

PEAFOWLS







peacock - павлин

[ˈpi:kɒk]



peafowl - павлин

[ˈpi:fəʊl]



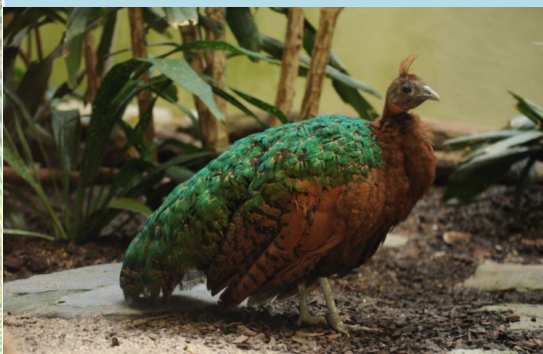
indian peafowl -
индийский павлин

[ˈɪndiən ˈpi:fəʊl]



green peafowl -
зеленый павлин

[grɪːn 'piːfaʊl]



congo peafowl -
африканский павлин

['kɒŋgəʊ 'piːfaʊl]

Peacock



Peafowl

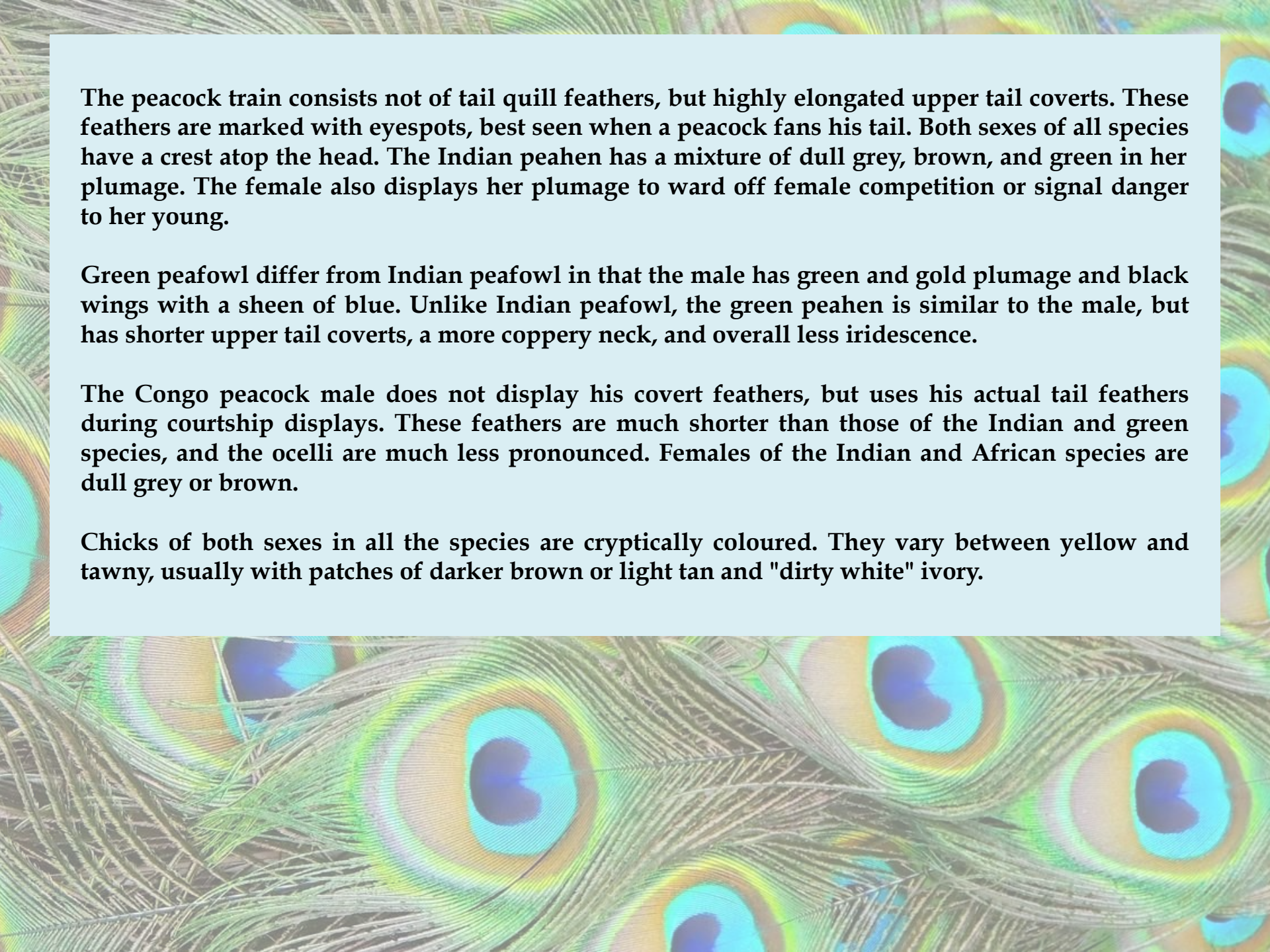


Peafowl is a common name for three bird species in the genera *Pavo* and *Afropavo* of the family Phasianidae, the pheasants and their allies. Male peafowl are referred to as peacocks, and female peafowl are referred to as peahens, even though peafowl of either sex are often referred to colloquially as "peacocks".

The two Asiatic species are the blue or Indian peafowl originally of the Indian subcontinent, and the green peafowl of Southeast Asia; the one African species is the Congo peafowl, native only to the Congo Basin. Male peafowl are known for their piercing calls and their extravagant plumage. The latter is especially prominent in the Asiatic species, which have an eye-spotted "tail" or "train" of covert feathers, which they display as part of a courtship ritual.

The functions of the elaborate iridescent colouration and large "train" of peacocks have been the subject of extensive scientific debate. Charles Darwin suggested that they served to attract females, and the showy features of the males had evolved by sexual selection. More recently, Amotz Zahavi proposed in his handicap theory that these features acted as honest signals of the males' fitness, since less-fit males would be disadvantaged by the difficulty of surviving with such large and conspicuous structures.

The Indian peacock has iridescent blue and green plumage, mostly metallic blue and green, but the green peacock has green and bronze body feathers. In both species, females are a little smaller than males in terms of weight and wingspan, but males are significantly longer due to the "tail", also known as a "train".

