



GROUND HORNBILL FOSTERING @ HESC



HELP ENSURE THEIR TOMORROW

WHY FOSTER A GROUND HORNBILL?

- IUCN redlist lists Ground Hornbill as Vulnerable
- A Southern Ground-Hornbill is estimated to live up to 50 or even 60 years.
- Large black turkey-sized birds with extensive, brightly coloured bare facial skin
- Walk on tip toe
- They have a deep booming 4-note call that they utter at dawn
- The eldest chick always out-competes its younger sibling for food and the younger dies of starvation within a few days of hatching. The Southern Ground hornbill lays 2 eggs at a time, one called Abel and the other Cain (associated with biblical history). When the eggs hatch, Cain - the stronger of the two chicks, kills Abel.
- It was estimated that the first successful breeding in females in the wild would be around 15-17 years

GROUND HORNBILL AT HESC

- Ground hornbills are conspicuous by their size and their striking black plumage and red wattles. A dominant female can be recognised by the patch of blue amidst her red throat patch and juveniles have drably coloured faces that turn red at about 3 years.
- Ground hornbills can be found in grassland and savanna woodlands. They habitually occur together in groups of 4 to 5 birds and spend much time in the open scouting for their prey. They require large tree cavities at least 40 cm wide and located 4 to 7 m above the ground for their nesting sites.
- Their prey comprises lizards, insects, small mammals, snails, birds and venomous snakes. They are also specialists in feeding on a tortoise, as they are able to break open the shell with their strong bills.
- Ground hornbills are monogamous breeders. They reach maturity at 6 years old at which time the females leave their flocks to join up with a male group, in order to form their own flock. The dominant pair within the flock mate for life.

Once the first egg is laid the dominant female does not leave the nest except if she has to defecate. Normally one or two eggs are laid but the second chick rarely survives as the first is much further advanced by the time the second hatches.

- Traditionally the ground hornbill is considered a sacred 'wise spirit'. Damage to a hornbill can only be atoned through the sacrifice of a calf and the bird is not spoken of for fear of retribution. Their distinctive call is supposed to indicate rain and in some countries their skulls and bills feature in hunters' headdresses.

GROUND HORNBILL FOSTERING

With this fostering you get to sponsor one of ground hornbills – Gumpie or Skewy. This is at a cost of **R2500.00** per year.

Personalized fostering certificate, two email updates on your sponsored ground hornbill and a subscription to our Cheetah Chat newsletter.

Please be sure to include the e-mail address of the person who should receive these cheetah updates if other than yourself.

COSTS CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS

All contributions to the wild dog adoption program will be used in the following ways:

- To take care of the ground hornbill
- Food and supplements for the Ground Hornbill
- Maintenance of their enclosure

- Contribution to participate in research
- Contribute towards gathering information of the locations of Ground-Hornbill groups outside of formally protected areas. This is to ensure that we can manage for any change in the population due to disease outbreaks, an increase in human persecution, emergence of novel threats – Mabula Ground Hornbill Project
- Any medical attention they may require

If you are interested in adopting a cheetah or any of the animals at the centre and require more information, please ask at the office or reception.

