



Common Name

Spotted Dikkop (Cape thick-knee)

Scientific Name: *Burhinus capensis*

FAMILY: Burhinidae

ORDER: Charadriiformes

AZA MANAGEMENT: Signature

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

- EUROPE
- ASIA
- NORTH AMERICA
- NEOTROPICAL
- AFRICA
- AUSTRALIA
- OTHER

HABITAT

- FOREST



TEMPERATURE TOLERANCE



From ° 50F to °110 F

DIET

- FRUGIVORE
- NECTIVORE
- CARNIVORE
- OMNIVORE
- PISCIVORE
- FOLIVORE
- INSECTIVORE
- OTHER

Captive dietary needs: Diets for dikkops in zoological institutions vary widely but are generally composed of a variety of commercial meats, commercial pellets, various animal proteins, and invertebrates. Diets providing 1% calcium on a dry matter basis with a calcium: phosphorus ratio of between 1:1-2:1 should be sufficient for all life stages. Calcium requirements for poultry species are not a good model for an avian species that only produces 1-2 eggs per breeding season, so additional calcium should be unnecessary if feeding at the levels of calcium and phosphorus listed above. Energy requirements vary widely based on environmental and individual factors, but the equation below to estimate the field metabolic rate for charadriiformes can be used as a starting point. Note that this is an estimate of FMR (field metabolic rate) and may overestimate energy requirements for zoo-housed birds. The total diet offered should be adjusted based on body condition, diet intake, and other factors unique to your institution. Energy requirements may increase for reproduction and growth, so care should be taken to ensure adequate food access during breeding season. Ensure parents are feeding a variety of food items to chicks, as insects alone are not a balanced food source for growing chicks. $FMR (kcal/day) = 1.94(\text{Body Weight in grams})^{0.77}$ (Nagy et al. 1999) While it is strongly recommended to have a nutritionist review your diet, a range of diets currently being offered in zoological institutions is included below for reference. Example diets: Diet amount fed: Institutions surveyed offered food at a rate of 9-23% of body weight, with diets supplying between 100-250 kcal for adult birds. These birds are often housed in group aviaries, so individual consumption is hard to monitor, and diet items offered often consider the health of multiple species housed in these aviaries. Diet composition: Commercial meat: 23% (0-34%) Commercial pellet: 25% (0-70%) Animal protein: 48% (27-64%) Terrestrial invertebrates: 4% (0-18%) Diet composition notes: 1. Commercial meat diets intended for zoo carnivores included canine, feline, bird of prey, and small carnivore diets. 2. Commercial pelleted diets included products intended for canids, softbill birds, gamebirds, parrots, flamingos, insectivores, and cranes. Most institutions offered multiple pellet types. 3. Animal proteins included various-sized mice, fish (smelt, capelin, silversides), hard-boiled egg, and krill 4. Terrestrial invertebrates fed included crickets, mealworms, and waxworms, but other species are also acceptable if available in your institution 5. Supplements are used by some institutions but generally should be unnecessary given the above diet proportions. Calcium supplements are likely unnecessary since most of the ingredients listed above contain adequate levels of calcium (see additional detail in the "Captive Dietary Needs" section). If feeding a large proportion of fish, you may consider a thiamin and vitamin E supplement. Wild diet and foraging: The spotted dikkop typically forages at night, but also during cloudy days. Feeds by leaning forward to pick food from the ground after a short run or during pauses while walking. Primarily feed on insects, but also eat a variety of amphibians, mollusks, crustaceans, and some seeds (Birds of the World).

- DESERT
- GRASSLAND
- COASTAL
- RIVERINE
- MONTANE
- OTHER

CIRCADIAN CYCLE

- DIURNAL
- CREPUSCULAR
- NOCTURNAL
- OTHER

In the wild, dikkops are nocturnal or crepuscular. In Zoos & Aquariums, they can adjust to being more active during the day

BREEDING INFORMATION

AGE AT SEXUAL MATURITY



Males Normally 2-3 years but can breed at one



Females Normally 2-3 years but can breed at one

Incubation period: 24 days

Fledgling Period: Fledge at 42-49 days

CLUTCH SIZE, & EGG DESCRIPTION

1-3 eggs with 1 egg being laid 56.52% of the time and 2 eggs being laid 43.38% of the time. The egg is buff-colored with brown splotches and very cryptic.

LIFE EXPECTANCY

Median Life Expectancy

Maximum Longevity

Within AZA 22 years, oldest known is 30 years

In the Wild 16-20 years



Within AZA 24 years, oldest known is 34 years

In the Wild 16-20 years



COURTSHIP DISPLAYS

First nest construction, then deep bow display, then sitting in nest scrape, then neck-arching followed by copulation



NEST SITE DESCRIPTION

Very subtle scrape in ground can be lined or unlined, prefer dry raised areas of sand and dirt.



CHICK DEVELOPMENT

The average weight at hatch is 25 grams and they leave the nest at 24 hours. Young chicks are very cryptic and difficult to see. The amount of live bugs should be increased by at least twice the regular amount when an institution is dealing with dikkop chicks.



PARENTAL CARE

Both parents will feed and tend to chicks

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION

MIXED SPECIES EXHIBITS

Compatible in mixed species exhibits? YES

NO

Comments: Best mixed with arboreal perching birds but can be housed with a variety of terrestrial birds.



SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In the wild: When not in breeding season they are gregarious and form flocks

In Captivity: Usually kept in a breeding pair



OPTIMAL HABITAT SIZE

33 ft x 10 ft x 6.5 ft and prefer dry, pebbly areas with low vegetation

Minimum Group Size: 1.1

Maximum Group Size: Small groups when not breeding



MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

They can be aggressive towards other birds and keepers during breeding season.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Be able to do minimal husbandry during breeding season because of their feisty nature. They will need a space of about three feet around the nest to not be distributed. For artificial incubation, the temperatures are 99.5 with 40-50% humidity.

REFERENCES

Birds of the World. (2024) Edited by S. M. Billerman, B. K. Keeney, P. G. Rodewald, and T. S. Schulenberg. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/home>

Nagy, K. A., I. A. Girard, and T. K. Brown. (1999) Energetics of free-ranging mammals, reptiles, and birds. Annual Review of Nutrition, 19:247–77



COMPLETED BY:

Name:

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