

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Passeriformes
Scientific Name: *Thraupis episcopus*

Family: Thraupidae
Common Name: Blue-grey Tanager

AZA Management: ☐ Green ☒ Yellow ☐ Red ☐ None

Photo (Male):



Photo (Female):



NATURAL HISTORY:

Geographic Range:	Europe	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asia	<input type="checkbox"/>	North America	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neotropical	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Africa	<input type="checkbox"/>	Australia	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	Central and northern South America		
Habitat:	Forest	<input type="checkbox"/>	Desert	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grassland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coastal	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Riverine	<input type="checkbox"/>	Montane	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other	Broad spectrum of essentially non-forest habitats, including all kinds of settled areas, plantations, city parks, gardens, young to old second growth, forest borders, savannas with scattered trees, waste areas and margins of rivers and lakes in dry to humid regions;		

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everywhere thrives in man-altered habitats.

Circadian Cycle: Diurnal ☒ Crepuscular ☐ Nocturnal ☐ Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Cold Tolerance: To 70° F ☐ To 60° F ☐ To 50° F ☐ To 40° F ☒
 To 30° F ☐ To 20° F ☒ Other ☐ This species is cold tolerant to 40 degrees if supplemental heat is provided. Be aware that wet or windy conditions will likely decrease the cold tolerance of this species

Heat Tolerance: To 30° F ☐ To 50° F ☐ To 70° F ☐ To 90° F ☒
 To 110° F ☐ Other ☐ Warmer temperature are tolerated depending on airflow, humidity, and the amount of shade offered.

Diet: Frugivore ☐ Carnivore ☐ Piscivore ☐ Insectivore ☐
 Nectivore ☐ Omnivore ☒ Folivore ☐ Other (Add Below) ☐

Captive Dietary Needs:

A wide variety of fruit with special preference for softer fruits such as banana, ripe papaya, blueberries. Complete avian softbill pelleted diets are readily available. Feeder insects such as mealworms, waxworms, fly larvae, soldierfly larvae, butter worms, and small crickets are well received and must be provided during chick rearing specifically. All insects fed out should be supplementally fed, particularly when chicks are being reared otherwise there is a strong risk for metabolic bone issues.

Life Expectancy in the Wild:	Males:	No published information for wild birds	Females:	No published information for wild birds
Life Expectancy in Captivity:	Males:	Median life span is 4.7 years, longevity is 26 years.	Females:	Median life span is 4.7 years, longevity is 26 years.

BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity: Males: [Click here to enter text.](#) Females: Estimated at 10 months

Courtship Displays: No specific courtship behaviors have been documented. Further research is needed.

Nest Site Description: Breeding season is typically March through September but reproduction has taken place in every month of the year in the captive population. Pairs will build their own nest but it is suggested that small wicker baskets be provided for them to use if they choose. In off exhibit breeding areas simple sight barriers can be provided to help pairs feel comfortable to nest. In larger aviaries with a varied population of other birds this species will prefer to

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nest in the cover of trees or large shrubs. Their nests and chicks will easily fall prey to other more predatory species they may be housed with.

Clutch Size, Egg Description: 1-3 eggs that are whitish to greyish-green with brown or darker markings.

Incubation Period: 12-14 days

Fledgling Period: 17-18 days

Parental Care: Both parents will feed the chicks. Typically offspring can be kept with the parents until they reach maturity at 8-10 months of age. This can vary with individuals. It is not unusual to be able to hold offspring from multiple clutches together with parents while they are nesting and rearing new chicks.

Chick Development: Chicks are altricial. When they fledge they are at risk of many hazards such as water features, guest traffic, and aggression from enclosure mates. Juveniles have been kept with their parents through successive clutches but each individual pair is different and you should watch for any signs of parental aggression starting at 30 days of age. In most cases it is not recommended to keep offspring with their parents past eight months due to heightened aggression possibilities as the juveniles mature.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Is found in mixed species tanager flocks outside of breeding season, typically found in pairs when breeding.

Social Structure in Captivity: Typically kept in pairs or single sex flocks

Minimum Group Size: Can be kept singly when kept with other tanagers but recommended to be kept at least in pairs-single sex or breeding pairs. If being housed in single sex flocks they should be kept in groups of six or more otherwise you will see increased aggression.

Maximum Group Size: This depends on the aviary size. Single sex flocks of over 12 individuals have been successfully kept.

Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits: Yes

Comments: This species is highly compatible with many other passerine species but reproduction can be challenging in mixed species aviaries.

Optimal Habitat Size: Adapts well to many situations. Has settled into and successfully bred in aviaries as small as 4'x8'x8' tall.

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Management Challenges: If kept in a large aviary it is critical that a feed trap or introduction cage be used. These can be as small as 3'x3'x3' but is best if a larger cage can be used. This is of course dependent on the space available. Successful management of this species requires the ability to safely and easily capture individuals when needed. For introductions an intro-cage is a must. The highest number of non-infant mortalities occur in this species shortly within being introduced to mixed species aviaries. It is critical to give them a soft introduction and best if the intro-cage is big enough to house several birds at once so that single birds are not being introduced alone. In many cases trapping in similar sized birds off exhibit and housing them together with new birds will increase the likelihood of their survival. It is also critical not to introduce birds that are too young as they do not have the skills to cope with trying to fight into an established aviary community. For best success introduce birds after they are 10-12 months old. Again, it cannot be stressed too much that for proper management of the health and welfare of this species a feed/trap/introduction cage is a necessity!

Can be susceptible to avian mycobacterium, aspergillosis, and systemic coccidiosis (formerly referred to as Atoxoplasmosis). When provided with a high iron diet this species is susceptible to iron storage disease. If reproducing birds do not receive enough vitamin D in their diet and don't have ready access to UV lighting chick mortality will be high.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

There are 14 blue-grey tanager sub-species identified. Due to the lack of information available for many of the founders in the SSP population, the species is managed at the species level.

REFERENCES:

Isler, M. L., and P. R. Isler. 1987. The Tanagers. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.

<https://www.hbw.com/species/blue-grey-tanager-tangara-episcopus>

<https://neotropical.birds.cornell.edu/Species-Account/nb/species/bugtan/overview>

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COMPLETED BY:

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Date: 3/17/2019