



Indian Peafowl

Pavo cristatus

Description: Peafowl are members of the pheasant family and have been raised in captivity as ornamental birds since ancient times. The male, or peacock, is famous for its vividly colored feather train with brilliant metallic shades of gold, bronze, green, and blue and the iridescent eyes. The train, which is raised and spread as a mating display, is full throughout the spring and early summer and then the feathers are molted, or shed. The female, or peahen, is slightly smaller, lacks a train, and is brown with green on its neck.

Geographic Range and Habitat: India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. They prefer dry, open forests and flock on the ground by day to feed and water.

Behavior: Peacocks can be loud! Peafowl have 11 different calls but it is the peacocks that really yell. They have a call that sounds like "may-awe, may-awe" that carries for a long distance. Usually it is heard in the early morning and late evening, and practically all day during the breeding season. With their sharp eyes, peafowl are likely to be the first to see a predator such as a tiger and call out a loud alarm. Peafowl are capable of flying but usually not very high or for long distances. At the Amarillo Zoo the peacocks are free to roam around and can be seen in various locations during certain times of the day.

Diet: Insects, seeds, grains, some vegetation

Status: Common. The Indian peafowl is the national bird of India and is protected in that country. To Hindus the peafowl is a sacred bird because the spots on the peacock's train symbolize the eyes of the gods.

