

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Ciconiiformes
Scientific Name: Eudocimus ruber

Family: Threskiornithidae
Common Name: Scarlet Ibis

AZA Management: Green Yellow Red None

Photo (Male):



Photo (Female):



NATURAL HISTORY:

Geographic Range: Europe Asia North America Neotropical
 Africa Australia Other South America

Habitat: Forest Desert Grassland Coastal
 Riverine Montane Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Circadian Cycle: Diurnal Crepuscular Nocturnal Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Cold Tolerance: To 70° F To 60° F To 50° F To 40° F
 To 30° F To 20° F Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Heat Tolerance: To 30° F To 50° F To 70° F To 90° F
 To 110° F Other 110 F +

Diet: Frugivore Carnivore Piscivore Insectivore
 Nectivore Omnivore Folivore Other (Add Below)

Captive Dietary Needs:

Although there are no commercial products specifically made for scarlet ibis, commercial flamingo products may be used. Small fish, such as lake smelt, silversides or capelin, are recommended as a supplement to their pelleted diet.

Life Expectancy in the Wild: Males: 15 Females: 15

Life Expectancy in Captivity: Males: 25-30 Females: 25-30

Species Fact Sheets

BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity: Males: 2 years Females: 2 years

Courtship Displays: Males use a variety of mating rituals to attract females including preening, shaking, bill popping, head rubbing and high flights.

Nest Site Description: Their nests consist of an arboreal platform of loose sticks, which are built in close proximity to the nests of other mated pairs.

Clutch Size, Egg Description: 3 to 5 brown-spotted eggs per season

Incubation Period: 19 to 23 days

Fledgling Period: 30 to 40 days

Parental Care: Males and females share parenting responsibilities; alternating between sitting on the nest and foraging.

Chick Development: Chicks are dark brown when they hatch and do not fully turn red until they are approximately 2 years of age. Their feet develop quickly, which gives them the ability to climb out of the nest and into the surrounding trees in as little as two weeks. They are dependent on their parents for approximately 75 days even though they fledge at around 35 days.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Congregations numbering in the thousands of scarlet ibis mixed with other Ciconiiformes have been observed during the breeding season. This species utilizes the flock while searching for food as well as for protection, especially of the young. Scarlet ibis are polygynous and each season arrange their nests extremely close to other pairs of the same flock.

Social Structure in Captivity: Same as in the wild barring such large numbers. This species has a flock mentality and will remain in close proximity to con-specifics in even the largest habitats.

Minimum Group Size: Small flocks average 10 individuals during the non-breeding season.

Maximum Group Size: In the 1000s during breeding season but typically no more than 30 during the non-breeding season.

Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits: Yes

Comments:

During the breeding season, scarlet ibis may monopolize trees for nesting sites, which may displace other arboreal nesting species from adequate nesting sites.

Optimal Habitat Size: As large as possible preferably with access to a large water source.

Species Fact Sheets

Management Challenges: This species tends to have foot issues similar to other ciconiiforms. Proper substrate and perching is required to prevent bumble foot. The feet are also prone to cracking in dry, cold weather. Access to water in which the birds can wade may prevent cracking.

Breeding scarlet ibis presents a host of potential issues. Two to three eggs are usually laid when in captivity. Although there is the potential for parents to successfully raise all three chicks, it is unlikely. The first and second chick are typically larger and outcompete the third chick. This may also occur between the first and second chick if the first chick hatches out significantly before the second chick. For this reason, the second or third egg may be pulled for incubation or hand raising. Furthermore, due to the close proximity of the nesting sites, aggression may be seen between ibis as well as ibis towards keepers. This may result in the inadvertent crushing of eggs or death of neighboring chicks. As chicks begin to maneuver out of their nests and through the trees, entanglement in branches may be detrimental.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

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REFERENCES:

Busch Entertainment Corporation, Scarlet ibis. Retrieved March 23 2014, from SeaWorld/Busch Gardens ANIMALS Web site: <http://www.seaworld.org/animal-info/animalbytes/animalia/eumetazoa/coelomates/deuterostomes/chordata/craniata/aves/ciconiiformes/scarletibis.htm>

Phelps, K. 2004. "Eudocimus ruber" (On-line), Animal Diversity Web. Accessed March 23, 2014 at http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Eudocimus_ruber.html

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COMPLETED BY:

Name: Lauren Schneider

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