



# WHITE-CHEEKED TURACO

Cuculiformes  
Family: Musophagidae  
Genus: *Tauraco*  
Species: *leucotis*



**Range:** Ethiopia, Sudan

**Habitat:** Dense humid forest and woodlands 2200-3200m

**Niche:** Arboreal, mainly frugivorous, diurnal

**Wild diet:** Podocarpus fruits and Juniper berries along with some invertebrates

**Zoo diet:**

**Life Span:** (Wild) 10 - 12 years  
(Captivity)

**Sexual dimorphism:**

**Location in SF Zoo:** Exploration Zone

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## APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

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White-cheeked Turacos have a green body with a dark greenish-blue tail and wings. Under-wing coverts are crimson. There are white patches forward the eye and behind the ear along the neck. The beak and eye ring are red and turacos have two inch prominent crest feathers which are blue-green. Turacos have a short, stout bill with a decurved maxilla. Young are similar to adults.

**Weight:** 7.1 – 11.1 oz

**Length:** 17 inches

**Wingspan:**

Their wings are relatively short and rounded resulting in a generally weak and limited to short distant flights. These birds have a semi-zygodactylous foot structure which aids in perching and climbing. They are agile birds that climb and leap through the trees rarely coming to the ground to bathe or drink. Their long tail aids in balance.

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## STATUS & CONSERVATION

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Not Threatened Cities III. They are considered as pest by some gardeners due to their messy feeding behavior.

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## COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

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Live in flocks of about 12 members in the upper canopy of the forests. Their feeding behavior disperses seeds of the various fruits they eat

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## COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

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These birds are monogamous. The male will feed female during courtship. Both parents build the nest, incubate and rear the chicks with assistance from other members of the flock. They nest in thick platform of dry twigs, which is loosely constructed, with slight depression at top. Young have claws on wings that assist them in clinging to branches and are lost upon maturity. Chicks can leave the nest at 6 weeks. Some may stay with the flock.

Incubation: 21 - 24 days	Fledge: 4 weeks
# of eggs: 2 - 3	Sexual Maturity: 1 - 2 years

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## MISCELLANEOUS

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The Cuckoos, roadrunners and S American Hoatzin are also found in this order

Unlike most birds where coloration is due to structural features of the feathers the greens and reds found on the Turaco are pigments unique to this family and are created by copper based pigments in the bird's body. **Turacoverdin** is the only green pigment found in birds and **Turacin** is a red pigment that is water-soluble.

Two sub-species, *Tauraco leucotis leucotis* & *Tauraco leucotis donaldsoni*, are differentiated by the pale crimson hind crown of *T. l. donaldsoni*

Turacos move from one group of trees to another in a single file, waiting for the first to land before the next one takes off.

### Sources:

created 11/2007, updated 7/2011

National Geographic Complete Birds of the World Vol 4 © 2009 Peter Clement, p 133-134

Handbook of Birds of the World Vol 4 © 1997 Lynx Edicions

[www.turacos.org/whitecheeked.htm](http://www.turacos.org/whitecheeked.htm)

<http://www.seaworld.org/>