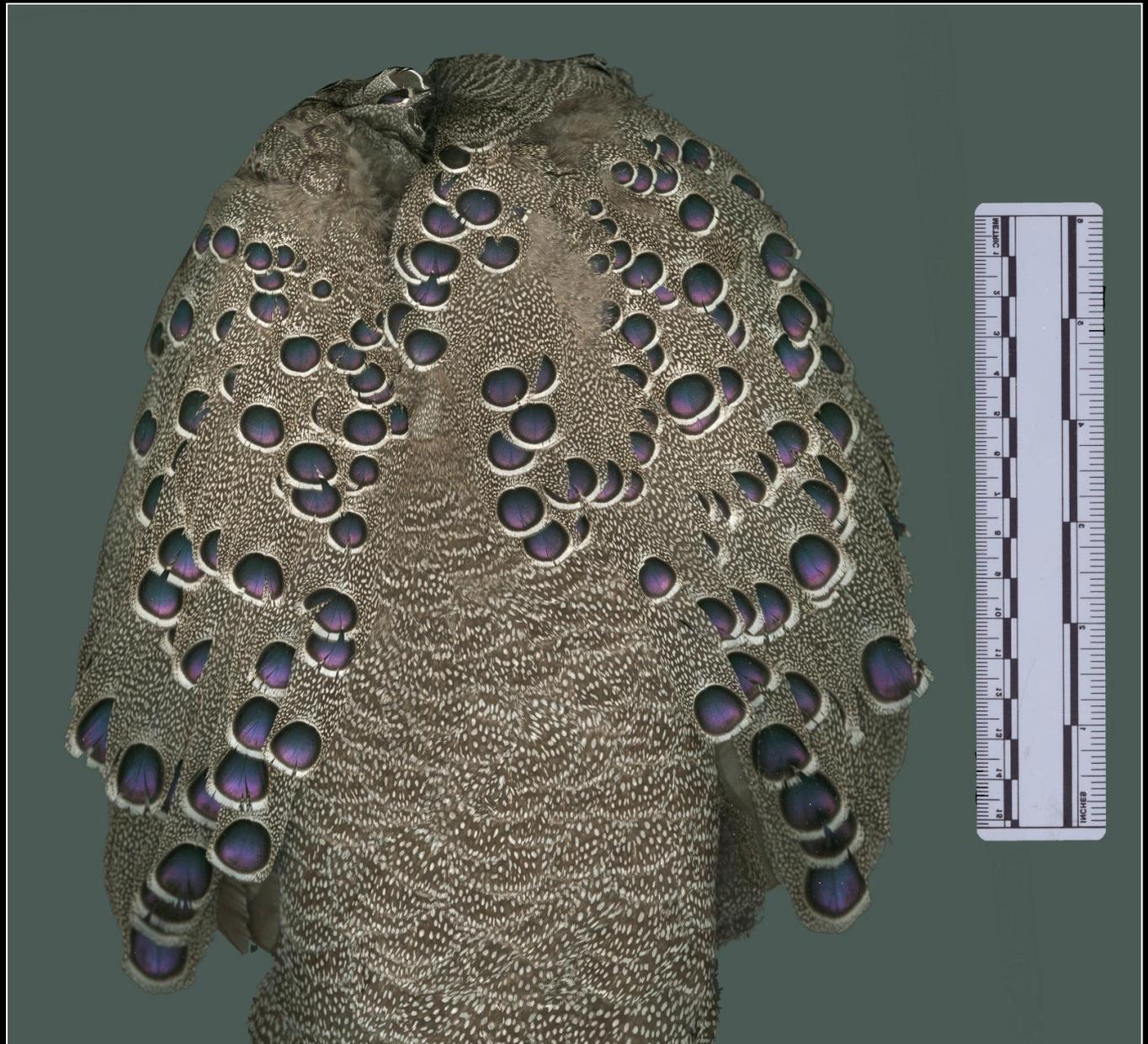
Grey  
Peacock-  
Pheasant  
(*Polyplectron bicalcaratum*)

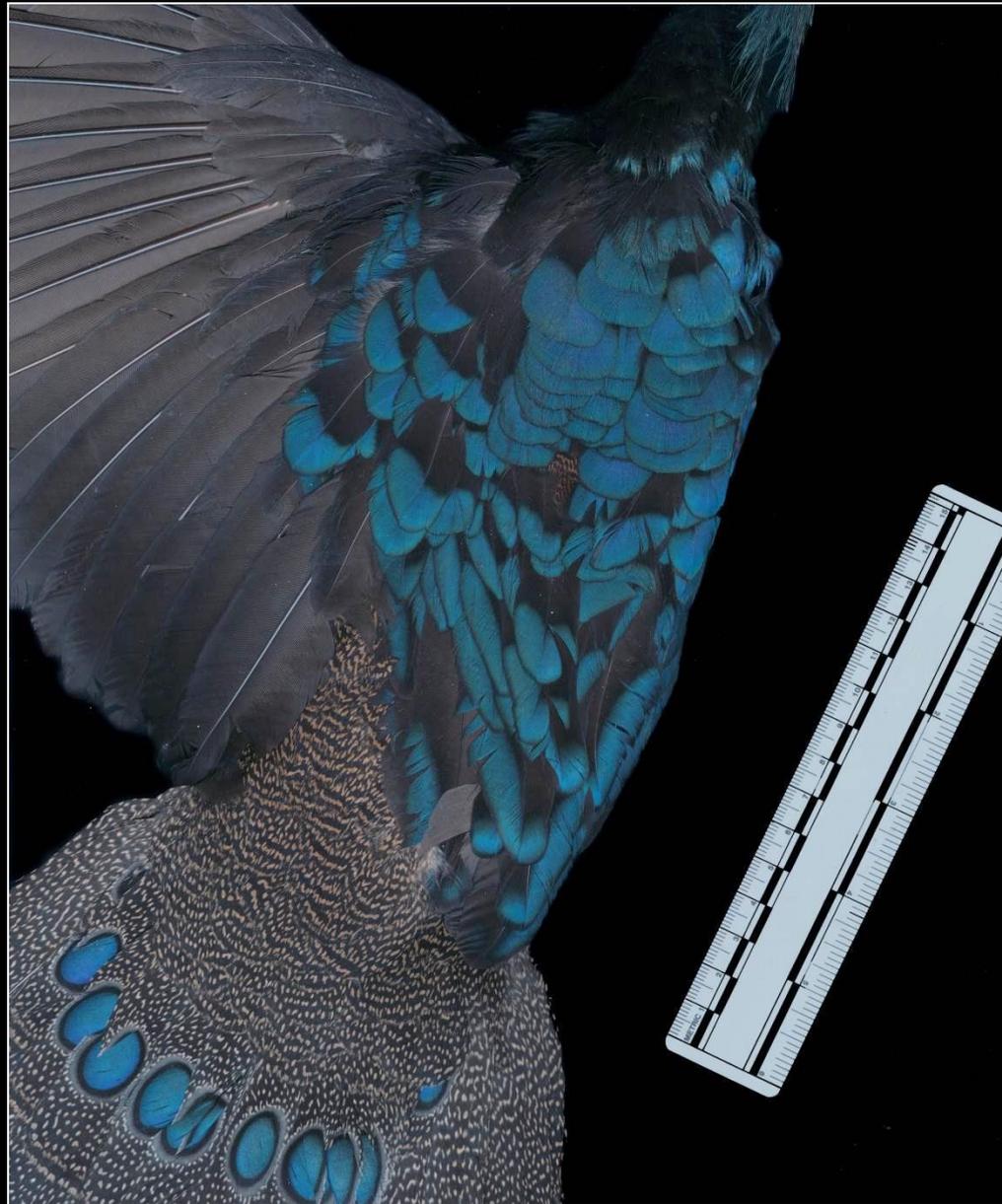


Tail feathers and coverts

# Grey Peacock- Pheasant

View of iridescent  
spots on the back  
and wing feathers;  
this prepared skin  
lacks the head

