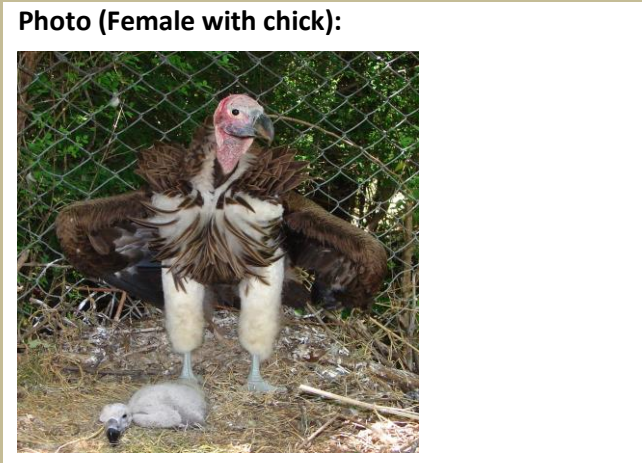
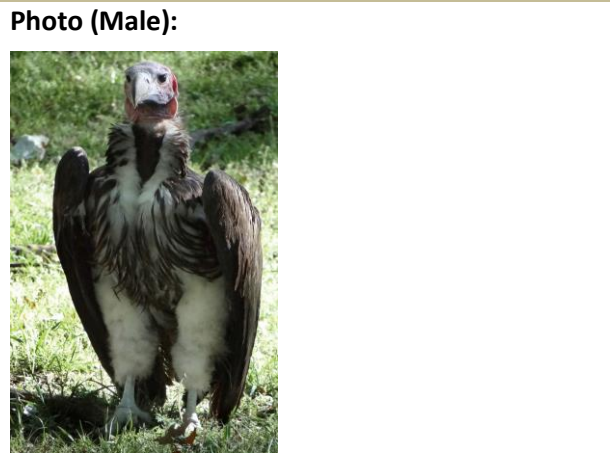


# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Falconiformes  
**Scientific Name:** *Torgos tracheliotus*

**Family:** Accipitridae  
**Common Name:** Lappet-faced vulture

**AZA Management:**  Green  Yellow  Red  None



## NATURAL HISTORY:

**Geographic Range:** Europe  Asia  North America  Neotropical   
 Africa  Australia  Other Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, southern Arabia

**Habitat:** Forest  Desert  Grassland  Coastal   
 Riverine  Montane  Other Inhabits arid open country; into parts of mountain and semi-desert ranges

**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 Mid-20's without precipitation

**Heat Tolerance:** To 30° F  To 50° F  To 70° F  To 90° F   
 To 110° F  Other Can handle in the 100's as long as there is adequate shade.

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

**Captive Dietary Needs:**

Scavenger. Will also capture small animals or eat large insects. Some records of attacking young and adult flamingo.

**Life Expectancy in the Wild:** Males: 20 – 50 yrs. Females: 20 – 50 yrs.

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**Life Expectancy in Captivity:** Males: Still being determined Females: Still being determined

## BREEDING INFORMATION:

**Age at Sexual Maturity:** Males: Approximately 4-5 years Females: Approximately 4-5 years

**Courtship Displays:** As breeding season approaches, the pair will usually be seen around the nest and start to repair/rebuild the nest. You should see an increase in nest defense during this time. There could be some food passing between the pairs, neck arching and grooming.

**Nest Site Description:** Pairs have built up to 3 nests, but they will reuse nests year after year. Nests are huge and can be as large as 4 to 8 feet wide and 1 to 3 feet deep. Nests are comprised of sticks (up to 2 foot in length) with the bowl lined in grasses or hay.

