

Collared Collared Aracari Aracari

Tucancillo Collarejo
(Spanish)

Pteroglossus torquatus

Class: Aves
Order: Piciformes
Family: Ramphastidae
Genus: Pteroglossus

Distribution

It occurs from southern Mexico through Central America to northern Columbia.

Habitat

From mid to upper canopy in humid forest is its primary niche. It's often found in tall second-growth trees and along the forest edge.

Food

Their diet consists primarily of a wide range of fleshy tree fruits like palm nuts, snake fingers (*cecropia*), and papaya.

Reproduction

Collared Aracari are monogamous. They breed once a year with breeding taking place from January to May. Courtship behaviour between a pair occurs prior to breeding. This reinforces the pair bond. .



In Costa Rica, the collared aracari is quite common in the lowlands and foothills of the Caribbean slope. In lower numbers, it's found on the Peninsula de Nicoya and lower slopes of the Cordillera de Guanacaste.

In Costa Rica, as elsewhere, the collared aracari avoids heavily deforested areas and won't generally stray above 1,000 metres. It can be found up to 1,500 metres

Although they consume a lot of fruit they are considered to be omnivorous. For protein during breeding season, insects are eaten. Other foods include bird eggs, small birds and small lizards. They get most of the water they need from the fruits they consume. They play an extremely important ecological role as vectors for seed dispersal of fruiting trees. It is estimated they feed upon 85-110 various species of fruit and berries.

They select a natural cavity or a large woodpecker hole about 6 to 30 metres above ground. These birds do not use materials for nesting... The female lays three eggs in the unadorned cavity. Both parents take turns in incubating the eggs. Incubation lasts from 15 to 18 days with an average of 16 days. Other members of the extended family are already in attendance. They help in protecting the nest site. They are cooperative breeders

Development

Born altricial, they are blind and naked. .

Hatchlings have very small bills. Pads on their heels protect feet from the rough nest. Though they fledge at about six weeks, they remain at the nesting site for a few weeks longer. Sexual maturity occurs between three and four.

Characteristics

The most prominent feature is the bill, accounting for about a third of its entire length. While the lower mandible is black, the upper is yellowish or whitish becoming brown nearer the head.

Adaptations

The bill is both durable and lightweight. Although 33% of its total length it is only 5% of body weight. This ratio facilitates flight. Thin, bony struts are connected by 'foamy' membranes. They are sandwiched between outer layers of keratin composed of microscopic 'scales' that overlap. The result is a bill resistant to cracking, bending and twisting, but with flight-enabling lightness.

Status/Threats

Predators include falcons and hawk. (Fledglings).

Sightings at Cano Palma

References

Tattersall, Andrade, Abe. Heat Exchange from the Toucan Bill.9
http://www.jacobsschool.ucsd.edu/news_events/releases/release.sfe?id
<http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Pteroglossus>

This is one of the few bird species to show complex kinship behaviour. An extended family of up to six helpers assists the parents in raising their young. Some of these are siblings from previous broods. These young araçari attendants are gaining experience before having their own families. As well as brooding, they gather food, regurgitating insects and fruit to the hatchlings. Later, the nest cavity becomes a dormitory for the extended family. They continue to live together in small flocks of 6 to 15 birds, some being related. Adults and fledglings will sleep together and may occupy several adjacent woodpecker holes or natural cavities. They have the ability to fold their tails over their backs while huddled together.

In Latin, *torquatus* means "adorned with a collar". On the collared araçari, it's a thin red stripe on the hind neck. Below a black throat, the under parts are yellow highlighted by a black breast circle and a brown and red band. The upperparts are dark olive and the rump red. A bright yellow iris sticks out on a black head, accented by red and black facial skin that encircles the eyes. Sexes are similar with the female beak being slightly smaller. Juveniles are duller and the chest and bill markings are as yet indiscernible

The upper beak has tooth like protrusions... This 'toothed' beak facilitates ingestion. It can reach out for fruit, grip it and, with a toss of the head, flip it back to the throat. Digestion leaves the seeds intact so that the collared araçari scatters potential trees throughout the forest. With two toes pointing forward and two backwards (zygodactylism) they have a strong grip on tree branches while hopping around in search of food.

Toucan bills have very efficient heat-shedding methods. To help regulate body temperature, the bill has an extensive network of blood vessels near the surface. This facilitates heat exchange with the surrounding air. As the air temperature heats up or the araçari expends more energy, blood flow to the bill increases and heat is radiated away. In milder air or at rest, blood flow to the bill is restricted so that body temperature is maintained in its normal range.

They use a variety of calls for various purposes. Calls can indicate aggravation, alarm, excitement or just chatter.

As with many other animals, the main threat to collared araçaris is deforestation. Destruction of rainforest cuts back on the habitat they rely on. They are also captured for the pet trade.

These are easily and frequently seen around Cano Palma

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