



GREAT HORNBILL

BUCEROTIFORMES
Family Bucerotidae
Genus *Buceros*
Species *bicornis*



Range: SW India through Himalayas, S China to Malay Peninsula & Sumatra

Habitat: Tall evergreen forests canopies

Niche: Arboreal, diurnal and omnivorous

Biomes: Tropical rain forest from sea level to 2000 m

Wild diet: Various fruits (mainly figs), insects, small reptiles, birds & mammals

Zoo diet: Fruit & insects

Life Span: (Wild)

(Captivity) 41 years

Sexual dimorphism: Male is overall larger than female.

Location in SF Zoo: Bird String between Leaping Lemur Café and Koala exhibit

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

These are the largest of the Hornbills and have a white upper breast and neck region that interrupts the black body and head. (This area is often seen as yellow where preening oils have been spread). A black band crosses the long white tail. The hollow yellow casque may be used to amplify their call. In the male this casque has two points in front while the female's does not. The body feathers are black with white on the feather tips. They have no under wing coverts. The male's eyes are red with a black rim where as the females is white with a red rim that intensifies during breeding.

Weight: M 5.5 – 7.75 lbs

F 4.8 – 7.40

Height: 3 to 4 ft

Wingspan: up to 4 ft

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Listed on CITIES I - In India (pop. est. 3500 over 100 forest fragments) it is hunted for food and traditional medicines while the destruction of its habitat is more problematic throughout its range. They have been bred in captivity. Tribes in NE India are converting to fiberglass hornbill beaks to use in their ceremonies. With lost of large trees for nesting there are birds that simply do not breed. Listed on IUCN Red List as Vulnerable.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

Nest is kept clean to the point where the chicks will defecate through the nest opening. Birds throw their food into the air then catch it. Their morning and evening call is a loud kahang ...kahang. The female molts during her time in nest. During the non-breeding season when fruit is plentiful they may become more gregarious and gather into groups of 20 or more. These groups may be family related

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Nest cavity ranges from 8 – 35 m above the ground among large trees like *Dipterocarpus* and *Syzygium*. Both adults work to seal the female within the nest cavity. Mud feces and saliva are used to seal the entrance. Once confined the female is totally dependent on her mate to feed her and the young. Food is swallowed by the male and then regurgitated to the female. After the female leaves the nest she assists with the feeding. The young have to break out of the nest on their own.

Breeds: Lays Jan – Apr across range

Fledging: c.30 days

Incubation: 38 – 40 days incubation (35 – 37 in captivity)

Sexual Maturity: M c.5 years

of Young: 1- 4 eggs

Weight at birth: 45 – 50 g.

MISCELLANEOUS

1 of 4 members in genus

Genus name is (G) for horned like an ox.

Described by Linnaeus in 1758

As of 1990 it remains a question as to whether this is a monophyletic group given its possible relations with the following families – Piciformes, Passeriformes, Psittaciformes and even the Caprimulgiformes.

Hornbills show their age by folds or carunculations on their casque.

Sources:

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