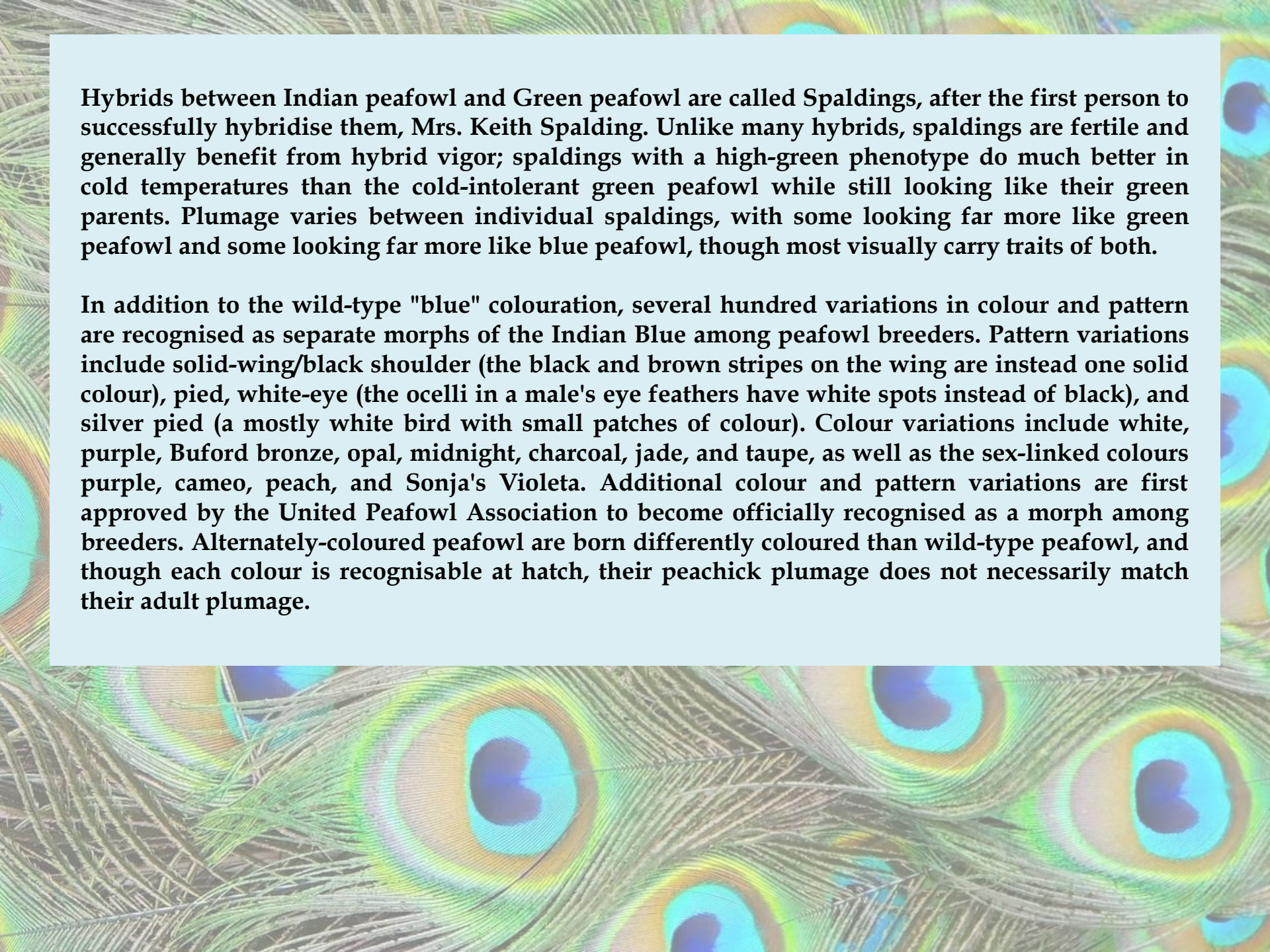


The peacock train consists not of tail quill feathers, but highly elongated upper tail coverts. These feathers are marked with eyespots, best seen when a peacock fans his tail. Both sexes of all species have a crest atop the head. The Indian peahen has a mixture of dull grey, brown, and green in her plumage. The female also displays her plumage to ward off female competition or signal danger to her young.

Green peafowl differ from Indian peafowl in that the male has green and gold plumage and black wings with a sheen of blue. Unlike Indian peafowl, the green peahen is similar to the male, but has shorter upper tail coverts, a more coppery neck, and overall less iridescence.

The Congo peacock male does not display his covert feathers, but uses his actual tail feathers during courtship displays. These feathers are much shorter than those of the Indian and green species, and the ocelli are much less pronounced. Females of the Indian and African species are dull grey or brown.

Chicks of both sexes in all the species are cryptically coloured. They vary between yellow and tawny, usually with patches of darker brown or light tan and "dirty white" ivory.



Hybrids between Indian peafowl and Green peafowl are called Spaldings, after the first person to successfully hybridise them, Mrs. Keith Spalding. Unlike many hybrids, spaldings are fertile and generally benefit from hybrid vigor; spaldings with a high-green phenotype do much better in cold temperatures than the cold-intolerant green peafowl while still looking like their green parents. Plumage varies between individual spaldings, with some looking far more like green peafowl and some looking far more like blue peafowl, though most visually carry traits of both.

