

ABSTRACT

Unintentional Maintenance of Lady Amherst Pheasant Habitats In Rural Yunnan

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We are attempting to determine how local villagers maintain the composition and structure of Lady Amherst pheasant habitats near Gulu, 25 km northwest of Kunming, China. In the first phase of our study we have compared the composition, structure, and physical environment of 14 0.7km² plots used by pheasants. Forested habitats of the study area were grouped into five types on the basis of dominant canopy species and soil moisture. Lady Amherst pheasants were detected 9 times in moist/mixed-canopy forest, 2 times in dry/pine forest, once each in dry/mixed and moist/pine forest, and never in dry/sparse-canopy forest. Preliminary comparisons suggest Lady Amherst pheasants used stands which differed considerably from the average available stand. Plots where pheasants were detected had lower tree basal area and herbaceous cover, and higher shrub and canopy cover, tree height, shrub height, and litter depth. These findings suggest that some land-use practices of local people may inadvertently benefit Lady Amherst pheasants. In the next phase of the study we will investigate how local land-use practices affect the structure and composition of pheasant habitats.

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