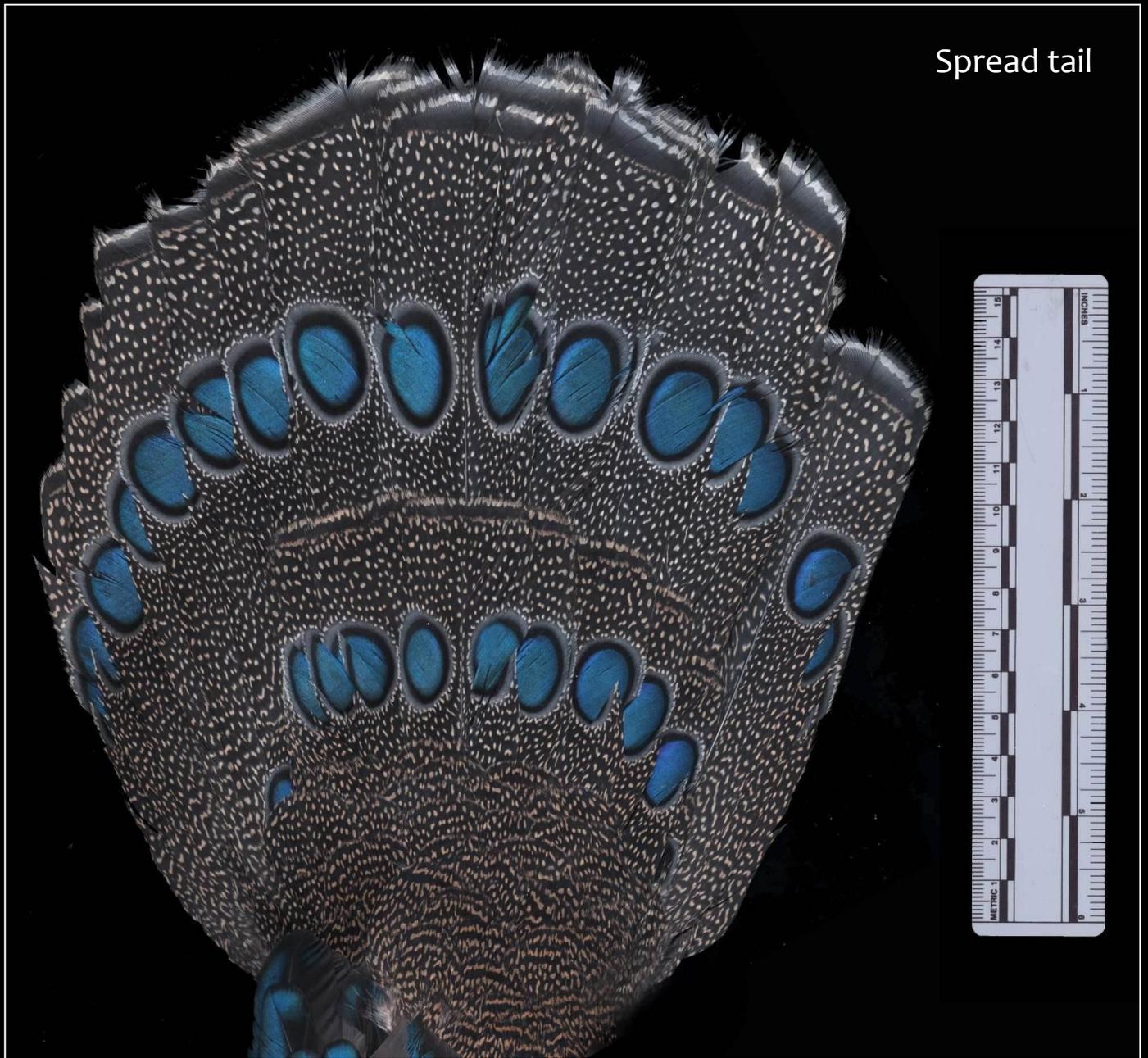




Palawan  
Peacock-Pheasant  
(*Polyplectron napoleonis*)

# Palawan Peacock- Pheasant

Spread tail





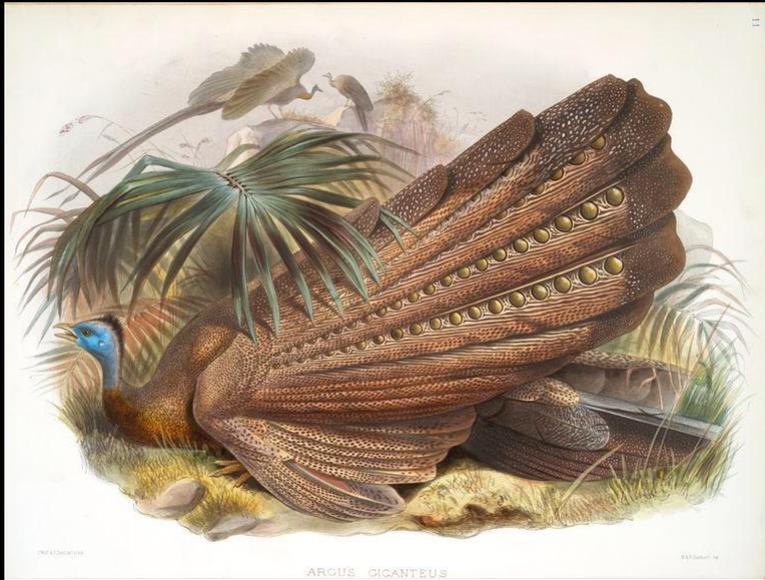
# Great Argus

(*Argusianus argus*)

The Great Argus of Malaysia, Borneo, and Sumatra possesses perhaps the most spectacular feathers of any bird. Both the secondaries and the tail feathers are greatly elongated and marked with ornate patterns including eyespots, mottling, and complex spotting. These feathers are sometimes sold individually as decorative objects, and are also sold for fly tying.

The Great Argus is CITES II-listed. The somewhat similar Crested Argus (*Rheinhardia ocellata*) (see p. 66) is CITES I-listed, but appears not to be used in the feather trade.

