

# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Gruiformes  
**Scientific Name:** *Antigone vipio*

**Family:** Gruidae  
**Common Name:** White-naped crane

**AZA Management:**  Green  Yellow  Red  None



**NATURAL HISTORY:**

**Geographic Range:** Europe  Asia  North America  Neotropical   
 Africa  Australia  Other  [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Habitat:** Forest  Desert  Grassland  Coastal   
 Riverine  Montane  Other  Wetlands

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

To 70° F  To 60° F  To 50° F  To 40° F

**Cold Tolerance:** To 30° F  To 20° F  Other   
 Winter hardy but should be provided with running water and shelter in severe winter weather. Cranes will roost in pools at night and this will protect toes from frostbite. May have difficulty navigating through deep snow

**Heat Tolerance:** To 30° F  To 50° F  To 70° F  To 90° F   
 To 110° F  Other  Heat tolerant but provide areas of shade, misting, and pools in hot climates.

# Species Fact Sheets

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

## Captive Dietary Needs:

Pelleted diets such as Mazuri and Ziegler crane diets work well. Supplement with gut-loaded insects, meat, fish and other vegetable products. Increase protein items during chick rearing. Increase calcium during egg production (oyster shell works well) and during chick development (sprinkle oyster powder on supplemental food).

**Life Expectancy in the Wild:** Males: 19-27+ years Females: 19-27+ years

**Life Expectancy in Captivity:** Males: 40-60 years Females: 40-60 years

## BREEDING INFORMATION:

**Age at Sexual Maturity:** Males: 2-3 years but can take longer Females: 2-3 years but can take longer

**Courtship Displays:** Unison calling; dancing. Breeding season in the wild is the spring season in range countries. Breeding season in North America is February through July.

**Nest Site Description:** Nests in wetlands, nests made of dry grasses and other available materials. In captivity, will nest by side of water features or in other areas in exhibits. Often makes a nest of grasses, sticks, and other natural vegetation. Cranes will attempt to build up nests during flooding, but may lose nest if waters get too high. Both sexes incubate and care for chicks.

**Clutch Size, Egg Description:** 2 brownish-green eggs

**Incubation Period:** 29-32 days

**Fledgling Period:** About 3 months

**Parental Care:** Both parents care for the chick(s). Parent raising or fostering to other white-naped cranes preferred. Contact SSP coordinator if considering other methods.

**Chick Development:** Precocial downy chick, attains juvenile plumage and flight by late summer in order to migrate with the parents. Attains adult coloring by the end of the 2nd summer. Great horn owls can prey on young chicks. If this is an issue in your area, covering pen would be best option. Follow a strict preventative parasite treatment program— young crane chicks are often susceptible to parasites, which can be easily prevented.

## CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

**Social Structure in the Wild:** Pairs at nesting time; congregate in groups at staging and migration time.

**Social Structure in Captivity:** Can only be kept in pairs

## Species Fact Sheets

**Minimum Group Size:** 1 pair

**Maximum Group Size:** 1.1.2. Young need to be removed by January or the adults may injure/kill the chicks at the beginning of the next nesting season; as early as February of the the next year.

**Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:** Yes

**Comments:** Can be exhibited with certain hoofstock, only recommend parent-reared individuals. Can mix with waterfowl and geese. Cranes will become much more aggressive to keepers and other species when nesting and chick-rearing.

**Optimal Habitat Size:** Enclosures should be as large as possible to allow cranes their own space and to get away from keepers and other species-a minimum of 500 sq ft. Cranes kept in smaller spaces may display aggression against mate or young. Cranes can be aggressive in inside holding facilities, so space should be separated to allow individual space for each crane.

**Management Challenges:** Maintaining in mixed species exhibits; managing birds if flighted, breeding and infertility can be a challenge.

More zoos need to have space and staff for AI program. Staff should learn artificial insemination-a fairly basic procedure-so they can do at their facility if there is a need.

Should be able to hold young away from parents for at least 2 years (in order to give SSP time to find juveniles their next home).

### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Endangered. Less than 5000 remain in the wild. Populations locally rare and disappearing. Major threats are fire, loss of habitat, encroachment of human development, power line deaths, hunting fatalities, proposed dams that will affect nesting areas and lack of suitable wetlands for nesting. Wintering areas where large numbers of birds congregate can be a potential for disease outbreaks.

Males are slightly larger than females, but sexes look alike. Sexes can be distinguished by watching wing placement during unison calls. Male drops his primaries and the female holds her wings tight against her body.

Photo courtesy of SCBI staff-sexes look similar.

# Species Fact Sheets

---

## REFERENCES:

Excellent husbandry manual: Cranes, Their Biology, husbandry, and conservations, edited by Ellis, Gee, and Mirande. Link is available on AZA website.

Birdlife International 2017 fact sheet.

Longevity data provided by Dr. Ozaki, Yamashina Institute for Ornithology and Mr. Nishida. 2014.

Click here to enter text.

Click here to enter text.

Click here to enter text.

Click here to enter text.

Click here to enter text.

Click here to enter text.

## COMPLETED BY:

Name: Carol Hesch, White-naped Crane SSP Coordinator

Date: 2/23/2017