



Welcome

Welcome to the sixteenth 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.

They're here!

In the early August we made a dawn trip to WWT Slimbridge and returned to Somerset with 17 healthy and not-so-fluffy crane chicks. After a couple of weeks acclimatising in the special constructed aviary they were released to the elements.



Newly released chicks take their first tentative steps and flaps in to the big wide world!

The new birds settled in well and quickly joined the existing flock to feed on abundant insects in the meadows and on wheat stubble fields close to the release site.

There is now a flock of 78 birds in the South West of the UK. 94 have been released over the last 5 years and the team are all really pleased with this impressive survival rate of 83%.

Crane Safaris

After the success of last year, the Crane Safaris are back! The Safaris are a unique opportunity to join our specialist volunteer crane monitors as they track down the released cranes on their daily checks. Using radio trackers to locate the birds we explore some of the less visited areas of the Somerset Levels & Moors. The Safaris end with a lunch at the Lemon Tree Cafe in The Willows and Wetlands centre in nearby Stoke St Gregory.



Crane Safaris will run from November to March. Details are under 'Seeing Cranes' and 'Events' on our website www.thegreatcraneproject.org.uk and bookings are through the Willows & Wetlands Centre on 07434 363 427.

Crane World Fact-file: No 9

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.

Sandhill crane *Grus canadensis*

The sandhill crane of North America is the world's most numerous crane. The species can be split in to six sub-species. The most abundant of these is the lesser sandhill, the rarest the Cuban sandhill.



A Miocene crane fossil, thought to be about ten million years old, was found in Nebraska and is structurally identical to the modern Sandhill crane, making it the oldest known bird species still surviving!

More crane information at www.savingcranes.org

New Nature Calendar

We have just launched a new interactive Somerset Levels and Moors Nature Calendar on our website. From bitterns to butterflies it's a handy guide to what's out there, and when to see it!



www.thegreatcraneproject.org.uk/somerset-levels-and-moors-nature-calendar

Crane Celebration is coming!

On the 22nd November at 4:30pm The Willows and Wetland centre in Stoke St Gregory will host a special 'Celebration of Cranes'. Somerset Art Works with artist Sarah Butterworth have been working with local schools and the community in order to create crane and wetland-inspired willow artworks which will feature in a special procession with music and dance.



Crane in Progress - one of two willow crane puppets which will form the centre piece of the celebration.

For more details on the celebration visit our website

More information



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www.thegreatcraneproject.org.uk

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.