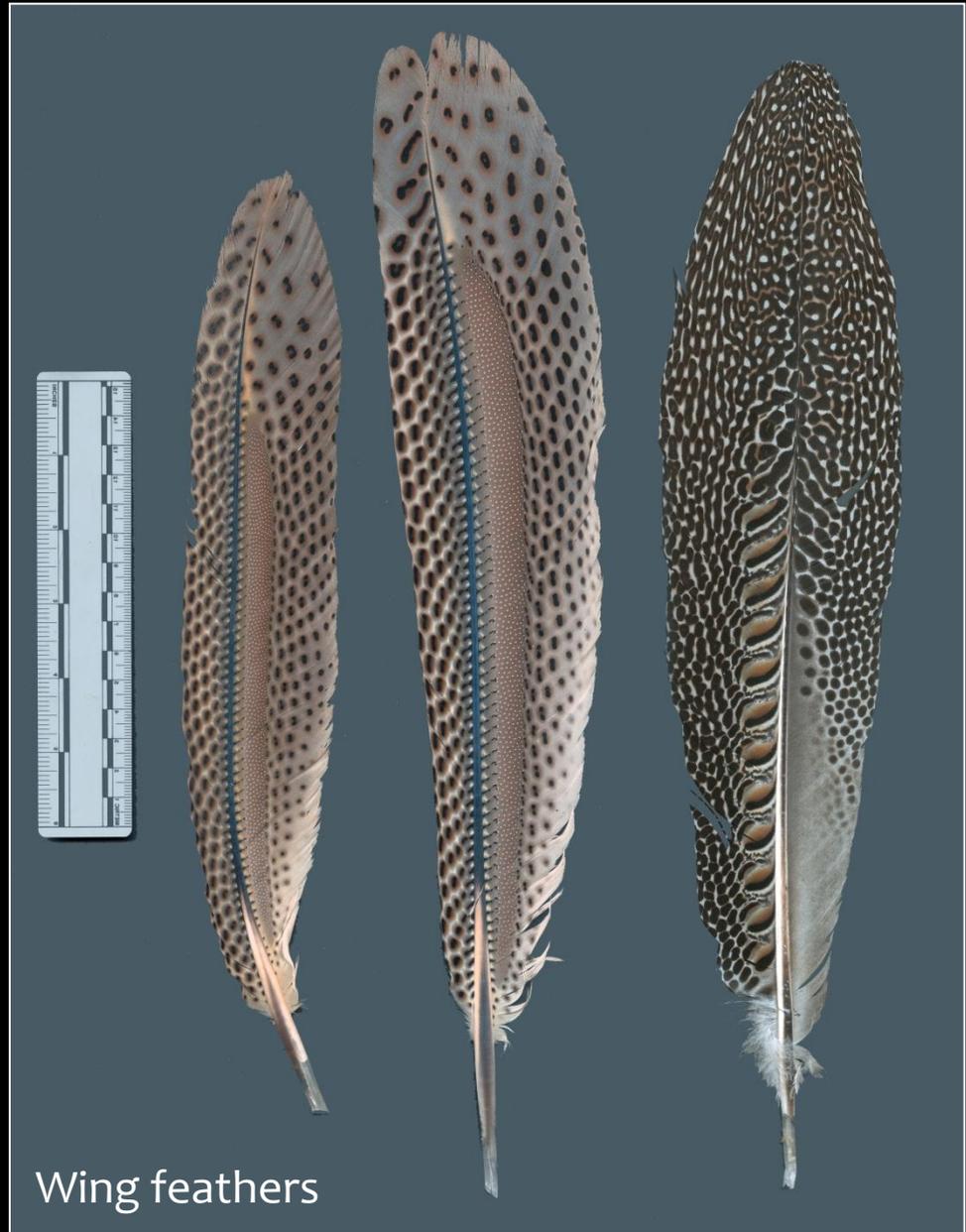




# Great Argus (*Argusianus argus*)



Male, showing greatly elongated tail feathers



Wing feathers

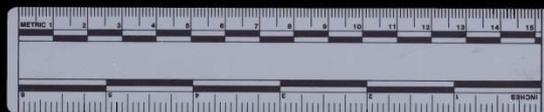


# Great Argus



Detail of the elongated central tail feathers; a 10-12" section of the ~50" total length

Inner wing feather (tertial) of male Great Argus





## Female Great Argus (*Argusianus argus*)

Although not as ornate as the male, the female Great Argus also has striking plumage, and these feathers are sometimes used in fly-tying.





## Crested Argus (*Rheinardia ocellata*)

The CITES I-listed Crested Argus is restricted to mountains in Malaysia, Laos, and Vietnam. An extremely shy species, it is rare in captivity. Its feathers do not appear to be in commercial trade, even though it has the longest tail feathers of any bird.



Indian Peafowl



# Peafowl

(*Pavo* species)

The Indian (or Common) Peafowl is one of the most recognizable birds in the world, and the males' spectacular eyespot plumes are widely used in decorative items. ("Peacock" is the term for the male; "peahen" for the female, so "peafowl" is the correct collective term.)

from the Indian Peafowl, based on its green neck and breast, different facial pattern and crown feathers, and the lack of barring on the wing coverts and secondaries. However, the eyespot plumes of the two species are extremely similar and cannot be reliably distinguished unless their location on the "train" of plumes is known (which is never the case for detached feathers).

Note that the apparent "greenness" of eyespot plumes is NOT a reliable character for identifying Green Peafowl feathers. Given the rarity of Green Peafowl, and the ready availability of Indian Peafowl feathers, Green Peafowl eyespot plumes are unlikely to be encountered in the trade.

Indian Peafowl have a long history of domestication, resulting in a number of plumage varieties, including pure white. Semi-wild Indian Peafowl often turn up in parks and residential settings.

Much less familiar is the Green Peafowl. This species is rare both in the wild and in captivity, and is CITES II-listed. The bird itself is easily distinguished

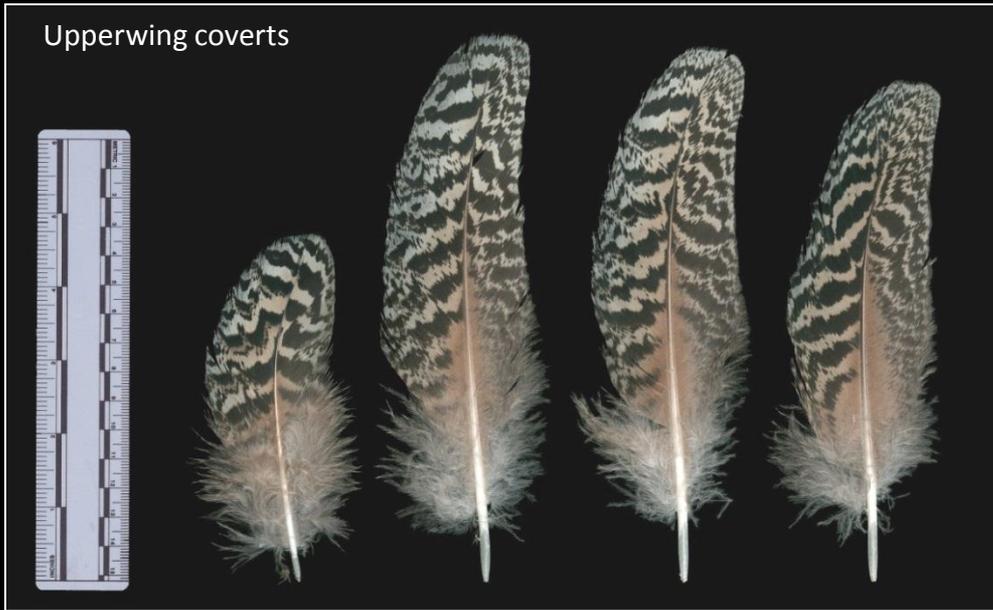


Green Peafowl



# Indian Peafowl

The lower photos illustrate two common domestic forms



## Indian Peacock

The "train" of plumes that the peacock spreads in display is composed of highly modified tail coverts; the actual tail feathers are dull brown and support the spread fan. The eyespot pattern can be seen on basal tail coverts only a few inches long, as well as the longest plumes that may be 3 feet or more. The barred and speckled wing coverts are diagnostic for Indian Peafowl (not found on Green).

