

# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Galliformes  
**Scientific Name:** *Colinus virginianus ridgwayi*

**Family:** Phasianidae  
**Common Name:** Masked Bobwhite

**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  [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:

Captive reared birds are fed a commercially prepared pelleted diet that meets the macro and micro nutrient requirements for their age and category of development.

**Life Expectancy in the Wild:** Males: 2-3 years Females: 2-3 years

**Life Expectancy in Captivity:** Males: 7-9 years Females: 7-9 years

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## BREEDING INFORMATION:

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

**Courtship Displays:** Courtship begins with the calling of the males—typical “ah-bob-white” call characteristic of the species.

**Nest Site Description:** Typical nest construction is on the ground with a bowl-shaped depression in native bunch grass that is well concealed and lined with dead grass.

**Clutch Size, Egg Description:** The female lays 10 – 20 white eggs.

**Incubation Period:** 21-23 days

**Fledgling Period:** precocial

**Parental Care:** Newly emerging chicks are brooded by either parent and in the event a nesting hen is killed, a male will brood eggs in her absence.

**Chick Development:** Parental adult and chicks leave the nest within one day of hatching. Chicks lose their “egg tooth” within 2-3 days. Growth of chicks is rapid but chicks retain natal down and must be brooded intensively until they are able to thermoregulate on their own. Primary feathers develop in 3-4 days and by 14 days chicks are capable of short flights. Juvenile plumage dominates by week 3 and full adult plumage is complete by week 12.

## CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

**Social Structure in the Wild:** Unknown but probably similar to other quail species

**Social Structure in Captivity:** Aggression during breeding season is common as birds retain their territorial breeding instinct but natural behavior has not been fully explored.

**Minimum Group Size:** 2

**Maximum Group Size:** 30

**Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:** Yes **Comments:** Phoenix Zoo has successfully maintained Masked Bobwhite Quail and other birds together in a shared exhibit.

**Optimal Habitat Size:** Estimated Home Range is 10.9 ha

**Management Challenges:** Habitat loss, limited wild birds, fitness and genetics of breeding birds

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

The Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) has been responsible for managing masked bobwhite in captivity since 1996. Prior to that, the birds were housed at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, MD. In the U.S., the entire species is housed on refuge except for small numbers on display at various U.S. zoos. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service partners with Africam Safari in Puelbla, MX and in 2015 and 2016, a total of 140 captive masked bobwhite were transferred to their new constructed facilities. The plan at Africam Safari is to produce chicks and experiment with pre-release conditioning strategies with the intent of working with

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Sonoran ranches to release birds within their native range in Mexico. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking AZA accredited partners to join in the conservation of this species by transferring part of the captive flock on Refuge to various zoological institutions within the U.S. The intent is to work together to produce healthy offspring, condition the birds and improve habitat on and off refuge to improve survival once released in the wild.

### REFERENCES:

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Tomlinson, R.E. 1972a. Review of the literature on the endangered masked bobwhite, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Research Public. 108: 1-28.

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