**Clutch Size, Egg Description:** 1 egg, white shell with some spots.

**Incubation Period:** 54 – 56 days

**Fledgling Period:** 115 days to 135 days

**Parental Care:** Both parents incubate and care for the chick. In captivity, there have been observations of 2 different ways of parental feeding. Initially, the chick is almost constantly brooded. During bad weather, the parents have been known to not feed the chick since it would mean the parents have to get off the chick exposing it to cold/wet conditions. At about 3 weeks the parents no longer brood the chick during the day (depending on temperature). At about 1 month, parents will be on the nest, but no longer brooding the chick overnight (depending on temperature). There is one record of a parent coming back to the nest to brood/shield a 2 month old chick during a hail storm. If possible, monitor exhibit with cameras/DVR system. One case of parental attack on the chick led to the chick needing to be removed from the nest for 48 hours. The attacking parent (male) was removed from the exhibit and the chick was returned to a side yard with his dam. Feeding attempts were observed, but perching had not been adequately secured, so chick was removed for another 18 hours. Chick was returned to the original nest, in the exhibit, with the dam. Dam was on the nest feeding the chick within 5 min. and the chick successfully fledged. Since this case, the sire was given one more opportunity to raise a chick. In that case, the sire would not stop brooding the chick nor would he allow the dam on the nest to feed the chick. The sire was again removed from the exhibit and the dam successfully raised the chick. Now, the sire is allowed to incubate and is removed from the exhibit when the egg is at external pip.

**Chick Development:** Chicks can weigh between 140 to 200 grams when hatched. They are covered in a white down. Chick will gain weight quickly (record of a day one weight of 141.1 gm to a day 12 weight of 450 gm and was 3027 gm by day 36). Young chicks will take regurgitated food “handed” to it from the parent’s bill within 24 hours of hatching. At about one month the feeding method changes and the food is passed from direct bill to bill contact. Between 2 to 3 months, the parent will regurgitate food on the nest again, allowing the chick to peck at the food in addition to the parent “handing” the food to the chick.

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Chicks will attempt to stand at about one month.  
Between 5 and 6 weeks, feather growth should be visible on the wings/shoulders.  
At about 2 months, the chick should start flapping the wings, trying to get "lift".  
At about 3 months the chick should get "lift".  
Monitor for fledging around 110 days.  
One case had a chick fledge at 117 days. At day 124 the chick weighed 6.29 kg and the wingspan was 7 ft. 2.5 in. By day 242 the weigh was 5.8 kg, and the wingspan was 7 ft. 8 in.

## CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

**Social Structure in the Wild:** Usually solitary outside of the breeding season, will congregate at large carcasses. There have been cases of 50 birds at a large carcass/watering hole, but usually group sizes is in the teens.

**Social Structure in Captivity:** Usually housed in a pair situation. Have been successfully housed in mixed animal exhibits, but not with a second pair of lappets.

**Minimum Group Size:** 2

**Maximum Group Size:** 2

**Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:**

Yes

**Comments:**

Have been kept with large (ex. greater kudu) and small (ex. Thompson's gazelle) hoof stock, Secretary bird, marabou, crowned crane spp., Abyssinian ground hornbill, southern ground hornbill and waterfowl.

**Optimal Habitat Size:** If birds are pinion/flight restricted, and housed with other species, a large yard of about 1 acre or more is preferred. This gives the birds room to pick a preferred nesting site(s) away from the main activity space of the exhibit.

**Management Challenges:** Getting pairs to breed has been the biggest challenge. The captive population is very small, and few zoos have successfully bred, that pairing up birds is an issue. There is an overabundance of offspring from 2 pairs, so finding suitable mates for these birds is limited. Since lappets can be housed with a variety of animals and they can still breed while being flight restricted, there is more of a demand than there are birds available.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Males and females are not sexually dimorphic, although the female tends to weigh a bit more than the male.

## REFERENCES:

Dallas Zoo internal material

<http://www.hbw.com/species/lappet-faced-vulture-torgos-tracheliotos>

# Species Fact Sheets

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<http://datazone.birdlife.org/species/factsheet/lappet-faced-vulture-torgos-tracheliotos>

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## COMPLETED BY:

Name: Debbie S. Milligan

Date: 10/20/2016