

Wings of Asia

Garden of Tropical Birds



Bird Guide

Wings of Asia

Welcome to "Wings of Asia," one of the world's outstanding aviaries. Metrozoo's 1½-acre, 65 ft.-high, free-flying aviary is among the largest and finest in existence, and perhaps the most innovative. Surrounding you are over 80 species of tropical plants, many of them rare. A variety of exotic palms, hardwoods and fruit trees with berries and nectar on which the birds naturally feed.

A primary goal in recreating a natural environment is to encourage the birds to behave as they would in the wild. What's more, this enables you to observe the birds' natural behavior, breeding displays and rearing of their young. Through breeding programs and new acquisitions, our collection of 70 species – over 300 birds in all – is continually changing and growing. Reproduction is vitally important to the zoo's aim of conservation, especially for the endangered or extremely rare species in our aviary.

Make no mistake about it, you're in their world now. As in the wild, every bird has staked out its own territory. Each competes for food, space, perching spots, nest sites, ground space, even nesting materials. You're seeing them on their terms. So watch carefully. And listen. Look up. Look around. Observe and help the children observe. Above all, be patient. As you become a part of their world, they'll reveal themselves to you.

The birds are fed twice daily, around 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. — a great time to see a lot of activity and talk to the zookeepers. We suggest using binoculars to discover the birds' intricate beauty and subtlety of behavior. But remember, nature doesn't always reveal its treasures immediately. Take time and get the most of this unique experience.

We Need to Preserve Our Wildlife

Wings of Asia is a natural tropical environment for more than 70 species of exotic birds. These birds normally inhabit the tropical rain forests of Asia. Unfortunately, these greenbelts are becoming extinct. Every minute of every day more than 50 acres of rain forest are destroyed. That adds up to almost 30 million acres a year (the size of the entire state of Pennsylvania). At this rate, by the year 2000, over 350 million tropical acres will have vanished.

In cooperation with the government of Papua New Guinea, some of the species now living in our exhibit were rescued from the lands being deforested. They are beautiful, living ambassadors from Asia's vanishing rain forests. And they are here to help remind us of the need to preserve the world's remaining forests for future generations — of people and wildlife — to enjoy.

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Aviary Photo Tips

We welcome you to take photographs inside the aviary. Whether using a 35mm SLR or any other type of camera, we suggest the feeding stations as excellent locations for taking pictures. Also, for good wide-angle shots, the overlook provides a good vista.

The recommended film speed for 35mm SLR cameras is ASA 400 with a shutter speed of 1/125 sec. and f8-fill aperture. A 100-300mm zoom lens is ideal, but you will also get good photos with a 50 or 55mm normal lens or a 28mm wide angle lens for vistas. For slide film, try "bracketing" or varying the f-stop or shutter speed one stop above and one below the meter reading of the camera to ensure getting the perfect shot. Use a flash for birds in shadows. And remember, PATIENCE is a virtue when taking photos.

Wading Birds

All of these birds can be found in and around the water, and most can be seen on the flamingo flat by the hanging bridge. When not actually near the water, they will be perched in the open in the highest trees and rocks in the aviary. In the wild these birds get their food from the water and all have special adaptations including long legs, specialized feet, specialized bills and feeding techniques to help them find food successfully.

EURASIAN SPOONBILL

Platalea leucorodia

Range: Europe, Asia.

Habitat: Seashores, lagoons, estuaries and marshes.

Usually found sweeping their unusual bills back and forth through mud puddles and shallow water by the flamingo flat and hanging bridge.

This is one of the larger birds in the aviary and nests solitarily either on the ground or in a tree.



LESSER FLAMINGO

Phoeniconaias minor

Range: India, Africa.

Habitat: Coastal salt flats.

Smaller and less pink than the American flamingo, they can be seen near the pool by the hanging bridge.

Flamingos filter-feed with their heads upside down which accounts for the odd-shaped bill.



