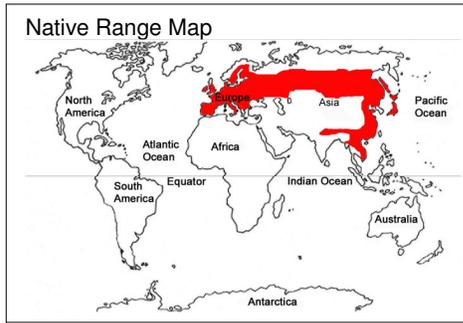


Eurasian Jay

Native Range Map



Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Subphylum: Vertebrata
Class: Aves
Order: Passeriformes
Family: Corvidae
Genus: *Garrulus*
Species: *glandarius*



Photo courtesy of Karen Marzynski

Habitat

- **In the Wild:** The Eurasian jay's native habitat extends from Western Europe, all the way across central Asia, to the eastern end of the continent. This bird is also native to the countries of China and northern India. This species prefers to live in forests that have thick vegetation on the ground. The Eurasian jay can also sometimes be found in urban and rural areas, in places such as parks or large gardens.
- **Exhibit Location:** exhibit outside of Pole Barn

Characteristics

- Length: 14 inches; Weight: 5-6 3/4 ounces; Wingspan: 21-23 inches
- The Eurasian jay has a colorful body that is mainly a brownish-pink color. Its back and underside are brownish-pink. (The underside is slightly paler.) Its head has a black and white flecked crown, and a black "moustache" can be seen behind its bill. It has a white throat and a dark brown or black bill. This bird also has a white rump, which contrasts with its black tail. Its wings are mainly black, but it does have some white patches, as well as blue wing patches on its shoulders. The legs are a light fleshy-brown.
- Males and females are similar in size and appearance. There is also little seasonal variation in their appearance.
- Juveniles look very similar to the adults, but their bodies are darker, their legs are a fleshy-yellow, and their bills are gray.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** 17 years; **In Captivity** 20 years

Behaviors

- The Eurasian jay can most commonly be spotted while in flight. This bird has broad wings, and its flight is slow and appears to be somewhat erratic and weak looking.
- This bird often raises its crown feathers to a crest when it is excited, or when displaying itself to other birds. This feature often causes bird watchers to confuse these birds with Hoopoes (another European bird with a crest and a curved bill).
- They have several different calls, and they also have the ability to imitate other birds. Their most common and easily distinguished call is their alarm call, which is a dry, raspy screech. This call is often described as a "skaaaaak-skaaaaak" sound.
- This species can often be found in a small gathering of approximately 5-30 birds in late winter and early spring. Unmated birds that are looking for a partner usually form these small groups. Otherwise, the Eurasian jay is a pretty solitary species.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** insects

Reproduction

- The Eurasian jay reaches sexual maturity at 3 years of age.
- Mated pairs usually pair for life. They have strong bonds and defend their territories together, but usually do not stay together outside of breeding season.

- The Eurasian jay is a solitary nester. Both parents build their nest in an inconspicuous place, such as in a densely foliated tree or shrub that is about 10-20 feet tall. The nest is usually a rather flat shape, and is made up of twigs on the outside, with soft material such as mosses, grasses, leaves, hair, and rootlets on the inside.
- The Eurasian jay normally lays its eggs around April or May. The eggs are a grayish-green color and have brown flecking on them. Females lay one clutch per year, of approximately 5-7 eggs. The incubation period is about 16-18 days, and is completed by the female. The female stays at the nest and is fed by the male during this time.
- The young are altricial (helpless and requiring parental care for a period of time after hatching) and are fed by both parents. They are capable of leaving the nest only after 3 weeks have passed and parents then often take care of their young until autumn.

Diet

- **In the Wild:** worms, eggs, insects, nestlings, small rodents, small frogs, small lizards, seeds, berries, acorns, fruits, bats, newts
- **At the Zoo:** complete pellets, fruit, seeds, insects

Conservation Status

- **IUCN status:** LC (Least Concern); **CITES Appendix:** not listed
- The Eurasian jay is not under protection and has a stable population.
- Predators: crows, squirrels, humans

Did You Know?/Fun Facts

- The Eurasian jay is the most colorful member of the crow family.
- If it is possible, the Eurasian jay will generally refrain from crossing any type of water.
- This bird is useful for forests because it spreads acorns and eats pests.
- Estimates have shown that a single jay can store as many as 3,000 acorns per month.

Sources:

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