



Welcome

Welcome to the ninth 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.

What a summer!

It's been another summer of hard work for dedicated foster parents Amy and Harry, rearing the 2012 batch of chicks.



Phelps (the loved being in water!)

Meanwhile, the 2010 and 2011 cranes have been exploring further afield and were seen over Glastonbury, Wells and Taunton. In May some even flew along the Severn into Gloucestershire and 11 turned up at WWT Slimbridge! Four have stayed on the reserve there but the others came back to the levels, where the unseasonal summer flooding has provided plenty of roosting pools.

In September the 19 new recruits were released. One brave soul, Evie, joined the older birds very quickly, while the others are taking longer to mingle.



© Nick Upton

Release day, September 2012

Exciting times

With the latest release bringing the total number of cranes in the south west to fifty-two, the project has now doubled the number of cranes in the UK. This takes us a long way towards securing the future of cranes in this country. Next spring there could be signs of breeding behaviour – watch this space!



© Nick Upton

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A new member of the team

In July the project welcomed its new Somerset Wetlands Community Officer. Susan Anders will be working with our brilliant volunteers on the project's programme of talks, school activities and other community events.

Crane World Fact-file: No 2

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.

Sarus crane. *Grus antigone*

At six feet this is the tallest crane – and the tallest of all flying birds! There are three sub-species, in India, Australia and parts of Indochina, but the latter has been decimated in the last 50 years. In Asia threats include a trade in chicks for pets and adults for food and medicine, as well as wetland drainage. World population 15-20,000, declining.



Tradition says Buddha rescued a Sarus crane injured by an arrow and nursed it back to health. At Buddha's birthplace in Nepal a project is using this story to persuade local farmers to protect the few remaining cranes nesting in the rice-paddies.

More crane information at www.savingcranes.org

We're so chuffed!

August brought the exciting news that we had won the Best Conservation Project category in the 2012 Countryfile Magazine Awards! It's really fantastic for the project to have such recognition and we are very grateful to all who voted for the project, and of course to Countryfile magazine.



Damon Bridge with the award

Crane 'Dates with Nature'

This winter we will again be organising opportunities to see the cranes, in collaboration with the Willow and Wetlands Centre at Stoke St. Gregory and a local landowner who provides access to a viewing area. Keep an eye on the project website for news on the timings of these 'Dates with Nature' – last year they sold out very quickly!

New film about the project

'Return of the Cranes', produced by the RSPB film unit, is a 30 minute feature telling the full story of the project. It follows the work of the project team, from egg collecting through rearing to release, with wonderful footage of the cranes from cute chicks to fully grown birds at home in (and flying over) the Somerset landscape. Quite emotional! See our website for news of showings.

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.