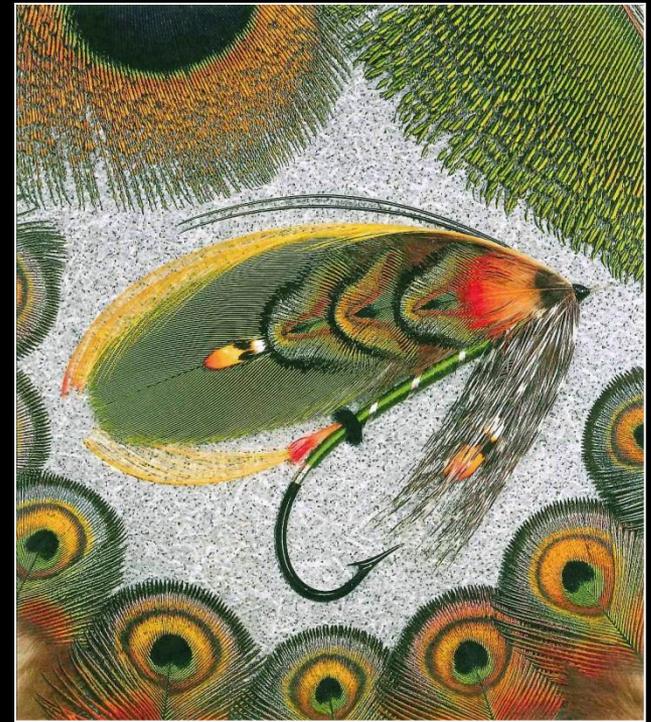
A variety of body feathers and coverts

"Train" of display plumes



## Wing feathers of Indian Peacock

The orange-brown primaries are distinctive for peafowl (*Pavo*), but do not distinguish the Indian and Green species. However, the strongly mottled and speckled inner secondaries and tertiaries are diagnostic for Indian Peafowl; these feathers are dark green on Green Peafowl.



## Green Peafowl

Note the distinctive facial pattern and the green neck, back and wings without barring. The orange-brown primaries and the blue eyespots are shared with Indian Peafowl.

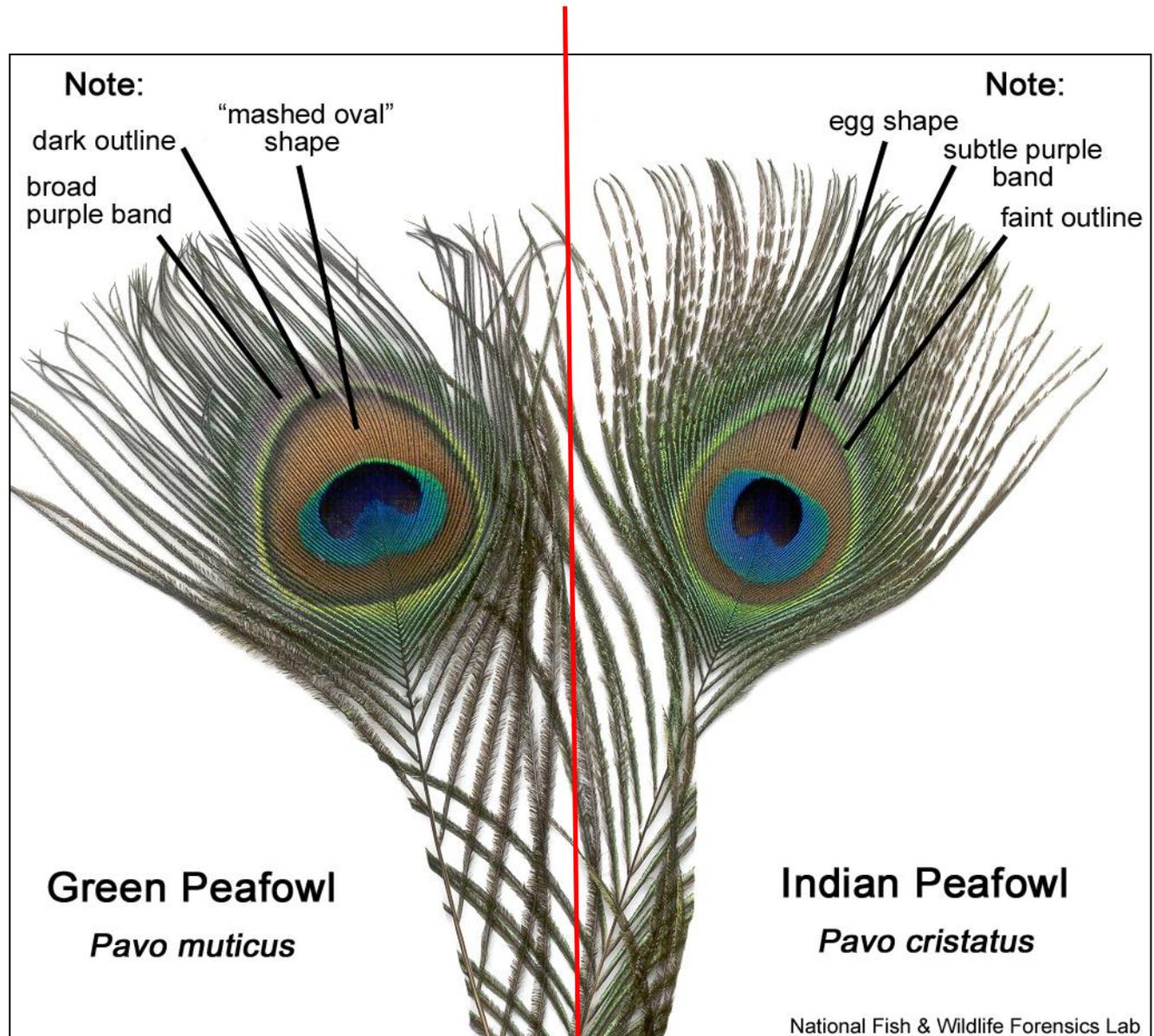
Decorative use of Green Peafowl feathers is rare, but they have been used in fly-tying.



This comparison illustrates some characters that may be useful for distinguishing Green and Indian Peacock eyespot plumes. These feathers are taken from comparable locations on the “trains” of the two species, allowing valid comparison.

Feathers from different locations on peacock trains differ in the size, color, and shape of the eyespot, so comparing different areas may lead to incorrect conclusions.

Note the subtlety of the differences illustrated. These can only be accurately assessed when known reference specimens are available.





## Decorative uses of Indian Peafowl feathers



Helmeted Guineafowl



NUMIDA PTYLORHYNCHA

# Guineafowl (Numididae)

The seven species of the guineafowl family are all native to Africa. One species, Helmeted Guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*), is widely kept as a barnyard bird, and semi-wild populations can be found in the U.S. and around the world. Only one guineafowl is protected: the White-breasted Guineafowl (*Agelastes meleagrides*) is listed as Threatened on the ESA. This extremely rare West African species is unlikely to be encountered in trade.

