

Red Crowned Crane

Scientific Name: *Grus japonensis*

Class: Aves

Order: Gruiformes

Family: Gruidae



The Red-Crowned Crane is one of the world's largest cranes, measuring about 5 feet tall and 3 to 5 feet from bill to tail tip. On average it is the heaviest crane species. Typical body weight can range from 11 to 23 pounds. Wing span averages between 7 and 8 feet. Males are slightly larger than females. The cranes are named for a patch of red bare skin on the crown, which becomes brighter during mating season. Mostly their feathers are snow white in color with black on the wing secondaries, which appear almost like a black tail when the birds are standing. They have been declining in number due to loss of habitat. It is a highly aquatic species that feeds in deeper water than other cranes.

Range

Siberia, China, Mongolia, Russia, the Korean Peninsula and East-Central Japan

Habitat

They nest in wetlands and rivers. In the wintering range, their habitat is comprised mainly by paddy fields, grassy tidal flats, and mudflats.

Gestation

Both males and females incubate the eggs for at least 30 days.

Litter

Most of the nests contain two eggs with only one surviving. 1-3 eggs have been recorded.

Behavior

Nest sites are selected by females. Both sexes build the nest which are frequently in a small clearing. To mate the pair engages in honking rituals before dancing i.e. moving rhythmically until they are standing close, throw their heads back and let out a fluting call in unison. At 95 days after hatching, the young are fledged and are good fliers by migration time.

Reproduction

Breeding maturity is thought to be reached at 3-4 years of age. All mating and egg-laying is largely restricted to April and early May. A crane pair "duets" in various situations, helping to establish formation and maintenance of the pair bond, as well as, territorial advertisement and agonistic signaling.

Wild Diet

The crane's diet is omnivorous, including rice, parsley, carrots, redbuds, acorns, buckwheat, a variety of water plants, carp, goldfish, salamanders, snails, crabs dragonflies, shrimp, rodents and small birds like ducklings.