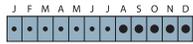


OSTRICHES *Struthionidae*

Large, flightless, cursorial birds that lack a keeled sternum for attachment of flight muscles. The wings are vestigial, and the feathers lack barbules. Ostriches have evolved powerful, elongate legs (with two toes on each foot) that enable them to attain running speeds of 70 km/h (43 mi/h) and make them the fastest animal on two legs. Their eyes are the largest of any vertebrate (five times the size of a human eye) and endow them with superb eyesight. This is a monogeneric family represented in Botswana by the southern African subspecies *S. c. australis*.



COMMON OSTRICH *Struthio camelus*

Setswana: mpshe, mmampshe, ntshwe, mmantshwe, ntšhe, mmantshwê

200 cm (78 ¾ in). **Identification:** Male has predominantly black plumage but white wings and white or buffy tail; breeding male has red on bill and red scales on lower leg (tarsus). Female and immature are uniform gray-brown. Juvenile is covered in prickly, camouflaging down. **Call:** Low-frequency, trisyllabic, booming *hoom hoom hoooo*. Suggestive of a distant lion's roar. **Status:** Resident, breeding. Egg-laying peaks from August to December, but the species breeds opportunistically throughout year. **Abundance:** Uncommon over most of its range but common in Central Kalahari Game Reserve, around Makgadikgadi Pans, and throughout Kgalegadi District. **Habitat:** Occurs in open, short-grass plains and arid savannas. **Habits:** The species is herbivorous. Breeding is polygynous; alpha male and female start nest on ground, but other females also lay in same nest. Male incubates at night, alpha female during day. **Conservation:** Least Concern.

GUINEAFOWLS *Numididae*

A family of terrestrial gallinaceous birds that have white-spotted gray plumage and are virtually devoid of feathers on the head and neck. Sexes are alike. Guinea fowls nest on the ground; the young (called "keets") are precocial and join the large flocks of adults soon after hatching. The birds roost in trees at night; they have a well-developed hind claw that enables perching (but they lack the spurs of game birds of family Phasianidae, p. 30). The family is endemic to Africa; two genera and two species are resident in Botswana, although the range of one extends only marginally into Botswana.



HELMETED GUINEAFOWL *Numida meleagris*

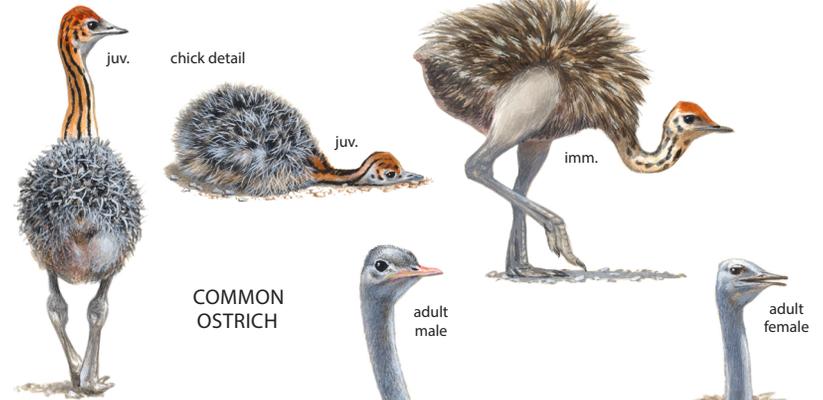
Setswana: kgaka

56 cm (22 in). **Identification:** Terrestrial game bird. Plumage is charcoal gray with white spots. Combination of bare blue head with bony casque and red-tipped wattles distinguishes this species from Crested Guineafowl. The three subspecies (*N. m. mitratus*, *N. m. papillosus*, *N. m. coronatus*) differ subtly in casque shape and size and in the shade of blue on the face. **Call:** Raucous, staccato alarm rattle; during breeding season produces a more musical, though repetitive, bisyllabic whistle, similar in cadence to *buck-wheat, buck-wheat*. **Status:** Resident, breeding. In years of good rainfall, breeding may continue past the summer peak until May. **Abundance:** Common in northern Botswana, parts of central Botswana, and in the eastern hardveld. All three southern African subspecies occur: *N. m. mitratus* in the eastern part of the country, *N. m. papillosus* in the northwest, and *N. m. coronatus* in the southwest (the first two are common, the last is uncommon). **Habitat:** Occurs in a variety of woodland types, both broad-leaved and acacia-dominated, in areas with dense grass cover and access to water. **Habits:** Occurs in pairs during breeding season, in large flocks (100-plus) during remainder of year. **Conservation:** Least Concern. Classified as a game bird; may be hunted from April to September.

CRESTED GUINEAFOWL *Guttera pucherani*

Setswana: kgaka

50 cm (19 ¾ in). **Identification:** Terrestrial game bird. Plumage is charcoal gray with pale blue spots. Red eyes. Tuft of black feathers on crown is diagnostic. **Call:** Noisy *chick-chock, chick-chock churrrr*. **Status:** Visitor; no breeding records from Botswana. **Abundance:** Rare. The bulk of the population occurs beyond the borders of Botswana; its range extends up the Zambezi Valley, entering Botswana in the vicinity of the Chobe River. **Habitat:** A forest species, found in riparian woodlands in Botswana. **Habits:** Gregarious, forages on ground but roosts in trees at night. **Conservation:** Least Concern.



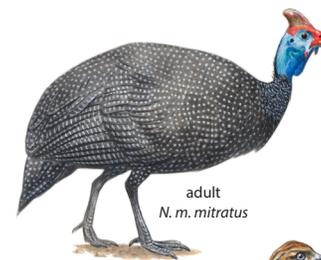
COMMON OSTRICH

adult male

adult female



subadult

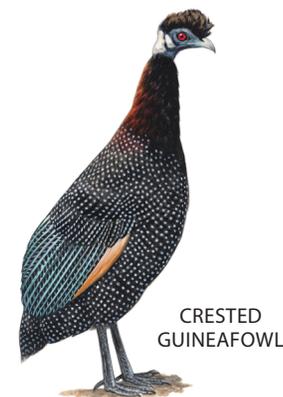


adult
N. m. mitratus

HELMETED GUINEAFOWL



juv.



CRESTED GUINEAFOWL