All guineafowl have partially or completely naked heads, often with crests or wattles. The most familiar species have black plumage with fine white spots and/or stripes. These attractive feathers are much used in decorative objects, including jewelry and fishing flies. The protected White-breasted Guineafowl does not exhibit these spots or stripes.

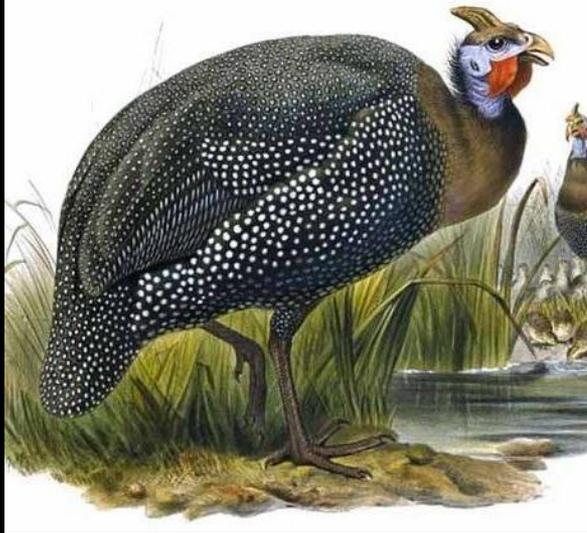


White-breasted Guineafowl

Details of Helmeted Guineafowl plumage and head



Helmeted



Vulturine



Helmeted Guineafowl (top row)



Vulturine Guineafowl (bottom row)

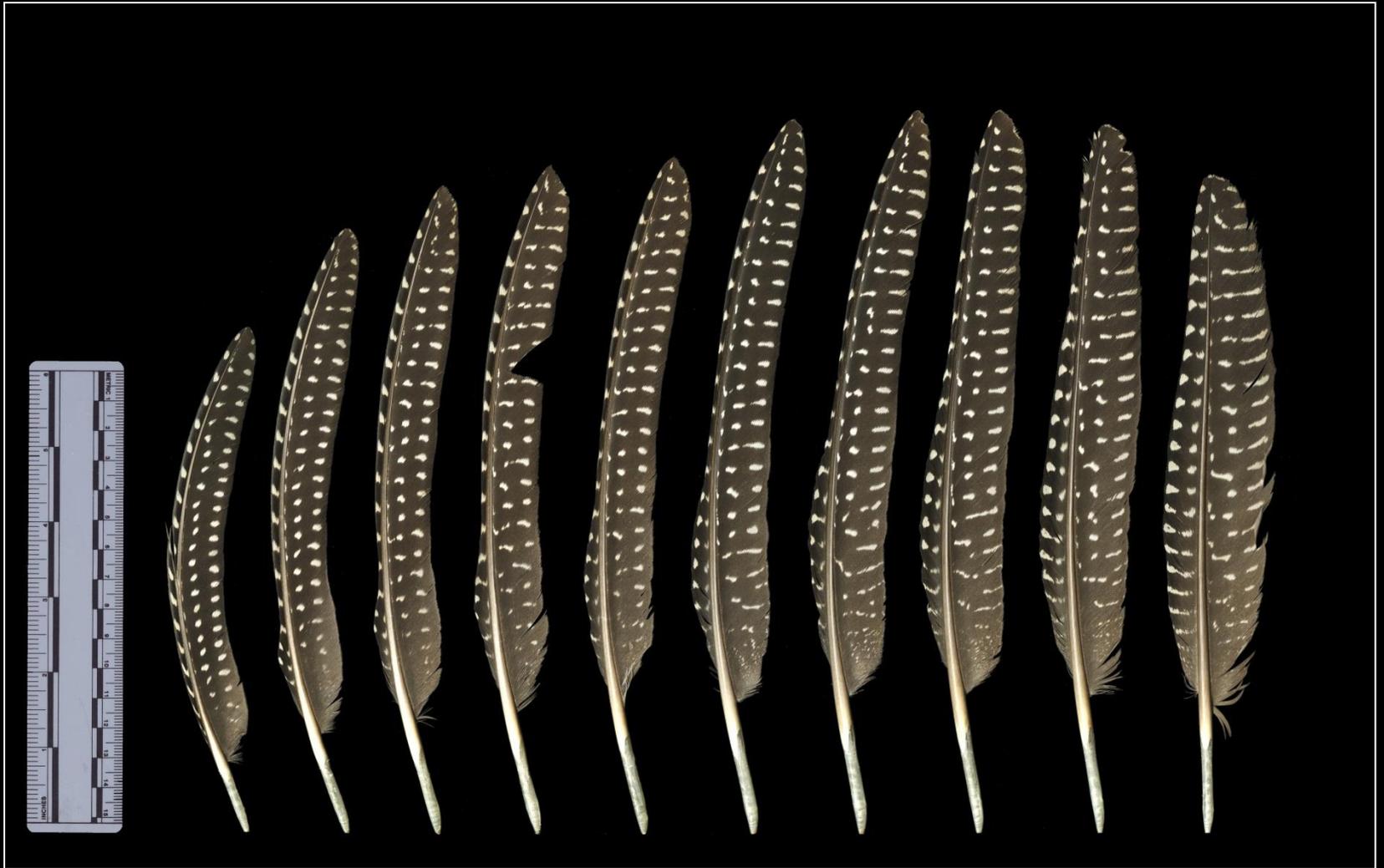
The two guineafowl species whose feathers are commonly seen in trade are the Helmeted (*Numida meleagris*) and Vulturine (*Acryllium vulturinum*). Both have black body feathers with numerous white spots; Vulturine also has white-striped feathers and blue in its plumage. Neither species is CITES-listed, so species ID is typically not necessary.



Helmeted Guineafowl

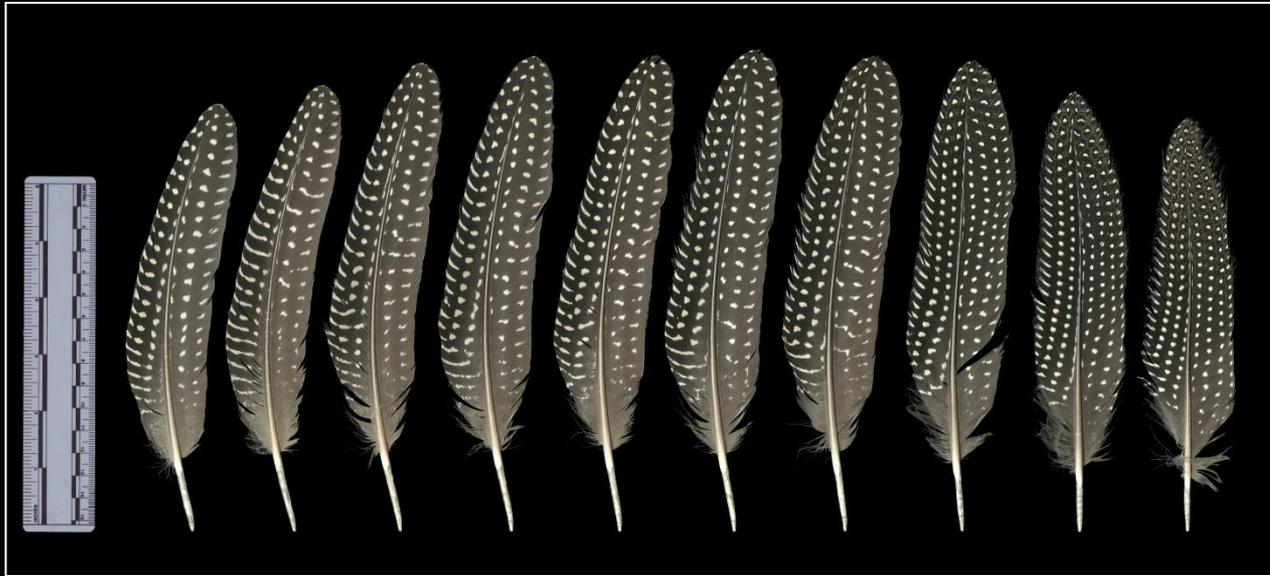


Vulturine Guineafowl



Primaries (outer wing feathers)  
of Helmeted Guineafowl

Secondaries (inner wing feathers)



