

CRANE, EAST AFRICAN CROWNED

RANGE:

Eastern Africa.

HABITAT:

Marshy areas, particularly near lakes and rivers.

SIZE:

Height: ~3 feet.

LIFE EXPECTANCY:

Wild: 15-20 years

Captivity: 20-25 years (although some references have listed up to 50 years).

REPRODUCTION:

- Breeding season begins with elaborate, courtship dances consisting of bowing, flaring their wings and leaping into the air. Males and females participate in the dances.
- Nests are usually on the ground and made up of grasses and leaves. The nest is usually built in the tall grass for protection.
- One to four long, oval-shaped eggs are laid per clutch.
- Incubation is done by both sexes and usually lasts about 30 days.
- Chicks can walk the first day and are completely mobile by the second. Crowned cranes can swim in an emergency.
- Both adults feed and protect the chick(s).
- Chicks can fly by 10 weeks of age.
- Cranes are sexually mature by three years of age.

DIET:

Wild: Insects, reptiles, mice, young birds, eggs of water animals and plant materials.

Captivity: Grain mix.

BEHAVIOR:

- Live in groups of up to 150 birds.
- Monogamous, having the same partner for life.
- Parents teach offspring dances and calls. The behaviors are not instinctual.
- Juveniles and monogamous pairs also participate in courtship dances.
- Less elaborate dances are performed throughout the year, not just during mating season.
- Has a chin wattle used to create calls to summon its mate. It can be heard from miles away.

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Yellow crowns are used as camouflage in the tall, yellow grasses of Africa.
- Their windpipe is five feet long, half of which is coiled in the breastbone. This allows them to produce loud, trombone-like calls that carry over long distances.
- The crowned crane is the only crane that perches in trees. They particularly like solitary trees that afford a wide view.

STATUS:

Not listed as threatened or endangered.

REFERENCES:

<http://www.oaklandzoo.org>

<http://www.alaike.lcc.hawaii.edu>

<http://www.jkinder.com>

<http://www.riverbanks.org>

theZOO
LOUISVILLE



Laura Lamb, photographer

Order: **Gruiformes**
Family: **Gruidae**
Genus: **Balearica**
Species: **regulorum**
Subspecies: **gibbericeps**