

Indian Peafowl

Pavo Cristatus (Linnaeus)

Order: Galliformes

Family: Phasinidae

Genus: *Pavo*

Species: *Cristatus*



STATUS

Resident/ Common

MORPHOLOGY

- Size : About that of the Vulture, excluding the train of the cock which is 3 or 4 feet long.
- Field Characters : The gorgeous ocellated train of the adult cock is in reality not his tail but abnormally lengthened upper tail-coverts. The hen is smaller, lacks the train and is a sober mottled brown with some metallic green on her lower neck. She is crested like the cock. Doves, in deciduous forest chiefly plains and foothills. Also semi-wild about villages and cultivation.

DISTRIBUTION

- Resident throughout Ceylon and India, locally up to 5,000 ft. in the Himalayas, but absent in W. Sind, the extreme N.W. and also in N.E. Assam.

HABITS

- In the wild state, Peafowl inhabit dense scrub and deciduous jungle abounding in rivers and streams.
- They keep in small flocks usually composed of a cock and or 5 hens but sometimes all of one sex, and emerge into firelines, clearings and fields in the mornings and evenings to scratch the ground for food. After the sun is fairly high up and also in the late afternoons, the flocks troop down to the water, tripping gingerly and with the utmost circumspection.
- They are possessed of phenomenally keen sight and hearing, are excessively wary and will slink away through the undergrowth on the least suspicion.
- The birds are loathe to leave the ground, but when suddenly come upon they rise with laborious, noisy flapping. The flight, slow and heavy at first, develops considerable speed once the birds are well under way.
- In many parts of India peafowl are protected by religion or sentiment. Here the birds have become very abundant and semi-domesticated, freely entering the precincts of villages and roosting in the neighbouring trees.
- Their food consists mainly of grain and vegetable shoots, but they are omnivorous, and insects, lizards and small snakes seldom go past.

NESTING

- January to October. Nest, usually a shallow scrape in dense undergrowth lined with sticks and leaves. Eggs three to five - glossy, broad oval, pale cream or 'white coffee'.
- Incubation (hen only) 26 to 28 days. Cock polygamous.
- Displays before his bevy of hens by erecting and fanning out his train and strutting about with peculiar paroxysms of violent quivering