

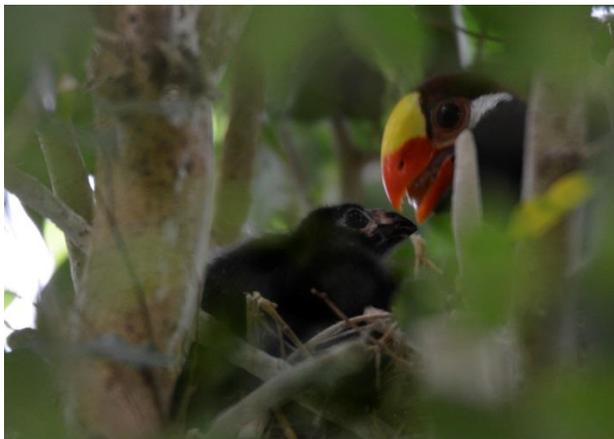
For Immediate Release

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Violet Turaco Chick Hatches at Rosamond Gifford Zoo

Syracuse, N.Y. (December 16, 2014) – A violet turaco chick hatched at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo on November 15. The chick can now be seen on exhibit with its parents in the Diversity of Birds area.

“We are pleased to announce the hatching of this violet turaco chick. The zoo’s animal staff does excellent work and it is always exciting when a new animal is born at our zoo,” says County Executive Joanne M. Mahoney.



Turaco chick and parent. (Photo by Terri Redhead)

“The hatching of this turaco chick is very exciting and valuable to the genetic pool, as its parents are founders for the North American population,” says Ted Fox, zoo director. “Turacos are very active birds, known for hopping and bouncing about. At this age, they are quite fun to observe.”

The adult violet turaco is about 30 inches in length and weighs less than one pound. Its coloring is a magnificent, shimmering blue-violet. Their heads have crimson on the crown and nape, with yellow on the forehead. This species is the only turaco without a crest. The bill is curved, strong and cinnamon red. Eyes are dark brown with crimson orbital rings. Legs are short and black or greenish-black, along with the feet. It takes about a year for full coloration to develop. The young are covered with a black, sooty gray down.

The turaco often travels in flocks of 10-12 birds. Violet turaco are more social than other species of turaco, although they like to hide in treetops. Turaco will freeze movement if disturbed, which helps camouflage them from predators. They drop more food than they consume, making food for other animals and helping with seed dispersal.

The turaco perches high in the dense canopy of tall trees. The birds have a gargling “cou-cou-vhou” sound that runs together and makes a pulsing roar when more than one bird is calling at the same time.

In the wild, the violet turaco is found in West Africa ranging from Gambia and Senegal east to Cameroon and in over 20 countries. The birds prefer open woodlands, riverine forests and humid forest edges. Their range is from sea level to about 3,000 feet.

FUN FACT:

The turaco's fourth toe rotates forward. Nestlings use a vestigial functional claw on each wing joint to scramble around the nest before they fledge. Turacos prefer to run along branches flying with a weak and dipping flight only when hopping is out of the question.

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For those planning to visit during the upcoming school break, the zoo is closed on Christmas and New Year's Day. For more information, call (315) 435-8511 or visit the zoo's website at rosamondgiffordzoo.org.

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Founded in 1914, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park is among the top 10 percent of zoos in the country as an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is dedicated to connecting people to the natural world by providing engaging guest experiences, exceptional animal care, and unparalleled conservation education.

The zoo actively collaborates with Friends of the Zoo to provide its guests "the best day ever," ensuring experiences that excite, memories that endure, and knowledge that inspires worldwide conservation.

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$8 for adults (19-61), \$4 for youth (3-18) and \$5 for seniors (62+). Children two and under are free. For more information, call the zoo at (315) 435-8511 or visit rosamondgiffordzoo.org.

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County Executive, Joanne M. Mahoney • Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, Bill Lansley
Rosamond Gifford Zoo Director, Ted Fox • Friends of the Zoo President, Janet Agostini

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