

This is one of the most beautiful and colorful birds from Central America. It is called a Quetzal.



Some more fun facts about the Quetzal:

- The Quetzal (pronounced ket-sal), makes its nest about 20-40 feet off the ground, where the birds will lay its eggs and raise its young.
- The growing chicks are fed mostly small invertebrates, amphibians, and reptiles, but begin to eat fruit as they mature. Less than 20 percent of the young survive to leave the nest.
- Toucans, jays, squirrels, and weasels are some of the predators that young quetzals have to avoid.
- The Quetzal's tail feathers are what make this bird so unique. Their tail feathers can grow to be over 2 feet in length (that's about three times the bird's body length!)
- The tail feathers of a male quetzal were once used as money as far north as New Mexico and as far south as the Andes. Because of their value as money, it was forbidden by the Mayans to kill a Quetzal.
- The Quetzal is the symbol of liberty in Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and El Salvador, much like the Bald Eagle is to the United States
- Due to habitat loss and over-hunting, the Quetzal is becoming harder to view in the wild. But, the more we learn about these birds, the more we can appreciate them and protect them from extinction.