

# Hornbill

## Fact Sheet

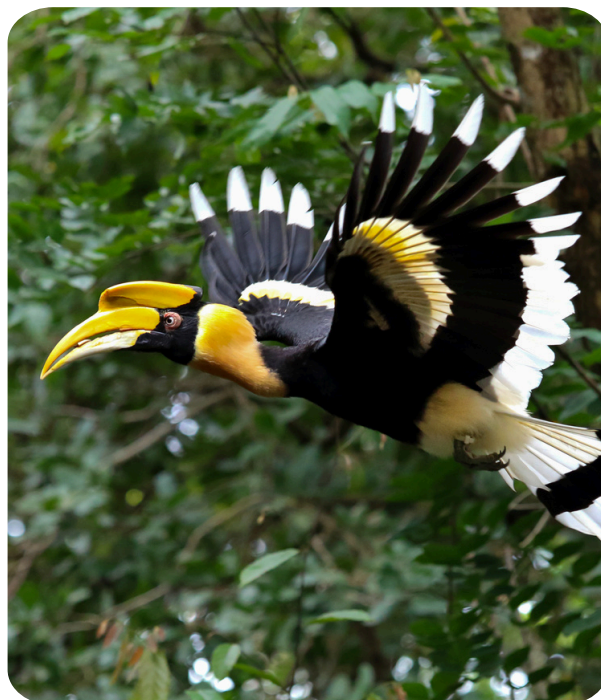
**Common name:** Hornbill

**Scientific name:** *Bucerotidae*

**Size:** Hornbills can range from the size from as small as a pigeon to 1.2m tall with a wingspan of up to 1.8m.

**Diet:** Fruit, insects and sometimes other small animals like lizards.

**Habitat:** A range of habitats in Africa and Asia.



There are around 60 different species of hornbills, which vary in size and colour. They are all easily identifiable by their long, curved beaks, often topped with a structure called a **casque**. A casque is made of **keratin**, the same substance found in human hair and fingernails. Hornbills use a variety of sounds to communicate with each other, and it is believed that the casque vibrates when hornbills **vocalize**, helping their sounds carry further and louder.

Hornbills are **diurnal**, meaning they are most active during the day and rest at night. Throughout the day, they spend their time **sunbathing**, **preening** their feathers, and foraging for food.

Hornbills nest in **cavities**, usually in large trees. In almost all hornbill species, the male bird in a pair will seal the female into the cavity as she nests. He closes the hole with mud except for a small opening through which he passes food! After the eggs have hatched, the female breaks out but in some species, the babies may be walled in again until their feathers have grown!



# Vocabulary

**casque** - a hard bump or helmet-like structure on the head of some birds or animals, often used for protection or display

**cavities** - hollow spaces or holes, like those found in trees where animals might live or hide

**diurnal** - active during the day and resting at night

**keratin** - a tough material found in nails, hair, feathers, and animal horns, giving them strength

**preening** - when birds use their beaks to clean and align their feathers

**sunbathing** - lying in the sun to get warm, like some animals do to heat their bodies

**vocalise** - making sounds or noises, like birds singing or animals calling to each other

What is one fact you learnt about hornbills?

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What do you like the most about hornbills?

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What is one question you still have about hornbills?

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