Scientific Name:  
*Lophophorus impejanus*

Other Names:  
Impeyan monal, Himalayan pheasant

Range:  
Asia, including Afghanistan, Bhutan, NE India, southern Tibet and Burma

Habitat:  
Open coniferous or mixed forests with bamboo

Average Size:  
Length: 2 - 2 1/2 feet  
Weight: 3 - 5 lbs.

Description:  
Male: Medium-sized pheasant with varying feather colors of blue, red, gold and yellow. Long tail is brown and head has a crest of upright feathers.  
Female: Smaller than male with brown feathers and no crest.

Lifespan:  
In the wild: Unknown  
In captivity: Estimated at 10 - 12 years

Diet:  
In the wild: Seeds, tubers, shoots, berries and insects  
In the zoo: Mixed vegetables, game bird chow, and insects

Sexual Maturity:  
Male: 2 years  
Female: 2 years

Clutch Size:  
5 eggs

Incubation Period:  
28 days

Predators:  
Carnivores, birds of prey, and humans

Population Status:  
Vulnerable

Conservation
Like many animals in Asian forests, loss of habitat is the largest threat to the Himalayan monal pheasant's survival. Hunting males for their crest of head feathers has been an increasing problem over the past few years, and hunting these birds for food continues to decrease wild populations. Although this bird is still common in some areas, it is unable to readily adapt to a changing environment. It has specific habitat requirements that prevent it from finding new home ranges.

The Sacramento Zoo works with visitors of all ages to increase awareness of the need to preserve whole habitats and ecosystems in an effort to protect as many species as possible. All animals interact with one another and each plays an important role in the ecosystem. Our Red Panda Forest, where the Himalayan monal is housed, shows many species living together and explains their roles within the ecosystem.

Behavior
The Himalayan monal pheasant is found in high altitudes of up to 4000 feet. It shows greater seasonal movements than other pheasants in the area, moving to much lower altitudes of 2000 feet in the wintertime. Most of its day is spent foraging for food. They are excellent diggers, using their long, curved beak to dig up to ten inches under the ground. These pheasants are most often found in pairs or small groups maintaining defined home ranges, with males being more competitive and aggressive than females. Four to six pairs can be found in a half-mile radius.

This species of pheasant is extremely communicative, using both body displays and vocalizations. The wide range in their calls allows them to differentiate between contentment, aggression, alarm, and advertising for a mate. The males have intricate displays signaled by bobbing the crest on their heads and fanning their tail feathers.

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Reproduction and Breeding
Breeding season for the Himalayan monal pheasant is April through June. Most breeding takes place in the higher altitudes where the monals tend to be in this season. Although the male will make contact calls in the dawn throughout the year, during these months, his vocalizations take place throughout the day. After a female notices the male’s display, mating soon follows. She will then make an unlined nest, which is a simple scraping of dirt or branches under the brush or on a hillside. The male does not assist with the rearing of young, but may remain close to defend the female and offspring from predators. The young are born precocial, able to take care of themselves, with camouflage as their best defense. Their downy feathers are light brown above and dirty white below.

Once the chicks reach three months of age, they have most of their feathers and begin to forage for food on their own. By the time they are six months of age, they are completely independent and must search out their own territories and mates.

Amazing Facts
These birds belong to the pheasant family!
The Himalayan monal is the national bird of Nepal!
In the summer months, this bird is found well above the timberline!