

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Galliformes
Scientific Name: *Tympanuchus cupido attwateri*

Family: Phasianidae
Common Name: Attwater's prairie-chicken

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 [Coastal prairie](#)

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 [Can generally withstand Texas costal temperature extremes without additional heat.](#)

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:

Fed Mazuri APC Breeder Diet January – June; Mazuri Gamebird Maintenance rest of year; Chicks have special dietary needs and a specially formulated pellet diet: Mazuri APC chick diet. In well planted enclosures, adult birds will forage on new forbs, seeds, as well as insects.

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Life Expectancy in the Wild: Males: 2 years Females: 2 years

Life Expectancy in Captivity: Males: 5-7 years Females: 4-6 years

BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity: Males: 9 months Females: 9 months

Courtship Displays: This is a lek display species. Males perform a “booming display”. APC courtship behaviors are described by Lehmann (1941:10–14): “The appearance of the male, while booming, is striking. As a preliminary to uttering the call he stretches his neck forward parallel to the ground. The erected pinnae, or neck tufts, point forward; the spread tail is held vertically or even inclined slightly over the back. The wings are extended downward and held firmly against the body and legs, the primaries almost touching the ground. The whole body appears strained and rigid. A short run forward is followed by vigorous stamping with the feet, which last only a few moments, but which under favorable conditions is distinctly audible for 50 feet or more. Inflation of the air sacs, which are actually but one sac with two lateral portions is synchronized with the stamping. The first syllable of the booming is given before stamping ends, the male quickly jerking his head downward as he begins the call and keeping it there until the air sac is deflated...”

Nest Site Description: Nests are typically constructed at the base of bunch grass, concealed by its overhanging leaves. Over a few days the scrape is lined with a layer of dry grasses. Several such scrapes may be started by a hen, and she may stop and abandon any of them at various stages.

Clutch Size, Egg Description: 7-16 eggs; can double clutch if first nest if lost. Eggs are a pale tan color and often lightly speckled.

Incubation Period: 26 days

Fledgling Period: 6 weeks

Parental Care: Hens provide brooding as well as predator warnings to chicks. Chicks are self-feeding at hatch. Chicks will stay with hen for approximately 6 weeks. In captivity, chicks are all hand-reared to increase production.

Chick Development: Chicks hatch out at ~15-18 grams. Precocial at hatch. Chicks are $\frac{3}{4}$ to full size between 6-10 weeks of age.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

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Social Structure in the Wild: During Breeding Season (from February – June), birds are generally solitary. Hens look for nesting areas. Males will gather at “booming grounds” for breeding display, but feed and roost alone. During late summer, fall, and winter, birds will form loose flocks.

Social Structure in Captivity: Breeding season: birds are kept as pairs or 1.2 for genetic management. Non-breeding season: birds are flocked together in groups based on enclosure size

Minimum Group Size: 1

Maximum Group Size: 10 (depends on size of enclosure)

Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits: Yes

Comments:

Because of the concentration on recovery, there are limited exhibits for these birds. They have been displayed with native song birds.

Optimal Habitat Size: 20' x 20' pen for paired breeding birds; 10' x 10' for single bird; unpaired (non-breeding) birds 100 sq ft per bird; 6-8' height recommended

Management Challenges: The APC has many management challenges.

1. Special attention must be paid to hens in the breeding season. Birds are set-up as pairs (instead of a lek-system). If hens do not “like” the male they are paired with they will provide subtle clues (prior to laying a clutch of infertile eggs). This must be noted so that she can be introduced to a genetically compatible male that she is interested in breeding.
2. There is high chick mortality in the first 10 days of life. USFW Recovery Team partners are working with nutritionist, biologists, vets, etc. on identifying factors for high mortality.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

This is a species that is held for captive propagation and release as part of the USFWS Recovery program. Regional facilities are needed to increase production for release for the Recovery Program.

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REFERENCES:

Lehmann, V.W. 1941. Attwater's prairie-chicken, its life history and management. United States Fish and Wildlife Service, North American Fauna Series 57. United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., USA.

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Bailey, H. Attwater's prairie-chicken studbook, AZA 2016

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COMPLETED BY:

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Date: 8/26/2017