In addition to the wild-type "blue" colouration, several hundred variations in colour and pattern are recognised as separate morphs of the Indian Blue among peafowl breeders. Pattern variations include solid-wing/black shoulder (the black and brown stripes on the wing are instead one solid colour), pied, white-eye (the ocelli in a male's eye feathers have white spots instead of black), and silver pied (a mostly white bird with small patches of colour). Colour variations include white, purple, Buford bronze, opal, midnight, charcoal, jade, and taupe, as well as the sex-linked colours purple, cameo, peach, and Sonja's Violeta. Additional colour and pattern variations are first approved by the United Peafowl Association to become officially recognised as a morph among breeders. Alternately-coloured peafowl are born differently coloured than wild-type peafowl, and though each colour is recognisable at hatch, their peachick plumage does not necessarily match their adult plumage.

Occasionally, peafowl appear with white plumage. Although albino peafowl do exist, this is quite rare, and almost all white peafowl are not albinos; they have a genetic condition called leucism, which causes pigment cells to fail to migrate from the neural crest during development. Leucistic peafowl can produce pigment but not deposit the pigment to their feathers, resulting in their blue-grey eye colour and the complete lack of colouration in their plumage. Pied peafowl are affected by partial leucism, where only some pigment cells fail to migrate, resulting in birds that have colour but also have patches absent of all colour; they, too, have blue-grey eyes. By contrast, true albino peafowl would have a complete lack of melanin, resulting in irises that look red or pink. Leucistic peachicks are born yellow and become fully white as they mature.