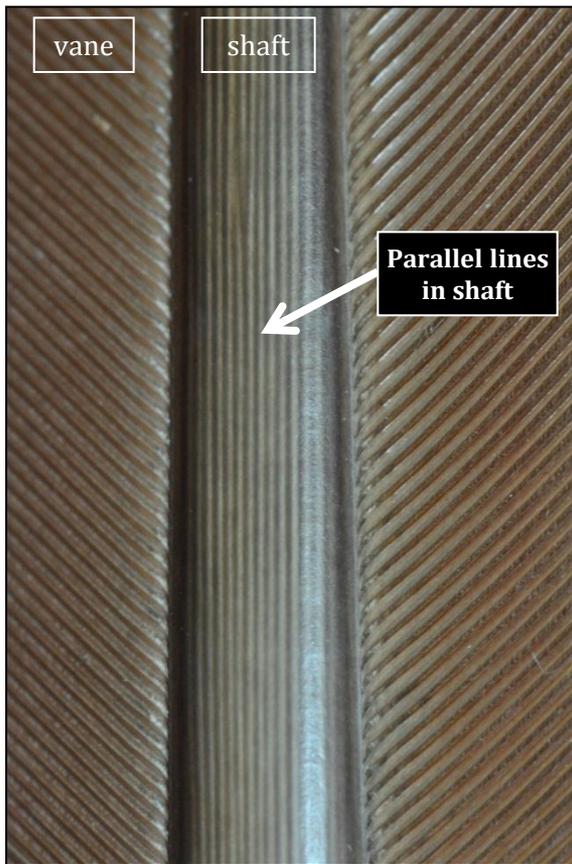
Tail feathers



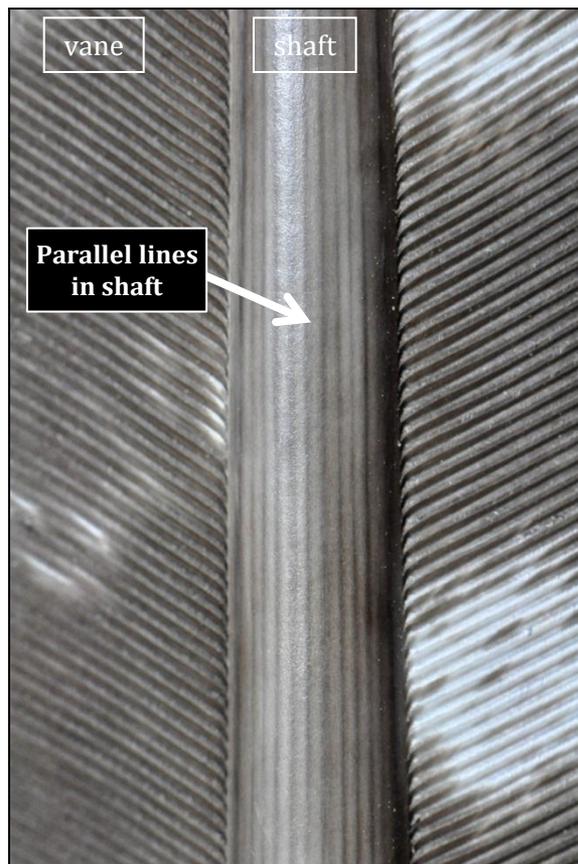
Helmeted  
Guineafowl

# Guineafowl feather use in decorative products

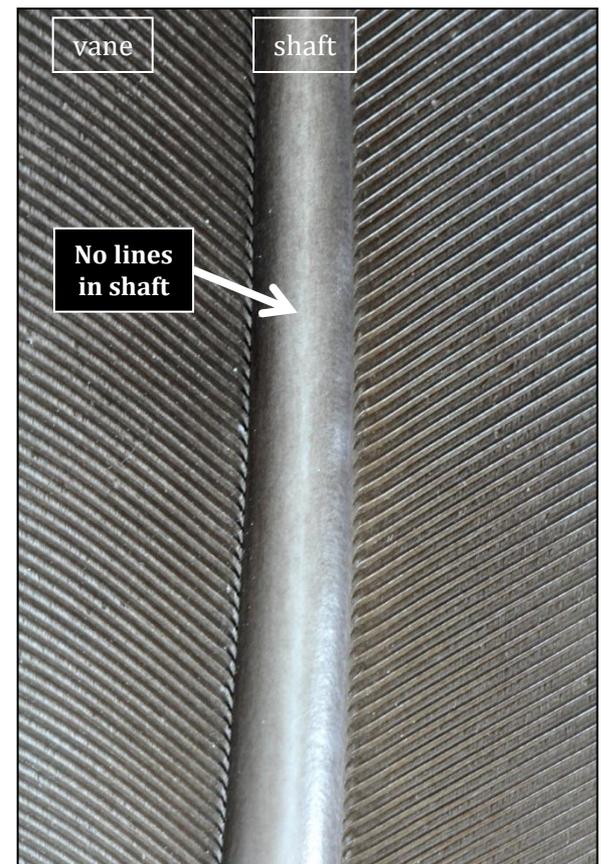




Indian Peafowl wing feather (wild type)



Turkey wing feather (wild type)



