



# BLUE-THROATED PIPING-GUAN

Galliformes

Family: Cracidae

Genus: *Pipile*

Species: *cumanensis*



**Range:** wide range in northern and western South America; distributed from the Guyana across northern and western Amazonia, south into Paraguay

**Habitat:** Tropical forests including riverine forests in lowlands (occasionally as high as 1000 m). Favors the edges where the forest meets open land or a river

**Niche:** almost completely arboreal in canopy, mainly frugivorous, diurnal

**Wild diet:** Palm fruit is preferred fruit, also flowers, figs and snails

**Zoo diet:**

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

**Sexual dimorphism:**

**Location in SF Zoo:** South American Tropical Rainforest and Aviary

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## APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

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The Blue-throated Piping-guan is a medium-sized bird, which has mostly black plumage with a greenish gloss. It has a large white patch on each wing, white flecks on the wing coverts and chest, a white patch over the eye, and a short white or buffy-white crest. The bill is baby-blue at the base and cobalt-blue at the tip and red legs.

**Weight:** 2.4 – 2.9 lbs  
**Length:** 27 - 30 in  
(includes neck and tail)  
**Wingspan:**

The Blue-throated Piping-Guan easily is separated from other species of piping-guan by its blue throat, and strikingly white facial skin and white crest.

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## STATUS & CONSERVATION

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Not globally threatened. The blue-throated piping-guan is classified as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List. The main threat to this species is a projected acceleration in Amazonian deforestation rates, with habitat having been historically deforested for agriculture within its range. It is hunted both locally and commercially for food, increasing its vulnerability to future decline.

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## COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

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The blue-throated piping-guan's call is distinctive with a long series of feeble, slurred whistles and is typical of the Amazon's predawn chorus; it gives a "piping" call of 6 or so slow high-pitched, clear whistles, "slightly ascending in pitch, *püüeee, püüeee, püüeee,...*". It is especially noisy during the breeding season. This bird will also clap and whirl its wings loudly.

It is almost completely arboreal and rarely comes to the ground; it walks nimbly or hops with help from its wings in the canopy or sub-canopy of the forest, especially in trees with flowers or fruit that it eats. It will forage solitarily or in small groups (as many as 12). Piping-guans also are regularly observed visiting clay and salt licks, as a possible supplement to their diet. It is non-migratory and roosts in trees at night. It will ascend over 5,000 feet into the mountains in search of food.

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## COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

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Little is known about its reproduction but generally breeds during the rainy season. Its nest is built of twigs in dense canopy vegetation. They are monogamous in which the sexes share reproductive duties. Guan young leave the nest shortly after hatching to hide in vegetation. Unlike most species with precocial young, blue-throated piping-guans are fed by their parents.

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Incubation:<br># of Eggs: 3 | Sexual Maturity:<br>Fledging: |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|

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## MISCELLANEOUS

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There are two subspecies, *P. c. cumanensis* and *P. c. grayi* of these pheasant-like birds. The blue-throated piping guan is described as "oddly 'prehistoric' (reptilian)" but "handsome".

### **Sources:**

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Handbook of the Birds of the World, Vol II © 1996 Josep del Hoya, Lynx Edicions, pgs 353, 310-341.

Travelers' Wildlife Guides: Brazil © 2005 David L. Pearson and Les Beletsky, Interlink Publishing Group

<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/speciesfactsheet.php?id=88>

[http://neotropical.birds.cornell.edu/portal/species/overview?p\\_p\\_spp=79431](http://neotropical.birds.cornell.edu/portal/species/overview?p_p_spp=79431)