Peafowl are forest birds that nest on the ground, but roost in trees. They are terrestrial feeders. All species of peafowl are believed to be polygamous. In common with other members of the Galliformes, the males possess metatarsal spurs or "thorns" on their legs used during intraspecific territorial fights with some other members of their kind.

Peafowl are omnivores and eat mostly plants, flower petals, seed heads, insects and other arthropods, reptiles, and amphibians. Wild peafowl look for their food scratching around in leaf litter either early in the morning or at dusk. They retreat to the shade and security of the woods for the hottest portion of the day. These birds are not picky and will eat almost anything they can fit in their beak and digest. They actively hunt insects like ants, crickets and termites; millipedes; and other arthropods and small mammals. Indian peafowl also eat small snakes.

Domesticated peafowl may also eat bread and cracked grain such as oats and corn, cheese, cooked rice and sometimes cat food. It has been noticed by keepers that peafowl enjoy protein-rich food including larvae that infest granaries, different kinds of meat and fruit, as well as vegetables including dark leafy greens, broccoli, carrots, beans, beets, and peas.

Indian peafowl

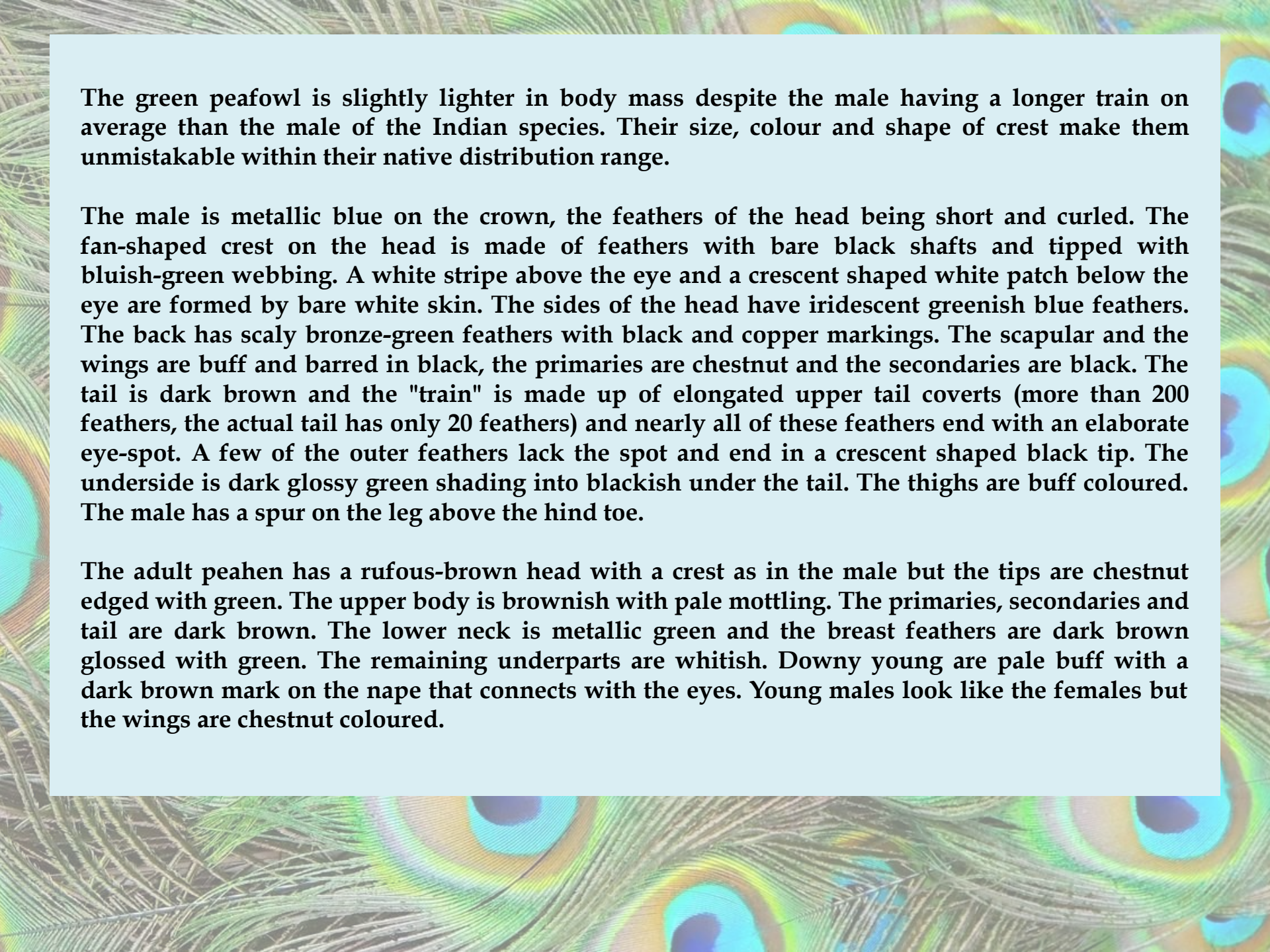


The **Indian peafowl**, also known as the common peafowl, and blue peafowl, is a peafowl species native to the Indian subcontinent. It has been introduced to many other countries.

