

A close-up photograph of a pheasant's head. The bird has a vibrant red comb on its forehead, a large brown eye, and a dark, slightly hooked beak. The feathers on its neck and chest are a deep, iridescent blue. The background is dark and out of focus.

January 2026

# VIETNAM PHEASANT RECOVERY PROJECT

## NEWSLETTER



Dear supporter of the Vietnam pheasant Recovery Project, with the start of 2026 we look back at another productive year with several important steps taken for the recovery of the Vietnam pheasant. This progress wouldn't have been possible without your continued support, for which we as a Recovery Team are very grateful. This document entails a number of updates of the progress made in the past year.

## Breeding centre updates

There is a new official name for the breeding centre: Rare Pheasant Breeding Centre (RPBC). This centre is located in Central-Vietnam within the historic range of the Vietnam Pheasant and aims to hold and breed birds for reintroduction. It will also host Viet Nature staff in a new office building and will allow outside visitors to come and learn more about native wildlife and the plight of the Vietnam Pheasant.

There are administrative changes involving the RPBC: Vietnam has reduced its provincial-level administrative units from 63 to 34 to improve governance efficiency. The province Quang Binh does not exist anymore. It has been merged with Quang Tri. The area where the breeding centre is located, used to be called Kim Thuy, is now referred to as Kim Ngân.

In April 2025 Viet Nature Conservation Company Ltd – VINACONSERV received the licence allowing to keep and breed pheasants at the RPBC. That was an important milestone for the Vietnam pheasant Recovery project which will enable to bring the first pheasants to the centre.

The first block of aviaries is built and ready! This block consists of 8 breeding aviaries, 16 holding aviaries and an entrance room with storage space and a small kitchen.

Areal overview of the Rare Pheasant Breeding centre



Viet Nature office building



Water filtration installation and unit



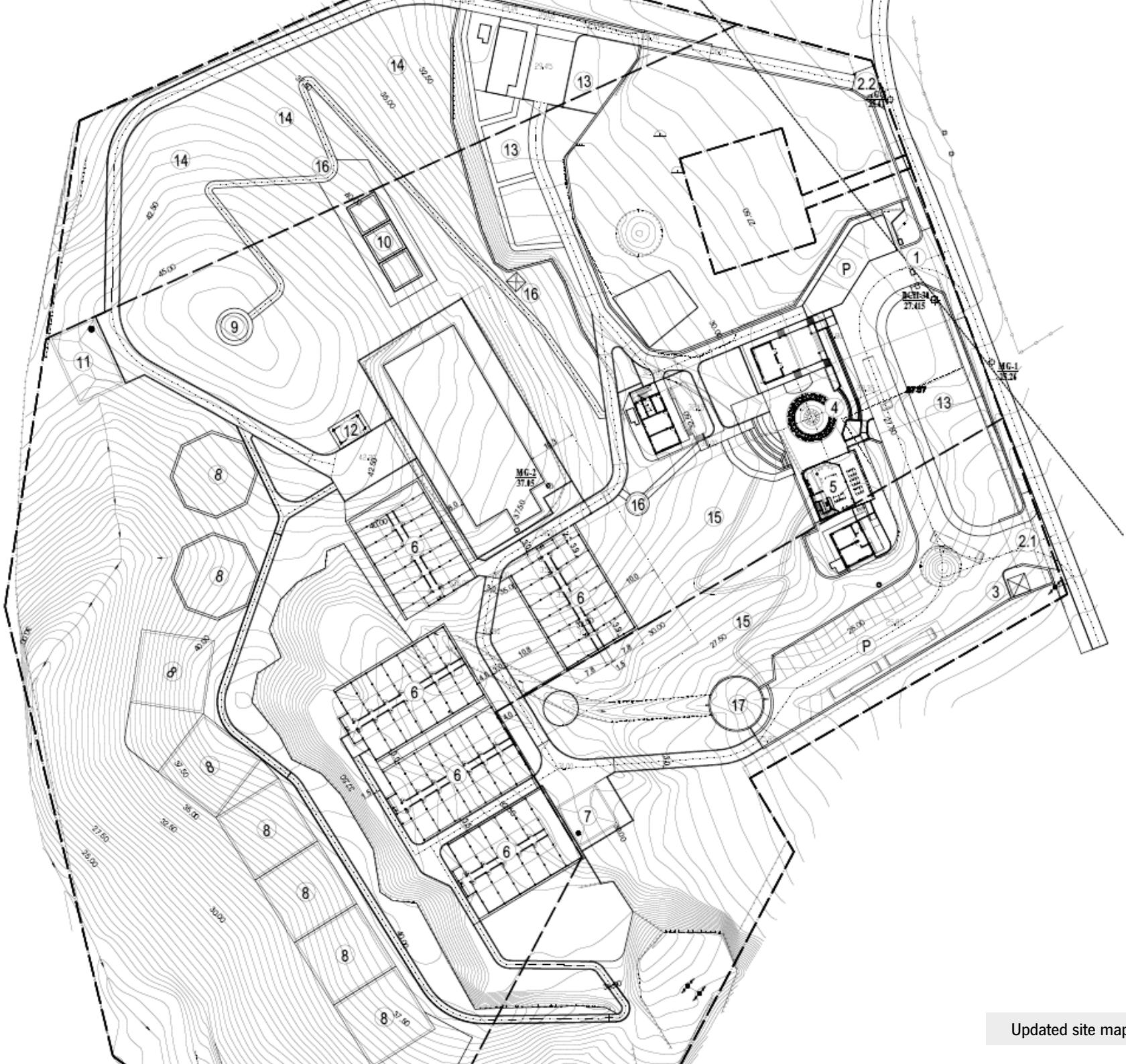
The office building is ready and now in use. The Viet Nature team is working in these offices since a few month. The canteen for visitors is under construction.

