

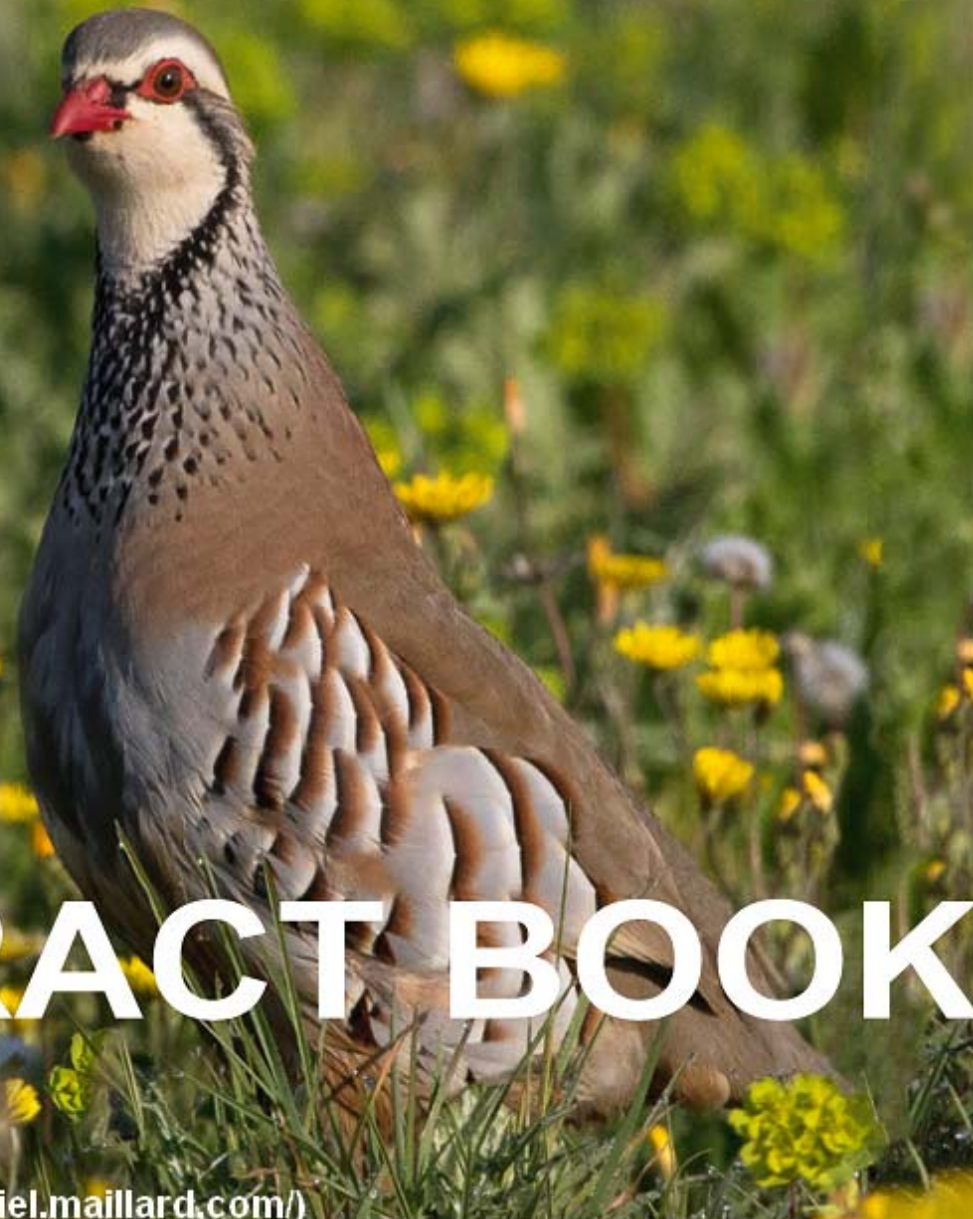
IUGB 2017



MONTPELLIER - FRANCE

33rd International Union of Game Biologists Congress

14th Perdix Congress
Montpellier
France – 2017, August 22-25



ABSTRACT BOOK

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(poster #81)

Status and possible restoration of North Caucasian Pheasant in Russia

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North Caucasian Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus septentrionalis* Lorenz, 1883), the only native sub-species of Common Pheasant in Europe, occurred in north-eastern Black Sea region, northern and north-western Caspian Sea region and along the rivers of Trans-Caucasia [1]. Wild populations were nearly destroyed at many areas by late 1950th due to uncontrolled hunting. Since early of 1960th tens of thousands of pheasants from a number of local farms have been released in the North Caucasus and Lower Volga. The farms reared mostly Ring-necked (“hunting”) Pheasants imported from Eastern Europe while native pheasants were never been captive-bred. Hunting demand for pheasants is very high presently which promotes further producing and introduction of Ring-necked Pheasants and loss of local sub-species genotype due to cross-breeding.

Protection of native Pheasant is only possible through development of artificial breeding of this sub-species for meeting of the hunter’s needs and gradual replace of Ring-necked Pheasants [2]. It is necessary to find “pure” populations which could exist in the areas where no introduction occurred. Then, based on experience of our work with other native Pheasant sub-species [3,4] we can start the experimental captive breeding of North Caucasian Pheasant.

In 2016 we undertook the literature review and questionnaire survey to find out the scale of pheasant release in the range of native sub-species. Additionally, field research was conducted in April for clarification of the pheasant status at some suitable sites in Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia-Alania republics of the North Caucasus. Our investigations revealed that during last 50 years the “hunting” pheasants have been released at the plenty of sites within the historical distribution of a native sub-species, especially in western and central parts of Trans-Caucasia. Therefore no “genetically pure” North Caucasian Pheasants can be found at most part of former range of a native sub-species. However, some information suggests that local populations of native Pheasant could survive in the central part of the Volga Delta and in lower Terek valley where likely no release occurred. Further investigations will be conducted during 2017 for clarification of the pheasant status at these areas.

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Keywords: North Caucasian pheasant, release, captive breeding