

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Galliformes
Scientific Name: *Pauxi pauxi*

Family: Cracidae
Common Name: Helmeted Curassow

AZA Management: Green Yellow Red None

Photo (Male):



Photo (Female):



NATURAL HISTORY:

Geographic Range: Europe Asia North America Neotropical
 Africa Australia Other

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:

Helmeted curassows are primarily frugivorous/folivorous, but will consume a variety of invertebrates and small vertebrates as well. Daily diet should consist primarily of fruits, vegetables, greens, and gamebird pellets. Birds can be offered rat-pups and pinky mice on occasion. Adults can receive peanuts as a treat and will occasionally eat mealworms when offered.

Life Expectancy in the Wild: Males: Unknown Females: Unknown

Life Expectancy in Captivity: Males: ~19 years or more Females: ~19 years or more

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BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity: Males: 2-3 years Females: 2-3 years

Courtship Displays: Males display to females from perches by performing a “booming” display. Male inhales and releases air, creating a low-pitched sequence of “booms” or “drone” noises. They will also court hens by picking up small rocks/pebbles and head-bobbing in an attempt to offer her the item(s).

Nest Site Description: Nesting typically occurs in trees around 4-6 meters above ground. Nests are typically constructed with forked tree branches as the underlying structure and are composed of small sticks and leaves. In captivity, birds will nest at heights of 4 feet above the ground. Houston Zoo uses large metal wash tubs filled with hay, but other institutions have had success with wooden nest boxes and large woven baskets.

Clutch Size, Egg Description: Clutch size for this species is two large white eggs laid one day apart.

Incubation Period: 30-31 days

Fledgling Period: None

Parental Care: Both parents may be left to care for the young, but keepers should closely monitor individuals with excitable or aggressive dispositions. Males with these dispositions may be pulled from the enclosure and given visual access to the hen and young. Hens are fully capable of raising young on her own. Once chicks are old enough to be removed from the hen, the male may be returned to the enclosure.

Chick Development: Chicks develop rapidly. Chicks hatch out with flight feathers and are capable of flying and perching. For detailed chick weight/growth information, contact the program leader.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Little is known about the social structure of the wild population. Birds have most commonly been reported in monogamous pairs or in family groups with one to two offspring. Offspring will leave their parents within their first year of life.

Social Structure in Captivity: Birds may be kept in 1.1 pairs. Multiple females may be kept together in a single-sex group, but sexually mature males should not be housed with each other. Hand-raised males have caused aggression issues in the past, and may need to be kept in an enclosure separate from the hen, except during breeding introductions. Institutions will be informed/consulted before transfer of birds with known aggression issues. Contact program coordinator for more information.

Minimum Group Size: 1.1

Maximum Group Size: 1.1.2

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Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:

Varies

Comments:

This species has been housed with a wide variety of species in the past. Individual temperament may play a larger impact on compatibility with other individuals/species. Birds may also exhibit heightened aggression/displacement during the breeding season.

Optimal Habitat Size:

Minimum dimensions of 6' Wx 8'H x 20'L can provide adequate space for a pair of birds, though enclosures of larger size are preferred. Walk-through aviaries are not recommended, but may be suitable for certain birds/pairings.

Management Challenges:

Hand-raised males have been problematic in the past and tend to exhibit heightened aggression towards other animals, mates, and/or people. Current management practices are attempting to minimize hand-rearing and strongly encourages parent-rearing or foster-rearing under domestic chicken hens. For more details, please contact the program coordinator.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Females exhibit two different color morphs. Normal coloration resembles that of the male, with the hens being slightly lower in weight/size. However, a "rufous" or "barred" morph is present within the population as well. This coloration appears to be uncommon in the wild, but has become more prevalent within captivity, likely due to limited genetics.

This species is currently listed as Endangered by the IUCN.

REFERENCES:

del Hoyo, J. & Kirwan, G.M. (2016). Helmeted Curassow (*Pauxi pauxi*). In: del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., Sargatal, J., Christie, D.A. & de Juana, E. (eds.). Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.

Delacour, Jean, and Dean Amadon. Curassows and Related Birds. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions, in association with American Museum of Natural History, 2004. Print.

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