The peacock is brightly coloured, with a predominantly blue fan-like crest of spatula-tipped wire-like feathers and is best known for the long train made up of elongated upper-tail covert feathers which bear colourful eyespots. These stiff feathers are raised into a fan and quivered in a display during courtship. Despite the length and size of these covert feathers, peacocks are still capable of flight. Peahens lack the train, and have a greenish lower neck and duller brown plumage. The Indian peafowl lives mainly on the ground in open forest or on land under cultivation where they forage for berries, grains but also prey on snakes, lizards, and small rodents. Their loud calls make them easy to detect, and in forest areas often indicate the presence of a predator such as a tiger. They forage on the ground in small groups and usually try to escape on foot through undergrowth and avoid flying, though they fly into tall trees to roost.

The function of the peacock's elaborate train has been debated for over a century. In the 19th century, Charles Darwin found it a puzzle, hard to explain through ordinary natural selection. His later explanation, sexual selection, is widely but not universally accepted. In the 20th century, Amotz Zahavi argued that the train was a handicap, and that males were honestly signalling their fitness in proportion to the splendour of their trains. Despite extensive study, opinions remain divided on the mechanisms involved.

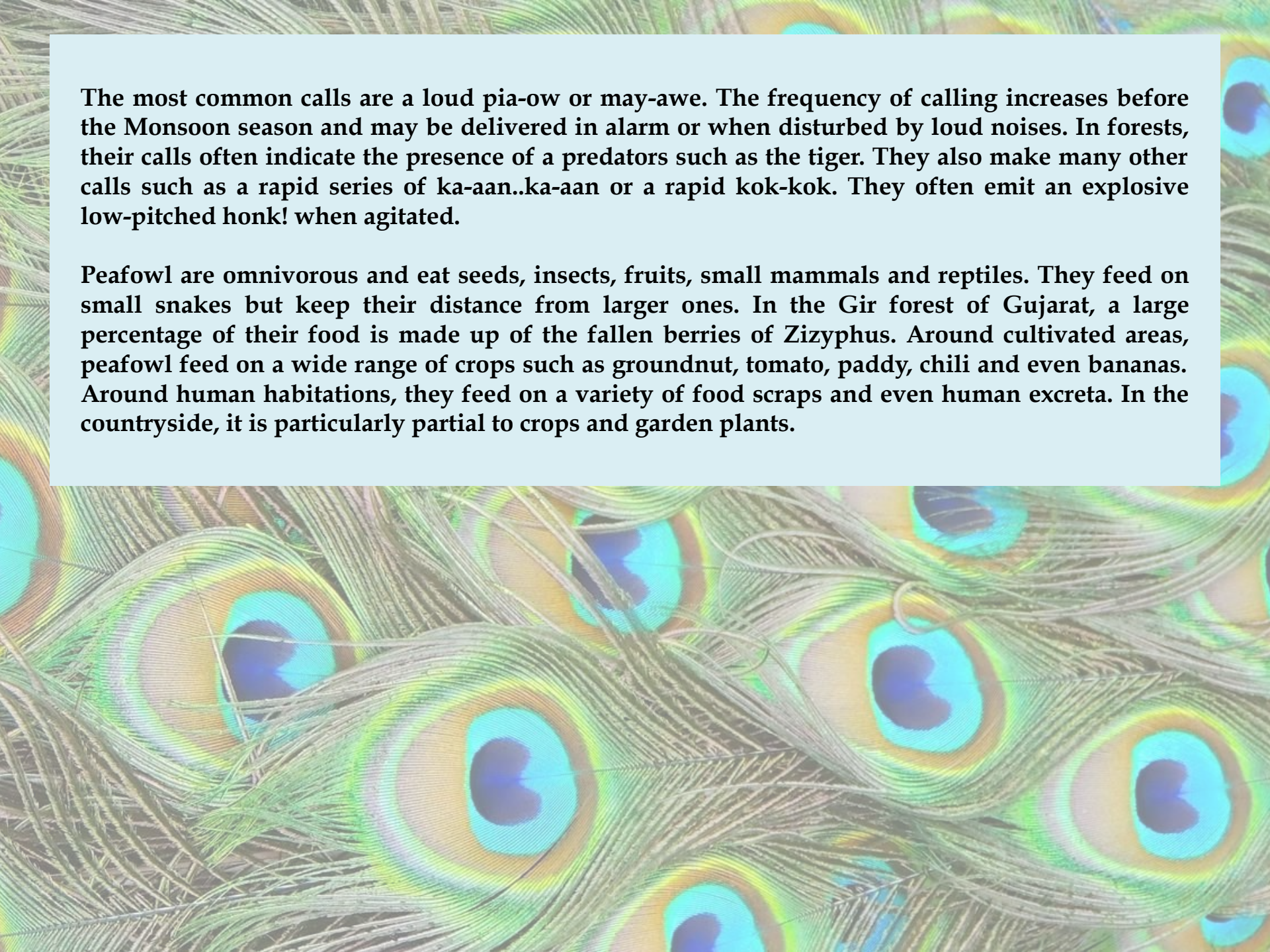
Peacocks are a larger sized bird with a length from bill to tail of 100 to 115 cm and to the end of a fully grown train as much as 195 to 225 cm and weigh 4–6 kg. The females, or peahens, are smaller at around 95 cm in length and weigh 2.75–4 kg. Indian peafowl are among the largest and heaviest representatives of the Phasianidae. So far as is known, only the wild turkey grows notably heavier.



