

# Silvery-cheeked Hornbill

*Bycanistes brevis*

**Class:** *Aves*

**Order:** *Bucerotiformes*

**Family:** *Bucerotidae*

## Characteristics:

A fairly large bird with a cream-colored, lightweight casque ("horn") on top of its beak. The head has silvery-grey feathers (hence the name) and the rest of the body is covered with black or white feathers. In males, the casque is larger than the females. Otherwise they are quite similar.

## Behavior:

They usually live in pairs and, as they are fairly gregarious, will sometimes roost in flocks of several hundred individuals ([Beauty of Birds](#)). They have a fairly wide range through which they fly long distances feeding on fruits and small birds in flight. They return to their tree roost at night.

## Reproduction:

They breed in the African spring (September and October). The female finds a cavity and, with the male's help, seals herself in leaving a small hole through which he feeds her regurgitated fruit. She lays a clutch of 1-3 eggs which hatch following a 40-day incubation period ([Oiseaux Birds](#)).

## Diet:

Wild: mainly fruits but will also eat insects, small birds, rodents, small reptiles, centipedes  
Zoo: softbill, fruit/veg mix, hardboiled egg, dog food and parrot pellets

## Conservation:

The population appears to be quite stable and has a large range, however their numbers seem to be declining in Zimbabwe ([Biodiversity Explorer](#)).

## FYI:

The hornbill is one of the few birds that have eyelashes to shield them from sun and dust ([Pittsburg Zoo](#)).



## **Range & Habitat:**

Forested areas from the Ethiopian highlands through Mozambique and into eastern Zimbabwe



**Lifespan:** up to 50 years in captivity and in the wild.

**Special Adaptations:** The hollow casque on their bills serves to amplify their loud, raucous call.

**IUCN Conservation Status:**  
Least Concern

