



Indian Peafowl

Kingdom: Animalia
 Phylum: Chordata
 Subphylum: Vertebrata
 Class: Aves
 Order: Galliformes
 Family: Phasianidae
 Genus: *Pavo*
 Species: *cristatus*



Photo courtesy of Charles Hardin

Habitat

- **In the Wild:** The Indian peafowl is native to India. It also can be found from eastern Pakistan through India, south from the Himalayas to Sri Lanka. Because of its appearance, this bird was taken worldwide. Early seafarers brought the peafowl to their homelands in other parts of the western world. In these places, you will find them in open forests, streamside forests, orchards, and in other cultivated areas.
- **Exhibit Location:** Glass enclosed exhibit in courtyard

Characteristics

- Total Body Length: male = 7.5 feet, including the tail; female = 2-3 feet
 Length of male's train = 4.5-5 feet (60% of total body length)
 Wingspan = 4.5-5 feet
 Weight: male = 8-13 pounds; female = 6-8 pounds
- Both the male and the female have a fan-shaped set, known as the crest, of spatula tipped wire-like feathers on top of their head. Their eyes are a dark, hazel brown. The facial skin is white. The beak and legs are brown.
- The female is mottled brown and dull looking, has a white belly, and lacks a train. She has green neck feathers.
- The male has a radiant blue neck and breast. They also have a metallic bronze green train, spotted with purplish-black markings also known as eyespots or ocelli. The train on the male is used for display to entice the female to mate with him.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** 20-24 years; **In Captivity** same

Behaviors

- Indian peafowl stay in small flocks (harems) of 1 peacock (male) and 3-5 peahens (females).
- Peafowl run more than they fly. The only time they fly is when they have to cross a river or ravine, when trying to escape predators, and to roost up in trees.
- They forage in the early morning and shortly before sunset. In the morning they will bask on rock heaps or haystacks. They retreat to the shade and security of the forest for the hottest part of the day.
- Peafowl physically interact with each other usually during territorial disputes. They will attack each other with their beaks and claws, chasing and pecking at each other.
- Peafowl warn each other when danger approaches with loud, shrieking cries and honks. They also call during mating season.
- They usually roost in the same tree every night. They fly to the top branches of dead trees just a little after sunset and leave just before sunrise.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** various insects, fruit

Reproduction

- Peafowl reach sexual maturity at approximately 2-3 years of age.
- Indian peafowl males pair with 2 or more females. Courtship displays happen in leks, which are breeding territories in close proximity to others. Females wander through several territories before choosing a male.
- During courtship, the male displays his train by fully fanning and lifting it above his head and performing various body movements. After mating, the male has no other involvement with the female or the chicks.
- Nests are a shallow depression dug in the ground concealed in scrub vegetation.
- Females lay a clutch size of 3-6 eggs. Incubation lasts 28-30 days.
- About 2 hours after hatching, the chicks are able to move around and follow the mother. They stay with her for about 9 months.

Diet

- **In the Wild:** grains, insects, small mammals, wild figs, flower buds, fruits, worms, arthropods, reptiles, berries, drupes, and some cultivated crops
- **At the Zoo:** grains, bird fruit mix, insects

Conservation Status

- **IUCN status:** not listed; **CITES Appendix:** not listed
- In the native range of India, the peafowl is actually being benefited because of religious protection and the recognition as the national bird of India.
- It is fully protected under the Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
- In Arcadia and Palos Verdes Estates in California, the Peafowl Management Plan was established to help regulate the interaction between the birds and the people. It includes setting up well-stocked feeding and roosting stations in the woods, trapping problem peafowl and relocating them, and educating the public.
- Predators: foxes, raccoons, dogs, crested hawk eagle, eagle owl, jackals, humans

Did You Know?/Fun Facts

- The peafowl's favorite food in the wild is the snake, even poisonous ones.
- Males are called peacocks, females are peahens, and the young are known as peachicks.

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