

MAROON-BELLIED CROWNED PIGEON

... A large terrestrial pigeon from New Guinea

Author and copyright: Cyril Laubscher



Normally, the “raised wing” in a pigeon is a threat display that can give a good cuff to ward off predators, but here at Cologne Zoo, it was part of the bird’s display for visitors. (1252)



The lace-like resemblance of the erect crest is immediately apparent in this close up. (1254)

Living in the lowland forests of Papua New Guinea, Irian Jaya, and some of the adjacent islands are three exotic and very distinctive crowned pigeons that differ markedly from all other pigeons. Resembling large fowls and nearly the size of a turkey, the single most impressive and diagnostic feature of each species is the large erect laterally compressed fan-shaped crest. It is immediately recognisable.

The lace-like crest is also a guide to the three species. The Victoria Crowned Pigeon (*Goura victoria*) has the most impressive crest with "dark blue fans" edged with white. Similar in appearance - but different to that of the Victoria Crowned Pigeon - are the greyish crests of the Blue Crowned Pigeon (*G. cristata*) from western New Guinea, and the Maroon-bellied Crowned Pigeon (*G. scheepmakeri*). A distinguishing feature between the latter two species is the lack of any maroon on the breast or belly of the Blue Crowned Pigeon.

Unlike other pigeons, crowned pigeons have 16 tail feathers, no oil gland or gall bladder, and possess reticulated scaling on their strong thick legs that instantly denote a terrestrial type existence on the forest floor. The Victoria Crowned Pigeon is the largest at nearly 35 inches (74 cm) in length while the other two are only 33 inches (70 cm).

The Maroon-bellied Crowned Pigeon has the southern most distribution, and the alternative name of Southern Crowned Pigeon is used in some literature. The bird portrayed is the subspecies that is often referred to as Sclater's Crowned Pigeon (*G. s. sclateri*). The main visual difference from the nominate race is a shorter crest, scaly appearance to the mantle and scapulars, more extensive maroon markings on the lesser wing-coverts bordering the white primary band, and a grey belly. Both races are prone to variable melanism around the head and nape.

ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES

The three crowned pigeons are all listed as vulnerable in the wild (Threatened Birds of the World published in 2000 by Lynx Edicions and Birdlife International). This vulnerability is probably a direct cause of being hunted for food, sport, and illegal trade, plus extensive logging that continues in virtually all areas.

In fact, Maroon-bellied Crowned Pigeons have been exterminated around the Port Moresby area, and much of the southeast of its range. In other areas, it is still very vulnerable to hunting and trapping, especially near towns, villages and roads.

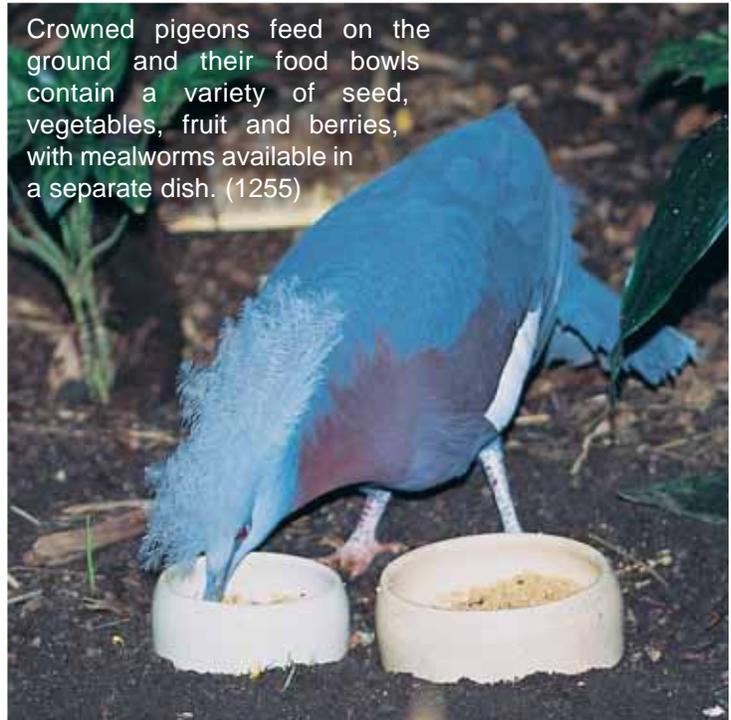
Found mainly in lowland forest below 500 metres, this species prefers forest on the flat alluvial plains. As in the other two species, it is gregarious and can be seen in small parties. Occasionally, flocks of up to 30 birds have been recorded. They forage for fruits and seeds on the ground and will only fly off with loud clapping wing beats to alight safely on a perch in a tree. They apparently sit there nervously wagging their tail, and will allow a close approach if the person remains quiet, and herein lies the danger, as they are vulnerable especially if it is a hunter approaching. The loud booming call is another distinguishing feature

AN AVICULTURAL RARITY

This magnificent pigeon is mainly seen in zoological collections, bird parks, and in stately home collections where the correct environment can be created, and the necessary expertise called upon.

Crowned pigeons tame down readily, and visitors can enjoy close up views of them, especially if they are housed in walk through aviaries or tropical rainforest

environments in the larger zoos. The bird depicted was photographed at Cologne Zoo in Germany, where Theo Pagel – then Curator of the Rainforest Project - had overseen the creation of a superb environment for birds and visitors alike in the Tropical House. The resident pair of Sclater's Crowned Pigeons is a major attraction that appeals to visitors – young and old alike. The bird showing the “raised wing” threat display was actually enjoying the company of the young children on a school outing, and would run around in a type of “figure 8” display motion, much to the delight of the young audience, and the photographer of course!