PURPLE SWAMPHEN

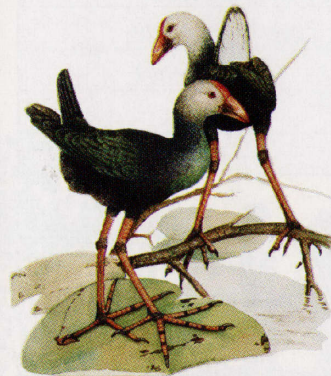
Porphyrio porphyrio

Range: China, India, Australia and New Zealand.

Habitat: Marshes and swamps.

Found mostly near the water. Left undisturbed, they will venture out into open areas.

The long-legged swamphens favorite food is young rice shoots, making them very unpopular with rice farmers.



SACRED IBIS

Threskiornis aethiopica

Range: India through Japan.

Habitat: Lakes, rivers, swamps and coastal marshes.

Best seen from the observation deck, on the rocks at each end of the monorail tunnel.

The ancient Egyptians believed that the sacred ibis represented Thoth, the God of wisdom.



YELLOW-BILLED STORK

Mycteria ibis

Range: Eastern Africa, Madagascar to parts of Ethiopia.

Habitat: Coastal marshes.

There should be no problem spotting the largest bird in the aviary near the flamingo flat by the hanging bridge or atop the rocks by the monorail.

The first yellow-billed storks bred in the U.S. were right here at Metrozoo.



Hanging Bridge

Ducks

The ducks in the aviary can all be found in the water or within a few feet of the edge of the pools. Most of the ducks are dabblers or surface feeders. However, two species, the white-eye duck and the Java treeduck feed on submerged vegetation in the wild. The males lose their colorful plumage in the summer and look like the females.

COMB DUCK

Sarkidiornis melanotos

Range: Southeast Asia, Southeast China, India and Africa.

Habitat: Marshy lakes and paddy fields.

The flamingo flat is a good spot to look for this water bird.

The male duck's comb becomes erect during the breeding season.



EURASIAN WIGEON

Anas penelope

Range: Europe, Asia.

Habitat: Temperate marshlands. Winters in the Asian tropics.

Find these wigeons in or near the pools, usually in each other's company.

Both male and female are large and stocky with very round heads.



FALCATED TEAL

Anas falcata

Range: Asia, Japan.

Habitat: Lakes and marshes.

These birds can be found on or near the ponds.

Although resembling a mallard duck at first glance, a closer look will reveal very ornamental plumage.



GREEN-WINGED TEAL

Anas crecca

Range: Northern to Southern hemispheres.

Habitat: Lakes, pools and grasslands.

The teal can be found in or around the pools.

This species is found world wide.



JAVA TREEDUCK

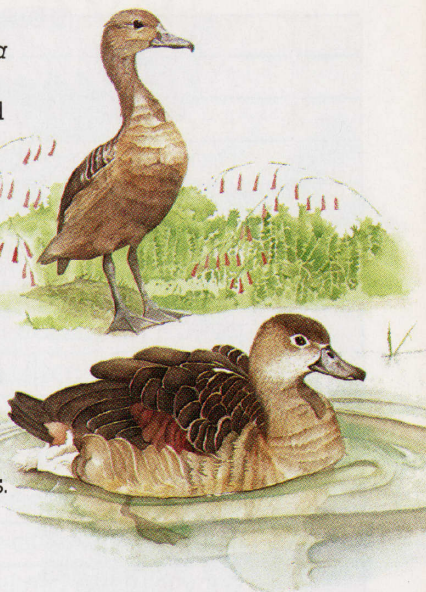
Dendrocygna javanica

Range: India, Indonesia, Indochina and Sri Lanka.

Habitat: Marshes, lakes, grasslands, jungle and swamp.

Frequents the pool edges or perches on logs placed in the water.

Although common to the jungles and swamps of Asia, they are quite rare in waterfowl collections.



MANDARIN DUCK

Aix galericulata

Range: East Asia.

Habitat: Lakes, wooded ponds and streams.

