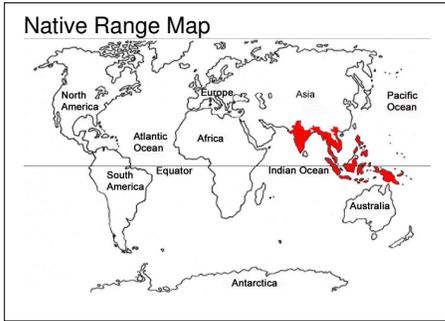


Native Range Map



Nicobar Pigeon

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Subphylum: Vertebrata
Class: Aves
Order: Columbiformes
Family: Columbidae
Genus: *Caloenas*
Species: *nicobarica*



Photo courtesy of Tony Wisneski

Habitat

- **In the Wild:** The Nicobar pigeon is found in Southeast Asia – from India eastward, on the Nicobar islands to New Guinea, and in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. They prefer mangroves and lowland forests.
- **Exhibit Location:** Diversity of Birds

Characteristics

- Length: 16 inches (females slightly smaller); Weight: 1 pound (females slightly heavier)
- Males are metallic-green/blue with coppery reflections. The head and flight feather colors are slate blue to black. They have a “mane” of long, hair-like feathers around the neck. The long neck feathers, called hackles, are black and purple iridescence. The very short tail is pure white. Females have shorter neck hackles.
- Males have a small black knob at the base of the bill near the forehead. The bill is strong and hooked.
- They have a rather stocky build with a relatively small head, but long legs and wings. They have large feet with long claws.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** 8-12 years; **In Captivity** 10-15 years

Behaviors

- Nicobar pigeons are highly nomadic, commuting between islands. They fly to larger islands and the mainland during the day to feed in flocks of up to 85 birds. They are particularly active at dawn and dusk.
- They only roost and breed on islands where there are no humans.
- When they drink, they stick their bill in the water and do not have to tip their heads back to swallow like most birds.
- Nicobars make a sound like grunting pigs when threatening others. They also make a cooing noise.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** whole fruit and insects

Reproduction

- Nicobar pigeons are monogamous and tend to mate for life.
- Courtship can last for days, with males cooing loudly and bowing to the females. Once the female selects a mate, the male chooses an area to nest. Males gather twigs, roots, and other materials. Females arrange the materials brought back by the males. The nests are primitive and have only a few sticks to keep the eggs from rolling away.
- One egg is produced in each clutch. Incubation is 30 days and is shared by both parents.
- Chicks are nearly naked when born, and are “altricial,” which means the chicks need to be cared for, insulated, and fed by the parents. After about 10 days, the chicks’ feathers begin to grow in. The chicks are almost independent before 1 month, but they stay in the nest a bit longer.

Diet

- **In the Wild:** hard seeds, fruits, corn, some invertebrates
- **At the Zoo:** pigeon pellets, paradise pellets, fruits, seeds, insects

Conservation Status

- **IUCN status:** NT (Near Threatened); **CITES:** Appendix I
- People trapping and hunting it for food, the pet trade, and clearance of wooded areas on small islands for plantations are threatening the status of the Nicobar pigeon.
- At the present time, conservation efforts are absent and logging, fire, and farming continue to decrease their preferred habitat.
- Predators: rats, cats

Did You Know?/Fun Facts

- The Nicobar pigeon is also known as the “hackled pigeon,” “white-tailed pigeon,” or “vulturine pigeon.”
- They have a very muscular gizzard (the “second” stomach of a bird used for grinding food), and can eat some hard nuts that humans can only open with a hammer!
- The Nicobar pigeon is a relative of the extinct Dodo bird.

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