

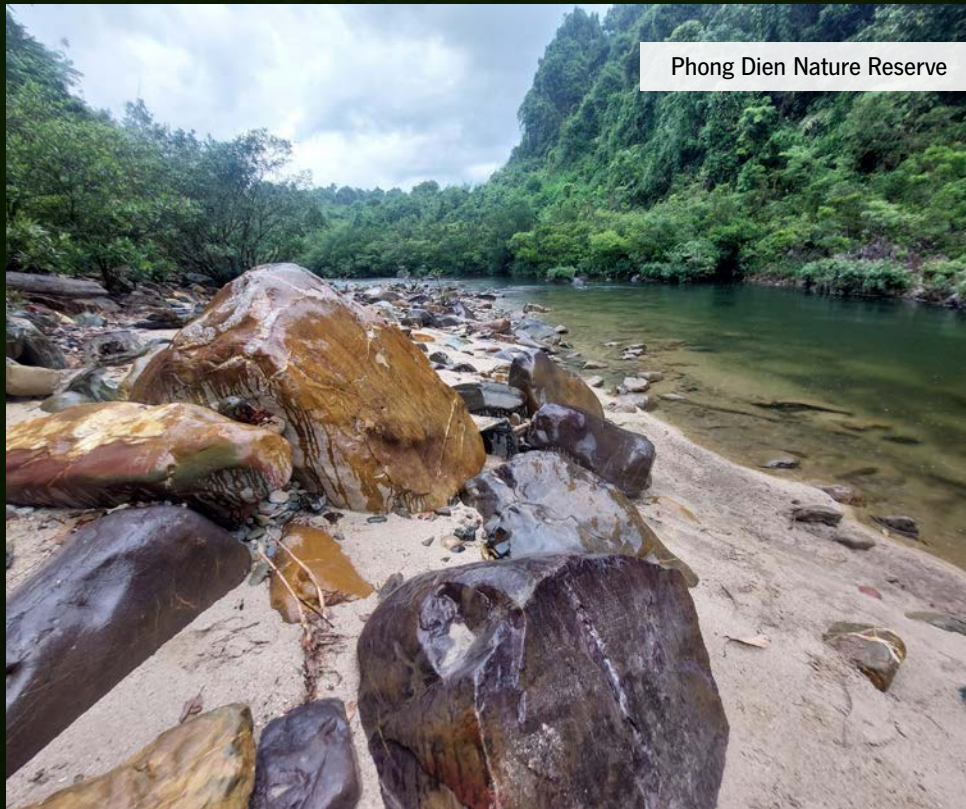
September 2026

VIETNAM PHEASANT RECOVERY PROJECT

NEWSLETTER



For more than a quarter of a century, the forests of central Vietnam have been missing one of their most remarkable inhabitants. The Vietnam pheasant, once native to the dense, humid lowland forests of the region, has not been recorded in the wild for decades. An international alliance of conservation organisations, zoological institutions, and Vietnamese partners has come together with a shared goal: to return the Vietnam pheasant to the forests where it once lived.





Milestones

Transport of birds from Europe to Vinpearl Safari Phu Quoc

As part of the international initiative “Bring Back Blue”, a group of 20 Vietnam pheasants from the EEP was transported from Berlin to Vietnam in May 2026.

On 14 May 2026, early in the morning at around 8:00 twenty Vietnam pheasants stepped out of their transport crates and set foot on Vietnamese soil in the outdoor quarantine facilities of Vinpearl Safari Phu Quoc. This was the largest transfer of Vietnam pheasants back to Vietnam after their ancestors were collected by Jean Delacour in the early 20th century and brought to Europe and marks one major milestone of the recovery project.

As described in the January newsletter, prior to this transfer 24 birds from the EEP (EAZA zoos and WPA members) were gathered at Tierpark Berlin as the central European transport hub for the Vietnam Pheasant Recovery Project.

Aligning the paperwork between German and Vietnamese authorities took about a year and quarantine period at the inhouse quarantine facilities of Tierpark Berlin could start in April 2026.



Monday, 11 May was the big day. Twenty birds, selected in ten future breeding pairs were distributed among twenty custom-build and IATA-approved transport crates and were transferred to the Animal Lounge of Frankfurt Airport. The birds took off on an early cargo flight next morning and they arrived safe and sound 12 flight hours later at the airport of Ho-Chi-Minh-City. Along the flight, the condition of the animals were checked regularly by the accompanying Berlin Tierpark staff member including refreshing water and food in the crates.

Upon arrival in Vietnam, the birds were cleared for immigration by the Vietnamese authorities which was facilitated by the local partners of Vinpearl Safari Phu Quoc and VietNature.

To reach the quarantine at Vinpearl Safari, the birds, together with staff from Tierpark Berlin, Vinpearl Safari Phu Quoc and VietNature drove through the night in a chartered, air conditioned transport vehicle. The last portion of the trip was done by ferry boat to reach the island of Phu Quoc which lies appr. 50 km off of the Southern coast of Vietnam in the Gulf of Thailand.

All birds arrived well at Vinpearl Safari and after the quarantine period, five pairs were transferred to the RPBC on 31 July facilitated by Vinpearl Safari Phu Quoc. Prior to the arrival of the pheasants at the RPBC, two bird keepers from ZSL Whipsnade Zoo and Tierpark Berlin arrived at the centre to accompany the final preparation of the aviaries and the transition of the care of these Vietnam pheasants to the staff of VietNature.



