

# Blue Crane

*Anthropoides paradiseus*



The Blue Crane is South Africa's National Bird, it occurs mainly in South Africa with a small population of less than 40 birds occurring in Namibia. It is an unmistakable large blue-grey crane with a bulbous shape, pale head and long flowing underwing feathers extending like a tail almost to the ground. Their legs are dark-grey to black, and the bill is relatively short compared to most other cranes as it is adapted for dry land foraging.



## HABITAT

The Blue Crane prefers short grasslands and is the least dependant on wetland habitats for breeding and foraging. Blue Cranes have highest population numbers in the Western Cape and the wheat and barley agricultural lands of the Karoo.

## FOOD

Blue Cranes mostly forage in grasslands and wetlands, with their natural diet consisting of small bulbs, seeds and sedges, roots, insects, worms, crabs, fish, frogs, and reptiles. They also feed on crops such as wheat, oats, sorghum, sunflower and lucerne pastures.



## BREEDING

Blue Cranes nest from October to February utilising a scrape on bare or rocky ground on grassy ridges, grasslands and sometimes wet areas. The nest may be lined or ringed with plant material and small stones. A clutch of 2-4 eggs is laid, generally 2 to 3 days apart. Incubation period is approximately 30 days, with both sexes sharing the incubation.

## STATUS

At present there are around 25 000 Blue Cranes in South Africa. THEY ARE CLASSIFIED AS VULNERABLE.

## THREATS

Habitat destruction and alteration – grassland and wetland habitat loss is due to mining, forestry, crop farming, overgrazing, drainage/damming of wetlands and industrial developments.

Poisoning – This can occur through intentional poisoning of cranes that cause crop damage. This can also occur unintentionally when farm workers bait grain for gamebirds.

Illegal Trade – Crane chicks are stolen from the wild to be kept as pets, for food or for sale to the captive trade.

Power lines – Cranes are injured or killed when colliding with power lines or are electrocuted on pylons.

## HOW WE HELP:

The African Crane Conservation Programme of the Endangered Wildlife Trust focuses on crane habitat conservation, conservation-based scientific research, environmental education and awareness, risk assessments and threat mitigation and reducing unnatural crane mortalities.

For queries, donations or to report a sighting in your area, phone 011-3723600 or email: [crane@ewt.org.za](mailto:crane@ewt.org.za).

To learn more about the Endangered Wildlife Trust please visit our website: [www.ewt.org.za](http://www.ewt.org.za)



# Grey Crowned Crane

*Balearica regulorum*

That shining golden crown, the beautiful burst of feathers around the head, the spectacular appearance of these birds makes them vulnerable to removal from their homes in the wild.

## HABITAT

Grey Crowned Cranes require mixed wetland-grassland habitats. Within South Africa, the largest population of Grey Crowned Cranes is found in the northern Eastern Cape and southern KwaZulu-Natal. They are, however found throughout the grasslands of KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Eastern Free State.

## FOOD

The diet of the Grey Crowned Crane is generally omnivorous, consisting of insects, seeds and other invertebrates in their natural habitat. Their preference for foraging in agricultural lands of sprouting or ripening maize, other cereal crops, or even cabbage, causes them to be widely regarded as a crop pest.



## BREEDING

Grey Crowned Cranes breed in the summer months with a peak in egg laying around November/December. They typically nest within or on the edges of wetlands with tall reed beds so that the nest is concealed from predators. The Grey Crowned Crane has the largest average clutch size of any crane, with up to four eggs being laid. Both parents incubate the eggs for a period of 28 to 31 days.

## STATUS

At present there are around 4 500 Grey Crowned Cranes in South Africa. THEY ARE CLASSIFIED AS VULNERABLE.

## THREATS

Habitat destruction and alteration – Wetland habitat loss is due to mining, forestry, crop farming, overgrazing, drainage/damming of wetlands and industrial developments.

Poisoning – This can occur through intentional poisoning of cranes that cause crop damage. This can also occur unintentionally when farm workers bait grain for gamebirds.

Illegal Trade – Crane chicks are stolen from the wild to be kept as pets, for food or to sell to captive bird market.

Power lines – Cranes are injured or killed when colliding with power lines or are electrocuted on pylons.

## HOW WE HELP:

The African Crane Conservation Programme of The Endangered Wildlife Trust focuses on crane habitat conservation, conservation-based scientific research, environmental education and awareness, risk assessments and threat mitigation and reducing unnatural crane mortalities.

For queries, donations or to report a sighting in your area, phone 011-3723600 or email: crane@ewt.org.za.

To learn more about The Endangered Wildlife Trust please visit our website: [www.ewt.org.za](http://www.ewt.org.za)



ENDANGERED  
WILDLIFE TRUST

[www.ewt.org.za](http://www.ewt.org.za)





# Wattled Crane

*Bufo carunculatus*

The Wattled Crane is a large, grey and white crane with distinctive whitish wattles below the chin edged by red at the front. The belly is black as are the legs and feet. The eyes are orange-yellow and the bill light reddish brown.

## HABITAT

The Wattled Crane requires wetlands for both breeding and foraging. Permanently inundated wetlands with primarily sedge-based vegetation are preferred.

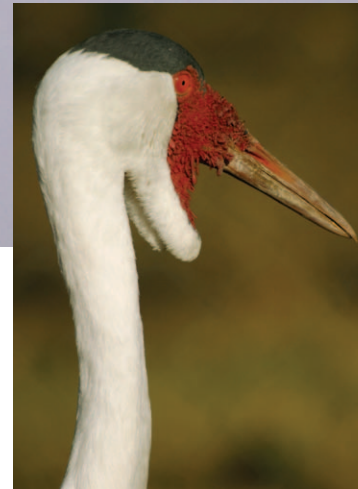


## FOOD

The Wattled Crane is primarily a specialised vegetarian, foraging in wetland habitats for sedge, rhizomes, water-lilies, nutgrass and water grass. It also feeds on grasshoppers, crickets and locusts.

## BREEDING

Wattled Cranes mainly breed in winter between May and August, although breeding activity has been recorded in all months of the year. Nets are constructed in permanently saturated wetlands. The Wattled Crane's reproductive rate is low. Pairs may lay either one or two eggs in a clutch, laid at three to four day intervals. However only one chick is raised. The incubation period is 36 to 40 days.



## STATUS

At present there are more or less 240 Wattled Cranes in South Africa. THEY ARE CLASSIFIED AS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED.

## THREATS

Habitat destruction and alteration – Wetland habitat loss is due to mining, forestry, crop farming, overgrazing, drainage/damming of wetlands and industrial developments.

Poisoning – This can occur through intentional poisoning of cranes that cause crop damage. This can also occur unintentionally when farm workers bait grain for gamebirds.

Power lines – Cranes are injured or killed when colliding with power lines.

## HOW WE HELP:

The African Crane Conservation Programme of the

Endangered Wildlife Trust focuses on crane habitat conservation, conservation-based scientific research, environmental education and awareness, risk assessments and threat mitigation and reducing unnatural crane mortalities.

For queries, donations or to report a sighting in your area, phone 011-3723600 or email: crane@ewt.org.za.

To learn more about the Endangered Wildlife Trust please visit our website: [www.ewt.org.za](http://www.ewt.org.za)

