

CRANE, WATTLED

RANGE:

Ethiopia, Central and Southern Africa. The Okavango Delta in Botswana is one of the most important breeding grounds.

HABITAT:

Large open areas of wet grassland, sedge marsh and river edge.

SIZE:

4 feet tall.

LIFE EXPECTANCY:

Wild: Unknown.

Captivity: Up to 25 years.

REPRODUCTION:

- Monogamous, forming pair bonds for life.
- Reproductive state of both male and female is synchronized by bodily cycles, weather and length of daylight.
- Courtship displays include nuptial dancing, unison calls, running and jumping into the air. Unison calls are produced during the first days of breeding season only.
- Mated pairs build a circular nest of marsh grasses.
- Usually only one buff, spotted egg is laid. If two eggs are laid and both hatch, one chick is left at the nest site to perish.
- Incubation takes 32-40 days. Both parents incubate the egg, care for and feed the chick.
- The chick remains with the parents until it develops flight feathers at 10-12 months. It then forms a flock with other non-breeding birds.
- Chicks reach sexual maturity at four years.

DIET:

Wild: Chiefly sedge, tubers and rhizomes. Occasionally grain, seeds, insects, snails, small fish, frogs and reptiles.

Captivity: Crane mix and mice

BEHAVIOR:

- Diurnal and omnivorous.
- Non-breeding birds flock together to socialize, feed, bathe and roost.
- Though usually silent, these birds can produce loud calls amplified by their convoluted windpipe inside their breastbone.
- Cranes may emit a low purr while feeding and tending chicks or when encountering other cranes.
- Wattled cranes of all ages dance, a combination of head bobbing, running, bowing and leaping.

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Though highly aquatic, wattled cranes do not have webbed feet. Hence they are restricted to shallow waters.
- Males have larger wattles than females.
- Males can shake their wattle in a threatening display.

STATUS:

Endangered (Appendix II of CITES). Wattled cranes are threatened due to a low reproductive rate, loss of wetland habitat and hunting.

theZOO

L O U I S V I L L E



Laura Lamb photographer

Order:	Gruiformes
Family:	Gruidae
Genus:	Bugeranus
Species:	carunculatus

CRANE, WATTLED



REFERENCES:

Cranes of the World, Lawrence Walkinshaw, 1973.

Encyclopedia of Birds, Edited by Christopher M. Perrins

Fundamentals of Ornithology, Jocelyn Zamtyne & Andrew Berger, 1961

Jewel of the Kalahari, Karen Ross, 1987

Managing the Great African Crane, Gary Michael, Curator of Birds, Louisville Zoo Trunkline Aug/Sept. 1992

National Geographic. Dec. 1990 Botswana

Rare Birds of the World, A. Collins, 1988

The Birds of Africa, Vol. II Edited by Emil K. Urvan