



## Welcome

Welcome to the fifteenth 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.

## Last but not least!

After five amazing years of the crane project the last batch of chicks to be brought back as eggs from Germany are ready to make the journey from WWT Slimbridge to the Somerset Levels. Staff and volunteers have been working hard to prepare for the arrival of 20 healthy young cranes. Once released the progress of these birds will be closely monitored throughout the winter.



As always the mug shots of this year's chicks will appear on the Great Crane Project website in late August. We invite local schools to name and champion the cranes and this little chap (formerly known as black red black) has been christened Ziggy by Kingsbury Episcopi primary school.

## Catchers in the Rye

In June Damon visited Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve with local ringer Alison Morgan. Apart from sampling some of the amazing wildlife from fire-bellied toads to wild boar and an abundance of wild flowers, they were able to gain invaluable experience of how to catch and ring wild cranes from an extremely experienced German team. This is in preparation for monitoring the wild born cranes that we hope to see in Somerset in the very near future!



## Crane World Fact-file: No 8

*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.*

### Brolga. *Grus rubicunda*

The official bird of Queensland, this large crane is found in north and eastern Australia and parts of New Guinea. Not the most attractive crane, adults sport a bare crown covered in greenish grey skin.



An adaptation to Australia's often harsh conditions is a salt gland located near the eye that excretes a concentrated salt solution from the saltwater they drink. The population is slowly declining but not particularly threatened.

More crane information at [www.savingcranes.org](http://www.savingcranes.org)

## News from the nests

As we reported in the last issue, we were starting to see several birds pairing up and we were excited to have the first crane nests on the Somerset Levels in over 400 years. An additional nest at Slimbridge produced two chicks but unfortunately, they failed to fledge. Although we weren't successful this Spring it is encouraging news for next year when more birds will be reaching maturity. As birds gain experience they will start to seek out the prime nesting spots and will become wiser to predators.



The first nest with eggs produced on the Levels for 400 years - April 2014

## Crane Celebration to mark the end of an era

As this phase of the Great Crane Project moves towards its end, we are excited to announce a joint project with Somerset Art Works, which will celebrate the last five years of hard work. A special crane celebration is being planned at Stoke St. Gregory on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November featuring dancing, music and a procession of crane and wetland inspired willow artworks produced by local schools. More on this in the next newsletter!

## 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.