

# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Bucerotiformes  
**Scientific Name:** *Bucorvus leadbeateri*

**Family:** Bucorvidae  
**Common Name:** Southern Ground Hornbill

**AZA Management:**  Green  Yellow  Red  None



**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  Savanna

**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  Click here to enter text.

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

**Captive Dietary Needs:**  
 Carnivore meat diet (Natural Balance), Mouse, Soaked dog food, Mealworms, Crickets.

**Life Expectancy in the Wild:** Males: 35-40 years Females: 35-40 years

# Species Fact Sheets

---

**Life Expectancy in Captivity:** Males: > 30 years Females: > 30 years

## BREEDING INFORMATION:

**Age at Sexual Maturity:** Males: >10 years Females: 4-6 years of age

**Courtship Displays:** Only dominant group male and female copulate, and form long-term bonds. Males initiate copulation by forcefully preening the female's head and neck, pushing her down. Female assumes a crouched position as the male steps on her back. Male grasps her nape with his bill.

**Nest Site Description:** Nests usually consist of a cavity in trees, stumps, wine barrels, or rock holes. The pair will use the same nest for many years, but for new pairings it is best to have multiple options for the female to choose from.

**Clutch Size, Egg Description:** 1-3 eggs per clutch, with only one chick surviving. Shell white and pitted, Ovoid in shape, elongate and pointed at one end, 60-100 g, 1st laid egg larger than 2nd.

**Incubation Period:** 40 days

**Fledgling Period:** 3 months

**Parental Care:** Fed by mother until old enough to consume larger items, inside the nest cavity.

**Chick Development:** Hatch blind, featherless, with pink skin and beak grey with white tip. By day 3, skin has turned purple. At 7 days, eyes begin to open and first feather pins begin to emerge. At 14 days, eyes are fully open, the chick is fully pinned, and throat is bare and partially inflated. At 21 days, pins begin to open and legs are strong and well developed. Day 30 chicks are fully feathered, with wing and tail feathers continuing to develop. At 3 months, chicks fledge. Can catch own food by 6 months of age, but will continue to beg and be fed by adults until 2 years old. Chicks remain with family group until reaching maturity for females, and indefinitely for males.

## CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

**Social Structure in the Wild:** A dominant adult male and female pair and their offspring. Males can stay in family group indefinitely, but females leave around 4-6 years of age. Breeding pair display dominance with threat behaviors and through refusal of food offerings.

**Social Structure in Captivity:** A dominant adult male and female pair and their offspring. Female offspring can stay with parents for 3-4 years. Male offspring can stay indefinitely, but should stay until they are of breeding age 10-15 years.

# Species Fact Sheets

**Minimum Group Size:** 2

**Maximum Group Size:** 11

**Compatible in  
Mixed Species Exhibits:** Yes

**Comments:**

Small ungulate (i.e. gazelles, duikers, kudu..)  
Vultures  
Marabou Storks

**Optimal Habitat Size:** Minimal size would be 20' X20'X12', but you would need a good enrichment plan. Optimal would be enclosed (for fully winged birds) and a large area (at least 30 yards by 30 yards) with 15 to 30 feet in height.

**Management Challenges:** Need tall fences (>7') even if clipped. Should have inside holding space if temperatures drop below 32 degrees for an extended period of time. They spend a lot of time on the ground foraging. If kept in smaller areas, then a varied and more frequent enrichment is necessary.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

They are very smart, gregarious, and have a great conservation message which is great for exhibiting a family group.

## REFERENCES:

BirdLife International 2012; Hulley and Craig 2007; Kemp and Boesman 2001

Courtenay-Latimer M. 1942. The Ground Hornbill (*Bucorvus cafer*). Ostrich. 13:121-136.

Kemp A, Kemp M. 1975. Studying the basic biology of the Southern Ground Hornbill. Transvaal Museum Bulletin. 15:6-7.

Kemp A. 1988. Bucerotidae, hornbills. In: Fry H, Keith S, Urban E, editors. The Birds of Africa. London (GB): Academic Press. p. 375-413.

Kemp A, Kemp M. 1980. The biology of the Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri* (Vigors) (Aves: Bucerotidae). Annals of the Transvaal Museum. 32(4):65-100.

Vigors N. 1825. Observations on the natural affinities that connect the orders and families of birds. Trans. Linn. Soc. London. 14:395-517.

## COMPLETED BY:

**Name:** Ann Knutson

**Date:** 6/28/2017