
Helmeted Guineafowl

Numida meleagris

Class: *Aves*

Order: *Galliformes*

Family: *Phasianidae*

Characteristics:

A stocky bird with a round body, their identifying characteristic is the small, bald head topped a bony knob and spots of red and blue on their face. The body is covered in grey-black feathers spangled with white dots. They have two wattles, one on each side of their beak.

Behavior:

Helmeted guinea fowl are noisy, gregarious birds meaning they live in large flocks. While they are capable of flight and will nest in trees, they prefer to spend their time on the ground, following hoofstock herds in search of insects and seeds found in the large herbivores' dung. In the bush, they'll walk in a single file imitating whatever the leader does.

Reproduction:

Males will court the females and once paired, will stay together throughout a breeding season. The males will guard females during egg laying and incubation and both will help take care of the young for the first two weeks after hatching. Females lay around 6-15 eggs in a ground nest that will hatch after an incubation of 24-30 days.

Diet:

Wild: Seeds, berries, grasses and insects
Zoo: Scratch grains

Conservation:

Helmeted guinea fowl are one of the most widespread birds in Africa and their populations appear stable. In fact, they seem to be benefiting from more agricultural land.

FYI:

Helmeted guinea fowl are the original birds from which guinea fowl were bred ([Utah's Hogle Zoo](#)). They are in the same family as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, partridges, grouse, quail and peafowl.



Range & Habitat:

Found throughout central and southern Africa in the scrubland and savanna



Lifespan: up to 12 years in captivity, 5 years in the wild.

Special Adaptations: The loud guinea fowl call makes them excellent "guard birds!"

IUCN Conservation Status:

Least Concern

