

Cock-of-the-Rock

Rupicola peruviana

Anatomy

A beautiful orange crest adorns the head of the cock-of-the-rock and brilliant orange, black and white feathers cover its back and wings. As with most birds, the female coloring is subtler. Their strong claws and legs allow them to grip onto steep cliffs and rocks.

Habitat

Found in the Andes from Venezuela to Bolivia, the cock-of-the-rock lives only in mountainous regions and builds its nests on the rocky surfaces of cliffs, large boulders and caves.

Diet

The cock-of-the-rock's diet consists mainly of fruit. Often, these colorful birds do not digest the seeds of their fruity meals. Instead the seeds pass through their digestive tracks and are eventually scattered along the ground, making these birds extremely important seed dispersers. In addition to fruit, cocks-of-the-rock eat insects and small vertebrates.



Threats

Many predators are attracted to the cock-of-the-rock's beautiful plumage. These include birds of prey such as eagles and hawks, puma and jaguars and even boa constrictors. The loss of habitat, predominantly from forestland being converted to farmland, is a major threat to the survival of this brilliant bird.

Sources:

- Jukofsky, Diane. *Encyclopedia of Rainforests*. Connecticut: Oryx Press, 2002.
- Ecology Info: <http://www.ecology.info/cock-of-the-rock.htm>
- Houston Zoo: http://www.houstonzoo.org/Animal/searchAnimal.asp?scriptaction=searchkeyword&Category_ID=3