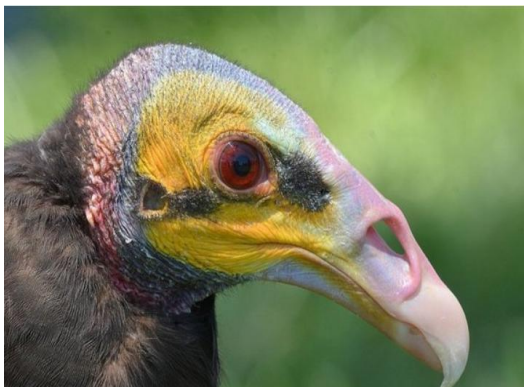
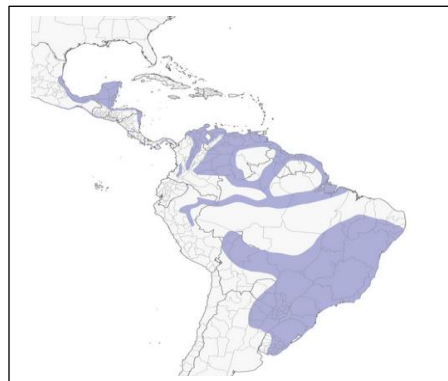


Lesser Yellow Headed Vulture



Classification

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Accipitriformes
Family: Cathartidae
Genus: *Cathartes*
Species: *burrovianus*



Range, Habitat, Conservation Status

- **Range:** Found in South America, east of the Andes, throughout much of Central America and parts of Mexico.
- **Habitat:** Lowland areas, such as brackish and freshwater marshes, grasslands, mangroves, wet savannas, wooded areas along rivers, second-growth scrub, and close to villages in some areas.
- **Conservation Status:** Least Concern

Physical Characteristics

- **Body Length:** 21 to 26 inches (55-66 cm)
- **Wingspan:** 59 to 65 inches (150-165 cm)
- **Weight:** 2.1 to 3.4 pounds (0.95-1.55 kg)
- **Lifespan:** Average is 6.6 years in the wild.
- **Identifying Traits:** Body plumage is mostly black with grayish feet. It is easily confused with a Turkey Vulture from above as its primary feathers are pale gray and it holds its wings in a V-shaped pattern while tilting from side to side just like a Turkey Vulture. The head and neck are featherless, with shades of pale orange and yellow.

Behaviors

- **Feeding:** Eats almost entirely carrion, such as roadkill and the carcasses animals with dying/dead fish in drying pools being a primary food source. Have been observed sharing a large carcass with many other vultures including Black Vultures and Turkey Vultures, but once the Turkey and Black Vultures show up, the Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture is often pushed aside due to its smaller size.
- **Breeding:** Mature and able to breed by its third year. The male does a courtship display which indicates mating signals to attract a partner.

- **Nesting:** Do not build nests, but instead lay the egg on the ground, in thick grass or in the hollow of a tree. Lay 1 to 2 eggs, which hatch within around 40 days. The parents feed their young by regurgitating pre-digested food into their beak. The young vultures will remain in the nest for 70 to 75 days before flying for the first time, thus they will fledge after two to three months.
- **Migration:** Not Migratory. However, it will relocate in response to the changes in water levels.
- **Call:** Like other New World vultures, it does not have a syrinx (voice box). Its vocalizations are limited to grunts or low hisses.

Resident Bird(s)

Name: Inca

- **Age:** Hatched in 2013
- **Sex:** Female
- **Background:** Came from another zoo or educational facility in the United States. Currently lives on the Ed Trail.

Fun Facts!

- This species of vulture glides with its wings held upward in a dihedral position, flying quietly in a smooth continuous motion, at a low altitude over the wetlands in search of food.
- When flying, it travels alone and is rarely found in groups with other vultures.
- Most birds have little to no sense of smell, but the Lesser Yellow Headed Vulture is equipped with both excellent eyesight and a superior sense of smell for finding food.
- A favorite food item seems to be fish, which it often finds in drying pools of water. Some biologists think the vultures may kill the dying fish found stranded in these pools before eating them.

Importance

- Vultures play an important role in the ecosystem by consuming dead animals that would otherwise smell for weeks and potentially spread disease to humans and other animals.

Sources

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