

Blue-crowned Mot-mot

Momotus momota



Physical Characteristics

- Much of the head is black with a large band or crown of blue that covers most of its forehead. Back and upper tail feathers are olive-green to parrot-green. Wings are brighter green with bluish green/teal main feathers.
- Racket-shaped feathers. Two central feathers of its long tail are green towards the end and blue near the tip.
- A broad bird with red eyes, a gray to black beak as well as short gray legs and feet.

Size

- Length: 16 inches
- Weight: 3.6 ounces

Lifespan

- Wild: around 20 years
- Zoos: around 20 years

Behaviors

- Activity Cycle: Diurnal
- Live in pairs throughout the year and do not flock with other birds.
- Males and females forage separately during the day.

Diet

- Wild: Mostly insectivorous. Beetles, large cicadas, stick-insects, grasshoppers, crickets, larvae. Occasionally spiders and small lizards. Will eat fruits.
- Zoo: Soaked cat food, soaked low-iron softbill blend, and another softbill blend, in addition to hardboiled eggs, insects, and fresh produce. Fruit can include apple, pear, melon, mango, peach, cherry, berries, and banana. Greens can include collard, kale, mustard, endive, and romaine.

Reproduction

- Incubation Period: 13 days-3 weeks
- Fledging/Parenting: Brood young for 3-4 days. Then only feed them in the burrow for about a month.
- Breeding Interval: once yearly from March to early April.
- Clutch Size: 3-5
- Breeding Behaviors: Start getting ready for reproduction months early during the rainy season so that the soil is softer and easier to move and the old-looking burrow is less likely to attract predators. Choose burrow sites that are not obvious, using holes already dug by people or other animals. Both parents incubate eggs.

Habitat and Range

- Habitat: Pacific lowlands, deforested highland areas, areas with low shade trees, patches of light secondary woods, thickets, hedgerows, shady gardens, and wooded ravines.
- Range: South and Central America. Ranges from northeastern Mexico to northwestern Peru, Paraguay, Bolivia, Trinidad, and northern Argentina.



Conservation

- IUCN Status: Least Concern
- Threats: Deforestation and pet trade.

Classification

- Kingdom: Animalia
- Phylum: Chordata
- Subphylum: Vertebrata
- Class: Aves
- Order: Coraciiformes
- Family: Momotidae
- Genus: *Momotus*
- Species: *M. momota*

Interesting Facts

- Blue-crowned Motmot is the only one of 8 species of Motmots that can reproduce in human care.
- Can kill prey by beating it against its own perch until it is totally maimed, then swallowing it whole.
- Have been seen carrying objects that they can't eat to court a female.
- They go to sleep much later than most other birds and do not actually sleep in their burrows, but in the foliage.