The unusual sail-like feathers at the back of the duck make it easy to see in the vicinity of the hanging bridge. Most Mandarin duck nests are in hollow trees. It is considered to be a highly social bird.



WHITE-EYE DUCK

Aythya nyroca

Range: Southern Europe, Western China and India.

Habitat: Fresh water ponds and marshes.

Seen in or around the pool on the rain forest side.

These are the only diving ducks in the two broad groups of divers and dabblers, or surface feeders, here at the aviary.



Pheasants

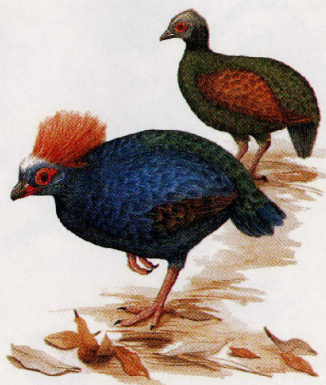
These ground birds are relatively shy but can be found in and around the undergrowth of the aviary. Two species, the green junglefowl and the Malayan crestless fireback, are located in the hornbill aviaries, while the other species roam free in the aviary. It will take patience to spot these very elusive birds.

CRESTED WOOD PARTRIDGE

Rollulus rouloul

Range: Malaysia, Indonesia and Borneo.
Habitat: Open forest.

Look in the open areas near the live oak trees for this grapefruit-sized bird. They tend to stay on the ground scratching for insects, fruits and seeds.



GOLDEN PHEASANT

Crysolophus pictus

Range: Central China.
Habitat: Open forest.

The regal male is usually found strutting along the ground with the female following close behind.

Although one of the most common pheasants in captivity, its sheer beauty makes it a favorite among aviary visitors.



GREEN JUNGLEFOWL

Gallus varius

Range: India.
Habitat: Low-elevation valleys near coast.

Found in the western hornbill aviary usually on the ground.

These pheasants share their biological ancestry with domestic chickens.



MALAYAN CRESTLESS FIREBACK PHEASANT

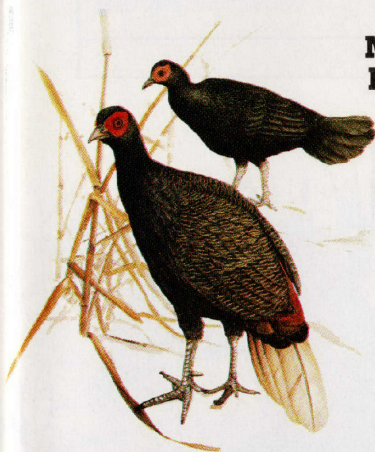
Lophura e. erythroptalma

Range: Sumatra and Borneo.

Habitat: Hot, low-elevation jungles.

The male pheasant has buffy tail feathers and the female's tail is black.

The male and female were long thought to be different species until the late 1800s when they were first bred in Paris.



PALAWAN PEACOCK PHEASANT

Polyplectron emphanum

Range: Island of Palawan.

Habitat: Deep, damp forests at low altitudes.

Look for them in or around the undergrowth of the eastern hornbill aviary.

Palawans are one of the smallest and most beautiful pheasants as well as being one of the shyest.



Pigeons and Doves

These birds should be recognizable to everyone as pigeons. Scientifically speaking, there is no difference between a pigeon and a dove. They are basically ground dwellers and not at all shy.

GREEN-WINGED DOVE

Chalcophaps indica

Range: India, South-east Asia, Sunda Islands to eastern Australia.

Habitat: Forest, open woods.

Look for the blueish-grey crown and emerald wings of the dove by the observation deck staircase.

Green-winged doves are prolific breeders in our aviary, nesting frequently but irregularly. They are fast-flying doves.



Observation Deck

LUZON BLEEDING-HEART DOVE

Gallicolumba luzonica

Range: Philippines.

Habitat: Thick rain forests throughout the islands.

Ground level toward the east entrance is a good place to scout for these birds.

