

FAIRY BLUEBIRD

RANGE:

One species found in India to Indochina, Greater Sundas, Palawan and Andamans. The second species is found throughout the Philippine Islands.

HABITAT:

Largely restricted to the upper tier of tall original forest, usually evergreen.

SIZE:

10" in Length

LIFE EXPECTANCY:

7 years in captivity.

REPRODUCTION:

The nest (built only by females) is built about 20 feet above ground usually in saplings or thin bushes deep in the forest gloom. The nest is frail and saucer shaped, mostly of twigs. The female alone incubates two greenish-white eggs, with heavy brown splotches. Both sexes will feed the young.

DIET:

Wild: Fruit (particularly wild figs, guavas and their seeds). Will also eat some flower nectar and insects when gleaned from the foliage or picked from fruit.

Zoo: Fruit, insects, soft bill diet.

BEHAVIOR:

A conspicuous, noisy and restless canopy bird, which usually sings regular whistled sequences from exposed perches. They are not migratory but wander locally depending on seasonal abundance of fruit. They usually travel quietly in pairs through the forest but will congregate in flocks when a large fig tree is bearing.

POINTS OF INTEREST:

The male Asian species (always more brightly colored than the drab female) is a handsome black bird with bright blue mantles (shining ultramarine blue with shimmering purple and lilac reflections) and red eyes. However, due to the isolation factor of the Philippine Islands, the females of the endemic Philippine fairy bluebird have evolved plumage similar to that of the males.

When handled, the birds shed their body feathers profusely. This may have escape value, in that it may confuse a predator.

STATUS:

Stable

theZOO
LOUISVILLE



PHOTO BY
ROBERT KEMNITZ

Order:	Passeriformes
Family:	Irenidae
Genus:	Irena
Species:	puella