



Blue Crane

(Anthropoides paradiseus)

South Africa's National bird

DESCRIPTION

A large blue grey crane with a light, bulbous shaped head with long flowing underwing feathers. Eyes are dark. Legs are dark grey and the bill is pale brown. They have a wingspan of 1.8 - 2m, stand 1 - 1.2m high and weigh between 3 - 6kgs. They are monogamous with a lifespan of approx 30 years and are endemic to South Africa with a small population in Namibia.

HABITAT

They prefer short grasslands and agricultural lands. They are the least dependant on wetlands for breeding and foraging.

BREEDING

They are summer breeders. Will lay 2 - 4 eggs and can rear more than one chick. Eggs are laid 3 days apart and incubate for approx 30 days. They nest in grasslands, agricultural fields and wetlands. Nests are normally a scrape in the ground lined by a few sticks & stones

FOOD

They are omnivores, mainly eating tubers and rhizomes but will also eat grasshoppers, crabs, snails and frogs. They also feed on crops like wheat, oats, canola, sorghum and lucerne.

THREATS

Jackal, serval, mongoose, power lines, habitat loss due to mining, forestry, crop farming, overgrazing, draining/damming of wetland, illegal trade and poisonings



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