

Project Update: January 2005

Cambodia is home to 14 species of Galliformes of which four are considered to be globally threatened. One of the most important areas for Galliformes within Cambodia is the Cardamom Mountain range, which supports nine species. Between 25th February and 25th March 2004 we undertook ornithological and questionnaire surveys to establish the status and threats to Galliformes, in particular the Cambodian hill-partridge, in and around the Roleak Korng Cheung Commune, Kampong Speu province, south west Cambodia. We established the presence of six galliform species by the ornithological surveys work and a further two by the questionnaire surveys. All species occurred at low densities, with scaly-breasted partridge and red junglefowl being the most numerous. By recording the Cambodia hill-partridge we confirmed its presence throughout the entire Cardamom Mountain range.

Also we recorded this species below its previously reported altitudinal range. Information provided on the number of birds hunted shows that the current population estimate for the species is likely to be an under-estimate. We established that there is a small population of green peafowl occupying the lowland areas of the Roleak Korng Cheung commune, away from the strongholds for this species, which are thought to be in the north and east of Cambodia.

The main threats to all galliform species appeared to be uncontrolled hunting, habitat degradation and disturbance, possibly making this group of birds the most threatened within the country. Future work needs to fully assess the range and status of the Cambodia hill-partridge throughout the entire Cardamom Mountain range and the green peafowl throughout the lowland forests of southern Cambodia. Conservation action to protect Galliformes throughout Cambodia should include increased legislation and enforcement to control hunting and logging, the education of local people about the value of wildlife conservation, the establishment of community-based conservation groups and the establishment of a market for the agricultural products of local people to generate income in place of hunting.

