

# Rufous-necked hornbill

The rufous-necked hornbill is a majestic creature of the forest, with a regal bearing and a commanding presence. Its brilliant plumage of rich, chestnut hues and vivid white accents is a testament to its status as one of nature’s most striking works of art.

Serial Number	Characteristic	Description
1	Common Name	Rufous-necked Hornbill
2	Scientific Name	Aceros nipalensis
3	Colour	Black with rufous neck and white-tipped tail feathers
4	Avg. Length	80-100 cm
5	Avg. Height	80-90 cm
6	Type of bird	Forest bird
7	Found in India	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, and Nagaland
8	Habitat	Tropical and subtropical forests
9	Status	Vulnerable

In the quiet of the forest, the hornbill’s call echoes through the trees, a deep, resonant sound that carries for miles. As it moves through the dense foliage, the bird’s large, curved beak parts the leaves, revealing a glimpse of its fiery neck and bold, black wings.

## Features

The rufous-necked hornbill is a large bird, with an average height of around three feet and a wingspan of over four feet. It has a striking appearance, with a beautiful plumage of chestnut-brown and vivid white accents that contrast sharply with its bold black wings.

The bird's most distinctive feature is its rufous-colored neck, which stands out vividly against the surrounding greenery of the forest. Its large, curved beak is another striking characteristic, with a bright yellow base and black tip that is perfect for breaking open nuts and fruits.

In addition to its impressive size and beautiful coloring, the rufous-necked hornbill has a number of other notable physical features. Its legs are sturdy and well-suited for perching on branches and navigating through the dense foliage of the forest.

The bird's eyes are also noteworthy, with a piercing gaze that gives it an air of intelligence and intensity. And while the rufous-necked hornbill is not known for its vocal abilities, its call is deep and resonant, carrying for miles through the forest and serving as a defining feature of its presence in the natural world.



# Habitat and Food

The rufous-necked hornbill is a bird native to the dense tropical forests of Southeast Asia, including parts of India, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. It prefers to live in areas with high tree density and a diverse range of plant species, as these provide ample food sources and suitable nesting sites.

The bird is primarily frugivorous, meaning that it feeds mainly on fruits and berries. Its diet also includes a variety of insects, small animals, and tree bark. The hornbill's large, curved beak is perfectly adapted for cracking open the tough outer shells of fruits and nuts, and its strong, muscular legs enable it to climb and cling to branches in search of food.

One interesting aspect of the rufous-necked hornbill's eating habits is its relationship with fig trees. Fig trees are a vital food source for the hornbill, and the bird's digestive system is uniquely suited to breaking down the tough seeds of the figs. In fact, the hornbill is one of the few birds that can digest fig seeds and help to spread their seeds throughout the forest.

The rufous-necked hornbill is also known for its nesting habits, which involve finding a suitable tree cavity and sealing itself inside with a mixture of mud, fruit pulp, and feces. The female bird will remain inside the nest cavity for several months, relying on the male to bring her food and protect the nest from predators.

# Nesting and Nurturing

The rufous-necked hornbill has unique nesting habits that are crucial to the survival of the species. The bird typically nests in tree cavities that are created by woodpeckers or

other birds, and the female bird will use a mixture of mud, fruit pulp, and feces to seal the entrance of the cavity, leaving only a small hole for the male to pass food through.



The female will remain inside the nest cavity for several months, relying on the male to bring her food and protect the nest from predators. During this time, she will lay a clutch of one to three eggs, which are incubated for approximately 38 days.

The eggs of the rufous-necked hornbill are white in color and approximately 3 inches in length. Once the eggs hatch, the female will remain inside the nest cavity with the hatchlings for several weeks, relying on the male to bring her food and protect the nest.

As the chicks grow, they will begin to develop feathers and become more active. At around 70 days old, the female will break open the seal on the nest cavity and leave with the chicks, which will begin to explore the forest and learn to find their own food.

The rufous-necked hornbill is a devoted parent, with both the male and female playing an active role in caring for the young. They will bring food to the nest, clean up after the

chicks, and protect them from predators.

## **IUCN Status**

The rufous-necked hornbill (*Aceros nipalensis*) is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This means that the species is at high risk of extinction in the wild due to habitat loss and degradation, hunting, and trapping for the pet trade.

The primary threat to the rufous-necked hornbill is the destruction of its forest habitat, which is being cleared for agriculture, logging, and infrastructure development. In addition, the birds are hunted for their meat and feathers, and are sometimes trapped and sold in the illegal pet trade.

Conservation efforts are underway to protect the rufous-necked hornbill and its habitat. These include habitat restoration projects, education and awareness campaigns, and the establishment of protected areas where the birds can live and breed without disturbance.