All these updates were made possible through the continued support from World Pheasant Association, Zoo Berlin, Tierpark Berlin, Prague Zoo, Mandai Wildlife Group, Karlsruhe Zoo, Wingham Wildlife Park, KNCF, World Land trust and Conservation Vietnam.

In February 2025 more than 90 visitors from Hanoi secondary school visited RPBC and there was a TV report about it. Spreading awareness about the RPBC within Vietnam is important for the succes of the project.

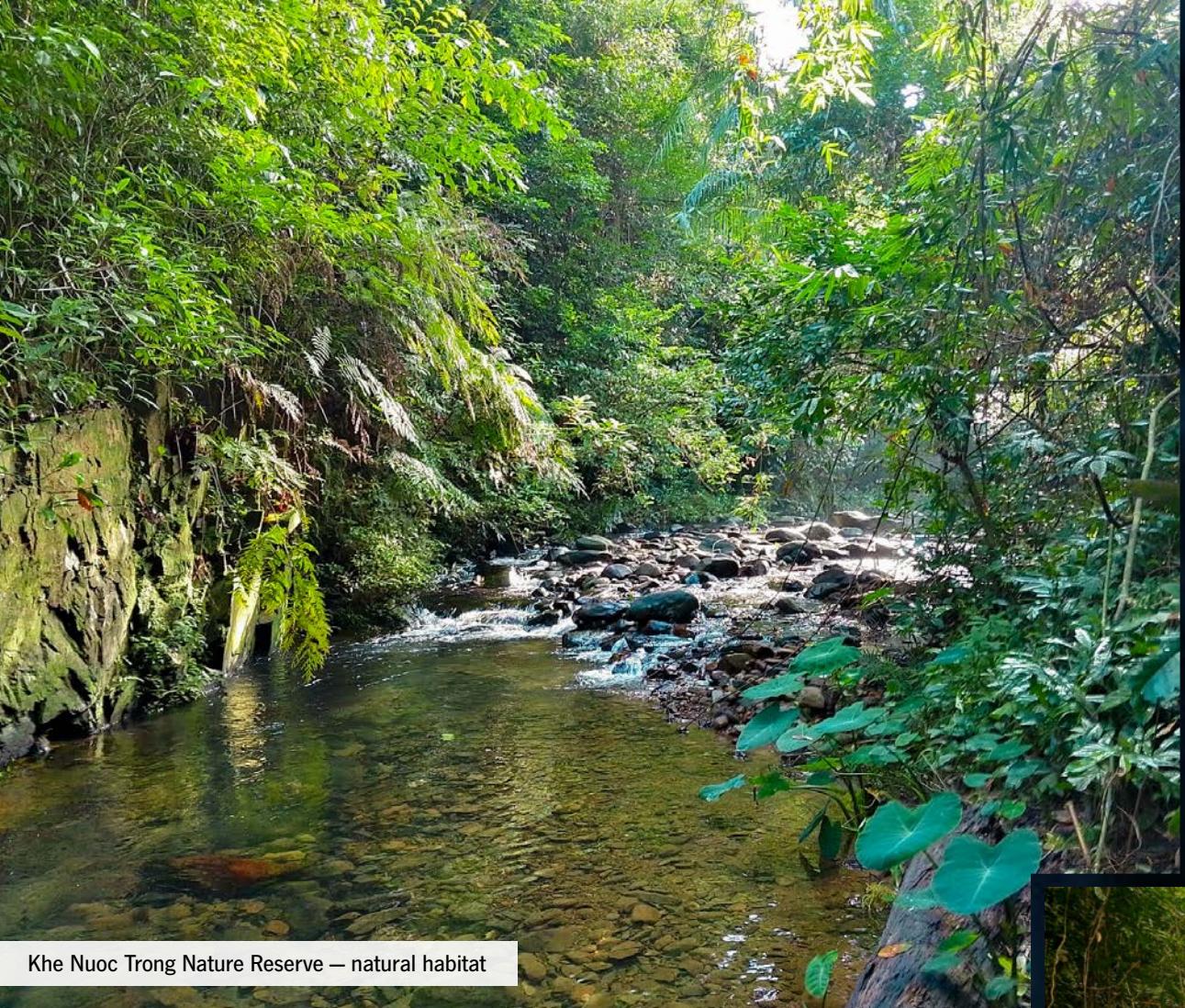
In summer 2025, Rik Dams, former project manager for the RPBC and Recovery Team member, visited the centre and checked up on the state of aviaries. He was very pleased with the state of the aviaries and very little things needed to be adjusted. The aviaries are ready to welcome the first Vietnam pheasants.