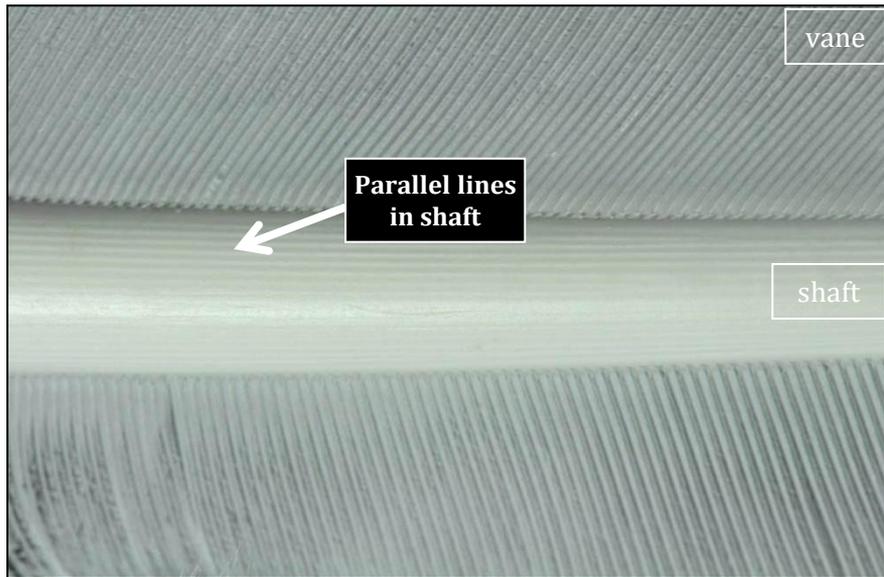
Golden Eagle wing feather

## Distinguishing the Flight Feathers of Turkeys and Related Birds from Eagle- 1

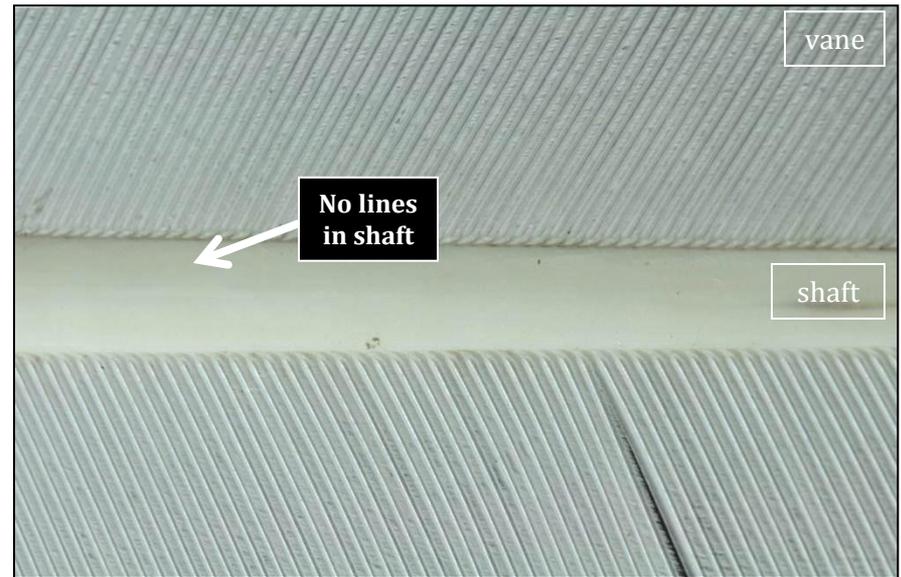
This ID Guide is focused on the colorful body feathers and tail plumes that are the main materials in the commercial decorative feather trade. However, the large wing and tail feathers of turkeys and Indian Peafowl are sometimes used in decorative items such as masks

and headdresses. There is a straightforward way to distinguish these feathers from the large flight feathers of eagles and other protected groups of birds, based on their shafts. The large feathers of turkeys, peafowl, and chickens have obvious parallel lines running along

the upper surface of the feather shafts, as shown in the left and center photos above. Eagle feathers lack such lines, as shown on the right. A loupe or magnifying glass is helpful in seeing these lines; each macro image above shows about a 2-inch segment of feather.



Turkey wing feather (white domestic type)



Adult Bald Eagle tail feather

## Distinguishing the Flight Feathers of Turkeys and Related Birds from Eagle -2

The white wing and tail feathers of domestic turkeys and peafowl also exhibit fine parallel lines in the upper surface of the shaft, although the lines may be hard to see in poor lighting. The all-white tail feathers of adult Bald Eagles, like all eagle feathers, lack these lines.

More detailed information on identification of eagle feathers is contained in the ID Guide, "Identification of Eagle Feathers and Feet," which can be found at:

<http://www.lab.fws.gov/idnotes/EagleIDGuide.pdf>

# Web Resources for Poultry and Pheasant Identification

(as always, use web information with caution)