The green peafowl is slightly lighter in body mass despite the male having a longer train on average than the male of the Indian species. Their size, colour and shape of crest make them unmistakable within their native distribution range.

The male is metallic blue on the crown, the feathers of the head being short and curled. The fan-shaped crest on the head is made of feathers with bare black shafts and tipped with bluish-green webbing. A white stripe above the eye and a crescent shaped white patch below the eye are formed by bare white skin. The sides of the head have iridescent greenish blue feathers. The back has scaly bronze-green feathers with black and copper markings. The scapular and the wings are buff and barred in black, the primaries are chestnut and the secondaries are black. The tail is dark brown and the "train" is made up of elongated upper tail coverts (more than 200 feathers, the actual tail has only 20 feathers) and nearly all of these feathers end with an elaborate eye-spot. A few of the outer feathers lack the spot and end in a crescent shaped black tip. The underside is dark glossy green shading into blackish under the tail. The thighs are buff coloured. The male has a spur on the leg above the hind toe.

The adult peahen has a rufous-brown head with a crest as in the male but the tips are chestnut edged with green. The upper body is brownish with pale mottling. The primaries, secondaries and tail are dark brown. The lower neck is metallic green and the breast feathers are dark brown glossed with green. The remaining underparts are whitish. Downy young are pale buff with a dark brown mark on the nape that connects with the eyes. Young males look like the females but the wings are chestnut coloured.



The most common calls are a loud pia-ow or may-awe. The frequency of calling increases before the Monsoon season and may be delivered in alarm or when disturbed by loud noises. In forests, their calls often indicate the presence of a predators such as the tiger. They also make many other calls such as a rapid series of ka-aan..ka-aan or a rapid kok-kok. They often emit an explosive low-pitched honk! when agitated.

Peafowl are omnivorous and eat seeds, insects, fruits, small mammals and reptiles. They feed on small snakes but keep their distance from larger ones. In the Gir forest of Gujarat, a large percentage of their food is made up of the fallen berries of Zizyphus. Around cultivated areas, peafowl feed on a wide range of crops such as groundnut, tomato, paddy, chili and even bananas. Around human habitations, they feed on a variety of food scraps and even human excreta. In the countryside, it is particularly partial to crops and garden plants.

Green peafowl



The **green peafowl** is a peafowl species native to the tropical forests of Southeast Asia. It has been listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List since 2009 because the global population has been declining rapidly and is severely fragmented due to loss of habitat.

