MEET THEM AT PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

MOLUCCAN COCKATOO

Cacatua moluccensis · also called salmon-crested cockatoo

Teacher & Student Fact Sheet · **© 2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.**
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Fast facts

ANIMAL GROUP	Bird (parrot)
NATIVE REGION	Seram archipelago, Indonesia
HABITAT	Tropical forest, swamp forest and forest edge
DIET	Seeds, nuts, fruits and some insects
LENGTH	Up to 20 inches
WEIGHT	Up to 2 lb
LIFESPAN	About 40–60 years
STATUS	Endangered



Photo: Plumpton Park Zoo

Did you know?

- The Moluccan cockatoo is one of the largest white cockatoos.
- Its bright salmon-orange crest feathers stay hidden until the bird raises its crest.
- In the wild, Moluccan cockatoos live only in a small group of islands in eastern Indonesia.
- A cockatoo can use its beak like a third hand when it climbs.
- A typical clutch is two eggs, and both parents help raise the chicks.

Words to know

Crest: A tuft of feathers on top of a bird's head.
Endemic: Found naturally in only one place in the world.
Zygodactyl: Having two toes forward and two toes back.
Endangered: At risk of disappearing from the wild.

Think about it

1. Why is it also called the salmon-crested cockatoo?
2. What might a cockatoo be telling others when it raises its crest?
3. Where do Moluccan cockatoos live in the wild?
4. Why does protecting mature trees help cockatoos?
5. What are the main threats to Moluccan cockatoos?

Draw it

Draw a Moluccan cockatoo twice: once with its crest down and once with its crest raised. Label the crest, curved beak and zygodactyl feet.

STANDARDS · GRADES 3–4 **WRITTEN FOR GRADES 3–5**

Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1 · 3-LS4-3 · 3-LS4-4**
Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.3.G · 3.1.3.H**

Where it lives in the wild



Lives in the wild ★ Plumpton Park Zoo, Rising Sun, MD

Draw here

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/birds/moluccan-cockatoo-2/ · **Sources:** World Parrot Trust; BirdLife International.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: 4-LS1-1 (3.1.4.A) · 3-LS4-3 (3.1.3.G) · 3-LS4-4 (3.1.3.H)
Plumpton Park Zoo · 1416 Telegraph Rd, Rising Sun, MD 21911 · (410) 658-6850 · plumptonparkzoo.org · a 501(c)(3) nonprofit zoo

FIELD TRIP WORKSHEET · PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

MOLUCCAN COCKATOO

Before and after your visit

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Before you visit · 5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Predict: where in the wild does the Moluccan cockatoo live?

Circle one (or more if it lives on more than one):

Africa | Asia | Australia | Europe | North America | South America

2. Predict: what does it eat?

☐ plants ☐ other animals ☐ both

3. Word hunt: find these words on page 1. Put a check by each one you already know.

☐ Crest ☐ Endemic ☐ Zygodactyl ☐ Endangered

Pick one word and write what it means in your own words:

_____

_____

4. My question: one thing I want to find out when I see the Moluccan cockatoo.

_____

_____

At the zoo · look closely

Watch for one minute. What is it doing?

☐ resting ☐ eating ☐ moving ☐ watching ☐ with others

Draw or describe one body part that helps it survive, and say how it helps.

Draw here

After your visit · talk it over

1. Check your prediction. Native region: Seram archipelago, Indonesia. Was your guess right?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partly

2. Diet check. The fact sheet says: Seeds, nuts, fruits and some insects. What did you learn about how it finds or eats food?

_____

_____

3. Discuss with a partner, then write your best answer.

• What might a cockatoo be telling others when it raises its crest?

_____

• Where do Moluccan cockatoos live in the wild?

_____

4. Exit ticket.

One thing I learned: _____

One thing I still wonder: _____

ADJUST IT

Grades K–2: talk and draw instead of writing; read the questions aloud. **Grades 6–8:** add evidence from the fact sheet and the animal page to every answer.