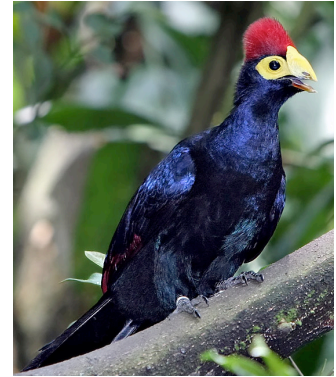




LADY ROSS'S TURACO

Cuculiformes
Family: Musophagidae
Genus: *Musophaga*
Species: *rossa*



Range: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia

Habitat: woodland, open forest and riparian areas

Niche: Arboreal, diurnal, omnivore

Wild diet: mainly fruits and some arthropods

Zoo diet:

Life Span: (Wild) 5 – 9 years
(Captivity)

Sexual dimorphism: Females may have a greenish beak.

Location in SF Zoo: Behind Conservation Corridor

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

This bluish-purple bird is the second largest of the turaco family. It has a prominent dark crimson erectile crest, yellow lores, and a yellow beak, which extends posteriorly to form a forehead shield. There is a yellow ring around the eye. It has a long tail and broad, round wing. Turacos have a short, stout bill with a decurved maxilla and black legs and feet. Juveniles are duller than the adults in color with a blackish bill and bare skin around the eyes.

Weight: less than 1 lb

Length: 15 - 18 in

Wingspan:

Turacos are clumsy flyers but use their semi-zygodactylous toes for gripping and clambering through the canopies of trees with their long tails for balance. The species rarely comes down to the ground.

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Lady Ross's Turacos are not globally threatened. They are so abundant in Africa that they are considered a pest. Their feeding habits are very destructive, which annoys most gardeners.

LADY ROSS'S TURACO

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

The call of a turaco is a loud cackling.

Lady Ross's turacos are very social birds, moving in small noisy flocks of up to 30 individuals. They spend their life among trees in search of fruit until evening when they nest solitarily on a platform of twigs. They will frequently wander to ripening fruit trees in areas away from their normal haunts.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

They are solitary and monogamous in breeding. During courtship, the male turaco will feed the female. Mated pairs will build their nest together. Male and females share in incubation of the two eggs. Once the eggs have hatched, other flock members help the new mother care for the chicks. They will brood for at least 8 days.

The chicks will not develop the full adult coloration until about one year.

Incubation: 21 -24 days	Fledge: 4 – 7 weeks
# of eggs: 2	Sexual Maturity: 1 – 2 years

MISCELLANEOUS

Turacos are the only birds to possess true red and green color. Their striking color comes from the presence of 2 copper pigments, turacoverdin (green pigment) and turacin (red pigment), which are unique to the Musophagidae Family.

Turacos aid in seed dispersal by messily eating fruit.

Turacos move from one group of trees to another in a single file, waiting for the first to land before the next one takes off.

Sources:

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National Geographic Complete Birds of the World © 2009 Peter Clement, p 133-134

Handbok of Birds of the World Vol 4 © 1997 Lynx Edicions

Sasol Birds of Southern Africa © 2002, Ian Sinclair

<http://www.turacos.org/>

<http://www.kenyabirds.org.uk>

<http://www.seaworld.org/>