



Grey Crowned Crane

(Balearica regulorum)

DESCRIPTION

The smallest of the three cranes. A beautiful colourful crane with a golden crown, black head with white cheeks, tiny red patch near the ear, a red throat wattle called a gular sac, long grey neck, with black, white and rufous coloured wings and long grey legs. It is the ONLY crane that has a fourth toe which enables it to hold onto a tree branch.

HABITAT

They require mixed wetland and grassland habitats as well as agricultural lands. They roost in wetlands or trees at night.

BREEDING

They are summer breeders, from September to approx. March. Will lay up to 4 eggs and can rear more than one chick. Eggs are laid 3 days apart and incubate for 28-31 days. They nest in wetlands mainly using bullrushes and tall reeds.

FOOD

They are omnivores, mainly feeding on insects, seeds and other invertebrates. They have a preference for foraging in agricultural lands on sprouting or ripening maize and other cereals crops.

THREATS

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



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