

## **Recognizing Decorative Body Feathers of Pheasants and Related Birds**

Identification Guides for Wildlife Law Enforcement No. 9

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The colorful body feathers of chickens, pheasants, guineafowl, and related birds are often used to decorate earrings, hair ties, dreamcatchers, and other small crafted items. None of these species are native to North America, and none are listed under the Endangered Species Act or CITES. Familiarity with these feathers will allow Special Agents and Wildlife Inspectors to recognize the legal use of decorative feathers and to avoid unnecessary seizures.

The birds frequently used for such decorative items include the following:

- Chicken (*Gallus gallus*)
- Indian Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*)
- Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)
- Golden Pheasant (*Chrysolophus pictus*)
- Lady Amherst Pheasant (*Chrysolophus amherstiae*)
- Reeve's Pheasant (*Syrnaticus reevesii*)
- Silver Pheasant (*Lophura nycthemera*)
- Helmeted Guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*)
- Vulturine Guineafowl (*Acryllium vulturinum*)

In the following pages, an assortment of body feathers from each of these species is illustrated. Many male pheasants exhibit a variety of different colors and patterns on their body feathers, and an attempt has been made to illustrate the range of types for each species. In addition, the many domestic breeds of chickens vary greatly in plumage, and so chicken feathers are very diverse in appearance, as shown.

It is worthwhile to devote particular attention to the Ring-necked Pheasant. This bird has been widely introduced in North America, and its plumage contains a variety of attractively patterned feathers. Learn these feathers well, and you will be able to confirm many items as legal.

Finally, the last illustration shows four hair-ties decorated with the body feathers of several of these species, providing an example of how these feathers appear in crafted items.