## Chickens:

<http://www.feathersite.com/Poultry/BRKPoultryPage.html#Chickens>

<http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/poultry/chickens>

## Pheasants and Peafowl:

<http://www.gbwf.org/pheasants/#gallo>

## Domestic Breeds of Turkey:

<http://www.feathersite.com/Poultry/Turkeys/BRKTurkey.html>

<http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/poultry/turkeys>

## North American Quail, Grouse, and Wild Turkey:

<http://www.lab.fws.gov/featheratlas/browse-family.php?Order=Galliformes>

## Pheasants and Guineafowl listed on CITES and/or the United States Endangered Species Act

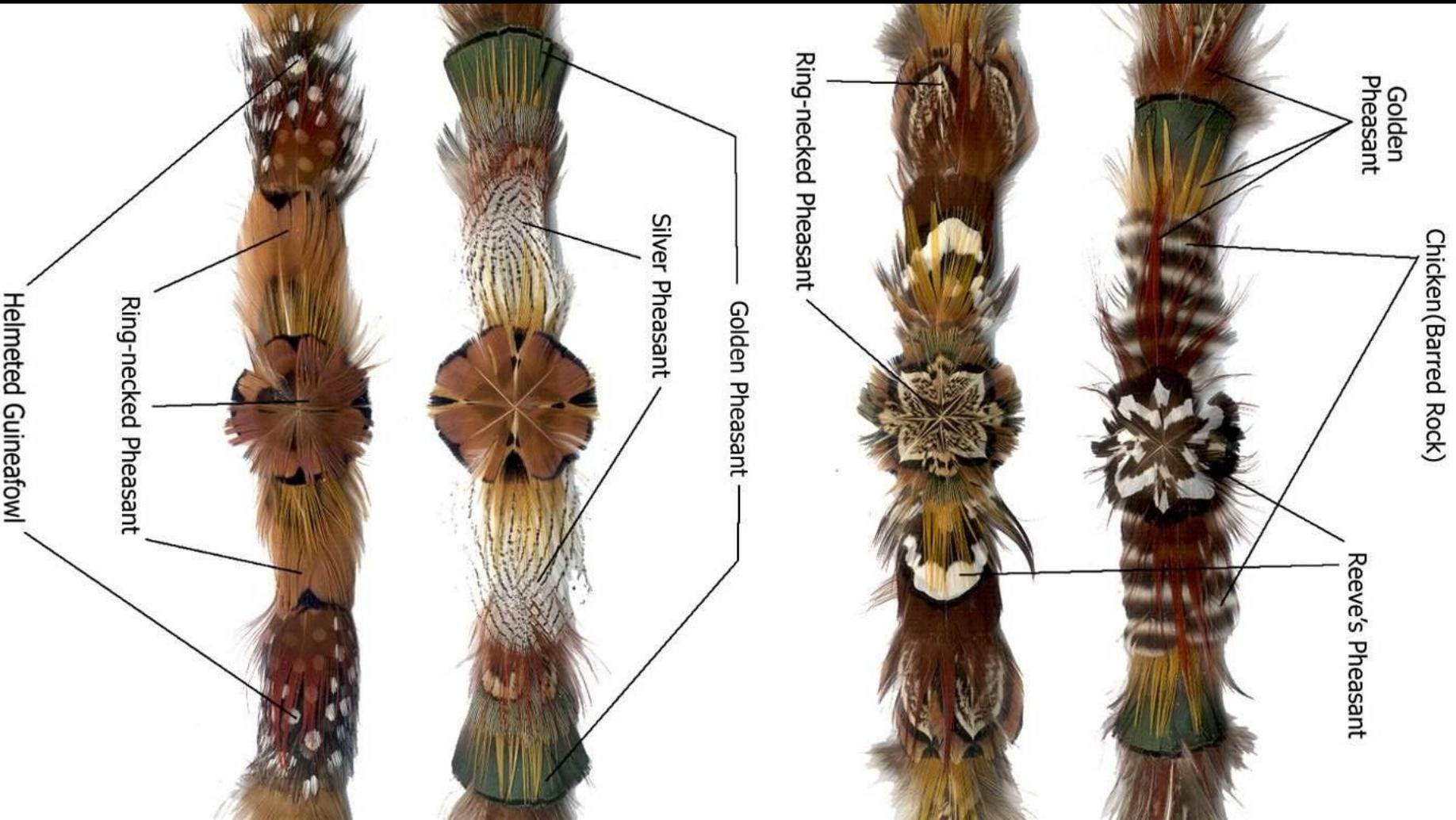
Scientific Name	Common Name	CITES Appendix	ESA Listing
<i>Agelastes meleagrides</i>	White-breasted Guineafowl	[not listed]	<b>Threatened</b>
<i>Argusianus argus</i>	Great Argus	<b>II</b>	[not listed]
<i>Catreus wallichii</i>	Cheer Pheasant	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Crossoptilon crossoptilon</i>	White Eared-Pheasant	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Crossoptilon manchuricum</i>	Brown Eared-Pheasant	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Gallus sonneratii</i>	Grey Junglefowl	<b>II</b>	[not listed]
<i>Ithaginis cruentus</i>	Blood Pheasant	<b>II</b>	[not listed]
<i>Lophophorus impejanus</i>	Himalayan Monal	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Lophophorus lhuyssii</i>	Chinese Monal	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Lophophorus sclateri</i>	Sclater's Monal	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Lophura edwardsi</i>	Edward's Pheasant	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Lophura imperialis</i>	Imperial Pheasant	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Lophura swinhoii</i>	Swinhoe's Pheasant	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Meleagris ocellata</i>	Ocellated Turkey	<b>III (Guatemala)</b>	[not listed]
<i>Pavo muticus</i>	Green Peafowl	<b>II</b>	[not listed]
<i>Polyplectron bicalcaratum</i>	Grey Peacock-Pheasant	<b>II</b>	[not listed]
<i>Polyplectron germaini</i>	Germain's Peacock-Pheasant	<b>II</b>	[not listed]
<i>Polyplectron malacense</i>	Malayan Peacock-Pheasant	<b>II</b>	[not listed]
<i>Polyplectron napoleonis</i>	Palawan Peacock-Pheasant	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b> (listed as <i>P. emphanum</i> )
<i>Polyplectron schleiermacheri</i>	Bornean Peacock-Pheasant	<b>II</b>	[not listed]
<i>Rheinardia ocellata</i>	Crested Argus	<b>I</b>	[not listed]
<i>Syrnaticus ellioti</i>	Elliot's Pheasant	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Syrnaticus humiae</i>	Mrs. Hume's Pheasant	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Syrnaticus mikado</i>	Mikado Pheasant	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Tragopan blythii</i>	Blyth's Tragopan	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Tragopan caboti</i>	Cabot's Tragopan	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Tragopan melanocephalus</i>	Western Tragopan	<b>I</b>	<b>Endangered</b>
<i>Tragopan satyra</i>	Satyr Tragopan	<b>III (Nepal)</b>	[not listed]

**NOTE:** this table does not include other listed taxa in the order Galliformes, including curassows and guans (Cracidae), New World Quail (Odontophoridae), or grouse (Tetraoninae), which are not covered in this ID Guide, and whose feathers are rarely used to decorate commercial items. This list is current as of June 2012.

## Exercise I: Identify as many feathers as you can



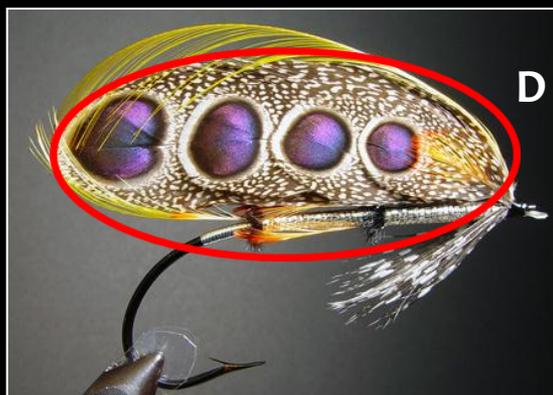
Answers on next page



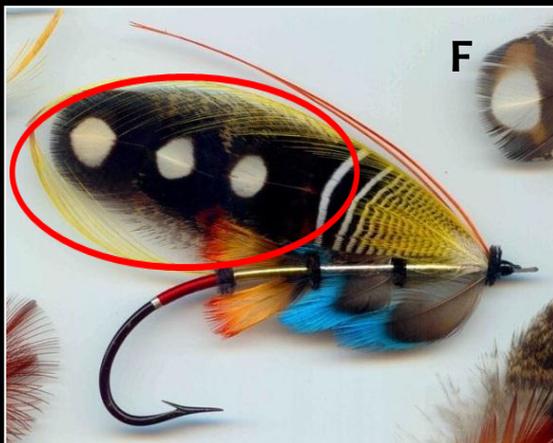


**Exercise II :**  
Identify as many  
feathers as you can  
(answers on next  
page)





- A: Lady Amherst + Grey Junglefowl
- B: Vulturine Guineafowl
- C: Silver Pheasant + Grey Junglefowl
- D: Peacock-Pheasant species
- E: Golden Pheasant + Grey Junglefowl
- F: Western Tragopan
- G: Great Argus
- H: Golden Pheasant + Grey Junglefowl



## Acknowledgements

The challenging work of scanning whole specimens and individual feathers for this ID Guide was accomplished by Sue Polich, whose skill and enthusiasm were essential to the completion of the project.

The painting of Mrs. Hume's Pheasant on p. 38 is by Ayuwat Jearwattanakanok; see <http://ayuwat.blogspot.com/2012/02/mrs-humes-pheasant.html>. The remaining paintings illustrating this ID Guide are by leading artists of the golden age of natural history, including John Gould, Daniel Giraud Elliot, J.G. Keulemans, and Charles Robert Knight. The digital archives of the New York Public Library (<http://digitalgallery.nypl.org>) and Oiseaux.net (<http://www.oiseaux.net/photos/photographies.html>) are gratefully acknowledged.

Fishing fly images on pp. 11, 30, 50, 71, and 79 are from the book *Rare and Unusual Fly Tying Materials: A Natural History, Volume 1 – Birds*, by P.A. Schmookler and I.V. Sils (The Complete Sportsman, 1994).

Images of feather earrings (or necklaces, as noted) on pp. 1, 10 (necklace), 18 (right middle), 26, 30 (lower right), 36, 44 (upper left), 48, 51, 53 (necklace), 57, 73 (center & upper right), and 79 are by Corvus Chainmaille (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/redcrow/sets/72157613190343589/>). Citation of this website does not constitute an endorsement of this site or its products by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The photograph of the Green Peafowl in flight on p. 71 is from <http://orientalbirdimages.org>. This website offers many other excellent photos of the pheasants and peafowl of Asia.

Many of the specimens and products illustrated in this guide were donated to the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory by the National Wildlife Property Repository.

## Feedback, Comments, and Corrections

Are welcome, and may be sent to: [pepper\\_trail@fws.gov](mailto:pepper_trail@fws.gov)



The End