



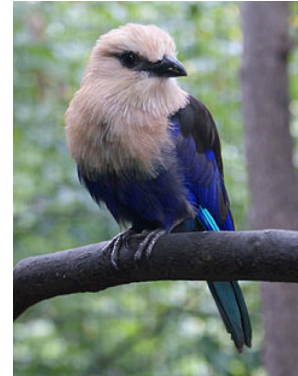
BLUE-BELLIED ROLLER

CORACIIFORMES

Family: Coraciidae

Genus: *Coracias*

Species: *cyanogaster*



Range: Western and central Africa, from Senegal to southern Sudan

Habitat: Wooded areas often on the edge of open or recently burned areas.

Niche: Arboreal, mostly carnivorous of large insects, diurnal

Wild diet: Mostly larger Invertebrates such as beetles, grasshoppers, winged ants and termites, small snakes and reptiles and oil-palm fruits

Zoo diet:

Life Span: (Wild)

(Captivity) ~8.9 years

Sexual dimorphism: none

Location in SF Zoo: African Aviary

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

Blue-bellied rollers are pigeon-sized birds with relatively large heads; they are large and distinctive among the rollers. They are named for their brilliant royal blue abdomen. They have dark and light blue feathers on their wings, and a cream-colored head and chest and a slightly forked azure-blue tail. Their tail has a moderately long streamer.

Their legs are short and the feet are relatively small to fit their stocky bodies; legs and feet function largely for perching not hopping along a branch. Their black, robust beak is downward-curved with a distinctive hook-tip; bill reflects its predatory nature.

Weight: 5.00 oz
Length: 11.0 to 11.8 in (tail streamers can add up to 2.4 in)
Wingspan: 14.1 in

Juveniles are typically smaller than adults, with duller coloration and a shorter tail.

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Blue-bellied rollers are not globally threatened. They have been placed in the lower risk/least concern category on the IUCN Red List. They are well established across a wide range in Africa and are in no current danger of extinction. Although their overall population may be declining, they are considered a species of least concern by the IUCN, the world's leading conservation organization. Blue-bellied rollers are well adapted to living in regions dominated by agriculture. They probably play a key role in pest control for farmers in these areas by eating insects, which may otherwise feed on crops.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

Blue-bellied Roller often perch prominently on trees, posts or overhead wires in open country, whilst watching for large insects on which they feed. They have a strong direct flight and dive-bomb prey on the ground. They are also known to flock to the scene of forest and brush fires and feed on insects fleeing flames. Some blue-bellied rollers migrate during the wet season (in winter).

Blue-bellied rollers are social birds that typically gather in small groups of three to six, sometimes up to 20. They exhibit many social behaviors, including calling to each other, chasing each other, flying together, and defending territory together. These activities are used to show territoriality, maintain group unity, and initiate courtship. During nesting, this species can become aggressive, attacking any bird that may approach. The call of Blue-bellied Roller is a harsh croaking *ga-ga-ga* sound.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Blue-bellied rollers are cavity nesters especially hollow palm trees. Males establish breeding territories to try to attract females. Breeding displays include loud calls and tumbling flights through the air (the “rolling” that gives the species its name). Breeding occurs from April to July, with the female typically laying two–three eggs. Parents share the responsibility of incubating eggs and feeding hatchlings until juveniles become independent, typically 40 days after the hatch. One male copulates with one or two females. Both parents incubate the eggs (majority by female) and feed the nestlings by regurgitation. Blue-bellied rollers typically become independent after about forty days.

Incubation: 22 - 24 days	Sexual Maturity:
# of eggs: 2 - 3	Fledging: 4 wks

MISCELLANEOUS

Blue-bellied rollers and other “true” rollers are so named because of their spectacular, tumbling courtship flights. Males are more numerous than females.

Sources:

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Handbook of the Birds of the World, Vol VI © 2001 Josep del Hoya, Lynx Edicions, pg 373, 342-369.

<http://www.marylandzoo.org/animals-conservation/birds/blue-bellied-roller/>

http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Coracias_cyanogaster/

<http://www.aviary.org/animals/Blue-bellied-Roller>

<http://www.lpzoo.org/animals/factsheet/blue-bellied-roller>