The blood-red patch at mid-breast is often brought to the attention of the keepers but don't worry, it isn't injured, it just looks that way.



NICOBAR PIGEON

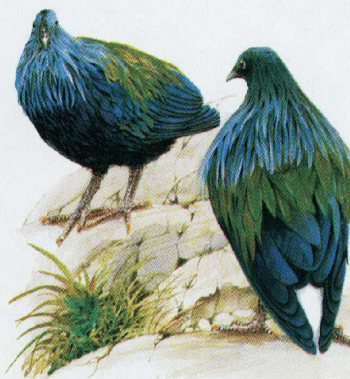
Caloenas nicobarica

Range: Southeast Asian coast, Nicobar and Solomon Islands.

Habitat: Island undergrowth.

A relatively large, tame and docile pigeon usually found foraging on the ground.

The Nicobar lays one egg at a time and the male and female take turns incubating.



VICTORIA CROWNED PIGEON

Goura victoria

Range: New Guinea and neighboring islands.

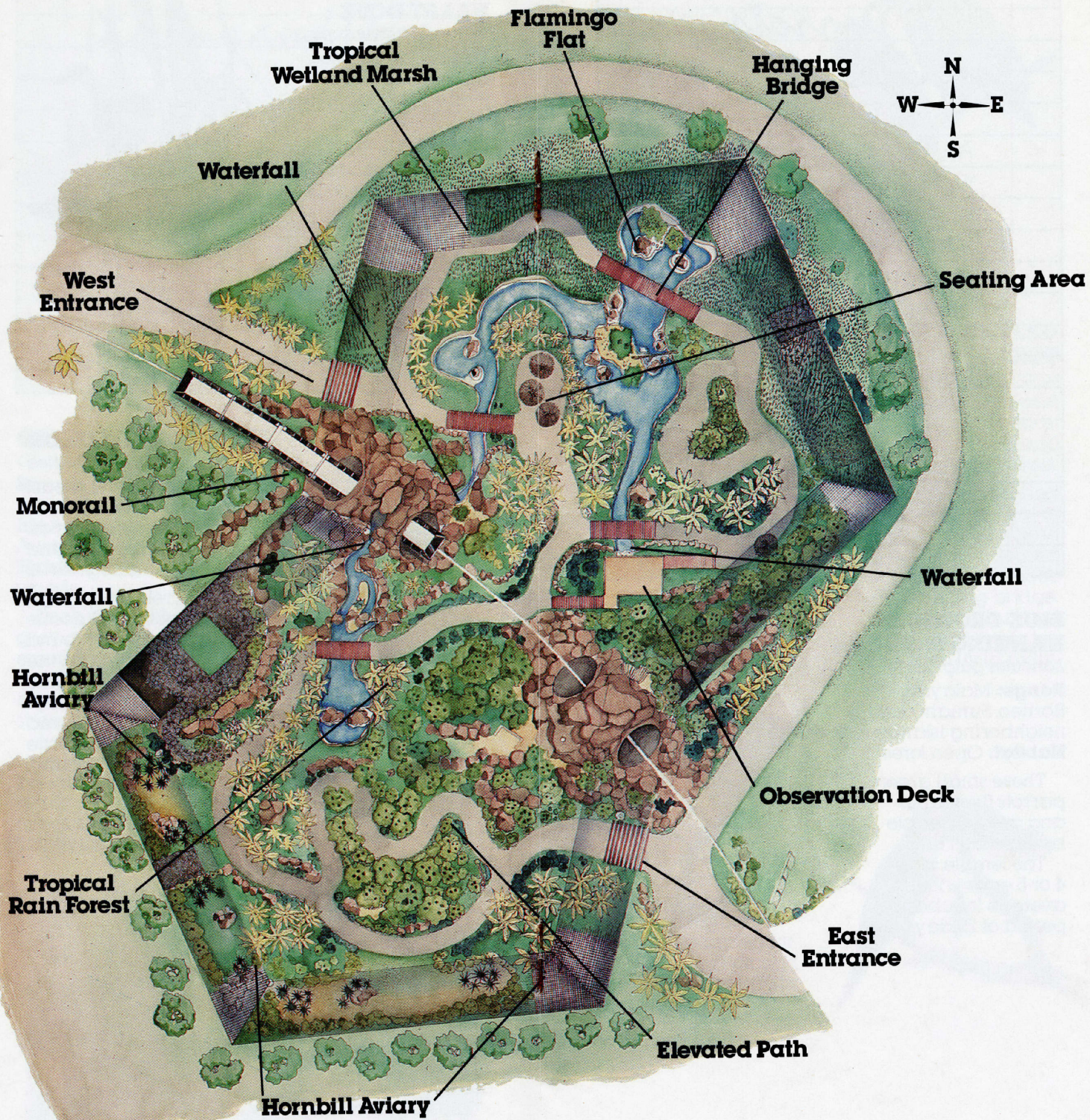
Habitat: Open forest.

