



## Himalayan Monal

Kingdom: Animalia  
 Phylum: Chordata  
 Subphylum: Vertebrata  
 Class: Aves  
 Order: Galliformes  
 Family: Phasianidae  
 Genus: *Lophophorus*  
 Species: *impejanus*



Photo courtesy of Karen Marzynski

### Habitat

- **In the Wild:** Found in the Himalayas from eastern Afghanistan to Bhutan, northeast India and southern Tibet, the Himalayan monal has also been reported in Burma.
- It is a high-altitude species, remaining between 1.3 and 2.8 miles above sea level. During the summer months, the Himalayan monal ventures above the tree line to wander on the grassy slopes. During the winter, it is found in coniferous and mixed forests with a high proportion of rhododendrons and bamboo, where it shelters from the weather.
- **Exhibit Location:** Bird Exhibit Outside the Pole Barn

### Characteristics

- Length: 2-2.5 feet; Weight: 3-5 pounds
- The male Himalayan monal possesses a wiry, metallic green head-crest with spoon-shaped feathers that is absent in other monal species. The eyes are ringed with blue, and the neck is reddish-brown. At the nape of the neck is a yellow patch that forms the top edge of the bluish-black wings and the purplish-black back. The breast is dark brown and the tail feathers are chestnut brown with a white rump that is visible in flight and when displaying to the females.
- Females have overall dark brown feathers, except for a white throat and rump patch, and the bright blue circle around the eyes. The female also has a crest, but it is shorter and brown with ordinary feathers.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild:** Unknown; **In Captivity:** 10-12 years

### Behaviors

- They are often found in pairs or small groups maintaining defined home ranges.
- Males are more competitive and aggressive than females.
- Their wide range of calls allows them to differentiate between contentment, aggression, alarm and advertising for a mate.
- The Himalayan monal has very strong legs and a long, curved beak that together enable it to dig into the hard soil of the mountains to uncover food. This method of foraging leaves conspicuous areas of turned over soil up to 10 inches deep on hillsides.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** whole apples, pumpkins, romaine lettuce and insects

### Reproduction

- They reach sexual maturity at 2 years of age for both sexes.
- The breeding season begins in April when the monals are at higher altitudes. The male switches from calling only in the early morning to calling throughout the day.
- The Himalayan monal uses several different call types to express meaning to its mate. Males also use body displays to attract females: bobbing the head-crest and fanning their tail feathers.
- Once a female notices his display, they mate and shortly afterwards she scrapes a nest in the ground and lays between 3 and 5 eggs. The female must incubate the eggs alone.

- The male will stand guard throughout the 27-day incubation period and until fledging to protect the eggs and chicks from predators.
- The young are born precocial, able to care for themselves.
- After 6 months, the young are completely independent and must search for food and mates alone.

### Diet

- **In the Wild:** seeds, tubers, shoots, berries, and insects
- **At the Zoo:** extruded poultry pellets, vegetables, some fruit, scratch grain and insects

### Conservation Status

- **IUCN status:** Least Concern; **CITES Appendix:** I
- The specific requirements of the Himalayan monal make it important to conserve its habitat, but currently this beautiful bird is not seriously threatened. In many parts of its range, tree harvesting takes place and additionally, this pheasant is hunted for food. The inhabitants of Kulu Valley also hunt it for the colorful plumes of its headdress. But this practice appears to have declined significantly in the last 10 years. For now, the Himalayan monal is not at risk.
- Predators: carnivores, birds of prey, humans

### Did You Know?/Fun Facts

- The Himalayan monal is the national bird of Nepal.
- The Himalayan monal is also known as: Danphe, Impeyan pheasant, Impeyan monal, and Himalayan pheasant.

### Sources:

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