

The Somerset Crane Chronicle

The newsletter of the Great Crane Project

Issue 10
Feb. 2013



Welcome

Welcome to the tenth newsletter of the Great Crane Project - the project that aims to re-establish a population of Eurasian cranes in the Levels and Moors and enrich the Somerset landscape in an inspirational way.

Wetter and wilder

We noticed a big change in the cranes this winter, compared to last year. The mild weather and high water tables (bringing worms to the surface) meant the cranes have had abundant food and roosting sites, so their movements have been much less predictable.

This was a real headache when we tried to organise our 'Date With Nature' viewings, as they were not interested in the food we put out! And the flooded roads didn't help. Regrettably we had to cancel most events, so apologies to those of you who were disappointed.



But to focus on the positive, this means our cranes are becoming more like wild birds – which was the plan all along!

As for crane viewing, we have some new ideas for high quality experiences next winter. We will let you know more when we have worked out the details!

Spring has sprung

With the first signs of spring appearing, we're all wondering what our cranes will get up to this year. Will we see pairs form, and wonderful dancing displays? They're probably too young for actual breeding attempts this year, but it's not impossible, so we can't help hoping!



Habitat creation

Whenever our cranes start breeding, they will need plenty of suitable sites for nesting and rearing their young. So the project is planning some work to create the right conditions in partnership with farmers and land managers across the Somerset Levels and Moors.

Crane World Fact-file: No 3

There are 15 crane species spread across the world in all continents except Antarctica and South America. Each issue of the newsletter will highlight a different species.

Demoiselle crane. *Anthropoides virgo*

This is the smallest of all the cranes and surely one of the loveliest. But despite its delicate appearance this is a tough bird: some populations regularly cross the Himalayas on migration, while others cross the deserts of the Middle East.



It is the second most abundant crane, occurring in 47 countries across East and Central Asia and (as remnant populations) Turkey and North Africa.

More crane information at www.savingcranes.org

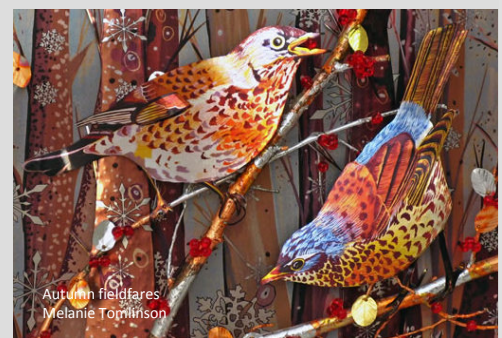
Easter eggs?

It will soon be time for Damon and the project aviculturalists to collect the next batch of wild crane eggs. And that means another trip to the fantastic Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve in Germany, where hundreds of cranes nest in pools deep in the forest. As before, the eggs will be taken early enough for the parents to lay again, so the wild population will not be affected.



Artist on board

This year the team going to Germany includes artist Melanie Tomlinson, who has been appointed by Somerset Art Works to record the experience. This is part of an exciting commission in which she will also work with schools in Somerset and Europe, culminating in an exhibition at WWT Slimbridge. More information about this, and links to Melanie's work, on our website.



More information



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A brighter future for Somerset's wetlands

The Great Crane Project (GCP) is a partnership between the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), the RSPB, Pensthorpe Conservation Trust and Viridor Credits Environmental Company. The project aims to re-establish a sustainable population of common cranes in Britain, securing its future as a breeding species.