

HORNBILL, RED-BILLED

RANGE:

Widespread throughout Africa, except in the forested west and central regions.

HABITAT:

Open savannas, particularly flat grasslands and thorn scrub. They are found near human habitation and seen around restaurants.

SIZE:

Up to 18 inches in length, head to tail.

LIFE EXPECTANCY:

12-15 years

REPRODUCTION:

- Nest in holes in trees
- Female is sealed up in nest for two to three months incubating and taking care of young.
- Female lays 3-5 eggs that are incubated for 25 days.
- Male brings insects to the hole in the nest for the female and young.
- The female will molt while sequestered in the nest.
- When the chicks are 22 days old the female leaves the nest. The chicks reseal the nest chamber with droppings and food remains.
- When young emerge from the nest they can fly very well, never to return.
- Young may stay with parents for 6 months after fledging.

DIET:

Wild: They feast on insects like, grasshoppers, beetles or even lizards and small amphibians.

Zoo: insects, fruit and some vegetables.

BEHAVIOR:

- Usually found in pairs or in small family groups.
- They are territorial and will defend their territories from other red-billed hornbills.
- Their wings are short and when they fly they flap and glide.
- The long tail is used as a brace while hanging on to tree trunk near a nest hole.

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- During the dry season hornbills will congregate in flocks of several hundred at good feeding areas and water holes.
- Are preyed upon by large raptors and sometimes by puff adders.
- They may be found over most of Africa they are not evenly distributed. They tend to be locally abundant.

STATUS:

Not threatened.

REFERENCES:

<http://www.oaklandzoo.org/atoz/azredhornbill.html>

http://www.hkenyabirds.org.uk/red_hornbills.htm

A Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa, 1963, J.G. Williams and N. Arlott

theZOO

LOUISVILLE



Robert Kemnitz, photographer

Order:	Coraeiiformes
Family:	Bucerotidae
Genus:	Tockus
Species:	erythrorhynchus