

Cape Thick-Knee

Burhinus capensis



Class: *Aves*

Order: *Charadriiformes*

Family: *Burhinidae*

Characteristics:

The cape thick-knee is also known as the spotted thick-knee, spotted stone-curlew (although they are not related to curlews) and the spotted dikkop. It is the largest of all the African species of thick-knees. The name comes from their spotted-like body and knobby yellow knees ([Birds of the World](#)). They can also be recognized by their large yellow eyes. The males and females look alike.

Behavior:

Cape thick-knees are solitary birds most active at night and are fairly common throughout their range. They avoid the harsh African sun by taking cover under bushes and trees during the daytime ([St. Louis Zoo](#)). They are usually seen singly or in pairs.

Reproduction:

Cape thick-knees are monogamous (have only one mate) and are only aggressive during breeding season. They are protective parents which raise one to two chicks at a time. They build a ground nest under a bush in spring or early summer using figs, straw shafts and leaves, and lined with small stones or dry plants.

Diet:

Wild: Insects, small mammals and lizards

Zoo: Insectivore diet, Softbill diet, Capelin, feline diet, mealworms

Conservation:

Cape thick-knees are listed as common as the population is stable.

FYI:

Much like the Kildeer in North America, cape thick-knees will perform dramatic “injury displays” to lure predators away from their nest sites ([National Aviary](#)).



Range & Habitat:

Dry grasslands and savannahs of Sub-Saharan Africa



Lifespan: up to 15 years in captivity and assumed about 10-15 in the wild.

Special Adaptations: These birds tend to be quiet during daytime, but vocalize loudly at night when they are most active.

IUCN Conservation Status:

Least Concern

