

Name: _____

Pretty As a Peacock

By Guy Belleranti

Everyone knows peacocks are beautiful birds, but did you know that all peacocks are males? The smaller and much duller colored females are called peahens. Together, peacocks and peahens are called peafowl.

Why the differences in color? Well, the peacock uses its brightly colored train of feathers to catch the eyes of peahens. A peahen's duller coloration meanwhile provides camouflage so it can better protect its eggs and chicks.



A peacock can have 150 or even 200 shimmering feathers in its train. But it doesn't have this train all the time. Once the breeding season is over in late summer the peacock sheds these feathers. This is called molting.

zoos and
blue peacocks
in the country



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he

There is also the lesser known Congo peacock of Africa. While brightly colored, it doesn't have a long feather train, perhaps because it lives deep in the rainforest.

What do peacocks and peahens eat? Insects, seeds, grain, flower parts, leaves, berries, and small animals.

Wild peafowl roost in the trees at night, sometimes gathering into groups called parties. They have to watch out for predators like wild dogs and cats and even tigers and leopards. Peafowl can fly short distances to escape. They also make a lot of loud cries to warn others. A male peacock might even try to scare some predators by fanning out its tail to look larger.

A wild peacock usually has a harem of several peahens. The peahen lays three to eight eggs on the ground in dirt or leaves. These eggs are about three times larger than chicken eggs. The peahen incubates the eggs for 28 days and stays with the young until they are ready to care for themselves.

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1. Peacocks are usually...
- a. more colorful than peahens
 - b. the largest species of bird
 - c. able to fly long distances
 - d. much larger than peafowl

2. Name seven things peacocks eat.
-

3. What's the difference between a peacock and a peahen?
-

4. Alvin told his teacher that his grandpa has a farm with a green peacock on it. He said the peacock laid half-a-dozen eggs last weekend. His teacher said, "I don't believe this is true."



- 5.
- b. about a month
 - c. a couple of months
 - d. Peahens do not incubate their eggs?
6. How do the eggs that are normally eaten by people compare to peafowl eggs?
- a. The eggs people eat are usually larger than peafowl eggs.
 - b. The eggs people eat are usually smaller than peafowl eggs.
 - c. The eggs people eat are usually more colorful than peafowl eggs.
 - d. The eggs people eat are usually more lightweight than peafowl eggs.

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.



1. _____

h p e e a n

hint: female peafowl

2. _____

l e d l r u

hint: less bright

3. _____

g n e m i r i s h m

hint: shining in the light

4. _____



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5. _____

6. _____

e c k c n h i

hint: animals that lay most of the eggs eaten by people

7. _____

n d H i u

hint: major religion in India

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In the article, "Pretty As a Peacock", you learned many facts about peacocks and peahens. The author also mentions that some people have peafowl as pets.



Would you want a peacock as a pet? Explain why or why not.



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ANSWER KEY

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1. Peacocks are usually... **a**
- a. **more colorful than peahens**
 - b. the largest species of bird
 - c. able to fly long distances
 - d. much larger than peafowl

2. Name seven things peacocks eat.

insects, seeds, grain, flower parts, leaves, berries, and small animals

3. What's the difference between a peacock and a peahen?

A peacock is a male peafowl. A peahen is a female peafowl.

4. Alvin told his teacher that his grandpa has a farm with a green peacock on it. He said the peacock laid half-a-dozen eggs last weekend. His teacher said, "I don't believe this is true." Why doesn't Alvin's teacher believe Alvin?

Peacocks don't lay eggs. Peahens lay eggs.

5.



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- 6.
- a. The eggs people eat are usually larger than peafowl eggs.
 - b. **The eggs people eat are usually smaller than peafowl eggs.**
 - c. The eggs people eat are usually more colorful than peafowl eggs.
 - d. The eggs people eat are usually more lightweight than peafowl eggs.

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.

1. peahen

h p e e a n

hint: female peafowl

2. duller

l e d l r u

hint: less bright

3. shimmering

g n e m i r i s h m

hint: shining in the light

4. in



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5. sc

6. chicken

e c k c n h i

hint: animals that lay most of the eggs eaten by people

7. Hindu

n d H i u

hint: major religion in India