These large birds can be found in the open areas under the canopy trees.

The largest of all pigeons, it can grow up to 12 pounds.



AVIARY MAP



Parrots and Their Relatives

All these brightly colored birds will be recognized as parrots by their hooked bills and familiar body shapes. Most of our parrots will be heard before they are seen. They are well-known as a group for their noisy screeches. These birds range in size from the tiny blue-crowned hanging parrot to the large eclectus parrot.

BLUE-CROWNED HANGING PARROT

Loriculus gaigulus

Range: Malaysia, Borneo, Sumatra and neighboring islands.

Habitat: Open forest.

These small green parrots fly noisily and are noticeable by their red rump.

The female lays 4 or 5 eggs with an average incubation period of 22 days.



EDWARD'S FIG PARROT

Psittaculirostris edwardsii

Range: Northeastern New Guinea.

Habitat: Woods.

Can be seen in the Hong Kong orchid or loquat trees.

About half the size of the average parrot, the fig parrot's call carries quite far.



GOLDEN-MANTLED RACKET-TAILED PARROT

Prioniturus platurus

Range: Indonesia and Celebes Islands.

Habitat: Woods and open forest.

A most challenging bird to spot. The heat of day keeps them close to the heavily leaved bottlebrush trees near the hanging bridge. These parrots travel in groups of five to ten and often fly at night.



GOLDIE'S LORIKEET

Trichoglossus goldiei

Range: New Guinea.

Habitat: Forest canopy.

Listen for sharp, shrill screeches.

Lorikeets have brushed tongues specially adapted for extracting pollen and nectar from tree fruits and blossoms.



LONG-TAILED PARAKEET

Psittacula longicauda

Range: Malay peninsula, Borneo, Sumatra, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Habitat: Open forest.

Circles the upper part of the aviary in the afternoon.

The male long-tails two center feathers are nearly 4 inches longer than the other tail feathers; and he has a bright-red bill.



PAPUAN LORY

Charmosyna p. papou

Range: New Guinea.

Habitat: Between 4,000-12,000 ft. altitude in mountain forests.

The brilliant colors and long streaming tails of the Papuan lory make them easy to spot as they dart about in search of flowers and fruit.

The melanistic (black) plumage of these birds is highly prized by natives for head decorations and trade items.



RED-SIDED ECLECTUS

Eclectus roratus polychloros

Range: New Guinea, north to Trobriand Islands and south to northern Australia.

Habitat: Open forest.

Ranges throughout the aviary but can usually be seen at the south side in the morning and north side in the afternoons.

These are the largest parrots in the aviary as well as the most brightly colored.



Hornbills and Relatives

These members of the order Coraciiformes are mostly very large birds with a horny growth (casque) over their bills. This casque is composed of a thin outer covering of horn and a honeycomb-like cellular tissue on the inside and is actually very light weight. All species of arboreal hornbills seal the female and chicks in the hollow cavity of a tree during nesting. Hoopoes and rollers are grouped with the hornbills because of their similar body structures.

