

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Struthioniformes
Scientific Name: *Eudromia elegans*

Family: Tinamidae
Common Name: Elegant crested tinamou

AZA Management: Green Yellow Red None

Photo (Male): [males care for the chicks].
 Sexes are identical in plumage, females are heavier.



Photo (Female):



NATURAL HISTORY:

Geographic Range: Europe Asia North America Neotropical
 Africa Australia Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

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: Elegant crested tinamous are relatively cold hardy, but cannot be trusted to remove themselves from inclement weather. They can remain outside in dry temperatures down to 32F, and wet temperatures down to 40F. Should they be exhibited outdoors, birds should be provided with supplemental heat sources [heat pads, heat lamps, heated sheds] when temperatures are below 50F. Chicks should always be kept warm, but will come back from hypothermia well if given warmth and fluids.

Heat Tolerance: To 90° F

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

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Captive Dietary Needs:

tinamou are omnivorous and should be fed a diet appropriate for such feeding habits such as gamebird pellets, chopped fruit, insects and greens. They are prone to obesity and weights should be closely monitored.

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

Life Expectancy in Captivity: Males: ~10 years Females: ~10 years

BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity: Males: 1 year Females: 1 year

Courtship Displays: Elegant crested-tinamou females are polyandrous and the males are polygynous. If both the male and female are not ready to breed one or the other will get harassed. When the female is ready to breed, she will initiate chasing with the male. She will chase him until he chases her. If he is ready to breed he will chase her, but if not she will chase him relentlessly. The reverse occurs if the male is ready to breed and she is not. When both are ready to breed, the female allows herself to be caught and copulation occurs. Males establish calling areas, within which the male digs a nest bowl; females, in groups of two or three, visit the calling male for copulation and egg laying. Females are dominant over males in initial interactions between the sexes. The male becomes more dominant, however, as the female becomes receptive to copulation. Copulation is quick and is preceded by a circling behavior. After mounting the female, the male treads her back rapidly causing her to rock side to side. He then slides off backwards, making brief cloacal contact.

Nest Site Description: Nests are a shallow bowl, placed under low bushes, grass clumps or weeds, or at the base of a tree. The bowl is dug with the feet, as the bird turns the body and kicks dirt out; additionally, a few feathers, twigs or other dry material often are pulled into the nest, by both males and females

Clutch Size, Egg Description: Clutch 5–6 eggs, occasionally up to 9, green or yellowish-green eggs. Mean egg dimensions are 53.4 x 38.0 mm, with a mass of 32 to 52 g. A single female may lay 30 to 40 eggs during a season

Incubation Period: 20–21 days

Fledgling Period: 1 day

Parental Care: Male only. The young leave the nest shortly after hatching, but remain with the male for a considerable period of time, becoming independent by three to four months of age.

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Chick Development: Chick resembles juvenile/adult in coloration and hatch with crests; male accompanies young for some time, may perform distraction display if brood threatened. Chicks reach full size at about 5 months

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Forages mostly in groups of up to 20 individuals, sometimes more, up to 50 and, exceptionally, 100 birds

Social Structure in Captivity: multiple males can be kept together with one female, or all male groups, or 1.1

Minimum Group Size: 1.1

Maximum Group Size: See above

Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits: Yes

Comments:

Elegant crested tinamous can be kept with a wide variety of other birds. Hand reared birds may be prone to approaching visitors which can be problematic in some instances

Optimal Habitat Size: Habitat size is mainly dictated by the number of birds placed together. Elegant-crested tinamou can do well in many housing environments. If breeding is planned ensure the mesh is no more than 1"x1" for the first foot from the ground to prevent chicks from escaping. They can be susceptible to gapeworm and aspergillosis, so moist habitats should be avoided. The birds will eat most plants [including plastic], so trial and error may be needed to ensure plants can thrive in their habitats. The birds must have hiding spots to get away from each other and sometimes the public.

Management Challenges:

Separate female when chicks are present. Males often do a poor job rearing chicks resulting in many chicks needing to be hand-reared. Foster rearing is a great option, and even hand-reared birds do much better if they are near adult tinamou. Tinamou chicks are difficult to rear, high mortality first 7 days, require attention to detail. Tinamou reared in the presence of adult tinamou do much better. Chicks require exposure to the flora and fauna of the adults in order to thrive, so being reared in a sterile environment raises mortality rate. Using substrate that adults have been on for the chicks helps with this. Species is prone to obesity. There are genetic concerns since it appears that all birds in captivity came from same importation.

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Ten subspecies of elegant crested tinamou are recognized:

E.e.elegans C Argentina,
E.e.intermedia NW Argentina,
E.e.magnistriata NW Argentina
E.e.riojana NW Argentina,
E.e.albida W Argentina,
E.e.multiguttata EC Argentina,
E.e.numida C Argentina,
E.e.devina SW Argentina,
E.e.wetmorei W Argentina,
E.e.patagonia S Argentina, S Chile

Tinamou Threats: Tinamous are some of the most commonly harvested bird species by subsistence hunters in the New World due to their terrestrial habits and relatively large size (0.43kg - 1.8kg). In regions where there is sport and commercial harvest they are primary targets. Despite the importance of tinamous as game birds, their diversity, extensive distribution, and that a relatively high proportion of species are listed as threatened and endangered, little is known of their biology.

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