

Hornbills

**Scientific Name:**

Bycanistes brevis

Range:

Forested parts of Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique.

Habitat:

Coastal and Mountain Forests

Average Size:

Length: 34-36 inches

Weight: 2.3-3.1 pounds

Lifespan:

Up to 35 years in captivity

Diet:

Wild: Omnivore – eats primarily fruits, but will also eat insects, eggs, small mammals and reptiles, as well as nestlings.

Zoo: Apples, grapes, bananas, other fruit, dog food

Reproduction:

Incubation: 40 days

Clutch size: 1-3 eggs

Appearance:

The head is silver-grey and the rest of the body is black, except for a broad white stripe on the lower back

Predators:

Reptiles will occasionally predate the nest, consuming the eggs and hatchlings. Raptors are also predators of both young and adult hornbills

Population Status:

Stable

**About the Animal**

Hornbills are named for the large bony structure on the top of the beak. This bony structure is called a *casque*. While its exact function is unknown, it may act as an echo chamber that allows the hornbill's call to be heard at great distances.

The Silvery-cheeked Hornbill is largely *frugivorous* (fruit eating), preferring cherry-sized fruits with hard stones. This preference makes this species a crucial part of seed dispersal. After eating a piece of fruit, it may fly several miles to another roost, and regurgitate the seeds undamaged.

Mating and Reproduction

When Silvery-cheeked Hornbills nest, the female is sealed inside of a tree cavity, except for a slit through which her mate feeds her. When the chicks are old enough, the female leaves the nest, and seals the chicks back in. Both parents continue to feed the young until they are old enough to leave the nest (approximately 80 days after hatching).

Amazing Information

This species of hornbill will come together in flocks of up to 200 individuals who will, as a group, fly great distances to find new food sources.



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