

Displays of the Red Bird-of-Paradise
Paradisaea rubra and their significance,
with a discussion on displays and
systematics of other Paradisaeidae.



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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DISPLAYS OF THE RED BIRD-OF-PARADISE *PARADISAEA RUBRA* AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE, WITH A DISCUSSION ON DISPLAYS AND SYSTEMATICS OF OTHER PARADISAEIDAE

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Abstract

The calls, displays and other behaviour of a captive population of Red Birds-of-paradise *Paradisaea rubra* are described and illustrated. Various loud advertisement calls are very similar to those of congeneric species but a peculiar display call is considered unique. Brightly coloured flank-plumes conspicuously used in display by congeneric species

appear to be relics in *P. rubra* because postures performed by it do not emphasize them but predominantly exhibit peculiar adornments on the head. The sequence in the display observed appears to be more complex than any previously described for *Paradisaeidae* and is quite distinct from that of other *Paradisaea* species, contrary to previous opinion.

Displacement Bill-wiping and visual food-searching have probably reached ritualized significance in this display of *P. rubra*. Several ethological characters found in *P. rubra* also occur in *Cicinnurus regius* and *Diphyllodes* spp. With regard to *Cicinnurus* these similarities are stressed because the relationship between it and *Paradisaea* (as previously been considered obscure but is possibly closer than believed. On ethological evidence *Cicinnurus* and *Diphyllodes* are probably best treated at present as a distinct group closer to *Paradisaea* than to the group *Lophorina*, *Parotia* and *Pteridophora*.

The uniform cryptic coloration of females in polygynous birds-of-paradise is probably the result of convergent evolution, correlated with the fact that only females attend nests.

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