Crowned pigeons feed on the ground and their food bowls contain a variety of seed, vegetables, fruit and berries, with mealworms available in a separate dish. (1255)

EXOTIC BIRDS BY PATRICIA GREEN

- Amazons,
- Cockatoos: Rose-breasted, Goffin's, Moluccan and Umbrella
- Macaws: Blue & Gold and Green-winged
- Africans: Congo Greys, Timneh Greys and Meyers
- Conures: Suns (my specialty) and Goldens (permit required)

Call or fax (530) 934-5175

www.freewebs.com/birdsinwillows



Barbi's Bird House

Pet Birds & Supplies

phone: 206.842.6854

www.BarbisBirdHouse.com



BIRD LEGBANDS

- * Stainless Steel
- * Open or Closed
- * Love Birds to Macaws


USDA Approved



DL Products

Tel: (626) 359-5048

www.dlproductsca.com

VISA

MasterCard



John Brasaemle

Avian Artist
Specializing in Watercolors

<http://home.comcast.net/~avianart>
avianart@comcast



All the important features of Sclater's Crowned Pigeon are visible. (1253)

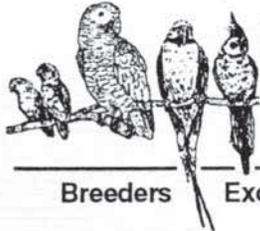
Interestingly in the USA, of the 3 crowned pigeons held in zoological collections, only 13% are Maroon-bellied Crowned Pigeons and this includes the Sclater's subspecies. Blue Crowned Pigeon and Victoria's Crowned Pigeon - in roughly equal proportions - comprise the other 87% of stock held.

Very few private aviculturists can afford these expensive pigeons, as they are rarely available and require a great deal of expertise if breeding is contemplated. A very large conservatory-type environment is ideal, where they can follow their natural behaviour of feeding on the ground among the leaf litter.

In good summer weather, an outdoor grassed and planted aviary adjoining the tropical conservatory environment could prove useful.

Crowned pigeons need a good pigeon seed mixture with extra maize added, supplemented with various diced fruits and berries, plus an insectivorous mixture with mealworms and other livefood.

The nest is small, well built and compact for such a large pigeon. Only one white egg is laid. Incubation lasts for 28 days, and the young squab leaves the nest at 30 days. The parents continue feeding the youngster for another 7-8 weeks. A juvenile is generally a duller edition of the adults.



MYERS
MENAGERIE of
BIRDS

Breeders Exotic Birds • Hand Fed Babies

SEEDS & SUPPLIES REASONABLY PRICED

Bob, Joyce & Rob M • W • F 10 am - 4 pm OR call for appointment	Ramona, CA 92065 B: (760) 788-5848 H: (760) 789-3815
---	--



Flexible Egg Candler - Candling without Handling **\$27.95**

Extra bright bulb on a 10"-flexible shaft to facilitate candling in the nest. Detects cracks in the shell and non-developing embryos. Operates on 2 "AA" batteries (included).

4422-C Replacement Lamp **\$6.00**

www.mdsvet.com • 1-800-435-9352



Bird Cages By Carmen

(760) 420-0886

Carmen R. Daily

www.animalenvironments.com
birdcage@animalenvironments.com

AFA Members:
Receive 10% OFF of
our regular website
price on ALL items by
entering the following
Promotion Code:

A704D



**Parrot
Bonanza**

www.parrotbonanza.com



Fantastic Feathers

5900 C-1 Rivers Ave.

N. Charleston, SC 29406

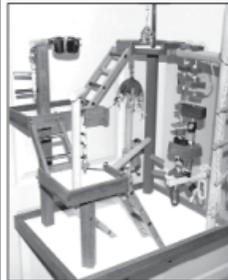
ALL AVIAN STORE

(843) 747-0038

sales@fantasticfeathers.com

www.fantasticfeathers.com

For your Chewers...
The solution: Acrylic Steps!
and cleanup is a snap!



BirdiePlayStands.com

PARROT PLAY GYMS AND STANDS
TABLETOP OR PORTABLE W/PEDESTAL & WHEELS

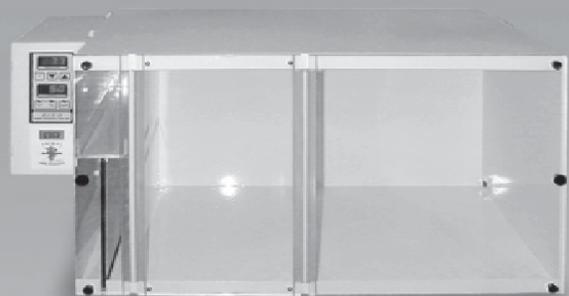
Mahogany frame & Posts
w/Melamine base for easy cleaning

WEBSITE: <http://www.BirdiePlayStands.com>
TEL: 631 754-4963 - Cell # 917 332-8857



Animal Intensive Care Units

Our AICUs are loaded with the latest
digital technology and features.
Veterinarian designed and tested.
Provide sophisticated support for
your birds and other small animals!



Large Digital Metal AICU
#912-062



Large Digital Acrylic AICU
#912-004



Small Digital Metal AICU
#912-060

Visit our website to see our complete line of the best
in AICU'S, Incubators and health care accessories.

www.lyonusa.com

Phone: 888.lyon.usa
Email: info@lyonusa.com