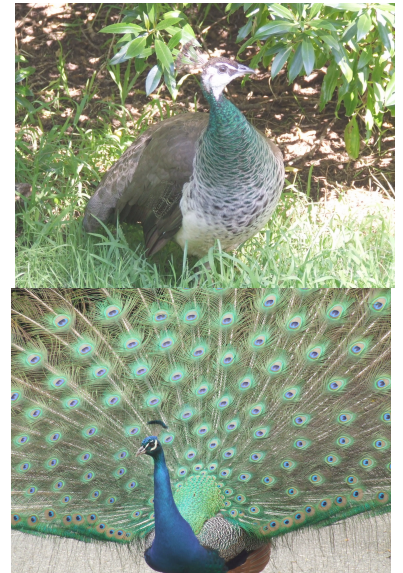


# PEAFOWL

**GALLIFORMES**  
**Family: Phasindae**  
**Genus: *Pavo***  
**Species: *cristatus***



**Range:** India and Sri Lanka

**Habitat:** Open hilly forest near water

**Niche:** Terrestrial, omnivorous, crepuscular

**Wild diet:** Seeds, fruit, roots, worms, insects and snails

**Zoo diet:**

**Life Span:** (Wild)  
(Captivity)

**Sexual dimorphism:** M is larger and more iridescent with a tail train during the breeding season.

**Location in SF Zoo:** Throughout zoo grounds

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## APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

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The male's plumage is a mixture of green, blue, white and chestnut. The female's coloration is similar but duller in iridescences. Both have bare areas around the eyes and both have a crown of feathers on the head. Their bills are short, stout and curve downward. The feet are also stout and have three front toes and one hind toe. The male also has a spur on their feet.

Short rounded wings that are used for short flights to avoid danger.

**Weight:**

**Length:** 78 inches / 198 cm

**Tail:** up to 63 inches by 3<sup>rd</sup> year

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## STATUS & CONSERVATION

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Though originally from India this species can be found in zoos and parks throughout the world. Being a symbol of Krishna\* these birds have long been protected by the people of India.

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## COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

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A harsh 'meowing' sound is made generally during the breeding season. They are strong runners and are able to fly up to perch in trees. They are non-migratory.

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## COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

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In the breeding season the cock becomes solitary and pugnacious. Each adult male returns to a place he occupied in previous years and establishes his territorial rights, threatening intruders and calling loudly to advertise his presence. Territories are small, ranging from 0.05 - 05 ha (0.02 - 0.2 acres) centered on a clearing in forest or scrub. Occasionally a junior male will challenge a neighbor and a long and violent battle ensues. Fights can last for a whole day or more consisting of slashing out with claws and spurs. Within his territory the peacock has special display sites. The cock waits near one of these sites until he sees a group of females approach. He then goes to the site and turning slowly away from the female, spreads his great fan with a long, loud shake to bring each 'eye' into place. He then begins to move his wings rhythmically up and down. As the female get nearer, he is careful to keep the un-patterned back of the fan toward them. as soon as the female enters the alcove, a transformation comes over the male. He backs towards her with rapidly fanning wings; she avoids him by stepping into the center of the display site. He then swivels suddenly, so as to face her, ceases the movement of his wings and presses the fan forwards, almost engulfing her. Simultaneously with this action, spasms of rapid shivering move through the fan, causing the whole structure to rustle with a loud, silvery sound. The female sometimes then runs quickly round to the front of the male and runs excitedly behind him again. This may be repeated several times before copulation takes place.

Incubation: 28 days

Sexual Maturity: F 1+ yrs / M 2-3 yrs

# of eggs: 3-5

Fledging: precocial

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## MISCELLANEOUS

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- ◆ The peafowl is the largest member of the Order Galliformes
- ◆ Albino's can be found frequently among birds bred in captivity.
- ◆ \*The term Krishna in Sanskrit has the literal meaning of "black" or "dark", and is used as a name to describe someone with dark skin. The Gaudiya tradition explains the primary meaning of the name Krishna as being "all-attractive". This is justified by an interpretation of a verse in the Mahabharata, as given in the Chaitanya Charitamrita. Commentators on the Vishnu sahasranama offer explanations on similar lines. According to Adi Sankara's commentary, Krishna is the 57th name of Vishnu and means the "Existence of knowledge and Bliss."
- ◆ Referred to as Indian Peafowl, Blue Peafowl, Common Peafowl
- ◆ *Pavo* is Latin for peafowl. *cristatus* is Latin for crested

**Sources:** (49 - 53)

Last Revision 11/95

Present Revision 4/2007

Wikipedia

[http://www.gbwf.org/pheasants/blue\\_peafowl.html](http://www.gbwf.org/pheasants/blue_peafowl.html)