The design for the breeding centre has been updated. The location and design of the new blocks of aviaries has been altered to better fit the elevations of the site.

## Updated site map



Khe Nuoc Trong Nature Reserve – natural habitat

## In situ news

Viet Nature actively coordinates several in-situ projects in the historic range of the Vietnam pheasant. Forest patrol teams, with rangers from local communities, continued with the camera trap surveys and removing snares from protected areas. The ranger station that functions as an access point to Khe Nuoc Trong Nature Reserve has been renovated with the help from Viet Nature. In spring 2025 a team of 10 people visited potential future release sites in Phong Dien- and Khe Nuoc Trong Nature Reserve and they reported excellent results: no snares were found during their field survey!

Viet Nature secured the funding for forest patrol and snares removal in selected forest compartments (release sites) at Phong Dien- and Khe Nuoc Trong Nature Reserve until the end of 2027!



Local ranger removing snares

## Ex situ population

The Vietnam pheasant EAZA Ex situ Programme (EEP) coordinates the population of the species in European and associated organisations. In 2025 more than 100 chicks hatched in EAZA institutions, in addition to several more birds that were bred by private breeders which are World Pheasant Association members. The ex-situ population in Europe is stable and large enough to establish an ex situ population in Vietnam. A DNA testing project screening the genetic diversity within the population and purity of the individual birds is ongoing. More than 100 samples from birds kept in zoos and within WPA have been tested already and more are expected to come. This research is coordinated by Antwerp Zoo's Centre for Research and Conservation and the results will be used to provide breeding recommendations within the EEP with the help of EAZA's population biologists.

There are also other running research projects focused on Vietnam pheasant which are highly important and will help us prepare future reintroductions, including disease risk analysis, personality tests, perching study, disperse study, and telemetry trials.

An interesting project is running in Watatunga Wildlife Reserve (Norfolk, UK). The domain consists of 170 ha of semi-wild conditions in which 4 pairs of Vietnam pheasants were released. These birds are currently being observed by camera traps.



Two males of Vietnam pheasant caught on a camera trap in Watatunga Nature Reserve (UK)



For 2026 more birds are planned to be transferred to this site. A university student will be selected to closely follow up the entire process and the behaviour of the birds after release. These release trials are very important for the planned reintroduction of the species and will give us much needed experience in advance of the actual reintroduction in its native range.

Two satellite populations of Vietnam pheasants which were established by imports of birds from Europe (in 2022 to Singapore and in 2023 to Taiwan) were successful and the species now regularly breeds in Mandai Wildlife Group and Taipei Zoo. Where possible surplus birds from these institutions will be used to strengthen the population in Vietnam.

Thanks to the generous support of Re:wild and Colossal Foundation's Species Reintroduction Fund, a stakeholder workshop is being planned in 2026 with field trips to selected Vietnam Pheasant sites in Vietnam, led by the IUCN Conservation Translocation Specialist Group and the Zoological Society of London, to assess the best methods for pre-release conditioning, release methodology, and post-release monitoring. The end-result of the workshop will be tangible release strategies to return the species to the wild in its homeland in Central Vietnam. Additional financial support from Re:wild and Colossal Foundation's Species Reintroduction Fund will go towards building additional aviaries and running costs at the RPBC.

In spring 2025, Prague Zoo published a special issue of *Gazella* Journal dedicated to celebrate Jean Delacour's achievement (the first import of this species to Europe and thus the establishment of an ex-situ population) and the return of Vietnam pheasants back to the wild after 100 years after their arrival to Europe. This publication is available online on the Prague Zoo website and through the following QR-code.

# First transport of pheasants to Vietnam

For the RPBC 10 (+2 extra backup) pairs of Vietnam pheasants were selected to be transferred from Europe to Vietnam. Birds were carefully selected from EAZA institutions and WPA members: Münster Zoo, Prague Zoo, ZOOM Gelsenkirchen, Fuengirola Zoo, Tierpark Berlin, Antwerp Zoo, Karlsruhe Zoo, Wilhelma Zoo, Chemnitz Zoo, Košice Zoo and Noël Cooleman (WPA/Aviornis).

The transport is scheduled for early 2026 and is being coordinated by Tierpark Berlin. All birds are already gathered in Tierpark Berlin and are awaiting the completion

of all necessary paperwork. Selected birds will be first transferred to Vinpearl Safari Phú Quoc which are organizing the transport of birds from Europe to Vietnam and later to the RPBC. Vinpearl Safari Phú Quoc was approved as a non-EAZA EEP participant in spring 2025. Bringing the first Vietnam pheasants to the RPBC will represent another milestone in the overall recovery project.



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