



Care For Us

*White-Rumped Shama (Copsychus
malabaricus)*

Animal Welfare

Animal welfare refers to an animal's state or feelings. An animal's welfare state can be positive, neutral or negative.

An animal's welfare has the potential to differ on a daily basis. When an animal's needs - nutritional, behavioural, health and environmental - are met, they will have a good standard of welfare.

A good life in captivity might be one where animals can consistently experience good welfare - throughout their entire life.





Understanding that animals have both sentient and cognitive abilities as well as pain perception, reinforces the need to provide appropriate husbandry provisions for all captive animals, to ensure positive welfare.

In captivity, the welfare of an animal is dependent on the environment provided for them and the daily care and veterinary treatment they receive.

White-rumped Shama are also known as Shama thrush and can be found in India and South East Asia. Although they are popularly kept as pets, their native habitat comprises of densely forested areas.

They are sexually dichromatic where the males and females show slightly different colourations. Males are much brighter in colour than females and have a complex mating call. They can reach an average age of between six and seven years old.

Their conservation status is least concern meaning their population is stable and numerous. However they are under threat from the demands of the pet trade where their welfare is often compromised due to poor care. They have also been introduced into several countries where they are considered an invasive species.



Shama like specific environments

Shama benefit from a habitat that closely resembles what they experience in the wild. They require a number of different trees for perching, and areas which are sheltered from the elements that can be used for nesting. Live trees which have leaves will provide opportunities for natural shelter. Ideal temperatures for shama range between 20°C and 30°C. Ideally, shaded areas should be provided to mimic life below the canopy.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

The opportunity to explore a spacious enclosure and fly freely between perches. A substrate such as bark chip will encourage foraging on the floor.





Shama like a varied diet

Shama eat a primarily insectivorous diet which can be replicated in captivity through the provision of an insectivorous pellet mix supplemented with small amounts of fruit and gut-loaded insects such as mealworms and crickets as well as chopped hard-boiled egg. Some components of the diet (e.g. calcium) may have different requirements at particular times of the year (e.g. nesting).

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Providing diets in a stimulating way which encourages foraging behaviours is vital. Feeding from multiple feed stations which are changed around regularly is a good way to achieve this, as well as scatter feeding across substrates on the floor.

Shama like to live in trees

Shama benefit from having living shrubs and trees in their enclosure. A selection of different sized perching made of various types of wood is essential for foot health. Some branches that move (e.g. swinging branches or tree branches that sway in the wind) will increase ankle strength and provide softer landing for the birds when flying onto the branch.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Giving birds the opportunity to choose within their environment is vital for their welfare. A selection of static and moving branches give the birds options as to where they want to rest as well as making use of shade from beneath living trees.



Shama have specialist breeding requirements.

Males will sing complex songs during the breeding season to attract a female. A pair will typically form a monogamous bond and the female will do most of the nest building. The incubation period is an average of 13 days and the chicks should fledge within a further 11 days. Chicks should be ringed and sexed before fledging and records of ring numbers kept.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Providing an assortment of potential nesting material such as hay, straw, small twigs and coconut fibres will encourage nesting. Providing small shelters or dense planting such as bamboo will provide a choice of potential nest sites.



Shama live in pairs.

Shama typically live in monogamous pairs but males can sometimes become aggressive towards females outside of the breeding season. It is important to monitor behaviours and remove females if aggression is shown. Shama should not be kept in large groups for this reason. Once fledged, individuals should be removed from their parents to prevent aggression.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Providing space and appropriate enclosure infrastructure to allow a pair to live together comfortably is important. Opportunity and space for individuals to get away from each other if required is essential to prevent increased aggression.

Shama can suffer stress easily.

Space, choice, stimulation and the encouragement of natural behaviours are all vital to ensure the welfare of shama. If birds are forced into close proximity with each other and humans without means of escape, they will become stressed. Equally if their enclosure is not suitable to meet all their environmental and behavioural needs, the welfare experienced by the birds will decrease. Coping behaviours such as stereotypical flying can be seen in extreme cases.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Providing an appropriate environment and spaces to hide away from humans will reduce potential stress levels in shama.



Shama enjoy

A suitable environment that promotes all their natural behaviours such as foraging, perching, and an appropriate social structure.

In captivity we should always try and replicate their natural and normal behaviours, so they are happy and healthy throughout their lives.