Unlike the related Indian peafowl, the sexes of green peafowl are quite similar in appearance, especially in the wild. Both sexes have long upper tail coverts which cover the actual tail underneath. In the male, this extends up to 2 m and is decorated with eyespots, while in the female, the coverts are green and much shorter, just covering the tail. Outside the breeding season, however, the male's train is moulted and distinguishing the sexes can be difficult unless they are observed up close. The neck and breast feathers of both sexes are iridescent green and resemble scales. In the male, the scapulars, median, and greater wing coverts are blue, while the lesser coverts are green and form a triangle of scaly feathers on the shoulder when the wing is closed. The secondaries are black and in some subspecies, the tertials are brown and/or barred with a faint pattern. The female has blue lesser coverts, so lacks the triangle at the wing shoulder. Females also have neck scales fringed with copper, as well as more barring on the back and the primaries and alula. Both sexes have shafted crests, and are long-legged, heavy-winged, and long-tailed in silhouette. The crest of the female has slightly wider plumes, while those of the male are thinner and taller. The facial skin is double striped with a white to light blue and beside the ear is a yellow to orange crescent. The dark triangle below the eye towards the eyebrow is bluish-green in the male and brown in the female. Seen from a distance, they are generally dark-coloured birds with pale vermilion- or buff-coloured primaries, which are quite visible in their peculiar flight, which has been described as a true flapping flight with little gliding that one associates with galliform birds.

Green peafowl are generally more silent than Indian peafowl. The males of some subspecies, especially *P. imperator*, have a loud call of ki-wao, which is often repeated. The female has a loud aow-aa call with an emphasis on the first syllable. The male may also make a similar call. The males call from their roost sites at dawn and dusk.

Green peafowl are large birds, amongst the largest living galliforms in terms of overall size, though rather lighter-bodied than the wild turkey, and perhaps the longest extant, wild bird in total length. The male is 1.8–3 m in total length, but this includes its tail covert (or "train") which itself measures 1.4–1.6 m. The tail coverts are even longer than those of the male Indian peafowl, but are shorter than those of the arguses. The adult female is around half the total length of the breeding male at 1–1.1 m in length. It has a relatively large wingspan that averages around 1.2 m and can reach 1.6 m in big males. The green peafowl is capable of sustained flight and is often observed on wing.

The green peafowl was widely distributed in Southeast Asia in the past from eastern and north-eastern India, northern Myanmar, and southern China, extending through Laos, and Thailand into Vietnam, Cambodia, Peninsular Malaysia, and the islands of Java. Records from northeastern India have been questioned and old records are possibly of feral birds. The ranges have reduced with habitat destruction and hunting.

Green peafowl are found in a wide range of habitats, including primary and secondary forest, both tropical and subtropical, as well as evergreen and deciduous. They may also be found amongst bamboo, on grasslands, savannas, scrub, and farmland edge. In Vietnam, the preferred habitat was found to be dry, deciduous forest close to water and away from human disturbance. Proximity to water appears to be an important factor.

Congo peafowl



The **Congo peafowl**, also known as the **African peafowl** is a species of peafowl native to the Congo Basin. It is one of three extant species of peafowl and the only member of the subfamily native to Africa, the other two being the Indian peafowl (originally of India and Sri Lanka) and the green peafowl (native to Myanmar and Indochina).

The male (peacock) of this species is a large bird of up to 64–70 cm in length. Though much less impressive than its Asiatic cousins, the male's feathers are nevertheless deep blue with a metallic green and violet tinge. It has bare red neck skin, grey feet, and a black tail with fourteen tail feathers. Its crown is adorned with vertical white elongated hair-like feathers. The female measures up to 60–63 centimetres in length and is generally a chestnut brown bird with a black abdomen, metallic green back, and a short chestnut brown crest. Both sexes resemble immature Asian peafowl, with early stuffed birds being erroneously classified as such before they were officially designated as members of a unique species.

The Congo peafowl inhabits and is endemic to the Central Congolian lowland forests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo where it has also been designated the national bird. It occurs in both primary and secondary forest in Salonga National Park. Secondary signs of its presence like droppings and feathers were more frequently encountered in regenerating secondary forest than in primary forest. In secondary forest, its droppings were found close to watercourses, where trees were smaller and plant diversity lower than in primary forest.