



## Moluccan Cockatoo

Kingdom: Animalia  
 Phylum: Chordata  
 Subphylum: Vertebrata  
 Class: Aves  
 Order: Psittaciformes  
 Family: Cacatuidae  
 Genus: *Cacatua*  
 Species: *moluccensis*



Photo courtesy of Karen Marzynski

### Habitat

- **In the Wild:** Moluccan cockatoos are found on the southern Moluccan and the Amboina Islands in Indonesia. They prefer lowland rainforests below altitudes of about 3,000 feet and wooded mountain slopes.
- **Exhibit Location:** Mandrill wing in Social Diversity; part of the Education Outreach collection

### Characteristics

- Length: 20 inches (from head to tail); Weight: 27-33 ounces  
 Females are slightly larger than males.
- Their overall coloration is white or tinged salmon-pink, with 6-inch long backward curving, erectile, salmon-pink crest feathers. The crest doesn't sit tight when lowered, thus making the head look even larger. The underside of the wings and tail are a yellow-orange. The tail is short and the body is larger than most cockatoos of similar length.
- Abundant feathers are longer and broader than similar sized birds. This gives the Moluccan cockatoo a bushy appearance when it rouses (ruffles its feathers).
- The bill is a gray to black color. Legs and feet are black. The eyes of the males are black, while those of the female are dark brown.
- Juveniles are similar in appearance to the adult male.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** unknown; **In Captivity** 40-60 years

### Behaviors

- Little is known about the habits of the Moluccan cockatoo in the wild.
- Moluccan cockatoos usually move in small numbers, singly, or in pairs, though up to 16 may roost together.
- Flight is usually long glides after a few wing beats.
- Cockatoos in general, and these in particular, have a very loud, quivering call as well as an exceptionally shrill screech. In the wild, it is thought to be a warning vocalization. In captivity, they can indicate alarm or pleasure.
- Unlike other cockatoos, this cockatoo's crest will retain a backward angle even when erect. This is a communication behavior and can show happiness, curiosity, or alarm.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** variety of toys, paper bags, change of cage perching, interaction with keepers

### Reproduction

- There is no definite information about the reproduction of the Moluccan cockatoo in the wild. Possible breeding activity was noted in May.
- Moluccan cockatoos breed easily in captivity, and usually produce 2 eggs. Incubation is 28-29 days.
- Nests are in hollow trees and wood chips are placed in the hole. Both parents help to incubate.

- The young stay in the nest until they fledge at 3 months.

### **Diet**

- **In the Wild:** seeds, nuts, fruits; attacks green coconuts, chewing through the outer layer to reach the kernel
- **At the Zoo:** fruits, vegetables, seeds, pelleted food

### **Conservation Status**

- **IUCN status:** vulnerable; **CITES Appendix:** I; can no longer be imported into the United States because they are listed on the Wild Bird Conservation Act
- Moluccan cockatoos are in a drastic decline due to trapping for the aviary trade and because of deforestation. Poachers have captured them in fishing line snares laid out along the routes to their communal roosting places or by using tame decoys to lure them.
- Since they breed readily in captivity, this may be useful as a potential means of reducing pressure of bird trappers on wild populations.
- Predators: humans

### **Did You Know?/Fun Facts**

- Moluccan cockatoos are also known as “Salmon-crested cockatoos” and “Rose-crested cockatoos.”
- They often become quite attached to their owners.
- Cockatoos are destructive to their habitat, especially wooden items.
- They are very intelligent birds and need a variety of enrichment toys and activities.
- Hand-reared birds are gentle and affectionate, but demanding.

### **Sources:**

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