

Great Indian Hornbill

Buceros bicornis



These large birds are found in the Tropical Rainforests of India and South East Asia and face problems like deforestation.

Female hornbills build nests in hollows of large tree trunks and the opening is sealed with a plaster made up mainly of faeces. She remains imprisoned in her nest until the chicks are semi-developed relying on the male to bring her food. During this period the female undergoes a complete moult. She is fed by her mate through a slit in the seal. The female voids faeces through the nest slit and young follow the same nest sanitation behaviour after they are two weeks old. Once the female emerges out of the nest, it is sealed again by the chicks.

Our pair has been with us since the park opened in 1984, and can live up to 40 or 45 years in captivity. Although they have never successfully bred, we are still optimistic that they can produce offspring. Our female seals herself inside the nest every year after mating with the male, but so far no chicks have resulted. Pairs have been recorded breeding at the age of 40 so there is still a chance that this magnificent pair of birds could produce chicks.



Lifespan: 40 - 45 Years

Weight: 3kg

Wingspan: 1.5m

Breeding Season: Spring

Incubation Period: 38 - 40 Days

Number of Chicks: 2 - 3

Diet: Mostly fruits and berries but also small birds, mammals and reptiles in the breeding season

Problems they Face: Deforestation, theft for illegal bird trade, introduced predators and diseases

Conservation Status: Near Threatened – CITES App. I. This is the only pair on display in Africa.