

INDIAN BLUE PEAFOWL

updated March 2017



Range	India
Habitat	Forest undergrowth
Diet (wild)	Insects, worms, lizards, frogs, snakes, seeds, grains, berries
Diet (captivity)	Greens mixture, scratch, whole corn
Description	Length: 6½–7½ feet, including train; wingspan: 4½–5¼ feet; weight: 6–13 pounds. The male has a brilliant blue head and neck. A small crown of bare shafted feathers tops the head. He has an elongated train, which can be straightened behind the bird in an elaborate fan of blue-green “eyes.” The female is a mottled brown with buff underparts; the neck is metallic green but less splendid than the male. She also lacks the male’s long train but does have a crown. Peafowl have strong legs and feet and a thick bill that curves downward.
Lifespan	20 years
Reproduction	The female makes a nest in the undergrowth where 4–8 eggs are laid and she incubates the eggs for about 28 days. Only the female tends the precocial young. During courtship, the male spreads his train, struts, and whirls his feathers, turning to face the female with the upper ornamental side of the train showing.
Behavior	Non-migratory birds, peafowl will generally run to escape danger but can fly for short distances. They have been domesticated for centuries and are commonly given free rein in zoos. They usually roost in trees at night. Males are peacocks, females are peahens, and young are peachicks. They have a harsh cry which supposedly keeps rodents and other pests at bay.
Our animals	Approximately 25, males and females of varying ages. The peafowl at PPZ are free-ranging.
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This species name in Sanskrit means “killer of snakes.” • Peafowl are in the same order as chickens, turkeys, quails, and pheasants • The white feathered peafowl have completely white feathers from the top of its head to the end of its train, with the “eyes” barely visible. They are not albinos because they are true breeders (when bred with another white feathered peafowl, all their offspring will be white feathered peafowl as well) and have brown eyes. • There is a significant positive correlation between a peafowl’s train and its mating success. Males spend a great deal of energy to produce and maintain good tail conditions, resulting in a trade-off between a longer train and avoiding predators or searching for food. Mating success is usually more successful for the males with the highest number of eye spots (called ocelli) on their train. • Indian blue peafowl are diurnal, seeking protection high up in trees when they sleep. They only fly to the lowest branch, and then work their way up branch by branch until they reach a safe height. • Peacock feather extract in the form of water or ash can be used to treat the venomous bites of Russell vipers, common cobras and Malabar pit vipers. The extract is high in iron, protein and steroids, and acts as an inhibitor to harmful enzymes in the venom that cause tissue damage. This is a traditional treatment in India for those who live far away from hospitals and doctors.

Phylum
ChordataClass
AvesOrder
GalliformesFamily
PhasianidaeGenus
Pavospecies
P. cristatus