COMMON HOOPOE

Upupa epops

Range: Malay peninsula and Burma.

Habitat: Forest fringe.

Can usually be seen in the flatland area between the observation deck and the hanging bridge.

The erect crest and the long, thin, curved beak make this one of the most unusual looking birds in the aviary.



GREAT INDIAN HORNBILL

Buceros bicornis

Range: India.

Habitat: Evergreen and moist deciduous forest.

This large bird should be easy to spot with its enormous yellow and black bill.

The loud noise produced by hitting their bills together is not a sign of aggression; rather, a natural acceptance of each other.



INDIAN BLUE ROLLER

Coracias benghalensis

Range: Southeast Asia.

Habitat: Below 5,000 ft. altitude in open country and cities.

They are either perched atop the highest limbs of the aviary or doing aerial acrobatics while catching insects. It is not uncommon to see the roller on telephone lines throughout Asia.



RHINOCEROS HORNBILL

Buceros rhinoceros

Range: Malaysia, Borneo and Java.

Habitat: Mature rain forest.

The majestic Rhinoceros hornbill can be found in a separate aviary on the south end of the tropical rain forest.

Hornbills frequently toss their diet of fruit and small animals into the air and catch them as if playing.



RUFIOUS HORNBILL

Buceros hydrocorax

Range: Philippines.

Habitat: Coastal forest.

One of the most vocal hornbills in the aviary, this rusty-colored bird is most easily recognized by its size and large rufous casque.

Their naturally white tails are usually stained yellow from the oil of their preening gland.



WRITHE-BILLED HORNBILL

Aceros leucocephalus

Range: Malaysia, Thailand, Borneo and Sumatra.

Habitat: Coastal forests.

These birds can usually be seen high in the tree tops, or near the feeding stations.

The black-headed female and the yellow-headed male are the only hornbill species loose in the aviary proper.



Perching Birds

Perching birds are by far the largest order of birds, and as such, will be divided by family.

PYCNONOTIDAE

Bulbuls have fluffy plumage and are common inhabitants of cultivated areas.

STRAW-CROWNED BULBUL

Pycnonotus zeylanicus

Range: Malay peninsula, Borneo, Sumatra and Java.

Habitat: Rain forest.

The waterfall by the rain forest is your best spot to hear and see the lovely straw-colored and textured crown of the bulbul.

The bulbul has one of the nicest voices in the aviary.



YELLOW-VENTED BULBUL

Pycnonotus goiavier

Range: Southeast Asia, Philippines and Greater Sundas.

Habitat: Secondary growth, shrubs and cultivated areas.

If you're quick, you might catch sight of one of these small birds darting through the underbrush in search of insects and seeds.

The yellow-vented bulbul "hawk" insects, catching them on the wing, and are adept at robbing insects from spider webs.



WHITE-VENTED BULBUL

Pycnonotus sinensis

Range: Southern China.

Habitat: Marshes and pastures.

With luck, you might catch a glimpse of this white-throated and white-bellied bird by the aviary's east entrance.

From Greek words pycno, meaning "thick" and notus, meaning "back."



IRENIDAE

A family with several disparate groups, including the leafbirds who blend well with the leafy trees and shrubs and the metallic-looking fairy bluebird.

FAIRY BLUEBIRD

Irena puella

Range: Malaysia and India.

Habitat: 5,000 ft. altitude forest.

This bird is active throughout the aviary, especially near the waterfalls.

Usually the fairy bluebird stays near water but will venture out to raid fruit trees.



GREATER GREEN LEAFBIRD

Chloropsis sonnerati

Range: Borneo, Sumatra and Java.

Habitat: Forest.

At feeding times the leafbirds can be seen on or near the feeding carts.

The only difference in coloration between the male and female is her yellow, his black throat.



ORANGE-BELLIED LEAFBIRD

Chloropsis hardwickii

Range: Malaysia, Burma, Himalayan and Assam regions.
Habitat: Open forest.

