

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Gruiformes
Scientific Name: *Balearica regulorum*

Family: Gruidae
Common Name: Grey crowned crane

AZA Management: Green Yellow Red None

Photo (Monomorphic):



Photo (Chick):



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 Wetland, Marsh

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

Cold Tolerance: To 70° F To 60° F To 50° F To 40° F
 To 30° F To 20° F Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Heat Tolerance: To 30° F To 50° F To 70° F To 90° F
 To 110° F Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

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Diet:	Frugivore <input type="checkbox"/>	Carnivore <input type="checkbox"/>	Piscivore <input type="checkbox"/>	Insectivore <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Nectivore <input type="checkbox"/>	Omnivore <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Folivore <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Add Below) <input type="checkbox"/>

Captive Dietary Needs:

Principal foods of the Grey Crowned Crane include tips of grasses, seeds, insects, and other invertebrates, and small vertebrates. They also forage in croplands for groundnuts, soybeans, maize, and millet. In captivity crowned cranes are maintained on a base diet of crane pellets supplemented with insects and vegetable matter.

Life Expectancy in the Wild:	Males: Click here to enter text.	Females: Click here to enter text.
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Life Expectancy in Captivity:	Males: In captivity, birds can live into their 30's and 40's.	Females: In captivity, birds can live into their 30's and 40's.
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BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity:	Males: 3 (rarely 2) years	Females: 3 (rarely 2) years
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Courtship Displays:	Cranes are well known for their elaborate courtship “dances”, a series of bows, jumping, and stick/grass tossing. The main vocalization is a booming call where the crane will inflate the gular sac underneath its chin and push the air out. This calling is done with the head laid against the top of the neck and then tilted back. The crane also produces peculiar honks that are quite different from the loud, bugling calls of other crane species that have much longer coiled tracheas.
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Nest Site Description:	Nesting usually occurs in wetlands where the vegetation is of a significant height to conceal the cranes on their nests. Nests consist of uprooted grasses and sedges piled and flattened into a circular platform.
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Clutch Size, Egg Description:	Grey-crowned Cranes have the largest average clutch size (2-5) of any cranes. Clutch size can vary with altitude.
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Incubation Period:	Incubation lasts 28-31 days.
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Fledgling Period:	Chicks fledge (first flight) at 56-100 days.
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Parental Care:	Both parents share incubation, brooding and rearing of the chick(s).
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Chick Development:	Juveniles are generally grayish, the upper body feathers are edged with rufous, and the lower body feathers are sandy buff. The nape is brown, the face is feathered and buffy, and the crown is spiky and golden buff. Chicks grow rapidly reaching full adult height by 4 months of age.
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CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Monogamous pairs. Gregarious flocks ranging from a few birds up to 200 birds during non-breeding periods.

Social Structure in Captivity: Monogamous pairs, family group, usually parents and offspring.

Minimum Group Size: 1 pair

Maximum Group Size: Dependent on the size of the enclosure space.

Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits: Yes

Comments:

Crowned cranes have commonly been mixed with other taxa. Suitability of different exhibit mates has not yet been examined. Most cranes species are housed independently for safety and breeding reasons.

Optimal Habitat Size: Enclosures should be as large as possible. It is recommended that enclosures be elongated, that is enclosure longer (depth) than wide. This provides birds with opportunity to move as far away from people as possible. It is recommended that enclosures be in the 40 ft (13.5 m) x 60 ft (20 m) range. Enclosure height needs to be 7 ft (2.3 m) to 8 ft (2.6 m). Top netting the enclosure is highly recommended at these heights and must be netted where the enclosure height is below the recommended height. Additionally, it is strongly recommended to hotwire (electric wire) at the top of the fence to deter climbing predators (with or without netting). Likewise, a dig proof barrier is installed at the bottom of the fence to deter digging predators. Vinyl-coated 16-gauge over 11-gauge chain-link is recommended. The best practical material is 2" (5 cm) mesh 11 gauge galvanized steel chain-link. Aluminum is better, but more expensive than galvanized.

Management Challenges: Management issues for this species are just starting to be examined. Cranes, especially hand-raised, may become aggressive to keepers.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Males and females are monomorphic. Males may be slightly taller and heavier than females. The Grey Crowned Crane is about 1 m (3.3 ft) tall and weighs 3.5 kg (7.7 lbs). Confirming gender is best accomplished through DNA testing.

While this is considered the most abundant of the African crane species Grey crowned-crane are still classified as Endangered (Cites II) due to a rapidly declining population. Overall estimates for the global population were as high as 100,000 pairs in 1985 but have declined to an estimated 50,000 pairs currently. These declines have been steepest in Kenya, Uganda, and South Africa. In addition, significant range contractions have been noted in South Africa, Namibia, and Zambia.

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Although habitat loss, drought related changes in land use, and poisoning have played a role in these declines it is the illegal removal from the wild of both birds and eggs, primarily for international trade for private and public collections, that is their main threat.

REFERENCES:

Ellis, David H., Gee, George F, & Mirande, Claire M. editors Cranes: Their Biology, Husbandry, and Conservation

International Crane Foundation, <http://www.savingcranes.org/grey-crowned-crane.html>

Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, <http://www.npwrc.usgu.gov/resource/birds/cranes/baleregu.htm>

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COMPLETED BY:

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