Local staff from RPBC during training with European keeper



First photos of Vietnam pheasants in aviaries in RPBC

Welcome ceremony

On 4 August 2026 a special welcome ceremony was held at RPBC to mark the arrival of the birds. The event was attended by representatives of Viet Nature, European bird keepers, and the Vice chairman of Quang Tri province. For the first time, the Vietnam pheasants at RPBC were presented to the public, alongside the Recovery project aimed to rescue and return the species to Vietnam. The event attracted considerable media coverage and public interest.



Update on next phase of aviary construction of RPBC

On 19 June 2026, construction began on the second block of aviaries at the RPBC. This new block consists of 12 aviaries, each measuring 7.8 metres long, 3.9 metres wide and approximately 3 metres high. The block includes an entrance room with a sink, a small storage room and a roofed central keeper

corridor. The roof also extends 2.9 metres over the front of each aviary, providing the birds with shelter from the rain. The entire block is being built on a 23% slope, with the ground conveniently draining slightly downwards from both ends of the central corridor. These aviaries are smaller than the breeding

aviaries in the first block. Since the first block already includes a separation area, it was decided not to include one in this new block. This makes the aviaries both more economical and simpler to construct. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of the year 2026.

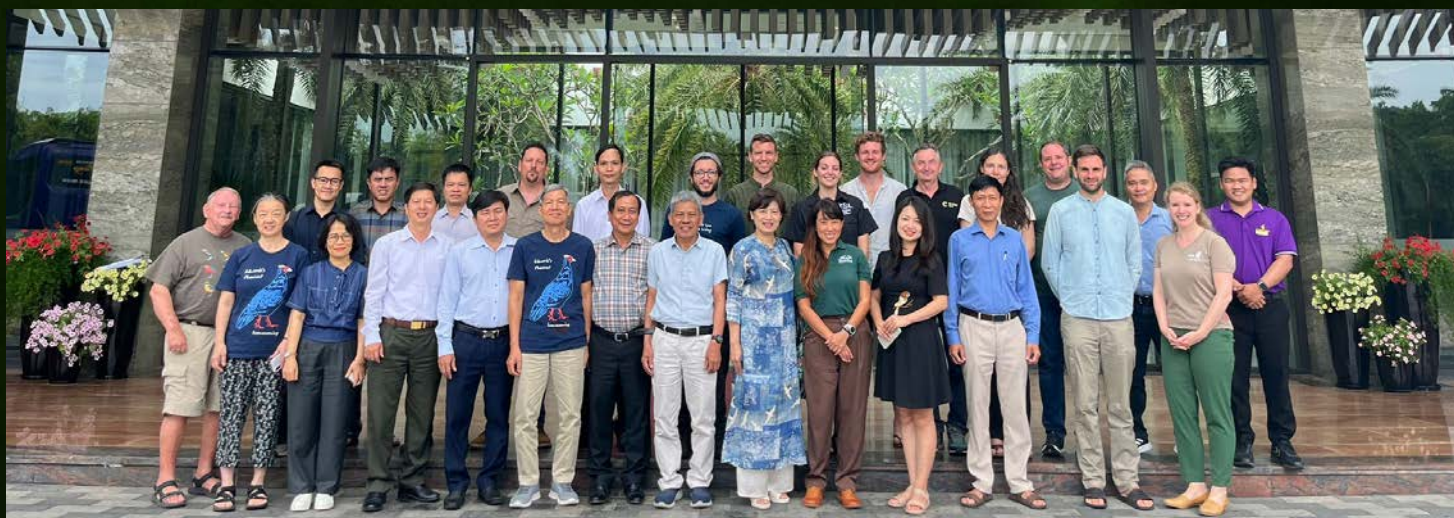


Vietnam pheasant translocation planning workshop 2026

At the same time the transport was taking place, a structured decision-making workshop in collaboration with the IUCN SSC Conservation Translocation Specialist Group (CTSG) and the Zoological Society of London

(ZSL) was held in Vietnam. The event brought together 25 national and international experts to develop recommendations for a trial release of Vietnam pheasants in central Vietnam. The workshop focused on three key aspects of the

reintroduction programme: pre-release conditioning and husbandry, (soft-) release methodology, and post-release monitoring. The trial release will evaluate four alternative treatment combinations, providing valuable information on how release age, release season, and pre-release social and housing conditions influence post-release success. Post release monitoring efforts will include trialling GPS and VHF telemetry devices on the birds in the natural environment along with the use of camera trap networks. Field observations and systematic data collection on behaviour and survival will also be part of the post-release monitoring activities and adaptive management of release methods applied where needed.



Funding call

Financial and other support for the project is warmly welcomed. Current funding needs include covering the operational costs of the RPBC, expanding holding capacity through the construction of additional aviaries, kick-starting the educational programme, and sustaining vital site-protection activities, including patrols and de-snaring efforts. Support in any of these areas will directly contribute to strengthening the project's conservation and educational impact and thus the conservation of the Vietnam pheasant. In case of interest we invite you to get in touch with Jan Dams (Zoo Antwerp, jan.dams@kmda.org) and Katharina Herrmann (Zoo and Tierpark Berlin, k.herrmann@zoo-berlin.de).

Photo credits:

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THANK YOU
to our donors
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who are making
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