

# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Columbiformes  
**Scientific Name:** *Caloenas nicobarica*

**Family:** Columbidae  
**Common Name:** Nicobar Pigeon

**AZA Management:**  Green  Yellow  Red  None

**Photo (Male):**



**Photo (Female):**



## NATURAL HISTORY:

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

**Habitat:** Forest  Desert  Grassland  Coastal  Riverine  Montane  Other  Subtropical and tropical moist lowland and mangrove forests

**Circadian Cycle:** Diurnal  Crepuscular  Nocturnal  Other  particularly active at dawn and dusk

**Cold Tolerance:** To 70° F  To 60° F  To 50° F  To 40° F  To 30° F  To 20° F  Other  Heat should be provided when temperature is below 50-55 degrees Fahrenheit

**Heat Tolerance:** To 30° F  To 50° F  To 70° F  To 90° F  To 110° F  Other  Sprinklers or spray baths should be made available if temperatures are 90 or above.

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

# Species Fact Sheets

## Captive Dietary Needs:

Commercial softbill, pigeon and/or parrot pellet, mixed fruits, mixed vegetables, seeds and occasionally insects

**Life Expectancy in the Wild:** Males: 8-12 years Females: 8-12 years

**Life Expectancy in Captivity:** Males: 15 years but can live upwards of 34 years Females: 11 years but can live upwards of 32 years

## BREEDING INFORMATION:

**Age at Sexual Maturity:** Males: 12 months Females: 12 months

**Courtship Displays:** Males perform a cooing and bowing display with their neck plumage erected.

**Nest Site Description:** In the wild and in captivity, the nest is a loose platform of twigs, placed as low as two meters off the ground in undisturbed sites or just below the canopy at a height of up to 12 meters in disturbed sites. Several nests of conspecifics may be built in a single tree. In captivity, successful nests have been found as low as 1.5 – 2 meters from the ground in a walkthrough aviary and as high as 4-5 meters.

**Clutch Size, Egg Description:** Average clutch consists of one elliptical, faintly blue-tinged white egg

**Incubation Period:** 30 days

**Fledgling Period:** 30 days\*

**Parental Care:** Both parents share incubation and chick rearing duties and produce crop milk for the chick.

**Chick Development:** Chicks are nearly naked when hatched and are brooded and fed by the sire and dam. After approximately 10 days, the chicks' feathers begin to grow in. \*The chicks are almost independent at 30 days but may remain on or near the nest for weeks after where they continue to be fed by the parents.

## CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

**Social Structure in the Wild:** This species forms monogamous pairs. They move about in flocks during the day and roost together at night. They are nomadic and commute from island to island in flocks of up to 85 birds, to find food. They are communal nesters.

**Social Structure in Captivity:** They can be kept in pairs in a smaller aviary or multiple pairs in a larger aviary. In addition, they can be kept in single sex flocks.

## Species Fact Sheets

1-2 pairs

**Minimum Group Size:**

Depending on each individual's temperament, multiple pairs can be maintained in medium to large aviaries.

**Maximum Group Size:**

**Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:**

Yes

**Comments:**

This species does well in various mixed exhibits however there can be aggression either towards or from other species of Columbids. We had to remove a female Mauritius Pink Pigeon from an enclosure when she became aggressive towards a pair of nesting Nicobar Pigeons. We have successfully housed Luzon's Bleeding Heart Doves, Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeons, Pied Imperial Pigeons, Black-naped fruit doves and Black-chinned fruit doves with Nicobar Pigeons in large free flight aviaries.

**Optimal Habitat Size:** We currently house 2-7 birds in a large free flight, mixed species aviary measuring approximately 20,000 square feet and ranging in height from 35 – 60 feet. We have housed single birds and pairs in much smaller enclosures (6' wide X 15' deep X 8' high).

**Management Challenges:** Their nests can be very flimsy and a strong wind or storm could blow the nest with eggs or chicks to the ground. Some egg predation can occur depending on the species with which they are housed. Wild rats and snakes have been known to predate eggs and chicks.

### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Nicobar Pigeons are found on the small islands and coastal regions from the Nicobar Islands, east through the Malay Archipelago, to the Solomons and Palau. Females are slightly smaller than males; they have a smaller bill knob, shorter hackles and browner underparts. Immature birds have a black tail and lack almost all iridescence. There is hardly any variation across the birds' wide range.

Some DNA studies have confirmed that the *Caloenas* taxa represent the closest relatives to the extinct Dodo.

This species is classified as Near Threatened (NT) on the IUCN Red List and protected under CITES Appendix 1 because throughout its wide range it is thought to be declining as a result of capture for food and the pet trade, habitat destruction and predation by introduced mammals.

# Species Fact Sheets

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## REFERENCES:

*Handbook of Birds of the World Alive* - <http://www.hbw.com/species/nicobar-pigeon-caloenas-nicobarica>

Pratt, T.K. & Beehler, B.M. (2015): *Birds of New Guinea*. Second edition. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

*Population Analysis & Breeding and Transfer Plan Nicobar Pigeon (Caloenas nicobarica) AZA Species Survival Plan® Yellow Program AZA 2016.*

WAZA Website: <http://www.waza.org/en/zoo/select-a-region/asia/birds/doves-and-pigeons-columbiformes/caloenas-nicobar>

*The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22690974/0>

Photographs provided by Joshua Caraballo, Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo

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