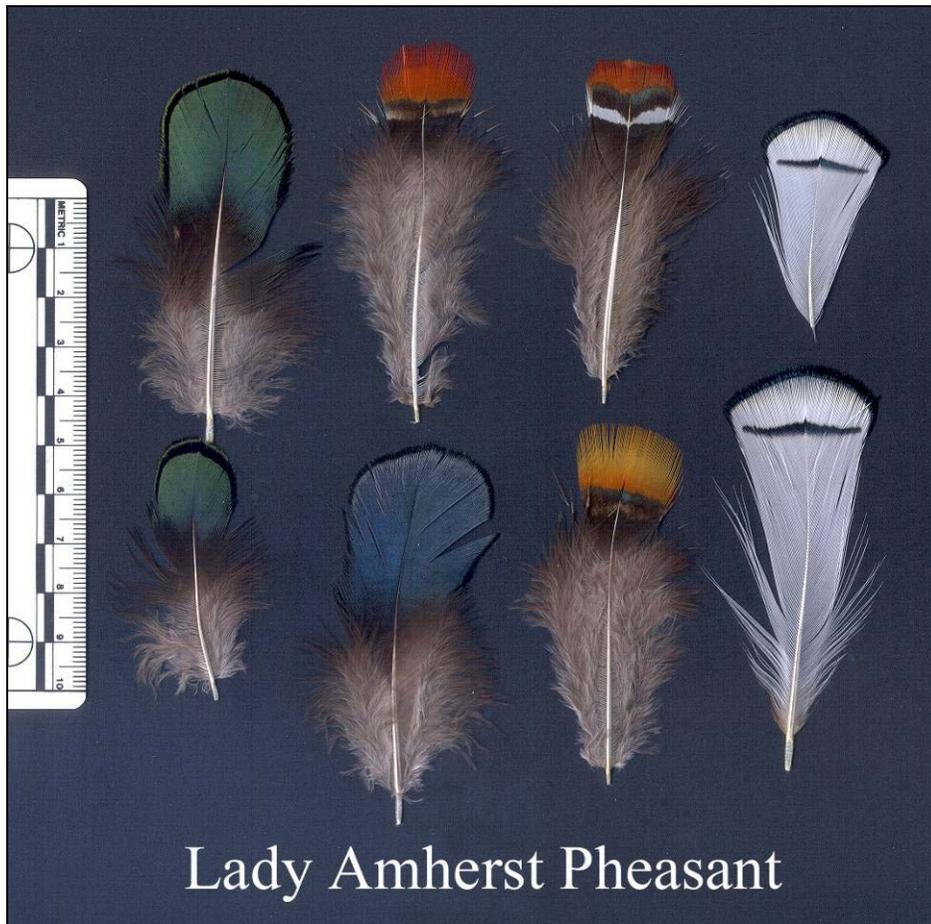




Male Ring-necked Pheasant

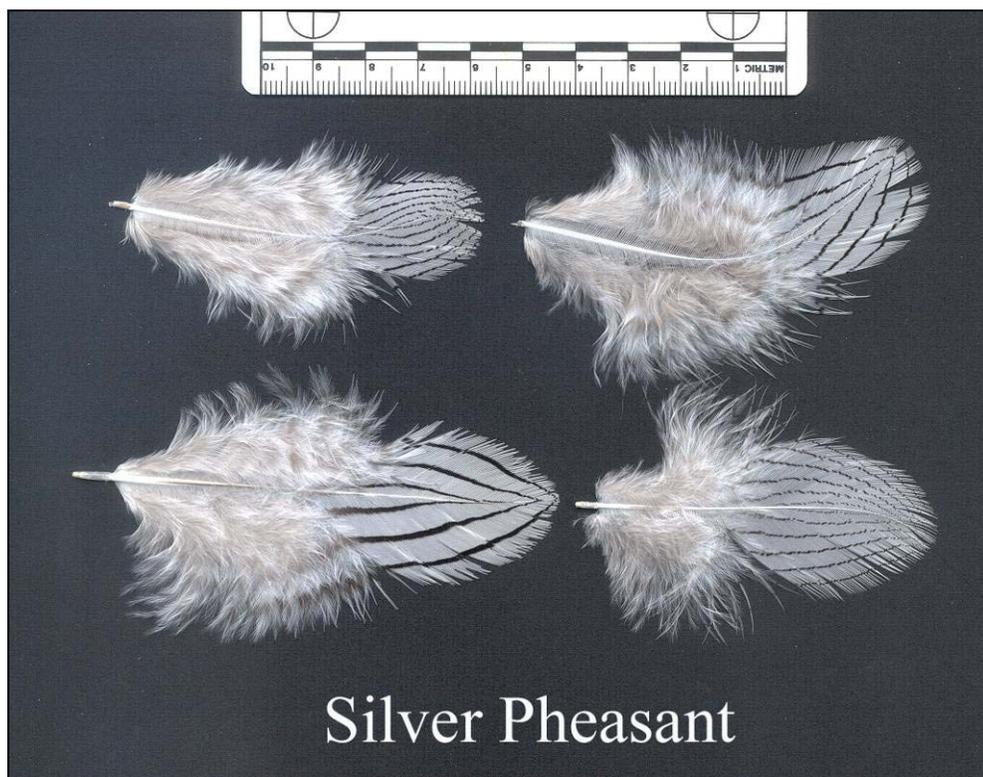


Female Ring-necked Pheasant





Reeve's Pheasant

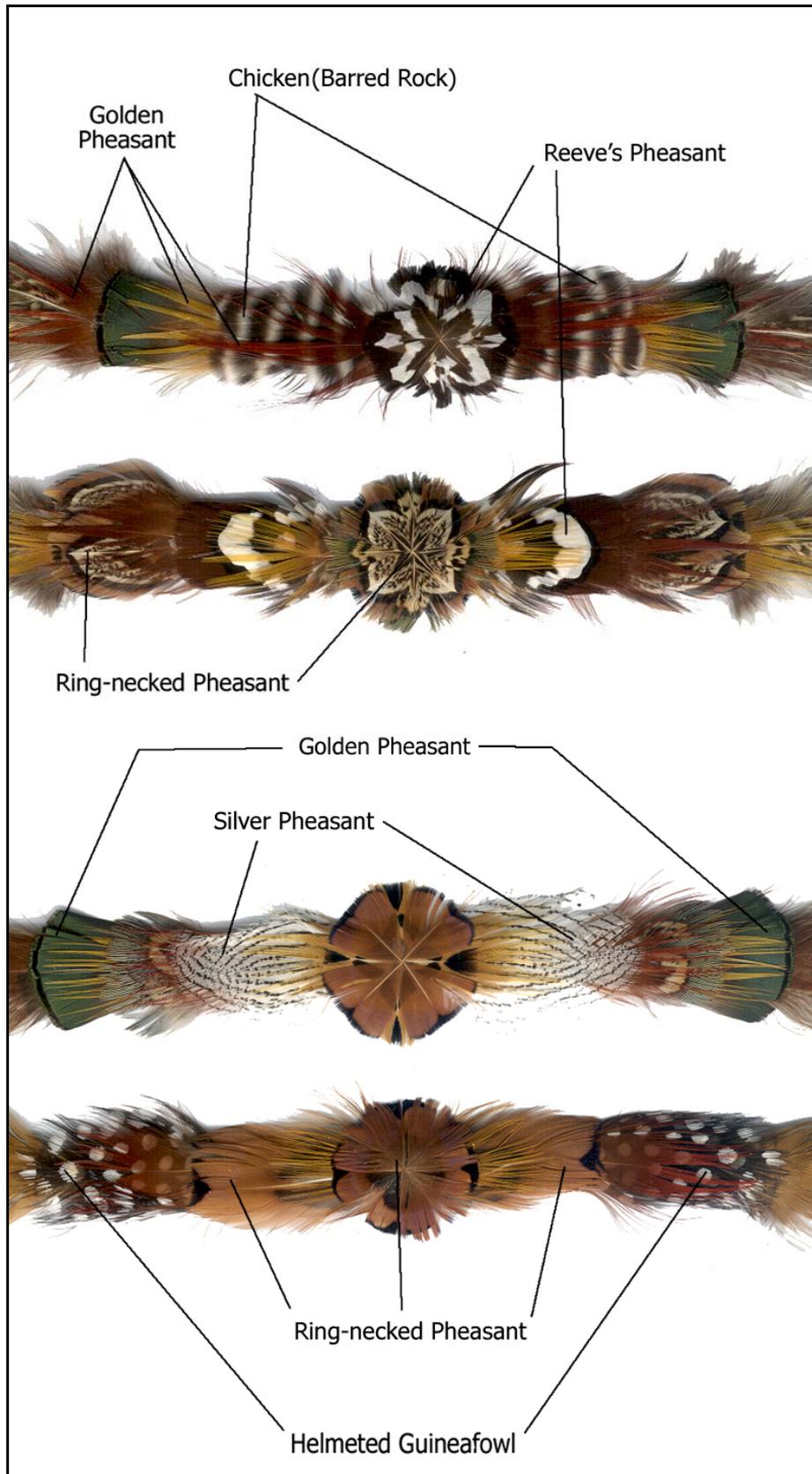


Silver Pheasant

Helmeted Guineafowl (top row)



Vulturine Guineafowl (bottom row)



**Use of decorative feathers of pheasants and related birds in hair ties.**