

# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Musophagiformes  
**Scientific Name:** *Musophaga violacea*

**Family:** Musophagidae  
**Common Name:** Violaceous Turaco

**AZA Management:**  Green  Yellow  Red  None

**Photo (Male):**



**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:** To 70° F  To 60° F  To 50° F  To 40° F   
 To 30° F  To 20° F  Other  This species is temperature tolerant as long as a heated, dry shelter where temperatures can be maintained above freezing is provided.

**Heat Tolerance:** To 30° F  To 50° F  To 70° F  To 90° F

## Species Fact Sheets

To 110° F

Other

This species is adaptable to prolonged, hot, humid weather with temperatures in excess of 95 degrees so long as shade is provided.

**Diet:**

Frugivore

Carnivore

Piscivore

Insectivore

Nectivore

Omnivore

Folivore

Other (Add Below)

### Captive Dietary Needs:

High quality soaked pelleted diet with addition of chopped fruit and greens. A variety of commercial pelleted diets have been used by different institutions successfully.

**Life Expectancy in the Wild:**

Males:

unknown

Females:

unknown

**Life Expectancy in Captivity:**

Males:

These are potentially long lived animals. An average lifespan is 15-20 years, although the oldest known male was 33.

Females:

These are potentially long lived animals. An average lifespan is 15-20 years, although the oldest known female was 34.

### BREEDING INFORMATION:

**Age at Sexual Maturity:**

Males:

Most males are sexually mature around 1.5 years of age, although reproduction is rarely possible before that.

Females:

Hens may be sexually mature as early as one year of age.

**Courtship Displays:**

Pairs will call together, chasing, allofeeding.

**Nest Site Description:**

The nest is a poorly formed shallow cup or platform made of loosely woven sticks. It is suggested that animals are provided with an open box or basket with a rough substrate to promote good chick leg development.

**Clutch Size, Egg Description:**

1-3 round white eggs.

**Incubation Period:**

25-26 days.

**Fledgling Period:**

Chicks fledge between day 13-26, although fledging on days 22-23 is most typical.

**Parental Care:**

Both parents build the nest and incubate, switching off incubation duties several times per day. Both parents feed and care for the chick.

# Species Fact Sheets

**Chick Development:** Chicks are altricial but hatch at an advanced state of development, covered in black down and with open eyes. They are able to beg and move around the nest immediately. A varied, rough nest substrate is important for proper leg development. They may begin exploring the edge of the nest in as little as two weeks, although they typically take several days longer than this. Adult feathers begin erupting around day 6, chicks are mostly covered in adult feathers by day 13, and red crest feathers appear around day 22. Juveniles look similar to adults, but with a brownish or black, less brightly colored beak.

## CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

**Social Structure in the Wild:** Monogamous pairs, sometimes with immature offspring.

**Social Structure in Captivity:** Single birds, mated pairs, mated pairs with immature offspring, female pairs or female groups are all acceptable combinations. Adult male animals will fight with each other. Although females or mated pairs are generally compatible, see the note below under “management challenges” for suggestions on dealing with incompatible birds.

One animal.

**Minimum Group Size:**

**Maximum Group Size:**

Mated pairs are recommended, some pairs may tolerate immature offspring and nest helping behavior has been observed. Female pairs or small female-only groups are also possible.

**Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:** Yes

**Comments:**

Although most birds work well in many mixed-species settings, some individuals or pairs are known to be incompatible with a variety of species or may become incompatible when breeding. Mix with caution in smaller aviaries or with more docile species.

**Optimal Habitat Size:** Exhibits measuring 7' wide by 15' long by 10' high are the minimum recommended for one breeding pair of birds. Mixed species exhibits should be larger. Enclosures should include a shelter from the elements (rain, sun, excessive heat, wind, and cold). These are active jumping and flying animals and will benefit from a perching strategy that allows for sufficient room to leap from perch to perch. Although turacos are usually visible, plants and other visual barriers should be provided to allow animals to hide or avoid each other if needed. Turacos are enthusiastic bathers; although it is

## Species Fact Sheets

not necessary, they will utilize a shallow pool, sprinkler, or large shallow dish to bathe in when the weather is appropriate.

**Management Challenges:** Most birds will be compatible, but turacos have the potential to show significant aggression toward each other, even among well-established pairs. This should be kept in mind as a possibility when introducing pairs and provisions made to separate birds if needed. Strategies such as side-by-side introductions, introduction in a neutral territory, and temporary removal of one animal or single-wing clipping of an aggressor are highly encouraged.

### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

These are active, vocal, readily visible turacos that are listed as an IUCN least concern species. Due to their habitat, they have the potential to have tie-in conservation messaging for sustainable paper use and tantalum mining. Their larger size and activity level makes them popular with guests, and they are relatively hardy animals with no special medical needs. Although some individuals can be pugnacious in some situations, most animals will also mix well with a variety of avian and non-avian species.

### REFERENCES:

del Hoyo, J., Elliot, A. & Sargatal, J. eds. (1997). Handbook of Birds of the World. Vol. 4. Sandgrouse to Cuckoos. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.

Todd, William "Trey". Turaco TAG Husbandry Manual. Houston, TX. Houston Zoological Gardens, 18 August 1998

Bailey, Hannah . "How to Grow a Turaco at the Houston Zoo". Proceedings from the Turaco & Cuckoo Workshop, Sponsored by the American Zoo & Aquarium Association's Avian Scientific Advisory Group. 26 April, 2002.

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