

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Passeriformes
Scientific Name: *Pitta sordida*

Family: Pittidae
Common Name: Hooded Pitta

AZA Management: Green Yellow Red None

Photo (Male):



Photo (Female):



NATURAL HISTORY:

Geographic Range: Europe Asia North America Neotropical
 From the Himalayas south through Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines to New Guinea
 Africa Australia Other

Habitat: Forest Desert Grassland Coastal
 Riverine Montane Other Plantations and other cultivated areas as well

Circadian Cycle: Diurnal Crepuscular Nocturnal Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Cold Tolerance: To 70° F To 60° F To 50° F To 40° F
 To 30° F To 20° F Other Prone to frost bite on toes

Heat Tolerance: To 30° F To 50° F To 70° F To 90° F
 To 110° F Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Diet: Frugivore Carnivore Piscivore Insectivore

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Nectivore Omnivore Folivore Other (Add Below)

Captive Dietary Needs:

A mix of chopped pinky mice, bird of prey diet mixed with insectivore pellet, superworms, small mealworms, wax worms, crickets, red wigglers, earthworms, and soaked Mazuri parrot pellet. An exclusion feeder helps if in a mixed species aviary.

Life Expectancy in the Wild:	Males: unknown	Females: unknown
Life Expectancy in Captivity:	Males: 3.3 years old; oldest male in captive population lived to 22 years old	Females: 3.3 years old; oldest female in captive population lived for 12 years old.

BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity:	Males: 1 year old	Females: 1 year old
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Courtship Displays: Courtship behaviors include a “tall stretch” movement where the pitta will slowly stand as erect as possible. The red abdomen is quite visible in this posture. This tall stretch posture has been observed in both sexes although males seem to perform it more than females. The male and female will also vocalize with a 2-note whistle to each other in a larger aviary. It sounds like “We-eeek, we-eeek”. Within 2 weeks of observed courtship behavior, nest building begins.

Nest Site Description: Both sexes participate in nest construction. Materials consist of a variety of sticks, small twigs, leaves, and palm fibers. It is globular in shape, about the size of a soccer ball with an entrance hold roughly 2 inches in diameter. The cavity is lined with softer plant material. Location can vary widely, but is always built on a sturdy, flat foundation in a well-hidden area with a lot of foliage. A large mesh nest platform, bricks, or milk crate, make excellent foundations for a nest. The nests invariably back up to a solid surface as well. The nest height varies from ground level to approximately 15 feet. Nest construction usually takes less than a week to complete and the pittas will be quite obvious in their efforts. The first egg is usually laid immediately after nest completion. They rarely use the same nest twice, so dismantling of an old nest may encourage a pair to go back to that location.

Clutch Size, Egg Description: Clutch size of 4-6 eggs. Color is a light cream base with a dark brown spotting usually heavier on the blunt end of the egg. Eggs are laid 24-36 hours apart. A pair can lay 3-5 clutches in a breeding season.

Incubation Period: 16-17 days	Fledgling Period: Approximately 14 days
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Parental Care: Both parents provide food for the nestlings and take turns brooding the young. Male hooded pittas take a more active role in foraging for food, while females may spend more time brooding the young. By the time the oldest chick is 5-6 days of age,

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brooding by either parent drops off dramatically. Since the youngest chick may only be a day or two old at this point, the rapid growth of the nestlings and the compact nature of the nest combine to provide a sufficiently warm environment during the day. At night, one of the parents usually will stay in the nest with the chicks.

Chick Development: Hooded pittas lay 4-6 eggs in a clutch. Incubation begins with the first egg laid. Logically there should be a 4-6 day gap in age between first hatched and last hatched. What typically occurs is a modified sequential hatch. After approximately 16-17 days the first chick will hatch. By the next day, the second and possibly third chick will hatch. By the end of the fourth day, all chicks have hatched. It may be the vocalization of the hatched chick(s) acts as a stimulus to the unhatched chicks thereby hastening the hatch process. This phenomenon has been documented in poultry and waterfowl. Nestlings respond to vibration in the nest, which would indicate a returning parent. They have a bright yellow gape that is quite visible in the cave like recess of the nest. They will not maintain the open mouth begging posture for more than a moment if not fed immediately. This may be a concealing behavior, which would be advantageous in the wild but proves to be frustrating when hand feeding in captivity becomes necessary.

The oldest nestling will fledge at approximately 14 days of age. Parents are then forced to divide their attention between the fledged chick and the ones remaining in the nest. Over the next two days, the remainder of the nestlings will leave the nest. The youngest chicks are most at a disadvantage at this time. They are smaller than their older siblings and their plumage is not as developed. Post fledging mortality is at its highest during the first few days after fledging. Chicks just leaving the nest are slightly smaller than the adult pittas. Their plumage is duller version of the adult plumage. Growth is rapid and within a week, fledged chicks can be seen following parents to a feed station. Two to three weeks after fledging chicks are capable of self-feeding although some begging may still occur. Juvenile pittas may safely remain with parents for several weeks. When parents begin the breeding behaviors again, fledglings are removed from the area to avoid any aggression. This occurs usually about 4 weeks after fledging.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Pittas spend most of their time on the forest floor searching for small live prey, predominately invertebrates. Normally quiet, secretive and solitary, they are difficult to spot until they move. They will seek a higher perch to call for a mate when in breeding condition. The call is rather plain and high pitched with considerable audible range. Pittas will also seek a high perch to roost at night.

Social Structure in Captivity: Ideally housed in a large free flight aviary that is well planted. Can be kept as singles or pairs and can keep juveniles together for up to 1 year.

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Minimum Group Size: Single sex

Maximum Group Size: A pair or up to 4 juveniles together.

Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits: Yes **Comments:**

Excellent exhibit bird and can be kept with a variety of species of birds. Can get aggressive with more ground dwelling passerines such as chestnut-backed thrush and white-rumped shama thrush.

Optimal Habitat Size: Large free flight mixed species aviary approximately 30' wide x 25' high x 40' deep.

Management Challenges: Optimal space. A breeding pair of hooded pittas do better in a large walk through aviary due to needing separate space in the non-breeding season.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Patricide has been noted in a few pairs of hooded pittas in captivity.

REFERENCES:

Robert, Herb. Husbandry Manual for Hooded Pittas

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COMPLETED BY:

Name: Megan Dunn

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