MEET THEM AT PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

SILVER PHEASANT

Lophura nycthemera

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

ANIMAL GROUP	Bird (pheasant family, Phasianidae)
NATIVE REGION	Southeast Asia and southern China
HABITAT	Mostly mountain forests
DIET	Omnivore: seeds, fruit, leaves, grain, insects
LENGTH	Males 47 to 49 in; females about 28 in (tail included)
WEIGHT	Males 2.5 to 4.4 lb; females 2.5 to 2.9 lb
LIFESPAN	8 to 10 years in the wild
STATUS	Least Concern
OUR PHEASANTS	Hades and Persephone



Photo: Plumpton Park Zoo

Did you know?

- Males and females both have a bare red face and red legs.
- A male courts by beating his wings so fast they make a whirring, drumming sound.
- Young males are brownish at first and take about two years to grow their silver-and-black feathers.
- Scientists recognize 15 subspecies of silver pheasant.
- In imperial China, the silver pheasant was the badge of a fifth-rank civil official.

Words to know

Plumage: All of a bird's feathers.
Subspecies: A group within a species that lives in one area and looks a little different.
Territorial: Defending an area against others.
Clutch: A group of eggs laid at one time.

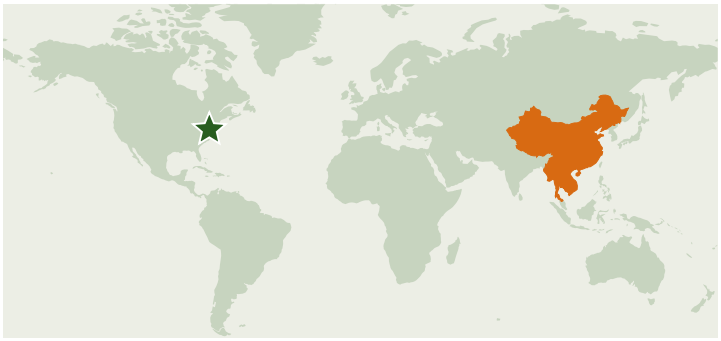
Think about it

1. How can you tell a male silver pheasant from a female?
2. What sound does a male make when he courts, and how does he make it?
3. Where do silver pheasants sleep at night, and why?
4. How long does it take a young male to grow his full adult feathers?
5. What did a silver pheasant badge mean in imperial China?

Draw it

Draw a male and a female silver pheasant side by side. Label the red face, the black crest, the male's long silver-white tail and the female's brown feathers.

Where it lives in the wild



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

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

Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **3-LS4-2 · 3-LS1-1 · 4-LS1-1**
Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.3.F · 3.1.3.A · 3.1.4.A**

Draw here

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/birds/silver-pheasant/ · **Sources:** Oiseaux-Birds; BirdLife International; Penn Museum; Alexandria Zoo; Plumpton Park Zoo species guide.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: 3-LS4-2 (3.1.3.F) · 3-LS1-1 (3.1.3.A) · 4-LS1-1 (3.1.4.A)
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SILVER PHEASANT

Before and after your visit

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Before you visit · 5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Predict: where in the wild does the silver pheasant 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.
☐ Plumage ☐ Subspecies ☐ Territorial ☐ Clutch

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 silver pheasant.

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: Southeast Asia and southern China. Was your guess right?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partly

2. Diet check. The fact sheet says: Omnivore: seeds, fruit, leaves, grain, insects. What did you learn about how it finds or eats food?

3. Discuss with a partner, then write your best answer.
- What sound does a male make when he courts, and how does he make it?
- Where do silver pheasants sleep at night, and why?

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.