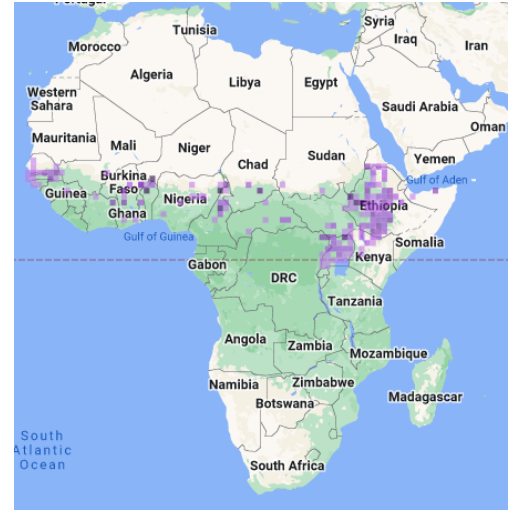


Abyssinian Ground Hornbill



Classification

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Coraciiformes
Family: Bucorvidae
Genus: *Bucorvus*
Species: *abyssinicus*



Range, Habitat, Conservation Status

- **Range:** Africa north of the equator, from south Mauritania and Guinea east to Ethiopia and north-west Somalia, and south to Uganda and northern Kenya.
- **Habitat:** Found in savanna, grassland, and agricultural habitats, usually in pairs or small groups, walking on the ground. Prefer short vegetation to aid in foraging.
- **Conservation Status:** Vulnerable due to habitat alteration.

Physical Characteristics

- **Body Length:** ~40 inches (102 cm)
- **Wingspan:** 19.5 to 23.5 inches (50-60 cm)
- **Weight:** 8 to 11 pounds (4-5 kg)
- **Lifespan:** In human care, the oldest pair lived over 40 years.
- **Identifying Traits:** The most obvious identifying feature is its large beak, topped with a bony prominence called a casque. However, they also have long eyelashes, distinct facial markings, a yellow mark at the base of their beaks, and long legs that help them forage. Males have a mix of blue and red coloration on their facial skin and throats and blue around their eyes, while females only have blue on their eyes and throats. Males are also normally slightly larger than females. During flight, a large white patch is visible in the wings. Juveniles have brown feathers and less vibrant coloration on the throat.

Behaviors

- **Feeding:** Primarily carnivores and eat reptiles such as cobras, tortoises, and lizards, as well as mammals like hares and mongooses, and insects and arachnids. Occasionally they will scavenge for carrion to supplement their diet, as well as consume seeds and fruit.
- **Breeding:** Varies by region, from January to November overall. Initiated by nest site inspection, courtship feeding and beak slapping.
- **Nesting:** The nest is constructed in a cavity of a large tree. The same nest can be reused year after year. Unlike other hornbills, the Ground Hornbill female does not seal herself inside the nest during incubation. She does, however, incubate the eggs alone, with the male bringing her food. The female stays in the nest for about a week after the eggs hatch when she will begin to leave the nest frequently. Chicks will remain in the nest for around 3 months.
- **Migration:** Not Migratory
- **Call:** A series of deep booming notes "uu-h uu-h" or "uu-h uh-uh-uh". Males and females may sing in duets.

Resident Bird(s)

Name: Maybel

- **Age:** Hatched in 2023
- **Sex:** Female
- **Background:** Hatched at another educational facility/zoo in the United States. Came to CRC in 2023.
- **Unique Individual Traits:** Named for the modified feathers around her face that look like eyelashes (Maybelline mascara).

Fun Facts!

- Abyssinian Ground Hornbills are similar to Southern Ground Hornbills; however, they have little overlap in range and the Abyssinian is easily distinguishable by the blue facial skin.
- Abyssinian Ground Hornbills generally only fly when disturbed or when crossing areas of dense brush. Instead, they prefer to walk or run from danger.
- Fledged juveniles remain with their parents for up to 3 years.
- Individuals travel up to 7 miles per day, finding and eating any edible animals in their path.
- The noticeable "eyelashes" of Abyssinian Ground Hornbills are modified feathers that protect their eyes from injury.

- Ground Hornbills have 15 cervical vertebrae while all other species of hornbills only have 14. They also have long legs and a shorter tail making them more adapted to life on the ground. They only walk on the terminal joints of their short toes, which allows them to walk smoothly while most hornbill species hop.

Importance

- Abyssinian Ground Hornbills have cultural value in some areas, and the call is frequently imitated with some villages creating entire songs about the species.

Sources

- <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/abyssinian-ground-hornbill>
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