
Domestic Chicken

Gallus gallus domesticus

Class: *Aves*

Order: *Galliformes*

Family: *Phasianidae*

Characteristics:

A member of the pheasant family, chickens come in a tremendous variety of sizes, feather colors, egg sizes, etc. One thing that characterizes a chicken from other birds is the presence of a comb and two wattles, which is a characteristic of the *Phasianidae*. Chickens have hollow bones and air sacs but lack the ability to fly well. There are around 175 different breeds of chickens ([U of Illinois](#)).

Behavior/History:

The chicken is the most widely farmed animal in the world as they require little space and minimal investment. Chickens have been domesticated for more than 2,000 years, most likely closer to 10,000 years ago. The wild ancestor is believed to be the red jungle fowl and/or grey jungle fowl. Chickens are highly social animals and have a high rate of predation ([Penn State](#) and [A-Z Animals](#)).

Reproduction:

Male chickens are called cockerels, cocks or roosters while females are known as hens. Egg bearing hens can lay over 300 eggs per year. Due to the success of the poultry industry, the [reproductive cycle](#) of chickens and turkeys is the best understood of all birds. Hens almost always lay eggs in the early daylight hours and ovulate within an hour of laying the previous egg. If the eggs are fertilized, they will hatch after a 21-day incubation period.

Diet:

Wild: seeds, berries, fruits, insects

Zoo: scratch grains, greens, meal worms, crickets

Conservation:

None. Domesticated.

FYI:

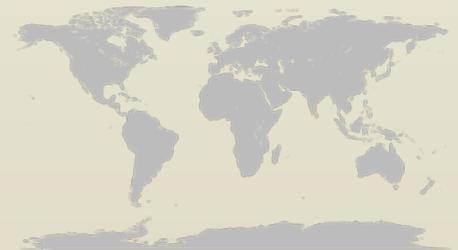
--The longest recorded flight of a chicken is 13 seconds and the longest recorded distance is 301.5 feet ([A-Z Animals](#)).

--In Latin, *Gallus* means comb.



Range & Habitat:

Worldwide



Lifespan: up to 16 years in captivity, 4-5 years in the wild.

Special Adaptations: Bred for meat, eggs and feathers

IUCN Conservation Status:

Not Evaluated-Domesticated