Check out the various banana clumps for ripe fruit to find this bird. They can also be seen close to the cart at feeding time.

The leafbird rarely makes its nest more than 20 ft. above ground.



MUSCICAPIDAE

Aggressive and curious with shrill songs that sound somewhat like hysterical laughter.

BLACK-CAPPED SIBIA

Heterophasia capistrata

Range: Southwest China, Burma and Thailand.

Habitat: 3,000-9,000 ft. altitude, evergreen forest and shrub.

You might observe this black-hooded acrobat hanging upside-down investigating the undersides of branches and leaves.

Black-capped sibilas form small noisy hunting parties in winter and pairs in summer.



CHESTNUT-CAPPED LAUGHING THRUSH

Garrulax mitratus

Range: Himalaya, Southwest China, Indochina, Burma and the Malay peninsula.

Habitat: Secondary forest.

These chestnut birds are usually paired and constantly calling to one another while hopping from branch to branch.

Both male and female incubate the eggs, as the sexes are alike.



RED-WINGED LAUGHING THRUSH

Garrulax formosus

Range: Southwest China and Southeast Asia.

Habitat: Forest undergrowth.

Look for the red-wing in the hibiscus tree or on the west side at the feeding station beneath the olive tree.

The curious laughing thrush can be destructive due to its investigation of everything new.



WHITE-CRESTED LAUGHING THRUSH

Garrulax leucolophus

Range: Southeast Asia, Himalaya and Sumatra.

Habitat: Open forest.

These birds are extremely visible throughout the aviary.

These birds are active and inquisitive and easy to spot because of their striking white crest.



MELIPHAGIDAE

Though called honeyeaters, these birds actually drink nectar. They have specialized tongues and bills for this purpose.

REICHNOW'S HONEYEATER

Melidectes rufocrissalis

Range: New Guinea.

Habitat: Open forest.

You might be able to hear their loud, unmelodious vocalizations from the southwest side in the hornbill aviary.

The long, curved bill is characteristic of most fruit and nectar-eating birds.



SMOKEY BARE-EYED HONEYEATER

Melipotes fumigatus

Range: New Guinea.

Habitat: Mountain forest.

Its call is weak but can be recognized by its small sooty-grey appearance with conspicuous circular yellow eye-patch.

The unusual eye-patch will occasionally turn to a deep red, as if blushing.



STURNIDAE

These gregarious and often noisy birds are popular cage birds. Some species imitate the calls of birds and other animals.

COLETO MYNAH

Sarcops calvus

Range: Philippines.

Habitat: Forest.

The unique vulture-like head with bare pink skin makes this an easy bird to recognize.

These fellows wander around as much as you do so don't be surprised to see them several times as you walk in the aviary.



GROSBEAK STARLING

Scissirostrum dubium

Range: Asia.

Habitat: Forest and cultivated areas.

Can usually be found working near a dead palm searching for new nest sites, or rebuilding an existing one.

The starling's long beak is useful for tearing at palm fibers. It spits out these fibers to line its nest.



PAGODA MYNAH

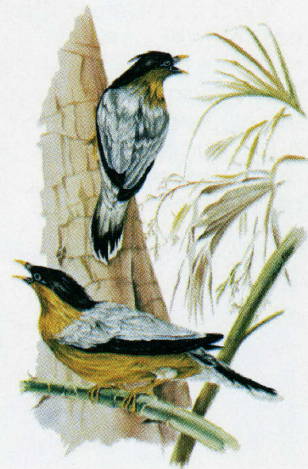
Sturnus pagodarum

Range: West Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and parts of east Pakistan.

Habitat: Near water in wooded areas.

The pagoda can usually be found by the coconut palms in the rain forest near the pond.

These birds have been reported to eat fruits that are toxic to humans.



WHITE-COLLARED MYNAH

Streptocitta albicollis

Range: Southwest China and Southeast Asia.

Habitat: Marshes and pastures.

Frequents the orchid tree at the east entrance or any of the high trees by the observation deck.

