

# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Musophagiformes  
**Scientific Name:** *Corythaeola cristata*

**Family:** Musophagidae  
**Common Name:** Great blue turaco

**AZA Management:**  Green  Yellow  Red  None

**Photo (Male):**



**Photo (Female):**



**NATURAL HISTORY:**

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

**Habitat:** Forest  Desert  Grassland  Coastal   
 Riverine  Montane  Other The canopy and secondary growth of forests.

**Circadian Cycle:** Diurnal  Crepuscular  Nocturnal  Other They forage throughout the day, usually resting during the heat of midday.

**Cold Tolerance:** To 70° F  To 60° F  To 50° F  To 40° F   
 To 30° F  To 20° F  Other Need shelter from the elements, so access to a heated building is recommended below 45F consistently. Need to be sheltered from freezing temperatures to prevent frostbite.

**Heat Tolerance:** To 30° F  To 50° F  To 70° F  To 90° F   
 To 110° F  Other Turacos cool themselves by gular fluttering and can tolerate high temps as long as they are not stressed. They can handle hot and humid environments as long as shade is provided. They are avid bathers and will use shallow water, water bowls, or mist baths when provided.

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| <b>Diet:</b> | Frugivore <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Carnivore <input type="checkbox"/> | Piscivore <input type="checkbox"/>           | Insectivore <input type="checkbox"/>       |
|              | Nectivore <input type="checkbox"/>            | Omnivore <input type="checkbox"/>  | Folivore <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Other (Add Below) <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Captive Dietary Needs:**

The main staple of their diet consists of various chopped fruit and veggies with a commercial pellet added such as dog food or parrot pellet. They have also been seen consuming protein such as insects or small vertebrates during chick rearing. It is important to provide ample foliage in the form of lettuce or approved browse. These birds will commonly cast well-formed pellets from indigestible plant material.

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| <b>Life Expectancy in the Wild:</b> | Males: unknown | Females: unknown |
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| <b>Life Expectancy in Captivity:</b> | Males: Estimated 30 | Females: Estimated 30 |
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**BREEDING INFORMATION:**

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| <b>Age at Sexual Maturity:</b> | Males: 2-3 years | Females: 2-3 years, can be as early as 1 year |
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| <b>Courtship Displays:</b> | Vocalizing, the birds will chase each other from tree to tree. They perform mutual feedings, will raise and lower their crest, and spread open their long tail feathers. |
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| <b>Nest Site Description:</b> | A minimal stick nest built in a tall tree. Birds will readily accept nest platforms or wicker baskets. It is important to provide a mesh lining or secured sticks in the bottom of the nest to prevent eggs from rolling and splayed legs in chicks. |
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| <b>Clutch Size, Egg Description:</b> | 2 (sometimes 3) pale bluish eggs laid every other day; females can re-clutch |
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| <b>Incubation Period:</b> | About 28-31 days, pipping can last up to 48 hours |
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| <b>Fledgling Period:</b> | Chicks start exploring and perching around the nest at about 2 weeks. Chicks will finally leave the nest after 30 days but will continue to be fed by the parents for up to 3 months. |
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| <b>Parental Care:</b> | Both parents participate in the incubation and rearing of the chicks along with defending the nest. |
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| <b>Chick Development:</b> | Chicks are born with black downy feathers and their eyes are quickly opened. For the first week chicks will average a weight gain of about 12-20% increase in body weight daily. After about 7 days pin feathers will erupt and the chick will start to become mobile. At about 14 days the daily weight gain will slow to about 10% as the chicks begin exploring in and around the nest area. Within 25-30 days the chicks will fledge but will continue to receive supplemental feedings and be protected by the parents for another couple of months. Common challenges are that the chicks are prone to |
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gastrointestinal fungal and/or bacterial infections requiring medical care. These infections can come on quickly and result in dehydration, loss of feeding response, and lead to lethargy and death.

## CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

**Social Structure in the Wild:** These birds can be territorial and usually stay in pairs throughout the year. However they have been seen foraging in large groups of 6 to even 20 birds.

**Social Structure in Captivity:** They work best as pairs but can be kept in larger single sex flocks if enough space is provided. Juveniles may be housed in groups and have even been seen assisting in incubation and chick care of their siblings. However, social interactions should be closely monitored and juveniles removed if aggression or sexual maturity is observed.

**Minimum Group Size:** 1

**Maximum Group Size:** Best kept in monogamous pairs but can be housed in bigger same sex groups in larger areas.

**Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:** Yes **Comments:** Aggression has been observed between turaco species and birds of similar size. They do well in well planted aviaries with other species such as passerines.

**Optimal Habitat Size:** Smallest enclosure for a breeding pair is 7'X15'X10'. Enclosures should be perched to allow for the birds to easily run along the perching as well as short distance hopping from perch to perch. Turacos can be rather "flighty" and do better when they have a choice of visual barriers between themselves and people.

**Management Challenges:** Easily stressed especially during medical exams and restraint, can regurgitate and aspirate. Birds can swallow fairly large objects leading to impaction. Fright molt or shedding several major feathers when being captured. Chicks often suffer and succumb to gastroenteritis.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Females in general are slightly larger than males, averaging 820-1230 grams to the males' average of 855-950g.

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## REFERENCES:

<http://www.oiseaux-birds.com/card-great-blue-turaco.html>

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22688425/0>

[http://aviansag.org/Husbandry/Unlocked/Care\\_Manuals/Turaco\\_TAG\\_husman.pdf](http://aviansag.org/Husbandry/Unlocked/Care_Manuals/Turaco_TAG_husman.pdf)  
Todd Trey Houston Zoological Garden Turaco Tag Husbandry Manual 1998

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Date: 2/15/2018