You should have no trouble finding these black birds, with their long tails and broad white collars.



CORVIDAE

Gregarious and noisy birds that are usually large and common around human habitation. Magpies and treepies are often brightly colored and shyer, staying in forested areas.

GREEN MAGPIE

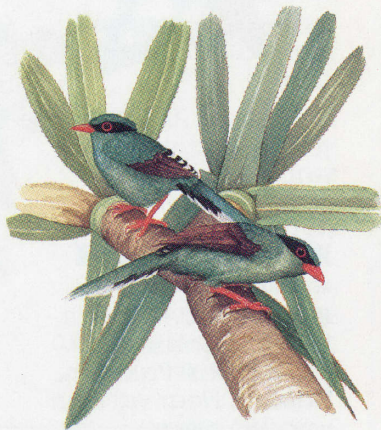
Cissa chinensis

Range: Himalaya, Southern China, Sumatra and Northwest Borneo.

Habitat: Open forest.

You'll find them in the east hornbill aviary near the entrance.

The magpie's striking appearance and uncharacteristic call make it a rewarding bird to observe.



RACKET-TAILED TREEPIE

Crypsirina temia

Range: Thailand, Burma and Greater Sundas.

Habitat: Open country, shrubs and cultivated areas.

Their spatulate tails give them an undulating motion in flight.

The treepie is very arboreal and rarely seen on the ground.



RUFOUS TREEPIE

Dendrocitta vagabunda

Range: India, Southeast Asia.

Habitat: Open forest.

Listen for a loud raucous call or its noisily flapping wings. Its carnivorous diet requires that it be separated from the main aviary in the western hornbill aviary. The rufous treepie has a very large and varied repertoire, from harsh guttural screams to very melodious tunes.



Waterfall

EURLAIMIDAE

Chunky birds with short tails and broad bills, they are slow-moving and build hanging nests.

LESSER GREEN BROADBILL

Calypiomena viridis

Range: Southeast Asia, Borneo and Sumatra.

Habitat: Open forest.

They appear as gems among the leaves of trees, with feathers almost totally covering their bills.

These solitary and unassuming birds are totally silent.



PITTIDAE

Plump ground birds with short tails. Many species are brightly colored but often secretive, staying in the undergrowth.

BLUE-WINGED PITTA

Pitta moluccensis

Range: Malay peninsula, southern Burma and Sumatra.

Habitat: Any tree-filled environment with minimal undergrowth.

A good place to spot the pitta is under the banana trees at the east entrance of the aviary.

The pitta's tail feathers are so short that the casual observer will probably see no tail whatsoever.



ORIOLIDAE

Colorful treetop birds with loud, rich musical songs.

BLACK-NAPED ORIOLE

Oriolus chinensis

Range: India, east to China, Indonesia.

Habitat: Open grassland, woods.

Listen for its loud flutie whistle by the poinciana, bottlebrush and loquat trees.

The U.S.'s first black-naped oriole born in captivity was here at Metrozoo.



DICRURIDAE

Common treetop birds that catch insects "on the wing."

GREATER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO

Dicrurus paradiseus

Range: India, Southeast Asia.

Habitat: Open forest.

Look around the east entrance by the feed stations or under the banana trees. The drongo's 12-inch outer tail feathers are mostly bare shaft with a twisted spoon-shaped racket at the end.



Miscellaneous

FIRE-TUFTED BARBET

Psilopogon pyrolophus

Range: Malaysia and Sumatra.

Habitat: Forests.

You might need to look harder for the barbet because its green coloration camouflages it well.

Whether in native Malaysia or here in the aviary, the barbets will drill holes for nesting, much like woodpeckers.



GREATER COUCAL

Centropus sinensis

Range: Southeast Asia, notably West Pakistan and parts of India.

Habitat: Forest.

You can usually find one of our glossy-black coucals atop a dwarf poinciana in the aviary with the Indian hornbills.

The first successful breeding of the coucal in captivity was here at Metrozoo.



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